

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
WORKSHOP MEETING
Friday, October 28, 2016, 10:30 AM**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 10:30Am by Mayor Shoemaker. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker. Mrs. Dalton was absent. Also present were Clerk Leidner and Attorney Robert Benbrook, Robert Gara, Police Director, Christine Rolef, Treasurer.

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 No. 2016-105 AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION – For PURPOSES OF Litigation involving COAH

Motion was made by Mayor Shoemaker to approve Resolution No. 2016-105, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All AYES, motion carried.

Motion was made by Mr. Avery to re-open the Public Meeting which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the Executive Session involved discussion of COAH litigation.

Jean O'Brien, 16 East Avenue: Ms. O'Brien expressed concern about her tap water being brown. This happens when the pipes are flushed. Mr. Avery let Ms. O'Brien know the public will be notified in another way when the flushing is being done, not just on the back of the water bills. Ms. O'Brien also wanted to let the Township Committee know that she feels the installation of sewers at this time is very important.

Bruce Leal: Principle of Blirstown Elementary School and a long time Blirstown resident. Mr. Leal appreciates the work that the Township Committee does to looking out for our tax dollars. Mr. Leal also mentioned he is a member of the BEC asked that the Committee look at sewers as an opportunity not as a problem. Mr. Leal also spoke on behalf of the Police Department and the Road Department because they help out at the school a lot. The Officers come to the school and do random walk through. Mr. Leal spoke very highly of Lieutenant Johnsen. He is always available to Mr. Leal, he is an invaluable asset to the Township as are all of the Blirstown Police Officers.

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE 2016-11 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2016-03 AN ORDINANCE GRANTING MUNICIPAL CONSENT TO THE ISSUANCE OF A FRANCHISE TO SERVICE ELECTRIC CABLE T.V. OF NEW JERSEY, INC., TO CONSTRUCT, OWN, OPERATE, EXTEND AND MAINTAIN A CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEM IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, COUNTY OF WARREN, SETTING FORTH CONDITIONS ACCOMPANYING THE GRANT OF SAID MUNICIPAL CONSENT AND PROVIDING FOR THE REGULATION AND USE OF SAID SYSTEM

Introduction, First Reading

Mr. Lance made a Motion to approve ORDINANCE NO. 2016-11 on first reading. The motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Walnut Valley Firehouse - Mike Russo from Whitman explained that his company has looked at the site, done testing and investigation and has determined how far the oil has traveled. Mr. Russo reported that Whitman Company has put together preliminary bid specifications for soil remediation. The Whitman Company has also prepared a Wetlands Application. Reports of the investigation are completed and this is the time the Township Committee needs to make a decision on how they would like to proceed in the remediation of this property. If the Committee chooses to go ahead with the remediation plan than Whitman would, by March 1, 2017, have to submit the remedial investigation report to the DEP. The plan must be approved by the Township Committee prior to submission. The next step would be to complete the Wetlands Application and submit that to the State. After all approvals are received then Whitman Company would prepare the bid package. Mr. Russo is proposing to remove the soil above and below the water table. The first deadline required by the DEP that Blairstown needs to meet is March 1, 2017. The second deadline is 2022 to show to the DEP that the cleanup will be done in 5 years.

Mr. Benbrook asked if there was a barrier that could be placed at the site, to keep the contamination from spreading. Mr. Benbrook explained that he is looking for a cost effective way for the Township to handle this issue. A feasibility study would need to be done to determine if this was a possibility.

Mayor Shoemaker noted that several years ago there were 2 Options provided by the Whitman Company. Mayor Shoemaker inquired as to what the difference was between those options. Mr. Russo explained that Whitman Company was looking, at that that time, at possibly reducing the excavation area. Due to the delay in remediation the company decided not to consider Option 2 because of the potential of the contamination spreading over time. Cost also went up due to work being done on a prevailing wage basis.

Mayor Shoemaker inquired as to whether there was any outside funding available for this project. Mr. Russo explained that he looked into grants and loans for this type of project and currently there are none available.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned whether the residential wells around the area were tested. Mr. Russo explained that they were and all came back clean with no contamination.

A decision needs to be made by March 1, 2017. Mr. Russo will recalculate using a non-prevailing wage formula and see what the numbers look like.

The Township Committee will discuss this issue further and will get back to Mr. Russo with an answer as to what steps they would like to take.

A presentation of was made by Mark Banek and Mark Marcase from Van Cleef Engineering regarding research done for the possibility of a sewer system. Mayor Shoemaker explained that they were invited here to report on what they have found and what is being proposed. Mr. Banek noted that this presentation is to provide information, not to make any decisions today. The presentation included a slide presentation as well as a handout.

The Township Committee discussed the presentation and several members of the public spoke regarding the possibility of sewers, both pro and con. Mayor Shoemaker let the members of the Township Committee and the members of the public that were present know that this was only the first presentation of the actual numbers that were researched and provided by Van Cleef Engineers. This is the first of many meetings that will be open to the public to give their input on the possibility of a sewer system for the Village area of Blirstown.

Back Up well update – Mr. Rodman reported that the original site for the back up well was next to the Water Tower at Blair Academy; quotes were solicited twice. Only one quote was received. There is a major issue in this location in that the rig that is needed to dig cannot get to the proposed location. An alternate location that is being considered is around the back of the water tower near the medical center. There is a window of time in March when there is no school in session when drilling could be done.

NEW BUSINESS

Christine Rolef, CFO explained that she was asked to provide a list of projects and other items to be considered for the 2017 Budget Year. Mrs. Rolef gave a brief description of each item. Mrs. Rolef also spoke to the Township Committee about the possibility of use fees for outside groups that use our fields. These fees would help with the maintenance of the buildings and grounds. Mrs. Rolef will be creating an application that groups will need to complete prior to getting approval for use of the Township fields. All Township Departments that are involved will be able to review the application.

Mr. Lance noted that health Insurance costs are down. Mrs. Rolef explained that this is due to the fact that in June the employees had the option to obtain family health coverage, however the employee had to choose either the Omnia or Aetna coverage. NJ 10 or NJ15 was no longer an option. Mrs. Rolef suggested that it may be a good practice that single coverage employees choose either Omnia or Aetna in the future as well, due to the cost savings to the Township.

Mrs. Rolef explained that if the Township Committee is considering a 24hour Police Department, this should be done before a tax rate is considered and established in the Township or it will be almost impossible to go with a 24 hour Police force without a municipal tax.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action:

From the Great Meadows Design Group, LLC- Proposal to provide Engineering Services for the replacement of the existing generator at the Municipal Building through the Generator Grant.

A Motion was made by Mayor Shoemaker to authorize the Mayor and Township Clerk to execute the proposal from Great Meadows Design Group, LLC to provide Engineering Services for the replacement of the existing generator at the Municipal Building through the Generator Grant. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Lance.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Van Valkenburg, Mayor Shoemaker. Motion carried.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Dave Paulson – 3 Water Street – Mr. Paulson explained that his business involves working with the impacts of water and he feels that the water issues need to be addressed. Spoke regarding the need for policing downtown. Mr. Paulson's opinion is that these decisions go hand in hand. He also offered to help the Township Committee in any way he can.

Lori Nienstadt – 157 Cedar Lake Road – The current economy should be taken into consideration when the Township Committee makes financial decisions. Ms. Nienstadt mentioned that she is a grant writer and is willing to help out in any way she can.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk