

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, June 9, 2010, 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 Clerk Pizzaia and Township Attorney Robert Benbrook.

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

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

WHEREAS, the Blairstown Township Committee needs to discuss matters relating to the issue as listed above; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes it to be in the best interest of the public to discuss such matter 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 matter mentioned above, the results of which may be made public immediately thereafter or at a later date.

Dated: June 9, 2010

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Seal made a motion to come out of Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari, with all members in favor.

Mr. Seal made a motion to reduce the salaries of the Department of Public Works employees by 10% with a reduction of four (4) work hours per week. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to set the DPW work schedule as full days Monday through Thursday with a four hour work day every Friday. This arrangement will become effective July 1, 2010 and will remain in effect until the adoption of the 2011 budget. Mr. Seal seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, announced that she was awarded the 2010 Warren County Outstanding Senior Citizen of the Year. Mrs. Ardia said that she feels that this is an honor for Blirstown Township as well as for herself.

Mayor Mach read the inscription on the plaque awarded to Mrs. Ardia by the Warren County Board of Freeholders. Mayor Mach also presented Mrs. Ardia with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Blirstown Township Committee for her years of dedication to serving the older adults of Warren County.

Peter McKenna, Mohican Road, spoke about the excessive amount of streetlights in the township. He volunteered to help the township identify lights which could be turned off. The Committee thanked Mr. McKenna for his offer of assistance.

Fred Cook, Four Corners Road, spoke about two recent grant awards to North Warren Regional Board of Education. The first was in the amount of \$192,000 for the roof and the second one is in the amount of \$35,000 for a security system. Mr. Cook also reported that members of the 2010 graduating class have been accepted to attend high profile colleges across the country.

Beth Arena, High Street, read a letter she is presenting to the Committee regarding problems on High Street. She believes that it is important to keep the Police Department on duty until 10 pm because their presence has deterred crime in the area of her residence. She also questioned whether the State Police would be able to arrive quickly enough during critical times. She asked the Committee to reconsider keeping the Blirstown Police Department until 10 pm.

Mr. Anderson responded to Ms. Arena by stating that the decision to cut Police hours was difficult but was made for budgetary reasons. He also stated that he had every confidence that the State Police would be able to provide the necessary coverage. Ms. Arena asked if it would be possible to have a Blirstown Police Officer and a State Police Officer available for a meeting to discuss a neighborhood watch. Mr. Anderson said that this is something he could request from the State Police.

Paul LoMonoco, Cedar Lake Road, invited the Committee to attend the 2nd Annual Challenger Fun Day on June 19th. The event will take place at Walnut Valley Field from 12:30 pm to 6pm.

Mr. LoMonoco also expressed concern for the condition of Sycamore Park after the Skylands Music Festival in August. He fears that there will be damage to the fields and wants to know if there is any mechanism in place to have the festival organizers pay for any damage. Mr. Lance said that the ball fields should not be involved in heavy traffic. Mr. Lance said that he is in the process of working out the details of the event and these concerns will be addressed.

MINUTES

May 12, 2010 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the May 12th Regular and Closed Session minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Seal, with all members voting in favor.

ADOPTION OF 2010 BUDGET – Copies of the 2010 Budget have been made available to the public and a copy has been filed with the library, as well as the synopsis being published in the NJ Herald on May 28, 2010.

PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET

Mayor Mach opened the Public Hearing on the 2010 Budget to the public. Mayor Mach commented that this is a very austere budget. Many cuts were necessary in order to maintain a zero percent municipal tax.

Debra Waldron, Maple Lane, asked what changes have been made in the Police Department. Mr. Anderson responded that the director has been cut from four days a week to two days a week beginning July 1st. The Special Police Officer has been eliminated as of the same date. Overtime will also be greatly limited by changing the hours from 7am to 10pm to 7am to 6pm daily.

Mrs. Waldron said that she feels that response time is critical when it comes to certain emergencies and would like the Committee to reconsider keeping the Blairstown Police Department on duty until 10 pm.

In response to a comment by Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Mach stated that it is not the intention of the Committee to disband the Police Department this year or any other year.

Peter McKenna, Mohican Road, said that Blairstown Township already pays taxes for State Police coverage and the surrounding municipalities use the State Police and have no problems with them.

Rosalie Murray, Cobblewood Road, spoke about land in town that is prime for development. For this reason, it is important to move forward with open space preservation.

Christian Joest, Belcher Road, thanked the Committee for holding the line on the municipal budget.

Ralph Costanzo, Mohican Road, expressed a desire to keep the Recycling Center open. He said it is difficult to dispose of certain items and the closure of the center is a disservice to the public.

Mayor Mach said that he realizes that there will be people inconvenienced by the closing of the Recycling Center, but that it has been a financial burden for the past several years.

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, asked about a 500 person limit at Sycamore Field. It is her memory that this limitation was in place when she was on the Committee. Mr. Seal said that this has been amended to read "large gathering" and that the number limit was removed. Mr. Lance said that when he spoke to a representative from the DOT, Air Safety Division, with reference to holding the Skylands Music Festival at Sycamore Park, the location was approved. The only restrictions were with regard to lighting and fireworks.

Joanne Van Valkenburg, Stillwater Road, asked if the reserve for uncollected taxes has gone up. Mayor Mach said that it has gone up significantly. Mrs. Van Valkenburg also asked about the status of COAH. Mayor Mach said that if S-1 is passed, COAH as we know it will be abolished. The function will be turned over to the Department of Community Affairs and they will administer it. Details on the restructuring of affordable housing should be announced in the next several months. At this time, we are still collecting COAH fees until we are told not to.

As there were no further questions or comments from the public, Mayor Mach closed the public hearing on the budget.

Mr. Lance explained that a resolution to amend the budget needs to be passed before the budget can be adopted. The resolution basically moves pension monies listed in the budget out of CAP as required by the State, but does not change the bottom line numbers. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the amending resolution, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

RESOLUTION R.2010-076 Adoption of the 2010 Budget

Mr. Lance made a motion to adopt the 2010 budget, which was seconded by Mr. Seal.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2010-03 ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO AMEND, REVISE AND SUPPLEMENT CHAPTER 17, "JOINT MUNICIPAL COURT" OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN TO REVISE THE BUDGET AND COLLECTION OF FEES, Introduction, First Reading

Mayor Mach explained that this ordinance revises the payment method for the administration of the court between Hope, Liberty and Blairstown Townships. Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve Ordinance 2010-03 on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2010-02 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED, "AN 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. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2010-02 on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

Public Comment on the Consent Agenda Items Only

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2010-077** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2010-078** Authorization to Return Escrow Monies
- 3 – R.2010-079** Establishment of 2010 Sustainable Blairstown Green Team
- 4 – R.2010-080** Authorization to Cancel Lien on Property
- 5 – R.2010-081** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2010-07
- 6 – R.2010-082** Approval of Liquor License Renewals
- 7 – R.2010-083** Fixing the Salaries and Wages of Officials, Appointees and Employees
- 8 – Approval of Business Directional Sign – Blairstown Farmers Market**

Mr. Lance requested that R.2010-083 be tabled until the July meeting, and Mr. Seal requested that Item #8 be removed for discussion. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Items #1 through #6, which was seconded by Mr. Seal.

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Item #8, which was seconded by Mayor Mach. Mr. Seal questioned whether the Committee wanted to waive the yearly fee for the directional sign for the Blairstown Farmers Market. Mayor Mach read a letter from the Foodshed Alliance requesting that said fee be waived. Mr. Lance said that other non-profit organizations are paying the annual fee. The Committee was in agreement that waiving the annual fee would have to be done on a uniform basis. No action was taken on the waiver request.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – May Report
- Finance – May Report
- Police Department – May Report
- Public Works Department – May Fuel Report
- Tax Collector – May Report
- Warren County Health Department – May 7, 2010

Mr. Lascari made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mayor Mach, with all members in favor. Mr. Lascari commented that gasoline usage is down from last year’s usage.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Rte. 94 traffic concerns:
 - a. left hand turn signal at Lambert Rd. – State approval received
 - b. engine braking – sample ordinance from Hope Township

Mayor Mach spoke with the head of the DOT and they do not sanction engine braking signs anywhere on State highways. This item will be removed from the Unfinished Business list.

- 2 – JCP&L billing – Mr. Lascari has completed input of data; to go to Environmental Commission for input
- 3 – Main Street concerns – road striping; feral cats; sidewalks
- 4 – Review of Noise Control Ordinance – model ordinance received from county
- 5 – Cedar Lake Horse Farm – one (1) proposal received; proposal rejected

Mayor Mach reported that a new RFP went out and was received on June 1st. It was the same bidder and it is under review.

- 6 – Service Electric Cable TV – extension of cable service
Mr. Lascari will attempt to have a letter on this prepared by the July meeting.
- 7 – Skylands Music Festival – letter sent to Mark Clifford requesting timeline of events leading up to festival

Mark Clifford is in attendance tonight to address concerns regarding the Skylands Music Festival.

Mark Clifford distributed a written timeline of the festival events to the Committee. With regard to parking, Mr. Clifford said that numerous cars can be parked on the grassy areas without involving the sports playing area. Mr. Lance and Mr. Clifford said that the fire and ambulance personnel will be stationed behind the Department of Public Works building.

Mr. Seal has concerns about parking problems. He feels that the suggestions to close a portion of Lambert Road for the festival would not work because it would prohibit access to the airport. Mr. Lance, Sgt. Losey and Mr. Clifford will be meeting on Monday, June 14th to work out the details on many issues, including parking and police coverage.

Mr. Clifford said that the distributed timeline is sketchy and he will add more detail for the Committee. Mr. Lascari said that he would like Mr. Clifford to maintain weekly communication with the Committee to apprise them of the progression of events.

Mr. Lascari asked about the anticipated ticket prices. Mr. Clifford indicated that the price for Friday evening will probably be \$20.00, Saturday would be about \$25.00 and Sunday \$15.00. Students will be admitted for \$10.00 and children 10 years of age and under are free. Advance tickets for the entire weekend should be \$50.00.

Mayor Mach opened the meeting to the public who may have questions regarding the festival only. Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, asked about the small trees that were planted. She would like them

protected from the crowds. Mr. Clifford said that the trees would not be disturbed by the festival patrons.

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, asked Mr. Clifford if his organization is non-profit. Mr. Clifford replied that it is.

Darren Occhiuzzo, Asst. Fire Chief, asked about Mr. Clifford's requirements for fire department stand-by. Mr. Clifford said that he is not sure at this time. He and Mr. Lascari will be talking to the fire department in the near future regarding this matter.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Stephanie Rummerfield, Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce, requesting permission to utilize Footbridge Park for annual Spirit of Americana Celebration on Sunday, July 4th

Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson, with all members in favor.

- 2 – from Patricia Sagan, Director, Recreation Department, re: North Warren Midget Football Proposal

This is a proposal to change the field dimensions at Walnut Valley and to replace the clay with sod. All concerned organizations are in favor, and the sod will be paid for by the Football organization. Mr. Seal made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

- 3 – Right of Entry Agreement between Blainstown Township and Warren County Mosquito Control Commission; authorization for Mayor to sign agreement

This is authorizing the mayor to sign an agreement allowing the WCMCC to access municipal property and to operate equipment along the Paulins Kill River to de-s snag and remove trees and debris. The motion to authorize this was made by Mr. Lance and was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

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 and Mr. Lascari have been working on the noise control ordinance. Mr. Benbrook will have this ready for the July meeting.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER – Results of bids for Overlay of Benton Road

Mr. Rodman reported that there were five (5) bidders on the Benton Road project, with results ranging from 78,520 to 104,980. Mr. Rodman has reviewed the bids and recommends that the Committee award the bid to Tilcon New York, Inc. in the amount of \$78,520. Since time is of the essence, Mr. Rodman would like the Committee to award the contract tonight, contingent upon attorney review. Mr. Lance made a motion to award the bid for the overlay of Benton Road at the quoted price of \$78,520.00, contingent upon review by Mr. Benbrook. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

The final paperwork has been submitted for the loan agreement for the Community Center remediation work. Mayor Mach asked Mr. Rodman to remind Mr. Russo from Whitman Company for an estimate on the removal of the Community Center.

With regard to work on the Paulins Kill Dam, Mr. Rodman said that the application for a wetlands permit needs the mayor's signature. Mr. Seal made a motion to authorize the mayor to sign the wetlands permit application associated with the repair work at the Paulins Kill Dam, which was seconded by Mayor Mach. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Rodman said that a Dollar General Store is proposed to occupy a space at the Tractor Supply site. There is discussion regarding the relocation of the monument sign in front of the building. They are talking with the Zoning Official on this matter.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk reported that a contract has been received from the Tax Assessor for farmland appraisals. The contract is between Blainstown and Appraisal Systems for \$25.00 per assessment for approximately 160 "farms". Mr. Lance made the motion to authorize the mayor to sign the contract with Appraisal Systems to assess the agriculturally used farmland appraised properties within the township. Mayor Mach seconded the motion.

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Mr. Anderson congratulated Mrs. Ardia again for her award from the County Freeholders.

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of May, 2010. He thanked the Police Department for the work involved in trimming their portion of the budget.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance spoke to the County Engineering regarding lining Main Street for parking. David Hicks said they are researching this and will get back to Mr. Lance.

Last month, Mr. Lance made a motion to spend \$10,000 for the purchase and installation of new water meters for the Water Department. After speaking with Bob DePuy, he would like to change this to include having the master meter tested, and also to include other water related items such as removing the tree at the Water Department. Mr. Lance made a motion to rescind the resolution

passed on May 12, 2010 authorizing the expenditure of \$10,000.00 for the purchase and installation of new water meters. The motion was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the expenditure of up to \$10,000.00 for any water related item. The motion was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to move \$250,000 out of the Open Space Trust Fund into a reserve fund to pay down outstanding debt. Mr. Seal seconded the motion.

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

COMMITTEEMAN LASCARI

Mr. Lascari reported on a fire that was caused by lightning in a house on Mount Vernon Road. The Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 responded quickly and stated that the lightning ignited a rafter in the basement.

The graduation ceremony at North Warren Regional High School is scheduled for June 23rd. Mr. Lascari wished everyone a happy and safe Fourth of July holiday.

COMMITTEEMAN SEAL

With regard to the Salvation Army clothing bins now located at the Recycling Center, Mr. Seal said that the DPW workers suggested relocating them alongside the shed at the children's ball field. Mr. Lascari would like them relocated on the DPW grounds. Another suggestion was near the fire house where the Farmers Market is located.

Since the Zoning Official is charged with approving location of clothing bins, Mr. Seal will speak with David Diehl with regard to placing the bins at the Stillwater Road site near the fire house.

Mr. Seal said that the DPW has a Case loader and a 1999 F250 pick-up that they would like to bid out for sale. Both items are rusted out and no longer used by the DPW. Mr. Seal made the motion to advertise for bids to sell both vehicles. Mr. Lascari seconded the motion.

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

Portions of the cap of the roof on the Municipal Building are missing. Mr. Seal would like to have this rectified. There is an estimate of \$2,355.00 to complete this work. The Committee was in agreement to get at least one more estimate for the job. Mr. Lance made a motion that up to \$2,500 be expended on the necessary cap work on the roof, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach said that the first half of the spring clean-up cost \$4,400.00. This is less than half of the cost from last year.

The Farmers Market opens on June 19th. The hours are from 10am to 2pm.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, asked about the costs of the North Warren Court and how the expenses are divided. Mayor Mach explained that the costs are prorated between Hope, Liberty and Blirstown Townships.

She also said that the seniors would be available to assist the Tax Collector in putting tax bills in the envelopes. Mrs. Ardia asked if there were a lot of tax appeals this year. Mayor Mach said that there were and Mr. Lance said the Tax Assessor has requested a revaluation because most properties are over-assessed.

Kevin Doell, Heller Hill Road, requested that the Committee communicate with the public regarding alternate ways to dispose of recycling items in light of the closing of the Recycling Center. The Committee discussed putting advertisements in the local newspapers regarding this matter.

Herman Shoemaker, Bingham Lane, reported the Business Association will be obtaining quotations for a gazebo to be placed on the triangle property on Main Street. He also spoke about the white business directory signs that are currently in place for businesses no longer in Blirstown. He will get the names for the DPW to take them down.

Fred Cook, Four Corners Road, asked about a newspaper article about a committeeman from a neighboring municipality who had an altercation with our police department. According to the article, the charges against this man were dropped and he is threatening to sue the township. Mr. Cook asked why the charges were dropped and whether the case went to trial. Mr. Anderson said that there was no trial to his knowledge but he really does not know what happened. Mr. Benbrook reiterated that it was a police matter and the Committee was not involved at any level.

A woman who resides on Main Street (name inaudible) expressed concern for the children in the township and the change in the police coverage from 10 pm to 6 pm.

Livia Coleman, Main Street, said that she supports the Police Department but understands that the cut-backs were necessary for budgetary reasons.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further questions or comments from the public, Mr. Lascari made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Seal with all members in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk