

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, February 8, 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 7:00. 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 - 029 AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONNEL

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 7:05pm.

Mr. Lance made a motion to re-open the Regular Meeting at 7:45 pm. The Motion was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker noted for the record that all members of the Township Committee were present at the Executive Session.

Mayor Shoemaker explained the results of the Executive Session. There was one personnel matter and no action was taken.

PRESENTATION was made by Richard Komissar from Tilson on behalf of Verizon Wireless requesting consent from the Township Committee to utilize the public right-of-way for small network nodes. He explained that this request is to fulfill a statewide initiative to fill some holes in the wireless network coverage. Mr. Komissar explained that the company is using network node antenna's, they are small 2 and a ½ foot antenna's that go onto utility poles that are in the public right of way. The company is looking to obtain a proactive consent from the Township Committee for Verizon Wireless to operate in the right of way. When the actual designs are completed Tilson will come back again with the plans to obtain the proper approvals. Tilson is hoping to use as many existing poles as possible. At times the existing pole can't be used so the company with complete a permit for another utility pole.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Robert Ho – 87 Mohican Road – Mr. Ho began with saying that the Township should fix the things that are broken before considering a sewer system. In his opinion the sewer system would only benefit a few and put a financial burden on so many others. Mr. Ho feels that a new sewer system will only destroy the beauty of Blairstown and will reduce property values. If the Township installs a sewer system the State of NJ could force them to build more housing to fulfill its COAH obligation. Mr. Ho pointed out that when a town builds low income housing crime becomes a big problem. People want to raise their families here for its beautiful natural scenery.

Joe Rich – 17 Cobblewood Road - Mr. Rich noted that he is not hostile about the sewer system, he just wanted to have the opportunity to present some information. He explained that on Main Street there are homes on the embankment side which comes down from the hill. They have tanks under the street, where all of their sewage goes, that have holes in them. He explained that what the sewer study team may not realize is that when they open the street up, and that is permeated with refuse that has been in there for many years, all of that soil may have to be moved. Then new soil will have to be brought in. Mr. Rich questioned how the engineers could do a study without soil samples and without drawings. Mr. Rich explained that the sewer plant itself will weigh a lot and it will sit right in the middle of what is along the river where it floods all the time.

Fred Cook – 44 Four Corners Road – Mr. Cook concerned about Four Corners Road noting that it is in bad shape. He was wondering if there are any plans to pave it in the near future.

Mayor Shoemaker explained that Four Corners Road was not on the list that was prepared in 2015. That doesn't mean that the list is set in stone. The list can be reassessed.

John Kovacs – 12 Cedar Glen Drive – Mr. Kovacs noted that at the last meeting he asked how many septic systems were failing and he remarked that Mayor Shoemaker said 2. Mrs. Dalton explained that the most recent report from the Warren County Health Department showed 2 failing systems. Mr. Kovacs agrees with a woman that he spoke to in the village that the village residents should incur the cost of the sewers and that he is not in favor of a municipal tax to cover the cost of the sewers. Mr. Kovacs inquired as to when the discussion on possibility of a sewer system began and he was told about a year ago. Mayor Shoemaker noted that it was viewed as an opportunity. Blair has a system that is old and needs to be replaced. Some members of the Township Committee thought it may be a good idea to piggy back on Blair's system upgrade. The Township went to Blair Academy and said let's do an engineering study and share the cost. Mr. Kovacs recommended that an Existing Condition Inventory Survey to determine the need for sewers in Blairstown.

Leone Samilson – 20 Bridge Street - Ms. Samilson has questions about the sewers. She lives in the downtown area for about 20 years. Ms. Samilson has a house in Florida and they are currently installing sewers. The cost is incurred by only the people that are hooking into the system.

MINUTES

December 14, 2016 - Regular Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2016 - Executive Session Minutes

January 4, 2017 – Reorganization Meeting Minutes

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

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2017 – 030 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2017 – 031 Authorizing the Mayor to sign Nature Conservancy Agreement
- 3 – R.2017 – 032 Approving Professional Services Agreement with Bruno & Associates
- 4 – R.2017 – 033 Authorizing Blirstown Township to Provide Municipal Funding Share For The Purchase of Development Rights to the Nonnemacher Farm Owned By Lothar Nonnemacher in Blirstown Township
- 5 – R.2017 – 034 Approving the Request for Consent from Verizon Wireless Request to utilize public rights of way for small network nodes.

Mr. Lance made a motion for discussion.

Mrs. Dalton and Mrs. Van Valkenburg wanted to discuss R.2017-030. Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned the Clarke Caton Hintz bill. There is a fee on the bill – telephone call from a citizen – interested party discussion. Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked to pull Voucher 36172 for clarification, Mrs. Dalton asked to pull Voucher 36176 New Earth Water Company, Michael Lata, inquiring as to whether the Township should be paying his liability insurance. Mr. Lata does not have a contract with the Township for 2017 is operating on a month to month basis therefore, we are required to reimburse him for his insurance.

Mayor Shoemaker asked to discuss R.2017-32 to clarify as to whether this is considered a Professional Service or if the Township is required to go out to request RFP's. Mr. Benbrook explained that the Township should get a couple of quotes for this service. Mr. Lance indicated that he reached out to the Township Auditor's and he advised that this is a gray area, other municipalities have approved this as a professional service. Mr. Lance pointed out that time is of the essence due to the fact that there are grants out there and deadlines need to be met.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Voucher numbers 36172 and 36176 from the bill list. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – January Report
- DPW – January Report
- Finance – January Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – January Reports
- Police Department – January Report
- Tax Collector – January Report and Annual Report
- Warren County Health Department – January 9, 2017

Mrs. Van Valkenburg would like to get the Warren County Health Department to take care of some of the items that appear on the list month after month.

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1 - Sewer Update - Mrs. Dalton noted that the Township needs to be clear that if the sewers were to be installed how it would affect our COAH numbers. Attorney Benbrook remarked that the Township Committee has before them a copy of the Final Fair Share Housing Settlement Agreement.

Mr. Benbrook went on to explain since the last time the Township Committee met the Supreme Court ruled unfavorably towards the municipal defendants, the Supreme Court ruling would essentially lock in a higher number of required units. Blairstown settled this case last November. The Blairstown Township Committee and the Land Use Board signed off on this in November. Mr. Benbrook noted even though the Supreme Court has ruled, The Fair Share Housing Center is willing to continue with settlement figure of 87 units. Mr. Benbrook indicated that Paragraph 6 in the Settlement Agreement breaks down the numbers for Blairstown. This agreement will cover Blairstown through 2025 and the figure will remain as 87 units. Mr. Benbrook explained the Durational Adjustment, explaining that this would be the answer to Mrs. Dalton's initial question.

The 55 units that are considered the Durational Adjustment number don't need to be addressed at this time. Mr. Benbrook asked the Committee to look at Paragraph 8 C2 that specifically deals with the overlay which indicates that the Township will designate an overlay zone for a village affordable housing overlay. This has always been in the agreement and required by the Master. Most Townships have this overlay requirement. Mr. Benbrook explained that this overlay is called an overlay because it is not an existing active zoning. Mr. Benbrook further explained that this overlay does not require or obligate the Township or Township Committee to any way approve sewers in any way shape or form. What we are trying to protect with this Settlement Agreement is home rule. Mr. Lance noted that with the overlay zone there would be 900 units required in the village area. Mr. Benbrook let the Township Committee know that he scheduled a Fairness Hearing on March 9 just in the event that the Committee agrees to the terms of the Agreement. After the Fairness Hearing we would have a 10 year period of repose. This would help keep municipal control over Land Use. The Master is insisting on keeping the overlay in the Agreement if the Township is planning on settling.

Mayor Shoemaker made a Motion to Authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to Execute the Settlement Agreement between the declaratory judgement petitioners (Township of Blairstown) and the Fair Share Housing Center, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg

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

2 – Walnut Valley Firehouse – Mr. Rodman noted that Whitman is waiting on an answer as to how the Township Committee would like to proceed. Mayor Shoemaker recommended that the Township Committee speak to the Attorney Benbrook an Executive session to decide how to proceed in this matter. Attorney Benbrook and the other members of the Township Committee were in agreement.

3 – Dump Truck Update - Mayor Shoemaker sent a memo to all of the members of the Township Committee for their review. All prices for this purchase are Co-op prices through the Morris County Co-op for the truck and a National Co-op for the dump body and plow. An Ordinance was adopted in August in the amount of \$165,000.00 for the acquisition of this equipment. The Mayor had two

meetings with the DPW employees to review the specs and determine that everything that is needed for the DPW to perform their jobs efficiently is included. There is one small addition on the Mack Truck Quote of \$953.00 for a rear differential lock. Mayor Shoemaker explained that this is a mechanism is used if the truck goes into a ditch, the rear end of the truck locks and you are able to pull out of the ditch. Mrs. Van Valkenburg questioned as to whether the DPW is comfortable with this truck. Mayor Shoemaker noted that they are. The quote for the Kenworth is \$165,120.00 includes the plow and dump body. The Mack quote total, with plow, dump body and automatic transmission is \$168,464.00. The National Quote for Kenworth with automatic transmission is \$165,129.00. There is a \$3300.00 difference between the two quotes. The DPW thinks that the Mack is the better truck.

Mr. Avery made a Motion to authorize the purchase of the Mack Truck with the Henderson add ons, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

The Township Committee allowed comments and questions from the public. Mr. Kovacs questioned whether the price of the truck was MSRP Price or if it was a negotiated price. Mr. Lance explained that this price is from a co-op meaning the bidding was already done through the co-op. Mr. Price questioned the maximum capacity of the front axle of the Mack truck. Mr. Price pointed out that the tires are smaller on the Mack truck then the Kenworth.

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

Mayor Shoemaker noted that he sent a memorandum to the members of the Township Committee regarding a Resolution that was passed by the Knowlton Township Committee. In 1983 the State of New Jersey set up quotas concerning DUI arrests. The North Warren Court is not eligible for money to run a DUI education program unless they exceed the number of arrests that were made in 1983 for driving while intoxicated. In 1983 the legal drinking age was 18 as a result the legal drinking age being raised to 21 the number of DUI arrests has fallen. The Courts are not getting any money from this fund. The Resolution is requesting that the 1983 base number be changed to a more current number. Mayor Shoemaker explained that he only brought this up because it can affect the way our costs accrue in the Court. Mayor Shoemaker asked the members of the Township Committee if they would like to send a letter in support of the Knowlton Resolution to Senator Oroho and other members of the 24th Legislative District.

Mayor Shoemaker made a Motion to send a letter in support of Knowlton Township's Resolution No. 2017-21, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

NEW BUSINESS

The Township Committee received a request from Kerry Kirk Pflugh, Director of Local Government Assistance to have a meet and greet. After a brief discussion the Township Committee agreed to ask Ms. Pflugh to attend the March 9 Township Committee Meeting.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1 – from Roger Thomas, Land Use Attorney regarding update on the status of enforcement of possible violations involving solar panels and required plantings at North Warren Regional High School. Mr. Thomas had sent a previous letter regarding this issue on October 18. Mayor Shoemaker passed the letter on to David Diehl and asked him to look at the situation. Mayor Shoemaker noted that he received an email today from Sarah Bilotti, Superintendent of North Warren Regional High School requesting a meeting regarding this issue. Mayor Shoemaker noted that he would attend the meeting along with Debbie Waldron, Land Use Secretary, Ted Rodman the Township Engineer and Mrs. Dalton.

2 – from Blair Academy, requesting an approval for a Social Affair Permit for a Reunion Weekend being held on June 9 & 10.

Mr. Lance made a Motion to approve the Social Affair Permit for an event being held by Blair Academy on June 9 & 10, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

1. from the New Jersey Conservation Foundation regarding an educational Rally being held on Friday, March 17, 2017. This notification was distributed by the Municipal Clerk to all departments, boards and committees that may have an interest in attending this Rally.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook's report was done at the beginning of the meeting.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

Mrs. Leidner had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman explained that an application for a State Aid Grant was submitted to the DOT for the overlay for Mohican Road in the amount of \$380,000.00. The Township has a month to pass a Resolution therefore it will be done at the March 8 meeting.

Mr. Rodman circulated a memo to the Township Committee as to the status of the back-up well. There were 3 locations originally. Blair, the parking lot next to the Firehouse and the 3rd would be redrilling the existing well. Mr. Rodman noted that it appears that the parking lot next to the Firehouse on Stillwater Road seems to be the best location for the back-up well. Mrs. Van Valkenburg remarked that the hydrologist report that she provided indicates that it would be the best location. Mr. Lance wanted to know if there is someplace else in closer proximity to the treatment plant in case the water does need to be treated. Mr. Lance inquired about placing the backup well at the charter school. Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that it is not in Blairstown. Mr. Rodman noted that the Township must control 50 feet around the well.

Mayor Shoemaker made a Motion to drill for the back-up well at the Stillwater Firehouse which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

Roll call vote: Aye: Avery, Dalton, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker
Nay: Lance
Motion carried.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE MEMBER AVERY**

Mr. Avery reported Senior Citizens are in the process of putting their activity schedule together for the year.

Mr. Avery also advised the Township Committee of a request received from Carl Stoddart, DPW Foreman to join the American Water Works Association. The Township has belonged to this organization in the past. It gives Mr. Stoddart and the Township an opportunity to receive consultations when water issues arise.

Mr. Avery made a Motion to approve the request for the Township to join the NJ Water Association with a membership dues of \$250.00, motion was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON

Mrs. Dalton reported that she will meet with Mr. Bruce Leal, Principal of the Elementary School on Friday to touch base with him about activities happening in the school. Mrs. Dalton also reported that she spoke with Sarah Bilotti, Principal at the High School regarding various issues and she will be meeting with her next week.

Mrs. Dalton also reported that she and Mrs. Van Valkenburg will be meeting at the municipal offices this week to address redesigning the office to provide better security for the staff and optimizing workspace.

The personnel policy is complete and has been distributed to the entire staff.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance offered that the first budget subcommittee meeting was held on January 27. Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker attended, but rotated in an out of the meeting to be sure they were not in violation of the OPMA law. The next budget subcommittee meeting is scheduled for February 17.

Mr. Lance reported that the water line leak off Sunset Hill Road was fixed; hopefully we will see a reduction in unaccounted water usage. Carl Stoddart is still working on the design for a new master meter at Blair Academy. This meter will monitor the two main lines going into Blair Academy and to reconcile water usage at Blair. There is the possibility of other unmetered buildings or unread meters we don't know about at Blair.

Mr. Lance also reviewed the Police Department report for January. There were 4 adult arrests, 24 traffic summons, 1 burglary, 1 theft, no DWI, 5 warrants were issued.

Mr. Lance noted that one of our police officers is coming up to an anniversary date with the department, Probationary Officer Paul Cho. On March 1, Mr. Cho will be with the department for one year. In accordance with the PBA contract statutorily the Township is required to give him a step increase but it is with approval from the Township Committee and the Police Director Robert Gara. Mr. Gara is recommending that Officer Cho be promoted from Probationary Officer to a Step 1 Patrolman. His salary would increase from \$44,571.00 - \$47,754.00 effective March 1.

Mr. Lance made a motion to promote Officer Paul Cho from Probationary Officer to Step 1 Patrolman as of March 1, 2017 with a salary of \$47,754.00 as indicated in the PBA Contract. Mrs. Van Valkenburg seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance reported that the Historic Preservation Committee held their Reorganization Meeting on Monday, February 6. He noted that the January Meeting was canceled due to the lack of a quorum. Christine Beegle was reelected as Chair of the Blirstown Historic Preservation Committee Wick Mott Vice Chairman, Barbara Green Secretary, and Lori Talley is the corresponding Secretary. Mr. Lance reported that among things that were discussed was this years 140th Anniversary of the train coming to Blirstown. The Committee is planning walking tours again this year. The Historic Preservation Committee is very excited about the Township hiring a grant writer, and have several grants they are anxious to have them look into.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that the Open Space Committee has not met, there is not a lot going on right now.

The Blirstown Website is up and running. Mrs. Van Valkenburg let everyone know that the new website is www.blirstowntownship.org.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg let everyone know that on Monday night there was a professional speed skater that used the Skating Rink at Sycamore Park for a commercial for Underarmour. She is trying raise money to go to the Winter Olympics.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker reported that he received a request from the North Warren Garden Club for their \$250.00 that they receive annually. This money helps to cover the cost of the plantings on Main Street and at the Municipal Building.

Mr. Lance made a Motion to approve the \$250.00 donation from the Open Space Trust Fund to the North Warren Garden Club which is done annually, the Motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mayor Shoemaker reported that there is a vacancy on the Open Space Committee. Mr. Domenic Daleo has submitted a Citizen Leadership Form indicating that he would like to serve on the Open Space Committee. Mayor Shoemaker appointed Mr. Daleo to the Open Space Committee.

Mayor Shoemaker received membership applications for two new Fireman for the Blairstown Hose Company -

Fred Mamay of Wishing Well Road he is also a member of the Bloomfield Fire Company.

Christopher Weiss from Cook Road is also a member of the East Orange Fire Department.

Both applicants have passed their physicals.

Mayor Shoemaker made a Motion to approve the new Hose Company Members, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

Voice Vote: AYE – Avery, Dalton, Lance, Van Valkenburg, Shoemaker

All ayes: Motion carried.

Mayor Shoemaker reported that he received a copy of letter that was addressed to Police Director Gara from Mr. Frank Mull of Millbrook Road. Mr. Mull thanked Officer Herzer for coming to his aid when he fell at the Acme. He stated “Mr. Herzer’s sincere concern and consideration exemplified that he does more than just answer a call”. He went on to say “The people of Blairstown are fortunate to have such an outstanding individual on the Police Force”. Mayor Shoemaker thanked him again and stated that it is wonderful how the Township is continually receiving such positive notes regarding the Police Department. It is much appreciated.

Mayor Shoemaker noted that the Hose Company will be in attendance at the March 8, 2017 Meeting.

Mayor Shoemaker noted that we’ve talked about and around the Sewer Project for so long. Tonight we heard about the possible impact it would have regarding COAH. This has caused such controversy. There is not support of the full committee to continue on with this project. It is taking a lot of time from people’s lives. Mayor Shoemaker proposed that the Township Committee remove the sewer project and sewer project discussion from the agenda. This does not prohibit anybody from continuing studies. Mayor Shoemaker pointed out that the Township, officially has never formally made a recommendation or a presentation. We’ve been the beneficiary of a citizen group presentation which got twisted around somehow. The Township has never taken official action concerning the sewers other than doing the study. Mayor Shoemaker suggested the topic be removed from the Agenda. Others can continue to do their studies because there are alternative approaches to sewer questions; nobody is prevented from doing that. Also, nobody is prevented from one day in the future at a meeting saying they want to talk about sewers again.

Mr. Lance noted that this issue consumed so much of the Committees time. He would like to remove the Township from the sewer study entirely, a letter should be sent to Blair Academy saying thank you but we are not interested in the sewers. He would like to de authorize the project and ask that no additional funds be authorized. Mr. Lance also would like to direct Township Engineer Rodman to not attend any more sewer meetings. The Water Department should be our top priority.

Mayor Shoemaker explained when all of this came up the Township had an organization, Blair Academy that said it would be happy to share in the cost of the Sewer Study and the implementation of a sewer system. He stated that he believes there was some sort of an obligation to pursue that option, because we could in the future be criticized for not having considered a major cost saving offer.

Mr. Lance noted that we should just put this issue to bed. We shared the cost with Blair and we have the report from the Engineers.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg noted that Blair Academy's intention was for the Township to take over the Sewer Project because they are an educational institution not a Sewer Plant operator. Mrs. Van Valkenburg believes it is time to put this issue to rest.

Mrs. Dalton remarked that this Committee really has the care and concern of this community as its core. There was never any hidden agenda and she believes the project should be put to rest.

Mr. Avery remarked that there was no hidden agenda at all. We felt we had an obligation to the town to take a look at the options. There was a lot more exploration that needed to be done before any decisions could be made. Long before that could be done there was a lot of resistance to the sewer project so we will never find out what the possibilities were. Mr. Avery felt like the Township had an obligation to the Village. He is not ready to give up on the sewer project but he will go along with it right now.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg recommended that the Blairstown Enhancement Committee work on enhancing the village area. Mr. Lance agreed and mentioned the sidewalks and the need for repairs.

Mr. Lance made a Motion to de- authorize any participation by the Township in any further studies for the sewer project, no further monies be expended and instruct Van Cleef and Associates to not expend any more monies on Blairstown's behalf, and send a letter to Blair Academy and say Blairstown is pulling out of this joint project and thank you.

Township Attorney Benbrook explained that he had a discussion with Mr. Frick at Blair Academy. Blair Academy's Sewer Permit Licensing Term is about to expire and if any time would have been a good time to do the sewers it is now because the project would come in under their old permit which has lower standards. If the Township decides to pull out Blair Academy will be fine, they still have their sewer system up there and they will update it when the time comes.

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

FROM THE PUBLIC

Debra Waldron – Land Use Board Chair – Mrs. Waldron Congratulated the Committee on their decision to stop the sewer study. She noted that this issue pitted neighbor against neighbor and Board against people in the public. Mrs. Waldron also thanked the Committee for hiring the Grant writer. Mrs. Waldron also spoke about signage. The turn from Bridge Street to Millbrook , there are buses and trucks that are ruining the property there as well as impeding the flow of traffic. A sign should be put up stating no thoroughfare, no trucks or buses permitted.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road - Ms. Murray inquired about the \$250.00 donation to the North Warren Garden Club as to how it can be taken from the Open Space Fund. She noted that she is very protective of Open Space because she started the committee and she knows the rules very well. Mr. Lance noted that it is dealing with Open Space, Historic Preservation and Farmland Preservation and that's what pays for the maintenance of our recreation fields. She noted it is not a slush fund. Open Space is Historic, Recreation, Farmland Preservation. Mayor Shoemaker remarked that he will take a look at the Ordinance.

Erin Hanelt – 67 Hoagland Road – Ms. Hanelt was glad that the Township Committee chose to not continue the Sewer study so that Blairstown can remain an affordable place to live and a nice place to raise a family.

Bob Halberstadt let everyone know that all State Office are closed tomorrow for non-essential employees due to the impending snow storm.

The Township Committee agreed that the Blairstown Municipal Offices will be closed as tomorrow as well.

Joe Tafuni – Mr. Tafuni thanked the Mayor for stopping the sewer project. Mr. Tafuni also thanked Mr. Benbrook for being the voice of reason and the residents are lucky to have him as the Township Attorney. He also noted that the Police Department is awesome, they do a great job. Mr. Tafuni noted that he was a State Trooper for many years. The Township Committee may want to start thinking about doing 24 hour coverage.

Joe Rich – Inquired of the Attorney as to whether the Township is ever going to be on the hook for any kind of money for low income housing. Mr. Benbrook explained that the Township has an Affordable Housing Trust Fund and an Ordinance in place. The Township collects a percentage whenever there is a development in town. As part of obtaining a CO they pay an Affordable Housing Development Fee. The Settlement Agreement specifically states that all monies would come out of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund or if the Township Committee chooses at any point they can go for bonding.

John Kovacs – 10 Cedarville Drive – Thank you for stopping the sewer project. Mr. Kovacs inquired as to whether the BEC could give the North Warren Garden Club the \$250.00 for the flowers. He also inquired as to whether the BEC will continue to help the people in the village try to solve their septic issues. The Township Committee agrees that it is up to the BEC as to whether they would like to continue to help.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 pm.

Submitted by:

Linda Leidner, RMC
Municipal Clerk