

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, January 2, 2019, 7:30PM**

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. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Lance. Mrs. Waldron was absent. Also present were Clerk Leidner and Attorney Dawn Sullivan.

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. This agenda is subject to change by order of the Blairstown Township Committee before and/or during this scheduled meeting.

Resolution No. 2019-027 – AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION – Not needed.

Mayor Lance asked everyone present to rise for a moment of silence to remember past Planning Board Member Jim Gilmore who passed away.

Before starting the agenda Mayor Lance made mention of the Grandfather Clock in the back of the meeting room. He explained that the Historic Preservation Committee received the clock as a donation a year and a half ago. Christine Beegle, Chairwoman of the Historic Preservation Committee explained that the clock was made by Mr. Bixler of Easton. She went on to explain that Alexander Adams, of the Adams homestead that is located on the border of Blairstown and Knowlton, gifted the clock to his sister Hilde as a wedding gift in 1858. A local family was moving to Florida and felt that this piece should remain in Blairstown. The Historic Preservation Committee thought this would be a good time to have a ringing in of the New Year with the grandfather clock. Mayor Lance announced Wickliffe Mott, Vice Chair, Lori Nienstedt, Secretary and Barbara Green were in attendance as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

None

PRESENTATION – Stephanie Nienstedt, Warren County Coordinator of the Municipal Alliance

Mayor Lance explained that he spoke with Ms. Nienstedt about a month ago. Blairstown used to be involved with the program. He went on to explain that this program is a drug and alcohol, substance abuse education program.

Mrs. Nienstedt explained that she oversees and monitors a grant from the State of New Jersey – Governors Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. Each municipality in New Jersey has an opportunity to participate in this grant program. The funds for this program come from drug offense fines. Blairstown could get \$5,545.00 from this grant that could be used for evidence based or

community level prevention strategies. This is a Community based program. Ms. Nienstedt explained that the cash match would be \$1,664.00. Ms. Nienstedt also recommended that Blairstown merge with Frelinghuysen because all of the paperwork needs to be in to the State of New Jersey by February and there is a lot that would need to be done. By merging all that would happen would that a committee be formed and paperwork signed. Also, by merging there is a larger sum of money available for the program. If Blairstown and Frelinghuysen merge then there would be \$11,806.00 to implement prevention strategies.

Mayor Lance made a motion to have Blairstown Township take part in the Municipal Alliance Program authorizing the amount of \$1,664.00, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll call vote: AYE – Moorhead, Sikkes Van Valkenburg, Lance
Absent - Waldron
All ayes - Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT SUMMARIES

Summaries were read by the following department heads:

Eric Usinowicz - DPW – Mr. Usinowicz gave his December report.

Fire Chief Calvin Inscho - Fire Department – Chief Inscho read his 2018 Annual Report in full. Mr. Inscho made the Township Committee aware of a new bill that is going through the legislature that better defines what Junior Firefighters are allowed to do. Mr. Inscho gave the members of the Township Committee a sample of a supporting resolution that some municipalities are passing.

Animal Control Officer – Scott Hendricks – Mr. Hendricks noted that three guiding principles that he has are, to be **Responsive, Communicate**, and to have **Compassion** not only for the animal but for the people as well. Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked Mr. Hendricks if he intended to go ahead with the purchase of a chip reader. Mr. Hendricks indicated that he absolutely would like to purchase one.

Joel McGreen – Open Space Committee Chairman – Mr. McGreen explained that the Township is looking to sell 3 lots and one lot was dedicated for COAH. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that the original deal on that property never went through, therefore it was determined that the lot is no longer included in the COAH plan.

Mr. lance inquired about Kostenbader and Mr. McGreen explained that unless the owner agrees to and pays for a Phase II Environmental Study this deal is off the table.

Mr. McGreen noted Karen Klein is interested in joining the Open Space Committee. Mrs. Leidner will send her a Citizen Leadership Application.

MINUTES

December 12, 2018 –Regular Meeting Minutes.

December 12, 2018 – Executive Session Minutes

These minutes will be available at the February 13 meeting of the Township Committee

ORDINANCES

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2019 – 028 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2019 – 029 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-20 Block 1601 Lot 3.05

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Mrs. Van Valkenburg and seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Roll call vote: AYE – Moorhead, Sikkes, Van Valkenburg, Lance
Absent - Waldron
All ayes - Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – December Report
DPW – December Report
Finance – None
Fire Department – None
Police Department – December Report
Tax Collector – December Report
Warren County Health Department – December 10, 2018
Zoning - End of Year 2018

Mrs. Leidner explained that some of the department reports are not included due to the meeting being so early in the month.

Motion to approve the Department Reports was made by Mr. Moorhead and seconded by Mr. Sikkes.

Roll call vote: AYE – Moorhead, Sikkes Van Valkenburg, Lance
Absent - Waldron
All ayes - Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

Social Affair Permit Application received from the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control for Blairstown Live Arts to be held at Roy's Hall on January 12, 2019 from 6:00pm – 11:59pm for a Fund Raising Concert. This is advisory only, the Township Attorney explained that there is no vote to approve needed as the Alcoholic Beverage Commission sends this to the municipality for review. If there are any concerns then they need to be submitted to the Alcoholic Beverage Commission within 7 days.

Resolution 2019-030 in Support of Path to Progress Recommendations made by New Jersey Economic and Fiscal Policy Workgroup

Motion was made by Mrs. Van Valkenburg to approve Resolution No. 2019-030, which was seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Mayor Lance read the Resolution in full. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that if the State does not do something about reducing the health care and pension costs at the State level the burden will be placed on schools and municipalities with a reduction in State Aid to both.

Roll call vote: AYE – Moorhead, Sikkes Van Valkenburg, Lance
Absent - Waldron
All ayes - Motion carried.

Letter to Blairstown Residents regarding the Sussex Warren Area Energy Cooperative – public information sessions will be held at the Blairstown Municipal Building Wednesday, January 23 at 3pm & 6pm, snow date Tuesday, January 29 3pm & 6pm.

Mayor Lance explained that this information is already on his Facebook Page and on the Municipal Website. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that this is a way for residents to save on the distribution portion of their electric bills. She went on to explain that this is an opt out program. Residents are automatically enrolled and have to contact Concord Energy to opt out if they do not want to participate in the savings. If a resident already has a third party provider then they will be unable to participate.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

No discussion.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Ms. Sullivan explained that the 45 day window in which any property owners would be able to come forward and redeem a property on the In-Rem Foreclosure list has lapsed. The Tax Collector has confirmed that there have been no redemptions on the properties. The next step is to file a final judgement on the properties. Ms. Sullivan also noted that she has sent out for the title work on the last two properties, the title work for one property has been received.

Ms. Sullivan thanked the Township Committee for the reappointment of her firm and she is looking forward to working with the committee in the coming year.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

Mrs. Leidner reported that as of today Maureen DeSimone has issued 350 dog licenses, she noted that it quite a few licenses since it is only January 2.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported that a voucher and permit are being prepared to be sent to the DEP for the new well for review.

Mr. Rodman also reported that the Route 94 Bridge construction is postponed until further notice.

Mr. Rodman thanked the Township Committee for the reappointment, he noted that this is this 34th year.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Mayor Lance noted that reports were given at the Reorganization Meeting held earlier in the evening. He inquired as to whether any members had any additional reports.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MOORHEAD

No report.

COMMITTEE MEMBER SIKKES

No report.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that she had a telephone conference with Jackie Espinoza from JCP&L. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that Ms. Espinoza explained that she is working with local officials looking for local places for crews to be stationed during storms. Tunnel Field in Knowlton was recommended as one location the trucks could be stationed and also the local camps are willing to house some of the crews so that they could shower and sleep. The purpose of this is so that the crews will be closer and more readily accessible when needed.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg also reported that the Warren County Freeholders approved a resolution opposing the sale of marijuana.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg also reported that David Diehl, Zoning Official gave a report that this year alone the Vacant and Abandoned Properties brought in \$42,467.33. Over the two years \$73,963.00 came in through this program.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg also reported that Mr. Diehl would also like to raise some of the fees associated with zoning.

COMMITTEE MEMBER WALDRON

Absent

MAYOR LANCE

No report.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Nellie Klaver – Ms. Klaver inquire as to the reasoning for replacing the former Animal Control Officer. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that there were complaints and also salary. Ms. Klaver inquired as to the salary of the new Animal Control Officer. Mayor Lance replied \$15,000.00 per year. Ms. Klaver explained she felt that as the Deputy Animal Control Officer for many years nobody reached out to her regarding the decision to interview for the position. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that she would have thought that the former Animal Control Officer would have let her know since she worked for him. Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that the position was advertised.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to appoint Walter Orcutt to the Open Space Committee, which was seconded by Mayor Lance.

Mayor Lance explained that during the Reorganization Meeting there were several appointments to the Township Boards and Committees and there are still vacancies on those boards and committees.

Roll call vote: AYE – Moorhead, Sikkes Van Valkenburg, Lance
Absent - Waldron
All ayes - Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Sikkes. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk