

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, July 13, 2016, 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Shoemaker. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mrs. Dalton, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Leidner 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.

An **OATH OF OFFICE** was administered to Linda Leidner for the Offices of Municipal Clerk and Registrar of Vital Statistics both for a three (3) year terms expiring on July 1, 2019, by Mayor Shoemaker.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Mr. Pete McKenna questioned whether another study of sewers was planned. Mayor Shoemaker explained that the study is actually being completed. Mr. McKenna asked what the study cost. The Mayor explained that the cost of the study was shared with Blair and the Township's portion was \$12,500.00. Mayor Shoemaker also explained that there were 2 parts to the study, one was a feasibility the other was a collection system assessment.

MINUTES

June 8, 2016 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Van Valkenburg requested clarification regarding Mrs. Murray's statement that was noted in the minutes on page 1, changing the word "reducing" the Open Space Tax to "maintaining". Mrs. Murray was present and the wording was confirmed.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the May 11th minutes with the appropriate correction, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, 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 adoption of this ordinance will be carried to the August meeting to further clarify addresses that would receive complimentary service.

ORDINANCE 2016 – 04 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING EXISTING ARTICLE I OF CHAPTER 128 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN AND ENACTING A NEW CHAPTER 128 ARTICLE I ENTITLED “BRUSH, GRASS AND WEEDS”

Second Reading, Public Hearing, Adoption

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Shoemaker opened the meeting for public comments and questions, seeing none Mayor Shoemaker closed the public hearing.

Mr. Avery made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2016 – 04 on second reading. Mrs. Dalton seconded the motion.

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

ORDINANCE 2016 – 05 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN CREATING A NEW CHAPTER 132 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN ENTITLED, “MAINTENANCE OF VACANT/ABANDONED PROPERTIES”

Second Reading, Public Hearing, Adoption

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Shoemaker opened the discussion to the public for comments and questions, seeing none Mayor Shoemaker closed the public hearing.

Mr. Avery made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2016 – 05 on second reading. The motion was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Mr. Lance noted that the fees to register these properties are very high. Township Attorney Benbrook explained that the fees are consistent with other municipalities around the state and basically come from state statute. The fees are meant to be punitive to get the financial lending institutions to move faster on getting vacant foreclosed properties turned around. Mr. Lance noted that he would like to revisit this and the other property maintenance ordinances in a year.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker
NAY – Lance
Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2016 – 06 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CHAPTER 147 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN ENTITLED “PROPERTY MAINTENANCE”

Second Reading, Public Hearing, Adoption

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Shoemaker opened the discussion to the public for comments and questions, seeing none Mayor Shoemaker closed the public hearing.

Mr. Avery made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2016 – 06 on second reading, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

ORDINANCE 2016-07 AN 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

Introduction, First Reading

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2016-07 on first reading, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the second reading and public hearing will be held next month.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2016 – 078 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2016 – 079 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2016-008
- 3 – R.2016 – 080 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2016-010
- 4 – R.2016 – 081 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2016-011
- 5 – R.2016 – 082 Audit Review

Mrs. Van Valkenburg requested that item #1 be taken off of the Consent Agenda.

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

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

With regard to item #1, Mrs. Van Valkenburg wanted to discuss the invoice for the spaying of feral cats noting that \$263.00 per cat was excessive. Although the cost to spay/neuter cats comes from the Dog Fund, the fees are still excessive. The trapper needs to be told to take the cats to the vet that was initially designated for this service at a lesser cost. A letter will be sent to the trapper regarding this issue.

Mrs. Dalton made a motion to approve R.2016-078, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – June Report
- Finance – June Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – June Report
- Police Department – June Report
- Tax Collector – June Report
- Warren County Health Department – June 10, 2016 Report

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

Mr. Avery noted that the number of police stops has gone up. Mayor Shoemaker added that this is due to officers finishing their training period and are able to patrol alone. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that she has heard many positive comments from residents regarding the police. Mayor Shoemaker added that the Police Department has been receiving notes, cards and letters all with positive messages and words of thanks.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There were no comments or questions on the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Township Attorney Benbrook reported that Lieutenant Loseys Disability Pension was approved by the State. As soon as the Township receives the confirmation letter from the State, the Township will be able to wrap up Mr. Losey's compensatory time payment. Attorney Benbrook requested a quick Executive Session to discuss this matter.

Mr. Benbrook also reported on the status of COAH, and updated the Committee and public on the recent history and developments with COAH.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to participate in the Municipal Shared Services Group and appropriate \$1500.00 to Katrina Campbell, Esq., which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg,

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to contribute \$1000.00 to Jeffrey R. Surenian and Associates to fund Vicinage 13, which was seconded by Mr. Lance

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

All ayes: Motion carried

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

None.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported on the Stonybrook Rd. guide rail. The wooden guide rails are rotten. To replace all of them using the numbers from the Morris County Co-op it would cost around \$278,000.00. This cost would be for steel, which is now a requirement. A portion of the cost can be recovered by collecting from the automobile insurance from the person that hit the guide rail.

Mohican Road has a guide rail that was damaged by an automobile accident. The estimate to repair that one is \$3187.00.

Walnut Valley Fire House underground tank removal, Whitman is seeking an additional \$6000.00 to do a soil erosion plan to be included in the specs they are preparing. Mike Russo is requesting an Executive Session to discuss the aspects of the technical portion. In lieu of that Mayor Shoemaker and Mr. Avery will meet with Mr. Russo and report back to the rest of the committee prior to authorizing the expenditure of \$6000.00.

A drainage pipe under Cobblewood Road needs to be replaced; it is collapsing. There is the possibility of installing a flexible liner, you put it into pipe and then expand it, this price would be around \$315.00 per sq. foot and it is about 90' long so the Township would be looking at between \$30,000.000 - \$35,000.00 installed as opposed to digging it up. The material is DEP approved. Mr. Rodman will obtain firm quotes.

Paulina Dam – DEP requested soil samples; French and Parillo obtained them and they are being sent to Grace Jacobs at DEP.

Wishing Well Road - Knowlton is going to be paving their portion of the road, Blairstown's portion is 500ft long 20ft wide, and Blairstown's portion would be \$8250.00 if the township would like to pave its portion at the same time.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Tilcon to overlay the 500' by 20' portion of Wishing Well Road and appropriating \$8250.00 for this project, this was seconded by Mr. Avery

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

Sewer update - Van Cleef let Mr. Rodman know that all of the paperwork has been submitted to the USDA for a grant determination. We should hear back from them in 1 month. Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned what the grant is for. Mr. Rodman explained it is for the installation of sewers and everything that goes with that.

Well update – Mr. Jim Frick had several questions regarding the back-up well, Mr. Rodman reported that he is currently working on answering them.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
MAYOR SHOEMAKER**

Mayor Shoemaker received a letter from Lieutenant Johnson thanking OEM Coordinator Nick Moore and Deputy OEM Coordinator Robert Moore for directing pedestrian traffic and control vehicular traffic after the fireworks display. The Police left to respond to a call that required 4 officers. The Mayor and Township Committee were all in agreement that it is refreshing to have such great communications.

The Township Committee will formally recognize Lieutenant Johnson's promotion at the August 10th meeting so that his parents' will be able to attend.

Mayor Shoemaker made note of the Meeting of July 27 at 6:00pm at the Lafayette House regarding the TTF. Mayor Shoemaker and Mr. Avery will attend.

Mayor Shoemaker reported on the Walnut Valley Football Field and the fact that it is in disrepair. The field has a fungus that needs to be treated for a cost of \$185.00. True Green proposed do a fall aeration and seeding, lime application and then do a revived soil amendment.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve True Green's proposal as presented in the amount \$2933.00, this was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mayor Shoemaker asked Mr. Avery about the status of the Dog Park Ordinance. Mr. Avery noted that it will be presented next month.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that the Committee received a letter from White Township Court asking if the township would be interested in participating in a Joint Municipal Court in 2017. The consensus of the committee is to stay with what we have.

The Hose Company is looking into getting a new pumper. Mayor Shoemaker just wanted to give a heads up that they will be coming to the Township Committee sometime in the near future with a presentation.

Mayor Shoemaker noted that a letter was received from the Warren County Public Safety Department commending Blairstown Townships OEM Coordinator and Deputy for attending all 6 of the Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator meetings that were held since March 11, 2015. The attendees were Nick Moore, Robert Moore, and Ted Rodman. Kudos to them for attending these meetings.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Seniors went to Silver Branches Resort on July 6. 55 people attended. The next trip will be to the Stoney Hill Inn in Hackensack on August 17 to see Vegas. Signups will be held Wednesday July 20. The Senior Advisory Committee would like to thank the Township Committee for supporting them. Mr. Avery also noted there will be a Regional Senior Olympics in Woodbridge on September 9, 10 & 11.

The Township is maintaining a dialogue with the DEP regarding the Water Plant. As soon as we move a little further with the well we will keep them informed regarding the process so that the DEP is aware that we are complying with their directives. Replacement of the roof of the equipment shed at the water tower will be postponed until there is a decision on what will be done with the building.

Mr. Avery also noted that we will be losing Gary Nemeckay, and John Christine due to retirement at the end of the month. These men have been with us for a long time and have served our township very well and will be greatly missed. Mike Sullivan and John Van Dyke will begin working on July 18.

Mr. Avery reported that the DPW is looking into purchasing a new large dump truck in the amount of \$157,922.00 through a cooperative called the National Auto Fleet Group. It can amortize at \$16,000.00 per year for 10 years. The truck is a Mack E single axle dump truck that comes with a plow and spreader. It was recommended by the Township Committee that a Bond Ordinance be drafted in the amount of \$158,000.00 for discussion and possible introduction at the August meeting. Mike Sullivan will take a look at the existing equipment at the DPW and prioritize what needs to be replaced. It was noted that the current fleet of trucks we have is very old.

Trappers are doing a good job with minimizing the feral cat situation on Main Street.

Mr. Avery reported that a dehumidifier was installed in the basement at Givens Belet. Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned what the status of the mold noting a letter from Statewide Insurance that was received in November regarding this issue. Mr. Avery will look into this issue.

The Blirstown Enhancement Committee has done a beautiful job repairing the wall across from the Post Office. It was all done with donations and by volunteers. A letter of thanks will be sent from the Township Committee. Mayor Shoemaker noted that the project took about a year and a half to complete. The next BEC meeting will be held on Tuesday August 16 at 7:00pm.

Mr. Avery would like to see ordinances, which are passed on first reading, placed on the website.

Mr. Avery requested approval to purchase 20 yards of mulch to be placed in the pocket park. The cost would be \$500.00. Addie and Trish will spread the mulch. They also weed and take care of the flowers. Mayor Shoemaker noted that he would like the DPW to reset the bench seat that had been removed.

Motion Mr. Avery made a motion to purchase 20 yards of mulch in the amount of \$500.00 for the pocket park with a second by Mayor Shoemaker

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

COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON

Mrs. Dalton reported that she met with Mr. Leal, Principal of Blirstown Elementary School. Mrs. Dalton noted that she will meet with Mr. Leal on a monthly basis so that she can share with the Committee and the community all of the wonderful things that are happening in Blirstown Elementary School.

Mrs. Dalton reported that she received correspondence from the Appalachian Trail Committee, Christina Roberts, Warren County Department of Land Preservation, which included a lengthy application and a sample application from Wind Gap, PA. The Township can mimic that application. Mrs. Dalton will be looking to meet with the advisory committee in the near future.

David Diehl, Zoning Officer, requested that the 911 Coordinator Position, which was cut in 2010, be reinstated beginning on July 1 with a salary of \$2400.00. Mr. Lance explained that this job is usually done by the municipal Tax Assessor and it was the consensus of the Township Committee that this job should be included in the Tax Assessor's job description and does not warrant any additional compensation.

Mrs. Dalton has copies of the current job descriptions for each of the employees and will distribute them asking that they be reviewed for suggested changes. Mrs. Dalton will meet with Mrs. Van Valkenburg, review them and report back at the next meeting. The Personnel Policy Manual needs to be reviewed as well. Mrs. Dalton noted that a nepotism policy needs to be in place. The attorney will look for changes that were previously done.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that the sidewalks on Main Street are not being maintained. Property owners need to maintain the sidewalk. The paving stones are shifting and need to be reset. The sidewalks are unsafe and unsightly.

Mr. Lance also reported that the Police Department has doubled the amount of calls from a year ago. There were 4 adult arrests 1 DWI and 7100 miles patrolled.

Historic Preservation Committee had a very successful Fourth of July Celebration. Mr. Lance also reported that the Historical Preservation Committee is planning a walking tour of the village area on October 29. Over the next couple of months the committee will implement a self-guided tour of the village, complete with brochures and signs.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

Mrs. Van Valkenburg provided information regarding bill A-2839 passed by the Governor, which allows micro enterprises, such as Dunkin Donuts, to be placed on certain preserved farmland.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported on an informational guide from NJ Realtors - Repurposing Stranded Assets and Revitalizing NJ Suburbs. Mrs. Van Valkenburg will be providing copies to the Land Use Board, Open Space Committee and Township Committee members.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported on excessive quarterly water usage that is unaccounted for. A Master Meter can be purchased and used to identify the problem. Mr. Avery noted that this issue has been looked into by using a hydrophone. A leak was found and repaired at Blair Academy. Mayor Shoemaker noted that new water meters had been purchased a while ago but have not been installed as yet. The new meters definitely need to be installed immediately.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked Mr. McGreen if he had anything to report regarding Open Space, he gave a very brief update on the 3 farms noting that surveys on two are just about complete and the third one is tied up with legal issues.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Tom Gross, Amackassin Road, thanked the Township Committee for passing the property maintenance ordinances. Mr. Gross requested information regarding the process for reporting and following up on properties. Mayor Shoemaker explained that the forms are in the process of being created.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road questioned the Township Committee on the reasons for bonding and the amount of money paid in interest throughout the years. Mrs. Murray noted that a \$.02 municipal tax would better serve the municipality for funding projects. Mr. Lance explained that we are bonding but causing no additional debt. The township is borrowing against itself, not issuing bonds.

Mr. Lance made a Motion to go into Closed Session for the purpose of Potential Litigation. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion.

Voice vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting closed to the public at 9:51pm.

Meeting opened to the public at 10:04pm.

Mr. Lance made a motion for the Township Committee to approve the final salary and wage payment to Mr. Losey for administrative leave from March 1- March 23 and accrued time upon receipt of the letter from the State confirming Mr. Losey's Disability Retirement. Mayor Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

All ayes: Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk