

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, August 12, 2015, 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

Regular meeting begins at 7:30 pm or immediately following Closed Session, whichever comes last.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT OPENING; ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order. Those present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mr. Price and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Pizzia and Attorney Robert Benbrook.

The **FLAG SALUTE** was conducted.

Mayor Shoemaker 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

Susan Price, Alice Court, reminded the Committee to speak into the microphones when speaking on the dais. She asked that the agenda be posted as early as possible on the website and requested that the prepared resolutions be posted on the website prior to meeting. If this is not agreeable, she would like to look at these resolutions with the general correspondence at the Municipal Building on the Friday prior to the meeting. These items will be made available for her to view by 2pm on the Fridays prior to meetings.

She also spoke about members of the public who may wish to video tape the meetings and asked the Committee to present reasonable rules for this. Mayor Shoemaker responded that the Committee would need to discuss this with Mr. Benbrook.

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, introduced Frank Van Horn, former Mayor of Knowlton Township, who was recently elected most outstanding senior citizen of Warren County. Mrs. Ardia wished Committee member Harold Price good luck in his position.

Mrs. Ardia requested that a Committee member contact her regarding the following subjects: lack of enforcement of the zoning ordinances, the rationale behind taking over Main Street, holding Committee meetings once a month vs. twice a month.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, thanked the members of the Committee and all those involved in assisting in the clean-up activities at the Cedar Lake Horse Farm.

MINUTES

July 8, 2015 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Roll call vote: AYE - Anderson, Avery, Lance, Shoemaker
ABSTAIN - Price

ORDINANCE 2015 – 02 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF IN-CAR POLICE VIDEO EQUIPMENT FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE FUNDING THEREOF, Introduction, First Reading

Mr. Anderson explained that the current in-car units need to be replaced, as they are now mandated by the State. The total amount to be expended on these units is \$35,000.00. Mr. Avery made a motion to approve Ordinance 2015 – 02 on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2015 – 090 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2015 – 091 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2015-008
- 3 – R.2015 – 092 Cancellation of Lien on Property
- 4 – R.2015 – 093 Refund of 2015 Tax Appeal Overpayments
- 5 – R.2015 – 094 Refund of 2015 Tax Overpayments
- 6 – R.2015 – 095 Award of State Contract Purchase for In-Car Video Cameras
- 7 – R.2015 – 096 Award of Contract for Resurfacing of Kill Road

Mayor Shoemaker requested that R.2015 – 096 be pulled from the Consent Agenda, and Mr. Price requested that R.2015 – 090 be pulled. Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve Items #2 through #6, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mr. Price said that he will abstain on R.2015 – 090 since he was not a member of the Committee at that time. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015 – 090, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the resurfacing of Kill Road was done in conjunction with Hardwick resurfacing the portion of that road in their township. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015 – 096, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Mayor Shoemaker said that at a previous meeting, the Committee agreed to rename Kill Road to Ward Road, which is the name of the road in Hardwick Township. Mr. Benbrook said that this would be done by ordinance, which he will prepare for the September meeting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – July Report
Finance – July Finance and Fuel Reports
Fire Department – July Report
Police Department – July Report
Tax Collector – July Report
Warren County Health Department – July 13, 2015

Mr. Anderson made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mr. Avery. Mr. Price questioned why there was no report from the Recreation Department. He would like a quarterly report detailing the number of participants by program. He would also like the non-township participants separated from the township participants.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1 – from Nicholas Falcicchio, tendering resignation as Blairstown Police Officer effective July 20, 2015

Mr. Anderson said that in addition to Mr. Falcicchio, Officer Guerrero also resigned from the Department. The Department is down two men and new hires are being sought.

2 – from Richard and Janen Ardia, re: Road Repaving on Ridge Lane

Mayor Shoemaker said that this will be addressed later in the meeting.

3 – from Bob Canace, re: Estate of Margaret Kostenbader, Proposal to Proceed Now with Open Space Acquisition and Site Restoration

This will be addressed later in the meeting.

4 – from James P. Fox, Morris, Downing & Sherred, LLP, re: North Warren Regional Board of Education, Zone Change Application

Mayor Shoemaker explained that Mr. Fox would like to appear at the October meeting to discuss an amendment to the zoning ordinance creating a school zone. The Committee was in agreement to have Mr. Fox speak at the October meeting.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

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

Mayor Shoemaker said that he has received a Citizen Leadership application from Jeanette Iurato to become a member of the Historic Preservation Committee. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this appointment, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that the Yards Creek tax appeal was postponed and the utility company may be withdrawing the appeal.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson said that all of his police matters were covered earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Anderson presented Mr. Lance with documents from Tom and Susan Sawyer that are of historic significance. Mr. Lance said that he would turn these items over to the Historic Preservation Committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery said that Mr. Mott has begun work on the clean-up at the Jones Farm.

The Seniors trip on July 29 was a huge success. Their next trip to Woodlock Resort will be held on October 1st.

With regard to COAH, the Declaration of Judgment has been submitted and now we are in a waiting mode. Mr. Avery said that R.2015-088 passed at the July meeting raised the Municipal Housing Liaison's salary from \$30 to \$35 per hour. However, the top hourly rate in the current salary ordinance allows only \$34 per hour. Mr. Avery made a motion to rescind R.2015-088 and to approve a new resolution raising the hourly rate of the Municipal Housing Liaison from \$30 to \$34 per hour. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Avery had a couple of residents present at his recent open door meeting. One resident was concerned about the length of time being taken on the road work being performed by the State.

The ad hoc ordinance review committee continues to make progress with their project.

Mr. Avery has had several complaints about property maintenance in the Main Street area. Mr. Avery would like the Committee to consider amending the township ordinance to create a village area property maintenance code specific to the village area.

Mr. Price commented that the Jones Farm property maintenance being performed by Mr. Mott has been completed.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance stated that the township has received the new tax rate and the tax bills have been sent to the residents. The tax rate is up 4.4 cents per \$100. Mr. Lance said that tax bills are habitually mailed out late requiring an extended grace period due to the tax rate being delayed in the Warren County Tax Office. Mr. Lance said that several Warren County municipalities are sending letters of concern about this to the Warren County Tax Board. Mr. Lance would like to draft such a letter to send to the Tax Board. The Committee agreed to this.

Mr. Lance made a motion to appoint Lori Nienstedt to the Historic Preservation Committee. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mr. Price objected to the assignments given to him. He feels that his talents could be better used on a more specific subject. Mayor Shoemaker replied that these assignments were those assigned to Mrs. Price, who he has replaced. Mr. Price suggested being assigned liaison to the Environmental Commission while he is on the Committee. Mr. Benbrook said that his presence on the Committee precludes him from being a member of the Land Use Board and the Environmental Commission. Mr. Price would like Mr. Benbrook to provide to him in writing this decision.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker said that the DPW is in the process of repairing numerous potholes throughout the township.

Mayor Shoemaker said that monies have been put aside for the repaving of roads. He distributed a worksheet outlining several roads that are in the most need of repaving.

Mr. Price said that the DPW is having difficulty keeping up with the potholes because of the constant mowing that has been required this summer. He suggested looking into hiring part-time mowers in order to allow the DPW workers more time to commit to road repairs.

After discussion, it was the consensus of opinion that the roads to be paved will be Ridge Lane, Conrad Court, Gaisler Road, and the intersection of Route 94 and Lambert Road. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to this affect, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. Mr. Lance expressed disagreement with paving Ridge Lane and Conrad Court, and requested that these two roads be voted on separately. Mayor Shoemaker amended his motion to approve the paving of Ridge Lane and Conrad Court. Mr. Anderson amended his seconding of the motion.

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

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve the paving of a portion of Gaisler Road and the intersection of Route 94 and Lambert Road. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Price asked that Shotwell Road and Kishpaugh Road be added to the list of roads needing repairs.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Ted Rodman reported that the DOT plans to pave Route 94 through the township. They will mill and pave from Mohican Road to Kerr’s Corner Road. All work will be done during the night and one lane will remain open at all times. The brick veneer crosswalks will be discontinued and the walkway will be painted.

With regard to the Paulina Dam, Mr. Rodman received an email from Ruth Ettinger of the Department of Environmental Protection stating that the summary overview for the removal of the dam has been completed. Mr. Rodman said that the DEP is moving forward towards the removal of the dam.

Mr. Rodman reported that Buck Hill Brewery, the new owner of the Forge Restaurant property, is in the process of getting approval for a new septic system. A treatment works permit application is being prepared and it is required that the Township Committee approve a resolution stating that there are no objections to said permit. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

Mr. Rodman introduced Mr. James Frick of Blair Academy, to speak about the plans for Park Street. Mr. Frick distributed plans for the road, which basically include the addition of 11 parking spots at the end of the road. This work will be funded by Blair Academy, and then the road will be turned over to the township. Mr. Rodman said that this is informational at this point. Blair Academy will draw up an agreement to be approved by Mr. Benbrook.

Mayor Shoemaker stated that former Mayor Mach worked hard on making this a reality and it is now becoming a reality. Mr. Frick said that this project is an example of the township and Blair Academy working together as a partnership for the betterment of the community.

Joel McGreen, Open Space Committee Chair, spoke about the possible purchase of the Kostenbader property in conjunction with the Ridge and Valley Conservancy. He explained that Mr. Canace’s letter is in request of up to \$125,000 for the purchase of this property. If grant monies are approved, the total to be spent would only be \$57,500. Mr. Lance made a motion that the township commit up to \$125,000 for the purchase of the Kostenbader property. The motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

FROM THE PUBLIC

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, said that she is upset that the Committee is considering reversing a decision of the Land Use Board. Mrs. Ardia also wanted to know if the number of DPW workers has been reduced or if their hours have been curtailed. Mayor Shoemaker answered that the hours are the same and the staff has not been reduced.

Susan Price, Alice Court, asked when the audio of the meetings will be available on the website. Mr. Avery responded that this should be completed in a couple of months.

With reference to the school zone issue, Mrs. Price provided email correspondence with the NWRHS Superintendent for distribution to the Committee. She believes that if this matter hinges on saving tax dollars, the Committee should want to know the potential dollar amount being saved. She requested this information from the school superintendent, but never received this information. She is in favor of keeping the school as an R-5 conditional use rather than changing it to a school zone.

Mrs. Price also spoke in favor of the Recreation Director submitting quarterly reports to the Committee, outlining the number of participants in each program.

Sylvia Zika, Four Corners Road, stated that she feels that tax monies should not be used towards recreation. Mrs. Zika asked Mr. Avery what his position is on the recreation issue. Mr. Avery stated that the value of recreation programs is greater than just the number of participants. He feels that the programs make the community a much better place to live. He is perfectly happy paying salary for such a valuable, talented and dedicated individual as Mrs. Sagan.

Sal Simonetti, Cobblewood Road, asked if the township planned on making Main Street a one-way street. Mayor Shoemaker said that this has been brought up many times and that there has been strong opposition to this. Rosalie Murray said that a study was made years ago that stated that one-way streets actually encourage traffic to go faster.

Pat DePalma, Frog Pond Road, thanked the Committee for placing the speed limit signs on her street. She requested that signs stating "local delivery only" for trucks be placed on the street.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk