

**TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
January 25, 2024**

The meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held on this date at the Knowlton Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Shipps. Mayor Shipps led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Shipps 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 Express Times as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk’s office.”

Roll Call: Bates--yes Cuntala—yes, Mazza—yes, Van Horn-yes, Shipps—yes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

2024-23 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session

Motion by Shipps, Second by Cuntala and carried to go into executive session at 7:05 p.m

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 by Shipps, Second by Cuntala and carried to come out of executive session at 8:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Limited To 20 Minutes With 3 Minutes Per Member Of The Public

Ms. Tara Mezzanotte informed the committee that Warren County appointed her as their representative for lower Delaware wild and scenic. Ms. Mezzanotte informed the committee she would need to resign her position as representative for Knowlton as she can only represent one entity. Ms. Mezzanotte stated Ms. Michelle St. Andre was willing to take over the position as Knowlton's representative. The committee advised Ms. Mezzanotte that nominating a representative will be put onto the February meeting agenda.

Ms. Sharon Valentine addressed the committee regarding the truck traffic on Decatur Street. Mayor Shipps advised Ms. Valentine that the committee did receive her email with her concerns regarding the increase in truck traffic. Mayor Shipps reached out to Commissioner Lori Ciesla and invited her to February's township meeting to address residents' concerns.

Mr. Chuck Walsh advised the committee that Blirstown recently passed a resolution of support in the restoration of the passenger rail service via Amtrak. Mr. Walsh will provide a copy of the resolution passed by Blirstown for discussion at the next township meeting.

Mr. Rene Mathez states he is not in favor of the railroad restoration as it will bring an influx of people and could impact open space within the Township.

Allison Baley addresses the concern of possible derailment of the proposed train and the impacts it would have on the environment.

DEPARTMENT REPORT

Recreation Director- Dennis Lembeck

Mr. Lembeck discussed the proposed recreation event dates for the year 2024.

Easter egg hunt- March 23rd at 11 am with a rain date of March 24th.

Clean Community Day- September 14th at 8:30 am with a rain date of September 15th.

Community Day- September 28th at 12 pm with a rain date of September 29th

Halloween Party- October 26th at 6 pm hosted by the Lions Club

Christmas Tree Lighting- December 6th at 6:30 pm with a rain date of December 7th.

Mr. Lembeck discussed storing the new AED for Tunnel Field inside the new shed which all coaches will have the passcode for easy access.

Mr. Lembeck requested an increase in recreations budget due to increase in pricing for required water testing and the replacement of the UV bulbs. Mayor Shipps requested Mr. Lembeck send an email with his proposal.

Zoning Department- George Boesze

Mr. Boesze discussed revising the Townships zoning application. Mr. Boesze states when an individual submits a zoning application, it requires supporting documentation to be included. Mr. Boesze would like to require the tax collector to review such application and certify that the individual is up to date on taxes.

Mr. Boesze proposed an increase in set zoning fees as follows:

Additions/accessory structures/ residential renovations- \$50.00

New residential construction- \$100.00

Commercial/ new business/ change of use- \$50.00

Commercial renovations/additions- \$100.00

Drive way permits- \$150.00

Drive way escrow- \$1500.00

Mr. Boesze addresses there is a late fee currently in place for zoning application which he feels could be eliminated. Committeeman Bates suggests enforcing a resubmittal fee on applications that are missing required documentation. The fee would be enforced on the third attempt to resubmit an application at the rate of 50% of

initial application fee. Township attorney Tara St. Angelo will draft an updated fee schedule ordinance with the suggested fees from Mr. Boesze including a resubmittal fee for the committee's review.

Mr. Boesze wanted to bring the attention to the committee regarding local retail buses in neighboring towns selling items and gifting cannabis to customers. Township Attorney Tara St. Angelo states the Township of Knowlton prohibits all cannabis uses within the Township. Ms. St. Angelo suggests amending the ordinance for cannabis and including retail buses.

I-80 NJDOT & 611 PennDOT- Tara Mezzanotte

Ms. Mezzanotte updated the committee that she met with Assemblyman DeMaio regarding rock wall mitigation and Route 80. Assemblyman DeMaio addressed the truck traffic concerns on Decatur Street and will have safety protocol requests within their resolution to the NJDOT including proper signage.

Ms. Mezzanotte addressed the NJDOT construction yard on Simpson Road. There was a permit issued for temporary use by the zoning officer. Ms. Mezzanotte asked the committee if the zoning officer or Township engineer be will enforcing the plan specifications NJDOT submitted to the zoning official in which the permit was approved for. Mayor Shipps states the committee will discuss for the next Township meeting.

Committeeman Van Horn left the meeting at 9:00 p.m. His vote will be marked as absent.

RESOLUTIONS

2024-24 Resolution Confirming Appointment Of Eric K. Snyder As The Affordable Housing Administrative Agent For The Township Of Knowlton And Confirming The Appointment Of Maggie Faselt As His Assistant

WHEREAS, Eric K. Snyder, A.I.C.P, P.P. was appointed as Knowlton Township's administrative agent for the purpose of providing affordability control services for all affordable housing within the Township pursuant to Resolution 2024-02 adopted by the Knowlton Township Committee on January 4, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Snyder receives a stipend in the amount of \$_____ in connection with the administrative agent position; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Snyder employs an assistant, Maggie Faselt, to aid him in carrying out his administrative agent duties;

WHEREAS, Mr. Snyder supervises all of Ms. Faselt's work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. Maggie Faselt is hereby appointed as assistant to the Administrative Agent.
2. Ms. Faselt shall not receive a stipend from the Township nor will the stipend for the administrative agent position be increased.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Mayor Shipps will speak with the Township CFO to determine Mr. Snyder's hourly rate as Mr. Snyder was salary based in past years. Resolution 2024-24 tabled.

2024-25 Resolution For Supplemental Funding Request

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program ("State") provides loans and/or grants to Municipal and County governments and grants to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the acquisition and development of lands for outdoor recreation and conservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton has previously obtained a Green Acres grant of \$400,000.000 from the State to fund the following project(s): Green Acres Project # 2113-03-079; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton desires to further the public interest by requesting an additional Green Acres grant of \$500,000.000 to fund the project(s); and

WHEREAS, the state shall determine if the supplemental funding request is complete and in conformance with the scope and intent of the Green Acres Program, and notify the applicant of the amount of the funding award; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of Knowlton, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. Mayor Shipps is hereby authorized to:
 - (a) Request such a loan and/or such a grant;
 - (b) Provide additional information and furnish such documents as may be required, and
 - (c) Act as the authorized correspondent of the above-named applicant, and
2. The applicant agrees to provide the local government/nonprofit share if a match is required.
3. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations in its performance of the project.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-absent, Shipps-yes**

2024-26 Reappointment Of Interim Municipal Court Administrator

WHEREAS, Kayleigh Keggan, was appointed on January 4th, 2023, as an interim Municipal Court Administrator for the shared Municipal Court of Allamuchy Township and Knowlton Township; and

WHEREAS, Kayleigh Keggan is currently considered an interim Municipal Court Administrator pursuant to N.J.S.A.2B:12-11(e) since she was hired after May 24, 2011 and does not hold a Municipal Court Administration Certification, and

WHEREAS, the statute further states, “Any person so appointed may, in consultation with the judge of the municipal court, be reappointed as a Municipal Court Administrator, on an interim basis, for two subsequent one-year terms. The Municipal Court Administrator appointed on an interim basis may be reappointed for a fourth, and if necessary, a fifth additional one-year term, provided that the municipal court administrator is currently enrolled in a certification program and needs additional time to complete the program”; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that it hereby reappoints Kayleigh Keggan as Interim Municipal Court Administrator for an additional one-year-term commencing on January 25, 2024.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-absent, Shipps-yes**

2024-27 Authorizing A Professional Services Agreement To Michael J. Hanifan For Municipal Prosecutor For The Shared Court Of Allamuchy Municipal Court

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton ("Township") requires a Municipal Prosecutor for the Allamuchy Municipal Court for the calendar year of 2024; and

WHEREAS, Christine Rolef, Chief Finance Office/Purchasing Agent, has determined and certified in writing that the value of these services will exceed \$17,500; and

WHEREAS, the Township has agreed to retain Michael J. Hanifan, Esq. of the Law Offices of Michael J. Hanifan located 3 Main Street, Newton, NJ 08760 provide the necessary legal services for the shared courts of Allamuchy and Knowlton Municipal Courts in an amount not to exceed \$26,000. There shall be an additional fee for special court sessions in the amount of \$110.00 per hour for the Calendar Year 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Township appoints, John Caleca, III, Attorney-At-Law, as the alternate prosecutor. Payment to John Caleca, Esquire shall be paid by Michael J. Hanifan, Esq. in his absence.

WHEREAS, the term of this contract is for the 2024 calendar year; and

WHEREAS, the contract with is for a total amount for 2024 Calendar Year not to exceed \$26,000; plus \$110.00 per hour for special court sessions and was not solicited through receipt of sealed bids or competitive contracting, therefore the requirements of N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5 (Anti Pay-to-Play Legislation) apply; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Anti Pay-to-Play Legislation, The Law Offices of Michael J. Hanifan submitted to the Township the Political Contribution Disclosure Form, New Jersey Business Registration Certificate, Stockholder Disclosure Certification and Business Entity Disclosure Certification as required; and

WHEREAS, said professional services may be retained without competitive bidding pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey appoints The Law Offices of Michael J. Hanifan as Municipal Prosecutor and John Caleca, III, Esquire as Alternate Prosecutor for the Allamuchy and Knowlton Municipal Court.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-absent, Shipps-yes**

2024-28 Resolution To Appoint Louis P. Mellinger, Esq. As Judge Of The Allamuchy And Knowlton Township Shared Municipal Court

WHEREAS, the Township of Allamuchy and Knowlton have an established Shared Municipal Court; and

WHEREAS, a Judge must be appointed to preside over same; and

WHEREAS, Louis P. Mellinger, Esq. a licensed New Jersey Attorney has heretofore served in that capacity; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to adopt this resolution reflecting that fact;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved on this 25th day of January 2024 that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2B:12-4(A) that Louis P. Mellinger, Esq. is hereby appointed as Judge of the Allamuchy Township Municipal Court for a term of three (3) years effective January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2026.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-absent, Shipps-yes**

2024-29 Authorizing A Professional Services Agreement To Scott Wilhelm, Attorney At Law As Public Defender And Gregory Gianforcaro, Attorney At Law As The Alternate Public Defender For The 2024 Calendar Year

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton ("Township") requires a Public Defender for the Township of Knowlton for the calendar year of 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Township has agreed to retain Scott Wilhelm, Attorney-At-Law in the State of New Jersey as the Municipal Public Defender for the Calendar Year 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Township appoints Gregory Gianforcaro, Attorney-At-Law, as the alternate Public Defender.

WHEREAS, the term of this contract is for the 2024 calendar year; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that Scott Wilhelm, Esq. is appointed the Municipal Public Defender and Gregory Gianforcaro is appointed the alternate Municipal Public Defender.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-absent, Shipps-yes**

2024-30- 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 Cuntala, second by Mazza and approved with the exception of the voucher submitted by Carl Shuster for the maintenance of the historic commission's website by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-absent, Shipps-yes**

NEW BUSINESS

Recreation Event Dates

Discussed during recreation department reports.

Mailbox Replacement Policy

Mayor Shipps discusses the policy that was in place regarding any damage to mailboxes during snowstorms. The currently policy states the Township is responsible only for damage caused by the snowplow, not from the impact of the snow that was removed off the roadway. Any resident who has made a complaint of damage, the DPW supervisor will inspect and give report to the committee. Attorney Tara St. Angelo will draft a written policy stating such including a flat standard fee of \$50 for damaged mailboxes.

Resignation of George Trangone

Mayor Shipps announced the resignation of Mr. Trangone and thanked him for his time with the Township. Mayor Shipps discussed finding a replacement to help with mowing at tunnel field or have DPW take over that area of mowing.

Mayor Shipps addressed the request from KAA to have the recreation department line the fields for sporting events. The committee agreed to have KAA continue to line the fields.

KAA Shed

Mayor Shipps discusses purchasing a new shed to store KAA equipment at Tunnel Field. Two quotes were supplied to the committee depending on the size of the shed. Tabled until next meeting.

Historic Website

A voucher was submitted for the yearly maintenance fee of the historic commission's website through GoDaddy.com. The committee discussed offering a page on the Townships website instead of paying for another website separately. The committee declined paying the submitted voucher for annual website maintenance.

Planting at Tunnel Field-

Ms. Michele St Andre requested \$350 for plants, mulch and basic plantings throughout Tunnel Field.

**Motion made by Shipps, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Van Horn-absent, Shipps-yes**

MEETING MINUTES

December 11th Public Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Shipp, second by Cuntala and carried to approve December 11th public session meeting minutes.

December 11th Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Shipp, second by Cuntala and carried to approve December 11th executive session meeting minutes.

January 4th Public Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Shipp, second by Cuntala and carried to approve January 4th public session meeting minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT- AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment

EXECUTIVE SESSION

2024-31 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session

Motion by Shipp, Second by Cuntala and carried to go into executive session at 11:00 p.m.

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. Attorney Advice

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 by Shipp, Second by Cuntala and carried to come out of executive session at 11:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Shipp, second by Cuntala and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting at 11:15 pm.