

**TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
January 13, 2025**

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 Van Horn. Mayor Van Horn led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Van Horn 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: Baley---yes, Bates—yes, Mazza—yes, , Shipps—yes, Van Horn-yes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

2025-19 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session

Motion by Shipps, Second by Bates and carried to go into executive session at 7:00 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. 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 Bates and carried to come out of executive session at 7:50 p.m.

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

Ms. Pamela Rusweiler addressed the committee regarding the filters for the reverse osmosis systems.

Committeeman Bates states that the Township has paid for those filters and in return, all five filters that homeowners are entitled to should be provided up front. Committeeman Bates states the Township attorney will need to reach out to Portasoft to discuss getting those filters.

Ms. Sharon Valentine addressed the committee regarding the reverse osmosis system manual and when she will be receiving a copy. Committeeman Bates states acting clerk Pierson has a PDF version she can forward onto residents or print out a copy. Ms. Pamela Rusweiler advised that it was in discussion that Portasoft may be responsible for providing the complete manual.

Mr. Vince Gaeta addressed the committee regarding the completion date of the construction on Route 46, specifically the paving. Committeeman Bates advised Mr. Gaeta it should be complete by June.

Mr. Mark Savacool addressed the committee regarding a property he obtained in a Sheriffs sale in 2023 on Ramsaysburg Road. He was unaware his deed included the property next door which has unpaid taxes. Committeewoman Shipps states she has been in contact with Mr. Savacool multiple times regarding squatters on the property and unpaid taxes. Committeewoman Shipps states in speaking with Mr. Savacool, he was aware that there were back taxes due when purchasing the property at the Sheriffs sale. Mayor Van Horn states the committee will talk to the Township Attorney.

DEPARTMENT REPORT

Transportation: I80-611-Amtrak

Ms. Tara Mezzanotte states Congressman Kean will take the lead for the Delaware Water Gap area congressional representatives.

PENNDOT has been easy to work with in regard to the 611 project. Ms. Mezzanotte states there will be an email sent out regarding Knowlton becoming a consulting party for this project.

Ms. Mezzanotte states the National Parks Service has a public comment period open for a fee schedule to go into effect for residents to enter at Kittatinny Point. The committee was not informed of this public comment period. Ms. Mezzanotte suggests becoming the National Parks Service Liaison for Knowlton Township. Mayor Van Horn states the committee will discuss with Township attorney and make a motion at the next Township meeting.

Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Project

Ms. Mezzanotte suggests appointing a Liaison on the Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Project. Ms.

Mezzanotte suggests Ms. Michelle St. Andre.

Ms. St. Andre states she would be happy to take on the roll. Mayor Van Horn states a formal resolution will be on for the next Township meeting appointing Ms. St. Andre.

Knowlton Fire and Rescue

Alex Weber provides reports to the Township Committee. New members are currently in the training program for fire and EMS.

Recreation Department:

Mr. Dennis Lembeck suggests April 12th with a rain date of April 13th for the Easter egg hunt. Clean community day will be October 4th. Mr. Lembeck suggested Community Day be September 27th with a rain date of September 28th with the help of KAA. Mr. Lembeck asks the committee for an update on the basketball courts. Mayor Van Horn states the hoops should be arriving sometime this week.

DPW supervisor Brian Peck suggests a nature trail near the tennis court area over the train tracks. Mr. Bob McNinch states a trail is possible according to the master plan.

Mr. Rene Mathez suggests starting a trail subcommittee moving forward with this project. Rene Mathez, Bob McNinch, Brian Peck and Megan Davis were interested in participating in the subcommittee.

Motion made by Bates, second by Van Horn and approved by roll call vote:

Bates-yes, Baley-yes, Mazza-yes, Shipps-yes, Van Horn-yes to approve forming the trail subcommittee.

RESOLUTIONS

2025-20 Authorization To Enter Into Inter-Local Agreement With Blairstown Township For A Chief Financial Officer

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton and the Township of Blairstown have expressed interest in renewing an inter-local agreement for shared Chief Financial Officer services; and

WHEREAS, this agreement shall be effective from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2024

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that an interlocal agreement with the Township of Blairstown for Chief Financial Officer Services is hereby approved and that the Mayor is hereby authorized to sign said interlocal agreement on behalf of Knowlton Township

2025-21 Enabling 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 Green Acres grants of \$ 900,000 from the State to fund the following project(s): Green Acres Project # 2113-03-079

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton desires to further the public interest by requesting an additional Green Acres grant of \$565,000 from the State to fund the projects; 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

WHEREAS, the applicant is willing to use the State's funds in accordance with its rules, regulations and applicable statutes, and is willing to enter into an Amendment of the Agreement with the State for the above-named project;

NOW, THEREFORE, the governing body/board resolves that:

1. Mayor Frank Van Horn 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.

2025-22 Resolution Adopting Fair Share Affordable Housing Obligations For The Fourth Round

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Supreme Court, through its rulings in Southern Burlington County NAACP v. Mount Laurel, 67 13 N.J. 151 (1975) and Southern Burlington County NAACP 14 v. Mount Laurel, 92 N.J. 158 (1983), has determined that every municipality in New Jersey has a constitutional obligation to provide through its land use regulations a realistic opportunity for its fair share of its region's present and prospective needs for housing for low- and moderate-income families; and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2024, Governor Murphy signed P.L.2024, c.2. into law, establishing a new framework for determining and enforcing municipalities' affordable housing obligations under the New Jersey Supreme Court's Mount Laurel doctrine and the New Jersey Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et al.); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(f)(1)(b), each municipality must adopt a binding resolution no later than January 31, 2025 determining its present and prospective fair share obligation for the Fourth Round; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Directive #14-24 issued by the Administrative Office of the Courts on December 13, 2024, “[a] municipality seeking a certification of compliance with the [Fair Housing Act] shall file an action in the form of a declaratory judgment complaint and Civil Case Information Statement (Civil CIS) in the county in which the municipality is located” within 48 hours of adopting the municipal resolution of fair share obligations; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(d), the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs issued “a report on the calculations of regional need and municipal obligations for each region of the State” on or about October 18, 2024 (the “DCA Report”); and

WHEREAS, the DCA Report set the municipal obligation for Knowlton Township as follows:

Present Need: 4

Prospective Need: 32

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(f)(1)(a), a municipality may determine its present and prospective fair share obligation for affordable housing consistent with the established methodologies; and

WHEREAS, the Township accepts the conclusions set forth in the DCA Report; and

WHEREAS, the Township’s calculation of need is entitled to a “presumption of validity” because it complies with Sections 6 and 7 of P.L. 2024, c. 2; and

WHEREAS, the Township specifically reserves its rights to:

- a. Adjust the Township’s fair share obligations based on a Vacant Land Adjustment, a lack of public water or sewer infrastructure (i.e. a Durational Adjustment), a survey pertaining to present need pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:93-5.2(a) and N.J.A.C. 5:93-Appendix C), and / or all other applicable adjustments, permitted in accordance with applicable statute, regulations or law;
- b. Revoke or amend this Resolution and the Township’s Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations to account for decisions of a court of competent jurisdiction or a change in applicable legislation; and
- c. The right to take any contrary position, or adjust its Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations,

in the event of a third party challenge to the Township's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations.

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

1. Knowlton Township hereby determines, based on the DCA Report and advice of the Municipal Planner and Attorney, to adopt the obligations set forth in the DCA Report as its binding Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations:
2. The adoption of this Resolution and the aforementioned Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations is subject to all reservations of rights, which specifically include, without limitation, the following:
 - a. The right to adjust the Township's fair share obligations based on a Vacant Land Adjustment, a lack of public water or sewer infrastructure (i.e. a Durational Adjustment), a survey pertaining to present need pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:93-5.2(a) and N.J.A.C. 5:93-Appendix C), and / or all other applicable adjustments, permitted in accordance with applicable statute, regulations or law with such adjustments to be adopted as part of the municipality's Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.;
 - b. The right to revoke or amend this Resolution and the Township's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations to account for decisions of a court of competent jurisdiction or a change in applicable legislation; and
 - c. The right to take any contrary position, or adjust its Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations, in the event of a third party challenge to the Township's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligations.
3. The Municipal Clerk and Municipal Attorney are authorized to take all actions required by N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(f)(1)(b), including:
 - d. Filing a Declaratory Judgment Complaint, along with this Resolution and a Case Information Statement, in the appropriate venue with the Program or any other such entity as may be determined to be appropriate, to initiate an action within 48 hours of the adoption of this Resolution pursuant to the requirements of P.L.2024, c.2, and AOC Directive #14-24
 - e. Publishing this Resolution on the Township's website.
4. The Municipal Attorney, Municipal Planner, and Planning Board are authorized to take all actions to draft documents necessary to comply with all Fourth Round affordable housing obligations, including drafting a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, an Affordable Housing Trust Fund Spending Plan, and effectuating ordinances and resolutions.
5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Resolution 2025-22 Tabled until the next Township committee meeting.

2025-23 Resolution Appointing An Affordable Housing Subcommittee

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(2)(a), the Township Planning Board must adopt a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan addressing its present and prospective fair share obligation for the Fourth Round by June 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has determined that it is in the best interest of the Township to appoint a subcommittee to draft such plan to present to the Planning Board; and

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

1. The following persons are appointed as members of the Affordable Housing Subcommittee:
 - a. Mayor Frank Van Horn
 - b. Committeeman Michael Bates
 - c. Planning Board Member Adele Starrs
 - d. Open Space Commission Member Rene Mathez
2. The Affordable Housing Subcommittee is authorized to work with the Municipal Attorney and Municipal Planner to draft documents necessary to comply with all Fourth Round affordable housing obligations, including drafting a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, an Affordable Housing Trust Spending Plan, and effectuating ordinances and resolutions.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Resolution 2025-23 Tabled until the next Township committee meeting.

2025-24 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 Van Horn, second by Mazza and approved by roll call vote:
Bates-yes, Baley-yes, Mazza-yes, Shipps-yes, Van Horn-yes

MAYOR APPOINTMENTS

Land Use Board

James Mazza

1-year term, expiring on 12/31/2025, Class I

Rene Mathez	1-year term, expiring on 12/31/2025, Class II
Matthew Baley	1-year term, expiring on 12/31/2025, Class III
Joe Werner	4-year term, expiring on 12/31/2028 Class IV
Tracey Allen	2-year term (unexpired term). expiring on 12/31/2026 Class IV
Tara Mezzanotte	2-year term, expiring on 12/31/2026 Class IV, Alt. #2

Motion made by Van Horn, second by Mazza and approved by roll call vote:

Bates-yes, Baley-yes, Mazza-yes, Shipps-yes, Van Horn-yes approved land use board appointments

NEW BUSINESS

Municipal Building Generator

Mayor Van Horn states the generator at the Municipal building generator does not have an automatic switch. The Township is receiving quotes and the committee will discuss at the next Township meeting.

Cross Acceptance Committee- tabled

Flagpole Quote for Tunnel Field

Mayor Van Horn states one quote was received for \$4,500 to upgrade the flagpole at tunnel field. The committee will discuss at a later date.

NSU/ DEP Notice of Violation-

Committeeman Bates states the Township is in communication with NSU regarding maintenance at the sewer plant. The committee would like to discuss with the Township attorney before moving forward.

MEETING MINUTES

December 18th Public Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Van Horn, second by Mazza and approved by roll call vote:

Baley-yes Bates-yes Mazza-yes Shipps-yes Van Horn-yes

December 18th Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Van Horn, second by Mazza and approved by roll call vote:

Baley-yes Bates-yes Mazza-yes Shipps-yes Van Horn-yes

PUBLIC COMMENT- AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Vince Gaeta addressed the upcoming meeting with JCP&L and Met Ed regarding power outages.

Committeewoman Shipps states the committee is aware of the meeting and Committeewoman Shipps would like to attend. There are issues with their transmission lines which have yet to be resolved.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Van Horn, second by Mazza and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting at 9:30 pm.