

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

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

June 8, 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 Members Mathez, Farber and Shippis. Also present was Ted Rodman, Municipal Engineer and Richard Cushing, Municipal Attorney. 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 at 7:05 pm with a salute to the flag and roll call.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Resolution 15-58

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs to enter executive session for discussion of personnel. The motion was seconded by Committeeman Mathez. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shippis – yes, Starrs – yes.

The Township Committee returned to public session at 7:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Cuntala and seconded by Committeewoman Shippis to approve the May 28, 2015 meeting minutes. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shippis – abstain, Starrs – yes.

PRESENTATION:

Dr. Fogelson, North Warren Regional High School

Dr. Fogelson, Superintendent and Bruce Hanelt, Board President, were present to review the 2015 budget. Dr. Fogelson reviewed achievements in athletic programs, arts and community outreach and service. He stated over 85% of graduates attend a 2 or 4 year college.

Dr. Fogelson also reviewed capital projects and summarized projected revenues. He stated the counseling and agriculture programs have been retained.

Knowlton Township residents will see a 9.8 cent increase in the tax levy due to losses in revenue and declining enrollment. Mr. Hanelt noted this is the first increase in 5 years. North Warren's cost per pupil is \$14,296. The cost per pupil ranks North Warren 14th of 46 regional high schools.

Bob McNinch, Vail Road, complimented Dr. Fogelson and his staff on the quality of education for the North Warren students. Mr. McNinch noted that 2 years ago, information had been requested from Dr. Fogelson concerning the percent W-4 salary average increases for full time teachers for last year, last 3 years and last 5 years. This information was not received and therefore the request to Dr. Fogelson was repeated. Dr. Fogelson recalled his assistant had been requested to provide this data previously but would make sure the current data was forwarded shortly after this meeting.

Mr. McNinch noted that based on budget data the north Warren cost per student had increased almost 10 percent over the last 3 years (about double the inflation rate). He asked for justification of these costs increases considering average family income was less today than 6 years ago. Mr. Hanelt said the increase is related to maintenance items and technological changes.

Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, asked for the cost of security provided by Blairstown Police Department. Dr. Fogelson stated the cost is \$90,000 for security from 7am to 10pm 5 days per week.

Hal Bromm, Delaware Road, asked for the annual increase in administrative salaries. Dr. Fogelson said his salary was frozen. Mr. Hanelt said other administrative salaries typically follow teachers' increases which have been 2 – 2.5% in recent years.

Committeewoman Shipps stated it is wrong for teachers to involve students in union negotiations. She said students are asked to wear colors of support for faculty. Committeewoman Shipps will provide a written complaint to Dr. Fogelson.

Candice Nattland, Route 46, asked for the breakdown of students entering 2 and 4 year colleges. Dr. Fogelson replied 2 year colleges are increasing due to cost and guaranteed transfer of 60 credits.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Ted Rodman, Engineer

Mr. Rodman provided an aerial photograph of the Station Road viaduct area. Discussion took place regarding a no parking ordinance for Station Road. Attorney Cushing suggested that parking by permit only may be more feasible. Attorney Cushing will draft an ordinance change with descriptions to be provided by Mr. Rodman.

Mayor Starrs reported she requested that the NJDOT install more no trespassing signs in the area.

Engineer Rodman reported he is working with Mike Bates, Fire Chief, to draft specifications for a refurbished fire truck.

Mike Bates, Fire Chief, will provide a description of the ambulance to be auctioned.

Joe Rossi, Zoning Officer

Mr. Rossi reported on the status of 150 Vail Road. To date, no applications for demolition permits have been submitted. He suggested that the Township pursue grants to demolish dilapidated buildings. In his experience, court fines are not effective.

Attorney Cushing will obtain the order to demolish structures from the construction official and write a letter to the property owner.

Mr. Rossi also reported on the Gulf gas station on Route 46. An appeal to the zoning decision has been submitted to the Board of Adjustment and is scheduled in July.

Historic Commission

Candice Nattland invited a Township Committee member to be a liaison to the Historic Commission. Committeewoman Shipps and Deputy Mayor Cuntala offered to act as liaisons.

Hal Bromm reviewed the Warren County Municipal and Charitable Trust Fund Conservancy grant application and requested a letter of support from the governing body. The required match amount will come from the historic commission.

A motion was made by Committeeman Farber to authorize the mayor to draft a letter of support. The motion was seconded by Committeeman Mathez. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

2015 Municipal Budget:

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs to open a public hearing for the 2015 municipal budget. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Committeeman Mathez reported the tax rate is flat in 2015.

Bob McNinch, Vail Road, noted the budgets showed Township “Total Operations Expenditures” increases of 3.7% for 2015 which followed a 9.3% increase the previous year. Mayor Starrs was requested to provide justification for these significant increases in local government spending considering average family income was less today than 6 years ago. Mayor Starrs replied the largest single expense last year was salt.

There being no further comment, a motion to close the public hearing was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to adopt the 2015 municipal budget. The motion was seconded by Committeewoman Shipps. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

ORDINANCES:

ORDINANCE 15-05 **Bond Ordinance For Acquisition Of Dump Truck** (copy attached)

A motion was made to open the public hearing for Ordinance 15-05 by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. The motion was seconded by Committeewoman Shipps. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Bob McNinch, Vail Road, asked if the entire ordinance was posted on the web site. Attorney Cushing stated publication in summary is permissible. The municipal clerk stated the ordinance was published in abbreviated form which is drafted by bond counsel. Future ordinances will be posted on the website in full whenever possible.

Mr. McNinch advised in his opinion the Committee was being secretive; it was unreasonable to expect Township residents to (a) subscribe to three newspapers just to be informed of a summary of ordinances subject to public hearing and then (b) be required to visit the Township office to see the complete ordinance and Knowlton, as other municipalities do, should post ordinances subject to public review on their web page. Committeeman Mathez agreed that ordinances should be posted in full on the web page. Attorney Cushing advised against Committee members taking responsibility for web postings of ordinances and resolutions.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 15-05 was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

ORDINANCE 15-06 **Bond Ordinance For Acquisition of Fire Truck** (copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to open a public hearing for Ordinance 15-06. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Mr. McNinch, Vail Road, noted the ordinance was not posted on the website.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

A motion to adopt Ordinance 15-06 was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 15-59
Resolution Approving Payment Of Vouchers
(copy attached)

Mayor Starrs questioned a True Green invoice for spraying at the recreation site. Deputy Mayor Cuntala will follow up with Dennis Lembeck, Recreation Director. A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-59. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

OLD BUSINESS:

COAH

Attorney Cushing reported that municipalities dissatisfied with fair share housing numbers are contributing \$2,000 dollars each to hire an expert who devised the original COAH numbers to write a report refuting the new numbers. Attorney Cushing stated a municipality can join at any time and suggested that the Township consult with the planner.

Committeeman Farber suggested the Township should work with the League of Municipalities to debate new numbers. Township Committee members were in agreement to address the issue at the July meeting.

Columbia Road Salt

Mayor Starrs reported a meeting with NJDOT, NJDEP, Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, Warren County DPW and Knowlton Township DPW has been scheduled on June 18th to discuss well contamination in Columbia.

NEW BUSINESS:

Township Inventory

Mayor Starrs reported she will update the Township inventory.

Community Service Work

Committeeman Mathez suggested that John Sikora, Clean Communities worker, could complete requests to weed Meadow Ridge Road and maintain the Hainesburg River Road / Woodruff Way intersection. Deputy Mayor Cuntala suggested that a precedent could be set for the Township to maintain private property.

Discussion took place regarding the chain of command for Community Service/Clean Communities projects. Township Committee members agreed that Dennis Lembeck is the Clean Communities Supervisor and will prioritize work projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Bates, Fire Chief, stated the fire company needs a certificate of insurance naming the fire company as additionally insured and vehicle insurance cards. The municipal clerk will follow up. Mr. Bates also stated fire and rescue would like to house the 2000 ambulance at the DPW until it is auctioned. Committeeman Farber will follow up with Brian Peck, DPW Supervisor.

Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, reported that the Sprint fiber optic cable is now being installed overhead and there will be no disturbances to driveways on Koeck Road.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Patton
Municipal Clerk