

MINUTES  
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
WORK-SESSION/REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021  
7:30 PM

**(Location Changed to Online Application: Zoom - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82240811284>)**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koury at 7:31 pm. Mayor Koury read the OPMA Statement and led the flag salute.

Roll Call: Mayor Philip Koury (present) Deputy Mayor Diane Burgess (present)  
Sebastian Donaruma (present) Mike Homulak (present)  
Craig Repmann (present)

Also present: Katrina L. Campbell, Municipal Attorney  
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk  
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer  
Alan Dilley, Public Works Supervisor (~8:45 pm)  
George Reichert, Office of Emergency Management  
Virginia Evans, Board of Education  
Heidi Wohlleb, Township Auditor, Nisivoccia  
Elizabeth Shaw, Rural Awareness  
Chief Brian Turner, Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS)  
Dick Malgran, Attorney, Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS)

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only:

No one from the public spoke regarding Agenda Items.

Proclamations & Presentations: None.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the June 10, 2021 minutes Work-Session/Regular Meeting and Executive Session:

Repmann Second: Homulak

Roll call: Burgess (Abstain) Donaruma (Abstain) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

Payment of Bills

Motion to approve the Bills List: Burgess Second: Homulak

Roll call: Burgess (Aye) Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

Ordinances:

1. Public Hearing and Final Adoption of Ordinance 2021-07: Calendar Year 2021 – Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank.

Motion to open Public Hearing: Repmann Second: Donaruma All in favor. Motion carried.

No members from the public came forward to speak.

Motion to close Public Hearing: Donaruma      Second: Repmann      All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion to adopt: Homulak      Second: Repmann  
Roll call: Burgess (Aye)   Donaruma (Aye)   Homulak (Aye)   Koury (Aye)   Repmann (Aye)

Resolutions:

1. Public Hearing of CY 2021 Municipal Budget

Motion to open Public Hearing: Repmann      Second: Donaruma      All in favor. Motion carried.

The Township CFO explained the 2.2% increase from the previous year, the effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on municipal finances, the staff's efforts to increase efficiency and reduce costs, and the Township's efforts to seek out additional sources of revenue. Upon Deputy Mayor Burgess' questioning, the CFO explained that the purchase of a new roof for the Public Works Building was included in the Building Expenses line item in the Capital Budget.

No members from the public came forward to speak.

Motion to close Public Hearing: Donaruma      Second: Burgess      All in favor. Motion carried.

a. Resolution 2021-27: Adoption of the CY2021 Municipal Budget.

Motion to adopt: Homulak      Second: Donaruma  
Roll call: Burgess (Aye)   Donaruma (Aye)   Homulak (Aye)   Koury (Aye)   Repmann (Aye)

2. Resolution 2021-28: ABC License Renewal – RIMA ENTERPRISE, LLC – Clinton Wine & Spirits, Inc.

Motion to adopt: Burgess      Second: Donaruma  
Roll call: Burgess (Aye)   Donaruma (Aye)   Homulak (Aye)   Koury (Aye)   Repmann (Aye)

3. Resolution 2021-29: EMEX Energy Auction Agreement.

Upon Mayor Koury's request for comparison to Hunterdon County's energy bid, the CFO indicated that the Township was still doing better with its own contract.

Motion to adopt: Burgess      Second: Donaruma  
Roll call: Burgess (Aye)   Donaruma (Aye)   Homulak (Aye)   Koury (Aye)   Repmann (Aye)

1. Resolution 2021-30: Re-Appointing Tax Assessor.

Motion to adopt: Homulak      Second: Repmann  
Roll call: Burgess (Aye)   Donaruma (Aye)   Homulak (Aye)   Koury (Aye)   Repmann (Aye)

1. Resolution 2021-31: Refund Duplicate Tax Payment – 83 Pittstown Road – Block 4, Lot 11.

The CFO praised the dedication of Jeff Ward, Tax Assessor, before explaining that the subject company of Resolution 2021-31 keeps sending tax collection checks for other Franklin Townships in New Jersey to the Municipal Building, and that the Tax Collector's Office keeps reminding the company of the issue. He further explained that the Tax Collection Department has begun returning duplicate checks before they can be deposited.

Motion to adopt: Donaruma Second: Repmann

Roll call: Burgess (Aye) Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

1. Resolution 2021-32: Resolution of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Authorizing a Grant to the Franklin Township School to Restore the Little Red Schoolhouse.

The Township Attorney explained an alteration to the initial draft of the resolution that adds in language that gives the Township's Open Space Committee and Rural Awareness oversight over the project to ensure historic accuracy. She further explained that the resolution limits how much funding the Township will provide. Elizabeth Shaw, Rural Awareness, explained that all of Quakertown was placed on the National Historic Register and offered those present access to read the documentation. She thanked the Township for the inclusion of Rural Awareness in the resolution and further explained that the inclusion of Rural Awareness in the resolution allowed the organization to match the Township's grant if needed, as the schoolhouse was a contributing building to Quakertown's placement on the National Historic Register.

Motion to adopt: Burgess Second: Repmann

Roll call: Burgess (Aye) Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

Old Business:

1. Discussion – Status of Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS)

Committeeman Donaruma welcomed Chief Brian Turner and other members of Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS) and explained the Committee's interest in re-evaluating the status of the Township's properties as a response to the purchase of 43 Lower Landsdown Road as the new Municipal Building. Dick Malgran, Attorney for QVEMS, explained his contact with the Township Attorney and addressed concerns that the property was not being used in accordance with the lease agreement. Chief Brian Turner, QVEMS, apologized for a delay in response due to technical difficulties and explained the membership of the organization (15 members total, 10 EMTs and 5 Active Other), their activities, how they answer calls and the storage location of the ambulance. Upon questioning, he explained that the ambulance was sometimes stored at members' residences and that the last patient transport performed by QVEMS took place on November 8, 2020.

Committeeman Donaruma explained that the Town Committee was looking out for the best interests of the Franklin Township residents. Mayor Koury explained that the Committee was not looking to cause

controversy and that rumors that the Committee was requesting that QVEMS merge with Quakertown Fire Company were false. He reiterated that the Committee's interest in the property was in response to the purchase of 43 Lower Landsdown Road as the new Municipal Building, and that the Committee was looking for better usage out of all municipally owned properties. Ken Weinberg, QVEMS member, mentioned the Township's controversial decision to cease utilizing QVEMS as its official emergency medical services ten years prior. The Township Attorney responded to Chief Turner's questions about the Township being approached for purchase of the property, explaining that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Game, had approached the Township for trail access via the property but, upon inspection, realized that the property would not be suitable due to the slope at the back of the property causing access difficulties. Chief Turner indicated that QVEMS would not have objections to sharing the parking lot for trail access and explained that the property was originally level but had been filled with soil from other properties.

Chief Turner responded to the Township Attorney's questions regarding the service being provided to Kingwood, explaining that the ambulance was being stored on the property and that typical QVEMS hours of operation took place on the weekends. Upon Committeeman Donaruma's questioning, he clarified that QVEMS would occasionally work during the week, but standard hours were between Friday, 1800 (6:00 PM) and Monday, 0600 (6:00 AM). Mr. Malgran explained QVEMS' cooperation with other organizations and addressed concerns that QVEMS was not in compliance with the terms of the lease. Chief Turner invited Committeeman Donaruma to attend a meeting of the QVEMS Executive Board. Upon questioning by Deputy Mayor Burgess, Chief Turner clarified the organization's membership, that they do not generally sit at the building waiting for calls, that the ambulance was stored there and briefly explained procedures to pick up the ambulance when a call takes place. He invited Deputy Mayor Burgess to attend a meeting of the QVEMS Executive Board. Mayor Koury reminded those present to be mindful of OPMA rules and explained the Committee's interest in gathering information in the spirit of cooperation. Mayor Koury responded to Mr. Weinberg's comments regarding the history of controversy between the Township Committee and QVEMS, explaining that the controversy was handled by a different Committee and that the current Committee sought to move forward from this point. He explained that lack of information has resulted in assumptions.

Mr. Weinberg questioned the status of the millstones he donated to Rural Awareness and recommended that one be placed in the Little Red Schoolhouse. It was explained that one of the millstones was on display in the lobby of the Municipal Building. Elizabeth Shaw, Rural Awareness, indicated that further discussion could take place regarding placing the millstone in the Little Red Schoolhouse.

Committeeman Donaruma explained that the recommendation to merge QVEMS with Quakertown Fire Company was a personal response as a possible solution to QVEMS' expressed need for more membership and did not reflect any discussion or recommendations of the Town Committee. Chief Turner explained his understanding of the meeting discussion as an effort to address miscommunication between the Committee as a result of historic controversy and expressed his appreciation of Mayor Koury's explanation of the Committee's efforts to move forward.

2. Request for Proposals (RFP) – COAH – Development of Affordable Housing on Block 5, Lots 2 & 3  
– Reject all 2019 Proposals and Re-Advertise for New Proposals

The Township Attorney explained the need to formally reject the proposals received in 2019 and advised that the Township should adjust the specifications before advertising for new proposals. She further advised the Committee that the Township Planner and COAH subcommittee should meet to discuss the changes.

Motion to authorize the rejection of all 2019 proposals in connection to the COAH development of Affordable Housing on Block 5, Lots 2 & 3 and re-advertise for new proposals with the changes included by the Township Planner and subcommittee: Repmann Second: Donaruma

Roll call: Burgess (Aye) Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

3. Property Purchase – 43 Lower Landsdown Road (New Municipal Building) – Status Update

Mayor Koury and the Township Attorney updated those present on the status of the 43 Lower Landsdown Road property inspections, indicating that the septic and mechanical inspections had been completed, that the septic system was deemed “satisfactory”, but the Township was still awaiting the official report on the mechanical inspection. Upon questioning by the Township Attorney, the Committee agreed to test the well water on the property. The Township Attorney updated the Committee on the contract with the County to purchase a portion of the land. She explained the County’s interest in a Preliminary Assessment Report, that a report was done during the Township’s previous purchase of the gravel parking lot as a Green Acres requirement, and that she and the Township Clerk were searching their records for a copy of that report. She indicated that the report was not required but would be beneficial to advance the progress of the sale.

Committeeman Donaruma updated the Committee on his efforts to speak to the State regarding the requirements to move the Police Department. He indicated that he remained in contact with the state via email and had also acquired a contact phone number, but he had not received any returned calls. Committeeman Donaruma responded to Committeeman Repmann’s questions regarding Shared Service options and annual number of arrestees, indicating that detention of arrestees remained an issue for Shared Services and statistics would have to be acquired from Captain Timothy Snyder.

No members of the public came forward to speak upon Mayor Koury’s invitation.

Staff Administrative Reports:

**CFO:** The CFO reported that with the adoption of the Budget, the Finance Department would continue its efforts on the Audit. Upon Committeeman Repmann’s questioning, the CFO indicated that the Auditors would grade the Township well, that the Township still struggles with revenue but was comfortable with the Township’s current position.

**Administrative:** The Township Clerk reported that with the completion of the Primary Election, the Clerk’s Office has returned focus to filing, records retention, and adding to the Township website.

**OEM:** George Reichert reported that the OEM is seeking a grant for a new AED to be assigned to the OEM, and that he had met with the County for hurricane planning. The Township Attorney provided grant recommendations for the AED. Committeeman Donaruma indicated that Mr. Reichert should reach out to him outside the meeting as St. Catherine of Siena Church was looking to donate an AED.

**BOE:** Virginia Evans thanked the Committee for the grant to restore the Little Red Schoolhouse. She reported that classes were done for the year but that there was still some activity at the school due to the replacement of the school's windows in the spring and the current updates to the gymnasium. She further reported that the School's Business Administrator, Patricia Martucci, had retired and that the school had hired Lori Tirone as the new Business Administrator.

**New Business:**

1. Town Committee Summer Meeting Schedule

The Committee briefly discussed member availability during the scheduled July and August meetings.

Motion to cancel the July 22, 2021 and August 26, 2021 Town Committee meetings: Repmann  
Second: Burgess All in Favor. Motion carried.

**Board of Health:** None.

**Committee Member Reports:**

Committeeman Homulak reported that the Quakertown Fire Company's EMS had expressed growing concerns regarding the Hampton Inn. He indicated that the fire company was planning a cross functional meeting with the Police Department to address the growing concerns. He congratulated the Police Department on their successful deployment of NARCAM on Tuesday.

Deputy Mayor Diane Burgess updated the Committee on the COVID-19 vaccination status of Hunterdon County, citing a 60% vaccination rate, and indicated that she could not acquire a specific vaccination rate for the Township. She indicated that Franklin Township had experienced no deaths due to COVID-19 and remains at a lower infection rate. She reported on the successful completion of the Township Well Testing event and thanked Catherine Innella, Deputy Township Clerk, for her efforts as the primary point of contact. She further reported that the Township's Sustainable Jersey application had been submitted and should be receiving a response in July. She indicated that the Environmental Commission would be working on initiatives throughout the year, specifying education efforts regarding the State's single use place ban passed the previous year.

Mayor Koury reported that Darlene Green, Township Planner, had provided an analysis of possible ways to implement cannabis into the Township Code and requested that the topic be placed on the July 8<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda as an "Old Business" discussion item. He further reported that the Township Newsletter had been mailed and expressed his criticism of the timeframe between article acquisition and publication.

Mayor Koury acknowledged the arrival of Alan Dilley, Department of Public Works Supervisor, and offered him an opportunity to report on the status of the Department of Public Works. Mr. Dilley indicated that he did not have anything to report.

Comments from the Public:

No members from the public came forward to speak.

Executive Session:

The Township Attorney explained the need to enter Executive Session, that action was not anticipated to be taken, and that all attendees of the meeting could wait in the Zoom application's Waiting Room except for the Committee, the Public Works Supervisor, the CFO (in his capacity as Human Resources Officer), the Township Clerk, and the Township Attorney.

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

Motion to enter executive session: Repmann Second: Homulak  
All in favor. Motion carried.

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:50 pm.

Topics discussed:

1. Personnel – Department of Public Works
2. Contractual & Attorney/Client Privilege – Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS) Lease

Committee exited Executive Session at 9:46 pm.

The Township Clerk resumed audio-visual recording of the meeting.

Action by the Committee: None.

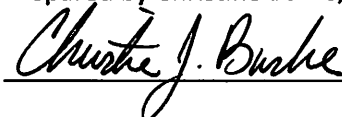
Mayor Koury wished everyone a happy Fourth of July Holiday weekend and a happy vacation to Committeeman Donaruma.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Repmann Second: Unrecorded All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:47 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk

  
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Adopted: 07/08/2021