

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, May 11, 2011, 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 by Mayor Mach. Those present were Mayor Mach, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lance, Mr. Lascari, and Mr. Seal. Also present were Township Attorney Robert Benbrook and Clerk Pizzaia.

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.

CLOSED SESSION – Personnel/Recreation; Contracts; Possible Acquisition of Land

Mr. Seal made a motion to enter into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Lance, with all members voting in favor.

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 matters 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 11, 2011

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Lascari made a motion to come out of closed session, which was seconded by Mr. Lance, with all members voting in favor.

Joel McGreen appeared in Closed Session to request permission to have two appraisals for the Race Farm property. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve up to \$7,000.00 for the appraisals of the Race Farm property. Mayor Mach seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Anderson explained that the Recreation Department hours were discussed in Closed Session. Due to budgetary constraints, Mr. Anderson made a motion to reduce the Recreation Director from three (3) days per week to two (2) days per week commencing on August 1, 2011, with all operating costs coming from the Recreation dedicated trust. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Arthur Duchek, Shotwell Road, gave a report on the upcoming circus he is organizing. Mr. Duchek has distributed posters announcing the dates and times of the shows. The circus will have two shows on June 11th at 5pm and 7pm and two shows on June 12th at 2pm and 4pm. Twenty percent of the proceeds will be given to the fire department and first aid squad.

Andrew Lagomarsino, Artist View Lane, spoke about snow plowing reimbursement for Artist View Lane. He objects to the amount being reimbursed and wants the township to plow the road. Mayor Mach reiterated to Mr. Lagomarsino that he should take this matter up with his homeowners association, as the township is fully in compliance with state statute.

Keith Stires, Jacksonburg Road, asked the Committee if a skate park is being planned for location behind the municipal building. Mayor Mach answered that the Skate Park Committee is insisting on Footbridge Park as the location and has refused location behind this building.

MINUTES

April 13, 2011 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session

April 13, 2011 – Special Meeting

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve all minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

RESOLUTION NO. 2011 – 058 Older Americans Month

Mayor Mach read the resolution in its entirety. Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve Resolution 2011 – 058, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. The Committee acknowledged the many contributions of the seniors of the township.

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

PROCLAMATION – Proclaiming May as Older Americans Month

Mayor Mach read the Proclamation in its entirety. Certificates of appreciation were awarded to Gladys Bellott, David Shotwell, Susan Lothian, Paul Chipko, Bob Brandt, Joanne Van Valkenburg, Fred Cook, and Carol Konya.

ORDINANCE NO. 2011 – 02 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING CHAPTER 29 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN ENTITLED “HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION” TO PROVIDE FOR A NEW CHAPTER 29 ENTITLED “HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE”

Introduction, First Reading

Committee Discussion

Mr. Lance explained that this ordinance is being introduced in order to have better control over the spending of this entity. He feels that there have been problems with their spending in the past. Mr. Seal feels that it would be more productive to correct their mistakes rather than change the commission back to a committee. He said that it is his understanding that they are eligible for grants that will not be available to a committee. Mr. Lance said that the commission only applied for one grant and that grants have virtually disappeared in the present economic climate. Both Mr. Anderson and Mayor Mach spoke in favor of changing the entity to a committee. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2011 – 02 on first reading, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2011 – 03 AN AMENDED ORDINANCE “FIXING THE SALARIES AND WAGES OF THE OFFICIALS, APPOINTEES AND EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY” BY SALARY RANGE

Introduction, First Reading

Committee Discussion

Mr. Lascari explained that the position of Assistant Fire Chief has been added to the ordinance. It had been omitted in the past due to an oversight. Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve Ordinance 2011 – 03 on first reading, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

ADOPTION OF 2011 BUDGET

R.2011-059 Resolution Authorizing Budget to be Read by Title Only

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2011 – 059, which was seconded by Mr. Seal.

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

PUBLIC HEARING – Copies of the budget have been made available to the public requesting same and a copy has been filed with the library as well as the Synopsis being published in the New Jersey Herald on April 29, 2011.

Open/Close

Mr. Lance explained that the preparation of this year's budget was very difficult and will be worse next year. He said that it is almost certain that a municipal tax will have to be instituted next year. Mayor Mach explained that the 2005 budget totaled \$5.38 million and this year's budget is \$4.215 million, which is a \$1.16 million reduction.

Mayor Mach opened the Public Hearing to the public. Anita Ardia, Dry Road, thanked the Committee for their efforts in keeping spending down. She asked what the surplus was, and Mr. Lance responded that it is completely depleted. Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, also complimented the Committee on its hard work. She suggested opening the budget meetings to the public in the future. As there were no further questions or comments from the public, the Public Hearing was closed.

R.2011-060 Resolution of Self-Examination of 2011 Budget

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2011 – 060, which was seconded by Mr. Seal.

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

FINAL ADOPTION OF 2011 BUDGET

Mr. Lance made a motion to adopt the 2011 budget on second reading, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

Public Comment on the Consent Agenda Items Only

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2011-061** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2011-062** Authorization to Release Escrow Monies
- 3 – R.2011-063** Adoption of Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

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

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – April Report
- Finance – April Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – February and March Reports
- Police Department – April Report
- Tax Collector – April Report
- Zoning Official – 1st Quarter, 2011 Report

A motion was made by Mr. Anderson to accept the reports, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. The Committee would like the Clerk to remind the Animal Control Officer that quarterly reports are required.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Route 94 traffic concerns – Electrical review at NJ DOT
Mr. Lascari reported that the signals are installed but are not yet operational. He will request that this project be completed by graduation.
- 2 – JCP&L billing – Mr. Lascari has compiled list of poles
Mr. Lascari will have this prepared for the June meeting.
- 3 – Main Street concerns – road striping; feral cats; sidewalks
- 4 – Review of Noise Control Ordinance – draft “Peace and Good Order” Ordinance
- 5 – Cedar Lake Horse Farm – RFP results under review

Mayor Mach said that Cindy Randazzo of the DEP indicated that she will try to make progress on this item.

- 6 – Service Electric Cable TV – extension of cable service
Mr. Lascari has been working on this and will have this information for the June meeting.
- 7 – Hazardous Obstructions at Blairstown Airport
Mr. Seal reported that there has been no progress made on this item. We are still waiting for the State to supply a map of the area.
- 8 – Snow Removal on Main Street – Mayor Mach to draft amended ordinance
Mayor Mach will work on this and hopes to have the draft ready for the June meeting.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Susan E. Payne, Executive Director, State Agriculture Development Committee, re: Municipal Planning Incentive Grant, Individual Farm Application Green Light Review, Race Farm
This item is in connection with the appraisals that were approved earlier in the meeting.
- 2 – from James P. Fox, Morris, Downing & Sherred, LLP, re: North Warren Board of Education; request for waiver of application and escrow fees
After discussion, the Committee agreed to waive the application fee only, with the stipulation that this waiver does not in any way endorse the merits of the application. Mr.

Lascari made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Lance. The Clerk will send a letter to Mr. Fox regarding the waiver.

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

- 3 – from Herman Shoemaker, Planning Board Chair, re: Ordinance Change – Land Use Application Check List

Mr. Shoemaker explained that this is being requested because there have been times when the applicant has not paid taxes on the day that the application is being heard. On occasion, this has been the only matter to be discussed on the agenda, and the meeting would have been cancelled if it had been known that the taxes were not up to date. When meetings are held unnecessarily, professional fees are incurred.

This matter was discussed and Mr. Benbrook said that other townships require that a tax certification be provided a certain amount of time before the application is heard. Mr. Benbrook also indicated that this change would have to be made by an amendment to the land use ordinance. Mr. Benbrook will draft an amendment to the land use ordinance to require that a certification is presented by the applicant at the time of application.

- 4 – from Debra Waldron, Zoning Board Chair, regarding Zoning Board reappointment
This will be carried over to the June meeting.

- 5 – from Robert DePuy, Dept. of Public Works Supervisor, re: American Legion Hall Repairs
The Committee discussed the many repairs that are needed at the Givens Belet building. Bob DePuy has prepared a list of repairs that are needed, but the cost of these repairs is unknown. Mr. Seal said that an estimate was received a couple of years ago on the septic alone for \$33,000.00. The building has mold and flooding problems.

After discussion, it was decided that Bob DePuy and Mr. Seal will work on determining approximate costs for the repairs on the list. Mr. Lascari also offered to speak with the Blairstown Hose Company to let the American Legion use the fire hall in the event the legion hall is out of commission and cannot be used. Mr. Lascari will speak to the members of the hose company during one of their meetings.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no comments or questions from the public on the General Correspondence list. Mayor Mach commented that there is a resolution passed by Hardwick Township in opposition to the COAH reform bill A-3477.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that Oxford Township is interested in having a shared services agreement with Blairstown for the Chief Financial Officer. He suggested that a member of the Committee be appointed to speak with the mayor of Oxford regarding this matter. Mr. Lance said he would be the liaison for this.

With regard to the grievance filed by Officer Bee, Mr. Benbrook said that Officer Bee was given seven (7) days prior to tonight's meeting to submit additional documentation to the Committee. As

Officer Bee did not do this, Mr. Benbrook recommended that the Committee dismiss his grievance without prejudice for lack of prosecution by reason of the fact that he has not provided the backup documentation. Mr. Anderson made this motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

With regard to the grievance filed by Officer Falcicchio, Mr. Benbrook spoke to Officer Falcicchio, who has agreed to adjourn the grievance hearing until June 8th. Mr. Anderson made a motion to adjourn the grievance hearing until 6:30 pm on June 8, 2011. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

Mr. Benbrook advised the Committee that the Council on Unfunded Mandates is now fully staffed and he suspects the township should be hearing about its case very shortly.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson thanked the Senior Advisory Committee and especially Anita Ardia for arranging the presentation this evening and acknowledged all of the contributions made by the seniors.

The Earth Day event went very well and Mr. Anderson thanked the Environmental Commission for making these arrangements.

Mr. Anderson also acknowledged everyone involved in putting together this year's budget. The Committee had difficult decisions to make in order to reach its goals.

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police report for the month of April. Mr. Anderson acknowledged Police Director Gara for his guidance of the Police Department.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance announced that the Blairstown Theater will be opening this Friday, May 13th, and will be showing Friday the 13th.

Final work on the village area roads should be completed by July 5th. They are in the process of being resurfaced.

The new water operator is now running the Water Department. The previous water operator left with his notes, which has made for a difficult transition. The CFO has been directed to hold the previous operator's final payment until his final report has been received. The new operator has indicated that an Operator's Manual should be available. Bob DePuy has found an old manual that may be updated for current use. The new operator has indicated that the scope of work at the water department is more than anticipated and he wants to be compensated accordingly.

COMMITTEEMAN LASCARI

Mr. Lascari summarized the February and March Fire Company reports. There was a fire on Auble Road in Knowlton that the fire department responded to. The transfer case of a Mack truck took on water and the pump gear is sheared. This needs to be repaired. The Fire Company will be submitting an estimate for the necessary repairs.

The web site master has returned from a leave of absence and has continued to keep the site up to date. Mayor Mach said that Mr. Decker has been asked to instruct the Clerk on how to insert simple documents into the web site. Mr. Lascari said that he could set up a meeting to settle this.

COMMITTEEMAN SEAL

A location was found for the circus to be held at Sycamore Park. The site was approved by the Department of Transportation.

Bob DePuy has looked at the site where the Community Center was located. The Public Works employees will be preparing the ground for the small park that was approved by the Committee. However, before any work can take place, a notice of No Further Action is needed from the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Department of Public Works employees have been busy with pick-ups for the town-wide cleanup. They will be starting on filling in the potholes throughout the township.

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach and Mr. Seal met with members of the Bark Park to look at the suggested location of the park behind the Municipal Building. The park committee was satisfied with this location. Mr. Seal is concerned about what is being expected from the township and what the dog park people are responsible for doing. Mayor Mach asked the Bark Park committee to put their rules and regulations in writing in order that a formal agreement can be written. Mayor Mach made a motion to approve the area as designated on a map drawn by Township Engineer Ted Rodman for use as a dog park, on the condition that rules and regulations are provided to the township. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Benbrook said that he will work with the bark park committee to have a written contract, which will include sanctions for rules not being enforced by the bark park committee.

Mayor Mach attended a shared services meeting at the county on April 29th. Freeholder Sarnoski is trying to orchestrate shared services among Warren County municipalities.

There was a presentation made by Houghton Quarry Warr regarding a solar project between the Warren County municipalities. In order to participate, the meter and panels would have to be on municipal property. Mayor Mach told the presenters that if, in fact, this project moves forward, Blairstown Township would be interested.

The Shade Tree Committee distributed seedlings to the sixth graders. Mayor Mach donated a tree for planting at the old Municipal Building site.

Mayor Mach said that a letter was received by Richard Ardia in request of Ridge Drive to be placed on the five year plan of the township. Mayor Mach indicated that Ridge Drive is on the five to ten year plan for repaving. The Clerk will send a letter to Mr. Ardia advising him of this.

Mayor Mach received a letter stating that the township will be receiving \$16,815.00 in Clean Communities funding for 2011.

A blue light permit application and an application for membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 were received recently. Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve the blue light permit application for Amy Zarembo. The motion was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

Jeremy Stoddart submitted an application for membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1. Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve the application, which was seconded by Mayor Mach

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

Mayor Mach said that the township has an ordinance in place that deals with sharing of recreation programs with surrounding municipalities. This ordinance is out of date and Mayor Mach would like to have it reviewed and updated. Mr. Lascari and Mr. Seal will review the ordinance and come back to the full Committee with recommendations.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Shoemaker, Bingham Lane, is working on signage for the downtown business area. He hopes to have a letter to the Committee by the June meeting.

Mr. Shoemaker will submit a list of vendors who have signed up to participate in the Fourth of July celebration. There are about 50 participants at this time.

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, asked if there has been any word on the case before the Council on Unfunded Mandates regarding the police coverage issue. Mayor Mach said that there has not been any news on this.

Mrs. Ardia asked why the Township Committee is going forward with changing the Historic Preservation Commission back to a committee. Mr. Anderson said that there have been spending issues in the past that the Historic Commission was told about. Mr. Lance added that the invoices to paint the cabooses were excessive. He feels that their lack of receiving the proper bids for the project cost the taxpayers more money than necessary. Mr. Lance said that the money comes from the tax payers whether or not it is grant money. Mayor Mach added that the Historic Preservation Commission did not comply with the rules of the grant by failing to make payment in the prescribed time limit. This resulted in a call from the federal government requiring that the grant money be returned. Because of this and other instances, members of the Township Committee feel that it would be better to have more control over this entity's spending by changing

it back to a committee. Mrs. Ardia said that this should have been explained to the Historic Preservation Commission's membership as these instances happened. Mayor Mach responded that Mr. Lascari and Mr. Anderson had spoken to the entity's members on several occasions. Mr. Anderson said that he spoke to them on one occasion when plaques they had purchased for Main Street were incorrect, so they spent another \$1,600.00 to have the plaques remade. This is a waste of taxpayer money that can be averted with the proper oversight.

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 in favor.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk