

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING
Wednesday, June 27, 2018, 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 by Mayor Lance. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, and Mayor Lance. Also present was Township Clerk, Linda Leidner.

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.

Resolution No. 2018-080 AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION – for the purpose of discussing Personnel.

Motion to authorize executive session was made by Mrs. Dalton and was seconded by Mrs. Waldron.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.

All ayes – Motion carried.

Executive Session began at 7:00 p.m.

Motion to close executive session was made at 7:30 p.m. by Mrs. Waldron and was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.

All ayes – Motion carried.

Regular Session began at 7:30p.m.

RESULTS OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Lance explained that during the Executive Session there was discussion regarding the Police Department and Land Use Board. The Police Department personnel matters will be released at the next Township Committee Meeting.

Mayor Lance went on to explain that our long time Land Use Secretary retired about a month ago and the Township Committee conducted interviews and from that process Linda Grohs was selected as the successful candidate.

RESOLUTION NO: 2018-082 – APPOINTMENT OF LAND USE SECRETARY AND CLERICAL ASSISTANT TO ZONING OFFICE

Mrs. Waldron made a motion to hire Linda Grohs as the Land Use Secretary/Zoning Official Clerical Assistant for 16 hours per week at a rate of \$17.00 per hour as noted in Resolution No. 2018-082, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.
All ayes – Motion carried.

Mrs. Grohs was introduced to the members of the public.

ORDINANCES

FOR ADOPTION: BOND ORDINANCE NO. 2018-015 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR AN APPROPRIATION OF \$40,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION AND INSTALLATION OF GENERATORS WITHIN VARIOUS TOWNSHIP BUILDINGS FOR AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$38,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRAITION

Second Reading, Public Hearing, Adoption

Mayor Lance opened the Public Hearing. There were no comments or questions from the public, Mayor Lance closed the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that this is for a generator for the Municipal Building. Mayor Lance explained that most of the monies for this generator came from a FEMA Grant.

Mrs. Waldron made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2018-015, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.
All ayes – Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Whitman - Walnut Valley Remediation – Mayor Lance turned the meeting over to Deputy Mayor Van Valkenburg due to a conflict of interest. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that the Township currently has an estimate of \$400,000.00 plus \$150,000.00 to remediate an oil leak issue at Walnut Valley Firehouse. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that she and Mrs. Waldron are seeking other quotes. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that we have until 2024 to remediate. Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mrs. Waldron will be meeting with other companies as well as Whitman to discuss the original estimate. There will be a meeting with Mrs. Rodman, Mrs. Waldron, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Rolef, Mrs. Sullivan and Mr. Whitman to review his proposal.

Proposed Amendment to the “Water” Ordinance for August Introduction. Some of the fees that were originally in the Water Ordinance were removed and the Township Committee would like to have them put back into the ordinance. Some examples are vacant properties, shut offs and reconnects. Mayor lance also noted that it may time for a rate increase as well. Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended waiting for the new well to be completed before discussing a rate increase. Currently the cost is \$75.00 for the first 1000 gallons and \$6.00 for each additional 1000 gallons. Mayor Lance noted that this ordinance should be done all at once.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that next time water bills are printed she wants the rates placed on the bills so that customers can see the rates. Mayor Lance will speak to the utility collector.

Special Event Ordinance – Mrs. Waldron reported that she did a lot of research, comparing our Special Event Ordinance to those of other municipalities. Our Ordinance is in line with all of the others out there. Mrs. Waldron did recommend adding the requirement of a rain date for all applicants.

NEW BUSINESS

Special Events Application received from North Warren Regional High School Marching Band to provide public parking behind Alpine Meats on July 13, 2018 for Friday the 13th activities.

This application was reviewed by all of the appropriate departments. Captain Johnsen noted that if the field is wet there may be a problem getting cars in and out. Mr. Avery noted that there usually isn't a problem unless the field is under water.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg is concerned with not having police to cross people. She is concerned that even if there is signage showing people where they should cross they may not cross at the crosswalk. The marching bands application is to park cars until 5pm. After that people may also park there at night.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended that BBA, BBC, business owners and our attorney to a meeting Mrs. Waldron made a motion to approve the Special Events Application from North Warren Regional High School Marching Band to provide public parking behind Alpine meats on July 13, 2018 as a fundraiser, which was seconded by Mr. Avery

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.

All ayes – Motion carried.

Mr. Avery said he would spend time at the Friday 13th event to see how the new parking plan is working.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended that BBA, BBC, business owners and our attorney should meet to discuss how to rectify the parking issues on Main Street.

Request for approval of membership application from Eric S. Lynch of Blirstown Township to join the Blirstown Hose Company.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve the membership application from Eric S. Lynch to join the Blirstown Hose Company, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.

All ayes – Motion carried.

Approval for the Mayor to sign Contract for the Great Meadows Design Group, LLC to revise the original design of the generator for a fee of \$4,450.00

Mrs. Dalton explained that the initial quote that was given for the project was \$166,000.00 and by having an electrician, the Acting DPW Director, CFO and the representative from Great Meadows Design meet and go over the project line by line the cost went down to approximately \$117,000.00. As a result a new set of specs was needed and that is where the \$4,450.00 will be allocated.

Mrs. Waldron made a motion to approve the Mayor to sign the contract for The Great Meadows Design Group, LLC, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.

All ayes – Motion carried.

2019 Pre Budget – Discussion – Mayor Lance read a letter from a resident on Stoneybrook Road, Susan Mager. Her letter was described in detail how what poor shape Stoneybrook Road is in. A copy of this letter will be attached to these minutes. Mrs. Dalton added that this letter describes many of the roads within the Township. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that the DPW has been going out and fixing as many of the pot holes as they can.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg requested the pre-budget meeting to discuss the possibility of taking a penny of the Open Space Tax and move it to the general budget. Then \$74,000.00 would go towards the roads. This is not enough to pave a road but it can go towards tar and chip.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg discussed the status of the Udell building. A letter went to the property owner to get them to cut the tree. The tree does not belong to the owner of the Udell building but it belongs to the car wash. Hopefully the tree will be removed by July 4.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg also reported that she spoke with Mr. Liscari who was reviewing the quote for the replacement of the phone system here at the Municipal Building. He felt the quote was very high and gave a recommendation for another phone company to come in and give us a quote.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that the Township is required by the State of New Jersey to have GIS mapping of our water system. We had a quote from Pellow in the amount of \$8500.00 to do the mapping. Pellow is able to use the mapping from Maser and with an apprentice they will be able to do the GIS mapping for \$3200.00. This can come out of the Capital Ordinance.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve an expenditure of \$3200.00 to do the GIS mapping, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance.

All ayes – Motion carried.

The Township is very close to meeting the original dates for the whole project.

One more item Mrs. Van Valkenburg felt she needed to bring up was a post that she saw on the Blairstown Free Speech Facebook Page. Mrs. Van Valkenburg also noted that she will be calling the individual that responded to the initial post.

Mrs. Dalton read the initial post without mentioning who made the post. The post on Facebook involved a person that was noting how nice it was to see children swimming in the Paulins Kill. The writer was reminiscing about their childhood days at the river. The writer also noted the mud

squishing between the toes of the children and the cool water giving cool relief on the nearly 80 degree day.

Mrs. Dalton read the responding message to the comment on Facebook that made reference to the mud not being mud but being E.coli, again not revealing the name of the person that made the post.

Mrs. Waldron noted that the river is monitored for safety. It is constantly being checked for the safety of the water. To make a statement like that is dangerous. She also noted that people make statements on Facebook as if they can say anything they want and the truth doesn't have to factor into it. Unfortunately there are people out there that believe these kinds of things. And then the members of the Township Committee have to deal with those responses because they come back to bite us.

Mrs. Dalton added that they do splash back at the Committee. Members of the community see the post and it says there is E.coli.

Mayor Lance remarked that this is one of the top rated trout streams in the state. Mrs. Dalton noted that there are fresh water clams in there.

Mayor Lance noted that during the bridge construction the Paulinskill water was tested twice a week.

Mrs. Dalton reported that last week she and Mrs. Van Valkenburg met with the Superintendent of the Elementary School and the Mrs. Dalton and Mrs. Waldron met with the Superintendent, Captain Johnsen and Ms. Petty regarding an SRO Officer. This meeting was to discuss whether this is a good option for the Elementary School – the children, the staff, the parents, the taxpayers – the Township as a whole. Mrs. Dalton will keep the Township Committee and the public informed as to the progress of these discussions.

RESOLUTION 2018-081 IN SUPPORT OF THE JULY 4TH FIREWORKS DISPLAY

Mrs. Dalton made a motion to approve Resolution NO. 2018-081, which was seconded by Mrs. Waldron.

Voice Vote: AYE: Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Waldron, Lance

Abstain: Avery

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Keith Stires – Jacksonburg Road - Mr. Stires thanked the Committee for allowing the DPW to use the oil and chip method for repairing the roads. However, Mr. Stires mentioned that he was at the last meeting and asked to have the pot holes on his road filled, the Committee told him that they would speak to the Acting Director of Public Works about getting those taken care of, the holes are still there. The Committee will reach out again.

Dave Cavagnaro - Heller Hill Road – Mr. Cavagnaro sent a letter requesting Heller Hill Road be resurfaced. Mr. Cavagnaro also noted that on Dry Road and Partridge Estates there are pot holes. Mrs. Van Valkenburg let him know that she spoke to the DPW Acting Director just today about this

location. The Township Committee members assured him that Heller Hill has been on their radar for quite some time.

Kevin Doell – 111 Heller Hill Road – Mr. Doell inquired as whether the Township has a final report that assesses the condition of the roads. Possibly including full cost to fix the roads and then prioritizing the roads that need to be fixed. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that the roads that are in greatest need of repair are Mohican, Heller Hill and Belcher. She went on to explain that road conditions change seasonally.

Mr. Doell asked if the referendum that has been being discussed regarding a 24 hour Police Department was still an option. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that with the condition of the Township roads the Committee may have to make that a priority before moving forward with the idea of a 24 hour Police Department.

Frank Falvey - 119 Gaisler Road - Mr. Falvey noted that the thread that she brought up earlier on the Facebook Page Free Speech, the reaction was three people just laughing. He explained that it was a running gag. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that it wasn't a gag it was out in public. Mr. Falvey also noted that if you look at the bottom of the feed the people involved in the discussion were discussing putting a group of local people together, including businesses together to do a cleanup of the Paulinskill.

Mayor Lance explained that when posts are made people tend to react to the first comment, especially if it is negative, and then the Township Committee begins receiving phone calls.

Mrs. Waldron noted that these type of comments are not only on the Free Speech page and many are not factual and that is what the public believes to be the truth. Then the public begins contacting the Township Committee. What is intended as an innocent comment turns into an issue that could have been avoided.

Mr. Avery commented that the Township Committee is not in a position to police Facebook. He noted that there was a misunderstanding about the whole thread of the conversation.

Mrs. Waldron, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mrs. Dalton noted they are not policing Facebook. They just come across the comments.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that people need to be responsible for what they say.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted the person who made the comment has said that the Paulins Kill is contaminated in public. Therefore, when she sees that comment, it is not a joke.

Mr. Falvey said I know who posted the comment. Mr. Falvey went on to say he read the thread and it is a lot of joking within the thread that even resulted in a cleanup of the Paulins Kill being planned.

Mrs. Leidner asked the Township Committee how they would like to handle a request from the Mayor of Byram to have a group from his town come for a tour of our building. They are looking into building a new building and would like to know the history of our building and get an idea of

costs and any issues with the process. After a brief discussion it was determined that our engineer would be the best person to them around.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Waldron made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:33pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk