

MINUTES  
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE/BOARD OF HEALTH  
WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025  
7:30 PM

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

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Donaruma at 7:30 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 (present) Alexa Tarby (present)

Also present: Igor Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi & Cohen, P.C.)  
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk

Mayor Donaruma briefly explained the agenda.

**Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only:**

Frank Pinto, representing Furlong Farm, introduced himself and explained his association with the farmland preservation request being addressed during the "Old Business" portion of the meeting.

Craig Repmann, 397 Sidney Road, questioned the Township Committee's Executive Session topic regarding leasing the current Municipal Building. Mayor Donaruma explained that the Township Committee was exploring an option and that such a lease would only take place if it made financial sense. Mr. Repmann explained the prior Township Committee's plan to auction off the current Municipal Building property once the Township's operations were moved to the New Municipal Building and further questioned whether the Township would have to go out to bid for the lease. The Township Attorney indicated that he would investigate Mr. Repmann's concerns.

**Proclamations & Presentations:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Motion to approve the February 13, 2025, Township Committee/Board of Health Work-Session/Regular Meeting & Executive Session minutes: Moustakas-Blew Second: Edelmann

Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Edelmann (Aye) Moustakas-Blew (Aye) Seiple (Abstain) Tarby (Aye)

**Payment of Bills:**

Motion to approve the Bills List: Seiple Second: Tarby

Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Edelmann (Aye) Moustakas-Blew (Aye) Seiple (Aye) Tarby (Aye)

**Ordinances:** None.

Resolutions:

1. Resolution 2025-23: Resolution to Support Publishing Legal Notices on Official Government Websites.

Mayor Donaruma explained that the municipality is required to publish legal notices in newspapers, that such requirements have become cost extensive, and that most newspapers have become digital in their publication formats. He indicated that the resolution is a request to change the publication requirements to posting on government websites. The Township Attorney additionally explained that many Hunterdon County newspapers had reverted to exclusively digital formats and no longer provide printed options which are specifically required by State statute regarding government legal notices. He indicated that a temporary legal measure was adopted at the end of the prior year to allow for digital legal notices.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2025-23: Tarby

Second: Moustakas-Blew

Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Edelmann (Aye) Moustakas-Blew (Aye) Seiple (Aye) Tarby (Aye)

Old Business:

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

Mayor Donaruma reported that efforts were progressing to address the maintenance and repairs of the trail. He indicated that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) application to authorize the volunteers to work on the trail was in the process of being completed. The Township Attorney updated the Township Committee on his efforts to contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife representative, indicating that the representative had confirmed that the trail is owned solely by the State and that there was no private property involved. The Township Attorney recommended that another meeting be scheduled with the State representative.

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 he had spoken with the contractor earlier in the day and that the progress remains “on track”. He explained that the back-ordered materials had been delivered and that the floors would be installed once the touch-up painting was completed.

3. Farmland Preservation – Furlong Farm (Pittstown Road – Block 27, Lot 12 (Franklin) and Block 21.04, Lot 19.04 (Alexandria)).

Frank Pinto, representing Furlong Farm, explained that Nick Dunbar had attended a prior meeting. He further explained that the State and County believes that Franklin Township is not in favor of farmland preservation. Mayor Donaruma explained that the Township is not opposed to preservation but that preservation efforts must be strategically made in balance with the Township’s Master Plan. Committeeman Edelmann further explained that it was not a question of lack of interest in preservation, but that there is only a small percentage of intended preservation left in the Township’s Master Plan, and there is little fear that the Furlong Farm is in danger of development due to the natural barriers of

the property. Deputy Mayor Seiple questioned the Township's benefits for preserving the property. Mr. Pinto explained that established homeowners do not want new houses built on neighboring properties. Mr. Pinto further explained that the money the Furlongs received for the preservation of the property could be utilized to further develop the farm. Upon questioning by Committeewoman Tarby, Mr. Pinto confirmed that the money received did not need to be utilized to further develop the farm but could be "pocketed". Mayor Donaruma explained that the Township had requested and received a list of priority farmland to be preserved from the County and indicated that the Furlong Farm is not high on that list. Upon being questioned by Mr. Pinto as to why limits are set on the amount of farmland to be preserved, Mayor Donaruma explained that it was the Township Committee's responsibility to keep taxes as low as possible, which require a strategic balance between development and preservation. Upon questioning by Mayor Donaruma, no member of the Township Committee expressed interest in supporting the preservation of the Furlong Farm property.

New Business: None.

Committee Member Reports:

Mayor Donaruma reported that there was a power outage the prior week and that he had been contacted by a resident who had been without power for several days. He indicated that the Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L) representative had been communicative but had explained that she was not able to expedite the restoration process for the resident. Mayor Donaruma further reported that he had received a notice from JCP&L regarding tree-trimming efforts to begin in early April. He also reported that Flemington Borough had expressed their sincerest appreciation for Quakertown Fire Company's efforts to assist them with the horrific fire that had affected Main Street on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Committeewoman Moustakas-Blew reported that the Franklin Township School would hold a Kindergarten Round-up around March 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> for students that would attend Kindergarten in September. She further praised the efforts of Quakertown Fire Company, specifically their Emergency Medical Services (EMS) unit, for their efforts regarding a medical incident concerning a student at the school. She explained that the EMS staff was "great" with the students and that Chief Patkochis had visited the student in the hospital. Deputy Mayor Seiple also expressed her praise for the fire company's efforts.

Committeeman Edelman reported that Chief Snyder was looking into speed signs and that he was working out the finances with the Chief Finance Officer (CFO). He explained that a prior purchase deal had been made but did not go through.

Comments from the Public:

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, provided positive feedback for the Township's NIXLE emergency contact messaging system.

Dave Giordano, 5 Lower Landsdown Road, questioned the events of the Land Use Board meeting. Committeewoman Tarby and Committeeman Edelman explained that the Land Use Board is working on the wording needed to remove Cannabis Businesses from the Master Plan. The Township Attorney requested that Land Use Board questions be addressed to the Land Use Board Clerk.

**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 and the Township Attorney.

Upon confirmation of the absence of all but the required attendees, the Township Clerk stopped audio recording of the meeting.

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

Second: Tarby

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:03 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 9:00 pm.

Motion to exit executive session and resume regular meeting: Seiple  
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: Edelman Second: Seiple

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk

  
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Adopted: 03/13/2025