

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, February 12, 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 (arrived at 7:17 pm), 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 – Potential Contract Negotiations; Personnel – Township Engineer

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

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

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: February 12, 2014

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Avery made a motion to come out of Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mayor Shoemaker stated that there were no results to be reported as a result of Closed Session.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Jackie Espinoza, JCP&L, spoke about improvements being made by JCP&L that impact Blainstown. She said that a pole line at Sunset Hill Road has been replaced with a synchronizing loop that will reduce outages. Improvements to poles are being made along the Route 94 corridor. In addition, pole to pole inspections are in the process of being conducted.

Frank Golick, Mud Pond Road, informed the Committee that his previous scout project was a huge success. He is now planning his Eagle Scout project. He has two projects in mind. The first project is the installation of a lighted flag pole at the newly constructed park on East Avenue. He asked if any permits would be necessary for this construction. Mayor Shoemaker will get an answer for Mr. Golick.

The second project idea is the construction of a 12 x 12 foot storage shed for the North Warren Regional Football program. This project would be in conjunction with the Board of Education. Mr. Lance said that this project would require permits and that Mr. Golick should contact the Zoning Official for set-back requirements and other regulations.

Mr. Golick will begin a series of fundraising projects beginning in March. When he decides on a project, he will return to the Committee with an update.

Joel McGreen and Bob Canace of Ridge and Valley Conservancy spoke to the Committee about the possible purchase of a piece of property in the Kostenbader Estate. Ridge and Valley Conservancy would like to work with the township towards purchasing this property as Open Space. The Ridge and Valley Conservancy will take the lead on the project if the Committee wishes to proceed. Mr. Canace presented the Committee with appraisal estimates for the property. He is asking that the township pay for half the cost of the appraisals.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to authorize the expenditure of up to \$2,000.00 towards obtaining appraisals for the Kostenbader property, to be taken from the Open Space fund. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mike Russo of Whitman Company gave the Committee an update on the soil remediation project at the Walnut Valley Fire House. Extensive investigation of the area has been made and the problem area has been defined. Potable well samples have come back clean, but there is a soil and ground water problem. Whitman is working on a remedial action plan. Mr. Russo presented the Committee with estimates for two options for bid specifications, one for extensive soil and ground water cleanup, and the second for limited cleanup.

Mr. Russo said that in reviewing the bid results, if the two options are reasonably close, he would recommend going for the extensive cleanup. If the limited cleanup is chosen, he wants the Committee to remember that there will be further monitoring costs that will be incurred.

The total estimate for the scope of work on Whitman's proposal is \$28,200. This includes complete bid specifications for two options. There was a discussion on whether Open Space funds could be used for a portion of this cost, since the site is used in part for recreational purposes. Mr. Benbrook is of the

opinion that a portion of the costs could be paid from Open Space funds. Mr. Lance will speak with the Recreation Director to determine a percentage of the area used for recreation.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Whitman to perform the scope of work as outlined in Proposal No. 32743 for an amount not to exceed \$28,200.00. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

MINUTES

January 8, 2014 – Regular Minutes

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

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

ORDINANCE 2014 – 01 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURCHASE OF A 1980 MACK LADDER TRUCK FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE FUNDING THEREOF, Second Reading

PUBLIC HEARING

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

Mrs. Price made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2014 - 01 on second reading, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

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, Introduction, First Reading

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve Ordinance 2014 - 02 on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2014 – 025 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2014 – 026 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2013-003
- 3 – R.2014 – 027 Resolution Calling on the Legislature to Make Permanent the 2% Cap on Interest Arbitration Awards
- 4 – R.2014 – 028 Resolution Agreeing to Certain Conditions Required by the Superior Court of New Jersey, Vicinage XIII, in Regard to the Joint Court of North Warren

- 5 – R.2014 – 029 Authorization to Enter into Professional Services Contract for Licensed Water Operator
- 6 – R.2014 – 030 Contracting for Professional Services without Competitive Bidding in Accordance with Local Public Contracts Law – Bond Counsel
- 7 – R.2014 – 031 Contracting for Professional Services without Competitive Bidding in Accordance with Local Public Contracts Law – Municipal Engineer
- 8 – R.2014 – 032 Authorization to Enter into Interlocal Agreement with Knowlton Township for Chief Financial Officer Services
- 9 – R.2014 – 033 Authorizing Mayor to sign Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement between Blairstown Township and Warren County
- 10 – R.2014 – 034 Appointing Joel McGreen to Serve as Blairstown Township’s Representative on Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee
- 11 – R.2014 – 035 Authorization to Transfer Funds
- 12 – Application for Blue Light Permit – Larry Riley, Blairstown Ambulance Corps
- 13 – Application for Membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 – Mike D. Rumsey

Mr. Lance asked to have Item No. 4 removed from the Consent Agenda, as he needs to abstain on this matter. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, with the exception of No. 4. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve Resolution 2014 - 028, which was seconded by Mr. Avery. Mr. Benbrook recommended holding Resolution 2014 -028 until final adoption of Ordinance 2014 - 02, which establishes the new North Warren Court at Hope. The Committee was in agreement. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Avery withdrew their motions.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – January Report
- Finance – January Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – January Report
- Police Department – January Report
- Tax Collector – January Report
- Zoning Official – 2013 4th Quarter Report
- Animal Control Officer – 2013 4th Quarter Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – December Report
- Warren County Health Department – January 10, 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

There is nothing new to report on this item. The Clerk will contact SECTV to ascertain when the draft ordinance will be available.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Stephanie Oliphant, Wetlands Specialist, Warren County Mosquito Control Commission, regarding Blirstown’s Stormwater Control/Management Ordinance

Ms. Oliphant is requesting permission from the Committee to use verbiage from the township's ordinance in her printouts regarding mosquito management.

- 2 – from Lisa Thompson, Sycamore Park Playground Project, requesting the use of the concession stand from May 14th to May 18th during the construction of the new playground

The Committee had no objection to this request.

- 3 – from William P. Munday, Marc, Attorneys at Law, re: Lane Enterprises, Inc., Tractor Supply Letter of Credit

Mr. Benbrook explained that Lane Enterprises is requesting to terminate a bond and substitute a cash certificate of deposit in the amount of \$50,000. He said that this is, in fact, more beneficial to the township with regard to receiving the money in case of default. Mr. Benbrook has spoken with Mr. Rodman, who has assured him that Lane Enterprises has five (5) items to complete, which would cost significantly less than \$50,000 to complete. Mr. Benbrook is recommending that the Committee approve this request.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the requests in Items #1 - #3. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Shoemaker remarked that with regard to national healthcare, the IRS has issued a statement that volunteer firefighters will not count towards a municipality’s full-time employee total.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk asked the Committee Members if they were in favor of holding a town-wide cleanup this fall. Mr. Lance said that this item has been appropriated for in the 2014 budget. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to hold a two day cleanup in the fall, which was seconded by Mr. Lance, with all members voting in favor.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported that the Paulina Dam grant application was submitted on time. There was a question on whether matching funds are required. Mr. Rodman replied that the township would have to contribute towards the project, but it is not a matching amount. Mr. Benbrook summarized that if the township were to rehabilitate the dam, it would cost approximately \$400,000. If the township were successful in obtaining this grant to remove the dam, it will cost the township approximately \$155,000. Mr. Rodman agreed with this.

Mayor Shoemaker commended Mr. Rodman and the team who assisted in preparing the grant application for a fine job in the short amount of time available.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of January. Mr. Anderson asked Police Director Gara about the status of Officer Bisanzio. Director Gara said that he is doing well at the Academy. He has completed approximately eight weeks of a 22 week program.

Mr. Anderson also reported that the North Warren Regional High School administration is looking for a special resource officer.

The police contract ends this year and negotiations will begin soon for a new contract. Mr. Anderson would like to hire Arthur Thibault to negotiate for the township. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to hire Arthur Thibault of Apruzzese, McDermott, Mastro & Murphy as labor attorney for the negotiation of a new police contract. Mr. Lance seconded the motion. Mr. Benbrook recommended that the Committee obtain a proposal from Mr. Thibault before taking any action. It was agreed that a proposal will be requested for presentation at the next meeting. The motions were rescinded.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Environmental Commission held their reorganization meeting. Harry Price is the chair and Patricia Gunther is a new member. A speaker was present to talk about savings with solar energy. The Commission will look into any possible savings for the township. The Commission will also be looking at other dam removal projects in the area.

The Senior Citizens Advisory Committee is in the process of planning activities for the year. Mr. Avery announced that today is Anita Ardia's 98th birthday.

The Water Department is working towards having the capability of billing each water user in a multiple unit currently billed on a single meter. Mr. Benbrook will be presenting an amended ordinance allowing for this.

Mr. Avery said that the Givens Belet building has been refurbished with the exception of cosmetic issues, such as painting. The Recreation Director has been notified that the building will be able to be used very shortly.

Mr. Avery will hold another open door event on Saturday, February 22nd.

The Land Use Board has cancelled the February meeting.

The Department of Public Works has been working hard on plowing this season.

Mr. Avery suggested forming an ad hoc committee to review the township code book. Mr. Avery said that the members would understand that the Township Committee would be under no obligation to follow through with any suggestions made by the ad hoc committee. After discussion, it was agreed that the formation of this committee would be a good idea. Mr. Avery would like to be the liaison to this committee and Mrs. Price volunteered to be a second liaison.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that the 2014 budget is almost completed. The budget is approximately \$75,000 under last year's budget. It has been proposed that this year's budget be brought up to last year's total and to appropriate the \$75,000 towards road repairs. The road projects could be paid in cash or financed by a note to be paid for in two years.

The DEP has inspected the water department and has ordered work to be completed on the second well and the standpipe. This needs to be addressed in capital outlay of the 2014 budget.

The Historic Preservation Committee has numerous projects planned. They will have a banner in the Memorial Day Parade and are planning events for the Fourth of July celebration.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mrs. Price reported that she has completed the NJLM course entitled, "Orientation for Municipal Employees, Newly Elected Officials, Re-elected, or Experienced."

Mrs. Price met with the Municipal Housing Liaison and was brought up to speed on COAH issues.

Mrs. Price met with the Open Space Committee on February 6th. Mrs. Price reported that the Open Space Committee does not wish to be combined with any other committees.

Mrs. Price met with Molly Petty, Business Administrator of the Blairstown Elementary School and also with the superintendent and principal of the school. She has also spoken with Dirk Hermann, President of the Board of Education. She will be attending the February 20th Board of Education meeting.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker asked the Committee members if they are in favor of increasing our public officials' liability insurance deductible from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Doing so will realize a cost savings of \$5,354.00 per year. Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Sharon Cooper to make this change, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Mayor Shoemaker reported that Debbie Waldron was re-elected as Chair of the Land Use Board. Jim Sikkes is the Vice-Chair. There was a presentation by Maser Consulting, and it was reported that the township is in good standing with our COAH obligations.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that Mrs. Waldron has asked that the Township Committee split the cost of the COAH report. Mayor Shoemaker is of the opinion that the monies all come from the same budget and that if the Land Use Board is short of monies by the end of the year, funds can be transferred. The Committee was in agreement with Mayor Shoemaker.

Mayor Shoemaker distributed a picture of the new announcers stand being proposed for construction at the Walnut Valley Field. The Committee had no objections to the new stand.

Mayor Shoemaker said that he has asked Mrs. Price to take on projects, one being a study of the feasibility of making Main Street one way. The second project is a study of the possibility of installing sewers in the village area. She will research the availability of grants for this purpose.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Harold Price, Alice Court, said that the Township Committee originally spoke about making repairs to the Paulina Dam. He cautioned the Committee about taking grant monies to remove the dam. He said that it is his understanding that a hole will be blown into the dam instead of having it removed. Mr. Price said that the Environmental Commission would like to hold a public forum to present information about the possible removal of the dam.

Mr. Avery said that he will be speaking to The Press about covering township news on a weekly or monthly basis and that information about the Paulina Dam could be included.

There was a discussion about making the township meetings more available to the public, and the possibility of linking local events to the township website.

Darren Occhiuzzo, Blairstown Hose Company No. 1, reported that his membership is actively involved in many types of training, including training on the new ladder truck. He thanked the Committee members for their support.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Lance. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk