

**MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP  
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
Public Session Meeting Minutes  
April 22, 2021**

The meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held on this date at the Knowlton Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey. This meeting was held by electronic means via ZOOM as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and various executive orders in connection with same and was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mayor Starrs.

Mayor Starrs led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Starrs read the following statements “This meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: P: 1975, Chapter 231, noting that notice of all regularly scheduled meetings has been published in the *New Jersey Herald* and/or the *Star Gazette* as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk’s office.”

**Open Public Meetings Act:**

This meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: P: 1975, Chapter 231, noting that notice of all regularly scheduled meetings has been published in the *New Jersey Herald* and/or *Star Gazette* as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk’s office.

**ELECTRONIC MEETING STATEMENT:**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on in-person public gatherings by executive orders of the Governor of New Jersey, meetings of the Knowlton Township Committee will be held remotely via Zoom. The Zoom platform allows for members of the public to participate via computer, mobile device, or telephone. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.5(g): Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing a revised annual notice in the two official newspapers designated by the Township, posting such notice on the door of the municipal building, and posting such notice on the municipal website. Such notice specified the time of this meeting and provided instructions on how to access the meeting remotely.

The following is an explanation of the procedures and requirements for making public comment as required by N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(h).

Please keep yourself muted until the meeting moderator requests that you unmute yourself. The Township reserves the right to mute or remove disruptive meeting participants after an initial warning. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity.

Comments will be accepted in writing. Written comments must be no more than 450 words and must include your name and address. This equates to about 3 minutes of speaking, which is the amount of time allowed for each public comment. Such comments will be read into the record at the appropriate time. However, please be advised that the Township reserves the right to summarize duplicative comments consistent with N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(f). Comments can be emailed by 3:00 p.m. the day of

the meeting to: [Knowltonpubliccomments@knowlton-nj.com](mailto:Knowltonpubliccomments@knowlton-nj.com). Written comments may also be submitted via mail or dropped off at the municipal building by such day and time.

Comments will also be accepted during the appropriate times of the meeting via Zoom. If you wish to make a comment during the meeting please use the “raise hand” button on your screen if you are signed in via Zoom. If you are accessing the meeting via telephone, please hit \*9 and the meeting moderator will call on you and identify you by the last few digits of your phone number. You can press \*6 to unmute yourself. Please state your name and address before beginning your comment. As always, comments are limited to three minutes per person and there will be two comment sessions during the meeting.

Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded.

### **Roll Call**

**Cuntala--yes, Mazza- absent, Shipps--yes, Van Horn-yes, Starrs—yes**

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve to go into Executive Session at 7:04 pm.**

### **2021-46 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session**

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act; N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., declares it to be the public policy of the State to insure the right of citizens to have adequate advance notice of and the right to attend meetings of public bodies at which business affecting the public is discussed or acted upon; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act also recognized exceptions to the right of the public to attend portions of such meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee find it necessary to conduct an executive session closed to the public as permitted by the N.J.S.A. 40:4-12; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee will reconvene in public session at the conclusion of the executive session;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Knowlton Township, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that they will conduct an executive session to discuss the following topic (s) as permitted by N.J.S.A. 40:4-12:

- A. Personnel
- B. Attorney Advice/ Potential Litigation

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Committee hereby declare that their

discussion of the subject (s) identified above may be made public at a time when the Township Attorney advises them that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the Township or any other entity with respect to said discussion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Committee, for the reasons set forth above, hereby declare that the public is excluded from the portion of the meeting during which the above discussion shall take place.

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve to return to Public Session at 7:47 pm.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tara Mezzanotte shared a letter written by Pennsylvania Congresswoman Susan Wild and Senator Bob Casey. Mrs. Mezzanotte read the key points which was the goal to increase public safety be investigated and that the community members be given an opportunity to voice their input regarding the project.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Animal Control Officer - Alan DeCarolis -was not available to attend this meeting so Deputy Mayor Shipp explained that ACO DeCarolis would like the township to consider passing ordinance that requires Knowlton Township Tax payers who own animals must reside in Knowlton Township. There have bee a few situations where pets have been left on a property or even home and the owners of the pet reside elsewhere leaving them with no food or water.

Attorney Parikh looked into this situation and had some concerns especially under the The Right to Farm Act. Attorney Parikh emailed Mayor Starrs a statute regarding disorderly person which included not caring of pets which may be used for enforcement.

**PROCLAMATION**

**Older American Month May 2021**

Whereas, the month of May is traditionally designated Older Americans Month by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and

Whereas, the theme for Older Americans Month 2021 is “Communities of Strength”, which highlights the strengths of older adults and the aging network, with special emphasis on the power of connection and engagement in building strong communities.

Whereas, Knowlton Township includes countless older Americans who enrich and strengthen our community; and

Whereas, Knowlton Township is committed to engaging and supporting older adults, their families, and

caregivers; and

Whereas, we acknowledge the importance of taking part in activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being—no matter your age; and

Whereas, Knowlton Township can enrich the lives of individuals of *every age* by:

- promoting home- and community-based services that support independent living;
- involving older adults in community planning, events, and other activities; and
- providing opportunities for older adults to work, volunteer, learn, lead, and mentor.

Now therefore, the Township Committee of Knowlton Township do hereby proclaim May 2021 to be Older Americans Month. Residents are encouraged to take time during this month to acknowledge and recognize older adults as vital members of our community.

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried approve to have Mayor Starrs sign the Proclamation Older Month May 2021.**

## **ORDINANCES**

### **INTRODUCTIONS:**

#### **2021-03- An Ordinance Amending Section of the Township of Knowlton Code Regarding Use of Columbia Beach-**

Discussion took place regarding this ordinance. Attorney Parikh stated that a cost needs to be added for the permits for the campground vans. Committee agreed to \$500 per van which entitles them to an x number of badges. Resident requiring a badge to launch a water craft will be \$20.00. It was also discussed to prohibit motorized vehicles. Attorney Parikh will make the changes and the ordinance should be ready for introduction at the next township meeting.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **2021-47- A Resolution of Knowlton Township Authorizing the Purchase of Electricity Supply Services for Public Use of and Online Auction Website**

**WHEREAS**, the Knowlton Township has determined to move forward with the EMEX Reverse Auction in order procure electricity for the and Knowlton Township

**WHEREAS**, the Local Unit Technology Pilot Program and Study Act (P.L. 2001, c. 30) (the “Act”) authorizes the purchase of electricity supply service for public use through the use of an online auction service; and

**WHEREAS**, the Knowlton Township will utilize the online auction services of EMEX, LLC, an approved vendor pursuant to the Act, waiver number EMEX LLC-1, located at [www.energymarketexchange.com](http://www.energymarketexchange.com); and

**WHEREAS**, EMEX, LLC is compensated for all services rendered through the participating supplier that a contract is awarded to; and

**WHEREAS**, the auction will be conducted pursuant to the Act; and be it

**RESOLVED**, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Knowlton Township Clerk: [Major Energy]; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Knowlton Township Committee of the Knowlton Township is hereby authorized to execute on behalf of the Knowlton Township any electricity contract proffered by the participating supplier that submits the winning bid in the EMEX Reverse Auction.

**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to approve resolution 2021-47.**

**2021-48 - Authorizing Execution of an Agreement with the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council to Renew-Membership Therein for the Period of October 1, 2021 through September, 20 2026**

**WHEREAS**, the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council (“MCCPC”) was created in 1974 to conduct a voluntary cooperative pricing system with municipalities, boards of educations, and other public bodies located in the County of Morris and adjoining counties; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the MCCPC is to provide substantial savings on various goods and services to its members through the cooperative public bidding process; and

**WHEREAS**, Knowlton Township desires to enter into an Agreement with the MCCPC, which is administered by Randolph Township as Lead Agency, to renew its membership in the MCCPC for the period of October 1, 2021 through September 20, 2026.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Knowlton Township Committee County of Warren, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Township Committee of Knowlton hereby authorizes the execution of an Agreement with the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council with the Township of Randolph as Lead Agency dated October 1, 2021 pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5). Said Agreement is for renewal of membership in the MCCPC for a five (5) year period from October 1, 2021 through September 30,

2026.

2. The Knowlton Township Clerk is hereby directed to submit a copy of this adopted Resolution, along with an executed Agreement, to Randolph Township as Lead Agency of the MCCPC.

3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon final passage according to law.

4. All appropriate Knowlton Township officials are authorized and directed to perform all required acts to affect the purpose of this Resolution.

**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to approve resolution 2021-48.**

### **2021-49 Award Professional Services Contract-DPW Renovation**

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton are desirous of attaining professional services for the DPW Renovations; and,

WHEREAS, there exists a need for Professional Architectural Services

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.) requires that the resolution authorizing the awarding of contracts and appointments for professional services without competitive bidding must be publicly advertises;

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officers Certifies has certified that funds are available thru Ordinance 2021-01:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, that the services Donnelly Architecture, LLC 79 Mount Rascal Road Hackettstown, NJ 07840 be retained at a cost not to exceed \$6,850:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution and contract is available for public inspection in the office of the Municipal Clerk and that this resolution be published in the official newspaper as required by law.

**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala—yes, Mazza-absent, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs--yes resolution 2021-49.**

### **2021-50 Resolution Regarding Quarterly Delinquent Notices on Missed Tax Payments**

WHEREAS, property taxes are due February 1st, May 1st, August 1st and November 1st, with a 10-day grace period; and

WHEREAS, property taxes paid in a timely fashion aid the municipality by creating flexibility with the

fund balance and allowing for a lower reserve for uncollected taxes; and

WHEREAS, property taxes paid in a timely fashion assist residents by allowing them to avoid accruing an 18% late fee; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton's tax collection rate is in danger of falling below 95%; and

WHEREAS, under the advice of township and state professionals, delinquent tax notifications should be sent quarterly.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Township Committee of Knowlton formalizes a policy for the tax collector to issue Delinquent Notices not greater than 30 days past the quarterly due dates on delinquent block and lots over \$1000.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve resolution 2021-50 with the adding \$1000.00 at the end of NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED.

#### **2021-51 Resolution Payment of Vouchers**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, that all claims attached are hereby approved as reasonable and proper claims against the Township of Knowlton.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that approval for payment is hereby given to the Chief Financial Officer to pay said claims, subject to the availability of funds.

**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala—yes, Mazza—absent, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs--yes Resolution 2021-51.**

#### **2021-52 LEAP Implementation Grant**

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has appropriated \$10 million for Shared Services and School District Consolidation Study and Implementation Grants to assist local units with the study, development and implementation of new shared and regional services; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) is tasked with administering these grant funds through the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP); and

WHEREAS, \$2 million in LEAP Implementation Grant funds has been set allocated to support costs associated with school district consolidation studies; and

WHEREAS, Blairstown, Knowlton Township, and Hardwick Township have determined to evaluate

whether North Warren Regional School District, Blairstown School District, Frelinghuysen School District, and Knowlton School District may be able to attain improved educational quality and efficiencies through consolidation or regionalization; and

WHEREAS, a formal study must be undertaken to accomplish this objective; and

WHEREAS, the North Warren Regional School District has agreed to be the lead entity in conducting this study and will submit the application for financial support for this study to DLGS on behalf of all participating units.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Knowlton that Knowlton Township does hereby join with North Warren Regional School District in applying for a LEAP Implementation Grant to support undertaking a feasibility study for regionalization/consolidation.

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve resolution 2021-52.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Marijuana Ordinance**

Discussion continued from last meeting and the committee agreed to opt-out for recreational use of marijuana and to only allow medical use. Attorney Parikh will prepare the ordinance for a later meeting.

**Delaware Beach Ordinance-discussed during ordinance**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Rights of Way and Removal of Diseased Ash Trees**

Mayor Starrs had DPW tag Ash Trees that were in the townships right to send to JCP&L to evaluate them. Attorney Parikh explained to the committee that it is not the townships responsibility to take down trees that are in the townships right a way.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and carried to approve to continue the policy having the residents take down their own trees including in the right of way.

**In Rem Foreclosure on Properties Where the Total Taxes Owed Far Exceeds the Assessed Value**

Mayor Starrs explained that a property that was agreed to go up for foreclosure has thousands of dollars owed on it for back taxes and is a small lot. Mayor Starrs discovered that are a few small lot properties that have thousands of dollars of back taxes. Attorney Parikh said that the township can foreclose on the properties, forgive the back taxes, and then sell it. Mayor Starrs explained that if the property were sold there would not be a profit on it but it would be taken off the tax books. Mayor Starrs will gather a list of properties with this scenario and present it to the committee at a later meeting.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Congressman Gottheimer reached out to Mayor Starrs to see if he could invite Governor Murphy to Knowlton Township on May 21, 2021. One of the reasons for Governor Murphy to come to Knowlton to discuss internet. Mayor Starrs will keep the committee up to date on the details of his visit.

Committeewomen Cuntala told the committee that Recreation Supervisor Denis Lembeck met with the Township Engineers at tunnel field and it was suggested to redo the basketball court, walking path, and tennis court to apply for the recreational grant that was discussed at the last meeting.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

1. February 25, 2021 Public Session Meeting Minutes  
**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to approve February 25, 2021 Public Session Meeting Minutes.**
2. March 8, 2021 Executive Session Meeting Minutes  
**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Shipps and carried to approve March 8, 2021 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.**
3. March 8, 2021 Public Session Meeting Minutes  
**Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to approve March 8, 2021 Public Session Meeting Minutes.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting at 9:12 p.m.