

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, March 12, 2014, 6:45 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, Mrs. Price and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Pizzaia and Township Attorney Robert Benbrook. Mr. Lance was absent.

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; Mohican Fire Hall; COAH  
Mr. Anderson made a motion to enter into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

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: March 12, 2014

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

**RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Shoemaker said that the results of the discussion on the COAH issue would be discussed later in the meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each  
No one signed up to speak tonight.

## MINUTES

February 12, 2014 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session Minutes

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

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

### **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**

Mr. Shoemaker said that this ordinance is still under review so the second reading will not take place tonight.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1 – R.2014 – 038            Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2014 – 039            Authorization to Transfer Funds
- 3 – R.2014 – 040            Resolution Agreeing to Certain Conditions Required by the Superior Court of New Jersey, Vicinage XIII, in Regard to the Joint Court of North Warren
- 4 – Approval of Business Directional Sign – Dale’s Antique Clocks, Route 94 and Main Street
- 5 – Approval of (2) Business Directional Signs – Blairstown Barber Shop, Route 94 and Carhart Street; Route 94 and Bridge Street
- 6 – Approval of Business Directional Sign – Barber on Main, Route 94 and Main Street
- 7 – Approval of Application for Membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 – Christopher R. Rossmell
  
- 8 – Approval of Application for Blue Light Permit – John R. Allen, Blairstown Hose Company No. 1

Mr. Anderson requested that Item No. 3 be pulled because it is in conjunction with Ordinance 2014-02 that was tabled. Mrs. Price requested that No. 5 be pulled also. Mayor Shoemaker requested that No. 6 be pulled. Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Item No. 3 has been tabled. In reference to Item No. 5, Mrs. Price explained that the Zoning Officer told her that the barber shop in question has moved. After discussion, Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to refund the \$25.00 sign permit fee to the applicant, which was seconded by Mrs. Price.

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

After a discussion on Item No. 6, it was determined that the approval of this sign would make seven (7) signs on one pole. The Zoning Officer has explained that the Township Committee can approve the

additional sign according to the ordinance. Mr. Avery made a motion to approve No. 6, which was seconded by Mrs. Price.

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

Mrs. Price, as liaison to the Open Space Committee, asked the Committee to approve Susan Gilmore as a member of the Committee. Mr. Avery made a motion to appoint Susan Gilmore to the Open Space Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

#### **INTRODUCTION OF 2014 BUDGET**

R.2014 – 041    Special Items of Revenue – General Capital Fund Balance  
R.2014 – 042    Special Items of Revenue – Grants  
R.2014 – 043    Introduction of 2014 Budget

Mrs. Price made a motion to approve Resolutions 2014 – 041, 2014 – 042, and 2014 – 043. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

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

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

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

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

Mr. Benbrook has spoken with the attorney for SECTV, who indicated that a decision has not been made on whether or not service will be extended on Mt. Hermon Road. There is no time frame on when the draft ordinance will be presented to the Township Committee.

#### **COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE** for information and possible action

1 –     from Molly Petty, regarding Municipal Alliance Grant Application for 2014-15

Molly Petty, Blirstown Elementary School Business Administrator, has indicated that she can no longer complete the necessary paperwork for the Municipal Alliance Grant. Warren County Department of Human Resources has requested a letter indicating that the township is aware that a grant application will not be submitted for the year 2014-15. The Committee agreed to have this letter sent to Syria Geddis.

- 2 – from Martin Grossman, Activities Coordinator, Paulinskill Valley Trail Committee, requesting permission to use Footbridge Park for National Trails Day on June 7<sup>th</sup>

The Committee agreed to grant this request.

- 3 – from Robert A. Pruznick, Executive Director, The Arc of Warren County, re: HFMA Special Needs Housing Partnership, Letter of Intent – Preliminary Commitment to Formalized Memorandum of Understanding

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this project would spend down the bulk of the township's COAH funds. Theresa Tamburro, Municipal Housing Liaison, has been working with Mr. Pruznick to purchase property to establish a group home for developmentally and intellectually challenged adults. With the approval of this MOU, \$105,000.00 of COAH funds will be placed in a special trust for this purpose.

Mrs. Price made a motion to authorize the Mayor to execute the Memorandum of Understanding, contingent upon Mr. Benbrook's review and approval of the final draft. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

#### **GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY**

Mr. Benbrook stated that the only litigation pending is a tax appeal with First Energy. He had nothing further to report.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

The Clerk had nothing to report.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

##### **COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON**

Mr. Anderson said that there is a position of sub-foreman, who would be in charge of the Department of Public Works in the absence of the foreman. Mr. Anderson made a motion to appoint Robert Kise as sub-foreman with a \$1,200.00 increase in salary. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Anderson made a motion to promote Sergeant Stephen Losey to Lieutenant. He has been a sergeant in the Blirstown Police Department since 2005 and has been recommended to this position by

Mr. Gara, Police Director. This promotion will be effective April 1, 2014 and will increase his salary by \$2,850.00. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Anderson requested that the Committee appoint Arthur Thibault as Labor Attorney to negotiate the contract between the township and the Police Department. The current contract expires at the end of 2014. Mr. Thibault quoted a rate of \$165.00 per hour, the same rate he charged during the recent negotiations. Mr. Anderson does not anticipate a great amount of time to be spent on the new contract. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to hire Arthur Thibault as Labor Attorney to negotiate the new police contract, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mr. Anderson stated that the township is required to have a Certified Recycling Coordinator to sign off on the township's tonnage report. He requested that the Committee appoint Richard Mach as the township's CRC at a yearly salary of \$500.00, plus reimbursement for the cost of any courses required for the position. Mr. Mach has acted as Blairstown's CRC for the past several years. Mayor Shoemaker made this motion, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mr. Anderson summarized the February report for the Police Department. He commented that the number of summons were increased this month due to snow conditions on the road. He emphasized that the officers attempted to contact vehicle owners before issuing a summons.

Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Benbrook for any status change on 83 Union Brick Road, a residence with excessive debris on the premises. Mr. Benbrook said that the Warren County Health Department has issued the appropriate summonses and the court has been reluctant to move forward due to the owner's advanced age. Mr. Benbrook will attempt to get an update for the April meeting.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery said that the Environmental Commission is having a clean-up day in April. He asked Mr. Benbrook if there would be a liability issue if the clean-up activities involved citizens as well. Mr. Benbrook said this would be fine as long as they did not operate any power equipment.

The Environmental Commission is looking into solar energy savings at the Municipal Building.

Mr. Avery said that he was not able to receive the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee report due to email difficulties but he will make a report at the April meeting.

The Recreation Department is busy planning spring and summer programs for the residents.

The Water Department is in the process of looking at the possibility of increasing revenue by installing individual meters on multiple unit residences. Mr. Avery is working with Carl Stoddart to schedule a water tower inspection at Blair Academy sometime in the spring.

The Givens Belet building is looking good and will be finished in the spring. The American Legion will be holding a 50/50 raffle at the Fourth of July Celebration and part of the profits will go towards maintaining the building.

Mr. Avery had three visitors at his last open door policy date. He said that one resident asked for assistance in putting salt on a private driveway that abuts township property. Mr. Benbrook said that this would open the township up to many more similar requests.

Another resident suggested the idea of having an economic development group. Mayor Shoemaker said that this idea has been put forth before and he believes there is merit to the idea, as events held on Main Street in the past have proved very successful and brought business to Main Street vendors.

Mr. Avery suggested the idea of having a central calendar where residents could inform the community about what events are planned throughout the township. In an attempt to get information out to the residents, he placed an article in The Press, listing upcoming topics being discussed by the Township Committee. Mr. Avery proposed having a Community Outreach committee to keep residents informed. He also said that plans are underway to improve our website. Mr. Avery would like to organize an advisory committee to review the township ordinances. Several township residents have volunteered to sit on this committee. The Committee agreed to allow Mr. Avery to organize this. Mrs. Price volunteered to help Mr. Avery with this project.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mrs. Price was unable to attend the February Board of Education meeting of the Blairstown Elementary School due to road conditions. She has been in contact with the school superintendent, the principal and the business administrator, as well as the president of the Board of Education.

#### MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker reported that the new ladder truck is in the possession of the hose company.

There was a pre-construction meeting at Sycamore Park for the new playground. Construction will begin on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Linda Ochs, one of the organizers, told Mayor Shoemaker that they are looking for 500 volunteers for the construction. The group would like one or more of the Township Committee members to join them in the construction project.

Mayor Shoemaker and the Recreation Director met with members of the Lacross organization. They are looking for a new playing field and might be coming to the Committee with plans for a new field.

Mayor Shoemaker summarized the February report of Blairstown Hose Company No. 1. They will be training their personnel on the new ladder truck.

#### FROM THE PUBLIC

Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, complimented the Department of Public Works for the outstanding job they have done this winter.

Mrs. Cook reported a dangerous situation at a building next to Nature's Harvest. The column supporting the porch is about to give way. She also said that the county pushes snow up onto the walkway when they plow which is a hazardous situation. She suggested plowing the lot next to the fire house so cars can be parked there.

Christine Beegle of the Historic Preservation Committee spoke about cleaning up downtown Main Street. She said that Benjamin Moore is sponsoring a contest where 20 towns will be selected for refurbishment. She said that a fresh coat of paint will greatly improve the downtown area.

She said that the Historic Preservation Committee is getting the word out about the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Blairstown.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, thanked the Committee for the township update that was in today's issue of The Press.

Mrs. Murray reminded the Committee that the township owns 62 acres of land if they are looking for a new playing field. Mayor Shoemaker said that this is already being considered.

#### **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 voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk