

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, May 14, 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 Attorney Kevin 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 – Possible Purchase of Property; Contract Negotiation

Mr. Avery 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: May 14, 2014

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

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

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Open Space Committee to submit a Green Acres grant application to purchase the Drastal property located on Stony Brook Road. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Benbrook explained that Blaiirstown voted last month to join the Knowlton Court. A formal agreement has been reached and Mr. Benbrook would like a motion to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute this shared services agreement. The major amendments to this final agreement include a revision to revenue distribution to once annually, and a change to the terms of the agreement, which is now a straight five (5) year agreement.

Mr. Anderson made the motion to authorize the execution of this agreement with Knowlton Township, which was seconded by Mr. Avery, contingent upon AOC approval.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Sylvia Zika, Four Corners Road, spoke about a drainage problem on Four Corners Road. She distributed a letter to the Committee, stating that she would like to read the letter during the public portion at the end of the meeting. She stated that her main concern is a public safety hazard caused by water in the roadway.

MINUTES

April 9, 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, Lance, Price, Shoemaker

PROCLAMATION – May 2014 Proclaimed as OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Mayor Shoemaker read the proclamation in full.

ORDINANCE 2014 – 03 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN ENTITLED “WATER” TO ESTABLISH NEW WATER CHARGES

Introduction, First Reading

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2014 – 03 on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

ORDINANCE 2014 – 04 AN ORDINANCE REVISING CHAPTER 29 ENTITLED “HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE”

Introduction, First Reading

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2014 – 04 on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2014 – 062 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2014 – 063 Fixing the Salaries and Wages of Officials, Appointees and Employees
- 3 – R.2014 – 064 In Support of Fireworks Display Held by Blairstown Rotary Club
- 4 – R.2014 – 065 Authorizing Mayor to Sign Shared Services Agreement with Town of Belvidere for Services of Chief Financial Officer
- 5 – R.2014 – 066 2013 Audit Review

Mr. Benbrook said that the Committee was in favor of tabling Item No. 5, R.2014-066. Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve Items No. 1 through 4, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – April Report
- Finance – April Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – April Report
- Police Department – April Report
- Tax Collector – April Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – March Report
- Warren County Health Department – April 11, 2014

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

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

Mrs. Price stated that she would like Mr. Benbrook to follow up on the issue at 83 Union Brick Road. Mayor Shoemaker agreed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

Mr. Benbrook said that his office has not received a draft ordinance.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

None.

Mayor Shoemaker said that Rebecca Seamon, representing the Dog Park group, will be attending a future meeting to speak about the construction of a small pavilion at that site in Sycamore Park.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There were no comments on the General Correspondence.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that with regard to the issue at 83 Union Brick Road, the Warren County Health Department has indicated that a summons will be issued to the property owner's son.

Mr. Benbrook said that the Blirstown Ambulance Corps needs a subordination document signed by the township in order to secure a loan by Lakeland Bank. Mr. Benbrook has reviewed the document and is recommending that the Mayor execute this subordination agreement.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the subordination agreement with Lakeland Bank and the Ambulance Corps, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Mr. Benbrook said that his office is working on litigation involving a previous employee. Mr. Benbrook said there is an insurance coverage issue. Mr. Benbrook will keep the Committee apprised of any action on this issue.

Mr. Benbrook said that his office is in receipt of a draft agreement between Blirstown Township and the North Warren Regional High School for police services. Mr. Anderson said that he and Mr. Lance will continue to work with the school on the specifics of this agreement.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman had nothing to report, other than he has been looking at some drainage problems.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson summarized the monthly Police Department report for April. The new officer is in training and is doing well. With the new officer in place, overtime costs should be greatly reduced.

Mr. Anderson commended the volunteers involved in the construction of the playground at Sycamore Park for their hard work and community spirit.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Advisory Council of the Warren County Division of Aging and the Warren County Freeholders will be holding a free luncheon for seniors on May 29th at the Knowlton Lions Club building. Blirstown will be receiving an award for supporting our senior citizens. Mr. Avery plans on attending.

The Township Committee update was published in today's edition of *The Press*.

The cosmetic improvements to the Givens Belet building continue to progress.

The Environmental Commission has postponed their cleanup until sometime in the fall.

The preparations for the Fourth of July celebration are progressing.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that capital projects need to be completed this year, and to pay for these improvements, the Committee has the option to float a note and pay it off in three years. There are eight (8) projects that are being considered, mostly road projects, the cost of which will be approximately \$877,000.00. The Police Department has requested a new vehicle, which is included in this amount.

The Historic Preservation Committee continues to work on the signage being placed around town. All signs on Main Street should be in place by the Fourth of July.

Mr. Lance reported that he, Mr. Avery and Mrs. Price took a tour of sites where dams have been removed. Mr. Lance said that after reviewing these sites, he is more on board with removing the Paulina Lake Dam.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mrs. Price thought that the tour of the dam sites was excellent. She was pleased with the way the sites looked after removal.

Mrs. Price attended the last Blirstown Elementary School Board of Education meeting. She plans on taking a tour of the school in the near future.

The Open Space Committee talked about the preservation projects being worked on, including the Drastal project application approved by the Township Committee tonight.

The committee reviewing the township code met recently for the second time, and they are progressing nicely.

With regard to COAH, we are still waiting for the corrected MOU, indicating the 80/20 percent figures discussed by the Township Committee. Mrs. Price and Theresa Tamburro, MHL, will be taking a webinar on June 4th regarding COAH.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker said that road improvements have been put off over the past few years due to budgetary reasons and now must be addressed. Road repairs and guiderail replacements are imperative. In addition, catch basins and road safety issues are being looked at.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that in 2011, Blirstown Hose Company No. 1 was included in our insurance coverage in order to get a reduced rate. This cost of the insurance was to be reimbursed to the township, but it appears that we never collected. Mayor Shoemaker said the CFO is working on the amount due to the township.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that Blirstown Hose Company No. 1 is having their 125th anniversary celebration on August 23rd.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Sylvia Zika, Four Corners Road, read in full the letter she presented to the Committee members earlier this evening. This letter is attached to the minutes. Ms. Zika stated that her primary concern is about the public safety hazard caused by the drainage problem on Four Corners Road. She asked that the Committee expedite repairs to the road in order to alleviate the dangerous situation.

Mayor Shoemaker responded by stating that the safety of Blirstown's residents is paramount to the entire Committee. Mayor Shoemaker also said that he, the Municipal Engineer and the DPW Foreman have visited the site in question to ascertain what can be done. Since Ms. Zika alludes to legal action in her correspondence, Mayor Shoemaker asked Mr. Benbrook to respond to any further comments.

Mr. Benbrook replied to Ms. Zika that it is not the Committee's role to become involved in disputes between private property owners. However, Mr. Benbrook will advise the Committee, if requested, on any legal aspects which may arise from this situation.

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, with all members in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk