

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, November 8, 2017, 7:00PM**

**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 7:00pm. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mrs. Dalton, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Leidner 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 - 114 AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONNEL AND CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

Motion was made by Mr. Lance and was seconded by Mr. Avery

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Executive Session began at 7:04pm.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to close the Executive Session and re-open the Regular Meeting at 7:36pm. The Motion was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker summarized the Executive Session. The first item was to give John Zukoski more responsibilities within the water company. With the increased job responsibility he will receive a salary increase of \$1.50 per hour. He would also be authorized to enroll in the required water operator classes to obtain the water license needed for that position.

Mr. Avery made the motion to approve a salary increase of \$1.50 per hour to DPW employee John Zukoski to take on more water company related responsibility and to authorize Mr. Zukoski to enroll in the classes necessary to obtain a water operator's license. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker also explained that in the promotion of Eric Usinowicz to the Acting Director of Public Works position a vacancy was created in the Public Works Department for a driver/laborer. Interviews were conducted and a choice was made to fill the position. Mayor Shoemaker explained

that 6 candidates were interviewed and the candidate that was chosen has many years of DPW experience and also holds a current water operator licenses.

Mr. Avery made a motion to hire Albert Schwartz as a driver/laborer within the DPW at a salary of \$37,440.00 and \$4,000.00 for the position of Water Operator with a review in 90 days. The motion was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

Mayor Shoemaker also reported that the Township Committee discussed authorizing the Township Attorney write a letter to Bruno & Associates to terminate the grant writing contract due to the fact that there have been very few grants applied for and received. The Committee as asked Mr. Benbrook to send the letter of termination to Bruno and Associates effective end of November.

**PRESENTATION:** Trey Baldwin, 10 Deer Run, Blairstown Troop 140 Eagle Scout Project.  
Mayor Shoemaker explained that Trey was before the Township Committee with a project proposal previously. The scope of the project has changed so he is back this evening to discuss it further.

Trey explained that his first presentation was to let the Township Committee know he would like to replace the old Welcome to Blairstown sign located on the north side of town. He handed out example of signs at the previous meeting. Since then a location has been identified a sign design was chosen. Trey explained that the new location is in the small area across from the Valero gas station, where the the ticket booth is located. He distributed a handout to the Committee with sign examples, the second page was a drawing of the new sign. Trey explained that the roof of the sign would be made of copper. The dimensions would be 11 ½ feet wide and 10 ½ feet tall. The writing portion of the sign is 8 feet wide and 4 feet tall. On the third page was a sign view. The Columns are fluted and made out of aluminum. The sign is designed to withstand up to 130mph winds. The next page shows the roof, base and poles. There is a power box for lighting.

Trey explained that the ticket booth would be removed entirely unless the Township Committee wanted it moved, and if so then a professional would need to be hired.

Eric Usinowicz, Acting DPW Director said that the DPW will dismantle the ticket booth and keep the clay roof tiles.

The next step would be that Trey will bring the final design to the Township Committee for approval. Trey then noted that a beneficiary needs to be assigned to the project, meaning that a member of the Township Committee needs to sign off on the project. Mrs. Dalton will be the committee liaison to the project.

The construction of the sign may begin late March 2018.

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

Marianna Stires - 30 Jacksonburg Road – explained that in traveling Mohican road to get to her road the curve is dangerous. A mirror on the left would assist with this problem.  
The Township Engineer will work on this issue.

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

**Calvin Inscho, Chief Blairstown Hose Company**, congratulated Debbie Waldron and Steve Lance on their election wins and also congratulated Mayor Shoemaker on a job well done.

Mr. Inscho explained that no decisions have been made in fire services agreement with Hardwick. There is another meeting on December 6.

Mr. Inscho reported that the pumper truck that was fixed by the Township Mechanic, Mike Sullivan was tested and passed. The Hose Company will do a drill with it next week to test it and if all is ok it will be put back into service. Mr. Inscho brought up the pumper truck that was purchased from Oxford. The Hose Company would like to hold onto it until they come before the Township Committee in December with the plans for the purchase of a new truck.

The Hose Company truck committee will be at the Township Committee meeting on December 13.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that he, Calvin Inscho, Nick Mohr & Eric Usinowicz met with people from the Forest Service about a program called Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This is a wildfire protection guide put out by the NJ Fire Safety Council and Forest Fire Service. This program was put together to raise awareness about the dangers of forest fires. If the Township develops a wildfire preparedness plan and adopts the plan it will obtain a \$5000.00 grant.

An Ordinance was introduced by Title to Repeal CHAPTER 76 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN ENTITLED "BURNING, OUTDOOR".

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2017-06 on first reading, second reading and public hearing will be held on December 13, 2017, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

**Eric Usinowicz, Acting Director of Public Works** reported that the DPW has been patching pot holes on Wishing Well Road, Frog Pond, Sunset Hill Road & East Crisman Road where they hired a contractor to put a French drain by the water company. Stillwater and Walnut Valley have been patched as well. Mr. Usinowicz reported that Maple Lane has been stripped. Mr. Usinowicz noted that Mike Sullivan did an awesome job on the pumper truck and just wanted to be sure that the public knows how much money was saved on that repair by Mr. Sullivan getting trained to repair the pumper. Both quotes for the repair came in at \$35,000.00 to fix the pump. The job cost about \$19,500.00 and is warranted for 6 years. Mr. Usinowicz explained that the hydrant flush was completed and the water was significantly better than it has been.

## **MINUTES**

October 11, 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.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1 – R.2017 - 115 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 - R.2017 – 116 Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation – Body Armor Replacement Fund
- 3 - R.2017 - 117 Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation – Body Armor Replacement Fund – Unappropriated
- 4 – R.2017 – 118 Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation – Bulletproof Vest Partnership
- 5 - R.2017 – 119 Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation – Clean Communities
- 6 - R.2017 – 120 Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation – NJDOT Maple Lane

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

- Clerk – October Report
- DPW - October
- Finance – October Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department –July/August/September
- Police Department – October Report
- Tax Collector – Report
- Warren County Health Department – September 11, 2017 Report
- Zoning Officer – None

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

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion was held regarding a Sample Ordinance regarding the requirement for landlords to institute adequate security measures regarding the disorderly behavior of tenants. Township Attorney Benbrook explained that Mrs. Van Valkenburg had given him the sample ordinance at the last meeting and he reviewed it. This would be something to introduce next year. This ordinance was from a shore municipality. If there were two municipal ordinance violations or 2 criminal code violations in a 12 month period this ordinance would require the landlord to post a bond to insure

the orderly behavior of their tenants. Mrs. Van Valkenburg wanted to possibly fine tune the ordinance to hold the landlords responsible for drug activity that continually going on at the premises by their tenants. Attorney Kevin Benbrook noted that he believes that this is going to be a hard ordinance to enforce. Police Captain Johnsen indicated that following up on the ordinance suggestion, his departments would be able to enforce the ordinance and follow up on the convictions. Forming a subcommittee to look into this in 2018 would be the best way to handle this.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that a memo was sent to the members of the Township Committee noting that the Fourth of July Committee would like to purchase a shed to store the Fourth of July equipment and place it behind the municipal building. Captain Johnsen indicated that there is enough room for the shed and he is fine with it. There is also a Fourth of July fund where the money for the shed can be funded from.

Mr. Avery made a motion to authorize the Fourth of July Committee to purchase a shed from the dedicated Fourth of July Fund and place the shed behind the municipal building. Mrs. Dalton seconded the motion.

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

**COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE** for information and possible action

1. Resolution R.2017-121 – Resolution to Award Contract – National Joint Powers Alliance- National Cooperative – Purchase of a Backhoe Loader

The DPW has obtained quotes. The backhoe that they chose is a Caterpillar Model 420F2 Loader and the total purchase price after discounts and trade ins comes to \$116,385.60. The DPW did a thorough job. They demoed a John Deere, a JCB, a Case and the CAT. Mr. Lance noted that they had narrowed their choices down to a CAT and a Case. The CAT is priced almost \$20,000.00 more than the Case. After the trade in the difference is about \$13,000.00. The warrantee on the CAT is better. Mr. Usinowicz explained that the CAT is the machine they thought would perform the best for the DPW.

Mayor Shoemaker opened the discussion to the public.

John Ciano – Powerco salesman noted that he came to the meeting to defend the Case. He explained its attributes. As far as the service issues that the DPW encountered on their old machine, Mr. Ciano explained that Powerco dropped the ball.

Seeing no other comments or questions Mayor Shoemaker closed the discussion to the public.

Mr. Avery made a motion to purchase the Caterpillar, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker  
No: Lance  
All ayes: Motion carried

2. Resolution R.2017-122 – Resolution Expressing Opposition to Legislative Bills 1045 and 1046 Proposals Regarding the Open Public Meetings Act and Open Public Records Act – urging the Legislature to reject Senate Bills 1045 and 1046 and draft new legislation to modernize OPRA and OPMA while providing municipalities and Municipal Clerks will resources to effectuate these changes for the benefit of the public.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Resolution R.2017-122, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.  
Voice vote: All ayes: Motion carried

3. Resolution R.2017-123 – Resolution in Support of Assembly Bill No. 4532/Senate Bill No. 3049 Amending the Open Public Records Law – Exempting certain personal information from the open public records law and bar attorney’s fees awards is denied in certain circumstances.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Resolution No. R.2017-123, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Voice vote: All ayes: Motion carried.

4. NJ-ABC – Social Affair Permit from Blairstown Live Arts for a Fundraiser being held at Roy’s Hall on November 17 from 6pm - 11:59pm.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve the Social Affair Permit from Blairstown Live Arts, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

Voice Vote: All ayes, Motion carried.

**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Letter from NJDEP Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification – 63 Mount Vernon Road

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY**

Walnut Valley remediation, Mr. Benbrook will provide something for the workshop. A cost comparison was done to remediate the issue. If the Township budgets \$11,000.00 for next year to file the paperwork that would be sufficient. Then a remediation plan and budgeting plan will need to be made.

All members of the Township Committee were in agreement to request the CFO to appropriate \$11,000.00 in the 2018 budget for the filing of the necessary remediation paperwork.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

Mrs. Leidner reminded everyone that the workshop meetings scheduled for November and December are cancelled.

**FROM THE TONWSHIP ENGINEER**

Mr. Rodman explained that he is continuing to work to obtain the points mandated by the DEP for Stormwater Management. He is working closely with the Elementary School. Mr. Rodman obtained coloring books and stickers to hand out to the students. Dates are set for stormwater information presentations.

Maple Lane is completed. Mr. Rodman explained that the final paperwork is being processed and noted that the project came in under budget.

The well project next to the Firehouse on Stillwater Road is staked out. There will probably have to be a fence around the well, the size and type will be determined later. All permits are obtained and

the project will begin tomorrow morning. A letter has been sent to Mr. Cavanaugh at DEP to let him know the project is beginning.

A purchase order was issued to Leggit, Brashears in May of 2016 for \$16,000.00. Mr. Rodman explained that at the beginning of this project finding a location for the well was difficult. As a result the original \$16,000.00 is spent. In order for them to complete their portion of the work another \$12,000.00 is needed. Money may be able to be transferred from the Phase II portion of the budget.

Mr. Lance expressed his concern that Leggitt, Brashears waited until the very last minute to let the Township know this. Drilling is beginning tomorrow so the Township is stuck having to come up with the money.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$12,000.00 to Leggitt, Brashears, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

Mr. Rodman also reported that his CPWM has been renewed for another 2 years.

Mayor Shoemaker asked about the generator project. Mrs. Leidner explained that were given a grant from NJEM in the amount \$100,000.00. The Engineer's cost estimate for the project was \$166,000.00. She went on to explain that there may be more grant money available for the project. Nick Mohr, OEM coordinator is reaching out to the county to see if funds are available.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY**

The Senior's will be having their Christmas party at Panther Valley on December 14. The sign up will be November 14. This Friday they will be going to the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON**

The children at the Elementary School are accomplishing a lot of really good things.

The High School submitted a grant application to the Voya Financial Corporation, this supports veterans. The grant allows High Schools to have veterans share their experiences. The High School was awarded \$12,000.00 which will be used to purchase recording equipment to record the veteran's stories.

The North Warren Marching Band are 2017 State Champions. They will perform at Metlife Stadium in the National Championships on Saturday.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE**

Mr. Lance reported on the Police Department. There were 148 traffic stops, 46 traffic violations were issued, 1 DWI, 2 narcotics arrests and there were 3 suicides.

The Historic Preservation Committee hosted a cemetery tour. About 70 people came to the event. They are planning on doing it again centered around Veteran's that are buried in the cemetery.

The Historic Preservation received several donations. One of the donations was a grandfather clock from the 1790's. The clock was from Bixler's Jewelers.

Mr. Lance also reported that he and Debra Walron attended an internet meeting that was held at North Warren. Centrylink there will be providing 3 cells for Blairstown that should increase download speeds. There will 4500 feet of internet cable added. Mr. Lance also reported that the BPU is trying to get Service Electric to provide more internet service to the area.

Mr. Lance noted that the Committee approved the use of Main Street for the Jingle on Main. The GBBA wants to charge the Township groups to have a table at the event. The GBBA are exempt from paying an application fee for this event and the Township is providing a Porta John. A Mayor will craft a letter to the GBBA requesting them to allow the Historic Preservation Committee to have a spot without . The Township Committee will reassess the Ordinance and the Application to possibly modify them in the New Year.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG**

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked Open Space Chairman Joel McGreen to give his report. There has been no change in the Ardia Farm status. Mr. McGreen sent the signed Nonnemaker contract to his attorney and there is one issue and she will be contacting our attorney. Hemlock Ravine has gone out for environmental assessment.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that she spoke with David Diehl regarding the vacant and abandoned properties and he reported that they are continuing to register properties. There are many properties out there.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked Mr. Benbrook about the status of the In-Rem foreclosure properties. Mr. Benbrook reported that the complaint is drafted. He also reported that Michael Pence let him know that the searches are done and Mr. Benbrook should have a report shortly. The process of serving notice to the property owners should be going by the end of the year.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked Mr. Lance about what the Historic Preservation Committee thought about the Footbridge Park plaque being refinished. He said it should be fine to go ahead with the restoration of the sign and the colors should be black background and silver letters. Restore it to the original colors. Barbara Green explained that the Historic Preservation Committee is filing an application to have the footbridge recognized as part of the historic district and she advised to check with Christine Beegle to be sure the restoration is ok.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg tasked that a date be set for a December Special Workshop Meeting on a Friday to talk about a plan for 2018, budget requests, committee appointments etc.

#### **MAYOR SHOEMAKER**

Mayor Shoemaker asked Mr. Rodman to recommend a way to have the Footbridge sandblasted not only for aesthetic purposes but for environmental reasons.

Mayor Shoemaker had nothing else to report, everything else was covered previously.



**FROM THE PUBLIC**

Marianna Stires 30 Jacksonburg Road inquired if the Township could require the landlords to do criminal background checks on tenants for the Committee to approve. The Township Attorney does not believe that there is a way to legally do this.

Mrs. Dalton made a motion to return to Executive Session for a brief discussion, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Executive Session began at 10:02pm

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 10:04pm, which was Seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

Mayor Shoemaker explained that in Executive Session the Committee continued to discuss the employment of Mr. Schwartz for the DPW and Water Operator position.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to offer Mr. Schwartz an additional \$2000.00 upon successful completion of a 90 day probation period, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05pm.

Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC  
Municipal Clerk