

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, January 12, 2011, 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

OPENING; ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mach. Those present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lance, Mr. Lascari and Mayor Mach. Also present were Clerk Pizzaia and Township Attorney Robert Benbrook. Mr. Seal was absent.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was conducted.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Mayor Mach 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

Josh Bryant, Hardwick Township, made a presentation on his proposed Eagle Scout project. He distributed his proposal for the installation of a 25 foot fiberglass flagpole at Sycamore Park. The flagpole will be illuminated by solar power. Mr. Bryant hopes to begin the project in March and have it completed in April. Mr. Lascari suggested having a formal flag ceremony upon completion. Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve the project proposed by Josh Bryant, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT – Seal

MINUTES

December 8, 2010 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session (Mr. Anderson absent)

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the December 8th Regular and Closed session minutes, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

Roll call vote: AYE – Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSTAIN – Anderson
 ABSENT - Seal

January 5, 2011 Reorganization Meeting (Mr. Seal absent)

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the January 5th Reorganization Meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

Roll call vote: AYE- Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT - Seal

Public Comment on the Consent Agenda Items Only

There were no comments or questions from the public on the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2011-020 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2011-021 Authorization to Release Certain Performance Guarantees and Escrows
- 3 – R.2011-022 Contracting for Professional Services without Competitive Bidding in Accordance with Local Public Contract Law – Bond Counsel
- 4 – R.2011-023 Reappointment of Barbara Emery as Chief Financial Officer
- 5 – Application for Blue Light Permit – Laura Bolcar, Blairstown Ambulance Corps

Mayor Mach made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT – Seal

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – December Report
Finance – December Report
Police Department – December Report
Public Works Department – December Fuel Report
Tax Collector – December Report
Zoning Official – 4th Quarter 2010 Report
Warren County Health Department – December 10, 2010

Mayor Mach made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson, with all members in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Route 94 traffic concerns – Electrical review at NJ DOT
Mr. Lascari has been in contact with the State and expressed our urgency regarding the left hand turn. Mr. Lascari spoke with Senator Michael Doherty, who said that his office will follow up on this on our behalf.
- 2 – JCP&L billing – Mr. Lascari has compiled list of poles
Mr. Lascari said that during February, a formal request to JCP&L will be made for the disconnection of approximately 40 lights, which he estimates will save about \$500.00.
- 3 – Main Street concerns – road striping; feral cats; sidewalks
No report.
- 4 – Review of Noise Control Ordinance – draft “Peace and Good Order” Ordinance
No report.
- 5 – Cedar Lake Horse Farm – RFP results under review
There has been no change on this topic.

- 6 – Service Electric Cable TV – extension of cable service
Both Frelinghuysen and Hope Townships are interested in joining with Blirstown towards a more favorable franchise agreement. This will be discussed later in the meeting.
- 7 – Hazardous Obstructions at Blirstown Airport
No report.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Christopher J. Pessolano, Warren County Purchasing Department, regarding award of contract to Viridian Energy to serve as third party energy provider for Warren County

Mayor Mach explained that the County put out an RFP for alternate suppliers of energy. Out of six responses, Viridian was the best offer. Mayor Mach said that the presentation given by Monika Hamburger, an agent for Viridian, showed that the township can save about four (4) to five (5) percent on seven (7) of our meters. The total annual savings would be around \$1,400.00. Mayor Mach made a motion to switch the seven (7) meters over to Viridian through Monika Hamburger, and pending review of the contract by Mr. Benbrook. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT – Seal

- 2 – from Frelinghuysen Township, re: Shared Services/Cable Television Franchise Attorney

Frelinghuysen Township would like us to share in the cost of an attorney to attend a joint meeting with other municipalities regarding the cable television franchise. The Committee had questions on who the attorney would be and the attorney's fees. Mr. Lascari said that he will contact Frelinghuysen for more information on this.

- 3 – from Hope Township, re: Cable Television Renewal
This communication from Tim McDonough, Mayor of Hope, asking the municipalities for a list of items they would like brought up during cable television renewal meetings. Mr. Lascari will work on this.

- 4 – from Frelinghuysen Township Recreation Department, regarding reimbursement of sports program expenses; response from Patricia Sagan, Blirstown Recreation Director

Mr. Lascari explained that the Frelinghuysen Township now has ball fields available to their residents. For this reason, they are not as interested in paying Blirstown for field usage as they used to be. The Committee discussed different options, such as a flat fee for field usage. Mr. Lascari said that the current ordinance should be looked at and it may need to be amended. Mr. Lascari suggested that a letter be sent to Mr. Marra and Mr. Kimball stating that the Committee will take this matter under advisement and will be discussed further at a future meeting. The entire Committee was in agreement with this. It was also suggested that this be brought up at the next Mayors' Meeting.

- 5 – from Kenneth Chermak, regarding dangerous condition on East Crisman Road
Mr. Chermak cited a dangerous situation on East Crisman Road. Mr. Lance said that the County owns the bridge. After discussion, the Committee agreed to have the Department of Public Works look at the signage and recommend whether any action should be taken. The Clerk will respond to Mr. Chermak regarding this matter.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no comments or questions from the public regarding the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook recommended to the Committee that special counsel be hired for the purpose of negotiating the new Police contract. Mr. Benbrook recommended appointing Arthur Thibault, who has agreed to the same hourly rate currently paid to Mr. Benbrook.

Mr. Lance made a motion to hire Arthur Thibault as special counsel for the purpose of negotiating the Police Department contract, at the current litigation rate paid to Mr. Benbrook. Mr. Thibault will work under the direction of Mr. Benbrook. The motion was seconded by Mayor Mach.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT – Seal

Mr. Benbrook informed the Committee that Paul Zdrodowski's case is scheduled to be heard on February 14, 2011. He also said that the Commission on Unfunded Mandates has accepted Blairstown's petition regarding police department hours of operation.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report. Mayor Mach asked if the substitute crossing guard position has been advertised. Clerk Pizzaia said that the position was advertised and two applications were received. These applications were forwarded to the Police Department.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson said that the Police contract negotiations are ongoing. He summarized the December Police Report. Mr. Anderson said that the department was doing a good job even though they have been shorthanded.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to formally discharge Thomas Krisak as Police Director. Mr. Krisak has decided not to return to work for personal reasons. The Committee was in agreement that Mr. Krisak was an asset to the township. Mr. Lascari seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT – Seal

Mr. Anderson said that he feels that the position of director is necessary for proper leadership in the Police Department. Mr. Anderson made a motion to hire Robert Gara as Police Director. Mr. Gara is a retired police chief. Mr. Anderson feels that Mr. Gara is the right candidate due to his strong police background. The position will be three days per week, at \$51,000.00 per year, six (6)

vacation days a year, and use of a township vehicle. The hiring date is February 1, 2011, and the position would be at will, with a 60 day termination agreement. Mr. Benbrook will provide a contract with the conditions as discussed. Mr. Lascari seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT – Seal

Mr. Anderson said that there have been issues in the past with spending with the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Anderson made a motion to change the Historic Preservation Commission back to a Committee. Mr. Benbrook said that this entity was made a commission by ordinance and will have to be changed back by ordinance. Mr. Anderson revised his motion to instruct Mr. Benbrook to draft an ordinance to change this commission back into a committee. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Mach
 ABSTAIN – Lascari
 ABSENT – Seal

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that the first budget meeting will be held on Friday, January 14th. In budget saving measures, employees have been cut by 25 percent over the past five years. In addition, \$448,086 has been cut from the budget in the last five years.

The Department of Public Works employees dealt with the water pump malfunction at the Water Department last week. Everything is running well now. Mr. Lance also commented that the DPW did a good job during yesterday's snow storm.

COMMITTEEMAN LASCARI

The new fire tanker has been outfitted. The fire department is very pleased with the truck. Mr. Lascari announced that in October of 2010, the NJ State Parks and Forestry Division awarded Blairstown Fire Company No. 1 a grant in the amount of \$4,500.00. Mr. Lascari said that the money will be used for gear and other equipment.

Mr. Lascari said that the position of assistant fire chief is currently a non-compensated position. Mr. Lascari would like this changed, but by redistributing the amount currently paid by the township to the compensated fire department positions. This new paid position will need to be placed into the salary ordinance.

Mr. Lascari said that the chair of the Historic Preservation Commission would like to comment on the recent report received on the Paulina Dam. Mr. Lascari explained to Mrs. Parisi that the correct procedure is to put the Commission's concerns in writing and to forward this correspondence to the Committee through the Clerk. The Township Committee will then present these concerns to McCabe, who conducted the research and presented the report.

Mr. Lascari read a letter of resignation from Thomas DePuy, an employee of the Department of Public Works, after 21 years of employment with the township. Mr. Lascari made a motion to accept this resignation, with regrets. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Mach
 ABSENT – Seal

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach told the audience that Mr. Seal recently underwent surgery. He is currently recuperating at Barn Hill in Newton.

Mayor Mach said that despite a few complaints, the Department of Public Works employees have done a fine job of snow removal, especially since they have been shorthanded.

Mayor Mach said that the County will be finishing the road work on Bridge Street. They will also be working on Blair Place sometime in the spring. The engineering work is completed.

With regard to the Best Practices Checklist, there were two items that we were allowed to check off if the Committee agreed to take care of them this year. One item is an attendance policy for government entities. Mayor Mach will draft this and distribute for Committee approval. The other item is the posting of RFP's on our township website. This will be forwarded to the township's webmaster.

Mayor Mach said that Hardwick had indicated a desire to share tax collector services with Blairstown. Mr. Lance said that our tax collector is not interested in doing this. Mayor Mach will relay this to Hardwick Township.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Ron and Silvanna Petersen, Blairstown Inn owners, spoke about a problem they have been experiencing with an adjoining property owner. This neighbor dug too close to the footing of their building. Mr. and Mrs. Peterson tried to talk to the Construction Department, which is the Department of Community Affairs, and they have issues with their responsiveness. The inspector at the DCA did not show up for one appointment, and then told Mr. and Mrs. Petersen that he would not come out to the site. Mr. Petersen expressed his frustration at the Construction Department's lack of concern for his situation. Mr. Anderson said that he will speak to the Pat Doddy of the DCA and find out why they would not assist the Petersens.

Rosalie Murray, Cobblewood Road, spoke about her concern about fracturing for gas along the Delaware River region. She read that waste from fracturing in Pennsylvania is being dumped into the Delaware. She is very concerned about health and environmental issues associated with this practice and she would like the Committee to consider passing an ordinance or writing a letter expressing the township's disapproval of this practice.

Herman Shoemaker, Bingham Lane, said that snow removal on Main Street went smoothly during the last storm. He also said that the feral cat problem is once again an issue on Main Street. Mr. Lascari is in favor of contacting the man who is feeding the cats to explain that he is responsible for the cats, by law, if he continues to feed them. Mr. Lascari asked Mr. Shoemaker to contact him with further information.

Paul Avery, Mohican Road, chair of the Fourth of July Celebration Committee, said that plans are progressing for this year's festivities. He has contacted the various branches of the Armed Forces,

who will be attending. He is in the progress of setting up a bank account, and a website is now operational. He also said that Blair Academy has been very helpful and will be participating in the event. Mr. Avery, Mr. Shoemaker, and Mr. Lance will meet with the CFO on Friday morning to discuss financial arrangements for the Celebration Committee.

Mary Flynn, Conrad Court, asked if the Committee was in favor of passing a resolution regarding the fracting situation discussed by Mrs. Murray. Mr. Lance said that the township has no power to stop any activity being done in Pennsylvania.

Wickliffe Mott, Lambert Road, said that the Shade Tree Committee held their reorganization meeting. A topic of discussion was the parking lot that was used by the Farmers' Market last year. The Shade Tree Committee would like to plant a buffer around the lot and wondered if there was money remaining from the Toll Brothers account. Mayor Mach said that this money has been earmarked for the learning garden at the Blairstown Elementary School.

Mr. Mott also remarked that he looked at the township's website and was surprised at how much information it contained.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari, with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk