

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Friday, March 6, 2015 – 10 AM  
TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**MINUTES**

**OPENING; ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Shoemaker. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Price and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Pizzaia and CFO Christine Rolef. Mr. Anderson was absent.

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was conducted.

**SUNSHINE STATEMENT**

Mayor Shoemaker read the following statement: Notice of this Special Meeting has been sent to two official newspapers of Blairstown Township noting the date, time and agenda thereof in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**DISCUSSION – 2015 Budget**

Mayor Shoemaker asked Mrs. Rolef to make a brief presentation of the proposed 2015 budget. She said that this proposed budget maintains a zero tax rate and that the overall increase from last year's budget is .08 percent. The increase is mostly due to health benefit cost increases and debt service payments. Health benefit costs in this year's budget increased by approximately \$45,000.00.

Mrs. Rolef said that she is working with Mr. Lance and Mr. Kevin Benbrook on ways to reduce the township's burden regarding health benefit costs. They will be looking into alternative insurance programs, such as self-insurance. Mr. Lance would like to look into State plans that have a high deductible, with the possibility of the township covering these costs by reimbursing the employee.

Mrs. Price asked about the memorandum regarding the DPW Foreman moving to the Water Company. She thinks this is a good idea. Mrs. Price feels that since we have to run a water company, it should be done efficiently and responsibly. She also would like another member of the DPW to be trained as a licensed water operator and to have the current water operator reduced in hours as a backup. It was the consensus of opinion that this should be discussed in closed session as a personnel matter at a future regular meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Pat DePalma, Frog Pond Road, asked that road repairs be included in the 2015 budget. She said that the DPW crew did a great job on plowing, but this winter was hard on her street. She also requested that Sand Hill Road be repaired. She also feels that road repairs should be made a priority over recreation programs.

Mayor Shoemaker responded that Sand Hill Road paving project is planned for the spring.

Mr. Lance said that the roads will be scheduled for repairs based on the severity of their condition. Mrs. Price requested the list of roads scheduled for repairs.

Christine Beegle, Historic Preservation Committee Chair, requested \$5,000.00 additional funds in the Historic Preservation Committee budget for their projects. She presented a list of projects being planned by the committee, which include reworking of historic plaques, a grave marker for Benjamin Smith, renovations to the ticket booth at Footbridge Park, a 175<sup>th</sup> commemorative booklet, and a Roy's Theatre poster.

There was a discussion on whether some of these projects could be funded by Open Space Funds. Mrs. Price suggested that Ms. Beegle attempt to get this additional funding through private sources. Mayor Shoemaker asked Ms. Beegle to submit a prioritized list of these projects. After discussion, the Committee agreed to increase the Historic Preservation Committee budget to \$5,000.00. In response to a question from Mrs. Price, Mrs. Rolef said that the \$2,500.00 to be added to the Historic Preservation Committee budget will come from the Water budget.

Mr. Lance suggested removing all monies from the Environmental Commission budget. Harold Price, Environmental Commission Chair, said that he requested that their budget be reduced to \$500.00. Mr. Lance said that no monies were spent from the Environmental Commission budget in 2014. Mr. Price said that he was reimbursed for items needed for the roadside clean-up project. Mr. Lance and Mrs. Rolef agreed that the reimbursement was made from the Clean Communities budget. The Committee, with the exception of Mrs. Price, agreed to reduce the Environmental Commission budget to zero.

David Fine, Carhart Street, read a letter from Sylvia Zika, stating that she believes the township should solicit proposals for professional services and that monies should not be spent on recreational activities.

Mr. Fine asked if the proposed budget included funding for the Paulina Dam. Mr. Lance said that removing the dam would be funded by the DEP if grant monies are secured. Mr. Fine also asked if water company improvements were included in the budget. Mr. Lance responded that \$81,000.00 of capital outlay has been included in this budget. This is money over and above regular operating expenses to be used for improvements.

Mr. Fine also asked about the second well of the water company and what the repercussions would be to the water users if it malfunctioned. Mr. Lance said that the second well is monitored, but said that the first well satisfies the water needs of all water customers.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Avery. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 am.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk