

**TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**ANNUAL REORGANIZATION MEETING
January 4, 2016**

A meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held at the Knowlton Municipal Building. Present were Rene Mathez, Kathy Cuntala, Ron Farber, Debra Shipps and Adele Starrs. Also present was Ted Rodman, Township Engineer. The minutes were recorded by Municipal Clerk Lisa Patton.

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by publishing notice of all regularly scheduled meetings in the Star Gazette, Star Ledger or Express Times as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk's office.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm with a salute to the flag and roll call.

Swearing In Of Township Committee Members:

Committeewoman Cuntala was sworn into office by the Municipal Clerk.

Nomination of Mayor:

A motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala and seconded by Committeeman Mathez to nominate Adele Starrs as Mayor for 2016. There being no other nominations, roll call was taken: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Mayor Starrs was sworn into office by the Municipal Clerk.

Nomination of Deputy Mayor:

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Mayor Starrs to nominate Kathy Cuntala as Deputy Mayor. There being no other nominations, roll call was taken: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Deputy Mayor Cuntala was sworn into office by the Municipal Clerk.

RESOLUTIONS:

**Resolution 16-01
Resolution Adopting Annual Meeting Calendar
(copy attached)**

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to approve Resolution 16-01 with an addition that the township committee may hold executive session from 7:00 pm to 7:30 pm on Monday meetings. The motion was seconded by Mayor Starrs. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala - yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

**Resolution 16-02
Resolution Approving Compensated Appointments
(copy attached)**

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 16-02. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 16-03
Resolution Approving Non-Compensated Appointments
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 16-03. Mayor Starrs stated she will replace George James on the planning board, Kim Schad will replace Arnold Kantor on the board of adjustment. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 16-04
Resolution Approving Temporary Municipal Budget
And Temporary Wastewater Utility Budget
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 16-04. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala - yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 16-13
Resolution Approving Consent Agenda
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 16-13 with the exceptions of Resolutions 16-06, 16-10 and 16-12. Roll Call: Mathez- yes, Cuntala -yes, Farber-yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 16-06
Resolution Authorizing Imposition Of Additional Penalties For Tax Delinquencies
In Excess of Ten Thousand Dollars And Setting Interest Rates For Delinquent Taxes
(copy attached)

Committeewoman Shipps inquired if the tax collector sends certified mail notices to delinquent taxpayers. Committeewoman Shipps will follow up with the tax collector regarding procedures for notification. A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Mayor Starrs to approve Resolution 16-06. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 16-10
Resolution Instituting A fee For Duplicate Tax Sale Certificate
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Farber and seconded by Committeeman Mathez to approve Resolution 16-10. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 16-12
Resolution Designating Newspapers For Receipt Of Open Public Meeting Notices
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to approve Resolution 16-12 with the addition that the Township Committee will designate which paper to advertise ordinances or requests for proposals. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 16-14
Resolution Authorizing The Knowlton Township Land Use Secretary To
Transfer Outdated Escrow Balances Into the Knowlton Township Escrow Account
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Cuntala and seconded by Committeeman Farber to approve Resolution 16-14. Committeeman Mathez will contact the land use secretary to remove Brennen from the list and any other account holders determined to be locatable. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – abstain, Starrs – yes.

Gypsy Moth Spray

Committeeman Farber reported he will attend the January 13th meeting in Morristown.

OLD BUSINESS:

Exterminator Service

Township Committeeman Mathez suggested that authorization be given to the municipal clerk to use the least harmful method of pest control in the municipal building. Township Committee members were in agreement.

Draft Unfit Building Ordinance

Mayor Starrs explained the NJ state construction code official doesn't want to have enforcement duties for the ordinance. She reported that Mr. Cushing suggested the duties be assigned to the township engineer.

Committeeman Farber requested time to study the two versions of the ordinance. He stated the Township Committee did not pass the ordinance in the past. Committeeman Mathez stated he agrees that there were concerns in the past and the ordinance should be studied carefully.

Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, explained the construction code official determines a building is unfit via a letter. Mr. Rodman would hold a hearing to determine the outcome of the structure. Committeeman Farber stated the process could become very costly. Mr. Rodman agreed. Township Committee members were in agreement to carry the matter to the January 28th meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Office Keys

A request was made for the municipal clerk to give office keys to the office manager. The municipal clerk stated she would comply, but was uncomfortable doing so because she is responsible for the records in the office. If others have access to the office, security and/or confidentiality issues could be compromised.

Mason Dump Truck

Discussion took place regarding the totaled dump truck. Mayor Starrs reported she would like to appeal the insurance reimbursement because a \$4,000 repair to the hydraulic system was made a week before the truck was totaled. Mayor Starrs will follow up. Township Committee members were in agreement to purchase the truck back from the insurance carrier.

Engineer Rodman recommended the Township obtain official estimates to repair the truck. Mayor Starrs stated the DPW Supervisor requested to purchase a new truck. She stated \$150,000 was allocated in 2015.

Township Committee members were in agreement to use the \$150,000 allocated in 2015 to purchase a new dump truck in 2016.

Engineer Rodman reviewed potential bidders for snow plowing. Committeewoman Shipps reported that Ken from A-Tech is interested in snow plowing. Engineer Rodman stated he will obtain verbal quotes and suggested that the mayor be authorized to award the contract to the lowest bidder. A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to authorize Mayor Starrs to award the snow plowing contract to the lowest responsible bidder. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes. Starrs – yes.

Committeeman Farber asked if the township has looked into leasing. He also suggested contracting or a shared service with Blairstown as a cost savings measure. Committeeman Farber will contact Blairstown officials.

2016 Goals

Mayor Starrs identified codification of ordinances as a top priority. Also identified were establishing on-line general code, amending the sign ordinance, addressing collapsing structures, renegotiating court contracts and utilizing 622 Route 94 as objectives in 2016.

Committeewoman Shipps stated she will contact the zoning officer regarding a property in disrepair on Warrington Road. Committeeman Mathez asked if the township has received any complaints from the public about the property. Committeewoman Shipps responded no.

Committeeman Farber stated the septic permit has been approved by Warren County Health Department for 622 Route 94. He reported there is a grey area regarding the use of the residence as COAH units. Committeeman Mathez suggested having the COAH administrator make a determination.

Staff Meeting

Mayor Starrs stated she plans to hold a staff meeting to review staff goals. The municipal clerk reported the office has been understaffed for a long time. She stated additional help is needed to keep up with the workload.

Subcommittee Appointments

Township Committee members were in agreement to keep subcommittee appointment the same as in 2015.

Engineer Report

Ted Rodman, Township Engineer reported a spill was identified at the Route 46 Shell station. The fire company and Warren County HAZMAT responded. Mr. Rodman explained the DPW supervisor was repairing a catch basin when he discovered diesel fuel had overflowed in the catch basin. Committeeman Farber asked if the station was required to have an oil separator. Engineer Rodman said no.

Mr. Rodman reported the NJDEP is handling the matter. He will forward an e-mail report to the committee. He is working with the NJDOT to see if it is possible for them to help with the cost of repair of the drain.

Mr. Rodman also reported he reviewed the septic ordinance. Joe Milkulka, C&P Engineering, will attend the next township committee meeting. Mayor Starrs will ask Pete Summers, Warren County Health Department to attend the next meeting also.

Committeeman Farber stated the terms of the ordinance will add unnecessary expense for home owners.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Pam Russweiler, Columbia, stated she received a letter from a Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission attorney. The letter advised her request for information was not specific enough. She also reported she called the county for blueprints for Decatur Street between Locust and Ward Streets. The county reported no blueprints are available and ownership is unknown. Warren County stated they do not own the catch basin in front of the Russweiler property.

Mayor Starrs reported she talked to Debbie Hirt, NJDOT. Mayor Starrs stated Debbie Hirt's office will create maps where jurisdictions start and end. Committeeman Farber stated there may still be a problem with ownership of drains.

Mayor Starrs stated she spoke to the head of NJDEP water quality who agreed to send a representative to a township meeting. Two representatives will be in Knowlton on Wednesday and Thursday and will also check the drain in front of the Russweiler property. Mrs. Russweiler stated it is the same kind of drain as on the ramp going to Portland.

Committeeman Mathez asked Mrs. Russweiler if the channel behind the Valentine property filled with water during the last rain. Mrs. Russweiler responded no.

Ted Rodman reported he tried to get a copy of drainage documentation from the county. The county said they could not provide the documents. Mrs. Russweiler asked who owns Decatur Street. Mayor Starrs responded it is unclear at this time.

Committeeman Mathez said a possible solution would be to put in sewer and water systems in Columbia. Committeeman Farber stated many residents outside Columbia have the same problems. Mr. Russweiler stated another solution could be to dig deeper wells. He asked for the test results from the nursing home. Mayor Starrs said it can be tracked because the water is tested regularly.

Discussion took place regarding salt reaching down into deeper wells. Committeeman Farber stated different casings are used now than in earlier times.

There was no further public comment.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Patton
Municipal Clerk

