

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, August 10, 2016, 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:35pm by Mayor Shoemaker. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Leidner and Attorney Kevin Benbrook, Robert Gara, Police Director and members of the Blairstown Police Department.

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.

Police Director Robert Gara noted that the members of the Blairstown Township Police Department were present. Mr. Gara wanted to publically thank the officers for their service and commended them on what a great job the entire force is doing. Mr. Gara added that the reason they are at the meeting is to honor recently promoted Lieutenant Johnsen and to show their support during his swearing in ceremony. Mr. Johnsen is an 8 year veteran of the Blairstown Police force and is an integral part in helping the town and the Department run smoothly. Mr. Johnsen's mother, father and girlfriend were also in attendance.

An **OATH OF OFFICE** was administered to Scott Johnsen for his promotion to Lieutenant of the Blairstown Police Department by Mayor Shoemaker.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Rosalie Murray Heller Hill Road wanted to clarify her statements from the last meeting. Mrs. Murray provided the Township Committee with her bond interest calculations on a bond that was taken in 2008. Mrs. Murray urged the Township Committee to instate a Municipal Tax of \$.04 so that it would have money to purchase what the municipality needs without bonding.

MINUTES

July 13, 2016 – Special Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2016 – Regular Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2016 – Executive Session Minutes

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve all of the July 13th minutes, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.
All ayes: Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2016 – 03 AN ORDINANCE GRANTING MUNICIPAL CONSENT TO THE ISSUANCE OF A FRANCHISE TO SERVICE ELECTRIC CABLE TV OF NEW JERSEY, INC., TO CONSTRUCT, OWN, OPERATE, EXTEND AND MAINTAIN A CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEM IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, COUNTY OF WARREN, SETTING FORTH CONDITIONS ACCOMPANYING THE GRANT OF SAID MUNICIPAL CONSENT AND PROVIDING FOR THE REGULATION AND USE OF SAID SYSTEM

Adoption, Second Reading

Township Attorney Benbrook explained that the public hearing for this ordinance was carried to this meeting to further clarify addresses that would receive complimentary service.

Mr. Avery made a motion to open the public hearing, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker opened the discussion to the public for comments and questions.

Mayor Shoemaker wanted to make it clear to the public that this contract expired around 3 years ago. Representatives from Service Electric came before the Township Committee in the beginning of the renewal process which was about 3 years ago, they were going to get back to us. It took some time for Service Electric to do so.

Mr. Benbrook explained that during those 3 years the Township has received mapping from Service Electric and service has been expanded to several of the areas the Township Committee had concerns about. Currently most of the Township is covered. Mr. Benbrook also wanted to make note that this is a non-exclusive franchise. The Township has continued to get the franchise fees even without an ordinance in place.

Seeing no comments or questions from the public Mr. Lance made a motion to close the public hearing, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2016-03 with the following amendment, in Section 15 under Free Services adding line number 7 – (1) Cable Connection for Blairstown Masonic Lodge #165 at 11 Stillwater Road, Blairstown. Seconded by Mr. Avery.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.

All ayes: Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2016-07 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$40,000 FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WELL FOR THE WATER DEPARTMENT IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$40,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION

Adoption, Second Reading

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this is to cover the cost of a new back up well which is being required by the State.

PUBLIC HEARING

Motion by Mr. Lance to open the public hearing, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker opened the discussion to the public for comments and questions.

Mr. McKenna questioned where the back up well will be located. Mayor Shoemaker explained it has been sighted next to the water tower on Blair Academy. It has been sighted on what the hydrogeologists have identified as a fault line which runs right through the campus. The hydrogeologists say that this is the best location for obtaining the right amount of water and water that probably does not need to be filtered.

Mr. Lance made a motion to close the public hearing, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve Bond Ordinance 2016-07, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.

All ayes: Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2016-08 – BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$165,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION OF A DUMP TRUCK FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT FOR AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$156,750 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION

Introduction, First Reading

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this is a bond ordinance to finance the replacement of the largest dump truck we have in our fleet. The dump truck the Township would like to replace is 20 years old and is in desperate need of replacing. The type of replacement truck has been identified and the price includes a snow plow and salt spreading equipment.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2016-08 on first reading, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.

All ayes: Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2016-09 – AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE BLAIRSTOWN DOG PARK

Introduction, First Reading

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the Township Attorney has created this ordinance. Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned who would be responsible for monitoring the Dog Park. Attorney Benbrook explained that the Recreation Committee recommended the rules and created the forms which include a Release of Liability and Application Form. The ordinance requires a sign be placed at the Dog Park posting the rules and referencing this ordinance number. The ordinance also provides that it can be enforced by the Police Department. The only penalty for not complying with this ordinance will be removal from the Dog Park, there are no monetary penalties at this time.

Motion was made by Mr. Avery to approve Ordinance No. 2016-09 on first reading, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.
All ayes: Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2016 – 085 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2016 – 086 Resolution to Cancel Lien on Property
- 3 – R.2016 – 087 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2014-001
- 4 – R.2016 – 088 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2016-002
- 5 – R.2016 – 089 Resolution Adopting the Hazard Mitigation Plan
- 6 – R.2016 – 090 Resolution Approving Corrective Action Plan

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.
All ayes: Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – July Report
- DPW – July Report
- Finance – July Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department –No Report
- Police Department – July Report
- Tax Collector – July Report
- Warren County Health Department – July 8, 2016 Report

Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended that we contact Mr. Summers at the Warren County Health Department and find out why some of the failing septic systems appear on the monthly report over and over again. The Township Committee was in agreement that it would be a good idea.

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

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker
All ayes: Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1- From Mayor Shoemaker to The Board of Chosen Freeholders of Warren County regarding the BEC proposal to install “Welcome to Blairstown” type signs at locations on 5 county roads in Blairstown.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned whether the signs are being installed by the BEC and whether they are covered under the Township’s insurance. Mayor Shoemaker asked Mr. Law if members of the BEC were going to install the signs. Mr. Law noted that the DPW will be installing them when permission is granted.

2- From State of New Jersey Department of Agriculture – letter asking if the municipality would like the Department to conduct gypsy moth mass surveys due to detection of defoliation.

The Township Committee agreed that yes they would like a survey done.

3- From State of New Jersey DOT – continued Shut Down of contract work financed by TTFA funds until further notice.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that there has been no movement in the legislature regarding this shut down.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

A letter was received from the NJABC regarding an application for a Social Affair Permit that was submitted by Blairstown Live Arts for a non-profit event being held on September 17, 2016.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve this application, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Attorney Benbrook reported there is nothing new on Affordable Housing since the win last month at the Appellate Division determining there is not a gap period in COAH. At some point the Township Committee and Land Use Board should have a joint meeting to discuss affordable housing.

Mr. Benbrook also reported that he and Christine Rolef, CFO have sent letters out to the residents on private roads to obtain their Homeowner Association bylaws to help iron out some of the issues that occurred in the snow removal reimbursement process in the past.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Municipal Clerk reported that the Townwide Clean Up dates will be Friday, September 23 & Saturday September 24. The vouchers will be available beginning September 12.

The Municipal Clerk also noted that she is working on getting introduced ordinances onto the website. She also reported that there was a delay in getting the previous meeting recording on the website, this should not be an issue in the future.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported on the stone wall on Heller Hill Road. To repair this wall using the gabion method would be too expensive to pursue. Mr. Rodman is looking into possibly using a strong flexible chicken wire to cover the wall to keep the rocks in place.

Paulina Dam update: no permit has been issued by the state as yet.

Cobblewood Road drainage pipe: Mr. Rodman will have more information on this for the next meeting.

Mr. Rodman reported that the guide rail on Stonybrook Road can be replaced in sections. Mr. Rodman marked the sections in white paint with numbers from 1-22. The Township Committee can decide which section they would like to have replaced. Material prices are through the Morris County Co-Op.

Blair Academy Main Street parking lot: there was an email from Jim Frick to Bill Gleba asking where to go for permit approval because they would like to get it done before the winter. Mr. Frick is waiting for a response.

Acme hired a firm to investigate what is happening with the water suppression system that is in the ground in front of the main entrance to the store. The municipality will get a report back as to what exactly is in the ground and what needs to be done with it.

Mr. Rodman reported that he staked out where to locate the well at the water tower. Blair Academy is interested in knowing how much daily activity will be occurring at the sight of the well because it is in the middle of the campus. The well is located right in the middle of the campus. Mr. Rodman also is looking into an easement agreement between Blair Academy and Blairstown. The owner of the well has to have control of a 50 ft. radius. Mr. Benbrook will reach out to Blair Academy's Attorney regarding this issue.

Regarding the Route 94 Water Treatment Plant, a trench was dug in front of the Plant because we were having problems with the floor and walls cracking. Water started showing up in the trench even in the dry weather. Carl Stoddart placed a fire hose in the catch basin on Route 94 opposite the plant and ran water into it. There was a smell and then water started collecting in the trench. Then red dye was added to the water feed; 5 minutes later the dye showed up in the trench. The dye also started showing up in a drain outlet that goes into the Kill. It appears that there is a crack in the drain pipe and that is causing the undermining of the foundation of the building. Mr. Avery noted that we are going to try to get the State to take responsibility for this.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker noted that in the recent past the Committee has talked about revising the Sidewalk Ordinance due to the poor condition of pavers in town. Mayor Shoemaker and Mrs. Van Valkenburg will walk the area to determine what sections are in need of repair. They will report to Mr. Lance. He will speak to one of the local landscapers to get an idea of what the cost would be to repair the sidewalk.

Mayor Shoemaker also reported that we have not yet received the information from Bill Gleba or the Freeholders regarding ordinances from around the county that have to do with snow removal and sidewalk cleaning. Mayor Shoemaker will follow up with them regarding this information.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg inquired as to whether the feral cat trapper is covered by our insurance. Mayor Shoemaker will check with Christine regarding the insurance.

Mr. Avery recommended that the Township Committee have a work session to discuss the townships' infrastructure and to also discuss the sewers and the water company. Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended beginning to discuss the budget for next year as well. Mr. Lance recommended that the meeting take place during regular business hours. A day and time will be determined and advertised.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

No Open Door session this month due to attendance at Tour de Blairstown which turned out to be a terrific success. This event is sponsored by the Food Shed Alliance and supported by the Blairstown Rotary Club and the Greater Blairstown Business Association. The Tour de Blairstown expected 125 participants and ended up having over 300.

Mr. Avery reported that he attended a Candlelight Ceremony that was intended to honor and appreciate first responders. Mr. Avery and Lieutenant Johnsen spoke at the ceremony. Lieutenant Johnsen stressed in his speech that saying thank you or giving a wave every now and again helps to let the police and first responders know that the residents are behind them and support what they are doing.

The next senior trip will be to the Stoney Hill Inn in Hackensack on August 17.

Mr. Avery reported on the status of the sewers. Mr. Avery also noted that we are waiting for a response from USDA regarding the application that was submitted.

Mr. Avery reported that we will begin the pinging of the system at Blair to check for leaks. This should assist in finding the cause of water lost each quarter. The system was last pinged was a year ago. Pinging will begin at 11pm next week. This will cost \$2500.00. Mr. Avery also explained that Blair will be calibrating their water meters and will pay for the calibration. Blair is also in the process of mapping their piping system.

A monthly report was submitted by the DPW. The DPW will submit a report monthly from this point forward. Mr. Avery would like to hire some part time people to cut grass to free up time in the DPW to replace water meters and fix catch basins.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to hire 2 part time workers over the age of 18 to mow grass at the rate of \$12.00 per hour through October 31, 2016 with a CAP of \$3500.00 from the Open Space Trust Fund and this position will be advertised. Motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker
All ayes: Motion carried.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended that the hiring of part timers for lawn mowing should be done every year and prior to the start of the mowing season. All members of the Township Committee were in agreement with that suggestion.

Mr. Avery reported that Mike Sullivan from DPW suggested the Township purchase a tire changer and balancing machine. The cost of the two machines is under \$5,500.00. Purchasing these machines will save the township money.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the appropriation of \$6,000.00 to purchase a tire changer and balancing machine. Motion was seconded by Mr. Lance.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker
All ayes: Motion carried.

The Walnut Valley Firehouse received a violation from PEOSH. This violation involves trip hazards in the floor of the Firehouse. This must be addressed by September 30, 2016.

Mayor Shoemaker added that the apron is being crushed because of use by the heavy trucks over the years. Mr. Stoddart has had one contractor come out and was there taking measurements today. Mayor Shoemaker suggested quotes be obtained from additional contractors. The Township Committee was in agreement that this cost should come out of the Fire Department budget. The PEOSH violation was a result of an unsafe action by one of the members. Disciplinary action was taken and is in effect for at least 6 months.

Motion was made by Mr. Lance to preauthorize up to \$5000.00 for the repair of the Walnut Valley Firehouse floor to satisfy the violation imposed by PEOSH in a timely manner to avoid financial penalties, subject to the availability of funds to be certified by the CFO, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker
All ayes: Motion carried.

BEC will have their next meeting on August 16th at 24 Amackassin Road.

COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON

No report. Mrs. Dalton was not in attendance at this meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that we received a letter from the NJDEP regarding the availability of grant money from the 2016 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Mr. Lance wanted to share an idea with the committee noting that a path from Noe Road to Paulinskill Trail would serve the community well. This path would keep the students off of the road. The Grant Application is due by November 10. This is a Federal Grant being administered by the NJDOT. Mr. Benbrook has the name of a grant writer that could help with the design and writing of the grant. Mr. Benbrook will provide the committee with the name and number.

Mr. Lance reported on the Police Department. The number of calls has basically leveled off in comparison to last year. The number of calls at this time last year was around 1,700 and that is the current number for 2016. The mileage for the month of July was 4600 miles. There were 10 adults arrested, 1 CDS arrest and 1 DWI arrest.

On Friday, August 26 from 5-8pm at Sycamore Park the Blairstown Police Department will be hosting Emergency Services Day. Police, Fire, and EMS will be represented.

Historic Preservation – Jean O'Brien will be donating a fire proof safe to the Historic Preservation Committee. This would be a great place to store historic documents. The safe will eventually be housed at the municipal building.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

Mrs. Van Valkenburg started by congratulating Mr. McGreen regarding a letter that came to Mayor Shoemaker from the State of NJ thanking the staff for reviewing the Farmland Guidance Documents that cover the following topics: Exception Areas, Division of the Premise and Nonagricultural Uses with the landowner. This had to do with the Green Light Application. Mrs. Van Valkenburg wanted to thank the Open Space Committee for all of the hard work they do handling all of the preservation projects.

Mr. McGreen was in attendance at the meeting and gave the following updates:

Ardia Farm – The survey is done, everything looks pretty good. This is in the hands of the County lawyers, title company and the State Agricultural Development Committee. Closing documents are being reviewed.

Croucher Farm - This farm is 150 acres. 50 acres are going to Green Acres along river. 90 acres will remain as a farm. The state will do a subdivision to separate those 2 lots, once that's done and purchased then it can be preserved.

Nonnemacher Farm – We were notified that there is federal funding to preserve farms and grass lands in the United States. This farm has been approved as a candidate for Federal Funding. Federal funds will cover 50% of the cost to preserve the farm. This would help cut our percent of the cost to preserve the farm. The owner of the farm must have an income of less than \$100,000.00 per year. There is an impervious cover limitation. The Federal Government has a 4-5% coverage limitation. One of the reasons they like this property is because it has prime soils, it's a river bank and it has no stones. The downside is they will not allow soil to be taken off of the property because they want to preserve the soil. The prospective new owner is going to decide if they will agree to this restriction. There is the possibility this may be rejected by the purchaser. We are using up the remainder of our state grant to preserve this farm plus we would also be using some of our Open Space Funds to do this. If purchaser says no we are forced to go back and pay the full price. It would be up to the Township Committee to decide if they want to follow through with this. Mr. McGreen wanted to make the committee aware of the situation and asked that if any of the members had any thoughts on this to please contact him.

There is 365 acres for sale on Mohican Road. This would make a beautiful park. It would take several organizations working together to be able to obtain this property.

Blair Academy is having a Community Carnival Day sponsored by the Class of 2018 on Sun Sept 4 from 2-4pm. No entry fee

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made note of a Catch Basin located in the vicinity of the Farmers Market where the music is played. Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that the water needed to be swept into the catch basin.

Land Use Board approved the building at 15 Stillwater Road for the Little Hill Foundation. No meeting in August.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Price - 3 Alice Court requested that the motion regarding the hiring of part timers for mowing the grass to include that the funding will be coming from the Open Space Trust Fund.

Motion was made by Mr. Avery with a second from Mr. Lance to amend the previous motion to hire part timers for mowing the grass to include that the funds will come from the Open Space Trust Fund.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker
All ayes: Motion carried.

Mr. Price made mention of the fact that when listening to the Township Committee meeting recordings it is very difficult to hear anything. He recommends that the committee members speak into the microphones. Mr. Price also mentioned that there are 7 people at the dais and only 5 microphones. People in the back can't hear what is being said. Mr. Avery explained that we do have additional microphones but when all are plugged in they create a terrible hum. This issue is being looked into.

Mr. Price remarked that back in October, when he was on the Township Committee, he asked about an alarm system at the Public Works garage. Mr. Price asked Mr. Avery what the status of the alarm system was, Mr. Avery noted that he will be looking into this.

Mr. Halberstadt - Mohican Road – tire changing system, will the Township Committee be looking into the price that was given? Mr. Avery noted that we will be comparing prices.

Mrs. Murray wanted to make a statement that the grass that is being mowed is not Open Space property, it is township owned property. Mr. Benbrook clarified that when Open Space is mentioned when it comes to allocating money it means the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg brought up the building on Jones farm that is a hazard. In February of 2012 the township looked into having the building taken down. This is an expensive endeavor because of the removal of the lead and asbestos. Mr. Lance would be willing to look into this again. Mr. Price offered that the farmer is continuing to cut the grass at the farm for Blairstown, even though the property is owned by the State and Blairstown Township.

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 voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk