

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, October 13, 2010, 6:45 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 (arrived at 7pm) and Mr. Seal. Also present were Clerk Pizzaia and Attorney Kevin 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 –Possible Litigation; Sale of Township Property; Personnel – Police Department

Mr. Lance made a motion to enter into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Seal, 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 such 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 matters mentioned above, the results of which may be made public immediately thereafter or at a later date.

Dated: October 13, 2010

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Township Attorney to file a complaint with the Council on Local Mandates with regard to the provision that was placed in the State budget that denies an increase in State Police coverage to our municipality. Mr. Seal seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lascari made a motion that a settlement proposal be offered to Sgt. Losey for the return of 200 hours of sick time. This offer is a settlement to the grievance filed by Sgt. Losey. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Leone Samilson, Bridge Street, spoke in favor of a dog park in the township. She has a letter from the insurance company stating that this would not increase the township's insurance. She and Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, visited Mount Olive to see their dog park. Ms. Samilson has a list of township residents who have expressed an interest in having a dog park and are willing to volunteer their time to build this park. Mayor Mach said that this park would need to be managed by the dog park volunteers and not maintained by the township's Public Works Department. Ms. Samilson said that it would be self-policed and dog owners would be doing the clean-up. The only thing she would ask from the township is to have the Public Works employees erect the fence.

Michael Campbell, Route 94, spoke regarding the sale of Block 1208, Lot 9. He is under contract to purchase this piece of property. He said that he has spent a great deal of money in an effort to meet the requirements set forth by the township for this sale. Mr. K. Benbrook said that a condition of sale is that this piece of land be merged into his existing parcel. Mr. K. Benbrook said that Mr. Campbell's attorney has indicated that Mr. Campbell is not willing to do this. Mr. K. Benbrook said that the other bidder made a bid on the property under the same conditions and that the township cannot deviate from the bid specifications. Mayor Mach said that a decision cannot be reached on this tonight and he asked Mr. K. Benbrook to ask Township Attorney Robert Benbrook to contact Mr. Campbell's attorney in an attempt to work this out.

Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, asked the Committee if there were plans to hire independent contractors this year to assist in snow plowing. Mr. Seal said that the independent drivers were eliminated from the budget this year in order to save money. Mrs. Cook expressed concern for the Public Works employees and the amount of continuous hours they would have to work. Mr. Lance said that the residents will probably experience delays this year in the time it takes to plow the roads. Mrs. Cook would like the Committee to consider sending notices to the residents informing them that there will be a delay in the plowing due to personnel and monetary constraints.

Paul Avery, Mohican Road, gave the Committee an update on his plans for the Fourth of July Celebration, with a return to the event being Blainstown oriented. The Rotary is enthusiastic about a return to the old type celebration, as are the Lions Club and Blair Academy. Mr. Avery asked if

the Celebration Committee could be a sub-committee of the Township Committee. Mr. Lance believes there might be an ordinance regarding a Fourth of July Committee. This will be researched and revisited at the next meeting.

MINUTES

September 8, 2010 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session (Mr. Seal absent)

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the regular and closed session minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

PRESENTATION by Monika Hamburger – Viridian Energy

Monika Hamburger represents the Blirstown Business Association, who has signed on with Viridian Energy, a green energy company. The basic program being offered is the ability to save up to 30% on kilowatt usage. There is no change in billing. JCP&L still provides billing and maintenance. The only difference is the kilowatt charge, which will be at Viridian's rate instead of JCP&L's rate. There is no contract to sign and residents and businesses can change back at any time with no penalties. Ms. Hamburger analyzed the township's July, August and September bills. She analyzed 19 of the meters and it appears that the township would have a significant savings on 7 of the meters by switching to Veridian Energy.

The BBA will receive two (2) dollars per month for every meter signed up. The proposal is to sign up the seven (7) meters that showed significant savings. This would be a great source of income for the BBA, depending on the number of meters switched to Viridian.

Ms. Hamburger said that if the township decides to accept this proposal to sign up with Viridian Energy through the Blirstown Business Association, she would come to the Municipal Building to assist township personnel in the switching procedure. Mr. Lascari would like to research any other energy savings proposals that may be available. This will be addressed at a future meeting.

PRESENTATION by Jason Kalafut, Grizzly Electric, LLC – Proposals for Energy Efficient Lighting at DPW and Stillwater Road Fire Station

Mr. Seal prefaced Mr. Kalafut's presentation by saying that the fire station was in dire need of replacement lighting. The present lighting takes a long time to reach full illumination and lights are constantly burning out.

Mr. Kalafut said that the proposal is for the replacement of 13 fixtures in the fire station. He will replace the current 15,400 watt High Bay lighting fixtures with 216 watt, 4 lamp T5 lighting fixtures. The total cost for materials and installation is \$3,705.00. He has projected an annual cost savings of \$1,055.37. There is a rebate from the State in the amount of \$1,300.00, which brings the total cost to the township at \$2,405.00. Mr. Kalafut will make application for the rebate.

Mr. Seal made a motion to approve this proposal at a total cost of \$3,705.00, contingent upon certification of availability of funds from the CFO. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

The proposal for new lighting at the Public Works building will be considered during next year's budget deliberations.

Public Comment on the Consent Agenda Items Only

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

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2010-129** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2010-130** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2010-10
- 3 – Approval of Applications for Blue Light Permit** – Allen P. Bickhardt and Thomas S. Gleason of Blairstown Ambulance Corps; Matthew Lambert of Blairstown Hose Company No. 1
- 4 – Approval of Applications for Membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1** – Michael J. MacLean and Jason A. Zatorski

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

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

Mayor Mach asked a representative from the Historic Preservation Commission to explain an invoice that was presented to the CFO earlier today for payment. Helen Parisi, Historic Preservation Commission Chair, explained that the invoice was for the repair and painting of the caboose roof in the amount of \$4,558.50. She said that the money comes from a federal grant received that must be spent on the museum. Mayor Mach asked if Mrs. Parisi could verify that the money was still available. Mrs. Parisi said that the money is available in the Hope Bank.

There was a discussion regarding the process the Historic Preservation Commission needs to follow in order to spend grant monies and other monies in their budget. Mr. K. Benbrook said that since the Historic board is a statutory commission, they have the independent authority to allocate and spend monies from their budget, which has been approved by the governing body.

Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve this invoice, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – September Report
- Finance – September Report
- Fire Department – September Report
- Police Department – September Report
- Public Works Department –September Fuel Report
- Tax Collector – September Report
- Warren County Board of Health – September 10, 2010 and October 8, 2010 Reports
- Animal Control Officer – 1st and 2nd Quarter Reports

Mr. Lance made a motion to accept the reports, which was seconded by Mayor Mach, with all members voting in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Route 94 traffic concerns – State approval received for left hand turn signal at Lambert Rd
Mr. Lascari said that he has been attempting to contact Debbie Hirt for an update. As far as he knows, the project is still with the Electrical Department for approval, and can stay there for as long as two years.
- 2 – JCP&L billing – Mr. Lascari has completed input of data; to go to Environmental Commission for input
Mr. Lascari asked for a volunteer to drive around and physically look at the poles. Herman Shoemaker volunteered to help Mr. Lascari with this project.
- 3 – Main Street concerns – road striping; feral cats; sidewalks
Mr. Lascari would like the bus companies and camps notified to change their routes, rerouting to Stillwater Road to Spring Valley Road to the camp locations. Mr. Lascari will draft a letter for the Clerk to send out.
- 4 – Review of Noise Control Ordinance – model ordinance received from county
Mr. Lascari reviewed a draft of a Peace and Good Order Ordinance that he is proposing the Committee adopt. He added that Beth Arena has completed a tremendous amount of research on this, and Officer Losey has reviewed it. The draft will be forwarded to Mr. K. Benbrook for review and to prepare for introduction at the November meeting.
- 5 – Cedar Lake Horse Farm – RFP results under review
Mayor Mach reported that this is ongoing.
- 6 – Service Electric Cable TV – extension of cable service
- 7 – Letter from DOT, Division of Aeronautics, regarding Hazardous Obstructions at Blirstown Airport

Mayor Mach said that the proposal from French and Parrello that was held over from the October meeting has been amended as requested by the Municipal Attorney. This is a proposal for a visual inspection of the Paulina Dam as required by the Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Lance made a motion to award the proposal to French and Parrello, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Bob Resker, Warren County Department of Land Preservation, re: Comprehensive Farmland Plan
This letter is for information only.

- 2 – from Robert Van Wattering, Blairstown Rotary Club, requesting permission to hold “Annual Halloween Parade” on Sunday, October 31, 2010
Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the preferred route as outlined by the Rotary Club, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

- 3 – from Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, regarding request for reimbursement by participating municipalities in Blairstown sports programs
Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Mrs. Sagan to bill the affected municipalities as outlined, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

- 4 – from Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, re: Dog Park
Mayor Mach said that this memorandum, which states that Mrs. Sagan supports the establishment of a dog park, is for informational purposes only.

- 5 – from Planning Board, “Ordinance to Amend the Land Development Ordinance of the Township of Blairstown, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, Section 19-601E
Mayor Mach made a motion to approve this ordinance regarding cell towers on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Lance. There will be a public hearing and second reading for adoption at the November meeting.

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

- 6 – from Planning Board, Resolution in the matter of recommendation for Township Planner Herman Shoemaker, Planning Board Chair, explained the review and selection procedure used to appoint a planner for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment. The criteria considered were cost, experience, and ability to attend meetings and make deadlines. The Planning Board’s first choice is Maser Consulting and this is the recommendation being made to the Committee. Maser was the lowest cost of those interviewed. Mr. K. Benbrook advised the Committee that the Planning Board has the authority to hire their own Planner without the permission or approval of the Township Committee, as long as they are within budget.

- 7 – from Theresa Tamburro, Municipal Housing Liaison, re: S1 – COAH
Mayor Mach said that the most important item is group homes and that we should be moving forward on them. He recommended that the township proceed slowly and cautiously as we watch what is happening at the State level. His main concern is not to lose the monies in the COAH trust.

- 8 – from Gina Trish, East Avenue, regarding proposed *Village Green* on Community Center lot
Ms. Trish explained her proposal for a park on the site of the demolished Community Center. She presented a petition from Blairstown residents in support of the proposal. She would like the township to block off access to the Community Center parking lot entrance

because it is being used as a cut-through and causing a hazard to the neighborhood. After discussion, the Committee agreed to revisit this matter at a future meeting.

Ms. Trish would like grass planted by the township as an initial phase of the project. She envisions fundraising as a means to purchase the gazebo. Ms. Trish would like all asphalt removed from the lot at this time, with the exception of the front parking spaces. The Committee was in agreement that this expense could not be incurred at this time. Mr. Lance believes that this might not be allowed by the DEP and that the environmental engineer should be consulted before removing asphalt. However, the planting of grass on the immediate area where the building was situated is something within the scope of the township's budget.

9 – from Elliott J. Gott, Division of Parks and Forestry, regarding *Trail Crossing* signs and speed limit signs at trail crossings

This correspondence is in request of placement of Trail Crossing and speed limit signs at various locations within the township. It is unclear whether the state or municipality is responsible for the cost of purchasing the signs and whether the State or municipality is responsible for installing the signs. Mayor Mach asked Mr. Seal to contact the State for clarification.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. K. Benbrook had nothing further to discuss.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The audience was reminded that November 2nd is Election Day and that the polls are open from 6am to 8pm. All polling places are located in the Municipal Building.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

The Environmental Commission met last week and the Sustainable Blirstown application was discussed. The Commission was disappointed in the rejection of the application, but it will be resubmitted next year. The entire Committee expressed their appreciation for all the hard work that has gone into the project.

Mr. Anderson summarized the September report from the Police Department. He recognized the work by Officer Losey in saving a child's life and congratulated him for a fine job.

Contract negotiations are beginning between the township and the Police Department.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

The Division of Pensions and Benefit has released figures for municipalities in 2011. Blirstown's PERS obligation is \$129,873, which is up \$14,826 from last year. Our PFRS obligation next year is \$99,139, which is \$31,552 more than last year. There are ever-increasing costs with no increase in revenue.

With regard to snow plowing, Mr. Lance said that outside contractors have been eliminated in an effort to cut back costs. The DPW would like to supply the Blairstown Elementary School with a truck so the school's janitor can snow plow. The Committee was in agreement that this was a good idea. It will be brought up to the school's superintendent.

COMMITTEEMAN LASCARI

The TractorCade was held on October 10th and was a very successful event. There were 80 participants.

The North Warren Regional High School is having a meeting tonight. A topic being discussed is random drug testing for the students.

Mr. Lascari would like the Committee to think about having the Blairstown Ambulance Corps attend a future meeting to explain their procedures and any problems that may exist. Mayor Mach said that the squad members may be reluctant to speak at a public meeting. Mr. Lascari said that he will speak with them outside of a public setting.

The Historic Preservation Commission spoke with Mr. Lascari about their concern that an outside contractor was hired to inspect the Paulina Dam when Gary McGowan, a commission member, is qualified to do this. Mayor Mach and the Township Committee said they have no knowledge of Mr. McGowan's expertise in this area.

Mr. Lascari would like the information supplied by Russell Walters to be reviewed by the Committee and that serious consideration be given to this during the 2011 budget meetings. He would especially like to see the water company pump project completed. Mayor Mach said that he feels this is worthwhile and would save a significant amount on the electric bill based on the information provided by Mr. Walters.

COMMITTEEMAN SEAL

Mr. Seal said that the only comments he had were on the snow plowing issue already discussed by Mr. Lance. He emphasized that the public will have to be told that plowing will not be done as quickly as in the past due to less DPW personnel and the lack of outside contractors.

MAYOR MACH

The Best Practices Checklist was completed and sent in to the State. Municipalities needed a total of 76 points out of 88 points to maintain 100% state funding. The final total for Blairstown was 77 points.

Mayor Mach thanked Carol and Fred Cook for their efforts during the summer to water the trees at the Municipal Building.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, asked about the stacking ordinance she supplied to the Committee. She said that the Police Department told her that the stacking ordinance could be included into the peace and good order ordinance being proposed by the Committee.

Herman Shoemaker, Bingham Lane, said that a house in poor repair on Main Street is being worked on.

Mr. Shoemaker announced that the Blairstown Business Association will be holding another event on Main Street from 10am to 3pm on October 30st.

Margaret Thomas, Dry Road, suggested that Open Space money might be used to finance the park that was proposed earlier this evening.

Rosalie Murray, Cobblewood Road, agreed with Mrs. Thomas that this park would be a legitimate use of Open Space funds. She also felt that signs should be put up to keep dogs off of the township's playing fields, as it is a health hazard to the children playing on those fields.

Mr. Lascari added that the new fire tanker should be arriving in about three weeks.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Mach, with all members in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk