

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, June 10, 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, Mrs. Price 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

Jon Thomas Cramer, Main Street, spoke to the Committee regarding the following topics:

- Livia Angelone and he are starting a crime watch.
- He would like the Committee to do something with the caboose, possibly a small museum.
- He would like to become a member of the Historic Preservation Committee.
- On June 20th at 8 am, he will be holding a Main Street wash down.
- He would like a liaison appointed between the public and the Police Department.
- The Kathleen house on Main Street is still having a problem with feral cats.

Mayor Shoemaker thanked Mr. Cramer for his comments. Mr. Avery said that he found out that the person who has been feeding the feral cats also has been trapping and spaying them. She is an animal lover who is trying to get the cats placed in homes.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, spoke on behalf of the Blairstown Enhancement Committee. The group will be holding a clean-up day on June 27th at the Cedar Lake Horse Farm property. This is in conjunction with the State DEP, which will be supplying a dumpster, paint, and other materials. Mrs. Murray is seeking volunteers to supply the manpower for the clean-up. She will put a sign-up sheet in the Municipal Building.

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, reported that people are having campfires on their properties on Bridge Street. Ms. Angelone also asked about the weight limit signs in the village area. She requested that the County and the municipality send a joint letter to the State requesting restrictions on certain roads.

Ms. Angelone also asked about getting prior notice from the County when the streets are going to be cleaned.

MINUTES

May 13, 2015 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mayor Shoemaker corrected his statement regarding the Emex Contract on page 7, changing the length of the contract from three years to two years.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the May 13th minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

ORDINANCE 2015 – 01 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$43,500 FOR ACQUISITION OF A SPORT UTILITY VEHICLE IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$41,325 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION Adoption, Second Reading

Committee Discussion – There were no comments from the Committee.

Public Hearing – Open/Close

Mayor Shoemaker opened the Public Hearing. As there were no comments or questions from the public, Mayor Shoemaker closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lance made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2015-01 on second reading, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2015 – 066 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2015 – 067 Audit Review
- 3 – R.2015 – 068 Award of State Contract Purchases for 2016 Ford Utility Police Interceptor
- 4 – R.2015 – 069 Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation – Clean Communities
- 5 – Application for Blue Light Permit – Amy Zaremba, Blairstown Ambulance Corps

Mr. Avery requested that No. 3 be removed from the Consent Agenda. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-068, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. Mr. Avery commented that he is concerned about the all black color scheme of the police vehicles, which he feels is not in keeping with the rural character of the community. After discussion, Mr. Anderson said that this matter would be brought up with Director Gara.

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

NORTH WARREN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL 2015/2016 BUDGET PRESENTATION by Dr. Brian Fogelson, Superintendent and Christina Sharkey, Administrator

Dr. Fogelson gave an overview of the 2015/2016 school budget. He outlined the school's achievements, which include a large selection of AP course offerings, over \$13 million being awarded in scholarships to the Class of 2014 graduates, and the NWR Marching Band being named 2013 National Champions.

The budget goals include increasing academic achievement, maintaining and enhancing existing program offerings, offering more on-line options for students, and building on staff professionalism.

Capital projects in the budget include continued payments on a technology upgrade lease. They will continue preventative maintenance and make security upgrades by hiring security personnel.

Anticipated revenues for this coming school budget total \$16,698,408.00. The school will be receiving \$5,095,326 in State Aid, the same amount as last year.

Reductions have been made in various areas, which include the elimination of the building project, delaying the purchase of computer and lab tables, and the reduction of staff members and one administrator.

The tax impact for Blairstown in this budget is a 1.9 cent increase, which equates to a \$56.43 annual increase on the average assessed property of \$295,166.00, or an increase of \$4.70 per month on the average assessed property.

Mayor Shoemaker thanked Dr. Fogelson for attending tonight's meeting to present the 2015/2016 budget to the Committee and the residents in attendance. (Dr. Fogelson's complete presentation is attached to the minutes.) Mayor Shoemaker also wished Dr. Fogelson well in his upcoming retirement.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – May Report
- Finance – May Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – May Report
- Police Department – May Report
- Tax Collector – May Report
- Warren County Health Department – May 11, 2015

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Robert Van Wattering, Blairstown Rotary Club, regarding July 4th fireworks

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve the Rotary Club's request for \$3,000 for Fourth of July fireworks, and for police assistance at the event. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

2 – from Jon Thomas Cramer, regarding the placement of speed limit signs on Main Street

After discussion, the Committee agreed to make a written request to the County for the placement of speed limit signs on Main Street.

Mayor Shoemaker discussed the property maintenance agreement to cut the grass and hay at the Jones Farm. He asked Mr. Benbrook why requests for proposals were not sought. Mr. Benbrook replied that this was pointless since no monies were being paid and there basically are no criteria by which to choose a winning proposal. Since Mr. Mott offered to perform this work, Mr. Benbrook wrote an agreement between the township and Mr. Mott.

Mr. Lance questioned whether the State of NJ allows the township to cut the grass between certain times of the year. Mr. Benbrook said that our records do not indicate this restriction.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the property maintenance agreement, once both parties find the agreement satisfactory. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Avery said that the Blairstown Enhancement Committee is asking the township to waive the ordinance that prohibits alcoholic beverages and vendors at Sycamore Park. Mr. Avery explained that the Tour de Blairstown event would have vendors at the park, as well as wine tasting. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mayor Shoemaker spoke about a letter received by Debra Waldron, Land Use Board Chair, regarding outstanding violations at the Darst property. She would like the Committee to work towards having these issues resolved. Mr. Rodman will be speaking with our Zoning Official about this matter.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook spoke about the Municipal Shared Services Defense Agreement with regard to COAH. This agreement would hire professionals in a cost effective manner to deal with our COAH obligation. The initial cost is \$2,000.00 for the township to participate in this shared service. Mr. Benbrook

recommended that the township enter into this agreement. Mr. Avery made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign this agreement and to authorize the initial expenditure of \$2,000.00 for our participation. The motion was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported that Sand Hill Road paving is finished. The road still needs to be striped. The project came in under budget. Mr. Rodman will prepare a resolution for a change order on the project for the July meeting.

Mr. Rodman and Mr. Diehl met with representatives from Blair Academy regarding parking spaces at the end of Academy Street and Main Street. They will present a plan shortly and Blair Academy will be funding the entire project.

Mr. Rodman reported that there was a meeting on May 27th to discuss the sewer feasibility project. There will be another meeting sometime next week.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mrs. Price read the following statement:

I am resigning from my position as Blairstown Township Committeewoman to be effective at the start of the meeting tonight following Roll Call and the Flag Salute. I felt I had to wait until this portion of the agenda to make this announcement.

I have come to this decision following much prayer and thought. I do not take this action lightly.

When I was called to serve in this capacity in the spring of 2013, and I mean literally phoned, I prayed and gave much thought then, too, before agreeing to step up.

It's nearly a year and a half later since my swearing-in and I have done my absolute best to do my absolute best. I am pleased with a number of my behind-the-scenes accomplishments that have protected both our town and our public money. However, I am now clear that the Township Committee arena (and I do mean arena) is not a good fit for my temperament, my training and skills, and my desire to contribute. I believe that I can better serve our town in other capacities and look forward to exploring those, especially at this time in my life at age 69.

For the voters and residents of our town who may be disappointed with this news, I am disappointed, too. For my friends, both new and old, I am grateful for their heartening encouragement and support. Most importantly, I will always appreciate my best friend and lifelong partner, my beloved husband Harry, for this complete belief in me and for his always having my back.

As a new believer in the Lord our God, I will continue to pray for our elected officials here in Blairstown and at every other level of government through our nation so that these leaders will have good health and exercise good judgement in governing on behalf of all of us, We the People.

May God bless Blairstown and this amazing country.

Mayor Shoemaker thanked Mrs. Price for her contributions and wished her well on her future non-governmental role.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to accept Mrs. Price's resignation, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Lance remarked that all Committee members disagree from time to time, but he appreciates her diligence and honesty during her tenure as Committeewoman. All members agreed and wished her well.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of May.

Mr. Anderson read a recommendation from Director Gara to promote Officer Jarret Bisanzio from Probationary Officer to Step I Officer, effective June 2, 2015. Mr. Anderson made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Anderson reported that he received the Memorandum of Agreement for the new police agreement today but has not had a chance to review it yet. This will be addressed at the July meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery said the Environmental Commission did not meet this month and will not meet again until September.

The Senior Citizens Advisory Committee will be taking their second trip to Hunt's Landing in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Avery attended a webinar on May 29th with regard to COAH.

The ad hoc group is still evaluating the township ordinances and will present a written report on their findings in the near future.

The Tour de Blairstown event is moving along and the BEC is working closely with the Police Department. They are looking for volunteers to assist at the event.

Plans for the Fourth of July celebration are in full force. Vendors are welcome to participate.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance pointed out that the annual audit listed no findings or recommendations, as has been the case for many years now.

Mr. Lance said that he was one of Lt. Losey's students at a defibrillator class and was impressed with his knowledge and his ability as an instructor.

As part of the Fourth of July celebration events, the Historic Preservation Committee will be conducting a walking tour of the village area at 2pm. The Committee will also have a tent at the Tour de Blairstown event on August 8th and will have an historic exhibit.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker reported that Frelinghuysen has not paid their 2014 and 2015 contribution towards fire protection from Blairstown Hose Company No. 1. In 2013, they only paid half of what was due. Mayor Shoemaker is proposing that a letter be sent asking for their contribution to be paid up to date. The Committee was in agreement to send this letter.

The Emex energy auction took place today. Mayor Shoemaker said that the best price was bid by Major Energy. Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the two year agreement with Major Energy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

The COAH group home in the process of being purchased has been inspected and the necessary renovations to convert the residence into a group home will fall into the amount set aside for this project. The closing on this property is set for June 30th.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that the trees in front of the Municipal Building have been inspected and are not healthy due to being incorrectly planted. Bartlett Tree Company submitted an estimate to replant and/or treat trees on this property that totals approximately \$3,000.00. After discussion, the Committee decided to put off making a decision on this until researching this further.

A representative of the Superior Court of NJ will be making a site visit to the Blairstown Court in Knowlton to perform an annual comprehensive report.

Mayor Shoemaker received a communication from Office of Congressman Matt Cartwright of Pennsylvania, asking for support for the Lackawanna railway passenger service. It was the consensus of opinion of the Committee to support this.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Beth Arena, High Street, said that she feels the township has lost an asset in Mrs. Price on the Committee and wished to thank her for her contributions.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, said that communities with good railway transportation are desirable places for families to settle. She knows that this is expensive, but feels the benefits to a community are immeasurable. She is in favor of the Township Committee's decision to support the Lackawanna project.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk