

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

**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
December 14, 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 Shipps. 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 7:04 pm with a salute to the flag and roll call.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Resolution 15-103 (copy attached)

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-103 and enter executive session for the purpose of discussion of personnel and potential litigation. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

The Township Committee returned to public session at 7:35 pm.

PRESENTATION: Howard Panton, Gypsy Moth Spray

Mr. Panton explained the Gypsy Moth survey and spray program. A survey is conducted yearly to determine the amount of egg masses in trees. He stated the gypsy moth egg masses can be blown up to 30 miles in the wind. BTK is the most effective treatment on smaller caterpillars. BTK is a biological pesticide spray. One half gallon is sprayed per acre by plane. The spray has approximately a 65% reduction rate in infestation. BTK is a safe pesticide which has no harmful side effects to humans. Although humans could experience temporary irritation of skin, eyes or respiratory tract. An aerial defoliation survey is done two weeks after the spray.

The gypsy moth defoliates trees and causes health issues to humans. Humans may experience rashes and respiratory problems due to gypsy moth inhabitation. The gypsy moth also causes physical safety issues by causing death to trees and costs to remove the dead trees.

Surveys have shown an increase in defoliation from 2014 to 2015. In 2016 there are 19 ½ thousand proposed treatment areas. The moths were introduced in the U.S. from Europe to make silk.

In Knowlton Township, 183 acres off Mt. Pleasant Road, have been identified in the annual survey for spraying of caterpillars. The estimated cost is 9 – 10,000 dollars. The federal government may reimburse up to 50% of the cost of the spray.

Mr. Panton explained the process which includes a request for egg mass survey, a resolution to declare the gypsy moth a public nuisance, establishment of a work force, coordination of one hour shutdown with school districts, identification of a contact person, notification to residents and notification to surrounding municipalities. The spray would be scheduled mid-May to mid-June and is weather dependent.

More information on gypsy moths can be obtained from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture Division of Plant Industry.

Committeeman Farber asked if the state and federal government is spraying parklands. Mr. Panton replied yes. Bob McNinch, Vail Road asked if there are guidelines for homeowners to conduct surveys. Mr. Panton answered no, it is too technical.

Mr. Panton stated a firm commitment is needed from the Township by the end of January to proceed with a spray. The Township Committee thanked Mr. Panton for his presentation.

Pam Russweiler, Columbia

Mrs. Russweiler explained she filed an open public records request form with the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission. The request was for documentation indicating trucks were calibrated, salt storage area includes retention and the amount of salt used from November 1, 2014 to November 1, 2015. Mrs. Russweiler said the request was returned with an explanation from an attorney that the request was not specific enough.

Attorney Cushing explained the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission is not subject to OPRA. Mrs. Russweiler asked if she needs to go to legislators. Attorney Cushing explained it may be more beneficial if the township pursues the information.

Mayor Starrs stated a meeting with herself, Committeeman Mathez and DRJTBC representatives is scheduled on Friday. Attorney Cushing suggested a request for a budget document would be a specific request. He also suggested a request for protocols or guidelines for standard operating procedures for application of salt at the Portland bridge and all bridges may be useful.

Mrs. Russweiler asked if the water sampling results have been received. Mayor Starrs said resident results were mailed today. NJDEP representatives will attend a Township Committee meeting in January or February. Mrs. Russweiler asked if Kevin Covatta from the Warren County Health Department could put an explanation sheet for results on the website. Mayor Starrs will ask Mr. Covatta.

Mrs. Russweiler thanked Engineer Rodman for checking the storm drain located by her property. Engineer Rodman said the drain is a galvanized grate from Campbell Foundry. Warren County said the drain belonged to the DRJTBC. Engineer Rodman said the DPW will fill in low spots around the drain as a temporary fix. Engineer Rodman will contact the DRJTBC regarding repair of the drain. Engineer Rodman will attend the meeting with Mayor Starrs, Committeeman Mathez and DRJTBC representatives.

Frank Makowski, Office of Emergency Management

Mr. Makowski explained the fire house is the back-up emergency management center and questioned the status of service and an upgrade to the generator. He requested that the service be scheduled as soon as possible.

Mr. Makowski also reported that he, Frank VanHorn and Lisa Patton are working on the hazard mitigation plan. The project is important to secure FEMA funding. He also reported he and Lisa Patton attended a Warren County damage assessment meeting where they learned of the ORION program expected to be implemented next year. The program will be utilized on cell phones, tablets or laptops. A report is generated and sent to the county, state and FEMA. The Township Committee thanked Mr. Makowski for his report.

150 Vail Road

Committeewoman Shipps reported complaints were received by the Warren County Health Department for high grass and feral cats at 150 Vail Road. Mayor Starrs asked what is needed to move the demolition of the structure along. Attorney Cushing explained a letter stating an emergency violation should be sent

to the executor of the estate. A second letter to the executor should indicate what needs to be done to the property and explain a lien will be placed on the property for payment. Initially, permission to enter the premise should be obtained from the executor. Attorney Cushing suggested that the Township Committee adopt an unfit buildings ordinance.

Mayor Starrs stated the township is in an awkward position because much money has been spent on the project already. Engineer Rodman said there is a time consuming process ahead. Mayor Starrs stated Gary Gray has offered to donate the demolition. Engineer Rodman said the township will be responsible for the tipping fee to dispose of materials.

Attorney Cushing asked if the building is falling over. Engineer Rodman stated it doesn't look like it would fall on the neighbor's residence. Committeeman Mathez stated he would like a good sense of the structural state. Committeeman Mathez also said the role of government should be to protect people.

Committeeman Farber said he is in favor of demolishing the structure because no taxes are being collected on the property and if it ever caught fire, the house next door could be affected.

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs to authorize Attorney Cushing to send a letter to the executor of the property and draft an unfit building ordinance. The motion was seconded by Committeeman Mathez. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – abstain, Starrs – yes.

2002 Mason Dump Truck

Mayor Starrs stated the DPW Supervisor is requesting to contract snow plowing services to cover the roads previously plowed with the totaled mason dump truck. Discussion took place regarding insurance requirements for a contractor. Attorney Cushing recommended consulting with the insurance representative.

Frank Makowski asked if the township has looked into renting a replacement truck. He suggested contacting Conte Construction. Committeewoman Shipps stated Blairstown has outside snow plow contractors.

Playground

Engineer Rodman explained the equipment for the playground is being purchased through state contract. The labor to install the playground was put out to bidders. He stated Master Construction was the lowest bidder at \$36,400 for labor and mulch. Engineer Rodman recommended awarding the contract to Master Construction contingent upon attorney review.

Air Conditioning

Engineer Rodman stated three proposals were sent out. Iron Mountain was the only bidder at \$21,595.00. Committeeman Farber recommended reaching back out to other contractors. Committeeman Mathez said he will contact Coyle.

Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, stated he had a proposal for \$19,000 covering the entire building. Mayor Starrs said the township committee will revisit the matter.

Route 46 Catch Basin

Engineer Rodman reported the DPW Supervisor uncovered the catch basin at Route 46 and Walnut Road. The eight foot deep catch basin contained oil. Brian Peck, DPW Supervisor called Engineer Rodman and HAZMAT. Warren County Health Department/HAZMAT notified the NJDEP. Engineer Rodman said the catch basin empties into the Delaware River.

The catch basin is also collapsing. Engineer Rodman identified a problem in determining jurisdiction of the catch basin. Committeeman Farber asked about the integrity of the pipe. Engineer Rodman said he did not know yet and will follow up.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Committeeman Mathez to approve the September 24, 2015 minutes with a change to read NRG coal plant was scheduled to burn diesel but have withdrawn their application to do so. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – abstain, Starrs – yes.

Township Committee Members were in agreement to carry the November 9, 2015 minutes until the next meeting.

ORDINANCES:

ORDINANCE 15-11

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING SECTION 35-4 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF KNKOWLTON ESTABLISHING THE POSITION OF OFFICE MANAGER

(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeemen Mathez to open the public hearing for Ordinance 15-11. The motion was seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs to close the public hearing for Ordinance 15-11. The motion was seconded by Committeeman Mathez. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to adopt Ordinance 15-11. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala - yes, Farber – no, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Discussion took place regarding the office manager working from home. Township Committee members agreed that the office manager will not work from home.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION 15-104

RESOLUTION APPROVING PAYMENT OF VOUCHERS

(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez and seconded by Mayor Starrs to approve Resolution 15-104. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – no, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes. Committeewoman Shipps requested a copy of the Century Link invoice for a cost saving analysis.

Committeeman Farber stated he would not sign the Special Counsel Corrigan voucher. Bill Clifford, Koeck Road, asked for the amount of the invoice. Committeeman Farber said it is \$6,000.00. Mr. Clifford asked when is this ever going to end, when the surplus is gone?

RESOLUTION 15-105

Resolution To Cancel Tax Sale Certificate Due To Merger

(copy attached)

A motion was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Committeeman Mathez to approve Resolution 15-105. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

RESOLUTION 15-106
Resolution To Refund 2014 Tax Overpayments
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Committeeman Farber to approve Resolution 15-106. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

RESOLUTION 15-107
Resolution To Award State Contract – Liberty Parks & Playgrounds, Inc.
(copy attached)

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Cuntala to approve Resolution 15-107. The motion was seconded by Committeeman Mathez. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Generators

Discussion took place regarding service for generators at the municipal building, DPW and fire house. Committeewoman Shipps stated she does not want to risk losing the warranty on the machines. A motion was made by Committeeman Mathez to proceed with servicing three generators. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Cuntala. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Committeeman Farber will ask Mayberry for a discounted rate for service of three generators.

Land Use Letter

Township Committee members approved a form letter to be given to new land use board members.

Station Road Ordinance

Committeeman Farber stated the viaduct graffiti is still a problem. He has received complaints that the parking permit on Station Road ordinance has inconvenienced hikers and people fishing off Station Road. He asked if the Committee is in favor of abolishing the ordinance.

Mayor Starrs said the ordinance has brought in over \$700 in fines. She stated the problem has lessened since enacting the ordinance. Committeeman Farber stated the Township should not be in the business of collecting parking fines.

Committeewoman Shipps reported that parents on Facebook are advising children not to go there. Mayor Starrs suggested implementing the ordinance for a five year timeframe. Committeeman Farber stated a better plan for accessing permits on weekends is needed. He suggested they be placed at locations issuing fishing licenses in the area.

23 Decatur Street

Mayor Starrs reported Wells Fargo was given 45 days to demolish the house at 23 Decatur Street.

Service Electric Cable Contract

Discussion of the Service Electric Cable Contract was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS:

Reorganization Meeting

The 2016 annual reorganization meeting was scheduled on January 4, 2016 at 6:00 pm.

Meeting Adjournment Time

Township Committee members discussed establishing an adjournment time. It was agreed that whenever possible, meeting will end at 10:00 pm.

Relay For Life

A motion to approve Relay for Life members utilizing the meeting room was made by Mayor Starrs and seconded by Committeeman Mathez. The meeting room is available to non-profit groups who provide a certificate of insurance. Roll Call: Mathez – yes, Cuntala – yes, Farber – yes, Shipps – yes, Starrs – yes.

Route 46 Road Resurfacing Project

Mayor Starrs reviewed the Route 46 road resurfacing project slated for 2016.

Emergency Medical Services

Committeeman Mathez reported the contract with Hackettstown Ambulance has been extended until June 30, 2016. He also stated either side can cancel the contract with six months notice.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Bates, Fire Chief, reported the final inspection of the fire truck will take place this week. He also said the annual fire company dinner will be held on January 16, 2016. He stated the Houston Galveston Coop is a good resource for items from office furniture to fire equipment. Mr. Bates said the fire company is enrolling in AFG grants for new gear. Dave Neal will be EMS captain in 2016. Mr. Bates stated there is concern with one way traffic during the Route 46 road resurfacing project.

ADJOURNMENT:

Township Committee members were in agreement to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Patton
Municipal Clerk

