

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Friday, March 4, 2016 – 10 AM  
TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**MINUTES**

**OPENING; ROLL CALL**

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 Pizzaia and CFO Christine Rolef. Mr. Rodman arrived at 10:10 am.

**FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was conducted.

**SUNSHINE STATEMENT**

Mayor Shoemaker read the following statement: Notice of this Special Meeting has been sent to two official newspapers of Blairstown Township noting the date, time and agenda thereof in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**DISCUSSION – 2016 Budget**

Mayor Shoemaker asked Mrs. Rolef to make a brief presentation on the proposed 2016 budget. She said that this proposed budget is down \$39,387.45 from the 2015 budget. The surplus is down approximately \$90,000.

Mrs. Rolef outlined particular items of the proposed budget, which included a \$25,000 increase in contribution to the first aid squad, which is actually a one-time transfer of funds from their capital account for the purchase of equipment. She said that there was a discussion on reducing the stipends for several members of the fire department. She kept the full amount in the 2016 budget, but the Committee can reduce these stipends when the salary resolution is adopted.

There is a \$15,000 reduction in the snow removal line item because she is anticipating a reduction in the amount paid this year to private road homeowner associations. Mrs. Rolef and Mr. Kevin Benbrook will be sending out notifications to the private associations stating that the Township will be strictly adhering to our ordinance regarding reimbursement for snow removal.

In order to balance the budget, Mrs. Rolef needed to reduce the general capital improvement fund and the reserve for first aid equipment. The Committee was in agreement to insert \$10,000 in the first aid capital fund for future purchases.

With regard to the Water Operating budget, Mrs. Rolef said that the water revenues are enough to cover the operating costs. She added \$65,000 into the Capital outlay, but she does not anticipate spending the entire amount. There was a discussion on adding the positions of Water Operator and Assistant Water Operator to the salary ordinance. After discussion, it was agreed to add the position of Water Operator to the salary ordinance with a salary range of \$5,000 - \$15,000 per year, and Assistant Water Operator with a salary range of \$1 - \$2.50 per hour.

Mrs. Rolef explained the Capital Plan page on the budget. Mrs. Rolef added a DPW purchase for \$180,000 on this list. Any items listed on the Capital do not necessarily need to be completed, but are only potential expenditures. After discussion, the Committee agreed to keep this item on the Capital Plan list.

Mr. Lance requested that Mrs. Rolef add the first year payment for the deferred charge on the bond ordinance for the water tower. Mrs. Rolef said the \$45,000 would be paid over three years and that she will add the first payment into the 2016 budget.

Mrs. Rolef asked if the Committee would like to put additional monies in the COAH budget. There is currently \$13,000 for the fair share housing study. After discussion, it was agreed to budget an additional \$5,000 for COAH.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg emphasized the need for a five-year plan. She would also like to eliminate the Open Space tax and institute a municipal tax. Mr. Lance said that the Open Space tax cannot be eliminated but could be reduced as in the past. Mrs. Rolef said that the township does have an asset list and a five-year plan for the roads, which are amended as necessary.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no members of the public present.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton. All members were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 am.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk