

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 9, 2016, 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

Regular meeting begins at 7:30 pm or immediately following Closed Session, whichever comes last.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Shoemaker. Those present were Mr. Avery, Mrs. Dalton, Mr. Lance, Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mayor Shoemaker. Also present were Clerk Pizzai and Attorney Robert 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, presented each Committee member with a report and requested that they read it and discuss it with her.

In honor of Mrs. Ardia's 100th birthday, *Happy Birthday* was sung and Mrs. Van Valkenburg presented her with cheesecake.

Peter McKenna, Mohican Road, asked about the status of the bridge work on Route 94. Mayor Shoemaker responded that all work is on hold due to a dispute between the bonding company and the State. Mrs. Van Valkenburg suggested that everyone send a letter to the State or sign a petition. Mr. Lance suggested discussing this at the next Legislator's meeting with Senator Oroho.

Robert Halberstadt, Main Street, announced that on April 2nd, an HGTV show entitled *We Bought the Farm* will air. The show will feature four farms located in Northern Warren County.

Harold Price, Alice Court, suggested that the DPW building have an alarm system installed. He would also like an alarm installed at the Jones Farm building.

Sandy Giacobbe, Stillwater Road, along with Jeanette O'Brien and Livia Angelone, spoke about drug problems in the area. Dr. Giacobbe said that he is hearing about this from his patients and although the problem is widespread, there is little to no information reported about this. He would like a police blotter instituted where the public can become aware of drug arrests.

Mrs. O'Brien said that she has reported drug activity around her daughter's home many times. Ms. Angelone said that she has witnessed drug activity frequently.

John Trontis, NJ Division of Parks and Forestry, said that the State has instituted a drug monitoring initiative that lists daily arrests that the local police would find useful with regard to drug arrests.

MINUTES

February 10, 2016 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the February 10th minutes, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

ORDINANCE 2016 – 01 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$70,000 FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE WATER DEPARTMENT IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, NEW JERSEY, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$66,500 BOND OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION

Adoption, Second Reading

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this ordinance is being adopted in order to finance necessary repairs to the Water Department.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Shoemaker opened the Public Hearing. Mr. Price, Alice Court, wanted to know the total cost to run the Water Department in 2015. He wants a total of the revenues brought in and the total amount of subsidies used to run the Water Department. In addition, he wants the total amount budgeted in 2016 to offset the costs of the Water Department.

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, brought a sample of her water to show the discoloration after the last storm. She said that the repairs are long overdue.

Mr. Lance made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2016 – 01 on second reading. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the bid of LEW Technologies to replace the filter media at the Water Department building at a cost of \$37,500. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

ORDINANCE 2016 – 02 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED, “AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE SALARIES 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

Mayor Shoemaker explained that this ordinance sets salary ranges for the township employees. The positions of Water Operator, at a salary range of \$5,000 - \$15,000 per year, and Assistant Water Operator, with a range of \$1.00 - \$2.50 per hour, have been added. These positions are being added in the event the Township Committee decides to utilize township employees to run the Water Department.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2016 – 02 on first reading, which was seconded by Mayor Shoemaker.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2016 – 037 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2016 – 038 Refund of 2015 and 2016 CoreLogic Payment Errors
- 3 – R.2016 – 039 2015 Tonnage Grant Application
- 4 – R.2016 – 040 Appointment to Positions Required by the NJ Department of Agriculture for Gypsy Moth Spraying Program
- 5 – R.2016 – 041 Authorization to Transfer Funds
- 6 – R.2016 – 042 Appointment of School Crossing Guards

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mrs. Dalton.

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

INTRODUCTION OF 2016 BUDGET

- R.2016 – 043 Special Items of Revenue – General Capital Fund Balance – Reserve for First Aid Equipment
- R.2016 – 044 Special Items of Revenue – Grants
- R.2016 – 045 Introduction of 2016 Budget

Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to approve R.2016 – 043, R.2016 – 044, and R.2016 – 045, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

**PUBLIC HEARING – Place-to-Place Transfer of Liquor License No. 2104-33-002-005
Blairstown Brewery Limited Liability Company, 45 State Route 94**

Richard Keiling, Attorney for Blairstown Brewery, explained that the State requires a Place-to-Place transfer of the license due to an expansion of the patio area.

- R.2016 – 046 Approval of Place-to-Place Transfer of Plenary Retail Consumption License No. 2104-33-002-005 Held by Blairstown Brewery Limited Liability Company

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve R.2016 – 046, which was seconded by Mrs. Van Valkenburg.

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

Jaime Murray, Chair of the Knowlton Environmental Commission, and John Trontis, NJ Division of Parks and Forestry, appeared before the Committee to make a presentation on a proposed Scenic Byway.

Ms. Murray explained that the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation and is voluntary and community based. The first step is to fill out an application. Once approved by the NJ DOT, it becomes a provisional NJ Scenic Byway.

Sponsors of a potential scenic byway need to determine which of six intrinsic qualities the designation will be based upon. The six qualities are: scenic, historic, archeological, recreational, cultural, and natural. The sponsor also determines the byway route.

The second step is to work on a corridor management plan, which is a written document that identifies the goals for the byway and a plan describing how the goals will be met.

The only byway commitments the sponsor must adhere to are that no additional billboards will be placed along the byway and that the intrinsic qualities of the byway will be preserved.

Each byway is assigned unique signage, which is developed and funded by the NJDOT. There is no expense to the municipality.

Ms. Murray showed a map of the proposed byway in Knowlton and the loop that would include Blairstown. The proposed loop would take the tourist through Main Street. She said that the byway only has positive elements for both Knowlton and Blairstown. It would hopefully benefit local businesses by increasing tourism in the area.

Ms. Murray presented the Committee with a sample resolution of support for consideration.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg asked if there were any other restrictions besides additional billboards. Mr. Trontis responded that there were not, and that there are no costs involved in participation in the program. Labor provided by the township will be involved in the installation of the signage.

Mayor Shoemaker thanked Ms. Murray and Mr. Trontis for explaining the Scenic Byway Program.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – February Report

Finance – February Finance and Fuel Reports

Police Department – February Report

Tax Collector – February Report

Warren County Health Department – February 11, 2016

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1 – from Leigh Pagano, President, North Warren Little League, regarding the installation of a fence at Sycamore Park

This item will be carried to the next meeting.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1 – from Department of Environmental Protection, re: Rescission of Notice of Deficiency and Issuance of Notice of Violation - Blairstown Water Department

Mr. Rodman reported that he spoke with a representative of Leggette, Brashears & Graham, who has been in contact with the DEP. Basically, the township is being required to give the DEP a

detailed schedule indicating when the well will be operational. Mr. Rodman is working with Leggette, Brashears & Graham to develop this schedule.

2 – from Leigh Pagano, President, North Warren Little League, requesting permission to shorten the back stop at Walnut Valley Field

Mayor Shoemaker explained that the work they are requesting will be at no expense to the township. Mrs. Van Valkenburg made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

3 – from Alex J. Lazorisak, Director, Warren County Public Works, re: Snow Removal – Main & High Streets

Mayor Shoemaker explained that Warren County has billed the township for snow removal on Main Street. He said Governor Christie declared a State of Emergency during that particular snow storm and therefore, the township may be able to receive FEMA monies. The Blirstown Office of Emergency Management has filed for funds and Mayor Shoemaker believes this bill could be paid with FEMA money.

With regard to the potential ownership of Main Street, Mayor Shoemaker said there are pros and cons to this. He proposed a special meeting to discuss this matter, to which the entire Committee was in agreement. The Committee decided on holding a special meeting on March 18th at 10am.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that the contract for the purchase of the Croucher Farm has been prepared by his office. The attorney representing the property owner has requested several minor wording changes. Mr. Benbrook recommended authorizing the Mayor to sign the contract after the amendments have been made. Mayor Shoemaker made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Joel McGreen, Open Space Chair, gave an update on the Kostenbader property. He said that he is hopeful that the property owner will sell. The High Acres Farm appraisals are complete and have been forwarded to the State.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported that the Park Street agreement has been signed and asked Mr. Benbrook about the quick claim deed. Mr. Benbrook said that this will come after the construction of the parking lot.

Mr. Rodman said that the DOT will be beginning work on Route 94 next week. They expect to do most of the work during night-time hours.

Mr. Rodman said that he will be attending a meeting on the proposed sewers and will have an approximate cost for the project soon.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Mr. Avery praised Anita Ardia for all of her work with the Seniors Club. She was honored recently at a Warren County Freeholders meeting and will be honored as "Citizen of the Year" by the Rotary Club.

Mr. Avery said that the DPW did an extraordinary job during the recent snowstorm.

Mr. Avery said that he did have visitors during his last open door meeting. One citizen had zoning concerns and the other reported a speeding problem on Belcher Road.

Mr. Avery is working on a draft ordinance for abandoned buildings and property maintenance with Mrs. Van Valkenburg. He asked for assistance on prioritizing the ordinance review results recommended by the ordinance review ad hoc committee. Mrs. Van Valkenburg will work with Mr. Avery on this project.

The Blairstown Economic Committee will be meeting on March 22nd. They are working on a program to get residents to sign up for Nixle.

Mr. Avery met with Jackie Espinoza from JCP&L regarding the list of street lights to be removed. The Committee agreed to give JCP&L permission to remove the lights as indicated on the list provided by Ms. Espinoza.

Mr. Avery received a quotation from Seidel for speakers and microphones to improve the sound system in the meeting room. Mr. Avery made a motion to authorize Seidel to supply and install speakers and microphones at the quoted price of \$1,692. Mrs. Van Valkenburg seconded the motion.

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

COMMITTEE MEMBER DALTON

Mrs. Dalton reported on William Sigety, who had come before the Committee in search of an Eagle Scout project. Mrs. Dalton said that she spoke with Christine Beegle, HPC Chair, who suggested two possible ideas. One is to develop an App for the HP walking tour, and the other idea is to conduct research on Benjamin Smith or another historic figure important to Blairstown. Ms. Beegle said that Mr. Sigety plans to do some research on how to develop an App.

Mrs. Dalton attended the recent North Warren Regional High School Board of Education meeting, at which the board recognized the Girls Cross Country team as undefeated champions this year. The school will be putting on a production of *Godspell*.

The Blairstown Elementary Chess Club won a Warren County tournament. Mrs. Dalton read a certification from the Elementary School to the Township Committee in recognition of their contribution and cooperation with the Board of Education and administrative staff.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LANCE

Mr. Lance stated that the 2016 budget is approximately \$40,000 lower than the 2015 budget.

Mr. Lance said that the copier needs to be replaced. Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign a lease/purchase contract for a copier at a cost not to exceed \$12,000. Mrs. Dalton seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance said that due to costs associated with the Water Department, most notably the new well, the Committee will have to look at the current water rates.

Mr. Lance read highlights from the February Police Department report. Mr. Lance said that since there is currently no officer in charge on duty, he is making a motion to appoint Scott Johnsen as OIC with no increase in salary. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance reported that the BHPC have received the donation of several display cases. They will be utilized to exhibit the many items in storage.

Fred Heilich, who is a railroad enthusiast and lecturer, will be at the Blairstown Inn on April 3rd for a book signing. In addition, Dr. Elliot Trommald, a former Blair Academy History Department Chair, will be speaking on John I. Blair at Blair Academy on April 5th.

Mr. Lance said that the Historic Preservation Committee is working on having the footbridge included in the historic district.

COMMITTEE MEMBER VAN VALKENBURG

With regard to the Recreation Department, Mrs. Van Valkenburg read the mission statement of the department. She said that the Recreation Department is running a great deal of programs and there has been a tremendous amount of people enrolling in them.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg and Mrs. Dalton have recently attended courses for newly elected officials orientation and also budgeting. She said it would be advantageous for all members to attend these courses from time to time.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg discussed issues brought up in a recent pamphlet sent out by the NJ Association of Realtors with regard to property values, taxation, and government transparency.

Mrs. Van Valkenburg reported that COAH is still in a holding pattern, awaiting judicial decisions.

MAYOR SHOEMAKER

Mayor Shoemaker said that the township has received an application from Thomas Czarnecki for membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1. He made a motion to approve the application, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mayor Shoemaker spoke about a couch that has been sitting on a property for quite some time on Main Street. Due to the grand re-opening of Roy's Theatre this weekend, Mayor Shoemaker is willing to take the couch to the landfill himself. Mr. Lance will assist.

Mayor Shoemaker asked for suggestions on where to place the plaque given to the township by the Fire Company. He will look into possible placement in the inner lobby.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Harold Price, Alice Court, asked if the sale of the Water Company is still being considered. Mayor Shoemaker answered in the affirmative. Mr. Price also suggested that the township consider going to a paperless meeting system.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Avery seconded the motion, with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk