

**MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
Public Session Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2020**

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 7:01 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."

ELECTRONIC MEETING STATEMENT:

In addition, as a result of the State of Emergency issued by Governor Murphy and the various executive orders limiting social gatherings, the Township has provided a link and dial-in number for residents to participate in, or listen to, this meeting electronically. The public will be able to participate and provide comment during the public comment section of the meeting. In addition, residents have been encouraged to submit any additional comments via email. Those emails will be read into the record during the public portion of the meeting.

Roll Call

Present: Committeewoman Cuntala, Committeeman McNinch, Deputy Mayor Shipps, Committeeman Van Horn, and Mayor Starrs.

Also present was Township Engineer Ted Rodman and Acting Court Administrator Ruth DeGeorge (Ruth DeGeorge had requested to be "Rice Noticed" to discuss with the Committee compensation in public session)

Executive Session

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve to go into Executive Session at 7:03 p.m.

2020-119 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. Personnel

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 Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve to go back to Public Session at 7:29 p.m.

PRESENTATION

Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan-

Barbara Davis from the Land Conservancy of New Jersey presented a revised farmland plan. The Land Conservancy is preparing the plan, which is funded through a 50% grant. Ms. Davis's slideshow provided information on how many acres Knowlton Township has preserved in farmland. It also provided the benefits of farmland preservation for Knowlton Township. Some other things discussed were agricultural trends in the area as well as strategies. Ms. Davis also explained the steps to have the Farmland Preservation plan adopted.

Mayor Starrs thanked Committeeman McNinch and former Committee member Rene Mathez for all the work that they put in for farmland preservation. Mr. Mathez explained that there is a lot more land that can be farmland preserved. Mr. Mathez also thanked present and past committee members for helping in the process of farmland preservation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Acting Court Administrator Ruth DeGeorge was "Rice Noticed" and requested to be heard in public session.

Mayor Starrs provided Mrs. DeGeorge with an answer regarding Compensation time. A memo from Township Attorney Parikh stated that department heads must use their compensation time by the end of the year or it will be forfeited. That is from the township personnel manual. Mrs. DeGeorge explained that due to backlog and extra work from virtual courts, she is unable to take time off. Mrs. DeGeorge explained that she is willing to put in the time but would like to be compensated. Mayor Starrs broke down Mrs. DeGeorge's pay, medical benefits, and overtime since the beginning of the year. Discussion took place regarding having the Administration of the Courts coming in and help with the backlog.

Committeeman McNinch commented that Mrs. DeGeorge is a dedicated employee. Committeeman McNinch had a few recommendations about offering a completion bonus. He also suggested authorizing 8 hours a week of overtime in order to prepare the courts to close. Committee did not agree with the completion bonus or the approval of overtime considering that there is a freeze on overtime currently.

Township Engineer Ted Rodman

There has been no change on problem statement's for Route 80/ Simpson Rd. and Bruglar Rd. Linaberry Rd. is paved and coring will be done within the week.

Storm water Ordinance needs to be updated by March 2021. The revised ordinance is being reviewed by the Planning Board currently. Discussion took place regarding Tunnel Field water filtration system and notification from NJDEP.

Mayor Starrs asked Mr. Rodman about a speed study on Linaberry Rd. Mr. Rodman will get estimates for the cost of the study for the next meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

RESOLUTION 2020-120- Resolution Approving Consent Agenda

WHEREAS, Resolutions 2020-121, 2020-122, 2020-123 and 2020-124 are considered routine, non-controversial and require no individual discussion; and,

WHEREAS, if discussion is required on a consent agenda item, it is removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton that approval is granted for adoption of the consent agenda items.

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala--yes, McNinch--yes, Shipps--yes, Van Horn--yes, Starrs--yes to Resolution 2020-120.

1. 2020-121-Renewal of Liquor License for 2020-2021 (Hunter's Lodge Motel LLC)

WHEREAS, the following renewal application has been completed, the proper fees have been paid to the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and the Township of Knowlton; and

WHEREAS, the licensee is qualified according to all statutory, regulatory and local government NJABC laws and regulation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey approves the following NJABC liquor license renewal:

Hunters Lodge Motel, LLC. . 2113-33-005-007

2. 2020-122-Renewal of Liquor License for 2020-2021 (Minton's Log Cabin Inc.)

WHEREAS, the following renewal application has been completed, the proper fees have been paid to the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and the Township of Knowlton; and

WHEREAS, the licensee is qualified according to all statutory, regulatory and local government NJABC laws and regulation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey approves the following NJABC liquor license renewal:

Minton's Log Cabin Inc. 2113-33-008-005

3. 2020-123 Renewal of Liquor License for 2020-2021 (Chefs LLC.)

WHEREAS, the following renewal application has been completed, the proper fees have been paid to the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and the Township of Knowlton; and

WHEREAS, the licensee is qualified according to all statutory, regulatory and local government NJABC laws and regulation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey approves the following NJABC liquor license renewal:

4. 2020-124 Renewal of Liquor License for 2020-2021 (Dalton's Inn)

WHEREAS, the following renewal application has been completed, the proper fees have been paid to the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and the Township of Knowlton; and
WHEREAS, the licensee is qualified according to all statutory, regulatory and local government NJABC laws and regulation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey approves the following NJABC liquor license renewal:

RBSD Inc. t/a Dalton's Columbia Inn 2113-33-006-008

RESOLUTIONS

2020-125- Governing Body Certification of the Annual Audit

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A 40A: 5-4 requires the governing body of every unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions: and

WHEREAS, the Annual Report of Audit for the year 2019 has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant and with the Municipal Clerk pursuant to N.J.S.A 40A: 5-6 and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 52: 27BB-34 authorized the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey to prescribe reports pertaining to the local fiscal affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Local Finance Board has promulgated N.J.A.C 5:30-6-5, a regulation requiring that the governing body of each municipality shall, by resolution , certify to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that all members of the governing body have reviewed, as a minimum, the sections of the annual audit report entitled " Comments and Recommendations"; and

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have personally reviewed, as a minimum, the Annual Report of Audit, and specifically the sections of the annual Audit entitled " Comments and Recommendations" , as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the governing body attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, such resolution of certification shall be adopted by the Governing body no later than forty-five days after the receipt of the annual audit, pursuant to N.J.A.C 5:30-6-5, and

WHEREAS, all members of the governing body have received and have familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey, as stated aforesaid and have subscribed to the affidavit, as provided by the Local Finance Board; and

WHEREAS, failure to comply with the regulations of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey may subject the member of the local governing body to the penalty provisions of R.S. 52:27BB-52 to wit"

R.S.52:27BB-52: A local office or member of a local governing body who, after a date fixed for compliance, fails or refused to obey an order of the director (Director of Local Government Services), under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and , upon conviction, may be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more than one year or both, in addition shall forfeit his office.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, hereby state that it has complied with N.J.A.C 5:30 6-5 and does hereby submit a certified copy of this resolution and required affidavit to said Board to show evidence of said compliance.

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve Resolution 2020-125.

2020-126- Resolution Authorizing the Execution of an Amendment to the 2019 Agreement Between the Township of Knowlton and the Municipal Clerk

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton and the Municipal Clerk, Kristin Shipps, RMC, entered into a Professional Services Agreement dated July 25, 2019, for the services of a full time Municipal Clerk and Officer Manager; and

WHEREAS, on or about July 8, 2020, the Township of Knowlton Municipal Clerk accepted a full-time position as Municipal Clerk with the Township of Blirstown; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton recognizes the value of the current Clerk and has extended the opportunity for the Municipal Clerk to remain employed by the Township of Knowlton in a part-time capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton Municipal Clerk agreed to such an arrangement but has likewise resigned from her position as Office Manager for the Township of Knowlton; and

WHEREAS, as it is believed that the foregoing is in the best interest the Township of Knowlton, the Mayor and Committee wish to memorialize the Amended terms of the Agreement at this time; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the Amended Agreement and Original Agreement dated July 25, 2019, are attached hereto.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Committee of Knowlton:

1. The Township of Knowlton does hereby authorize the execution of an Amendment to the Clerk Agreement dated July 25, 2019, in accordance with the terms of said Amendment attached hereto.
2. The Mayor is hereby authorized to execute the Amendment and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this resolution.

A certified copy of this Resolution shall be annexed to the Amendment to the Agreement and kept on file in the office of the Township Clerk and made available for public inspection during normal business hours.

Motion was made Mayor Starrs, second by Committeeman McNinch and roll vote: Cuntala—abstain, McNinch—yes, Shipps—abstain, Van Horn—yes, Starrs--yes Resolution 2020-126.

2020-127- 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 Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Deputy Mayor Shipps and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala—yes, McNinch—yes, Shipps—yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs--yes Resolution 2020-127.

OLD BUSINESS

6 Foreclosed Properties --Mr. Rodman provided the committee with packet of the 6 Foreclosed properties that was discussed at the last meeting. Mayor Starrs did speak with Max Spann and they do not do auctions for small properties. Committee went over each property. Mayor Starrs agreed to reach out to the county to get information on the properties that have houses on them and Deputy Mayor Shipps will sit with Tax Assessor Rich Motyka to get assessments on the properties.

Drive thru Trick or Treat--Committee Van Horn talked to the Knowlton Lion's club regarding having the drive thru trick or treat during their annual Halloween event.

Playground--Mayor Starrs stated that the playground is being cleaned twice a day which is a change from the prior meeting discussion which was that the playground was going to be cleaned once a day.

NEW BUSINESS

Verizon Service in Knowlton--Mayor Starrs received a contact person with Verizon Wireless and had them look at the cell coverage at the Knowlton Fire House. After a service call they did set up a system that is providing Fire & Rescue with better cell service. Verizon is doing a study on why Knowlton township cell service is so bad in Knowlton Township.

CenturyLink Petition at BPU--Mayor Starrs found out that there is a petition that was submitted to the BPU eliminating their local office and local contact. Mayor Starrs does not have a copy of the petition but will forward it to the committee once she gets it.

CORRESPONDENCE

MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve September 14, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2020 Public Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Mayor Starrs and carried to approve September 14, 2020 Public Session Meeting Minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT--No public comments

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve to adjourn tonight's meeting at 8:54 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Shipps

Municipal Clerk