

MINUTES
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORK-SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021
7:30 PM

(Location Changed to Online Application: Zoom - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87411374208>)

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koury at 7:32 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 (arrived at 7:38 pm)

Also present: Katrina L. Campbell, Municipal Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)
Igor V. Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer
George Reichert, Office of Emergency Management
Virginia Evans, Board of Education
James Witkowski, Board of Education

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 September 9, 2021, minutes Work-Session/Regular Meeting & Executive Session:

Burgess Second: Homulak

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

Payment of Bills

Motion to approve the Bills List: Burgess Second: Donaruma

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

The CFO explained the items on the Bills List as small standard payments.

Ordinances:

1. Introduction & First Reading of Ordinance 2021-10: An Ordinance of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Lease for Agricultural Purposes of Certain Property Owned by the Township and Not Required for Public Purposes.
 - a. Public Hearing and Final Adoption scheduled for October 28, 2021.

2. Introduction & First Reading of Ordinance 2021-11: An Ordinance of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Lease for Hunting Purposes of Certain Property Owned by the Township and Not Required for Public Purposes.
 - a. Public Hearing and Final Adoption scheduled for October 28, 2021.

The Township Attorney explained the results of the Bid Openings for both the Farmland and Hunting Leases, citing that one farmland property received no bids and each of the other properties received only one bidder for each type of lease. (Committeeman Repmann arrived at 7:38 pm.) The Township Attorney further explained the duration of the leases. Mayor Koury explained the amounts for each lease. Deputy Mayor Burgess and Committeeman Homulak recommended approving the leases. Upon questioning by Committeeman Homulak, the Township Attorney explained the timeline for approving the bid results to final adoption of the resultant ordinances, contract execution and authorization to begin utilization of the properties. She indicated that the farmer should be informed of his successful bid to allow him time to start planning. Upon questioning by Mayor Koury regarding maintaining the property that hadn't been bid upon, the Township Attorney recommended asking the farmer of the winning bids if there was something the Township could do to make the property more desirable for future leases.

Motion to Introduce Ordinance 2021-10: Homulak Second: Burgess

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

Motion to Introduce Ordinance 2021-11: Burgess Second: Donaruma

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

Resolutions: None.

Staff Administrative Reports:

CFO: The CFO informed the Committee that the Township had received the full amount for the Bond acquired for the purchase of 43 Lower Landsdown Road and that it was ready for the closing on the property. He explained that the Church had experienced difficulties removing one of the crosses from the building and had requested assistance from the Township. He further explained that upon bringing the matter to the attention of the Public Works Supervisor, the Church was directed to a former congregant for assistance. The Township Attorney explained that she had been in communication with the church's attorney. The CFO also reported on the status of the Tax Sale scheduled to take place in November.

Administrative: The Township Clerk advised the Committee that well tests were available for pickup in the Clerk's Office. Deputy Mayor Burgess clarified that that well tests were provided by Raritan Headwaters. The Township Clerk explained that the available test kits were focused primarily on hazards caused by flooding.

OEM: George Reichert updated the Committee on the status of recovery from Tropical Storm Ida.

BOE: Virginia Evans indicated that she did not have an official report and stated that school was open. Upon questioning by Mayor Koury, Ms. Evans explained that the school had utilized one “snow” day because of the flooding in the Township, and that the previously completed water remediation efforts had been successful and the basement had remained dry. She updated the Committee on the school’s COVID-19 status and explained that the school was always in need of substitute teachers, lunchroom employees and bus drivers.

Board of Health: None.

Old Business:

1. Alcohol Anonymous Request to Re-Open Municipal Building to Meeting and Large Gatherings.

The Township Attorney explained that once the building was open for one group it would have to be made available for all groups. The Township Clerk explained that the Township’s insurance provider has COVID-19 information that will have to be included in a required Facility Use Permit. Upon questioning by Committeeman Donaruma, the Township Attorney explained that there were no mandates regarding cleaning requirements and reminded the Committee that the Township staff also must use the building. Upon questioning by Committeeman Homulak, the Township Attorney provided examples from other municipalities. Deputy Mayor Burgess updated the Committee on the number of COVID-19 cases per week for the past month, citing two cases per week. Upon questioning by Mayor Koury regarding staff opinion, the CFO indicated it was the Committee’s decision and the Township Clerk indicated that the staff had expressed concerns regarding cleaning up after the group. Upon questioning by Committeeman Homulak, the Township Clerk and Deputy Mayor Burgess indicated that the group is comprised of anonymous individuals who may or may not be local. The Committee instructed the Township Clerk to obtain the staff’s opinion, update the Facility Use Permit with the required COVID-19 information, and contact Alcoholics Anonymous to explain that the Township would require strict adherence to cleaning up after a meeting. The Committee agreed to table further discussion.

Mayor Koury sought a status update on the timeframe required to move into the new Municipal Building. The Township Attorney updated the Committee on that status of the Landsdown Road Bridge repair, indicated that the repair was being outsourced by the County and may be repaired before the Sidney Road Bridge. The Township Attorney explained that the Township could utilize the building for meetings before fully moving the Municipal Building. Mayor Koury read correspondence he had sent to the County regarding status updates on the bridge repairs in the Township.

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

Mayor Koury explained that the CFO had already spoken regarding the status of the Bond and that the official closing date for the property purchase was Tuesday, October 28th, 2021. Committeeman Donaruma indicated that he would schedule a meeting with the Department of Corrections and an architect regarding moving the Police Department to the new building. The Committee discussed the need and requirements for a project manager, and the need for a subcommittee meeting regarding short term planning. The Township Attorney recommended contacting West Amwell for assistance and ideas.

New Business: None.

Committee Member Reports:

Committeeman Donaruma reported that Captain Snyder had indicated that the Township Police Department had been receiving complaints regarding speeding on roads being utilized as detours around the damaged bridges, and that anyone else receiving complaints can forward them to the Police Department. Mayor Koury indicated that Captain Snyder had attended a meeting regarding cannabis and would be providing the Committee with an update at the next meeting.

Committeeman Repmann advised the Committee of a request from the Recreation Commission for approval of a Halloween Trunk-or-Treat event to be held at the Elks field. The Township Attorney indicated that the event was an outdoor event with no concerns from the insurance company. The Committee expressed their approval.

Mayor Koury reported that the next Land Use Board meeting would take place on October 13th, 2021. He further reported that he had spoken with the Township Engineer regarding drainage issues on Doe Run and requested that the Township Engineer submit a report of his findings. He indicated that he and Committeeman Repmann had scheduled a meeting with a cannabis business applicant the following week and advised the Committee of a webinar being hosted by the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC) on September 28th, 2021, via Zoom. The Township Attorney indicated that she would forward a memorandum to the Committee regarding the CRC regulations and various licenses.

Comments from the Public:

Upon invitation to speak by Mayor Koury, James Witkowski, Board of Education, expressed his approval of the Town Committee's efforts.

Executive Session:

The Township Attorney explained the need to enter Executive Session, that action could be taken, and that all attendees of the meeting could wait in the Zoom application's Waiting Room except for the Committee, the CFO, the Township Clerk, and the Township Attorney. Igor B. Vikov, Attorney from Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen, the Township Attorney's office, was also permitted to observe.

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: Donaruma Second: Repmann
All in favor. Motion carried.

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:26 pm.

Topics discussed:

1. Personnel – Department of Public Works
2. Contractual & Attorney/Client Privilege – Outstanding Invoices

3. Contractual & Attorney/Client Privilege – Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS) Lease

Committee exited Executive Session at 9:36 pm.

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

Action by the Committee: None

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Repmann Second: Unrecorded

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:36 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk



Adopted: 10/14/2021