

**MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2019**

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 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Starrs.

Mayor Starrs led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Starrs read the following statement: "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 and/or the Star Ledger as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk's office."

Roll Call

Present: Committeeman McNinch, Deputy Mayor Shipps, Committeeman Van Horn, and Mayor Starrs
Also present was Township Engineer Ted Rodman (arrived at 7:30 pm), DPW Supervisor Brian Peck and Attorney Tara St. Angelo from Gebhardt & Kiefer

Absent: Committeewoman Cuntala

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

DPW Supervisor Brian Peck-- has no reports.

RESOLUTIONS

2019-44- Resolution Commendation for Eagle Scout Benjamin Erickson

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township resident Ben Erickson of Troop 140, Boy Scouts of America, has earned the rank of Eagle Scout; and

WHEREAS, to do so Ben passed a two-hour Board of Review with four district-level Boy Scout Committeemen; and

WHEREAS, Ben joined the Boy Scouts twelve years ago and since then has held positions of responsibility within Troop 140 such as Troop Guide, Troop Instructor, and Senior Patrol Leader; and

WHEREAS, Ben spent 98 hours on his Eagle Scout project to construct a memorial for life at St. Jude's Church in Blairstown, NJ; and

WHEREAS, Ben's project involved raising \$3,500 in funds, digging, pouring concrete for the memorial footing, compacting stone dust, cutting and placing pavers, as well as obtaining the necessary approvals and coordinating volunteer assistance; and

WHEREAS, Ben's attainment of the 21 necessary merit badges further demonstrates his commitment ideals that benefit our community; and

WHEREAS, the rank of Eagle Scout is the highest award a boy can attain in scouting and is earned by only 5 percent of all Boy Scouts; and

WHEREAS, in all these actions Ben Erickson has demonstrated strong leadership abilities and exhibited a strong sense of duty, honor, and service, making him a clear example of the best qualities of American youth.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on this day, March 11, 2019, the Knowlton Township Committee commends Benjamin Erickson on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout and awards him with this Certificate of Merit.

Motion made by Committeeman McNinch, second by Mayor Starrs and carried to approved Resolution 2019-44.

2019-45- Resolution Regarding Salt Practices for Commercial and Government Agencies Conducting Winter Road Treatment in and Around Columbia

WHEREAS, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Geological and Water Survey (NJGWS) is studying the issue of salt in the wells of some Knowlton residents' well water; and

WHEREAS, sampling results presented by the Geological and Water Survey showed levels of sodium and chloride that exceed recommended levels for consumption; and

WHEREAS, the NJGWS study identified multiple sources of salt including (in no particular order): The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, homeowners, Knowlton Township, NJ Department of Transportation, the Travel Centers of America, the Warren County Road Department; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township has taken the following steps in an attempt to mitigate the problem:

- Built new salt shed
- Poured asphalt aprons in front of salt shed
- Bought new dump truck with automated salt spreader
- Paid for point-of-use Reverse Osmosis systems for affected residents who wanted them
- Hired a hydrogeologist to assist in evaluating solutions
- Requested NJDEP commission a long-term engineering solutions study
- Posted low-salt signs in village of Columbia
- Participated in updating winter maintenance agreement with other agencies to avoid overlapping of salted routes
- Educated township staff
- Changed the de-icing products applied to roads in Columbia by the township; and

WHEREAS, ongoing well monitoring by the NJGWS shows that year-round levels of sodium and chloride continue to exceed acceptable levels; and

WHEREAS, ongoing well monitoring by the NJGWS, which is reflected in the attached graph, shows salt levels in drinking wells rising precipitously after each snowstorm.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Knowlton Township Committee requests the cooperation and assistance of public agencies and commercial enterprises salting in and around Columbia by:

1. Considering alternatives to rock salt and salt brine such as grit, calcium magnesium acetate, potassium acetate, beet juice, and/or others for any surfaces treated in the area by each agency
2. Ensuring the application of de-icers around the sensitive area of Columbia be reduced as much as possible and that this area be specially designated within each organization as requiring non-standard de-icing treatment
3. Sharing changes in road salting products and procedures with the NJGWS and Township so that the public is assured that efforts to limit additional exposure of residents to salt in the area are being undertaken by all
4. Supplying a member from your agency to participate in an ongoing working group that meets or corresponds regularly to monitor progress on lowering salt usage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this resolution shall be sent to The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, NJ Department of Transportation, Travel Centers of America, Delaware Water Gap Travel Plaza, and Warren County.

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to approved Resolution 2019-45. Mayor Starrs asked the Committee what they should ask the legislators to help with. Deputy Mayor Shipps suggested having the agencies sit down and talk it over.

2019-46- Resolution Authorizing Mayor and Clerk to Extend Agreement with Warren County Housing Program

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton (the "Township") filed a Declaratory Judgment Action (the "Litigation") in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Hunterdon County, in furtherance of the Supreme Court's March 10, 2015, decision captioned In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96 & 5:97 by N.J. Council on Affordable Housing, 221 N.J. 1 (2015) (the "Supreme Court Decision"), which was assigned to the Honorable Thomas C. Miller, P.J., Cv.; and

WHEREAS, Fair Share Housing Center ("FSHC") is a Supreme Court-designated interested party in the Litigation in accordance with the Supreme Court Decision; and

WHEREAS, through that process, the Township and FSHC agreed to settle the Litigation pursuant to a certain Settlement Agreement;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Settlement Agreement, the Township agreed that its "Rehabilitation Need" for the Third Round is ten (10) units; and

WHEREAS, the Township has completed two (2) credits of such obligation; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to an Agreement dated January 14, 2014, which is attached hereto, the Township previously partnered with the Warren County Housing Program to meet its "Rehabilitation Need;" and

WHEREAS, under such Agreement, the Township pays a flat fee of \$10,000 per unit and the Warren County Housing Program provides the remainder of the funding in order to rehabilitate deficient housing units in the Township, regardless of the final cost to bring such units into compliance with applicable building and safety codes; and

WHEREAS, in order to comply with its obligations under the Settlement Agreement and provide a mechanism to meet its rehabilitation obligation, the Township has determined that it is in the best interests of the Township and its residents to extend the Agreement with Warren County Housing Program through 2025 to provide for the rehabilitation of up to eight (8) residential units over the next approximately seven (7) years; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the Mayor and Township Clerk are hereby authorized to execute a Letter Agreement with the Warren County Housing Program in substantially the same form as attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and carried to approve by roll call vote: Cuntala—absent, McNinch—yes, Shipp—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to Resolution 2019-46.

2019-47- Kitchen Farm Cost Share Resolution

WHEREAS, the State Agriculture Development Committee [SADC] certified a market value [CMV] of \$5,100. per acre for the farmland preservation development easement on the Kitchen Farm, located at, 81 Lime Kiln in Knowlton Township NJ and owned by Mark Kitchen [Block 47, Lot 7 – approximately 32.1 acres with one non-severable exception of approximately 4 acres], which farm is contained in Warren County’s 2019 Planning Incentive Grant Program;

WHEREAS, the cost share from the state of New Jersey is estimated to be \$3,450 per acre: and

WHEREAS, based on the Township’s application, the County of Warren will provide a cost share of approximately \$825/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 the Kitchen Farm [Block 47, Lot 7] is approved.
2. The Township commits to the funding of the acquisition of said development easement on the Kitchen Farm [Block 47, Lot 7] of \$825/acre or approximately \$23,183

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, authorizing the Mayor to sign an Agreement of Intention to Sell Development Easement between Knowlton Township and Mark Kitchen.

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 Committeeman McNinch, second by Mayor Starrs and carried to approve by roll call vote: Cuntala--absent, McNinch--yes, Shipps--yes, Van Horn--yes, Starrs--yes Resolution 2019-47. Committeeman McNinch thanked resident Rene Mathez for all his hard work preserving farms in Knowlton.

2019-48- 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 Committeeman McNinch and carried to approve by roll call vote: Cuntala --absent, McNinch--yes, Shipps--yes, Van Horn-yes, Starrs--yes Resolution 2019-48.

OLD BUSINESS

COAH Administrative Agent

The Committee discussed proposals received from two administrative agents for affordable housing, Community Grants Planning & Housing (CGP&H) and Triad & Associates. Mayor Starrs said that she also asked Piazza and Associates to provide a proposal, but they declined. Attorney Tara St. Angelo provided a description on what a COAH Administrative Agent would do for Knowlton Township.

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman Van Horn and carried to approve by roll call vote: Cuntala—absent, McNinch—yes, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to the CPG&H proposal, which has a capped annual fee of \$3,500.

Hemlock Rd. Repairs

Township Engineer Ted Rodman explained that Hemlock Rd. is in need of major repair. There was discussion regarding the part of Hemlock Rd. that goes along the stream to Mount Pleasant. Mayor Starrs stated that money has already been allotted to repair Hemlock Road. Committee agreed to have DPW to continue with repairing the road and then to revisit if that section of the road continues to be an issue. Mr. Rodman gave DPW Supervisor specs for catch basins.

Washington Street Right-of-Way

Mr. Hamway would like to put up a fence that is on the township right-of-way. Discussion regarding who owned the property that the fence was going on. Committee asked Mr. Hamway to confirm who the property owner is and provide detail on where the fence extends.

Department Report

Township Engineer Ted Rodman—Provided an update on the guide rails for Polkville Road. Burglar Rd. problem statement— there has been no response yet. Salt Litigation—conference call tomorrow pertaining to DOT drainage with Mr. Barnett, the salt attorney.

NEW BUSINESS

Warren County Outstanding Senior Nomination

Committeewoman Shipps asked the committee about nominating a Knowlton township senior for the Warren County Outstanding Senior award. Committee agreed it would be best not to have the whole committee nominate but an individual could.

Knowlton Court Days

Due to personal situations of the Municipal Judge and the recent resignation of the Municipal Prosecutor, the committee discussed changing the court days in order to accommodate a new prosecutor. Committee also agreed to have a ½ day carryover if needed once a month.

CORRESPONDENCE—No Correspondence

MEETING MINUTES

February 28, 2019 Public Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Committeeman McNinch, second by Deputy Mayor Shipps and carried to approve February 28, 2019 Public Session Meeting Minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Rene Mathez commented on the NJDEP regulations that increased the miles of state streams that are C1 streams. The Paulins kill will now be a C1 stream.

Resident Matt Bailey asked about the township property that is being auctioned—is it being sold with a reserve? Mayor Starrs explained that the township has reserved the right to reject any and all bidders.

Resident Pam Rusweiler asked for clarification about Mr. Rodman’s comment on the salt litigation and the DOT. Mayor Starrs explained that the Township’s salt attorney asked for DOT records regarding the DOT interchange drainage system.

DPW Supervisor Brian Peck asked for the Committee's help obtaining a turnaround on Mount Pleasant Road. The snow plow drivers are unable to use the driveway that he has used in prior years to turn around. Engineer Rodman will look into this.

Resident Pam Rusweiler would like to thank DPW Supervisor Brian Peck for the incredible job that he does in the village of Columbia during snow storms.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman Van Horn and carried to adjourn tonight's Township meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Shipps
Acting Municipal Clerk