

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, July 8, 2015, 7:30 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. Those present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Pizzaia and Attorney Robert Benbrook.

The **FLAG SALUTE** was conducted.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

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

Joh Thomas Cramer, Main Street, asked about whether the caboos could be turned into a museum. Mr. Lance said that since there is no climate control in the caboos, the Historic Preservation Committee members are not interested in doing this.

Mr. Cramer requested that the heaved sidewalk in front of his residence be repaired. He also reported that the cat situation on Main Street continues to be a severe problem. Mayor Shoemaker said that will speak to the Animal Control Officer for suggestions.

Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, spoke about a section of her road that is breaking down. She would like this added to the list of upcoming repairs. She also asked about the gypsy moth problem. The Clerk advised that this has been reported to the State. An application has been sent to the NJ State Department of Agriculture in request of an egg mass survey, which will be conducted sometime in the fall.

Jackie Espinoza, JCP&L, spoke about the STEM Classroom Grants available through First Energy. The grants are available to the schools for science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. Ms. Espinoza said that this information has been distributed to the schools.

Susan Price, Alice Court, asked if the OEM personnel being appointed tonight are the same individuals who were appointed at the Reorganization Meeting. Mayor Shoemaker responded that they are the same individuals. The Clerk added that the County OEM requires these appointments on the anniversary dates of the initial appointments, which is why the resolutions are being considered tonight.

Mrs. Price also asked about the cost of the port-a-johns for the Tour de Blairstown and whether the township would be paying for this. Mr. Avery responded that this event has been cancelled.

Robert Klemm, Stony Brook Road, said that there are many potholes on his street and requested that the Committee consider making this road a priority.

MINUTES

June 10, 2015 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2015 – 076 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2015 – 077 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2014-008
- 3 – R.2015 – 078 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2014-010
- 4 – R.2015 – 079 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2015-002
- 5 – R.2015 – 080 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2015-003
- 6 – R.2015 – 081 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2015-009
- 7 – R.2015 – 082 Appointment of Emergency Management Coordinator
- 8 – R.2015 – 083 Appointment of Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator
- 9 – R.2015 – 084 Appointment of Additional Deputy Emergency Management Coordinators
- 10 – R.2015 – 085 Appointment of Martin Miller to the Historic Preservation Committee
- 11 – R.2015 – 086 Authorization to Solicit Appraisals for Croucher Property (Open Space)
- 12 – Application for Blue Light Permit – William McNulty, Blairstown Ambulance Corps

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – June Report
- Finance – June Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – June Report
- Police Department – June Report
- Tax Collector – June Report
- Warren County Health Department – June 8, 2015

Mr. Anderson made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Memorandum of Agreement for Police Contract – Arthur Thibault, Labor Attorney

Mr. Anderson introduced Art Thibault, who represented the township in the contract negotiations with the Police Department.

Mr. Thibault highlighted the proposed agreement, which will be retroactive to January 1, 2015 and expire on December 31, 2017. Salaries will be increased 2% each year and paid holidays have been

decreased by 2 days. The sick time buy-back provision has been eliminated, which will save the township approximately \$76,000 per year. The PBA also agreed to contribute to retiree health insurance. There were also minor language changes to the grievance procedure.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement for the police contract, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1 – from Charles Anderson, submitting letter of resignation for Land Use Board

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to accept Mr. Anderson's letter of resignation, with regrets. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

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

2 – from Eleanor Young, Pass It Along, regarding 4th Annual Pass It Along Bike Tour on September 12, 2015

Mayor Shoemaker explained that since the bike tour route will include Blairstown, written approval is needed by the Township Committee. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

3 – from William Hunt, Deputy Public Safety Director, re: Regional Warren and Hunterdon County FEMA FMA Grant Opportunity, Authorization and Letter of Intent to Participate

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this was already approved by the Township Committee. Mr. Anderson made a motion to reconfirm the township's intent to participate in this program, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

Other than the information regarding the gypsy moth egg mass survey, the Clerk had nothing further to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson thanked Mr. Thibault for his work in representing the Township in the police contract negotiations.

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of June. He added that the township has a great group of officers.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Environmental Commission will not meet again until September.

The next Seniors' trip will be on July 29th. They will be going to Mt. Haven, Pa. to see a salute to America.

With regard to COAH, the township has filed its Declaratory Judgment and awaits a response from the courts.

Mr. Avery said that Theresa Tamburro, COAH Municipal Housing Liaison, has requested an hourly increase in salary from \$30 to \$35. Mr. Avery emphasized that no other monies or benefits are associated with her employment. Mr. Lance said that it would have to fall within the salary ordinance range for her title. Mr. Avery made a motion to increase the hourly salary to \$35, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Mr. Avery reported that the ad hoc committee on the ordinance review is almost finished and will report to the Committee on their findings.

The Cedar Lake Horse Farm clean-up was postponed due to the weather. The new date is Saturday, July 18th. Mr. Avery urged anyone interested to sign up to assist.

The Fourth of July Celebration was a huge success. There were many activities, and the Rotary's duck race was very popular.

The sewer feasibility committee met with the engineer for a preliminary report of the available options and to gather information on what is allowed by the Environmental Protection Agency. A complete report should be available in a month or two.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance announced that Christine Rolef, CFO, passed the Qualified Purchasing Agent examination. This means that the bid threshold for the township is \$40,000, as opposed to \$17,500 for a municipality without a QPA.

Mr. Lance congratulated Mr. Thibault and the PBA members for a harmonious negotiation of the new contract.

The Historic Preservation Committee's newest member, Martin Miller, will be a great asset with his vast knowledge of local history.

The Historic Preservation presented a walking tour of the village area on the Fourth of July and manned a booth at Footbridge Park. The next walking tour will be held on October 31st.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker asked whether the Committee should consider adopting a noxious weed ordinance, as there is a structure on High Street about which there have been many complaints. Mr. Lance said that Hackettstown has an ordinance that the township should look at. The Committee will review this ordinance for guidance.

The Blirstown Hose Company would like to switch from DSL hook-up to cable service at the Stillwater Road Fire House for better reliability. The cost will be \$120 installation fee, plus \$9.02 per month more than the current charge. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mayor Shoemaker reported that the Sand Hill Road paving project has been completed and that the job came in under budget.

Mayor Shoemaker said that there have been complaints about the condition of many roads, most recently Gaisler Road and Ridge Lane. Mr. Rodman and the DPW Foreman will be reviewing the road repair schedule and updating it to reflect those roads with a greater need of repair.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that he has received an estimate from Bartlett Tree Service to attempt to save the trees at the Municipal Building. The estimate is approximately \$3,200 to treat these trees. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to spend up to \$3,200 for this work, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mayor Shoemaker announced that a letter was received from Governor Chris Christie, stating that the township has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$165,000 for the preservation of the Kostenbader property.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that the County is interested in having Main Street turned over to the township. The Mayor will be attending informal meetings on this and will keep the Committee apprised.

Mayor Shoemaker read the letter sent to the Township Committee from the Blirstown Republican Committee regarding the three names submitted for consideration to replace Susan Price. The names submitted are Walter Orcutt, Jim Gilmore, Jr. and Harold Price.

Mr. Lance, Mr. Avery and Mr. Anderson all expressed disappointment in the names submitted by the Blirstown Republican Committee. After discussion, Mr. Anderson made a motion to appoint Harold Price as Committee Member to replace Susan Price. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Benbrook directed Mr. Price to make arrangements to be sworn in before the next Committee meeting. Mr. Price said that he believes the logical choice would be to appoint the next highest vote getter in the primary election, Jim Gilmore. For this reason, Mr. Price declined accepting the Committee seat until Mr. Gilmore were offered the position.

Mr. Benbrook said that the Township Committee fulfilled its statutory obligation in appointing one of the three candidates presented by the Blairstown Republican Committee. In light of Mr. Price's declining his appointment, Mr. Benbrook's opinion to the Committee is to keep the seat vacant until the November general election.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman said that the township is waiting for news on the Paulina Dam from the NJ State Department of Environmental Protection.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, wanted the audience to understand that both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party have the opportunity to put a name forward on the November ballot. Independent candidates can run, also.

Susan Price, Alice Court, objected to the characterization of the process by which the County Committee chose the three names presented to the Township Committee.

Mrs. Price asked about the well testing. Mayor Shoemaker said that the arrangements are still in the process of being made. In response to Mrs. Price's inquiry, Mayor Shoemaker said that the Hazard Mitigation Plan has been submitted to the County.

Mrs. Price asked if the new police agreement addressed a COO position and light duty provisions. Mr. Thibault responded that the COO position is now in the contract.

Mrs. Price would like more information listed on the agenda regarding business being conducted by the Committee.

Harold Price, Alice Court, asked if the Committee planned on rescinding the vote appointing him as candidate to replace Susan Price. Mr. Benbrook said that this required no formal action.

Debra Waldron, Maple Lane, has concerns about the speed of Century Link and DSL with regard to internet access. She would like the Committee to assist the residents in getting upgrades to the equipment or allow competitors to provide the service. Mayor Shoemaker responded that this is a matter to be brought up to the Board of Utilities. She added that Hardwick is also interested in this and perhaps the two municipalities together would have more weight in getting something done.

Mrs. Waldron, as Land Use Board Chair, reminded the Committee that her board is down one member. She requested the appointment of a new member as soon as possible since summer vacations and conflicts of interest cause absences and lack of voting members.

Rosalie Murray, Cobblewood Road, reminded everyone that the Cedar Lake Horse Farm clean-up will take place this Saturday. There has been a great deal of interest in this project and she is hoping for a good turnout.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Lance. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk