

TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MEETING
Wednesday May 22, 2019 7:30PM
Meeting Minutes

Workshop meeting begins at 7:30 pm or immediately following Closed Session, whichever comes last.

OPENING; ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Lance. Those present were Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Lance. Mr. Sikkes was absent. Also present were Clerk Leidner and Attorney Dawn Sullivan.

The **FLAG SALUTE** was conducted.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Mayor Lance 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. This agenda is subject to change by order of the Blirstown Township Committee before and/or during this scheduled meeting.

Resolution No. 2019-068 AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION – for the purpose of Personnel.

Motion to authorize executive session was made by Mrs. VanValkenburg. Second by Mr. Sikkes.
Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mrs. VanValkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.
Executive Session began at 6:45 p.m.

Motion to close executive session was made by Mrs. Waldron. Second by Mr. Moorhead.
Roll Call Vote: Aye –Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. VanValkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

Regular Session began at 7:38 p.m.

RESULTS OF REGULAR SESSION

Mayor Lance stated that the purpose of Executive Session was to appoint a Municipal Clerk.

A motion to hire Everett Falt to the position of Municipal Clerk for a salary of \$65k/year was made by Mrs. Waldron. Seconded by Mrs. VanValkenburg.

Mayor Lance stated that he expressed very vocally in executive session that he is opposed to this as the Township should be promoting internally with the Deputy Clerk, Lori Nienstedt. Mrs.

Waldron said that the discussion went all the way down the board, that the Committee all agreed, that the Deputy Clerk should have the position of Township Clerk. However, the Deputy Clerk is not, at this point, trained and the Committee hopes with the hiring of Mr. Falt that he will give her the training she needs in order to move up.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg stated that Mr. Sikkes should recuse himself from voting for any of the candidates as he was not in attendance at the Committee Meeting in which the three candidates were interviewed.

Roll Call Vote: Aye –Mr. Moorhead, Mrs. VanValkenburg, Mrs. Waldron
Nay – Mr. Sikkes, Mayor Lance
Motion carried.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Lance asked the audience to stand and have a moment of silence for Jon Thomas Cramer, former Detective Sergeant of the Blairstown Police Department. Mr. Cramer worked for our Police Department for 26 years.

OLD BUSINESS

Paulina Dam Lake Report – Mr. Rodman and Mayor Lance are the only two people left involved in the original decision-making process regarding whether or not the Paulina Dam should be removed.

The Water Department was started by Blair Academy. In the late 1970's or early 1980's, Blair sold the Water Department to a company in Sparta, which eventually went bankrupt. The Bankruptcy Court ordered that Blairstown Township would own the Water Department.

Chris Marx, engineer with French and Parrello, explained that his company performs an required inspection report of the Dam every two years to ensure that it is in safe operating condition, which it is. However it does not meet regulatory compliance and has insufficient spillway capacity so the dam needs to be rehabilitated or removed.

The emergency action plan and operations manual need to be updated and the operation manual needs to be updated. Mrs. Waldron asked what the advantages of the dam being prepared would be. Mr. Marx stated that they would have the benefit of a lake, however the Township would have to maintain the dam. Removing the dam is not as great a cost as remediating issues regarding sediment. Mayor Lance stated that six or seven years ago the DEP conducted a sediment study but never released the results of the study. Mr. Marx stated that he could not comment on that.

Beth Styler Barry of the Nature Conservancy presented an overview on the changes that would occur in the Paulinskill and surrounding environment. Ms. Styler Barry referred to the recently

decommissioned Columbia Dam to provide examples of changes that may be seen if the Paulina Dam is removed. One of the key changes that has occurred at the Columbia Dam is the return of shad 10 miles upstream from the former dam site, which is an indicator of the river being healthy.

Mrs. VanValkenburg asked Ms. Styler Barry if she had an idea of the cost of removal of the Paulina Dam. Ms. Styler Barry replied that she did not due to the fact that structures that exist downstream will need to be considered. Resolution 2014-129 stated that the DEP would put money toward the design and permits of the Paulina Dam removal if permits are obtained by Blirstown, specifications are completed, and funding becomes available.

Barbara Brummer, State Director of the Nature Conservancy in New Jersey, stated that the Nature Conservancy is committed to restoring the entire watershed, restoring floodplains. It is very important. Mrs. VanValkenburg asked Ms. Brummer if there is grant monies available for the dam removal. Ms. Brummer replied that there are. The first \$1M in donations for the Columbia Dam came from private donors who care about the health of the river, the environment. The initial donations were used to pay for testing and the design and engineering. From there permits were submitted and higher levels of money for construction and such were able to be obtained.

Mayor Lance asked if the sediment at Columbia Dam was contaminated. Ms. Brummer said it was not. Mrs. VanValkenburg said that regarding Paulina Dam, with all the testing that has been done if there was contamination it would have likely been communicated by now. Mayor Lance stated that if we reversed our decision from 2014 and kept the Dam, we are looking at \$320k to do upgrades and \$150k over the next 20 years in maintenance. Mr. Lance asked Mr. Marx if there is any State funding available for that. Mr. Marx said there is a low interest loan money available for either the removal or upgrades. However, the maintenance is the responsibility of the Township.

Mr. Sikkes asked if it was safe to assume that since there was no contamination of sediment at Columbia Dam there would be no contamination at Paulina Dam. Ms. Styler Barry replied that they cannot make any assumptions.

Mrs. VanValkenburg asked what the Nature Conservancy needs for them to be able to help us. Ms. Brummer stated that she would need a resolution stating that the Nature Conservancy would act as the project lead for the removal of the Paulina Dam. Nature Conservancy would then be responsible for working with the engineering firm, working with the DEP to obtain permits, and finding grant funding for the project. With regard to the initial funding for the work, the Nature Conservancy is willing to put money into the project because of their commitment to improving the health of the waterway.

The commitment date has yet to be determined according to Mr. Marx. Ms. Brummer said that the design is due to be completed in the Fall.

Ms. Styler Barry stated that there is a public safety issue. There are many dam related drownings in the State of New Jersey. Nationally, there are increasing cases of dam related deaths because more and more dams are being abandoned for their original industrial purpose. Regarding whether the Town asks a non-profit to partner on this type of project. It is the owner, which in this case is the Town, who makes the request to partner with Nature Conservancy on this type of project.

Mrs. Waldron expressed her concern over the cost factor regarding this project as well as her appreciation for having an organization that is competent in dam removal and funding procurement.

Motion made by Mrs. Waldron to have the attorney draw up a resolution requesting that the Nature Conservancy would act as the project lead for the removal of the Paulina Dam.
Seconded by Mr. Sikkes.

Roll Call Vote: Aye –Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. VanValkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Discussion – Possible Ordinance for June – Amending Chapter 190 of the Code Of the Township of Blairstown entitled “Water”.** Mrs. VanValkenburg explained that this possible Ordinance would provide for a fee to be applied should residents wish to have their water turned on or shut off. Mrs. VanValkenburg explained that discontinuation or restoration is \$20 per shut-off/reconnect and a standby fee of \$15 per quarter. It is recommended that the hydrant maintenance fee be removed. With regard to the fire protection/sprinkler system, Mrs. Waldron recommended keeping that in Chapter 190 due to ever changing building codes.

The Committee agreed to have Township Attorney, Dawn Sullivan, review Chapter 190, make recommended revisions, and amend any fees where needed.

2. **ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION – Needed for sale of properties to Green Acres –Public hearing June 12, 2019**

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-12 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, COUNTY OF WARREN, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF PROPERTY KNOWN AS 5 SIPLEY ROAD, BLOCK 1503, LOT 9, 70 SAND HILL ROAD, BLOCK 1503, LOT 8.13 AND 56 SAND HILL ROAD, BLOCK 1503, LOT 8.14 IN BLAIRSTOWN NEW JERSEY

First Reading, Introduction

Motion made by Mrs. VanValkenburg; Second by Mrs. Waldron.

Roll Call Vote: Aye –Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. VanValkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

3. **Resolution No. 2019-070 – In Support of Fireworks Display**

Motion made to approve by Mr. Sikkes. Second by Mrs. Waldron.

Roll Call Vote: Aye –Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. VanValkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

4. Mrs. VanValkenberg stated that she printed out something called Code Red; How to Write Effective Applications for FEMA and DHS Emergency Notification Grants and would like to supply this to Nick Mohr of OEM. Mayor Lance stated that Senator Gottheimer’s office contacted him a week previous and Scott Johnsen, Calvin Inscho, and Brian Walsh and Mayor Lance will be meeting with a representative. Mrs. Waldron requested that Mayor Lance inquire of Gottheimer’s office if there are any beautification grants available. Mayor Lance believes that Senator Oroho’s office had previously communicated something on that but that it was tailored to specific population densities and areas such as county seats. Mrs. VanValkenburg praised the volunteers of the BEC for the beautification of the Village area that was undertaken recently.

FROM THE PUBLIC

No comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mrs. Waldron made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Moorhead. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Everett Falt, RMC
Township Clerk/Office Manager