

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, April 12, 2017, 6:45 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 6:48pm. 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 - 048 AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONNEL**

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

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Executive Session began at 6:50pm.

Mr. Lance made a motion to re-open the Regular Meeting at 7:57 pm. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker explained the results of the Executive Session. There was one personnel matter and no action was taken.

**PRESENTATION OF DAR AWARDS WAS POSTPONED TO THE MAY 10, 2017 MEETING.**

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

Kendra Close – 82 Stillwater Road – Ms. Close representing Blairstown Farmers' Market and Foodshed Alliance, was in attendance to obtain permission to hold the Annual Farmers Market in the lot by the fire hall.

Mr. Lance made a Motion to approve the Farmers Market as long as the certificate of insurance is provided, Mrs. Van Valkenburg seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE: All ayes, motion carried.

Livia Angelone – 12 Bridge Street – Ms. Angelone reported that she needs help with getting her neighborhood quiet after 10:00pm. The noise is being made by dogs, vehicles and neighbors parties.

Also, residents are not cleaning up after their dogs. Ms. Angelone is requesting more enforcement by Township Officials. Mayor Shoemaker will discuss these issues with Bob Gara and Alan DeCarolis.

Jean O'Brien – 16 East Avenue – Ms. O'Brien made note of the noise from trucks on Route 94 using their air brakes. Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended that she start a petition for a full time police department here in Blairstown. Mrs. O'Brien also inquired as to how things were progressing with the water. Ms. O'Brien was advised by the Township Committee that the Township Engineer will cover the water in his report.

Frank C. Van Horne – Knowlton Committeeman – Mr. Van Horne explained that initially he came to discuss the possibility of a shared service for a salt shed. He explained that our salt shed is actually too small to accommodate an additional municipality. Another suggestion was that the adjoining municipalities of Hope, Knowlton and Blairstown DPW's work out a plan to plow certain roads in a neighboring municipality where plows are already on that road in exchange for another road within their municipality. This can be done by calculating mileage.

## **MINUTES**

### **February 8, 2017 - Regular Meeting Minutes**

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

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

### **February 8, 2017 - Executive Session Minutes**

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

## **ADOPTION OF 2017 BUDGET**

R.2017 – 049 Resolution Authorizing Budget to be Read by Title Only

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Resolution 2017-049, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton

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

**PUBLIC HEARING** – Copies of the budget have been made available to the public requesting same and a synopsis has been published in the New Jersey Herald on March 27, 2017.

Mr. Lance explained that the 2016 adopted budget was \$4,044,000.00 and the proposed 2017 budget is \$3,964,813.41 million so the budget is down \$79,186.59 from the adopted budget from last year.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that Blairstown Township does not have a municipal tax. We have a \$.02 Open Space Tax which is a dedicated tax for Open Space Preservation, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Mrs. Van Valkenburg made the recommendation for residents to look at their tax bills and they will see that most of it is for school budgets. When school budgets come up go to those meetings.

Hearing no comments or questions from the public, Mayor Shoemaker closed the Public Hearing on the 2017 Budget Adoption.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Resolution 2017-50, the final adoption of the 2017 budget, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1 – R.2017 – 051 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2017 – 052 Appointment of Certified Recycling Coordinator
- 3 – R.2017 – 053 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2016-009
- 4 - R.2017 - Application for Blue Light Permit - Salvatore P. Lascari and Colomba Kampfe, Blirstown Ambulance Corps.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

- Clerk – March Report
- Finance – March Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – March Report
- Police Department – March Report
- Tax Collector – March Report
- Animal Control Officer – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Report, 2016
- Warren County Health Department – March 10, 2017 Report

Mr. Lance 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

Mr. Lance explained that on the Warren County Health Department Report 83 Union Brick Road a court hearing was scheduled for March 9 and the defendants failed to appear.

Mayor Shoemaker asked that the Zoning Officer do a monthly report. That way the Township Committee can follow up on complaints that they receive.

Mr. Lance made a motion to request a monthly report from the Zoning Officer that will include all activities, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

NONE

**COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE** for information and possible action

1 – memo from Regina McKenna, Tax Collector, regarding Municipal Foreclosures

Ms. McKenna provided the Township Committee a list of properties that have been put up for Tax Sale and a copy of a previously adopted resolution from a prior year. Mr. Lance gave a copy to Township Attorney, Kevin Benbrook to pursue.

Mr. Benbrook indicated that he will prepare a new Resolution for the next meeting and will start the Process.

2 – from NJABC – Social Affair Permit Application was received by the NJABC from Blirstown Live-Arts, for a Non-Profit Fundraiser to be held April 15, 2017 from 6:30pm – 11:59pm.

3 – from NJABC – Social Affair Permit Application was received by the NJABC from Givens-Belet Blirstown American Legion Post 258 for a Non-Profit Event- Annual Memorial Day Parade to be held on Sunday, May 28 from Noon-8:00PM at Footbridge Park.

Mr. Lance made a Motion to approve the Social Affair Permits for an event being held by Blirstown Live Arts on April 15 and from Blirstown American Legion Post 258 on Sunday, May 28, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

4 - email from Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center to place a Clothing Collection Box to collect "new" clothing items for victims.

Municipal Clerk Leidner explained that this clothing box is to collect **new** clothing for victims of domestic Abuse and sexual assault.

Mr. Lance made a motion to allow the placement of a new clothing collection box in the lobby of the Municipal Building for the month of April as requested by the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Crisis Center, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

5 – Facilities Use Application has been received from Ridge and Valley Conservancy for use of Givens-Belet for a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on October 8, 2017 from 2-6pm. A deposit has been received.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve the Facilities Use Application from Ridge and Valley Conservancy for the use of Givens Belet on October 8, 2017, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

6 - Facilities Use Application has been received from the MOMS Club of Blirstown for use of Sycamore Park for a Community Movie Night on July 15, 2017 from 5:30pm – 12:00am.

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the Municipal Clerk and CFO met with the Township Insurance Agent As it is customary for the Facilities Use Application be reviewed for insurance purposes. There were Items within the MOMS Club's application and their insurance that raised red flags. The Police had Concerns about the application as well, lighting was a big concern as well as the park use ordinances.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to deny the Facilities Use Application submitted by the MOMS Club of Blairstown, which was seconded by Mr. Avery

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

All ayes: Motion carried

7 - Facilities Use Application has been received from Blairstown Hose Company #1 for Use of Sycamore Park on July 29, 2017 from noon – 9pm for a Fire Fighting Skills Competition

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Facilities Use Application submitted by the Blairstown Hose Company to hold a Fire Fighting Skills Competition at Sycamore Park on July 29, 2017.

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

All ayes: Motion carried

#### **GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

**1** – Invitation from the Warren County Prosecutor to attend an informational session on the impact of the legalization of marijuana on Tuesday, May 2 at 8:00am at the Belvidere Manor Banquet Hall.

Municipal Clerk Leidner to attend and bring back any pertinent information.

**2** – Letter from Dolan & Dolan – Land Use Board Annual Report for 2016.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY**

There will be some tax appeals coming before the tax board that Kevin will attend if needed.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

Mrs. Leidner reminded the Township Committee that there will be no Workshop Meeting on April 24 due to her attendance at the Municipal Clerk's Conference.

Mrs. Leidner also reminded everyone that the DPW and Municipal Offices will be closed on Friday, April 14 in observance of Good Friday.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER**

Mr. Rodman reported that a letter was sent to Charles Cavanaugh from the DEP requesting an extension for the well project to see if we can secure a grant. There was no response to the letter as of this afternoon.

Mr. Rodman also reported that there was a pre-construction meeting regarding the East Chrisman Road bridge. The tentative start date is set for May 1 through approximately August 1, 2017. This is a County project.

Regarding the Cobblewood Road culvert Mr. Rodman will get three quotes again as enough time has elapsed that the previous quotes would be invalid. The consensus of the Township Committee is that something must be done with this pipe.

Regarding the Walnut Valley Firehouse Remediation - The Township signed a receptor evaluation update with Whitman. This does not involve how the clean-up will be done or who will do it. Mr. Rodman recommends the Township Committee meet with Whitman to discuss this issue.

#### **FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY**

Mr. Avery reported that the Blirstown Seniors are planning their first outing of 2017, they will be traveling to The Brownstone on Tuesday April 25.

Mr. Avery also reported that an increase of funds is needed for the drilling of the back up well. Even though the Township is trying to obtain grant money for this project this money needs to be in place so that it is available should it be needed.

Mr. Avery made a motion to increase the Bond Ordinance for the Back-up well by \$20,000.00. Which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Avery noted that at the last meeting of the Township Committee they discussed the need for new DPW equipment. Christine Rolef, CFO explained that the DPW is in need of 2 plows, 2 spreaders, a tractor and a backhoe. A pick-up truck is needed but can probably wait until 2018 to be replaced.

Mrs. Rolef gave the Township Committee two spreadsheets. One is Debt Service Equal Payments and the other is Debt Service Payments spread out. A discussion ensued regarding these two options. After this discussion Mr. Avery made the following motion.

Mr. Avery made a motion to authorize the CFO to have Bond Council prepare a Bond Ordinance in the amount \$323,000.00 which includes the DPW pick-up truck, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON**

All job descriptions are in the process of being formatted. The job descriptions will be reviewed by all employees, signed off on and filed in a binder in the office of the Municipal Clerk's.

Mrs. Dalton made mention that she was glad that the Blirstown Animal Control Officer, Alan DeCarolis was in attendance at the meeting. Mrs. Dalton noted that there was no official Job Description for Animal Control officer and asked him to review the sample and get it back to her within 10 days. Mrs. Dalton also noted that she was just made aware of the fact that Mr. DeCarolis has an assistant, Nellie Klaver. The Township was not aware that she goes on calls when he is not available. Mr. DeCarolis explained that Ms. Klaver is the Animal Control Officer in Allamuchy and he is her Deputy there. The major concern is if Ms. Klaver is injured on a call how would she be covered. Blirstown would just have to formally recognize Ms. Klaver as Deputy Animal Control Officer without compensation from Blirstown Township. Mrs. Klaver will forward her personal information for our records.

Mr. DeCarolis made reference to the fee schedule, he noted that the Townships fees are very low and should be reviewed. Mr. DeCarolis touched on the barking dog issue, unfortunately it ends up being a he said/she said situation. By the time the Animal Control Officer and or the Police get to the scene the barking has stopped. If an affidavit is signed Mr. DeCarolis will issue a summons. Our Animal Ordinance does not limit the number of dogs a person can have. Mr. DeCarolis noted that some municipalities go by acreage to determine how many dogs a resident can have. Mayor Shoemaker asked Mr. DeCarolis about cats. Mr. DeCarolis noted that they do not pick up cats. If

there is an injured cat or a sick cat then we take care of the situation. The surrounding towns do not license cats. It is almost impossible to enforce the licensing of cats. Mr. DeCarolis recommended that Blirstown raise the dog licensing fees, they are too low in comparison with the surrounding municipalities.

Mrs. Dalton made reference to a memo from Christine Rolef, CFO that was sent to the members of the Township Committee in reference to Lori Nienstedt. Mrs. Nienstedt is currently a part time employee and Mrs. Rolef is requesting that the Committee consider making her a full time employee. Currently Mrs. Nienstedt works fourteen hours a week in accounts payable and two hours a week as an assistant to the Zoning Officer. Mrs. Nienstedt is qualified to be the Township IT person as she has experience in this field. In addition she could be an on staff grant writer. Mrs. Nienstedt would also be the DPW administrative assistant.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to hire Lori Nienstedt as a full time employee with an effective date of May 1, 2017, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

Mrs. Dalton reported that North Warren has been selected to participate in a State Department initiative to partially fund a teacher of Mandarin Chinese for the 2017-2018 school year. Mrs. Dalton has been asked to act as the community liaison and she has to go to a round table and will get to meet the teacher.

Mrs. Dalton also reported that Blirstown Elementary school recently hosted an art show, participated in Jump rope for the Heart and raised \$5000.00. On April 10 the New Jersey State Commissioner of Education, Kimberly Harrington visited Blirstown Elementary. She reviewed curriculum, visited classrooms and interacted with the students. Ms. Harrington is a local and worked at Blirstown Elementary. Ms. Harrington was extremely impressed with the school.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE**

Mr. Lance thanked the employees, boards and department heads especially Christine for preparing the budget and getting it adopted in a timely manner. Great job by all.

Mr. Lance gave a report on the April Police reports there were 24 traffic summons issued, 116 motor vehicle stops, 6 arrests – most troubling are the 4 narcotic arrests. On April 29 is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. This is an opportunity to dispose of expired and unused prescription drugs. Blirstown is an authorized drop off location as well as several other Warren County municipalities. Beginning in May Blirstown will be a permanent expired/unused medication drop off location.

Mr. Lance also reported that the Police Department received a certificate of recognition called Every Life Matters, in recognition of the Annual Recognition NARCAN Saves Day April 6, 2017. This recognition is in appreciation of the police saving the lives of heroin victims during an overdose, at a time when every minute counts. This was presented by the Coalition for Healthy and Safe Communities with a Special Recognition given by the Warren County Freeholders.

Historic Preservation will be giving 2 guided tours on April 22 at Appalachian Trail Day, one at Noon and again at 2pm. Appalachian Trail Day will be held on Main Street. A topic of discussion of the

Historic Preservation Committee has been the old Blairstown Press Newspaper that are stored at the Warren County Library and are falling apart. The Historic Preservation Committee has been looking into ways to preserve these newspapers; digitizing is not the answer. The paper itself needs to be preserved. The Warren County Clerk's Office is trying to preserve the Belvedere Apollo Newspaper, the Historic Preservation Committee is hoping they may be able to assist with the preservation of the Blairstown Press.

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

Mrs. Van Valkenburg distributed information from the New Jersey Forest Fire Service to the members of the Township Committee. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that a presentation was made by the Forest Fire Service to the Land Use Board. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that our Fire Code Ordinance is a very weak ordinance and should be eliminated from our Code Book. The Forest Fire Service must be informed whenever anyone makes a fire. The Forest Fire Service has their own fee schedule.

In regards to COAH, Mrs. Van Valkenburg has been in contact with the Housing Liaison Theresa Tamburro. She has been in touch with John with the planning division of ARC to determine if they have not found a group home location as yet. They are looking for a 4 bedroom ranch with a garage to house the group home. The ideal location for the home would be in the village area or the Route 94 corridor.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported on a copy of an article that was received from Land Use Chair, Debbie Waldron regarding a presentation done by the State of New Jersey in 2001-2002, the public was invited, to determine if the train would be coming back to the Blairstown area. At the time it was unanimous that nobody wanted the train to come to Blairstown. Frelinghuysen wanted the train but the State did not want the train going to Frelinghuysen. The New Jersey Herald recently reported that the train will be going to Andover and there is a stop in Blairstown. The train will go directly to Andover but the stop in Blairstown could be an additional stop in the future. This is something that the Township Committee should keep an eye on.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg mentioned that when Main Street is going to be closed for any reason the businesses need to be notified well in advance of the event. Many times the businesses have appointments that are set months in advance and then the road is closed and the clients are unable to get to their appointments. The residents need to be notified as well. The event organizers should be charged with the task of notifying the businesses and residents.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that Carl Stoddart and Pat Sagan reported that the fencing behind the home plate area of the Little League Field is loose and presents a dangerous situation for the kids. Caps should be placed on these fences. The same condition exists at Sycamore Park behind home plate on the little league field. Also, the issue about parking on the grass at Sycamore Park and people driving up to the dog park are major issues. An Ordinance is needed to post no parking signs and to be able to enforce them.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg also brought up the funding to pay Jessica Caldwell for the Overlay Zone preparation that the Master is requiring. This expense was never approved by the Township Committee and now the Land Use Board needs a Planner for this purpose. Township Attorney Kevin Benbrook explained that when the COAH litigation began he started working with Darlene Green from Maser Consulting, at some point the Township hired Jessica Caldwell and Mr. Benbrook began



working with her. The RFP for Jessica Caldwell began in 2015. The overlay was not even known to be a required back then or that the Land Use Board would need to hire a Planner to comply with a 120 day deadline to design a density overlay zone. The proposal would need to be approved in order for Mrs. Rolef to pay Jessica Caldwell's bill.

#### **MAYOR SHOEMAKER**

The Mayor's report topics were addressed in earlier parts of the meeting.

#### **FROM THE PUBLIC**

Debra Waldron - Land Use Chair spoke regarding the meeting she attended at North Warren Regional High School regarding the resolution of the solar panel application. Ms. Waldron asked the school to work with the Township, the school didn't realize that they are obligated to maintain the plantings for as long as the solar panels are in existence. Ms. Bilotti, Superintendent was going to bring this to the attention of their new attorney and the Board of Education and get back to either Debbie Waldron or Ted Rodman with a planting plan and they have not gotten back to either.

Doug Pitchell – Mr. Pitchell inquired as to whether when Narcon is administered to someone they be required to pay for the antidote? Mayor Shoemaker referred the question to Police Director Gara for a response at the next meeting.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road - Ms. Murray noted that when the question was posed to the public in 2001 as to whether they wanted the NJ Transit Train to come to Blairstown the public said yes but the Township Committee at the time said no. Mrs. Van Valkenburg remembers it differently. Mr. Lance remembered that the public did not want the train.

John Balbi – 46 Hope Road – Spoke asking for help to get his permits for his recycling center. Mr. Balbi feels that he is not being guided in the right direction to obtain the permits he needs to expand. Mr. Rodman advised Mr. Balbi that a completed checklist and application get an applicant before the board. Every applicant must follow this procedure. Mr. Benbrook advised Mr. Balbi that the Township Committee has no jurisdiction over Mr. Rodman's checklist or what the Land Use Board does. Mr. Rodman advised Mr. Balbi to have his attorney call him.

#### **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 10:58 pm.

Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC  
Municipal Clerk