

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:35pm by Mayor Shoemaker. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker. Mr. Lance was absent. Also present were Clerk Leidner and Attorney Kevin 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.

A presentation was made by Lisa Hibbs from Concord Energy Services/Commercial Utility Consultants regarding Energy Aggregation through Title 14. Ms. Hibbs explained that her company is registered with the State of New Jersey and licensed by the BPU. Ms. Hibbs gave an explanation on how the program could possibly help the residents of Blairstown save money on their electric bill. If Blairstown is interested in joining the cooperative the entire process would take about 5 months. Public outreach would be via a 6 page mailer which is approved by the BPU. The BPU wants to be sure that the residents are protected. Concord Energy would come out and host public outreach meetings. There would be about 3 or 4 meetings. The Township Committee will discuss this program at the November meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Jean O'Brien, 16 East Avenue – Ms. O'Brien reported that she has her new water meter installed. She also noted that the safe she donated to the Historical Committee was moved. The Township Committee thanked Ms. O'Brien for the donation. Ms. O'Brien was curious about the status of the back up well.

Township Attorney Benbrook explained that the bids that were to be received today were extended until Monday. Potential bidders wanted to make a visit to the site.

Ms. O'Brien was curious to know if East Avenue could be made a one way because the traffic is very bad. Much of the traffic was due to the bridge repair. The Township Committee will take this recommendation into consideration.

Mr. John Kennedy – 25 Amackassin Road – Mr. Kennedy was present to share some research that was done by the Blairstown Enhancement Committee regarding sewers.

Mayor Shoemaker thanked the BEC and Blair Academy on behalf of the entire Township Committee for the beautiful flowers and landscape on Old Academy Street.

Livia Angelone – 12 Bridge Street –Ms. Angelone asked if there was any progress on getting a weight restriction on Bridge Street for commercial buses and trucks rerouted from Main Street. Mayor Shoemaker asked that this be placed on the agenda for the November 9 meeting to create a subcommittee to address this issue.

Jeanette Iurato– 2 Heller Hill – Spoke on behalf of the Greater Blairstown Business Association. They have begun to plan the Jingle on Main event which is scheduled for Saturday, December 3. Ms. Iurato asked that the Township provide the Porta- Potties for the event. The GBA would like the Township Committee to attend tree lighting at 4:45 and the Mayor to light the tree. The event will be scaled down to 40 to 50 vendors. Mayor Shoemaker congratulated Jeanette and Tony on the opening of the museum.

Dave Paulson - 3 Water Street - Asked that the Township Committee move the sewer project forward.

Kurt Snegel & Mary Stone – 81 Mohican Road – spoke regarding water runoff off of Mohican Road that washes out their private road, Brookside Terrace. The residents have done all that they can do and are asking the Township for assistance. The water needs to be redirected. It was recommended that shot rock be used to suppress some of the run off. The amount of the shot rock needed is between 30 and 40 tons, and would cost around \$1800.00. Mr. Avery will get in touch with Tilcon to get the municipal co-op price. In the interim the municipal engineer, Ted Rodman will go out to the property to take a look at the issue. The Township Committee will discuss this further at the next meeting.

MINUTES

September 14, 2016 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the September 14 minutes, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE 2016-10 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2016-02 “FIXING THE SALARY AND WAGES OF THE OFFICIALS, APPOINTEES AND EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY” BY SALARY RANGE

Introduction, First Reading

Mrs. Dalton received an official notification of retirement letter from Dawn Gallant, Tax Collector effective December 1, 2016. Mrs. Dalton noted for the record that Dawn has the blessings of the Township Committee as well as their thanks. Mrs. Dalton stated that Dawn has been an asset to the Township and she is wished all of the best in this next chapter of her life. She will be missed.

Mrs. Dalton made a motion to accept this resignation with regret, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

Voice Vote: All ayes, motion carried.

Mrs. Dalton reported that with this resignation comes salary issues that need to be discussed.

Jean McKenna has been appointed as Tax Collector effective December 1 at a rate of \$500.00 - \$800.00 per month. Kerri Womack will be moving into the position of Assistant Tax Collector effective December 1 with as salary of \$42,000.00 minus the salary that will be paid to Jean McKenna for the time it takes for Ms. Womack to complete her training and take the Tax Collector exam. Mrs. Womack's hours will be Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8-4 and she will work Thursday and Friday during the first 2 weeks of each quarterly tax collection period.

With Kerri Womack's transition to Assistant Tax Collector a vacancy is created in the position which included Payroll Processing and Accounts payable duties. Maureen DeSimone will be taking on the duties of payroll processing and will perform these duties during the three days she is currently in the office and will receive an increase of \$2.00 per hour which will increase her rate to \$20.00 per hour. The Accounts Payable position is currently not filled. The Township is currently accepting applications for this position which is a 10 -14 hour per week position with a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour. Resumes are due by October 19, 2016.

Due to the retirement of Dawn Gallant the position of OEM Administrative Assistant needs to be filled. That position will be assumed by Linda Leidner, Municipal Clerk beginning December 1, 2016 at a salary of \$2200.00 per year. The website creation and maintenance and creation of a new Blirstown Newsletter will be done by the Municipal Clerk with a salary increase of \$3300.00. The website creation will begin on December 1 in order to have a smooth transition from the old website to the new on January 1.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2016-10 on first reading, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 - **R.2016 – 096** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 - **R.2016 – 097** Resolution to Enter into Agreement with Verizon
- 3 - **R.2016 – 098** Resolution to Enter into Agreement with Swiftreach
- 4 - **R.2016 – 099** Authorizing Ptl. James Dillon Advancement from Probationary to Step 1
- 5 - **R.2016 – 100** Authorizing Ptl. Richard Herzer Advancement from Probationary to Step 1
- 6 - **R.2016 – 101** Resolution Authorizing Execution of an Agreement with the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council to Renew Membership therein for the Period Of October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2021

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked that R.2016-96, R.2016-97 and R. 2016-98 be pulled from the consent agenda for questions.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve R. 2016-99 through R.2016-101 of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Mrs. Dalton.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg had a question regarding the Wells Fargo Financial Leasing invoice. The Township is being charged a \$250.00 contract termination handling fee. Christine Rolef explained that the termination fee is a contractual obligation; that is why it is being paid. The Township Attorney agreed that if the termination fee was in the contract that it needs to be paid.

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve R.2016-096. The motion was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker explained R. 2016-97, noting that Swiftreach will be replacing Nixel as the service that will be used to contact the citizens. Mayor Shoemaker then explained that Verizon provides the information that is needed for Swiftreach to get the information to citizens.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve R.2016-97 and R.2016-98. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – September Report

DPW – September Report

Finance – September Finance and Fuel Reports

Fire Department – September Reports

Police Department – September Report

Tax Collector – September Report

Warren County Health Department – September 12, 2016 Report

Mayor Shoemaker noticed in the Police Report that the number of adult arrests went up from 8 last year to 13 this year. 67 traffic stops last year and 154 traffic stops this year. This increase could be due to the fact that the police are doing more single officer per patrol vehicle coverage.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg was happy to see that we are beginning to receive Vacant and Abandoned Property registrations as shown in the Clerk's report.

Mr. Avery made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Roll call vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker

All ayes: Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Best Practices Checklist – Mayor Shoemaker explained that this is an auditing system that shows the state how we comply with what the State determines is needed for a Municipality to run efficiently. The Township Treasurer explained that there are 35 questions; our State Aid is determined by a

minimum number of questions the Township answers correctly. Blairstown will not have any reductions in state aid because of compliance with the State requirements.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1. From NJABC – (2) Social Affair Permits for Blairstown Live Arts were received by the NJABC for Concert Fund Raising Events being held on November 5 and November 11, 2016 from 6pm-11:59pm.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the (2) Social Affair Permits for Blairstown Arts., which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Voice Vote: All Ayes, motion carried.

2. From Pat Kennedy – An application has been submitted for approval by the Township Committee for a NJABC Social Affair Permit for the Blairstown Enhancement Committee to hold a Fundraiser on November 18, 2016 at Roy Hall from 5:00pm – 11:59pm.

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the Social Affair Permits, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Voice Vote: All Ayes, motion carried.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

1. From BEC - Letter thanking the Township Committee for approving Ordinances 128 “Brush, Grass and Weeds”; 132 “Maintenance of Vacant/Abandoned Properties”; and 147 “Property Maintenance”.

2. From Blairstown Rotary Club regarding the “Annual Halloween Parade” being held on Monday, October 31, 2016 starting at 5:00pm. Line-up at Post Office at 4:30pm, parade at 5 and judging at Agway Feed Store approximately 5:30pm.

3. From Jeff Spatola, Chief of Staff, District 24 Legislature notification of a meeting being held on Friday, November 4, 2016 at 10:30am in the Independence Municipal Building

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that he has a settlement conference with Jessica Campbell and Beth McManus at the Fair Share Housing Center tomorrow regarding the affordable housing litigation. The settlement would show our prospective need would be 87 units. The Township has carry over court credits of 21, and prior round credits of 12, the Warren County ARC Program, the accessory apartment program, and Market Affordable Program. There would be an unmet obligation of about 45 units which we would address by durational adjustment after this settlement. Mr. Benbrook will come back to the Township Committee for final approval. Mr. Benbrook has been in contact with Mr. Thomas, Land Use Board Attorney appraising him of this development.

Mr. Benbrook filled the Township Committee in on a OPRA Lawsuit that was served on Blairstown as well as most of the other municipalities in Warren County.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

Mrs. Leidner reminded those present that the last day to register to vote is October 18. Voter registration forms are available at the Municipal Building. There is a link on the Township website to get those forms and other Election information.

Municipal Clerk Leidner reported that she received a phone call from our Local Fire Warden Eric Weber regarding Blairstown's Outdoor Burning Ordinance. Mr. Weber has been the Fire Marshall for many years and has always used Title 13 State Forest Fire Code to issue open burn permits and to stop people from having illegal open burns, never knowing that Blairstown had its own Ordinance. Mr. Weber recommends that the Township remove Chapter 76, Burning, Open from the Code book. After a brief discussion it was decided that Joanne Van Valkenburg should take this back to the Land Use Board for their consideration.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Cobblewood Road drainage pipe: Mr. Rodman received prices for the lining of the pipe; they range between \$33,000 and \$40,000. This will be placed in the budget for next year. The DPW filled in the depression in the road above the pipes, smoothing out the road surface.

Back Up Well – Quotes for the Well Drilling will be opened on Monday.

Mr. Rodman reported that we received a plan for the proposed treatment system and process flow for the relocating the equipment into the existing building next to the water tower. We can fit all of the equipment into that building. The Township Attorney will work on the wording for the easement. Surveys are being done by Blair. Access easement will be outside of the 50ft. easement area. The Township still needs DEP approval to begin drilling. Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked whether we are still within the DEP timeline. Mr. Rodman believes that we are well with the timeframe. Mrs. Van Valkenburg also asked about placing a dehumidifier for climate control to keep our equipment from being ruined.

Mr. Rodman reported that there was a sewer meeting with the USDA on September 29th and another meeting tomorrow. He will discuss with the Township Committee at a workshop meeting.

Regarding the drainage pipe on Route 94 in front of the Water Treatment Plant, Mr. Rodman met with the DOT. The DOT has agreed to clean out the 2 catch basins and the pipe. An email was received from the DOT on September 29 indicating that we need to wait for the reinstatement of the TTF before this cleaning can proceed.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MAYOR SHOEMAKER

COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that he attended a meeting with the USDA on September 29 regarding grant and loan procedures in the event that the Township Committee would like to submit those applications.

Mr. Avery reported that the water system was pinged a second time to just make sure that there were no leaks in the system. Again there were none. Now the focus is on Blair. Blair has agreed to recalibrate their main water meters. After that there may be a monthly read on town wide meters. Mrs. Van Valkenburg would like a schedule of the new meters being installed.

Tire change and balancing equipment purchased and has already shown to be cost effective.

Specs were reviewed for the new dump truck.

The American Legion is getting prices for new cabinets to upgrade the kitchen at the Givens Belet Building. The building interior has been painted, floors are in good shape. Mold problem needs to be addressed as well.

The BEC group plantings look beautiful. The next BEC Meeting is on October 25 at 7:30pm. A Benefit Show will be held at Roy's Theatre. Tom Chapin will be performing. All of the profits go to the BEC

COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON

Resolution NO. 2016-102

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve Jean McKenna as Tax Collector as of December 1, 2016. Motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Resolution NO. 2016-103

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve Kerri Womack as Assistant Tax Collector as of December 1, 2016. Motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

In the beginning of November rotating of student work in the Municipal Building Lobby.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

Mrs. Van Valkenburg spoke regarding the proposed newsletter and the cost of printing and mailing. The first number received were rather high so both Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Linda Leidner will continue to obtain prices.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg explained that the Township provides a lot of services to other municipalities and it may be time to start asking for these municipalities to contribute to the cost of these services. Mrs. Dalton questioned how we start the dialogue.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg would like to see the Police Department have extended hours. She would like to see them start at 6:00am to 12am. Mrs. Van Valkenburg would like Mr. Gara, Police Director to get some numbers together.

Croucher Farm – Nothing new to report.

Nonnemacher Farm – the County is paying for the appraisals.

Ardia Farm – Need to wait for the estate to settle.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg wanted to bring up taking a portion of the Gorab property on 94 and make it a community garden.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Jeanette Iurato - Thank you for bringing up extended police coverage.

Jean O'Brien – Thank you for bringing up extended police coverage. It would be welcome in the village.

David Paulson – 3 Water Street – Appreciate the possibility of extended police coverage. Private citizens also need to be involved in policing.

RESOLUTION No. 2016-104 AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION – For PURPOSES OF POTENTIAL CONTRACT FOR PURCHASE OF LAND

Motion was made by Mr. Avery to approve Resolution No. 2016-104, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

Voice Vote: All AYES, motion carried.

Meeting Closed to the Public at 10:05pm.

Meeting re-opened to the Public at 10:27pm

Mayor Shoemaker reported that in Executive Session the Committee discussed the terms of a potential contract for the purchase of land; a potential Open Space acquisition. No formal action will be taken at this time.

Mayor Shoemaker noted that there would be a Workshop Meeting held on October 28, 2016 at 10:30am.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Dalton. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk