

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, April 10, 2019 7:30PM
MINUTES**

Regular meeting begins at 7:30 pm or immediately following Closed Session, whichever comes last.

OPENING; ROLL CALL

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.

PRESENTATIONS

Footbridge Park Proposal - Patricia Sagan, Blairstown Recreation Director, Tyson Trish, Blair Academy Fine Arts Department Photography and LEADS Teacher, Evan Thomas, Fine Arts and LEADS Teacher, and Sophomore students Corrine Wilm and Miki Wang were present.

A request was made to approve a proposal by the Blair Academy LEADS Class to volunteer to renovate Footbridge Park, including a) buying new and replacing faulty parts on some of the play structures, b) creating a mural of wings with a caption that states "Reading Gives You Wings", c) planting native trees and mulching in needed areas.

A motion was made Mrs. VanValkenburg to approve the Blair Academy LEADS Class proposal to renovate Footbridge Park, seconded by Mrs. Waldron

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron

All ayes – Motion carried.

Warren County Community College (WCCC) Information Session– Will Austin, President and Dr. Phil Linfante, Board Chair, Mr. Craig Dana, former Board Chair were present.

Mr. Austin briefed the Committee on a number of positive strides the school has made, namely:

- WCCC has become a national trendsetter in the area of remedial education. They are the only college in New Jersey that has completely abolished remedial education. Every student that comes to them goes directly into college courses. As a result, their graduation rates doubled.
- While WCCC does not get many Blairstown students coming physically to their campus, they have other programs to benefit our students, such as their dual enrollment program. This program has saved students and their families upwards of \$50k.
- WCCC has the highest graduation rate of any community college in the State.

Dr. Linfante presented State statistics on the increasing role of community colleges in New Jersey, including:

- Dr. Austin made an arrangement whereby WCCC students can now obtain all their textbooks for an entire year for \$140. This includes 20k volumes worth of materials. They can pick six resources for the following year should they transfer to another institution.
- In March 2018, WCCC was evaluated by Middle States Association (the accrediting body that accredits colleges and universities in the middle states region) and WCCC received an unprecedented zero recommendations.

Mr. Craig Dana credited the leadership of WCCC for the advancements of the school. He stated that not only do they have the highest graduation rate compared to the national average, but they have dedicated staff, a foundation to raise money for scholarships, and fantastic facilities. He suggested that people consider Warren County Community College for their higher education needs.

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING APRIL 2019 AS WARREN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH

A motion was made Mr. Sikkes to recognize April 2019 as Warren County Community College Month, seconded by Mrs. Waldron

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

PROCLAMATION - Designating May as OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Mayor Lance read a proclamation recognizing May as Older Americans Month.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carol Cooke read a letter from Blairstown resident Karen Klein concerning a municipal tax. Mrs. Cooke also pointed out a situation on Cobblewood Road with a drainage ditch near #51 and #53 that develops an ice patch in the winter.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Ambulance Corps – The following March report was given by Fernya Klindt: the ambulance responded to 74 calls (Blairstown had 47 calls, Hope - 14, Hardwick - 7, Frelinghysen - 5, and Walpack - 1), 55 patients were seen, Volunteers put in 268 man hours.

Animal Control – Mr. Hendricks distributed an additional report to the Township Committee and explained that he responded to 15 incidents during March and they are all closed out.

Fire Department – Calvin Inscho, Fire Chief reported that Hose Co. #1 rescued a horse from a swimming pool on Belcher Road.

The Contract with EF Recovery has been signed.

Service with FirstNet, a first responders network, will begin in several weeks at a cost of \$43/month. One of the responders will be in the Chief's car and one in each engine. This will assist the FD with cost recovery.

Comedy Night fundraiser on May 18, 2019. There will also be a basketball game fundraiser for Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOPS) between the PD and FD on May 31st at 7:30 p.m..

DPW – Eric Usinowicz, Acting Director of Public Works gave the following report. All of the meters have been read in town and at Blair Academy. An adjustment on the breaker at the water house fixed the issue that had existed. All of the fire apparatus has been serviced. General maintenance on the DPW fleet and police cars is underway. A new motor was installed for the furnace at the Municipal Building. Cold patching and catch basin repairs have been accomplished. Spring clean-ups have been ongoing in the parks.

Police – Scott Johnsen, Police Chief reported that tip411 will be replacing Nixle. It is an app where alerts can be sent out as well as giving people the ability to send anonymous tips, including pictures and videos, to the Police Department. The app is for android or Apple.

Chief Johnsen also reported that the Hidden in Plain Sight program was held at the North Warren Regional HS. Donations were made of Narcan to the Blairstown Ambulance Corps who then passed it along to the Police Department for officers who come in contact with Fentanyl.

Update on the e-ticket system implementation was given.

Chief Johnsen noted that a speed sign being implemented would be helpful for both Hope and Blairstown. Chief Johnsen suggested someone get in touch with John Kruk of Hope to possible split the cost of having them in strategic places.

Mrs. Waldron congratulated Chief Johnsen on being recognized at the 5th Annual Recognition Luncheon for his service. The date of the luncheon is May 16, 2019.

Mr. Moorhead asked if there was a possibility of Blairstown having an engine braking Ordinance, specifically as it relates to Rt. 94. Mr. Sikkes said that since Rt. 94 is a State road, we cannot enforce it.

Mrs. Waldron asked if the Committee could consider expansion of the Police Department area in the Municipal Building to accommodate interrogation, record storage, and separation of families.

Open Space – Joel McGreen, Open Space Chairman, explained that the Nonnemacher farmland (120 acres) preservation project is supposed to close next week.

With regard to the contract for the purchase by the NJDEP of Township owned land near Sand Hill Road there are requirements for the Township to take all actions requested by the purchaser. Ms. Sullivan is requesting due diligence on behalf of the Township to avoid any unexpected issues and associated expenses.

- The Open Space plan was approved last month by the Land Use Board. It will be memorialized in April. It will allow us to obtain more grants for Green Acres/Open Space programs.
- Mohican Farms – the County attorneys said that if the County owns any part of the lakefront, they are benefitting from the lakefront and are therefore held liable. So, the next step is to not have the County own any of the lake frontage.

MINUTES

December 12, 2018 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve was made by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mrs. VanValkenburg.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

December 12, 2018 – Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve was made by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mrs. VanValkenburg.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

March 13, 2019 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve was made by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Moorhead

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mr. Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron,

Abstain - Mayor Lance due to absence from this meeting

Motion carried.

March 13, 2019 – Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Moorhead; seconded by Mrs. Waldron

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron

Abstain - Mayor Lance due to absence from this meeting

Motion carried.

March 27, 2019 – Regular Workshop Meeting Minutes

Motion to approves was made by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Sikkes

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

March 27, 2019 - Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve was made by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Sikkes

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

ORDINANCES

FOR INTRODUCTION:

ORDINANCE 2019-08 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND PART II “GENERAL LEGISLATION” OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN TO ADD A SECTION 108 ENTITLED “FIRE INSURANCE CLAIMS”

Introduction; First Reading

Motion to approve Ordinance 2019-08 on first reading was made by Mr. Sikkes; seconded by Mrs. Waldron.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

Public Hearing will be at the May meeting. Mayor Lance explained that in the case of a fire insurance claim of over \$2,500.00, the Fire Insurance Company will have to check to make sure that taxes are paid on the property before disbursing any payments to the owner or the mortgage company.

ORDINANCE 2019-09 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 184-20 “STOP INTERSECTIONS OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN

Introduction; First Reading

Motion to approve Ordinance No. 2019-08 on first reading was made by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance

All ayes – Motion carried.

Mayor Lance explained that this Ordinance is to add some stop intersections near old Walnut Valley Road.

FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION:

ORDINANCE 2019-07 CALENDAR YEAR 2019 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

Second Reading, Public Hearing, Adoption

Motion to approve by Mrs. VanValkenburg; seconded by Mr. Sikkes.

Mayor Lance opened the Public Hearing. No comments or questions from public, Mayor Lance closed the Public Hearing.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

1 – R.2019 – 053 Authorization to Pay Bills

2 – R.2019 - 054 2018 Tonnage Grant Application

3 - R.2019- 055 Transfer of Appropriation Reserves

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by by Mr. Sikkes; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

INTRODUCTION OF 2019 BUDGET

Mayor Lance commented that there will be a public hearing when the budget is being adopted, which is yet determined. This year the Township of Blairstown is under State Review. The State had a problem with their software, thereby budgets are being submitted by paper which is causing delays in the State approval process.

R.2019 – 056 Resolution to Defer School Taxes

Motion to approve Resolution No. 2019-056 was made by Mr. Lance; seconded by Mr. Sikkes.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

Mrs. VanValkenburg commented that when you defer taxes you are merely putting it off for the future. She asked that if the schools consolidate, does the money get paid out to the regional school or is it going back to taxpayers? Mr. Lance stated that the levy will eventually go up and this issue will likely go to referendum. This will likely take three to four years to resolve.

R.2019 – 057 Introduction of 2019 Budget

Motion to approve Resolution No. 2019-057 by Mr. Lance; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mayor Lance
Nays - Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron
Motion carried.

Mrs. VanValkenburg read a prepared statement to Mayor Lance regarding a possible 5.5 cent tax and recounting the current projects that need to be done in Blairstown. Mr. Lance detailed the projects that were completed and the funding that is available toward them in the form of grants.

Mrs. Waldron commented that we are not living within our means in Blairstown. She expressed concern regarding time constraints that Blairstown is facing that directly correlate to large expenditures such as Walnut Valley Field and Paulina Dam. Mayor Lance stated that we will bond for Walnut Valley. Mrs. VanValkenburg said that we need to stop borrowing.

Mr. Moorhead expressed that he feels that the issue of a municipal tax is the issue du jour. Mrs. VanValkenburg disagreed and asked where are we going to get money from in the future, citing that the Township gives a 2% increase each year.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Ambulance Corp. – March Report

Animal Control – March Report

Clerk – March Report

Finance – March Fuel Reports

Fire Department – March Report

Police Department – March Report

Tax Collector – March Report

Tax Collector – Report of Uncollectible Taxes

Warren County Health Department – March 11, 2019

Zoning – Vacant and Abandoned Properties (VAP) February/ March 2019

Motion to approve the Department Reports was made by Mrs. VanValkenburg; seconded by Mrs. Waldron.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Walnut Valley Firehouse Remediation

Mayor Lance recused himself due to conflict of interest.

The company that performed the original test boring said that they have a contractor they would like to work with to give an estimate for remediation of Walnut Valley.

Motion to approve having GeoWorx go out with the subcontractor to develop an estimate by Mr. Sikkes; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron
All ayes – Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Emergency Fund Recovery Agreement – Between Blairstown Hose Company and Blairstown Township – Authorizing the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to sign the Agreement.

Motion to authorize the Mayor and Township Clerk by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

Application received from Blairstown Museum to hold the Third Annual Historic Blairstown Day. Application has been reviewed by all departments. Fees determined. Applicant is publishing and the date for Public Hearing will be May 8, 2019.

Letter from Little Hill Foundation requesting to hold their annual fundraising 5K/5 mile race in Blairstown Township on October 19, 2019 from 9:30am – 1pm.

Motion to approve by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Voice Vote: All ayes – Motion carried.

Request for approval of Initial Application for Blue Light Permit for Brandon Casey of Blairstown.

Motion to approve by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Voice Vote: All ayes – Motion carried.

Request from Blairstown Ambulance Corp to Apply for OA Plates for the Ambulance. Volunteer Rescue Squad needs letter from Township Committee re: NJSA 27:5F-18 through 27:5F-30.

Ms. Sullivan stated that we need a letter from the Ambulance Corp that certifies that they vehicles meet the State standards. Ms. Sullivan said the Committee can approve with letter pending.

Motion to approve by Mr. Sikkes; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Sikkes, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mrs. Waldron, Mayor Lance
All ayes – Motion carried.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

On March 25, 2019 there was a social media course and newly elected officials course presented by Dorsey-Semrau. During this time there was a discussion regarding a social media policy. Ms. Sullivan suggested the Committee consider it and provide direction to her at the next meeting.

An organization made a request to hold a can shake fundraiser in the roadways last month. During Ms. Sullivan's research, she noted there was nothing specifically in the Code regarding this and offered to draft a policy to address this. It would only apply to Township roads.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The second location for elections has been determined. The Evangelical Free Church will handle Districts 3 and 4. Districts 1, 2, and 5 will remain at the Municipal Building. This will commence during the June Primary. Permission will be sought to have John available for clean-up at both locations.

Linda and Lori went to a demonstration presented by Bill Duffy and Holly Mackey on the new machines in Belvidere.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman said the information on the application for the permit for the well was technically incomplete as per the DEP. It has since been changed and is back in cycle for approval.

Belcher Road – discretionary aid that we received in 2018 must be used by October 25, 2020. Mr. Rodman said there are many problems with Belcher Road that need more than just 2” overlay.

Main Street Parking – no change in the status. The design is being developed.

Paulina Dam Inspection – French and Parrello did the inspection. The report must be submitted on April 15, 2019 with Mayor Lance’s signature.

Motion to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign the report was made by Mrs. Waldron; seconded by Mr. Moorhead.

Voice Vote: All ayes – Motion carried.

State aid for 2019 – Mohican Road from Rt. 94 to Cobblewood – we requested \$271k, we received \$156k. There is a letter with a due date though it was not on hand.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER MOORHEAD

Mr. Moorhead reported that he will be meeting with the Recreation Director, Pat Sagan, to discuss the Goryab property. Mrs. Waldron asked Ms. Sullivan if volunteers could work on the property. Ms. Sullivan said there would be some type of insurance issue and advised that Mrs. Waldron speak with Sharon Cooper. It is advised that they have volunteers sign a hold harmless agreement.

Main Street Advisory Committee – Mr. Moorhead asked if Mr. Usinowicz has spoken with Chief Johnsen revisiting Ordinance for the downtown area. Mrs. Waldron said that she spoke to Chief Johnsen about submitting a list of recommended Ordinance changes.

COMMITTEE MEMBER SIKKES

Mr. Sikkes reported that upon the recommendation of the Chair of the Land Use Board, the older Master Plan will be tweaked to avert incurring large expenses associated with hiring a planner.

Mr. Sikkes also reported that the Zoning Official David Diehl has been issuing citations. There have been many issues surrounding the storage containers around the Town which are not permissible unless they are for farm use.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

No report given.

COMMITTEE MEMBER WALDRON

Mrs. Waldron reported that she reached out to the NJLOM regarding the Main Street Assist bill. There may be some type of expansion on the bill and while we may not meet all of the criteria on the bill, we might meet some of the criteria.

Mrs. Waldron also noted that high levels of radon in the water causes a rise in arsenic in the water. Mrs. Waldron suggests that residents test their water. The Health Department recommends the water be tested annually but that you could also test every three years.

MAYOR LANCE

Mayor Lance reported that on March 25, at the County League Meeting, Warren County Economic Development Committee spoke about agro-tourism and agricultural development. The Warren County Health Department is asking all Municipalities to do a resolution on Eradicate the Stigma Associated with Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Disorders. Senator Thomas Kean, Jr. is the guest speaker at the May 6, 2019 meeting.

Junior Firefighters received awards at the Fire Department Dinner. There is a Firefighter course at County College of Morris that the Junior Firefighters are attending on their own time during the summer.

Historic Preservation Committee is gearing up their walking tour program for 2019. One highlight is Rocco's Villa Sunset near Lake Susquehanna. The Historic Preservation Committee will be at the Fourth of July, Jingle on Main, and Hope Township's 250th Anniversary.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Fred Cooke spoke regarding the condition of the roads, particularly concerning Four Corners Road.

Bob Halberstadt presented a proposal to eliminate certain fees for people who volunteer for emergency services.

Dave Paulson stated that he is hearing more of a controlled bleed rather than a controlled growth of Blairstown.

Mayor Lance read aloud a letter from the North Warren Garden Club, thanking the Township for their donation which went toward the purchase of flowers and barrels in the downtown area for the Club to decorate.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mrs. Waldron made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Moorhead. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Nienstedt, Deputy Clerk

Approved by:

Linda Leidner, Municipal Clerk