

**MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP**  
**WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**  
**Public Session Meeting Minutes**  
**May 27, 2021**

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 7:00 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."

**Open Public Meetings Act:**

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 *Star Gazette* as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk's office.

**ELECTRONIC MEETING STATEMENT:**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on in-person public gatherings by executive orders of the Governor of New Jersey, meetings of the Knowlton Township Committee will be held remotely via Zoom. The Zoom platform allows for members of the public to participate via computer, mobile device, or telephone. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.5(g): Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing a revised annual notice in the two official newspapers designated by the Township, posting such notice on the door of the municipal building, and posting such notice on the municipal website. Such notice specified the time of this meeting and provided instructions on how to access the meeting remotely.

The following is an explanation of the procedures and requirements for making public comment as required by N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(h).

Please keep yourself muted until the meeting moderator requests that you unmute yourself. The Township reserves the right to mute or remove disruptive meeting participants after an initial warning. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity.

Comments will be accepted in writing. Written comments must be no more than 450 words and must include your name and address. This equates to about 3 minutes of speaking, which is the amount of time allowed for each public comment. Such comments will be read into the record at the appropriate time. However, please be advised that the Township reserves the right to summarize duplicative comments consistent with N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(f). Comments can be emailed by 3:00 p.m. the day of the meeting to: [Knowltonpubliccomments@knowlton-nj.com](mailto:Knowltonpubliccomments@knowlton-nj.com). Written comments may also be submitted via mail or dropped off at the municipal building by such day and time.

Comments will also be accepted during the appropriate times of the meeting via Zoom. If you wish to make a comment during the meeting please use the "raise hand" button on your screen if you are signed in via Zoom. If you are accessing the meeting via telephone, please hit \*9 and the meeting moderator will call on you and identify you by the last few digits of your phone number. You can press \*6 to unmute yourself. Please state your name and address before beginning your comment. As always, comments are limited to three minutes per person and there will be two comment sessions during the meeting.

Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded.

## **Roll Call**

**Cuntala—absent, Mazza—yes, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tara Mezzanotte- just checked in regarding the S curve resolution which Mayor Starrs will have ready for the next meeting.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Fire and Rescue** –Tom Moritz from Fire & Rescue had a few questions for the Township Attorney who was not present at this meeting.

**Emergency Management Officer** Mike Bates— Hazard Mitigation Plan has been updated and sent to the county for approval. Mr. Bates also let the committee know that there will be some FEMA grants coming up for stormwater.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **2021-56- Resolution to Support and Approve Construction of a Historic Interpretive Kiosk**

WHEREAS, the Knowlton township historic commission recommends installation of a historic interpretive Kiosk at the New Jersey side on the Portland Columbia Pedestrian Bridge displaying the history of the Columbia covered bridge and displaying information about other Knowlton historic sites, and;

WHEREAS, the Knowlton Township of Historic Commission submitted on February 26, 2021 a grant request to fund this project to the Warren County CHPP Grant Project, and;

WHEREAS, the Warren County Commissioners awarded on April 28, 2021 to Knowlton Township Historic Commission a grant of \$2,500, and;

WHEREAS, the Knowlton Township Historic Commission recommends this Kiosk be located on Block 19 Lot 3 with address of 27 Washington Street, said property being owned by Knowlton Township, and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, support and approve the installation of a historical interpretive Kiosk on Block 10, Lot 3 in the village of Columbia.

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Shipps and carried to approve resolution 2021-56**

### **2021-57- Resolution Supporting Submission of the NJ Department of Community Affairs' 2021 Local Recreation Improvement Grant**

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton desires to apply for and obtain a 2021 grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for approximately \$110,000 to install improvements at the Knowlton Township's Tunnel Field Recreation Area; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton has pledged to provide \$10,000 toward the project's total; and

WHEREAS, these improvements will eliminate hazards on the walking track and allow for safe and consistent operation of the facility, promoting both passive and recreational outdoor activities for Knowlton Township and its surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, these improvements include repairing and paving the walking track, resurfacing the

basketball court, resurfacing the tennis/ pickleball court, and improving landscaping.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Township Committee of Knowlton does hereby authorize the application for the 2021 Local Recreation Improvement Grant; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of Knowlton recognizes and accepts that the Department may offer a lesser or greater amount and therefore, upon receipt of the grant agreement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, does further authorize the execution of any such grant agreement; and also, upon receipt of the fully executed agreement from the Department, does further authorize the expenditure of funds pursuant to the terms of the agreement between the Township of Knowlton and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that the persons whose names, titles, and signatures appear below are authorized to sign the application, and that they or their successors in said titles are authorized to sign the agreement, and any other documents necessary in connection therewith:

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala—absent, Mazza—yes, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, resolution 2021-57 pending the information from the Engineer regarding on names should be inserted.**

**2021-58- Resolution Requesting Oversight of \$64 Million I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project in Knowlton and Hardwick Townships—tabled to a later meeting**

**2021-59-Governors’ Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Fiscal Grant Cycle October 2020-June 2025**

**WHEREAS**, the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse in communities throughout New Jersey.

**WHEREAS**, The Town Council of the Township of Knowlton County of Warren State of New Jersey recognizes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages; and therefore has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent such abuses in our community; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council has applied for funding to the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the County of Warren;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey hereby recognizes the following:

1. The Town Council does hereby authorize submission of a strategic plan for the Knowlton Township Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2022 in the amount of:

DEDR	\$1,498
Cash Match	\$374.50
In-Kind	\$1,123.50

2. The Town Council acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Starrs and carried approved by resolution 2021-59.**

**2021-60 Resolution 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 Starrs, second by Van Horn and carried to approve by roll call vote: Cuntala—absent, Mazza—yes, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to Resolution 2021-60.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Guidance on \$287,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act**—Committee received guidance on what Knowlton township can spend the money that they will be receiving, Funds must be used by 2024. Committee will take a look at the guidance and discuss further at the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Cost of Living Increase**—Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala—absent, Mazza—yes, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes for a 1.5% cost-of-living increase for township employees.

**DPW Resignation**—Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and carried to accept the resignation of Dave Quick with regret.

Discussion took place regarding hiring a new DPW worker. DPW Supervisor Brian Peck is requesting that an advertisement goes out for not only a full-time employee but for also a Seasonal Employee on a separate advertisement. Hiring a seasonal employee will provide coverage until a full-time employee is found due to the fact that the job market is tough. Committee also discussed where they should advertise for employment. Mayor Starrs will put the add out on the website, social media sites and the PA papers.

**DPW Addition Blueprint**—DPW Supervisor Brian Peck talked about a few different proposals that the architect came up with regarding the DPW addition. Architect will come up with the materials that are going to be needed so Mr. Peck can look in to the cost of those materials.

**Resuming In-Person Township Meetings—Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and carried to approve to resume in-person township in a hybrid form.**

**Municipal Building-Security Quote—**tabled to a later meeting

**Paul Avery- Blairstown Rotary**

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and approved by Roll call vote: Cuntala—absent, Mazza—yes, Shipp—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes to donate \$1,000 for the Blairstown Rotary Fireworks.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**—No correspondence

**PUBLIC COMMENT**— There were no comments from the public

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and carried to go into Executive Session at 8:15 pm 2021-61 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session.**

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act; N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., declares it to be the public policy of the State to insure the right of citizens to have adequate advance notice of and the right to attend meetings of public bodies at which business affecting the public is discussed or acted upon; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act also recognized exceptions to the right of the public to attend portions of such meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee find it necessary to conduct an executive session closed to the public as permitted by the N.J.S.A. 40:4-12; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee will reconvene in public session at the conclusion of the executive session;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Knowlton Township, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that they will conduct an executive session to discuss the following topic (s) as permitted by N.J.S.A. 40:4-12:

A. Contract Negotiations

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Committee hereby declare that their discussion of the subject (s) identified above may be made public at a time when the Township Attorney advises them that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the Township or any other entity with respect to said discussion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Committee, for the reasons set forth above, hereby declare that the public is excluded from the portion of the meeting during which the above discussion shall take place.

**Motion made by Starrs, second by Van Horn and carried to close Executive Session at 8:35 pm**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Shipp, second by Starrs and carried to adjourn tonight’s meeting at 8:37 p.m.