

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 6:15 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 Shoemaker at 6:08pm. 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.

**RESOLUTION 2017 - 0102 AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONNEL**

Motion was made by Mr. Lance and was seconded by Mrs. Dalton

Roll Call Vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.

All ayes: Motion carried.

Executive Session began at 6:09pm.

Mr. Lance made a motion to close the Executive Session and re-open the Regular Meeting at 8:02pm. The Motion was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Roll Call Vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mr. Benbrook offered to summarize the Executive Session. He explained that discussion was had with the Assistant Tax Collector regarding the parameters of the position of Tax Collector.

Two candidates were interviewed for the position of Director for the Department of Public Works. A decision was made to hire from within making the position title Acting Director of Public Works. Mr. Eric Usinowicz is the chosen candidate. The Mayor explained that Mr. Usinowicz has been with the Blairstown DPW for 9 years.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to hire Eric Usinowicz as Acting Director of Public Works beginning October 16, 2017, with a starting salary of \$57,000.00 with incremental increases of \$1,000.00 for each successful completion of each of the CPWM classes and an increase when certification is completed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll Call Vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.

All ayes: Motion carried.

The Township Committee wanted to recognize the current DPW Foreman Bobby Kise for the incredible job that was done by him during the time that there was no DPW Director, he stepped in and handled the day to day responsibilities of running the Department and did an outstanding job.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to give Bobby Kise a stipend of \$2000.00 gross for taking on the responsibility of DPW while there was a vacancy in the Director position, Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker.

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker explained that from day one of the vacancy Mr. Kise was responsive and proactive. He did a terrific job. The entire Committee expressed their thanks for a job well done.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Pat Kennedy – Blairstown Enhancement Committee - 25 Amackassin Road – wanted to inform the Township Committee about the BEC’s beautification project for this year. One project planned is to plant 2 flowering Red Bud trees on the triangle of land across the street from the Post Office which is owned by the Township. Blair Academy mows that piece of property. Ms. Kennedy with contact Blair to see if they prefer the BEC to mulch around the trees to make mowing easier.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion authorize the BEC to plant 2 flowering red bud trees on the triangle of land across the street from the Post Office, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Kennedy passed out picture of a sign to the members of the Township Committee explaining that the date be 1755 when Blairstown was settled. It would replace the sign that is located on Route 94 by the intersection of Route 521.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve the Blairstown sign with the date showing settled in 1755 to replace the sign on Route 94, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Reverend Harvey spoke regarding the First Presbyterian Church sidewalk agreement. He was looking for a status update on the agreement. It was explained that the signed agreement was received by the Township Clerk who in turn forwarded the original contract to the Township Attorney by mail on September 26 for filing with Warren County. Mr. Benbrook explained that portion of the Site Plan Requirement was satisfied, however Reverend Harvey needs to follow up with the Land Use Board regarding any remaining conditions that may need to be satisfied. Mr. Benbrook noted that he will forward a copy of the signed agreement to Charlie O’Connell, the attorney for the church.

## **MINUTES**

June 28, 2017 – Regular Workshop Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

July 26, 2017 – Regular Workshop Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

September 13, 2017 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

September 27, 2017 – Regular Workshop Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1 – R.2017 - 103 | Authorization to Pay Bills   |
| 2 - R.2017 – 104 | Authorizing Blairstown Township to Provide Municipal Funding Share for the Purchase of the Development Rights to Nonnemacher Farm Owned by Lothar Nonnemacher in Blairstown Township |
| 3 - R.2017 – 105 | Awarding Contract for Refuse and Single Stream Recycling   |
| 4 – R.2017 – 106 | Awarding Contract for Drilling of Backup Well  |
| 5 - R.2017 – 107 | Approval to submit a Grant Application and Execute a Grant Contract With the New Jersey DOT for the Overlay of Belcher Road project  |
| 6 - R.2017 – 108 | Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2017-005   |
| 7 - R.2017 - 109 | Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2015-006   |

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of tabling the bill for the Annual Generator Inspection, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mr. Lance noted that on the bill list there was a bill for the annual inspection of the generator in the amount of \$750.00. Mr. Lance remarked that this charge is very high. The contractor is from

Quakertown, Mr. Lance recommends that the Township look for someone local and less expensive to perform this service. If the work has not been done then Mr. Lance would like this bill pulled from the Bill List.

The other item Mr. Lance questioned was the bill from Bruno and Associates. They are not providing any service in obtaining grants. Mrs. Van Valkenburg inquired as to whether the Township has gotten any grants and the CFO, Christine Rolef said no. She explained that about 7 grants were applied for, we are waiting for word on the COPS Grant and the Body Armor Grant. Mr. Lance feels that we should terminate the contract with Bruno & Associates. There have been no results.

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

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to terminate the contract with Bruno and Associates in accordance with its terms, and authorize the Township Attorney to review the terms, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

**Eric Usinowicz, Acting Director of Public Works** – gave an impromptu DPW report. He reported that the DPW finished paving Maple Lane and they are just waiting on a date for striping to be completed. Mr. Usinowicz also reported that they finished picking up clean up items and taking them to the landfill for the disabled. Now they are getting the equipment ready for winter. Repairs to the salt shed have been completed and two new windows have been installed in the DPW building, replacing the broken ones.

**Joel McGreen, Open Space Chairman** - Everything is the same, nothing more to report.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Clerk – September Report  
DPW - None  
Finance – September Finance and Fuel Reports  
Fire Department – None  
Police Department – September Report  
Tax Collector – September Report  
Warren County Health Department – September 11, 2017 Report  
Zoning Officer – Quarterly Report

Mrs. Dalton made a motion to approve the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mayor Shoemaker noted that in the Zoning Officers report shows that the Township has brought in about \$8000.00 in Vacant and Abandoned Property fees.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Back-up Well – Mr. Rodman explained that a low bid was received from STOTH2OFF for \$59,800.00. The contractor has visited the site at the Firehouse. STOTH2OFF gave the price based on drilling 350 feet. In speaking to the hydrologist the well should be in the limestone and hopes are that they will only have to drill to 200 feet, therefore, we will only have to pay for the 200 feet since we are paying by the foot. The drilling is scheduled for the week of 10/23.

Mr. Rodman reported that Storm water presentations have been scheduled at the Elementary School.

Mr. Rodman also reported that the State Aid application for Belcher Road was submitted by the deadline of October 6 requesting the amount of \$176,950.00.

Airport hazard Zone waiting for cost update from Bob Berry regarding the delineation that the Township is seeking. Mr. Benbrook indicated that it appears that the airport will be paying for the entire project.

2. Givens Belet - Mr. Avery had a meeting with the members of the Legionnaires Committee. They checked the status of the underground oil tank and it has not been sand filled. The tank still has a small amount of fluid in it. They received a quote of \$2000.00 to have the tank removed.

3. 33 Frog Pond Road – Mr. Rodman explained that he reviewed the Driveway Standard Ordinance and went to the Bernstein property and took pictures of the driveway. The driveway does not meet the standards of the Ordinance. The driveway is higher than the road, the snow plow comes through and clips the edge of the driveway and rips it up. The Driveway Ordinance states that the driveway must create an even surface between the driveway and roadway. Therefore, this is the owner's responsibility to fix the problem. Mr. Benbrook offered that if needed he will assist in responding to the letter.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Shoemaker noted that a Special Events Application was received from the Greater Blairstown Business Association for the Annual Jingle on Main to be held on November 25, 2017.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Special Events Application from the greater Blairstown Business Association for the Annual Jingle on Main Event being held on November 25, 2017 and the closing of Main Street for this event, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the payment for rental of one Porta Potty that is handicapped accessible for the Jingle on Main Event, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

**COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE** for information and possible action

1. Letter from the BEC requesting approval to plant two Redbud trees across the street from the Post Office. Discussed and approved during Public Comment session.

2. Application for a Blue Light Permit from Brian Rosemeier, Blairstown Hose Company.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Blue Light Application from Brain Rosemeier, Blairstown Hose Company, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

3. Letter from Blairstown Elementary PTG requesting permission to hold their Annual Spiritwalk Fundraiser on Friday, October 6, 2017 and waive the Police coverage fees. No vote since this event already took place.

**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Letter from the New Jersey General Assembly containing Assembly Resolution No. 216 – encouraging homeowners to plant native plants that support bee populations and create habitat for pollinators.

Mrs. Leidner was instructed to place this on the website and then should be placed on the Township Facebook page.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY**

Mr. Benbrook reported that the Fair Share Housing Fairness Hearing is scheduled for November 15, and the Municipal Clerk will be placing it in the newspaper of record and on the website. After this hearing the Township will be good until 2025.

Mr. Benbrook received a letter from the Blairstown Museum in response to the letter that was sent to them regarding a disclaimer to be placed on their website. They will be putting some statement, not exactly what was requested by the Township Committee. The response came from an attorney.

Mr. Benbrook will be providing information regarding the Walnut Valley Firehouse for the Committee to discuss at the workshop meeting.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked Mr. Benbrook about the status of the tax foreclosures; he reported that he is still waiting for the searches.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

Free Rabies Clinic will be held on Saturday December 2, 2017 9am-Noon.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER**

Mr. Rodman gave his report earlier in the meeting.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

**COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY**

Mr. Avery asked Barbara Green if there was anything to report from the Senior's. Ms. Green reported that there is a sign up tomorrow, for the November 10 trip to the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse. She also reported that the signups for the Christmas Party will be held on November 14 and the party will be held on December 14.

Mr. Avery also reported that the Salt Shed repair is completed. The DPW is also in the process of testing backhoes.

Part time people need to be hired for snow plow drivers. Mr. Usinowicz is requesting 1 part timer with a CDL and 3 that don't need to have a CDL for the winter season.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON**

Mrs. Dalton reported that 3 contractors picked up the specs for the construction in the front office. They are due to the Municipal Clerk by 2:00 on Tuesday, October 17.

Mrs. Dalton reported on the LED project for the Municipal Building. The Municipal Clerk met with Cliff from Lulo Electric on August 29. The quote is to replace all of the fixtures not just the bulbs. Mrs. Leidner will request what the cost will be to replace the bulbs. Net Zero never got back to us.

Mrs. Dalton received a letter from Fred Cook requesting that the Township Committee reconsider placing his road on the 2018 list of roads scheduled for repair. He is recommending the Township do the quarter mile beginning at the spot where the work was done several years ago and then just past the top of the steep hill leading up from Cobblewood. Mrs. Van Valkenburg requested that the DPW, as they are traveling the roads, to put them in priority status for repair.

North Warren Regional High School is having a Tricky Tray on November 4. They are also hosting the Music Under the Stars event on Saturday, October 14.

Blairstown Elementary School has new signs, one at the end of Stillwater Road that was paid for by the PTG and the other is a very old original sign that was refurbished as an Eagle Scout Project by Ryan Tafuni and is located on Sunset Hill Road. Mrs. Dalton also reported that there are 91 "sustainable schools" in New Jersey and Blairstown Elementary is one of them. They are the only school in Warren County with that designation.

Mrs. Dalton also reported that the Blairstown Elementary School will holding their PAWS to the Pavement Event on Saturday, August 14. This is a walk/run event for all ages.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE**

Mr. Lance summarized the police report which included 1 burglary, 1 DWI, 115 traffic stops that resulted in 28 summons and there were 3 narcotic arrests. Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned the fact that she heard that when people are arrested for they are back out on the street almost immediately. Police Captain Johnsen explained that this is due to the new NJ Bail Reform. He also explained that there are new laws coming out regarding the requirement of Narcan recipients to go through some type of rehabilitation program. The law states that unless it is a dangerous crime the person arrested is released quickly.

On September 25, Mr. Lance attended the organizing meeting of the County Governing Officials. Steve Oroho spoke about State Aid for education. Freeholder Ed Smith was there.

Mr. Lance also spoke about a meeting he attended regarding internet service in this area. CenturyLink set the meeting up, in attendance was a representative from Hardwick, Blairstown, Hope and

Knowlton. Also in attendance were 3 representatives from the BPU, and 8 CenturyLink Officials. These officials were flown in from all over the country. They agreed, in their 2018 Build Plan, to upgrade the three existing internet service devices in Blairstown, build two more devices and install 4,543 feet of fiber optics. This will increase download and upload speeds.

Blairstown Historic Preservation Committee – this Friday Roy’s Hall has donated a space for the Committee to set up a small exhibit for the showing of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. There will be a 4:30 showing of the movie. There will be 4 shows. The big event will be the Cedar Ridge Cemetery Tour on Saturday October 28, there will be 2 tours 1:00 & 3:00.

Mr. Lance explained that the Blairstown Historic Preservation Committee would like to purchase a portable PA system with their money that is in the budget.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Historic Preservation Committee to purchase a portable public address system up to \$700.00, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG**

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that she received a letter from Charlie Petty regarding the historical plaque on the bridge in Footbridge Park. In the letter Mr. Petty noted that the plaque is in very poor shape and hardly readable, he is offering to take the plaque off, sandblast and repaint it with the permission of the Township Committee. He will also position the plaque securely back on the bridge.

Mr. Lance requested that he be able to bring this back to the Historic Preservation Committee because they are talking about possibly expanding the Historic District that never included the Footbridge. They are meeting on October 23.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg distributed a sample Ordinance from Newton requiring certain landlords to post adequate security against the consequences of disorderly behavior of the tenants. She thinks that having an ordinance like this would be a good idea and to incorporate drugs into the ordinance. Mrs. Van Valkenburg believes that it should be up to the landlord to have a tenant removed after multiple arrests for the use of drugs. She asked Mr. Benbrook to take a look at the ordinance for the legality of this type of ordinance.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg inquired as to whether there will be more than one voting location in Blairstown for the upcoming election. Mrs. Leidner explained that the voting location will remain the same this year.

The ordinance committee has been meeting and reviewing all of the Township Ordinances other than Chapter 19 which pertains to Land Use. Mrs. Van Valkenburg discovered that the Township does have an alarm ordinance, and she is bringing this up because the Fire Department asked to have an ordinance put in place for multiple false alarms. Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked to have this information placed on the Township’s website.



## **MAYOR SHOEMAKER**

Mayor Shoemaker noted that now the Township has someone in charge of the DPW he would like Mr. Usinowicz to get in touch with Mike Lata and go over the workings of the Water Company. Mr. Lata sent a letter requesting a contract be drawn up for clarification purposes. Mr. Lata also told the Mayor that John Zukoski, from the DPW has been doing inspections at the water plant on a daily basis and has been doing a great job.

The issue with the Hose Company and providing services to Hardwick has been resolved. The Stillwater Fire Company withdrew its offer.

Mayor Shoemaker noted that the Facebook page is up and Lori Nienstedt did a great job getting that up and running.

Mayor Shoemaker also made note of a fire on Stark Road last week. The garage and apartment over it burned. There were 9 fire departments there to fight the fire.

## **FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mayor Shoemaker asked that the public keep their comments to 3 minutes because the Committee has been in session since 6:00 this evening.

Bob Halberstadt - Frelinghuysen – The Express Times did a follow up on his story regarding the fire. The homeowners praised all of the emergency services personnel. They thanked the Fire Department for saving their house. The fire was contained to the outbuilding and the garage.

Harold Price, 3 Alice Court – Mr. Price inquired as to why there are only 3 parking lot lights lit. The sign is not lit either. Mr. Price noted with the Election coming up the building needs to be lit. Mayor Shoemaker will speak to Mr. Usinowicz tomorrow and get the situation corrected.

Mr. Price also had a question for Mr. Rodman regarding installation of bicycle grates on Maple Lane during the paving process. Mr. Rodman explained that the cost of the grates was included in the Grant that was received from the DOT. Mr. Rodman explained that the Township had the grates in stock so they were used and we will be reimbursed once the paperwork is completed and sent to the State.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC  
Municipal Clerk