

**TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
February 27, 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

2025-36 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session

Motion by Mazza, Second by Bates and carried to go into executive session at 8:00 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 9:20 p.m.

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

No public comment

DEPARTMENT REPORT

Transportation: I80-611-Amtrak

RESOLUTIONS

2025-30- Resolution Approving The Payment Of \$40,000 From The Knowlton Township Open Space Fund For The Preservation Of The Ullman Property

WHEREAS, the NJ Green Acres Program recommends that each County set aside 7% of the developed and undeveloped area in the County for recreation; and

WHEREAS, a main goal of the Knowlton Township Master Plan is to provide recreational facilities for residents of all ages; and

WHEREAS, The Nature Conservancy, a private group dedicated to preserving open space, has provided the lead and a path using matching funds from various groups towards the purchase and preservation of a 188-acre parcel of land in Knowlton Township; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township for decades has sought to preserve this 188-acre property due to its environmental importance, its pristine C1 stream, its size, its combination of forested areas and wetlands and its scenic beauty; and

WHEREAS, the County has agreed to take ownership and maintenance responsibilities for this property following purchase by The Nature Conservancy from the property's owners; and

WHEREAS, the County plans to maintain this land as a public park; and

WHEREAS, having a County public park within Knowlton Township will greatly benefit the residents of Knowlton Township; and

WHEREAS, the Knowlton Township Open Space Advisory Committee at its meeting in September 10, 2024 recommended that the Township transfer \$40,000 of our Open Space Funds to The Land Conservancy to be used along with other funds obtained by The Land Conservancy towards the purchase of the property by The Land Conservancy and;

WHEREAS, \$40,000 represents a contribution of approximately 3% of the cost to purchase the property and;

WHEREAS, if this property were preserved through the State Farmland Preservation program the Township would contribute approximately \$200,000 from our Open Space Fund towards the cost of preserving the land.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and the Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren and the State of New Jersey approve the transfer of \$40,000 from the Township's Open Space Fund to The Nature Conservancy to be used along with other funds obtained by The Nature Conservancy from Green Acres, the County and other land conservancies for the purchase of this property and the ultimate transfer of ownership to Warren County for the purpose of a County park.

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

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

2025-31 Resolution To Support Publishing Legal Notices On Official Government Websites

WHEREAS, the sunset provision of March 1, 2025, imposed under P.L. 2024 c.106 is fast approaching in what was a temporary solution that allowed local governments to comply with the public notice requirements under the law in time for annual reorganization meetings in January; and,

WHEREAS, local government officials serve as the stewards of property taxpayer dollars and should no longer be required to subsidize the newspaper industry with revenues collected from publishing legal notices in the press; and,

WHEREAS, long before NJ Advanced Media's announcement that it was terminating daily print publications in January of 2025, local government officials found it increasingly difficult to comply with the public notice requirements

under the law as the media has become almost exclusively digitized and struggled to retain staff, resources, and publications; and,

WHEREAS, legislation that will authorize local governments to publish legal notices on a local government's official website will streamline an antiquated and overly burdensome process and save valuable time, resources, and property taxpayer dollars; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Knowlton does in fact, hereby urge state leaders to pass legislation that will authorize municipalities, counties, school districts, and all local governments to publish legal notices in a clear, transparent, and timely manner on a local government's official website.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to Governor Phil Murphy, Senate President Nicholas Scutari, Speaker of the General Assembly Craig Coughlin, Senator INSERT SENATOR HERE, Assembly members INSERT ASSEMBLY MEMBERS NAMES HERE, and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

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

2025-32 Resolution Authorizing Mayor And Clerk To Execute A Shared Services Agreement With Hardwick Township For Nixle Community Information Services

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton will renew the contract with Everbridge, Inc. for Nixle community information services for a period of two years; and

WHEREAS, the price of such services shall be \$3,400.00 per year; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Township to continue to share such service with the Township of Hardwick; and

WHEREAS, copies of the Shared Services Agreement between the Township of Knowlton and the Township of Hardwick will be available for public inspection upon the adoption of this Resolution; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the Mayor and Township Clerk are hereby authorized to execute a Shared Services Agreement for Community Information Services Between Knowlton Township and Hardwick Township in substantially the same form as attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

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

2025-33 Resolution Appointing A Representative To The Paulins Kill Partnership Wild And Scenic River Project

WHEREAS, Michelle St. Andre serves as Knowlton Township's representative on the Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic Management Council; and

WHEREAS, as required by Congress, the Management Council is responsible for administering the River's Management Plan in partnership with the National Park Service; and

WHEREAS, the Management Plan protects and enhances the values that designate such rivers as National Treasures, including high water quality, recreational opportunities, historic and cultural significance, geological features, ecological integrity, and scenic beauty; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township supports the Partnership Wild and Scenic River Program in part because it ensures the protection of existing local and private landowner rights, as outlined in federal legislation available at <https://www.rivers.gov/legislation>, including:

- **Section 6(c) of the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**, which states that neither the Secretary of the Interior nor the Secretary of Agriculture may acquire lands by condemnation for inclusion in a national wild, scenic, or recreational river area if such lands are within an incorporated city, village, or borough that has in force a duly adopted, valid zoning ordinance conforming to the purposes of the Act.
- **The Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**, which stipulates that state and local zoning laws and ordinances in effect at the time of enactment satisfy the requirements under Section 6(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1277(c)).

WHEREAS, the Foodshed Alliance, in partnership with Knowlton, Hardwick, and Blairstown Townships, is conducting research and outreach to determine whether the Paulins Kill meets the eligibility and suitability criteria for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Program (The Reconnaissance Phase); and

WHEREAS, if The Reconnaissance Phase concludes that the Paulins Kill is likely to meet the program's criteria, Congressional representatives will be petitioned to introduce a **Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic Study Bill**, which would appropriate federal funding through a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and a 501(c)(3) organization, such as the Foodshed Alliance, to advance the next steps, including:

- Establishing a formal Study Committee with representation from each municipality, and
- Developing a Management Plan for the river.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Knowlton appoints Michelle St. Andre to represent the township in all matters related to the Paulins Kill Partnership Wild and Scenic River Project, including as a member of the current **Reconnaissance Project Team**, a potential **Study Committee**, and a potential **Management Council**, effective immediately.

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

2025-34 Resolution To Establish A "Trail Advisory Subcommittee" And Approve Planning Of A New Recreational Trail In The Brugler Preserve

WHEREAS, the Knowlton Township Master Plan states as a main goal providing recreational facilities for residents of all ages.

WHEREAS, the Knowlton Township Master Plan proposes the building of additional recreational trails within the Township as they provide public health, economic and transportation benefits.

WHEREAS , the Township has numerous areas wherein new recreational trails could be constructed including the 43 acre Brugler Preserve.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and the Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren , and the State of New Jersey hereby establish a “ Trail Advisory Subcommittee “ , whose purpose will be to prepare plans for new trails, develop funding sources including grants to cover cost of building new trails and establish plans for the maintenance and upkeep of these trails.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and the Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, and the State of New Jersey nominates Bob McNinch (Chair) . Renee Matez. Brian Peck, Tara Mezzanotte and Megan Davis to serve as members of the “ Trail Advisory Subcommittee “ for a term of two (2) years.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and the Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren and the State of New Jersey approves the “ Trail Advisory Subcommittee’ to proceed with layout plans, funding plans , etc all necessary for building a new trail through the Township owned Brugler Preserve ,connecting to Tunnel Field and providing safe access to the historic lime kiln located within the Brugler Preserve.

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

2025-35 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 Shipps, second by Baley and approved by roll call vote:
Baley-yes, Bates-yes, Mazza-yes, Shipps-yes, Van Horn-yes**

NEW BUSINESS

Community Day

Tabled until March 10th meeting.

Fire and Rescue tires

Moved to executive session

Tunnel Field Support

Ms. Michelle St. Andre is requesting \$350.00 for the pollinator garden to cover costs of supplies and educational materials for the community.

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

Baley-yes Bates-yes Mazza-yes Shipps-yes Van Horn-yes approved for \$350.00

Spring Clean Up

Knowlton Township Spring Clean up is scheduled for June 9th through June 14th. Vouchers will be available for pick up two weeks prior.

DPW uniforms

Committeewoman Shipps addressed the cost of DPW uniforms. The committee discussed different options to lower the cost. The committee agrees to look at different companies and request that all DPW uniforms are of all the same color when purchasing.

Committeewoman Shipps discussed having both the Municipal and DPW buildings septic's pumped. The committee agreed to have both septic's done.

MEETING MINUTES

January 13th 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

January 13th 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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Van Horn, second by Mazza and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting at 9:20 pm.