

**MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP  
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
Public Session Meeting Minutes  
April 23, 2020**

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.”

**ELECTRONIC MEETING STATEMENT:**

In addition, as a result of the State of Emergency issued by Governor Murphy and the various executive orders limiting social gatherings, the Township has provided a link and dial-in number for residents to participate in, or listen to, this meeting electronically. The public will be able to participate and provide comment during the public comment section of the meeting. In addition, residents have been encouraged to submit any additional comments via email. Those emails will be read into the record during the public portion of the meeting.

**Roll Call**

Present: Committeewoman Cuntala, Committeeman McNinch, Deputy Mayor Shipps, Committeeman Van Horn, and Mayor Starrs.

Also present was Township Auditor John Mooney, Township Engineer Ted Rodman and Township Attorney Leslie Parikh

**PUBLIC COMMENT**—Clerk Shipps asked each member of the public (who appear as phone numbers or names) individually for comments, but there were none.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**DPW March Report**

Committeewoman Cuntala read Knowlton DPW March report prepared by DPW Supervisor Brian Peck. In response to Covid-19 and the Governor’s Executive Order, on 3/19 Knowlton Township Public Works employees started a staggered start and stop schedule and were assigned daily tasks that would ensure separation while being productive and efficient:

- Tree trimming, tree removal, and brush cutting completed on Linaberry and Rich roads

- Brush cutting around Route 80 bridge on Cook Road Fallen tree on Starlite Hill Road was cut up and removed
- Marker posts were collected, cleaned, and put away for the season
- Tow broom was serviced, and flat tire replaced
- Started street sweeping and cleaning intersections (tow broom broke three days into sweeping and we are awaiting parts)
- Cleaned up junk that was left on the side of Mount Pleasant Road
- Flail mowing on Linaberry and Limekiln roads completed
- Three drainage ditches on Linaberry Road were cleared of dirt and debris that had accumulated over the years.

Mayor Starrs also said that the DPW workers have started repairs on Hemlock Road, which would qualify as an essential construction job, so they are all working together there.

### **Township Engineer Ted Rodman**

Mr. Rodman explained that the application for the overlaying of Linaberry Rd. has been submitted to NJDOT for state aid.

Bruglar Road: Mr. Rodman explained an ongoing problem that Bruglar Road has had with trucks going on to the road and damaging the historic bridge. Mayor Starrs explained that Warren County DPW saw the damages and were going to submit the damages including the guiderail to their insurance. Mayor Starrs asked about sending a problem statement to NJDOT requesting more signs before Bruglar Rd.

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve to have Mr. Rodman submit a problem statement to NJDOT for signage along 94 before turning on to Bruglar Road.

Discussion took place regarding the spur on Bruglar Road, which upon attorney advice it is up to the property owner of the spur to contact NJDOT and take the spur out. The Township does not own the spur.

Soil Importation on Route 46– NJDEP has issued a violation for the gas station property owner across from Knowlton Elementary School. Mayor Starrs asked Attorney Parikh what role the township has in it. Attorney Parikh offered to reach out to NJDEP. NJDEP stated they received Knowlton’s soil importation ordinance and will take it into consideration in the violation. Committeeman McNinch commented that the township ordinance is for importation of soil. This case soil was being transferred from an owner’s property to other part of their property. Attorney Parikh will look at the ordinance.

The hole discovered under Route 80 is in Hardwick Township according to DPW Supervisor Brian Peck. Committeeman Van Horn explained that Mr. Peck went by the mileage markers.

## **ORDINANCES**

### **Introduction:**

#### **2020-03 Calendar Year 2020 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank**

WHEREAS, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget to 2.5% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton in the County of Warren finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2020 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee hereby determines that a 3.5% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$55,107.22 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

WHEREAS the Township Committee hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, in the County of Warren, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that, in the CY 2020 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of Knowlton shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$55,107.22 and that the CY 2020 municipal budget for the Township of Knowlton be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that any that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

**Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala Yes, McNinch—yes, Shipp—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes, Ordinance 2020-03.**

## **RESOLUTIONS**

**2020-54- Resolution Designation a Secondary Official Newspaper of Knowlton Township**

WHEREAS, the Star Gazette has sent notification to all municipal advertisers that they will cease publication as of March 31, 2020 and, consequently, no more legal advertisements will be run in this publication; and,

WHEREAS, as designated by the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6), a municipality has certain obligations to publish legal advertisements in order to make the public and the press aware of meetings and other municipal business; and,

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton must now designate a secondary newspaper, so that residents and the press may be able to locate legal advertisements for the Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Knowlton Township Committee, that if it is necessary to advertise in a second newspaper, the township will publish in the Thursday edition of the Express Times, Warren County, NJ Zoned edition.

**Motion made by Committeeman McNinch, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve Resolution 2020-54.**

**2020-55- Self- Examination of Budget Resolution**

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-78b has authorized the Local Finance Board to adopt rules that permit municipalities in sound fiscal condition to assume the responsibility, normally granted to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, of conducting the annual budget examination; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:30-7 was adopted by the Local Finance Board on February 11, 1997; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-7.2 through 7.5, the Township of Knowlton has been declared eligible to participate in the program by the Division of Local Government Services, and the Chief Financial Officer has determined that the local government meets the necessary conditions to participate in the program for the 2020 budget year.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the governing body of the Township of Knowlton that in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:30-7.6a & 7.6b and based upon the Chief Financial Officer's certification, the governing body has found the budget has met the following requirements:

1. That with reference to the following items, the amounts have been calculated pursuant to law and appropriated as such in the budget:
  - a. Payment of interest and debt redemption charges
  - b. Deferred charges and statutory expenditures
  - c. Cash deficit of preceding year
  - d. Reserve for uncollected taxes

- e. Other reserves and non-disbursement items
  - f. Any inclusions of amounts required for school purposes.
2. That the provisions relating to limitation on increases of appropriations pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.2 and appropriations for exceptions to limits on appropriations found at N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.3 et seq., are fully met (complies with CAP law).
3. That the budget is in such form, arrangement, and content as required by the Local Budget Law and N.J.A.C. 5:30-4 and 5:30-5.
4. That pursuant to the Local Budget Law:
- a. All estimates of revenue are reasonable, accurate and correctly stated,
  - b. Items of appropriation are properly set forth
  - c. In itemization, form, arrangement, and content, the budget will permit the exercise of the comptroller function within the municipality.
5. The budget and associated amendments have been introduced and publicly advertised in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Budget Law, except that failure to meet the deadlines of N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5 shall not prevent such certification.
6. That all other applicable statutory requirements have been fulfilled.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution will be forwarded to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services upon adoption.

**Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Mayor Starrs and carried to approve Resolution 2020-55.**

**2020-56- Resolution Imploring the Governors of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as Well as the Boards of Trustees of Lehigh Valley Health Network to Promulgate Updated Protocols Regarding Obstetrical Labor, Delivery and Visitations**

WHEREAS, to witness the birth of a child is our best opportunity “to experience the meaning of the word miracle” (Paul Carvel); and

WHEREAS, one of the greatest joys experienced by a spouse is being able to participate in the birth of and have that initial bonding with a new baby; and

WHEREAS, many Warren County couples have brought it to the attention of the Board of Chosen Freeholders that Lehigh Valley Health Network have imposed a ban on New Jersey visitors, including for maternity visits; and

WHEREAS, this ban is particularly discriminatory against Warren County couples, as neither hospital in Warren County offers maternity services, leaving expectant parents no choice but to use medical facilities located outside of the County; and

WHEREAS, Warren County's number of COVID-19 infections is far fewer than the amount reported in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, where Lehigh Valley Health Network maternity facilities are located, so a ban on family members assisting in the birth of a baby is an unnecessary and heavy-handed approach not supported by the facts; and

WHEREAS, the New York Department of Health has updated specific guidelines for obstetrical and pediatric settings providing for familial support in labor and delivery as well as the immediate postpartum period if the patient so desires; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli has issued an order to hospitals requiring them to allow one designated support person to be with the expectant mother, deeming such support as essential to patient care throughout labor, delivery, and the immediate postpartum period; and

WHEREAS, the Knowlton Township Committee shares the sentiment that a child's birth is a special moment and should be celebrated; and

WHEREAS, the delivery of a baby without a spouse or any family members present creates additional stress and anxiety, which could impact delivery; and

WHEREAS, an amended order on visitation, being cognizant of symptoms of COVID-19 and protocols addressing the health, safety and welfare of all patients and staff, should be implemented to ensure a practical, prudent, and reasonable policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren requests that Gov. Phil Murphy of the State of New Jersey and Gov. Tom Wolf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as the respective boards of trustees of Lehigh Valley Health Network, modify the policies for labor and delivery for the birth of a child to permit participation by designated family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be sent to Gov. Murphy, Gov. Wolf, and to the respective boards of trustees of St. Luke's University Hospital Network and the Lehigh Valley Health Network.

**Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Mayor Starrs and carried to approve by Resolution 2020-56 taking out St. Luke's language deleted who have already changed their policies.**

**2020-57- Resolution Requesting the State and Federal Governments to Immediately Allocate Critically Needed Emergency and Economic Funding to the County of Warren for the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

WHEREAS, in response to the deadly COVID-19 (“Corona Virus”) pandemic the Federal Government recently enacted several pieces of legislation aimed at reducing the economic impact and protecting public health; and

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (the “CARES Act”) is largest emergency aid package in United States History and provides for over two trillion dollars (\$2,000,000,000,000) in emergency and economic aid and allocates billions of dollars of relief to individuals, businesses, the health care system and state, county and local governments; and

WHEREAS, on April 2, 2020, the United States Senators for the State of New Jersey, Robert Menendez and Cory Booker, announced the release of the first wave of Federal funding pursuant to the CARES Act under which New Jersey would receive a combined total in excess of eighty-two million dollars (\$82,000,000) in State and local funding and of which fifteen million seven-hundred thousand dollars (\$15,700,000) in discretionary funding was allocated directly to the State Government; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding that Northern New Jersey has one of the highest concentrations of confirmed cases in the entire world and is currently considered to be at the epicenter of the national and global emergency caused by the deadly Corona Virus, the County of Warren is only one (1) of four (4) New Jersey Counties not to receive any federal funding; and

WHEREAS, while several other counties within the State with significantly less Corona Virus cases received federal aid, the taxpayers and residents of Warren County and a few other counties have been marginalized, ignored and left to carry the heavy burden and cost of responding to the most significant national emergency that has faced this Country since World War 2 alone and without the benefit of critically needed federal and state assistance; and

WHEREAS, unlike in other parts of the State where testing centers have been opened with the help of State or Federal assistance, Warren County, with the assistance of St. Luke’s Hospital and local municipalities, took action to open a testing center on its own initiative and funded solely by the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, imploring Federal and State Government to take notice of the significant impact on residents and taxpayers of Warren County caused by the Corona Virus epidemic and to take immediate action to correct and address the inequities caused by the current allocation of State and Federal and provide the necessary funding and resources to the County of Warren and municipalities within the County to protect the health and safety of the public.

**Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Mayor Starrs and carried to approve Resolution 2020-57.**

**2020-58- Resolution Temporarily Suspending Recreation Department Activities and Providing for A Temporary Furlough of Certain Recreation Department Employees Due to COVID-19**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 103, Governor Phil Murphy declared that a Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency exist in the State of New Jersey as a result of an outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”), which is a contagious, and at times fatal, respiratory disease; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 107, Governor Phil Murphy also ordered that all public gatherings be cancelled until further notice; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 108, Governor Phil Murphy ordered that all State Parks and Forests and county parks must close to the public; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020 Knowlton Township (the “Township”) declared that a local public health emergency and state of emergency exist in the Township; and

WHEREAS, due to the foregoing and the risk to the public associated with the spread of COVID-19, the Township has made the decision to close most recreation facilities and all Recreation Department activities associated with same until such time as the threat of spread has subsided; and

WHEREAS, the closure of the activities supports the difficult decision to temporarily furlough Recreation Department employees; and

WHEREAS, the temporary furlough is also necessary to minimize the financial impact due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Governing Body of the Township of Knowlton hereby authorizes the temporary furlough of employees within the Recreation Department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the closure and furlough is effective as of the date of this resolution and remains in effect until such time as the Governing Body (in consultation with the OEM coordinator) determines is appropriate.

**Motion Made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman Cuntala and carried to approve Resolution 2020-58.**

**2020-59- Brookhollow Winery Cost Share Resolution**

WHEREAS, the State Agriculture Development Committee [SADC] certified a market value [CMV] of \$18,000 per acre for the farmland preservation development easement on block 10, lot 6, a portion of Brookhollow Winery, located at the corner of Stark Road and Route 94 in Knowlton Township. The lot is approximately 16 acres and will have one non-severable exception, of approximately 3.5 acres. The

farm is contained in Warren County's Planning Incentive Grant Program;

WHEREAS, the cost share from the state is estimated to be \$10,800 per acre: and

WHEREAS, based on the Township's application, the County of Warren will provide a cost share of approximately \$3,600/acre for the acquisition of said development easement, holding title to such development easement; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, in the County of Warren, as follows:

1. The acquisition of the development easement on Brookhollow Winery [Block 10, Lot 6] is approved subject to available funds.
2. The Township commits to the funding of the acquisition of said development easement on Brookhollow Winery [Block 10, Lot 6] of \$3,600/acre or approximately \$45,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by said Township Committee that the Municipal Clerk of this Township is directed to forward to the Warren County Agriculture Development Board and the State Agriculture Development Committee certified copies of this Resolution as requested and required.

**Motion made by Mayor Starrs second by Committeeman McNinch and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala--yes, McNinch--yes, Shipps--yes, Van Horn--yes, Starrs--yes to Resolution 2020-59.**

**2020-60- Resolution to Approve the Submission of a 2020 Grant Application and Execution of a Grant Contract with the "State Agriculture Development Committee"**

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township has a "Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan" dated May, 2008 per N.J.S.A. 4:1C-43.1, and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.4 (a) and (b) set forth the minimum required components for a County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan; and

WHEREAS, on July 25, 2019, the State Agriculture Development Committee approved revised guidelines which supplement N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.4 (a) and (b) and provide uniform standards for the development of County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plans; and

WHEREAS, proposed amendments to the County PIG regulations at N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.4 (c) require counties to reexamine and update the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan at least every ten (10) years and

WHEREAS, the "State Agriculture Development Committee" will grant reimbursement of up to 50% of

eligible costs not to exceed a maximum grant of \$30,000 to assist Municipalities in updating their “Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plans, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of Knowlton formally approves the grant application for the above stated updated plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of Knowlton and that their signatures constitute acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and approve the execution of the grant agreement.

Discussion occurred regarding whether the funds would come out of the Open Space fund or the general funds. Committeeman McNinch will confirm before any funds are spent.

**Motion made by Committeeman McNinch, second by Committeeman Van Horn and carried to approve Resolution 2020-60.**

**2020-61- Resolution for Preparation of Estimated Taxes**

WHEREAS, Governor Philip D. Murphy has declared a state of emergency via Executive Order 103 in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Division of Local Government Services has recommended municipalities prepare to issue estimated property tax bills for 2020; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 3 of P.L. 1994, c. 72 (C.54:4-66.3) provision is made for the issuance of estimated tax bills when the Governing Body has determined that there will be insufficient cash flow to support operations in late July 2020 unless third quarter revenue is received on time; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector and the Chief Financial Officer have reviewed and computed an estimated tax levy in accordance with N.J.S.A. 54: 4-66.3,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of Knowlton Township hereby authorize that:

1. The Tax Collector is directed to prepare, and issue estimated tax bills for the third quarter 2020, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 54: 4-66.2et seq.
2. The entire estimated tax levy for 2020 is hereby set at \$9,413,272.51, with the estimated tax rate being \$3.645.
3. The Tax Collector is authorized to take any additional steps necessary to immediately implement this resolution.

**Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve Resolution 2020-61.**

**2020-62- Resolution Authorizing USDA to Treat a Knowlton Township Owned Property for Spotted Lantern**

WHEREAS, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has reached out to Knowlton Township to approve treatment for Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*), an invasive insect species, on Township-owned Property; and

WHEREAS, the said property is Block 12 Lot 5, 648 Route 94 (DPW Yard);

WHEREAS, the lot will be set with manual traps and *Ailanthus altissima*, or Tree of Heaven, will be treated with triclopyr (a herbicide) or dinotefuran (insecticide), or the chemical equivalent; and

WHEREAS, any chemicals used will be applied by backpack or handheld sprayer only and will be applied only to the Tree of Heaven; and

WHEREAS, the USDA to is required to conduct environmental monitoring and assessment in treated areas to ensure safety; and

WHEREAS, the NJ Department of Agriculture is studying other non-herbicidal and non-pesticidal forms of spotted lanternfly containment but is not currently using them; and

WHEREAS, the Spotted Lanternfly is widespread in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and threatens agriculture, especially the grapes, apple, hops, and hardwood industries.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Knowlton Township Committee does hereby approve for the Mayor to sign the Treatment Release Form

**Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Deputy Mayor Shipps and carried to approve Resolution 2020-62.**

#### **2020-63- Resolution Approving 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 Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala --yes, McNinch--yes, Shipps--yes, Van Horn--yes, Starrs--yes with the exception of the Maser bill which Mayor Starrs will handle.**

## **BUDGET INTRODUCTION**

Township Auditor John Mooney explained the budget for this year which is no tax increase to the residents. Mr. Mooney explained that he is concerned that the tax collection is going to decrease because of residents losing income from COVID-19. He also stated that the state put a freeze on the homestead benefit and he does not know if it will be released.

Deputy Mayor Shipps asked Mr. Mooney to explain Tax Anticipation Note. It's less than a one year note that the Township may need if they do not collect enough in taxes to pay the County and Schools. Mr. Mooney recommends it in case cash flow becomes low. Mr. Mooney explained that if you don't use the Tax Anticipation Note, it just goes away, but if you do use the Tax Anticipation Note, it is just like paying down debt.

Committee agreed to revisit the Tax Anticipation Note at the first meeting in May, once there is a clear picture of how much will be collected for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

**Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala-- yes, McNinch--yes, Shipps--yes, Van Horn--yes, Starrs--yes to the Budget Introduction.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Spring Clean Up Changed to September 21-September 26th**—Clerk Shipps advised the committee that due to COVID-19, the Pollution Control Authority has canceled the original town spring cleanup date. We have rescheduled for September 21-September 26.

**Memorandum of Agreement between the Nature Conservancy and Knowlton Township** –Mayor Starrs explained that the Nature Conservancy has agreed to plant trees at their expense at the 3 FEMA buyout properties along Route 46. Attorney Parikh reviewed the memorandum and explained changes that were made and added a Hold Harmless Agreement.

**Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve for Mayor Starrs to sign memorandum of agreement with Attorney Parikh's changes.**

**Route 80 Rockwall Update**– Mayor Starrs has been working with Congressman Gottheimer on language to assert into the Federal Appropriations Bill that will pull the funding for the Route 80 Rockwall project. Congressman Gottheimer sent the letter to the newspaper which is good news because there is a formal request from Congressman Gottheimer as well as Pennsylvania Congressman Matt Hartwright who is on the Appropriations Committee. The town will not know for several months if the attempt to pull funding on the project works.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Service Electric and Altice USA**– Mayor Starrs explained that Altice is taking over Service Electric and the BPU has to approve it. BPU has requested that the surrounding townships sign off. The mayors of the surrounding townships agreed not to sign anything until they agree on paper to improvements in our towns. Committee agreed Knowlton should not sign.

Mayor Starrs explained that Altice signed an affidavit that Service Electric meet all the municipal requirements have been fulfilled which after reading the contract in 2014. The contract states that the municipal building have free internet which is not the case. Mayor Starrs asked Attorney Parikh how they should handle this. Attorney Parikh suggested speaking to Mayor Starrs in the next few days to get the full background.

**Quote from MSI for New Server**–Clerk Shipps explained that the current server that the township uses it not working correctly. There is a need to get a new server soon. Mayor Starrs asked Clerk Shipps to ask why MSI does not use a cloud-based server. Clerk Shipps will ask and also reach out to other clerks in the county to see who they use.

**Tax Anticipation Notice** -discussed during budget discussion

**CORRESPONDENCE**– No Correspondence

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments. Clerk Shipps read an email from resident Pam Rusweiller regarding Service Electric: “I noticed on the agenda under new business is Service Electric/Altice. I would just like to share my experience..... Since moving into Knowlton in March 2008 I had my phone and internet through Century Link and television with DIRECTV. My service with CL was fine but the speed was very slow for the internet. DirectTV cost was constantly increasing. September 2019 I experienced my TV bill increasing from \$79 to \$179. Per month. Century Link for internet and landline went up to \$98. Per month. Since Service Electric was available at my location I opted for the “triple play” with a faster internet speed, same telephone and tv options at a cost of \$179 - the service from SE is AWFUL!!!! Internet is worse than CL, my landline is pretty much useless, and SE is not helping or resolving my issues. I have found them extremely difficult to work with. I hope when, and if, Altice takes over better service will be provided to residents. I am not sure what is going to be discussed but felt input from users of SE may be helpful.”

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**March 9, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes**–Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to approve March 9, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

**March 9, 2020 Public Session Meeting Minutes**–Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to approve March 9, 2020 Public Session Meeting Minutes.

**March 23, 2020 Public Session Meeting Minutes**– Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve March 23, 2020 Public Session Meeting Minutes.

Committeeman McNinch abstained.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to adjourn tonight's Township meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristin Shipps  
Municipal Clerk