

TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON  
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

**June 13, 2016**

The monthly meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held on this date at the Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey. This meeting was called to order at 7:02PM by the Mayor Adele Starrs, who read the statement that this meeting was being held in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act":

In accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of publication with the Star Gazette and/or the Express-Times, filed in the Municipal Clerk's Office and posted in the Knowlton Municipal Building. Mayor Starrs then led the public in the pledge of allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

**Present:** Committeewoman Kathy Cuntala, Committeeman Ronald Farber, Committeeman Rene Mathez, Committeewoman Debbie Shipps, Mayor Adele Starrs

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** Attorney Richard Cushing, Judith Fisher, Acting Clerk and Township Engineer Ted Rodman

**Executive Session:**

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to adopt the Resolution to go into Closed Session at 7:05PM.

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Pubic Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P. L 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

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

1. The public shall be excluded from that portion of this meeting
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

Personnel: Interviews for New Acting Municipal Clerk

As nearly as can be ascertained, the matter or matters to be discussed at this time will be disclosed to the public when such matters are resolved.

**Time In:** 7:05PM

**Present:** Committeeman Farber and Committeewoman Cuntala, Committeeman Mathez, Mayor Starrs

**Also Present:** Attorney Richard Cushing, Deputy Clerk Doreen Apgar

Let the record reflect that Committeewoman Shipps recused herself from participating in the interviews.

**Time Out:** 8:15PM

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to come out of closed session.

No official action was taken by the Committee at this time. Copies of the minutes will be made available at such time as the Committee determines that there is no harm to the public interest.

**Payment of the Bills**

**A motion** was then made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeeman Cuntala and carried to authorize the payment of the bills in the amount of \$459,257.38.

There was a question on the monthly report from the Security System Company. The monthly charge is \$420, but the report is not detailed enough. After a brief discussion the Committee agreed to keep it the same for now. Also noted was the Committeewoman Shipps has been working on the phone bill and that this month it was down to \$211 saving the Township \$1000.

**Roll Call**

**Ayes:** Committeewoman Cuntala – Y Committeeman Mathez – Y Committeeman Farber – Y Committeewoman Shipps– Y Mayor Starrs – Y

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** None

**Presentation:** Anthony Ardito, Auditor: Review of the Township Audit 2015

The Committee had copies of the 2015 Audit to review along with the Auditor. Mr. Ardito let the Committee know that their surplus for 2015 is \$1,082,477. The 3 areas to look at are 1) collection rate, 2014 was 95.8% for 2015 it was 96.2%, 2) pre-paid school tax and 3) unspent budget, appropriations/reserve. Financially the Township is doing well. Committeeman Mathez asked about surplus, which is usually used to offset Capital projects. Noted was that the Committee dropped the Municipal tax one cent. Next they reviewed the Comments and Recommendations. Mr. Ardito lighted that several of these were from the previous years but that it was better this year. He pointed out that the Tax Collector needs to work on the tax Liens. Many of them are old dating back to before 2000. Research needs to be done to locate the owners and if not, then after 7 years these funds will go back to the State. The Committee discussed possible more hours for the Collector and also giving Doreen 4/6 hours additional to help the Collector. They also talked about several items that involve the Tax Assessor. Committeewoman Shipps and Committeeman Mathez said that they will speak with the Assessor to see what he needs to correct those items.

Mr. Ardito commented that they reviewed the bidding process and the specs for advertising. He assured the Committee that the specifications were properly written.

Mrs. Fisher, Acting Clerk, noted that the Committee will approve the Audit at the June 23, 2016 meeting when they will adopt the resolution and sign the group affidavit that they have reviewed the comments and recommendations as noted in the 2015 audit.

**Public Comment:**

Mr. Michael Laracuate from 18 Ivan Road approached the Committee about having a fireworks display at his location. The date would be July 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9:30pm to 9:45pm. He spoke with the Fire Marshall and in order to do this, the Township need to approve by passing a resolution and Mr. Laracuate would then make application. The Committee asked questions. The owner noted that he has the proper permits, it is not being sponsored by the Lake Association, the display will be over the lake and that he has contacted the neighbors regarding objections. He also provided the Committee with a map of the location and a copy of the necessary homeowners Insurance which is through Liberty Mutual. After a brief discussion, the Committee approved this request.

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve the fireworks display for Michael Laracuenta at 18 Ivan Road and that he make application with the Fire Marshall.

**RESOLUTION 2016-68 In Support of Fireworks Display**

WHEREAS, a fireworks display will be held in Knowlton Township by Michael Laracuenta at 18 Ivan Road, Knowlton Township on July 3, 2016 from 9:30pm to 9:45pm; and

WHEREAS, he will be arranging for the fireworks display; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey requires a resolution of support from the Township Governing Body in order to arrange for an inspection and approval of the fireworks display.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that his resolution serves as a resolution of support for conducting fireworks in Knowlton Township by Michael Laracuenta.

**RESOLUTION**

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve to adopt **Resolution 2016-64**

**Roll Call**

**Ayes:** Committeewoman Cuntala – Y Committeeman Mathez – Y Committeeman Farber – Y Committeewoman Shipp – Y Mayor Starrs – Y

**Nays:** None **Absent:** None

**2016-64 Conforming Employment Status of John Sikora**

WHEREAS, by virtue of the two percent CAP, the Township of Knowlton must constantly strive to find ways to operate more efficiently; and

WHEREAS, Joh Sikora has been a long-time and capable employee, but is not available to work year-round; and

WHEREAS, both the Recreation and Road Departments have need for an employee on a year-round, part-time basis; and

WHEREAS, John Sikora continues to be able to provide services to the Township on Saturdays as Supervisor of the Community Services operation which he has done very successfully.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Township Committee that the Township, with regrets, terminates the part-time, seasonal services of John Sikora for the Road Department and/or Recreation Department because of the Township's need for a year-round employee, but continues the employee status of John Sikora s Community Services Supervisor on Saturdays.

**2016-65 Approving New Jersey Alcoholic Beverage Control Special Affairs Permit for Hunter's Lodge Motel, LLC**

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Shipp and carried to approve **Resolution 2016-65**

WHEREAS, the Hunter's Lodge Special Affairs permit application is complete in all respects, the proper fees have been paid to the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and to the Township of Knowlton; and

WHEREAS, the Licensees are qualified according to all statutory regulatory and local governmental New Jersey Alcoholic Beverage Control laws and regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Body of the Township of Knowlton approves the NJABC Special Affairs Permit for the Hunter's Lodge Motel, LLC to be held on June 25, 2016 at the Hunter's Lodge Field on Route 46, Delaware, New Jersey. Event will run from 12:00pm to 1:00am on that date, with a rain date of June 26, 2016.

**2016-66 Authorizing the Re-Insertion of Minutes**

Committeeman Farber questioned this resolution and minutes. He requested to know where these minutes were found, who found them. Attorney Cushing noted that he had them and that he found them in his litigation file. Committeeman Farber wants additional information on these minutes and times to review before approving the re-insertion of these minutes in the minute book. This Resolution will be held to the June 23, 2016 meeting for re-discussion.

**2016-67 Concerning the Purchase of the Fire Truck**

A motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala, seconded by Committeewoman Shipps and carried to approve **Resolution 2016-67**

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township purchased a used Fire Truck in 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Committee, having obtained assurances from the Clerk that the request for bid was advertised and have retained the fax confirmation showing the request for bid was sent to the newspaper, approved a resolution stating that the request for bid was properly advertised only to find out later that the newspaper, despite having been faxed our request to advertise, did not actually do so; and

WHEREAS, a resident with extensive experience in specifications conclude that the specifications for the fire truck improperly favored one vendor; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee received assurance from professionals indicating the specifications were properly written; and

WHEREAS, these circumstances have led to loss of confidence in the Committee's purchasing process by the resident, who has made accusations of a "cover up" And threatened the Township with litigation; and

WHEREAS, the Township wants to avoid a lawsuit and more important wants to take steps to ensure that problems related to purchasing do not happen again;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton acknowledges the difficulties associated with the purchase of the fire truck and has already taken the following steps to assure that these kinds of problems do not occur again:

Two newspapers will be used to advertise for purchases over \$40,000

An affidavit indicating that an advertisement has been published will be obtained from newspapers

A written report form listing all vendor offers and pertinent information will be available to the public prior to the award of purchases over \$40,000

The CFO and appropriate Committee member will sign off on the report

All Township Professionals and employees concerned with the process have been counseled.

**Roll Call**

**Ayes:** Committeewoman Cuntala – Y Committeeman Mathez – Y Committeeman Farber – Y Committeewoman Shipps – Y Mayor Starrs – Y

**Nays:** None **Absent:** None

**ORDINANCE: 1<sup>st</sup> Reading to Introduce**

A motion was made by Committeeman Farber, seconded by Committeeman Mathez and carried to introduce on first reading Ordinance 2016-09

**2016-09 Authorizing the Sale for Nominal Consideration of an Ambulance to the Knowlton Fire and Rescue**

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton purchased a 1996 ambulance, Ford Van VIN#1FDKE30F3THBB30954 (“Ambulance”) for use by Knowlton Fire and Rescue; and

WHEREAS, the Ambulance has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton has determined that the ambulance is no longer needed for municipal purposes; and

WHEREAS Knowlton Fire and Rescue has agreed to accept the donation of the title to the Ambulance and will use the proceeds from the sale of the Ambulance for the fire and rescue purposes; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:12-21 authorizes a governing body by Ordinance to sell for nominal consideration to certain organizes unneeded personal property without compliance with other laws governing the disposal of personal property by municipalities; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton Fire and Rescue is a type of organization to which unneeded personal property may be sold for a nominal consideration.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. It is hereby authorized that the Ambulance will be sold to Knowlton Fire and Rescue for \$1.00
2. The Ambulance shall be used by Knowlton Fire and Rescue only for volunteer fire and rescue services, or may be sold as appropriate, but may not be used for commercial business, trade or manufacture, and if the Ambulance, or the proceeds from the sale thereof, are not used in accordance with the limitation set forth herein, ownership of the Ambulance, or the proceeds from the sale thereof, shall revert back to the Township of Knowlton.

**NOTICE**

NOTICE is hereby given that the foregoing Ordinance as introduced to pass the first reading at a regular meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton held on June 13, 2016, and then ordered published in accordance with the law. Said Ordinance will be considered for final reading and adoption at a meeting of the Township Committee to be held on July 13, 2016, at 7:00p.m. or as soon thereafter as the Township Committee may hear this Ordinance at the Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey, at which time all persons interested may appear for or against the passage of said Ordinance.

Judith M. Fisher, RMC  
Acting Municipal Clerk

**OLD BUSINESS**

**COAH Update:** Committeeman Mathez updated the Committee on the Fair Share Housing proposal. Attorney Cushing also talked about the proposal that is agreeable with the Fair Share Housing. What’s needed is to have the courts approve it. The Committee asked several questions of the Attorney and Committeeman Mathez. They noted that the impact to the Township was minimal and that the Township’s numbers remained the same.

**23 Decatur Street:** Update

Mayor Starrs reported that she was in Knowlton Court on this issue. They were held in contempt and fined \$2500. Warren County Health Department failed the well and septic and noted that the debris has not been removed. As for the standing water, the Warren County Mosquito Commission noted that the area should be leveled but it is not bad enough to spray at this time.

**St Luke's Contract:** There was a small change made to the contract. Knowlton Rescue would cover the area 3 nights and St. Luke's the remaining 4 nights. If the Squad was not able to cover, then St. Luke's would provide the coverage. The Rescue Squad was agreeable to this change. A motion was then made by Committeeman Farber, seconded by Committeeman Mathez and carried to approve the contract for St; Luke's and the authorize the Mayor to sign.

**Roll Call:**

**Ayes:** Committeewoman Cuntala – Y Committeeman Mathez – Y Committeeman Farber – Y Committeewoman Shipps – Y Mayor Starrs – Y

**Nays:** None **Absent:** None

**Station Road Viaduct:** Update

Mayor Starrs talked about planting plants to hide the graffiti. The DOT would not approve trees but that they gave a preliminary approval for ivy or creepers to be planted; but that they will not pay for this. Mayor Starrs asked the Committee to approve a \$100.00 or less to purchase English Ivy.

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Shipps and carried to purchase English Ivy for \$100 or less. Community Services will be used to plant the Ivy.

**Concrete Ramp:** Quote from Joe Trinca

No quote has been received to date from Mr. Trinca. The Committee did discuss with the Engineer, Mr. Rodman if the ramp to the basement was indeed compliant with ADA regulations. The Engineer suggested that the Construction Official also look at the ramp for compliance.

**Policy for Food Reimbursement** when away at a Conference:

The Committee discussed this request. The township does reimburse for mileage but not meals. IT was suggested that Committeewoman Shipps and Committeewoman Cuntala research this and report back with any suggestions/regulations for the policy manual.

**Cyber Assessment:** The Township Insurance Company has requested the Township's IP address for the entity. The Fund has contracted with Pivot Point Securities to complete an assessment for all its members.

**Roseanne McParland, Court Administrator:** Denied Insurance Claim

Ms. McParland reported that on February 10, 2016 after the court session she went to the Hope Bank to make the night deposit. She noticed then that her driver's side mirror had been keyed. The next day she reported this to the Township Clerk and asked to review the surveillance cameras. The recording was accessible and the service provider was contacted. A service technician was sent out and he found that only 3 of the 4 cameras were operational. This problem was immediately rectified. Ms. McPartland followed the proper protocol and the final

results is the township insurance will not cover the cost to replace her mirror. She has asked the Township to reimburse her the cost of a new mirror of \$517.82. There was a brief committee discussion. Committeewoman Cuntala and Committeeman Farber both asked how this person knew it was Ms. McPartland's vehicle. An establishment of a policy was considered but it was suggested that the court personnel park at the far end of the parking lot when the court is in session.

A motion was made by Committeeman Farber, seconded by Committeeman Mathez and carried to reimbursement Ms. McParland \$517.82 to replace her mirror.

Roll Call:

**Ayes:** Committeeman Mathez – Y Committeeman Farber – Y Committeewoman Shipps – Y Mayor Starrs – Y

**Nays:** Committeewoman Cuntala – N **Absent:** None

**DEP Grant:** Items for Seniors

Mayor Starrs talked to the Committee about several items for the Seniors that can be purchased from this Grant. They also talked about a horseshoe pit. It was decided to talk with the Recreation Coordinator as to where the pit could be placed.

**Contract for the Air Conditioner:** (Iron Man)

The completion date for the installation is July 1, but the contractor noted that he will need additional 3 weeks. He is requesting that the contract date be adjusted to September 21. Noted also was that his contract has not been signed. The Committee did not agree with the extension to September 21. After a brief discussion, they settled with a completion date of September 1<sup>st</sup>. A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to amend the contract to read a completion date of September 1<sup>st</sup> and to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute the same after the contractor signs.

Roll Call:

**Ayes:** Committeewoman Cuntala – Y Committeeman Mathez – Y Committeeman Farber – Y Committeewoman Shipps – Y Mayor Starrs – Y

**Nays:** None **Absent:** None

**Septic System:** Contract

Noted were that several items were still missing and they are the contractor's certification and the proof of Affirmative action. It was then noted that the Affirmative Action was provided. A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez, seconded by Committeeman Farber to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign the contract after the contractor provides the information.

Roll Call:

**Ayes:** Committeewoman Cuntala – Y Committeeman Mathez – Y Committeeman Farber – Y Committeewoman Shipps – Y Mayor Starrs – Y

**Nays:** None **Absent:** None

**150 Vail Road:** Demolition Permit

The Committee discussed what is needed to obtain this permit. The first item is that Township needs to get the homeowner to sign off. Noted was that there is no owner or executor. At this time, the Attorney suggests that the Committee discuss further in Closed Session.

Mayor Starrs reported that she has scheduled a meeting with DOT on June 21 in regards to the repaving of Walnut Road.

**Public Comment:**

There was a discussion on the handicap ramp and ADA compliance.

**Minutes:**

**February 18, 2016**

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve the minutes of February 18, 2016. Noted was that Committeeman Mathez was absent for this meeting.

**Executive Session:**

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to adopt the Resolution to go into Closed Session at 9:20PM.

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

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

1. The public shall be excluded from that portion of this meeting
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:  
150 Vail Road: Potential Litigation

As nearly as can be ascertained, the matter or matters to be discussed at this time will be disclosed to the public when such matters are resolved.

**Time In:** 9:20PM

Present: Committeeman Farber, Committeewoman Cuntala, Committeeman Mathez, Committeewoman Shipp and Mayor Starrs

Also Present: Attorney Richard Cushing, Engineer Ted Rodman

**Time Out:** 10:06PM

A motion was made by Committeewoman Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to come out of closed session.

No official action was taken by the Committee at this time. Copies of the minutes will be made available at such time as the Committee determines that there is no harm to the public interest

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala, seconded by Committeeman Farber to adjourn tonight's meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee at 10:06PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Judith M. Fisher, RMC  
Acting Municipal Clerk