

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, August 13, 2014, 7:30 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 Attorney Kevin Benbrook (arrived at 8:35).

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.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, spoke about the water meter on the rental side of her duplex located at 10 Bridge Street. She said that the water meter is reading extremely large amounts of water usage and asked the Committee to have the meter checked. She is certain that there is no water leak. Mr. Avery said that he will ask the DPW to look into this for Ms. Angelone.

Ms. Angelone also spoke about the truck and bus traffic on Bridge Street. She asked the Committee to contact the County about having Bridge Street removed as a truck route. She said the procedure is to send a letter to the State, endorsed by the municipality and the county, to have a weight restriction on the road. She was told the entire procedure takes about a year. Mr. Lance said that this will involve a traffic study. Mr. Lance will contact the county on how to proceed with this.

Richard Keiling, attorney for the prospective buyer of 2 Jones Road, explained that a new septic installed on this property does not meet the setback required by the County for the two holding tanks. The Warren County Board of Health is requiring a letter from the Township, stating that there is no objection to this. The Committee agreed to send this letter, contingent upon Mr. Benbrook's review.

MINUTES

July 9, 2014 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Price made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

ORDINANCE 2014 – 07 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURCHASE OF AIR PACKS AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE FUNDING THEREOF Introduction, First Reading

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this ordinance provides for the funds to purchase air packs for the Blairstown Hose Company, which is part of the agreement to dissolve our agreement with the Hose Company to lease the Mohican Road Fire Hall.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2014 – 07 on introduction, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

ORDINANCE 2014 – 08 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR DPW EQUIPMENT ENUMERATED WITHIN FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE FUNDING THEREOF Introduction, First Reading

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this ordinance provides the funding for the purchase of a truck for the DPW. It provides for an expenditure of \$60,000 for the Capital Account.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2014 – 08 on introduction, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2014 – 093 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2014 – 094 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2014-009
- 3 – R.2014 – 095 Authorization to Cancel Lien on Property
- 4 – R.2014 – 096 Refund of 2014 Tax Appeal Overpayment
- 5 – R.2014 – 097 Refund of 2014 Tax Payments
- 6 – R.2014 – 098 Amendment of 2014 Capital Budget
- 7 – R.2014 – 099 Authorization to Enter into Agreement with Asphalt Paving Systems for Temporary Lease of Township Property
- 8 – R.2014 – 100 Authorization to Terminate Lease Agreement with Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 for the Lease of Mohican Fire Hall
- 9 – R.2014 – 101 Reappointment of Christine Rolef as Temporary Purchasing Agent
- 10 – Application for Blue Light Permit – Joseph DiGrazia, Blairstown Ambulance Corps

Mrs. Price requested that Item No. 8, R.2014 – 100, be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, with the exception of No. 8, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

With regard to R.2014 – 100, Mrs. Price said that the agreement states that the township will pay the Hose Company up to \$25,000, but the ordinance states that the township will purchase the air packs. Mrs. Price read the language that the Hose Company’s attorney agreed to, that states that

the township will purchase air packs for the Hose Company, the Hose Company will choose make/model, for a cost up to but not exceeding \$25,000. This language will replace No. 2 in the lease termination agreement.

The Committee agreed to this language change. After discussion, it was decided to table R.2014 – 100 until the September meeting. At that time, the funding ordinance will be scheduled for adoption and Mr. Benbrook will have the amended document prepared.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – July Report
Finance – July Finance and Fuel Reports
Fire Department – July Report
Police Department – July Report
Tax Collector – July Report
Municipal Court of North Warren – June Report
Warren County Health Department July 14, 2014

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

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 Gina Trish, re: Village Green Park Sign

Gina Trish has requested the placement of a sign identifying the Village Green Park. The sign will be approximately 2 ft. x 2 ft. and affixed to the split rail fence. After discussion, the Committee agreed to ask Mrs. Trish to obtain estimates for the sign. Mrs. Price suggested that the sign be paid for by private donations, especially in light of the other organizations that have financed their various projects by private donations. Mayor Shoemaker said that the Committee could make this decision after seeing the cost involved.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook was not in attendance at this time.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of July.

Mr. Anderson said that Lt. Losey is recuperating from his non-work related accident last month. He hopes to have him back to work on light duty in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Anderson proposed that Rocco Guerriero, Jr., currently on the Police Department as a Class II Special Officer, be made a full-time probationary officer, with a starting date of August 16, 2014. Mr. Anderson made a motion to this effect. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Anderson reported that Marion Spriggs, Deputy Clerk, will be out for some time due to open heart surgery. The Committee wishes her well.

HEARING on Step II Grievance filed by Officer Falcicchio.

Mr. Anderson explained that Officer Falcicchio filed a grievance because he was not compensated for covering while Lt. Losey was out. Mr. Benbrook has advised that the township is not contractually bound to do this, but since this was done once before in 2011, Mr. Anderson is proposing to make this payment. Mr. Benbrook has prepared a resolution stating that this is a one-time issue and that the township will not be obligated to repeat this practice in the future. Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve this resolution, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker. Mrs. Price stated that she would like to have the option to make payment in the future on a case-by-case basis.

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

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Environmental Commission is still on hiatus and will resume meeting in September.

The Seniors Advisory Committee will be going to Ehrhardt's on Lake Wallenpaupack on August 20th. Two additional trips are planned for the fall.

The Christmas Party is scheduled for December 6th at the Knowlton Lions Club.

With regard to the Water Department, the water tower is scheduled to be inspected sometime this month. Mr. Avery is working on gathering information on the costs associated with maintenance and operations in order to make the department financially self-sustaining.

The members of the American Legion are in the process of obtaining quotes to have the floors in the Givens Belet building sanded and refinished. Mr. Avery would like the Committee to pay this cost, which will probably be about \$2,500.

The ordinance review committee continues to work on a review of the township code book.

The township webmaster is working on the new website, which should be available for review shortly.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that in light of the financial condition of the State, he is concerned about state aid. He fears that there may be a reduction in the energy tax we receive next year.

Mr. Lance said that he and Mr. Anderson will begin negotiations with the police for their new contract.

The Historic Preservation Committee has almost completed the sign project. They are planning their activities for next year.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mrs. Price reported on the COAH project involving the ARC. After discussions with Theresa Tamburro, MHL, and Darlene Green, Planner, she has been advised that the township should move forward on the proposed group home, expending the entire \$117,000 remaining in the COAH trust account, which will give the township four credits for the four bedroom group home. Mrs. Price asked if the MHL's salary came out of the COAH trust or the general account. Mr. Lance thought that Mrs. Tamburro's salary was paid from the trust. Mr. Lance will check with the CFO and the auditor regarding the salary issue. Mrs. Price made a motion to accept the revised MOU, contingent upon attorney review and CFO review. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

Mrs. Price reported on her research regarding "Blue Acres" funding, and said that it does not apply to Blairstown Township. Currently, the program is geared to nine counties, though not exclusively, since the event of Hurricane Sandy. The program deals mostly with cluster neighborhoods, and the affected areas are completely levelled.

Mrs. Price met with Ted Rodman and Carol Cook on July 15th regarding the sewer issue in the village area. Mrs. Price met with Mr. Rodman, Jim Frick, and Tom Schaefer on August 6th regarding the problems faced by the downtown areas. Mr. Frick indicated that he would speak to Blair Academy representatives regarding the possibility of a joint effort for the placement of sewers in the village area.

Mr. Benbrook suggested researching whether any USDA loans are available for this purpose.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker summarized the Blairstown Hose Company activities for the month of July.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that JCP&L's pilot program on vegetation, which includes Blairstown, will now be making a survey of hazardous trees. He and Carl Stoddart, DPW Foreman, identified these trees and have forwarded this information to the BPU.

Mayor Shoemaker and Bob Canace of Ridge and Valley Conservancy will be making a presentation before the Warren County Department of Land Preservation on September 8th to explain Blairstown's request for grant monies to purchase the Kostenbader property.

Mayor Shoemaker asked Nick Mohr to attend tonight's meeting to speak about a recent letter from the Warren County Department of Public Safety announcing that Blairstown has received a grant award of \$75,000.

Mr. Mohr, OEM Coordinator, explained that the grant is funded by the federal government, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and administered by the NJ State Police and the Warren County Department of Public Safety, Office of Emergency Management. The Township received a \$45,000 grant with a 10% match in the first round. This second round has a 0% match requirement for the \$75,000 grant. The process now is to decide the best way to use the funds and to file the grant application by September 5th. There was a discussion on the possibility of using the grant monies to upgrade generators at the Municipal Building, the Water Department or the Fire House.

Mayor Shoemaker said that the grant application is due before the next Committee meeting. Mr. Benbrook advised the Committee to make a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the grant application as prepared by Mr. Mohr. Mr. Lance made this motion, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mayor Shoemaker said that a communication was received from American Rivers and Trout Unlimited stating that new grant monies are now available that can be applied for to remove the Paulina Dam. He asked Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, to explain further. Mr. Rodman said that the DEP has not officially announced the grant monies, but it seems that monies will be available for the financing of the engineering and permit costs, but not the construction costs involved in the dam removal. A resolution will eventually need to be passed to receive these funds, but the actual removal of the dam will be a condition of receiving this money.

Mr. Rodman has contacted French and Parrello to get an updated cost estimate of refurbishment of the Paulina Dam with and without hydro.

Mr. Rodman reported that Mr. Benbrook wrote a letter to two residents on Four Corners Road regarding the condition of the roadway at their driveways. Mr. Rodman said that both residents indicated that they will cooperate with the township regarding the problem.

Mrs. Price reported that a resident suggested putting signage at the new playground identifying a phone number to contact with concerns.

Mrs. Price asked Mayor Shoemaker to follow up on a resident's concern about a catch basin and other issues on Mingle Road. Mayor Shoemaker will look into this.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, suggested that the township include pictures of our police officers in any future mailings that may go out. She feels that it would be nice to be able to identify the officers for safety reasons.

Mrs. Cook spoke with representatives from the Resource Conservation and Development Council, who will be looking at the Jacksonburg Dam in order to give suggestions on how to remove debris to alleviate flooding on the road.

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, offered to assist Mrs. Price regarding the identification of problems faced by the village area. Mrs. Price said that the flooding problem is not repairable. She is interested in researching sanitary sewers, not storm sewers, but thanked her for her offer.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk