

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, April 9, 2014, 7 PM**

MINUTES

Regular meeting begins at 7:30 pm or immediately following Closed Session, whichever comes last.

OPENING; ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order. Those present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Price and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Pizzaia and Township Attorney Robert Benbrook.

The **FLAG SALUTE** was conducted.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Mayor Shoemaker read the following statement: Notice of this meeting has been sent to two newspapers of general circulation in which notice was given of the date, time, place and general agenda in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

CLOSED SESSION – Contract Negotiations – North Warren Court; Litigation

Mr. Lance made a motion to enter into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

WHEREAS, the Blairstown Township Committee needs to discuss matters relating to the issues as listed above; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes it to be in the best interest of the public to discuss these subjects in Closed Session;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Blairstown, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that it shall meet in Closed Session to discuss only the subjects mentioned above, the results of which may be made public immediately thereafter or at a later date.

Dated: April 9, 2014

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Lance made a motion to close the Closed Session meeting. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

Mayor Shoemaker said that the Committee discussed leaving the North Warren Municipal Court in Hope at the end of this year. It has been decided that it will be financially beneficial for Blairstown Township

to leave the North Warren Court and to join the Knowlton Shared Court. Mayor Shoemaker said that Blairstown Township will save approximately \$75,000.00 per year.

Mrs. Price made a motion to enter into an agreement with Knowlton Township for a shared court to be operated out of Knowlton Township Court pursuant to New Jersey Statute. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Price, Shoemaker
 ABSTAIN - Lance

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Louis Tommaso, representative of the Foodshed Alliance, asked the Committee for permission to use the lot adjacent to the Stillwater Road fire house for the farmers’ market. The market will run from May 31st to October 25th. Mr. Tommaso will make sure that each vendor is properly insured as required by the township. Mr. Lance made the motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

Gladys Bellott, Union Brick Road, spoke about the condition at 83 Union Brick Road. She has come before the Committee on several occasions to complain about the deplorable conditions. Mr. Benbrook said that the jurisdiction in the matter lies with the Warren County Board of Health. He knows that the Warren County Board of Health has filed complaints with the Municipal Court. The property owner fails to appear in court, and the court is reluctant to press the matter further because of the woman’s age. Mr. Benbrook was requested to look into this to see if the status has changed.

MINUTES

March 12, 2014 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session Minutes

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

NORTH WARREN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL 2014-15 BUDGET PRESENTATION by Dr. Brian Fogelson, Superintendent and Christina Sharkey, Administrator

Dr. Fogelson gave an overview of the 2014/2015 school budget. He outlined the school’s achievements, which include a large selection of AP course offerings, over \$3.2 million being awarded in scholarships to the Class of 2013 graduates, and the NWR Marching Band being named 2013 National Champions.

The budget goals include increasing academic achievement, maintaining and enhancing existing program offerings and maintaining class size at current levels.

Other goals include seeking a “greener” footprint for the school and a reduction in energy usage. Towards this goal, solar panels have been operational since August of 2013.

Capital projects in the budget include continued payments on a technology upgrade lease. They will continue preventative maintenance and make security upgrades by hiring security personnel.

Anticipated revenues for this coming school budget total \$16,334,000.00. The school will be receiving \$39,410.00 more in State Aid than last year.

Reductions have been made in various areas, which include reduced electrical costs, reduced transportation costs, reduced administrative and departmental supplies, and reductions associated with staff retirements.

Additions to the budget include security personnel, the proposed multi-purpose building, athletic uniforms, and various educational readiness tools.

The tax impact for Blairstown in this budget is a 1 cent increase, which equates to a \$35.71 annual increase on the average assessed property of \$295,366.00, or an increase of \$2.98 per month on the average assessed property.

Mayor Shoemaker thanked Dr. Fogelson for attending tonight's meeting to present the 2014-15 budget to the Committee and the residents in attendance. (Dr. Fogelson's complete presentation is attached to the minutes.)

ORDINANCE 2014 – 02 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, DELETING AND REPLACING CHAPTER 17 OF THE CODE OF BLAIRSTOWN, "JOINT MUNICIPAL COURT," IN ORDER TO CREATE A NEW JOINT MUNICIPAL COURT, Adoption, Second Reading Public Hearing – Open/Close

No action was taken on Ordinance 2014 – 02.

ADOPTION OF 2014 BUDGET

R.2014 – 050 Resolution Authorizing Budget to be Read by Title Only

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

PUBLIC HEARING – Copies of the budget have been made available to the public requesting same and a copy has been filed with the library as well as the synopsis being published in the New Jersey Herald on March 20, 2014.

Mayor Shoemaker opened the Public Hearing to the public. Mr. Lance reported that the Township Committee has consistently lowered the budget since 2006 which included a 25% employee reduction.

As there were no comments or questions from the public, Mayor Shoemaker closed the Public Hearing.

R.2014 – 051 Resolution of Self-Examination of 2014 Budget

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

R.2014 – 052 Final Adoption of 2014 Budget

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2014 – 053 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2014 – 054 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2013-006
- 3 – R.2014 – 055 Authorizing the Submission of 2013 Tonnage Grant Application
- 4 – Approval of Application for Red Light Permit – Scott Durlister, Blairstown Ambulance Corps

Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – March Report
- Finance – March Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – March Report
- Police Department – March Report
- Tax Collector – March Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – February Report
- Warren County Health Department – March 7, 2014

Mr. Lance made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Service Electric Cable TV – SECTV is preparing draft ordinance for franchise renewal

Nothing to report.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from James P. Fox, Morris, Downing & Sherred, LLP, re: Proposed Amendment to R-5 Zone or in the Alternative an Amendment to the School Property's Zoning

This correspondence, in addition to another letter recently received by the Clerk, is in request of the waiver of permit fees to North Warren Regional High School. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve these requests, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

- 2 – from Robert F. Glowacky, Chief School Administrator, Warren County Technical School, requesting the donation of a fire vehicle for use by the Fire Science Program

Mr. Glowacky came forward to address the Committee. He said that the Warren County Technical School is starting a Fire Science Program in September and the donation of this truck would be very beneficial. Darren Occhiuzzo, Chief, Blairstown Hose Company No. 1, spoke in favor of the township donating this vehicle.

Mr. Lance asked which truck was going to be placed in Hardwick Township. Chief Occhiuzzo said that this would have been the truck. Mr. Lance is concerned about donating this truck when, contractually, we agreed to place a truck in Hardwick Township if Hardwick built a building for its housing. Nick Mohr, OEM Director, said that he was asked by former Mayor Mach for an estimate to refurbish this vehicle being considered for donation, and it was found to be thousands of dollars and not financially viable. Robert Haberstadt, Ambulance Corps, asked if it were possible to place this vehicle at the Warren County Technical School on loan. Mr. Glowacky said that this would be possible. After discussion, the Committee was in agreement that this would be a good solution just in case our contractual agreement with Hardwick comes into play.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to lend the fire vehicle to the Warren County Technical School, with the stipulation that if, in fact, Blairstown is required to place said vehicle in Hardwick, at that point the vehicle would be returned to Blairstown. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion. Since the vehicle is on loan, the title will remain in Blairstown's name. Mr. Benbrook asked Mr. Glowacky to obtain a letter from the school's insurance carrier stating that the vehicle will be covered while in their possession. Mr. Glowacky will provide this to the township.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

3 – from Radka Pieroni, Fundraising Chair of MOM's Group, re: Sycamore Park Playground Project

Radka Pieroni, a Fredon resident, Jamie Oatley, Belcher Road, and Brianna Johnson, Vail Road, addressed the Committee regarding their request for the donation of \$8,000 toward the Sycamore Park Playground Project. Ms. Oatley stated that the MOM's Group has raised over \$133,000 towards this project, but need the remaining \$8,000 in order to construct the park. Christine Rolef, CFO, stated that the township cannot make a donation to a private organization. Mr. Benbrook suggested purchasing a specific item for the park so it would not be a monetary donation. CFO Rolef said that the \$8,000 is part of the aggregate that well exceeds the bid threshold so the entire project should have been bid. If the township were to purchase the fence, she would solicit quotations. The MOM's representatives said that the fencing has already been ordered with specialized pickets recognizing the names of the donors.

Ms. Johnson said that the group solicited bids for the fence. CFO Rolef said that as long as the bids quoted a price on identical fencing, she believes that the township could purchase the fence from the lowest bidder. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to purchase and install the fence for the playground, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

The MOM's Group representatives will work with CFO Rolef on the purchase of fencing.

4 – from Michael Mihalic, Supervisor, Traffic Investigations, DOT, re: No Passing Zone, Route 94. Motion to approve NJDOT resolution of support; second. Roll call vote.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There were no questions or comments on the General Correspondence List.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook said that the township violated a water testing regulation several years ago. The NJ DEP has offered a settlement to the township. We are required to pay a fine of \$1,125.00. Mr. Benbrook attempted to have the fee waived with no success. The NJ DEP would not lower the fine as these fines are uniform throughout the state. Mr. Benbrook is recommending that the township pay this fine to close the matter.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Mayor Shoemaker to sign the settlement with the NJ DEP and to pay the settlement fine in the amount of \$1,125.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

Mr. Benbrook said that Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, has been working with him on the resolution authorizing grant matching funds for the removal of the Paulina Lake Dam. This resolution commits the township to a cash expenditure of \$155,800.00. The resolution states that the expenditure is contingent upon receiving the grant monies and grant conditions which the township deems favorable.

Mrs. Price stated that she has spent a great deal of time educating herself on this project. She said that for economic reasons only, she would feel compelled to accept this grant if it were awarded to us.

On April 25th, she and Mr. Lance will be touring dams that have been removed in the area. In speaking with the experts, she is absolutely convinced that the removal of the dam will not alleviate any flooding. She feels that the benefits to the township, in addition to the savings for not repairing the dam, would be a reduced liability to the township. As far as talk about the dam breaching, Mrs. Price stated that she is confident that the dam is structurally sound. There has never been a dam inspection report indicating that the structural integrity was in question.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the resolution authorizing grant matching funds for the removal of the Paulina Lake Dam. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The town-wide cleanup has been scheduled for October 24th and 25th. The voucher system will be used again and items will be taken to the Oxford landfill.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman said that he received notification from the Warren County Engineer's Office that reconstruction work will take place on East Crisman Road. The tentative work date will be July and August of this year. Construction work will also take place on Route 521 on both sides of the intersection with Mud Pond Road. This work will also be done during July and August.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson stated that Officer Bisanzio is doing well at the Police Academy and is scheduled to graduate in June.

Mr. Anderson and Mr. Lance started police contract negotiations last week. He asked the Committee to bring any issues to his attention in the near future.

Mr. Anderson said that interviews were conducted for a Special Police Officer. The best candidate is Rocco Guerriero, Jr., who Mr. Anderson would like the Committee to hire tonight as a Special. Mr. Anderson made a motion to hire Rocco Guerriero, Jr. as a Special Officer in the Blairstown Police Department at \$15.00 per hour. He is an at-will employee, with no benefits associated with this position. Hiring is contingent upon successfully passing a physical and psychological examination. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

The Environmental Commission has postponed its cleanup day to sometime in the fall. They will also be participating in the dam tour.

The Senior Advisory Committee have scheduled all of their meetings. Mr. Avery read a letter from Anita Ardia, who wished to thank the hard working members of the Senior Advisory Committee. Mr. Avery said that May is Older Americans Month.

It appears that a revision of water meter billing will greatly help the township financially. Mr. Avery said that numbers he received from the CFO indicates that separate meter billings on multiple units will have a very positive financial effect on the water department's budget. There are about 80 units involved. Mr. Benbrook will be amending the ordinance to allow for the separate billings.

The Givens Belet building is now ready for use by the various clubs and organizations.

Mr. Avery hopes to have another notice in The Press detailing topics of discussion for the May Committee meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance thanked the CFO and all Committee members and employees involved in getting the budget ready. This is the ninth year of reductions in the municipal budget.

Mr. Lance said that the DEP will be issuing an order to Blairstown to have, at the least, a plan for a second well at the Water Department. Mr. Lance said that the plan probably will be to remove the Paulina Lake Dam and then to locate the well at that location.

The Historic Preservation Committee would like to change their enabling ordinance allowing for more members. They would also like for more than one member to reside outside of Blairstown. He would like the ordinance to allow for up to 25 members. Mr. Lance will give his suggestions to Mr. Benbrook for an ordinance amendment.

The last 10 signs of the walking tour are being finalized and will be installed by the Fourth of July. They are compiling a booklet for the 175th anniversary.

On September 27th, there will be a *Tour de Farm New Jersey* event being held at Race Farm.

Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno will be at Waterloo Village on May 6th for a tour with local municipal officials.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

The ordinance review committee will be holding its first meeting on Monday, April 14th at 6:30.

With regard to COAH, Mr. Pruznick of Arc, will be meeting with the State at the end of April. He will let us know about the feasibility of amending the Memorandum of Understanding that the Committee approved at the last meeting.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

The park constructed where the Community Center used to be located has a soccer ball and net on the premises. Mayor Shoemaker is concerned that such activity will ruin the grass. He will take measures with the police department, if necessary, to make sure this type of activity is not happening at the park.

Mayor Shoemaker sent a letter to Richard Myron addressing his concerns about Heller Hill Road. Mr. Rodman is looking into how to approach the bank stabilization on Heller Hill Road. Mr. Rodman said that a contractor has looked at it and he will report on this at a future meeting.

Mayor Shoemaker has asked Mrs. Price to look into the feasibility of sewers in the village area. He has also asked her to spearhead a group to look into beautifying the village area and drawing in more business.

Mayor Shoemaker said that road repairs need to be a priority, especially after this winter. He said that Kishpaugh Road, Stonybrook Road and Maple Lane are in dire need of work. Mrs. Price said that she has received complaints about Gaisler Road.

Mrs. Price said that she has received complaints that people from the Alina Lodge congregate at the pump house to smoke. Local residents are concerned about this activity. Mr. Lance said that the Committee has been talking for some time about fencing in the property.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Robert Haberstadt, Blairstown Ambulance Corp, thanked the Blairstown emergency services for their quick response and professionalism at the fire at a residence on Four Corners Road.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk