

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, May 10, 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, Christine Rolef, CFO 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 - 054 AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Motion was made by Mrs. Van Valkenburg and was seconded by Mr. Avery

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Executive Session began at 6:45 pm.

Mr. Lance made a motion to re-open the Regular Meeting at 7:35 pm. The Motion was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Township Attorney Kevin Benbrook explained the results of the Executive Session. Three Contract issues were discussed. Mr. Benbrook explained that the Township will be pursuing some alternatives on two of the contract matters. Another contract issue that was discussed involved the County and the possible swap of different roads for purpose of snow plowing and removal of snow only. Mr. Benbrook will be pursuing that as well.

The other discussion involved a Sidewalk Agreement with the county to assist the First Presbyterian Church.

PRESENTATION OF DAR AWARDS TO 3 BLAIRSTOWN STUDENTS:

Mayor Shoemaker explained that there are 3 Blairstown students that will receive Certificates of Achievement from the Daughters of the American Revolution. Mayor Shoemaker read the body of the certificates. The following 6th grade students received the following awards –

1st Place- Etian Rizvani, 2nd Place – Angelina Guiliano, 3rd Place Chloe Michalko. These students submitted essays to an essay contest sponsored by the General William Maxwell Chapter of the

DAR. Mayor Shoemaker, Cynthia Dalton, Christine Beegle, Barbara Green presented each of the students with their respective plaques.

Principal Brice Leal spoke and expressed how proud everyone is of these students, they are proud of all of the students of Blirstown Elementary school however, cream rises to the top. Mr. Leal explained that once Etian won first in Warren County his essay went on to win third in the state. All three essays were outstanding. Mr. Leal thanked the Daughters of the Revolution for the great opportunity they give our students and our schools with these types of contests. Over 100 essays were submitted.

PRESENTATION – Blirstown Youth Soccer Organization – Storage shed request.

Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, Eric Lynch and Dave Bennet, President and Vice President of the Blirstown Soccer Organization were in attendance requesting permission to purchase a shed. They explained that a new soccer shed is desperately needed, the current shed is in terrible disrepair. The members of the Soccer Association distributed pictures of the existing storage shed along with three quotes for a new shed. The lowest quote was a little over \$3000.00. It was explained that members of the Soccer Association will install and maintain the shed.

Mr. Lance mad a motion to spend Open Space Funds not to exceed \$3400.00 to purchase a new storage shed for the Blirstown Soccer Association, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Jean O'Brien – 16 East Avenue – Ms. O'Brien expressed concern regarding health risks that are caused by water quality. Mr. Avery explained that there is an expert coming next week to try to help in finding the cause of water issues. Ms. O'Brien also questioned the status of the new back up well. It was explained to her by members of the Committee that this is a long process. It was also explained that the Township is not going out to bid as yet because we were granted an extension by the State of NJ due to the fact that we will be applying for a grant to help fund the new backup well.

Mayor Shoemaker took this opportunity to update the public on the status of the water break on East Avenue. The water is now back on, no boil water advisory is needed. All water is chlorinated and purified and fine to use.

MINUTES

February 22, 2017 - Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

ORDINANCES

BOND ORDINANCE NO. 2017-01 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$323,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$242,725 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION

Introduction, First Reading

Mr. Avery noted that this is a process that is much needed right now.

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the Public Hearing and Adoption will be held on June 14, 2017.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve Bond Ordinance No. 2017-01 on first reading, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

BOND ORDINANCE NO. 2017-02 BOND ORDINANCE MAKING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$20,000 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WELL FOR THE WATER DEPARTMENT IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$20,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION

Introduction, First Reading

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the Public Hearing and Adoption will be held on June 14, 2017.

Mayor Shoemaker also explained that in the process of obtaining prices for the placement of a new back up well it was discovered that the cost would be more than the amount the Township initially bonded for so this will add \$20,000.00 to cover the cost.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Bond Ordinance No. 2017-02 on first reading, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-03 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CHAPTER OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN ENTITLED "SPECIAL EVENTS"

Introduction, First Reading

Motion to approve; second. Roll Call Vote

Introduction Tabled to June 14, 2017

Township Attorney Benbrook explained that he discovered that in Chapter 84 Special Events was covered. Mr. Benbrook worked with the existing Ordinance and brought amend it to fit into the current needs of the Township.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2017 – 055 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 - R.2017 - 056 Resolution Supporting the Click-It or Ticket Campaign
- 3 - R.2017 - 057 Authorizing Disposal of Municipal Assets
- 4 - R.2017 - 058 Authorizing Purchase of Ride on Mower
- 5 - R.2017 - 059 Authorizing Purchase of a Tractor

Municipal Clerk Leidner explained that we received notification today that the Township is not eligible for the Click-It or Ticket Campaign therefore Resolution R.2017-056 should be pulled from the list.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda numbers 1,3,4,5 excluding 2, which was seconded by Mrs.Dalton.

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

NORTH WARREN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL 2017-2018 BUDGET PRESENTATION by Sarah Bilotti, Superintendent and Chris Heagele, Business Administrator. Also Gene Woznicki, School Board President, Bob Brandt and Frederick Cook, School Board Members were also in attendance.

A copy of the presentation was distributed to the members of the Township Committee and will be on file in the Municipal Clerk’s Office.

Ms. Bilotti explained when preparing the budget they look at three things, student achievement, infrastructure and how to form and support a firm financial foundation. A three year budget comparison was also provided.

Mrs. Bilotti also explained some of the ways the school has been able to reduce costs. Among them were reducing staff by attrition, healthcare decrease by joining the State Health Benefit Plan. Cost savings were noted in infrastructure through utilities by joining consortiums, high school lighting projects and boiler efficiency was increased by 87%.

Mayor Shoemaker inquired about the increase in transportation costs. Ms. Bilotti explained that the new licensing requirements for bus drivers has slowed the new applicant process and in August the school lost the bus company they were using and that caused the need to hire a different company and the cost was triple what they were previously paying for bus service.

Mrs. Bilotti touched on the drop in student enrollment. There has been about a 25% reduction in enrollment and that seems to be the trend. She also touched on student performance and initiative. Ideas and programs supported by the 2017-2018 Budget were also discussed.

Mrs. Bilotti explained the Blairstown Township Levy as follows:

2017 Tax Levy: 2.00% School Tax Increase for Average Home: \$3.28 per month

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – April Report
DPW - April
Finance – April Finance and Fuel Reports
Fire Department – April Report
Police Department – April Report
Tax Collector – April Report
Warren County Health Department – April 10, 2017 Report

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1 – Back Up Well Update – Mr. Rodman will cover this in his report.

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1 – Facilities Use Application has been received from the Blirstown Elementary School for use of Footbridge Park for a 4th Grade Field Trip on Thursday, June 1, 2017 from 11:45am – 2:30pm.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Facilities Use Application from BES for use of Footbridge Park for a 4th Grade Field Trip on Thursday June 1, 2017 from 11:45-2:30pm, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

2 - Letter from Rosette Inscho regarding new and update signage around crosswalks. Mayor Shoemaker explained that the Township Committee is in receipt of this letter and had been passed along to Police Director Gara and DPW Supervisor Carl Stoddart to take action on as soon as possible. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that this is a priority, not a wait and see situation.

3 - Email from Blirstown Museum advising the Township Committee that they will be having "Historic Blirstown Day" on Saturday, August 5, 2017.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- 1 – Memorandum from Warren County Engineer regarding the Reconstruction of Warren County Bridge #04010, East Crisman Rd. Over Paulins Kill – bridge is scheduled for closure on or about May 18, 2017 and will reopen on or about August 14, 2017.
- 2 – Email from Pat Sagan advising everyone that Search and Rescue will be conducting drills at Sycamore Park on Saturday, May 13, 2017 from 6-11pm. THIS IS A DRILL – not an actual emergency.
- 3 - Warren County Bi-Annual PAPER SHREDDING EVENT – May 20, 2017 from 8-11am – Warren County Administration Building

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that Jessica Caldwell circulated draft ordinances to our court appointed Master and the Land Use Board. We are working toward the Final Compliance Hearing. Mr. Benbrook noted that the Master provided him some guidelines as to how to get this process completed. Mayor Shoemaker was curious about the next steps. Mr. Benbrook explained that the Land Use Board has to adopt a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and then the Township Committee needs to endorse it. There will then be a final compliance hearing before Judge Miller.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

Municipal Clerk Leidner explained that in speaking with the Oxford Land Fill regarding the dates for the Townwide Clean-up they offered that the residents could have the entire week from Monday, September 18 - Saturday, September 23 to bring their trash to the transfer station with vouchers, instead of just 2 days. Last year the Township only offered 2 days, Mrs. Leidner requested history and asked permission to allow the entire week as there were many complaints last year about the limited amount of hours for the residents to bring their garbage to the dump.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to extend the Townwide Clean-up dates to Monday, September 18- Saturday, September 23, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported that we received a reply from the DEP regarding the request for a time extension for the back up well project to begin construction. The Township was granted the extension to February of 2018 to begin construction of the new back up well. Mr. Rodman explained that the Township is not able to go out to bid until the grant process is completed. However, work on the specs can begin so that when the time comes we can go out to bid in a timely manner.

Mr. Rodman reported that he is proceeding to get quotes for the pipe lining on Cobblewood Road.

Paulina Dam - Mr. Rodman mentioned 3 things that he would like to put on the record:

1. Blairstown owns the dam.
2. The dam is listed as a significant hazard dam which is one below a high hazard dam.
3. The Township will have to rehabilitate, repair or remove the dam.

The Township is required to file regular inspection reports every two years. The report was done in April 2016. There was nothing significant that came out of that report. Mr. Rodman also reported that the DEP has contracted with a company called SDM Smith Engineering to design and get permits for the removal of the dam. All of this work is being paid for by the DEP. The cost for the removal of the dam will be the Township's responsibility. The cost estimates for removal of the dam from 2009 was \$1,300,000.00. The estimated cost for updating the dam was \$320,000.00 including maintenance. The 20 year cost of upgrading and maintaining the dam was estimated at approximately \$470,000.00. Mr. Rodman explained that he spoke to Grace Jacobs who is our contact at DEP regarding the dam. She told him that there is a low interest loan available for dam restoration and in land water projects with an interest rate of no more than 2% per year, maturity not to exceed 20 yrs. These loan applications are due on May 31. Mr. Rodman added that he contacted Warren Newman who is the Engineer that is in charge of the permit work for DEP, unfortunately they have

not updated the cost to remove the dam so the cost information will not be available by May 31. Mr. Rodman let Grace Jacobs know that the Township will not make the deadline to apply for the loans, she understood our situation and we will not be penalized for this issue. Mr. Rodman reminded the Township Committee that we did a Resolution in 2014 "Now therefore be it resolved that Blairstown Township is interested in pursuing the removal of the Paulina Dam and does agree to remove the dam if permits are obtained. Plans and specifications completed and funding becomes available. Blairstown will provide at least two years for design and permitting has been completed for ONRR and others to seek additional sources of funding for removal of Paulina Dam including potential funding from federal, state, Blairstown and non-profit sources, while remaining consistent with dam safety requirements. If no additional funding is identified to assist in the cost of dam removal Blairstown may decide against removing the Paulina Lake Dam."

Mrs. Rolef, CFO explained that the State has the grant availability for dam removal broken up into sections and Blairstown is in the 2020-2022 or 2022-2024 grant availability years.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked to discuss the flight zone in Sycamore Park since our Insurance Agent Sharon Cooper is in attendance at this meeting. Ms. Cooper explained that anyone who is using Sycamore Park should know that portions of the park are in a fly zone. Ms. Cooper suggested maybe Certificates of Liability should be included to be signed by parents when they are signing sports permission slips. The bottom line is that everyone that uses the park needs to be made aware of the fly zone. Mr. Benbrook recommends taking a look at the survey of the park and possibly get some signage up informing park users of the issue.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY**

Mr. Avery noted that just before the beginning of the meeting he texted Mr. Stoddart to get an update on the status of the water leak on East Avenue and his response was "Just turned everything back on." Mr. Avery was very impressed with the way the DPW handled everything today.

Mr. Avery reported that the Blairstown Seniors had their first outing of 2017 on April 25, traveling to The Brownstone in Paterson. 50 people attended and everyone had a great time. The next trip is on June 28 to Doolan's in Spring Lake.

COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON

Mrs. Dalton reported that last week she participated in a webinar in support of the visiting Mandarin Chinese teacher. Her name is Wen Je Zang, she holds a masters degree in English language and literature and is currently a teacher of English at a High School affiliated with a University.

Mrs. Dalton also reported that she met with Bruce Leal of Blairstown Elementary and discussed the crossing guards request for signage and painting the crosswalks. Mrs. Dalton also let the members of the Committee know that Seussical the Musical will be performed on Friday and Saturday, May 12 & 13 at 7pm.

Mrs. Dalton noted that at a previous Township Committee Meeting the Committee approved the hiring of 2 summer DPW workers. Ms. Rolef, CFO mentioned that hiring 2 individuals for 40 hours for the length of time they would be needed would cause the Township to have to pay into the State

pension System. Mrs. Dalton requested that the Committee give permission to hire 3 DPW summer employees and have them each work 28 hours to avoid getting involved with the Pension requirements.

Mrs. Dalton made a motion to hire 3 DPW employees for the summer each working 28 hours, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance gave a report on the Police activity reports there was 1 adult arrest, 3 thefts, 1 fraud, 3 malicious mischiefs, and 137 motor vehicle stops.

Mr. Lance reported that he had a request from the Police Department asking the Township Committee to approve their annual Emergency Services Day to be held on Friday, August 25 from 5-8pm at Sycamore Park. This request includes asking the DPW to set up before and take down after the event. There is \$3200.00 in the budget to cover the event.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Emergency Services Day to be held on August 25 from 5-8pm at Sycamore Park, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mr. Lance noted that Blair Academy gave the Historic Preservation Committee a \$500.00 donation which was placed in the Historic Preservation Trust Fund. New walking tours are being planned, possible cemetery tours as well.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked Joel McGreen to give an Open Space report.

Mr. McGreen reported that the settlement of the Ardia Estate is still in progress.

Nonnemaker Farm- there has been no response yet.

Kostenbader is still interested, has not moved forward as yet.

Mr. McGreen reported that he received an email from the State Agricultural Development Committee, it appears that the Township is going to receive another \$500,000.00. Mr. McGreen reported that he is planning on sending out letters to eligible farms that are over forty acres.

In regards to COAH, Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that Theresa Tamburro has submitted her resignation effective at the end of May. Township Attorney Benbrook noted that this position may not need to be filled. Mr. Benbrook explained that many municipalities outsource this position to the County.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that Recreation used to use the Library for the Yoga Program. Pat Sagan, Recreation Director received a letter that she can no longer hold this program at the Library. Is there anyone at the County level that can help remedy this situation? Mr. Benbrook recommended contacting the Warren County Library Trustee Board. Mayor Shoemaker read the letter that was

received from the Library explaining the reasons why the yoga program does not fit into the library policy for using the facility.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that the Tax Sale will be held on Wednesday, May 24 at 10:00am in the Municipal Building.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker reported that a complaint was received from Ms. Millen on Mt. Vernon Road. She reported that she hit a pot hole on Mt. Vernon Road and damaged a tire. Ms. Millen requested that the pot holes be fixed, they were fixed the day after the letter was received.

Mayor Shoemaker also reported on the Appalachian Trail Day, noting that it was a rainy day but the turnout was good and it was a great event. Senator Oroho and the Warren County Freeholders were in attendance.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that the new truck is scheduled to go down the production line on May 31 and it will be delivered to Henderson during the week of June 12.

Mayor Shoemaker received an email from EMEX noting that our 2 year contract is up in October. Currently the electric rates through EMEX are about \$.08 per kwh.

Blair Woman's Club celebrated their 90th Anniversary. Mayor Shoemaker attended a luncheon that was held at Blair Academy. Mr. Avery and Mrs. Dalton were also in attendance.

Mayor Shoemaker noted that he had a conversation with Hardwick Mayor Perry regarding the Fire company Shared Services Contract. This contract expires at the end of 2017. The first year they gave \$11,500.00. The amount that is currently received by Blairstown is \$17,500.00. Mayor Perry had a meeting with the Hose Company Chief, Calvin Inscho, to talk about how much the Hose Company would like to receive from Hardwick. Mayor Shoemaker noted that he will be meeting with Mayor Perry regarding this matter.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Jean O'Brien – East Avenue had some questions on how the Presbyterian Church sidewalk issue is being worked out. Mr. Benbrook explained that the County issued a conditional approval because Main Street is a County road and so is Bridge Street. Even though the church is doing no improvements whatsoever within the county right of way the county is requiring the church to get a sidewalk maintenance agreement from the Township. Mr. Benbrook continued to explain that we are going to do that just for the portion of the sidewalk that is in the county right of way that relates the Presbyterian Church's site plan. The Committee gave Mr. Benbrook the permission to work that out with the county. There will be an agreement between the Township and the County that will be supplemented with an agreement between Blairstown and the Presbyterian Church that passes through the maintenance which they do anyway.

Debra Waldron – Land Use Board Chair, invited the Township Committee to attend the LUB Meeting on Monday night for a presentation being given by Jessica Caldwell regarding the overlay zone for COAH. Municipal Clerk Leidner cautioned that if 3 or more members of the Township Committee will be attending the LUB Meeting we will have to advertise as a joint meeting because there will be a

quorum. It was determined that there will not be quorum of the Township Committee at that meeting.

Ms. Waldron also asked about what streets are scheduled to be paved, Mayor Shoemaker explained that we received a grant to pave Maple Lane. No others have been scheduled as yet.

Mayor Perry is getting together with the Mayor of Knowlton and Hope Mayor Mc Donough and Ms. Waldron hoped that there would be a representative from Blairstown involved in the discussion as well, to discuss the Century Link internet issues. A Century Link representative will be in attendance. They will also be sending a letter to the BPU noting that Century Link is not providing adequate internet service to the residents and businesses in this area.

Regarding the North Warren Regional planting issue, Mrs. Waldron has not heard back from North Warren with the replacement plan. Time is of the essence for the planting of the trees.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 pm.

Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk