

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

**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
April 23, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held at the Knowlton Municipal Building. Present were Mayor Starrs, Deputy Mayor Cuntala and Township Committee Member Mathez, Farber and Shippis. Also present was Christine Rolef, CFO. The minutes were recorded by Lisa Patton, Municipal Clerk.

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 by Mayor Starrs at 7:10 pm with a salute to the flag and roll call.

PRESENTATION:

Sarah Shoemaker, Warren County Health Department

Ms. Shoemaker reviewed the Mayor's Wellness Campaign program. She reported that \$100.00 contributions will be made to municipalities and schools promoting healthy events. Mayor Starrs asked if the funds could be utilized for installation of bike racks. Ms. Shoemaker said they would need to be installed in blacktop or concrete. Mayor Starrs will follow up.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Steve Agin, Delaware, reviewed his concerns with the NJDOT rock mitigation project along Route 46 and the Gulf station lighting on Route 46.

Mayor Starrs reported a violation notice was issued to the Gulf station. They will apply for a variance through the Board of Adjustment. Mr. Agin will follow up with the zoning officer.

Mr. Agin cited safety concerns with the Route 46 rock mitigation project. He stated the crane overhangs traffic lanes at times. Mayor Starrs noted the Township has not received a report from Mr. Agin outlining concerns with the project. Mr. Agin said the report is being prepared. Mayor Starrs said the Township would be willing to support opposition to the project if there is a plan going forward.

Mr. Agin asked if the Township receives progress reports on the project. Township Committee members responded no. Mr. Agin stated he will submit a report of safety concerns and see what response is forthcoming from the Township Committee.

RESOLUTIONS:

**Resolution 15-43
Resolution Approving Payment Of Vouchers
(copy attached)**

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-43 with the exception of the following vouchers: municipal court digital recorder, recreation site fence and Hawk Mountain Tree Service. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – absent, Shippis – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 15-44
Resolution Petitioning The Director Of The Division Of Local Government Services
For Approval Of A Delayed Introduction Of The 2015 Knowlton Township Municipal Budget
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Committeewoman Shipps to approve Resolution 15-44. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – absent, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Resolution 15-45
Resolution Approving Introduction of 2015 Municipal Budget
(copy attached)

Christine Rolef, CFO, reviewed the 2015 Municipal Budget. She reported there is currently an anticipated surplus of \$917,000.00. The overall budget has been decreased by \$140,027.00.

Discussion took place regarding the tax rate. Bob McNinch, Vail Road, noted the tax increase of .08 and asked the Township Committee to consider a flat tax rate in 2015. Township Committee members present were in agreement to keep the tax rate flat. The CFO will make adjustments to the budget which will be presented again for introduction at the May 11, 2015 Township Committee meeting.

Resolution 15-46
Resolution Petitioning The Director Of The Division Of Local Government Services That The 2015 Local Municipal Budget Include A Special Item Of Revenue Under The Heading Of “Special Items Of General Revenue Anticipated With Prior Written Consent Of Director Of Local Government Services – Other Special Items: Cell Tower, Hotel Tax and Capital Fund Balance
(copy attached)

Township Committee members present were in agreement to table Resolution 15-46.

Resolution 15-47
Resolution Approving Ramsaysburg Change Order
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-47. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – absent, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes

Resolution 15-48
Resolution Approving Hunter’s Lodger NJABC Special Affairs Permit
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to approve Resolution 15-48 conditioned upon the Mayor’s approval of safety concerns. It was suggested that Fire and Rescue and the State Police should be notified of the event. The Township Committee also cited concerns with hours of operation and adequate parking. The motion was seconded by Mayor Starrs. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – absent, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Voltaix

Mayor Starrs reported she attends Voltaix meetings. Discussion is taking place regarding making the Portland property a research and development site. Mayor Starrs will keep abreast of further developments.

New Jersey State Police

Mayor Starrs stated she attended a mayors meeting with State Police and would like to sponsor a meeting with the State Police in Knowlton Township. Mayor Starrs also reported the State Police will hire civilians to man the Route 80 weigh station.

Road Salt

Mayor Starrs reported the County DPW now uses cranberry juice to offset the high cost cost and environmental issues with salt usage. Deputy Mayor Cuntala reported Frelinghuysen uses grits mixed with salt. Committeeman Mathez suggested that the DPW Supervisor provide a report of ways to lower salt usage.

Mr. Clifford asked Howard Cowell, prior DPW Supervisor, how salt usage was handled in the past. Mr. Cowell stated salt was cost prohibitive years ago and was mixed with grits for economy. Mayor Starrs asked if grits clog the road drains. Mr. Cowell stated it is not a problem since the roads are swept in the spring.

Committeewoman Shipps stated Station Road was patched with stone. She thought the road was going to be fully paved. Deputy Mayor Cuntala will follow up.

COAH

Township Committee members present reviewed the Maser proposal for preparation of a declaratory judgement statement and plan.

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to conditionally approve the proposal giving the mayor authority to negotiate a price reduction with the planner. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Discussion also took place regarding COAH rental credits. The municipal clerk will contact the COAH administrator regarding 622 Route 94 and Hunters Lodge.

Anderson Farm Preservation

Committeeman Mathez reported the Anderson Farm was preserved in April.

NEW BUSINESS:

FEMA FMA Grant Application

Mayor Starrs reviewed a letter received from Warren County Public Safety announcing a joint Warren/Hunterdon County application for Flood Mitigation Assistance funding. The grant would provide for 100% of the acquisition cost of severely repetitively flooded properties. The properties would become municipal open space and the municipality would maintain the lots.

Committeeman Mathez stated Knowlton previously did not have enough properties to qualify for acquisition funding.

John Sikora, Willow Lane, stated he raised his home with FEMA assistance. It took two years to get a certificate of occupancy after the last flood.

Steve Agin, Ann Street, Delaware, asked if the township maintains the properties in perpetuity. Mayor Starrs stated the time length is 100 years. Mr. Agin also asked if the funds only apply to residences. Mayor Starrs said yes.

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of neighbors acquiring adjoining properties. A meeting sponsored by Warren County Emergency Management will take place on May 13th at 7:00 pm at the Harmony Township municipal building.

Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, cited concern with losing retables. He said it is only fair to let residents know that retables will drop. Committeeman Mathez explained that 60 – 70% of residential retables go to school taxes. Mr. Clifford stated government buy outs are not a good thing.

Lawn Mowing

Discussion took place regarding lawn mowing at the municipal building, 622 Route 94, Ramsaysburg, the school and the area by the walking bridge in Columbia. Township Committee members present were in agreement to have Mr. Sikora begin mowing the areas next week.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no further public comment.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm by Mayor Starrs. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Patton
Municipal Clerk

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