

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, October 8, 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.

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 letter she recently presented to the Committee, requesting a reduction in her water bill. She told the Committee she is hoping for a fair resolution to this problem.

Kathy Ulrichny, Mingle Road, and Sheila Rosco, township resident, spoke about the Recreation program. They said they are representing people who participate in the township sponsored Zumba program. They complimented Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, for the program and said they hope the program continues to be offered. Mayor Shoemaker said that it was suggested at the September meeting that the Committee consider dropping programs that are similar to those being run commercially, but this was only a suggestion and the Committee took no action on this.

William Baldwin, Deer Run, spoke about reimbursements to private roads for snow removal. Mr. Baldwin questioned why salt cost was not made a component of the formula to reimburse the private homeowner associations. Mr. Anderson answered that the township will be looking into adding salt cost into the formula sometime in the near future. Mr. Baldwin asked if this would be retroactive. Mr. Anderson replied that it would not be, but he is hoping the new formula could be in place by next year.

Jackie Espinoza, representative of JCP&L, informed the audience about a telephone scam, where customers are told that power will be discontinued if monies are not immediately paid. Ms. Espinoza asked anyone who receives a call of this nature to inform the police.

Mayor Shoemaker read a letter from Frank Golick, Eagle Scout, asking the Committee for permission to run a "Fill the Trailer" event on November 16th at the parking lot used by the farmers' market. Troop 2010 would like to make this an annual event. Mayor Shoemaker asked Mr. Golick to come forward to speak about the project.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Lance. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Lance introduced members of Troop 1040, who were in the audience tonight as a requirement of earning their citizen and community badge.

## **MINUTES**

September 10, 2014 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1 – R.2014 – 121            Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2014 – 122            Cancellation of Lien on Property
- 3 – R.2014 – 123            Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2013-010
- 4 – R.2014 – 124            Award of Contract to Schifano Construction for Road Resurfacing of Sand Hill Road
- 5 – R.2014 – 125            Award of Contract to Denville Line Striping for Line Striping of Sand Hill Road

Mr. Lance 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 – September Report
- Finance – September Finance and Fuel Reports
- Police Department – September Report
- Tax Collector – September Report
- Zoning Official – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Reports
- Municipal Court of North Warren – August Report
- Warren County Health Department – September 8, 2014

Mayor Shoemaker 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

The Committee was in agreement to take this item off of the Unfinished Business list.

Mr. Benbrook said that he will follow up on this item to ascertain if Service Electric Cable TV is close to presenting an ordinance to the Committee.

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

- 1 – Best Practices Worksheet

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the Best Practices Worksheet is completed and submitted to the State on an annual basis. Mr. Lance said that the worksheet can impact receiving state aid. Mr. Lance said that Blairstown scored 92% so no state aid will be lost.

2 – from Kelly Golick, with reference to Boy Scout Troop 2010 holding a “Fill the Trailer” event on November 16<sup>th</sup>

This was addressed earlier in the meeting.

3 – from Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, re: Request from North Warren Football

Mayor Shoemaker explained that North Warren Football is requesting to run a line from the electrical panel to the press box so they do not have to use a generator. North Warren Football will pay all expenses. Mayor Shoemaker said that he has no objections as long as the line is run around the newly refurbished football field. Mr. Anderson added that the Zoning Officer reported that the press box is currently on top of a shipping container. This was reported to the Zoning Official as a safety hazard. The Committee held off making a decision until this issue is rectified.

Mrs. Price spoke about the recreation issue addressed earlier during the public portion. Mrs. Price explained her operating principles since being on the Committee and her reasoning behind her comments at last month's meeting. She said that her suggestion regarding the duplication of recreation and commercial programs was simply to ask questions in order to promote dialog amongst Committee members.

#### **GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

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

Mr. Benbrook stated that he has reviewed the one bid received on the Sandhill Road project and said that it is compliant with the law.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the award of the Sandhill Road contract to E.J. Breneman, LP, contingent upon receipt of the affirmative action statement, at the total bid price of \$234,425.00. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Price.

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

Mr. Benbrook reported on the progress made towards the township's move to the Knowlton Shared Court as of January, 2015. The approval by the AOC was contingent upon on-site inspections. The inspection took place at a time when the court was doubled up on its case load, which raised a flag with the AOC. Mr. Benbrook wrote a letter to the acting director explaining the situation and expressing confidence that Knowlton can rectify any problems by January, 2015. Mr. Benbrook is optimistic that the move will go on as planned.

Mayor Shoemaker asked Mr. Benbrook about continuing certificates of occupancy for rental units. Robert Benbrook was of the opinion that these were not allowed by law. Mr. Benbrook will research this matter and look for sample ordinances, if available.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

The Clerk reminded property owners that the town-wide cleanup is scheduled for October 24th and 25th and that vouchers can be obtained at the Municipal Building beginning on October 14th.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON**

Mr. Anderson reported that he met with Director Gara, Lt. Losey, and North Warren Regional High School Superintendent Brian Fogelson regarding the special resource officers to be placed in the high school. Officers John Glinko and Edward White have been hired as the Special Resource Officers. One more officer will be hired in the near future.

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Report for the month of September.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY**

Mr. Avery reported that groups are currently able to meet at the Givens Belet building. Plans are being made to paint the interior.

The ordinance review group is continuing their work.

Mr. Avery's open door meeting took place last Saturday and four people came to speak with him.

Mr. Avery spoke with Nick Mohr about improving the sound quality in the meeting room, and Mr. Mohr has some ideas on making improvements to the speakers.

Mr. Avery has been working on the economic development project to which he has been assigned. A group meets on Fridays and they are currently working on a presentation aimed at encouraging recruits to assist in the project.

Mr. Avery reported that the water tower has been inspected and has passed inspection. Another inspection has been recommended in five years.

The Environmental Commission is working on getting permission from the State to maintain the Jones Farm property. Harry Price, Environmental Commission Chair, came forward to speak about this. A farmer approached Mr. Price about cutting hay on the upper 15 acres. The Open Space Committee members and the Recreation Director are in favor of this. The NJ DEP, Parks and Recreation, have no objection to this. A representative in the NJDEP suggested a memorandum between the State and Blairstown, giving the township control over the property. Mr. Price would like permission to go forward with this so the weeds can be controlled this year. Mayor Shoemaker said that there is no harm in having a memorandum written for Committee review. The rest of the Committee was in agreement to allow Mr. Price to move forward with obtaining a memorandum from the State for Committee review.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE**

Mr. Lance said that John Kerkendall has requested to lease the tillable acres of the Gorab property, as he has for many years. He has requested a 2-year lease in order to reap the benefit of putting down lime next year. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve a 2-year lease with Mr. Kerkendall to farm the Gorab property for a fee of \$2,500 per year. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance announced that the township collected another \$398.00 from a former committeeman who was ordered to pay restitution for misappropriation of township funds.

The Historic Preservation Committee is almost finished with the placement of the walking tour signage. They are working on pamphlets detailing the walking tour stops. The members have also been making presentations to various groups. The Historic Preservation Committee is actively seeking new members.

Mr. Lance said that a house across the street from the Township Water Department will soon be on the market and he suggested that the Committee look into the feasibility of locating a second well on this property.

Mr. Lance reported that Aqua NJ is possibly interested in purchasing the Water Department. There was a preliminary meeting with the company's representatives. Mr. Lance said that a public referendum ballot question would be required in order to sell the Water Department.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mrs. Price said that she has done research on the finances of the Water Department and said that \$37,000 of the yearly expenses is paid through the Current Fund. She asked if the Committee wanted to rectify this or wished to keep it that way. She said that the new ordinance does not cover the costs of the Water Department. There was a discussion on per 1,000 gallon rate vs. usage charge to break even and cover the total expenses of the Water Department. Mr. Lance said that the Department has been subsidized since the township took it over. Mr. Avery gave figures on various scenarios that would bring the total revenue to break even status, which would raise the per 1,000 gallon rate. Mrs. Price presented scenarios that would build in funding for capital improvements. Mayor Shoemaker announced that the new billing rates will begin on November 1st.

With regard to COAH, Mrs. Price said that after working with Township Attorney Robert Benbrook, there is an amended MOU and a cover letter that should protect the Township. There is a corresponding resolution that authorizes the placement of \$105,000.00 in a dedicated account for the COAH group home. Mrs. Price made a motion to approve this resolution, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Mrs. Price said that Darlene Green advised that the Township get assurances in writing from The Arc that all requirements for the group home will be met and that the Township will receive its four credits.

Mrs. Price said that there are two COAH accounts and is proposing that they be combined into one account. She said that the two separate accounts caused incorrect reporting to COAH for 2012 and 2013. Mrs. Price made a motion to close the dedicated trust account in order to join both accounts. After discussion, it was the consensus of opinion to consult with Theresa Tamburro, Municipal Housing Liaison, for her input on this before proceeding.

Mrs. Price said there was a meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup> regarding sewers. The focus has been on the possibility of a joint project with Blair Academy. Blair is interested in pursuing this. Mr. Rodman reported that he met with representatives from Blair Academy and said that they are interested in a joint sewer system involving the Village area and Blairstown Elementary School. Mr. Rodman has prepared a draft letter to two engineering companies for proposals on obtaining a feasibility study. Mr. Rodman said that there is no commitment on the Township's part. After discussion, the Committee was in agreement to authorize Mr. Rodman to move forward with the solicitation of proposals.

## MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker reported that Knowlton Township is interested in having a shared services agreement for a Zoning Official. Mayor Shoemaker would like to approach Knowlton with a proposal to pay Blairstown \$13,350 a year for Mr. Diehl's services, with the Township keeping 25%. The Committee is in favor of having Mayor Shoemaker follow through on this.

Mayor Shoemaker said that the Christmas lights on Main Street are broken and in bad repair and he is proposing replacing them. He would like to purchase six new decorations for a total cost of \$2,208.00. This would come from the DPW budget. The Committee members had no objection to this expenditure.

Mayor Shoemaker discussed a change in the Halloween Parade route, which would by-pass Main Street, thereby not requiring permission from the County to close Main Street. The Police Department would require two officers on duty during the parade. The Committee members agreed to this change.

Mayor Shoemaker said that he is in receipt of a resolution from the DEP regarding the removal of the Paulina Lake Dam. Basically, this resolution states that Blairstown Township agrees to remove the dam if grant monies become available for the cost of removal. Mr. Benbrook advised that this resolution does not bind the township to removing the dam if funding does not become available. He said that the DEP is spending \$250,000 to obtain design specifications and permits, and would like assurance in writing that the Township will remove the dam if funding is made available within the next two years.

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

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

Mayor Shoemaker distributed letters he received from various residents and participants in the Recreation programs, expressing their satisfaction with the currently run programs. These letters came in response to the remark at last month's meeting that the Recreation Department was running programs in competition with the business community and thereby potentially harming these businesses. Mayor Shoemaker asked the Committee members if, in fact, they support the Recreation Department's programs as currently being offered and support the Recreation Director. Mr. Avery, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Lance expressed their support of the programs as well as the Recreation Director.

Mrs. Price said that the residents of Frog Pond Road have requested additional speed limit signs going up the hill. Mayor Shoemaker said that he looked at this recently with the DPW Foreman.

## FROM THE PUBLIC

Syvia Zika, Four Corners Road, spoke about the possible sale of the Water Department to Aqua NJ. Mrs. Zika read an article in the New Jersey Herald that spoke against the sale of Sussex Borough's Water Company to Aqua NJ. Mrs. Zika is of the opinion that the Committee members do not have the qualifications to make a proper decision on selling the Water Department. She is also concerned that water rates and customer service would be greatly affected by privatization of the Water Department.

Beth Arena, High Street, asked Mr. Avery if his economic development project included the Village area. Mr. Avery responded that it is. Mrs. Arena asked if she could participate in the group working on this project. Mrs. Arena was told that her participation would be welcome.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, objected to the farming of the Gorab property. She said that the intent of purchasing this property was to construct a park and recreation facilities. Mr. Lance said that the

farming actually benefits the land, otherwise it would end up looking like the Jones Farm. Mrs. Price said that in reviewing the Open Space ordinance, there was a provision that allows for this usage if said use contributes to or benefits the land.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Lance, with all members in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk