

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING  
Wednesday, February 22, 2017, 7:30 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 7:30. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mrs. Dalton, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Leidner and CFO Rolef.

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.

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

Jackie Espinoza – from JCP&L – Ms. Espinoza was in attendance to talk about the Global ETR's which stands for the "Estimated Time of Restoration". Ms. Espinoza explained that JCP&L is required to put out a Global ETR on the outage map that is accessible by the mobile app and on the website. What the ETR means is an estimated time of when the last customer may be restored. The Board of Public Utilities asked JCP&L to do this so that customers have an idea as to when they can expect power to be back on. Ms. Espinoza explained that JCP&L is going to try their best to provide a User ETR which means a lineman went to the site, assessed what was going on, and when they are estimating the power to be restored. The Global ETR's are done by district or area, so don't worry because sometimes this is put out at the beginning of a storm and does not necessarily mean that the power will be out as long as is shown at that time.

Jean O'Brien – 16 East Avenue – Ms. O'Brien noted that she missed two meetings and she understood there was discussion on the sewers. She hopes that it is a shut case, she didn't want to be told she would have to put in three hook ups. Mayor Shoemaker let Ms. O'Brien know that the sewer discussion has been taken off of the agenda, however, that does not prevent another committee member or new committee to open the discussion up at another time. Mr. Lance remarked that sewers are a dead issue. Ms. O'Brien also inquired about the status of the back-up well, Mayor Shoemaker explained that the location that is being looked at is the parking lot next to the Fire Hall on Stillwater Road.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mrs. Rolef, CFO distributed a budget comparison packet. She explained that the budget is \$4.17 less than last year. Some key points that Mrs. Rolef pointed out were Health benefits did increase by \$99,000.00, and the Township contribution to the Ambulance Corp is being decreased by \$13,335.00. The decrease was proposed to the Township by the Ambulance Corp. We are continuing paying down the two ordinances 2015-01 and 2014-15. Ordinance 2015-01 which was for the Police SUV, we have

a payment this year and a payment next year, which will pay it off. We also have the balance of \$67,480.00 from Ordinance 2014-15 – Improvements to various roads. The Township will have to go out for a Bond Anticipation Note this year because if the initial appropriation is not paid off in three years a BAN must be taken out. In 2016 we were starting to take strides in paying down the debt with that so what we would take out is minimal. Ms. Rolef explained that other than that there really wasn't anything else for the basic operation of the municipal building.

Capital Items – Mrs. Rolef noted that last year we put \$27,000.00 or \$28,000.00 into the budget for the Capital Improvement Fund. That goes into the Capital Fund which can be used either to fully fund or put a 5% down on a Capital Project. Mrs. Rolef reviewed the Capital wish list, excluding DPW. The first road listed was Maple Lane, we received \$185,000.00 from the DOT grant and Mr. Rodman, Township Engineer confirmed that that amount would be enough to complete the road. The next road on the list is Lambert Road, which would be the portion from the library parking lot to Route 94. That project is estimated at \$15,000.00. Mrs. Rolef explained that the Ordinance 2014-15 that we are paying down, has about \$75,000.00 left. We could try to make the most out of that money or we could cancel the ordinance and do another Ordinance. There really is not enough left to pave an entire road. The Committee could choose to do two smaller projects such as the drainage on Cobblewood Road which would be about \$38,000.00 and the drainage on Belcher Road which would be about \$30,000.00. The Committee could choose to do the small section of Lambert Road. Mrs. Dalton explained that the pipe on Cobblewood Road is a major issue; all of the members of the Committee were in agreement.

Mrs. Rolef did note that the quote that the Township Engineer received last spring/early summer for the Cobblewood project was pretty accurate. The Township Committee was in agreement that putting the insert in the pipe would be the way to go. A portion of the paving of Lambert would be in the 2017 budget. Mrs. Rolef placed several thousand dollars in the Capital Improvement Fund, there is not an exact dollar amount as yet to pave the section of Lambert Road and the S turn at Belcher. Anything that would go over the \$75,000 remaining from Ordinance 2014-15 would be placed in the Capital Improvement portion of the 2017 Budget so that there would be a funding source for these projects. Mr. Lance noted that we are applying for state aid for an overlay on Mohican Road from Cobblewood to Geisler for 2018.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that the Heller Hill stone wall is in desperate need of repair. Mayor Shoemaker remarked that Mr. Rodman has reported that wire baskets, similar to the ones holding walls back on highways, is the solution. There are concerns regarding this solution, one being it is not aesthetically appealing.

Mrs. Rolef inquired as to whether the Township Committee is in agreement with going ahead with fixing the drainage issues that absolutely need to be addressed on Belcher Road and the pipe on Cobblewood Road. A consensus of the Committee indicated that all would like Mrs. Rolef to contact the Township Engineer to move forward with these projects. Mrs. Rolef noted that Belcher Road needs to be quoted. For Cobblewood she will need to check with Mr. Rodman because the repair is bordering the bid threshold. The previous proposals for the pipe lining are invalid because they are outdated.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg is requesting a five year spending plan for DPW equipment replacement and other municipal projects.

Mr. Lance recommended using deferred school taxes to begin purchasing desperately needed equipment for the DPW. This year the money would be used to purchase a new mason dump truck.

Mrs. Rolef brought up the foreclosed properties that have been on the books for several years. To have our Township Attorney work on foreclosing these properties; the cost is estimated to be about \$5,000.00 because this is outside of his retainer.

Mrs. Rolef also noted that 2% will be included in the budget for salary increases should the Committee choose to increase salaries, however a resolution will not be done yet.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that the Land Use Board will need to budget for a Planner due to the COAH obligation for an overlay. Mrs. Rolef indicated that there is \$5000.00 in the COAH budget. The Land Use Board is also asking the Zoning Officer to enforce Zoning Ordinances. Mr. Diehl will more than likely need to make court appearances. This will need to be covered in the budget as well.

Plows and spreaders need to be addressed. They have been welded many times. A prioritized list needs to come from the DPW director.

The Township Committee thanked CFO Christine Rolef on a job well done with the budget preparation.

#### **FROM THE PUBLIC**

Laura Tafuni – 89 Hope Road - Mrs. Tafuni expressed concern regarding the patrons from Buck Hill Brewery parking on Route 521 and Route 94 making traveling on the corner dangerous not only for drivers but for pedestrians crossing the road. Captain Scott Johnsen let Mrs. Tafuni know that he has contacted the State and County asking for No Parking Signs to be placed in that area. Mayor Shoemaker indicated that he has discussed this issue with Police Director Bob Gara. Mr. Gara will be instructing the officers to enforce no parking on those roads.

Keith Stires – 30 Jacksonville Road – Mr. Stires inquired about when and where the BEC Meets. Mrs. Dalton let Mr. Stires know that the BEC will be meeting on Thursday April 20 at 7:30pm at Royce Hall. Mr. Stires also inquired as to what is used for the road repairs, whether it is macadam or tar and chip stone noting that tar and chip stone is less expensive.

Joe Tafuni - 89 Hope Road – Mr. Tafuni noted that he has 30 years of service with the New Jersey State Police and part of his duties as a Station Commander was scheduling. Mr. Tafuni suggested that the Township Committee review the CAD data to see when the high call volumes are in the Township to determine what coverage is needed during various times of the day and night.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Avery. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC  
Municipal Clerk