

**BLAIRSTOWN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REORGANIZATION MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2015 – 6PM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

M I N U T E S

OPENING CEREMONIES – The meeting was called to order. Those present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Price and Mr. Shoemaker.

The **FLAG SALUTE** was conducted.

The following SUNSHINE STATEMENT was read:

Notice of this meeting has been sent to two newspapers of general circulation in the Township of Blairstown in which notice of the date, time, place and general agenda were set forth in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

INVOCATION – Rev. David Harvey of the First Presbyterian Church gave the invocation.

DETERMINATION OF THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CANVASSERS

Elected Official – Stephen J. Lance

Senator Steven Oroho administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Lance.

Elected Official – Herman P. Shoemaker

Elizabeth Patterson, Esq., Mr. Shoemaker's daughter, administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Shoemaker.

NOMINATION FOR MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2015

A motion to appoint Herman Shoemaker as Mayor for 2015 was made by Mr. Lance and seconded by Mr. Avery.

Mrs. Price stated that she feels the entire Committee was not included for input in this decision and is objecting to what she perceives as a lack of process and transparency. Mayor Shoemaker responded that Mrs. Price's comments infer that there was some sort of secret meeting to discuss this, which there was not. Mrs. Price responded that she was not suggesting that there was a secret meeting, but that she was told that previous Committees held meetings in December to discuss this.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Avery, Lance, Shoemaker

NAY – Price

The Oath of Office was administered to Mr. Shoemaker by Elizabeth Patterson, Esq.

Mayor Shoemaker chaired the remainder of the meeting.

NOMINATION FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2015

The nomination of Frank W. Anderson as Deputy Mayor was made by Mr. Lance and seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

The Oath of Office was administered to Mr. Anderson by Clerk Pizzaia.

OATHS OF OFFICE – BLAIRSTOWN HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 OFFICERS

Darren Occhiuzzo, Chief
Matthew Lambert, Assistant Chief
Stuart Kise, Captain
Eric Usinowicz, Lieutenant

Senator Oroho administered the Oath of Office to the officers of Blairstown Hose Company No. 1.

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

As there were requests to remove several resolutions from the Consent Agenda, each resolution was voted on separately.

R.2015-001 Various One Year Appointments – Compensated
Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-001, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Mrs. Price questioned whether changes could be made in personnel on this list during the year. Mayor Shoemaker responded that changes could be made by the Committee.

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

R.2015-002 Various Appointments – Non-compensated
Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve R.2015-002, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

R.2015-003 Cancel Water Utility Balances under \$5.00
Mr. Avery made a motion to approve R.2015-003, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

R.2015-004 Appointing Local Emergency Planning Committee Members
Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-004, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

R.2015-005 Fixing the Rate of Interest to be Charged on Delinquent Taxes and Authorizing the Tax Collector to hold Annual Tax Sale

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve R.2015-005, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

R.2015-006 Complying with Open Public Meetings Act

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-006, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Mrs. Price requested a change of wording in section 1A, putting "the public portion of the meeting" at the beginning of the sentence. She also questioned the designation of official newspapers, which was answered by the Committee, regarding two versus three official newspapers.

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

R.2015-007 Designating Authorized Signatures

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-007, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

R.2015-008 Authorizing Investment of Idle Funds and Fund Transfers

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-008, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

R.2015-009 Adopting a Cash Management Plan

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve R.2015-009, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

R.2015-010 Contracting for Professional Services without Competitive Bidding in Accordance with the Local Public Contract Law – Municipal Attorney

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-010, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Mrs. Price said that she believes that RFP's should be received for this service. She also has a great concern regarding a member of the firm who has refused to work with her. She detailed the history of a situation between her and Attorney Kevin Benbrook, stating that Mr. Benbrook was asked to forward to her a corrected document, and failed to do so. The document, forwarded to the State, was incorrect, and Mrs. Price said this could have been avoided if he

had followed her direction. She said that Mr. Kevin Benbrook was confrontational with her and hung up the phone on her. She said that this is unacceptable behavior from a professional and cannot, in good faith, hire a firm that refuses to work with a township official.

Both Mayor Shoemaker and Deputy Mayor Anderson spoke in favor of the firm of Benbrook & Benbrook.

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

R-2015-011 Contracting for Professional Services without Competitive Bidding in Accordance with the Local Public Contract Law – Municipal Auditor

Mrs. Price made a motion to approve R.2015-011, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Mr. Lance said that Nisivoccia is a fine auditing firm, but spoke in favor of retaining Ardito and Ardito as Municipal Auditor. Mrs. Price said that she had some concerns with Ardito and Ardito throughout the past year, and that she believes that it is a good practice to change auditors from time to time.

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

R.2015-012 Contracting for Professional Services without Competitive Bidding in Accordance with the Local Public Contract Law – Municipal Engineer

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-012, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

R.2015-013 Designation of Official Newspapers

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve R.2015-013, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

R.2015-014 Cancellation of Certain Real Estate Property Tax Balances

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-014, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

R.2015-015 Authorization for Tax Assessor to File Corrective Appeals and Stipulations and Authorization for Township Attorney to Work with Tax Assessor in Defense of Tax Appeals with the Warren County Board of Taxation

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-015, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

R.2015-016 Collection of a Fee for Duplicate Tax Sale Certificates

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve R.2015-016, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

R.2015-017 Fixing the Rate of Interest to be Charged on Delinquent Water Accounts

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-017, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Mrs. Price questioned the reference to an ordinance section in the first paragraph. After discussion, the Committee agreed to omit the first paragraph of R.2015-017.

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

R.2015-018 Appointment of Municipal Court Judge

Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve R.2015-018, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Anderson congratulated Mayor Shoemaker and Mr. Lance for their election wins. He also thanked Pastor Harvey and Senator Oroho for attending tonight's meeting. Mayor Shoemaker also thanked Senator Oroho for his attendance.

Mr. Lance also thanked Pastor Harvey, Senator Oroho and those in the audience for attending tonight.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, congratulated Mayor Shoemaker and Deputy Mayor Anderson for their elections tonight.

Mrs. Ardia hoped that the Township Committee would strive for better communication between its members.

Pat DePalma, Frog Pond Road, believes that the Committee should not choose a township attorney based on personalities.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson, with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk