

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 11, 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 Kevin 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

Carol Cook, Four Corners Road, complimented the DPW for the excellent job they did this winter on the snow plowing.

MINUTES

February 11, 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, Price, Shoemaker

March 6, 2015 – Special Meeting Minutes

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

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2015 – 033 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2015 – 034 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2011-01
- 3 – R.2015 – 035 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-04
- 4 – R.2015 – 036 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2014-018
- 5 – R.2015 – 037 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-05
- 6 – R.2015 – 038 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2014-004
- 7 – R.2015 – 039 Credit Adjustment to Water Account

- 8 – R 2015 – 040 Authorization to Transfer Funds
- 9 – R.2015 – 041 Authorization to Cancel Improvement Authorizations of the General Capital Fund
- 10 – R.2015 – 042 Transfer of 2014 Water Overpayment to 2015 Water Account and Credit Adjustment to 2015 Water Account
- 11 – Approval of Application for Membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 – John R. Allen

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

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

INTRODUCTION OF 2015 BUDGET

- R.2015 – 043 Special Items of Revenue – General Capital Fund Balance and Reserve for Sale of Municipal Assets
- R.2015 – 044 Special Items of Revenue – Grants
- R.2015 – 045 Introduction of 2015 Budget

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the resolutions, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker. Mrs. Price requested that R.2015-045 be removed for separate consideration. Mr. Lance and Mayor Shoemaker amended their motions to approve R 2015-043 and R.2015-044.

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

Mrs. Price made the following statement outlining her reasons for her intentions to vote against the 2015 budget:

The budget we are introducing tonight was not a result of a collaboration among us all, despite the short special meeting to discuss it on Friday, the 6th. There definitely was no way for all of us to work together during the two earlier sub-committee meetings as only two TC members could be present at any time. Further, since my swearing-in in January 2014, by design or not, I continue to have virtually no administrative assignments, assignments that have been divided among the four of you, despite my decades-long business and professional experience. Therefore, with nearly no input into this document addressing a 3.9 million dollar operation, I am hard-pressed to endorse it.

Second, nearly 7 weeks ago, we received a memo from our DPW supervisor making a strong case for re-vamping how we operate the water company with corresponding suggestions for improvements to DPW operations. Rather than seriously entertaining some or all of these suggestions in advance of producing this budget, I am concerned that now we will have no provision to adopt any of these changes, changes that would have be offset by other line items in order to avoid a Blairstown property tax, again. Our reality is that we own a water company and we should be running it as efficiently as possible rather than being pushed into what appears to be patchwork fixes.

Finally, there are line items in this budget by which I simply cannot abide.

Therefore, as we go to a vote for this budget, my vote will be “no ”

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2015-045, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. Mr. Lance commented that the budget is 0.84% lower than the 2014 budget and maintains a zero tax rate.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – February Report
- Finance – February Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – February Report
- Police Department – February Report
- Tax Collector – February Report and 2014 Annual Report
- Warren County Health Department – February 9, 2015

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

None.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There were no comments on the General Correspondence.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

With regard to the proposed school zone ordinance, Mr. Benbrook said that he has been in contact with the attorney who represents the elementary school. Mr. Benbrook sent the attorney a copy of the draft ordinance along with a memorandum explaining the township’s rationale on including the elementary school.

Mr. Lance commented on Municipal Housing Liaison’s thoughts on this ordinance, indicating that making a school zone would reduce the township’s COAH housing obligations. Mr. Lance suggested making a separate school zone for Blair Academy to reduce it further. Mrs. Price said that if Blair Academy were not in a residential zone then it probably would not affect COAH. Mr. Benbrook believes Mrs. Price is correct, but said that the township should look at all of the township’s zones in light of the court’s recent ruling. Mr. Benbrook reported that the Supreme Court recently made a ruling on COAH, basically returning municipalities to Mount Laurel

remedies. He said that it is important for the township to keep on top of this to ensure that a builder does not move in with plans for high density housing.

Mayor Shoemaker said that the Land Use Board's Planner will be attending their meeting on March 16th and the Committee is welcome to attend for informational purposes.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of February. He said that the township has been in the process of updating police vehicles. He expects to make the next replacement in 2016.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the sound system in the room has been worked on and microphones have been repaired.

The Environmental Commission held their reorganization meeting. Harold Price is chair, Tom Dust is vice-chair, and Pat Gunther is secretary.

The Seniors Advisory Committee is planning their activities for the year. They will be going on four trips and will also hold their annual Christmas party.

The Givens Belet building is undergoing renovations. The floors have been sanded and the walls painted. Groups are scheduling meetings at this time. Mayor Shoemaker said that the American Legion volunteers have worked hard on getting the building into good shape and requested the Clerk to draft a letter to the Legion expressing the Committee's appreciation.

Mr. Avery held an open door meeting on March 9th. Christine Beegle, Historic Preservation Committee Chair, came to speak with him about additions to the website.

The Economic Development Committee is meeting twice a month. They are planning on making a presentation to the Committee at the May meeting.

Planning is underway for the Fourth of July celebration. Information to vendors will be sent out shortly.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance thanked the Boy Scouts from Troop 140 for attending tonight's meeting.

Mr. Lance reported on the steady decrease in the township's budgets since 2006. He thanked the Committee, the CFO and the department heads for their input in the 2015 budget.

Mr. Lance said that the Historic Preservation Committee is very active and is planning to use the image of an old poster to make and sell t-shirts

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE

Mrs. Price reported that the signed MOU has been received by the township. She believes that the next step is for the township to communicate with the State indicating that we will be working with the Arc on this project.

The Open Space Committee meeting was cancelled due to the weather.

With regard to the sewer feasibility study with Van Cleef, Mrs. Price said that the agreement is being reviewed by Attorney Robert Benbrook. She requested that Mr. Kevin Benbrook send this agreement to the Mayor for signature after attorney review and that she be apprised of any changes made to the agreement.

Mrs. Price reported that Ron Schone has joined the sewer feasibility group.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker said that we are continuing to search for the water leak at the Water Company. The firm hired by the township will be coming out tonight to attempt to find the problem.

The township is in the process of working on the Hazard Mitigation Plan required by the County in order for the township to be eligible for FEMA funds in the event of an emergency. There will be another meeting with the county on March 20th to review information submitted by the municipality.

With regard to the Kostenbader property, a grant application was submitted to Green Acres for \$165,000. It is expected that a decision on whether we receive the grant monies will be made next month.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Sylvia Zika, Four Corners Road, stated that she believes that the township should receive proposals for professional services. She asked that the Committee consider soliciting proposals the next time these agreements are made. She also believes that it is not the function of government to provide recreational activities with taxpayer monies.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Remarks by Committeewoman Susan Price to fellow TC members at 3/11/15
TC meeting:

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