

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, September 9, 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. Avery, Mr. Lance (arrived at 9:06 pm), Mr. Price and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Pizzaia and Attorney Kevin Benbrook. Mr. Anderson was absent.

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

Susan Price, Alice Court, asked if the Committee planned on getting answers to the questions she posed of the school superintendent dealing with school zones. These questions were distributed to the Committee in an email. Mrs. Price feels that it is important to know how much money the school would be saving if a school zone were to be instituted in the zoning code. Mayor Shoemaker said that he would follow up on getting a response to these questions.

Raymond Snyder, Cedar Lake Road, expressed dissatisfaction in his dealings with the Zoning Official. He said that he will speak about this in depth at the public portion of the meeting.

**MINUTES**

August 12, 2015 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

**PROCLAMATION** – September is National Preparedness Month

Mayor Shoemaker read the Proclamation proclaiming September as National Preparedness Month.

**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, Adoption, Second Reading**

**PUBLIC HEARING** – Open/Close

Postponed due to a lack of 2/3 vote of full governing body, as required by law.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1 – R.2015 – 104 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2015 – 105 Approval of Liquor License Renewals

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

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

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

- Clerk – August Report
- Finance – August Finance and Fuel Reports
- Police Department – August Report
- Tax Collector – August Report
- Warren County Health Department – August 10, 2015

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

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

Mayor Shoemaker introduced Debbie Hirt, Community Relations Manager for the Department of Transportation, Frank Passaro, Construction Supervisor from J.A. Alexander, Inc., and Tony Suozzo, Resident Engineer from the Department of Transportation. They are here tonight to speak about the paving project that will take place on Route 94 from Mohican Road to Kerr’s Corner Road.

Debbie Hirt said that this project will involve some detouring, which will be proposed to the Township Committee for their approval. Tony Suozzo explained that Route 94 will be resurfaced, beginning at Mohican Road and working towards Kerr’s Corner Road. There are issues to be worked out from the bridge to Kerr’s Corner Road, so the project will begin with paving from Mohican to Bridge Street. This will be a night-time operation, from 8pm to 6am, with alternating lane closures. The detours will be necessary for side streets that will not have access to Route 94 during the repaving project. He estimates that the project will take only five or six nights from start to finish. The starting date is yet to be determined.

Frank Passaro exhibited a drawing of the area involved and explained the proposed detour routes in detail. He said that notifications will be sent to all residences and businesses along the affected route.

Mr. Benbrook suggested that the Committee authorize the Mayor to approve the detour routes on behalf of the township. Mayor Shoemaker made this motion, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

**COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE** for information and possible action

1 – from Robert Bernstein, regarding damage to Frog Pond Road

Mayor Shoemaker said that in response to this letter, he requested the DPW Foreman to visit this site to assess the damage.

2 – from Brian Appezzato, Senior Planner, Warren County Planning Department, re: Request for Letter of Support for Warren County Transportation Plan Update

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this is a letter of support in order for the County to get funding for an updated Transportation Plan. Mr. Price questioned whether this was really a step towards regionalized planning, which he is against. Mayor Shoemaker felt that the letter of support in no way was an endorsement of the eventual findings of the study. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to authorize the letter of support. As there was no second, the motion failed.

**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Mayor Shoemaker commented that the township received a letter from the Department of Agriculture, stating that a gypsy moth egg mass survey will be conducted sometime in the fall.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY**

Mr. Benbrook said that the COAH analysis of housing obligations, being conducted through a research agreement with Rutgers, is essentially completed. Dr. Burchell, who was hired to perform this study, has health issues and a replacement to finish his work is being sought. Mr. Benbrook said that COAH is still basically on hold and he is keeping abreast of the situation.

Mr. Benbrook will present the Committee with a draft ordinance regarding the maintenance of properties in foreclosure. He will also prepare an ordinance to amend the ordinance regarding stop signs to reflect the name change of Kill Road to Ward Road.

Mr. Benbrook has received a draft ordinance from Service Electric Cable Company and will have it ready for presentation at the next meeting.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

The town-wide cleanup is scheduled for September 25 and 26. Vouchers will be available in the Municipal Building beginning September 14.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER**

Mr. Rodman said that 24 grates are required by the State to be replaced and installed on Sand Hill Road. He said that cost for these grates will be approximately \$5,400. This needs to be completed before we can be reimbursed for the Sand Hill Road resurfacing project. Mr. Rodman said that there is a question of whether the cost of the grates should come from the Capital Account or from the Open Space Account. After discussion, Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to take this expense out of the Capital Account. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Rodman said that the Ambulance Corps is looking into having a light on Route 94 coming out of the Municipal Building. Mr. Rodman said that he spoke to Debbie Hirt, who said that the township would have to pay for approximately one-fourth of the cost. Mr. Rodman will follow up to see how much money would be involved in this project.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

##### **COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY**

The Environmental Commission met in September and elected Tom Dust Acting Chair.

The seniors will be going to Woodlock, PA on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

With regard to COAH, Mr. Avery said that the Municipal Housing Liaison reported that the ARC representatives have received an appraisal on the proposed group home and are waiting to make a bid on the house.

The sewer ad hoc committee will be meeting this Friday with the engineer who is conducting the feasibility study. It will be determined at this time what format is to be used for their presentation to the EPA.

The feral cat problem in the village area continues to be actively addressed.

The Blairstown Enhancement Committee is working on the wall on Main Street with regard to making it more attractive.

The audio of the meetings are now available on the website.

The Fourth of July Celebration Committee will now be chaired by Karen Lance.

##### **COMMITTEE MEMBER PRICE**

Mr. Price reported that there was a meeting on August 29 between representatives from the Township Committee, Warren County, and Ridge and Valley Conservancy at the Kostenbader property. There is the possibility of receiving a grant to preserve this property.

Mr. Price presented a quotation for purchase of a new loader for the DPW. It is available through a national cooperative. He said that the present equipment used by the DPW is unsafe. He has given all the necessary information to Mayor Shoemaker and hopes to have the support to authorize this purchase. The pricing is effective through December 1.

Mr. Price wanted it on the record that a water problem at 34 Gaisler Road will be addressed. Mayor Shoemaker responded that he and the DPW Foreman will look at this after the next rain.

##### **MAYOR SHOEMAKER**

Mayor Shoemaker spoke about the wall on Main Street currently being addressed by the Blairstown Enhancement Committee. He said that this concrete wall has been a source of concern for years and it is unknown who owns the property. Robert Berry, Surveyor, has done some preliminary deed research to ascertain the owner of the property. He has agreed to finish this research for \$700. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to authorize Mr. Berry to complete his research for this purpose for the fee of \$700. Mr. Avery seconded this motion.

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

Mayor Shoemaker said that he was told by a Warren County representative that a portion of Route 521 in Blairstown was turned over to the township years ago. Since no one has any recollection of this, Mayor Shoemaker would like this verified.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that he has received complaints about a gymnasium being run out of the Mohican Road Fire Hall. The Zoning Official is following up on this violation of running a business in an R-5 zone. There is also a concern about how this impacts our insurance, as the Fire Department is covered under the Township's insurance. Mayor Shoemaker has expressed to the Fire Department that they should be concerned about their tax exempt status. He also questioned whether the Township should continue maintenance on this property. After discussion, it was decided that Mr. Benbrook will correspond with the Fire Department expressing the concerns of the Township Committee. Mr. Benbrook will also speak with the Tax Assessor with regard to this issue.

**FROM THE PUBLIC**

Susan Price, Alice Court, asked about the status of the well testing. Mayor Shoemaker replied that they are scheduled to be tested either this Friday or the following Monday.

Mrs. Price said that the Land Use Board attorney has suggested that there be a joint committee comprised of Land Use Board members and Township Committee members, along with the Municipal Housing Liaison, for the purpose of dealing with COAH matters. Mr. Avery and Mayor Shoemaker will bring this up at the next Land Use Board meeting.

*<Mr. Lance arrived at the meeting at 9:06>*

Mrs. Price asked about the possibility of having a bond ordinance in place for the purchase of the loader for the DPW. She would like the Committee to consider the introduction of this ordinance in October in order to go forward with this purchase in a timely manner.

Mr. Lance said that money is tight and this could most likely cause the need for a municipal tax next year.

Raymond Snyder, Cedar Lake Road, continued his discussion about the Zoning Official and his lack of communication. He said that numerous requests to the Zoning Official for a return call were unanswered. Mayor Shoemaker responded that the Zoning Official told him that he did respond to Mr. Snyder and that Mr. Snyder left a message on his answering machine that he found offensive. Mayor Shoemaker said that he will express Mr. Snyder's concerns to the Zoning Official.

Sylvia Zika, Four Corners Road, said that she has experienced the same problems with the Zoning Official that Mr. Snyder described.

The Clerk requested that Ordinance 2015 – 02 be considered, as Mr. Lance's presence fulfills the 2/3 vote of full governing body.

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**PUBLIC HEARING – Open/Close**

Mayor Shoemaker opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 2015 – 02 to the public. As there were no comments or questions, Mayor Shoemaker closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lance made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2015 – 02 on second reading, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

**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. All members were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk