

MINUTES
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE/BOARD OF HEALTH
WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025
7:30 PM

Franklin Township Municipal Building, 202 Sidney Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867

Due to equipment failure, no meeting recording was made of this meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Donaruma at 7:31 pm. Mayor Donaruma read the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) Statement and led the flag salute.

Roll Call: Sebastian Donaruma (present) Donald Scott Edelmann (present)
Jessica Moustakas-Blew (present) Deanna Seiple (absent) Alexa Tarby (present)

Also present: Igor Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi & Cohen, P.C.)
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources (CFO/HR)
Robert Geib, President, Quakertown Fire Company/Emergency Medical Services
Matt Naughton, Franklin Township Board of Education

Mayor Donaruma briefly explained the agenda.

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only:

Craig Repmann, 397 Sidney Road, questioned if the Township had received estimates from the Township Engineer regarding the Capoolong Creek trail repairs and maintenance project. Mayor Donaruma indicated that estimates had not yet been provided.

Proclamations & Presentations: None.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the January 28, 2025, Township Committee/Board of Health Work-Session/Regular Meeting & Executive Session minutes: Edelmann Second: Moustakas-Blew
Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Edelmann (Aye) Moustakas-Blew (Aye) Seiple (Absent) Tarby (Aye)

Payment of Bills:

Motion to approve the Bills List: Tarby Second: Edelmann
Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Edelmann (Aye) Moustakas-Blew (Aye) Seiple (Absent) Tarby (Aye)

Ordinances: None.

Resolutions:

1. Resolution 2025-21: Resolution of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Establishing an Economic Development Ad-Hoc Committee for Purposes of Fostering Economic Development in the Township.

Mayor Donaruma explained the resolution's ability to facilitate the Township Committee's desire to retain the services of former Township Mayors, Michael Homulak and Craig Repmann, for the Township's ongoing efforts to progress with the New Municipal Building and Ingerman (Affordable Housing behind the Cracker Barrel Restaurant) projects.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2025-21: Tarby Second: Moustakas-Blew
Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Edelmann (Aye) Moustakas-Blew (Aye) Seiple (Absent) Tarby (Aye)

2. Resolution 2025-22: Resolution of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Creating an Ad-Hoc Committee for Purposes of Capoolong Trail Remediation, to be Comprised of the Residents of Franklin.

Mayor Donaruma explained that the resolution would allow the Township to support a group of volunteers in their efforts to take care of the Capoolong Creek Trail. He recommended changing verbiage in the draft resolution regarding prohibiting the utilization of power tools so as not to unduly prohibit potential individuals who may otherwise be authorized. The Township Attorney provided the correct language to add to the resolution.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2025-22 as amended: Tarby Second: Edelmann
Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Edelmann (Aye) Moustakas-Blew (Aye) Seiple (Absent) Tarby (Aye)

Old Business:

1. Capoolong Creek Trail Repair and Maintenance Report and Update.

Mayor Donaruma reported positive feedback regarding the Township's investigation into a potential grant to assist with the project.

2. New Municipal Building (43 Lower Landsdown Road) – Status Update

Mayor Donaruma reported on the status of the upgrades to the New Municipal Building, indicating that there was not much more to report on since the last meeting, but the project was still progressing.

New Business: None.

Committee Member Reports:

Mayor Donaruma explained the absence of Deputy Mayor Seiple, indicating that she was attending the North Hunterdon Ladies last home game of the season and encouraged those present to attend if the meeting ended early enough.

Committeewoman Moustakas-Blew reported that she had attended a Recreation Commission meeting on January 30th and provided a list of scheduled events for the year.

Committeewoman Tarby reported that she had attended a Cross-Acceptance Plan meeting held by the County Planning Division in the County Complex on Route 12. She explained that the County is addressing the State Preliminary Development/Re-Development Plan and requesting that municipalities review their Master Plans and compare them to the State guidelines. She indicated that an additional meeting will be held on March 6th and that the meeting is open for anyone to attend.

Committeewoman Tarby further reported on the events of the prior evening's Land Use Board meeting, indicating that concerns were raised over a misunderstanding of the verbiage on the Land Use Board's Meeting Agenda. She explained that the Land Use Board is working on finalizing the verbiage to be utilized in the Master Plan in response to the Township Committee's request to remove Cannabis Businesses from the Township's Master Plan.

Committeeman Edelmann reported on the activities of the Police and Public Works Departments. He focused on the Department of Public Works, explaining that an employment advertisement for a Senior Laborer had been posted. He reported that the Township had run low on the salt utilized to respond to snow and ice events, that a new shipment had just arrived, and explained the amount of salt needed to address the Township's roadways. He further reported that the new hire was doing well. He advised that snow that starts at night takes time to be addressed on all roads. He further advised that the department would begin addressing potholes when the timing was appropriate. Mayor Donaruma expressed his appreciation for the department. The Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources (CFO/HR) clarified that the employment advertisement was being placed in anticipation of the upcoming retirement of an employee.

Comments from the Public:

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, questioned the status of a permit application from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Division of Fish and Wildlife, for the purpose of allowing the volunteers to begin working on the maintenance of the Capoolong Creek Trail. Mayor Donaruma indicated that the application submission would begin now that the Ad-Hoc Committee resolution had been approved. The Township Attorney advised that the Ad-Hoc Committee is an advisory committee and would be bringing their efforts to the Township Committee for approval. Committeewoman Tarby responded to further questions by Ms. Basile regarding a resident's complaint made at the Land Use Board meeting regarding soil moved at the site of a project. She indicated that the Land Use Board Clerk had investigated the matter and had been advised that the effort was made in response to a top-soil preservation requirement for the project, and that the professionals had indicated the controls were adequate. Former Mayor Michael Homulak responded to Ms. Basile's question regarding a follow-up on a gas leak in the Township, indicating that the activity that resulted in the leak had been stopped and the site was considered safe.

Matt Naughton, Franklin Township Board of Education, introduced himself as a liaison between the Township Committee and the school board, indicating he was looking forward to working together.

Robert Geib, President, Quakertown Fire Company/Emergency Medical Services (EMS), thanked the Township Committee for their efforts to assist with the acquisition of a new ambulance and indicated that he was seeking to formalize the funding plan. He briefly explained his interest in formalizing a Memorandum of Understanding and ensuring that a line-item had been made in the municipal Budget. He further explained the company's efforts to finance a new ambulance, and that delivery was expected in the spring. Mayor Donaruma briefly explained the history of the request to the new Township Committee members. The CFO explained how municipalities utilize a lease, indicating that government entities lease as a purchase plan. Upon questioning by the Township Attorney, a brief explanation was provided regarding the amount.

Executive Session:

Mayor Donaruma explained the need to enter Executive Session, that no action was anticipated to be taken, and that all attendees of the meeting could wait outside of the meeting room except for the Committee, the Township Clerk, the Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources (CFO/HR) and the Township Attorney.

Motion to enter executive session: Tarby
All in favor. Motion carried.

Second: Edelmann

Committee entered Executive Session at 7:56 pm.

Topics discussed:

1. Attorney-Client Privilege/Litigation/Contractual – Lease of Township Owned Property – Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS).
2. Attorney-Client Privilege/Contractual – Potential Lease of Township Owned Property – Current Municipal Building (202 Sidney Road).

Committee exited Executive Session at 8:32 pm.

Motion to exit executive session and resume regular meeting: Edelmann
All in favor. Motion carried.

Second: Tarby

The Township Attorney explained the topics discussed in Executive Session, that no action would be taken, and that minutes would become available once the need for confidentiality was no longer required.

Action by the Committee: None.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Tarby Second: Edelman

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk



Adopted: 02/27/2025