

**MINUTES
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORK-SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2022
7:30 PM**

**(Location Changed to Franklin Township School
226 Quakertown Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867 in the Theater.)
Masks are optional.**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koury at 7:33 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 (absent)
Craig Repmann (present)

Also present: Richard Wenner, Municipal Attorney
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources Officer
Captain Timothy Snyder, Police Department
Karen Sutton, Board of Education President

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 March 24, 2022 minutes Work-Session/Regular Meeting and Executive Session:

Donaruma Second: Burgess

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

Payment of Bills

Motion to approve the Bills List: Burgess Second: Donaruma

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

Ordinances: None.

Resolutions: None.

Staff Administrative Reports:

CFO: The CFO reported that the Finance Department was currently focusing on the Annual Budget and had begun preparing for the receipt of second quarter tax collection. He updated the Committee on the

status of Township's ARP (COVID-19 relief) grant funds. Upon questioning by Committeeman Repmann, he indicated that the Township Auditor was not involved with the administration of the Township's ARP grant funds.

OEM: The Committee briefly discussed the upcoming retirement of George Reichert, OEM Coordinator. Deputy Mayor Burgess requested suggestions for replacements.

ADMINISTRATIVE: The Township Clerk reported that the Department of Public Works had picked up the Township's Salem Oak Sapling the previous day and that it was currently being kept in a pot in the Municipal Building for safe keeping while an appropriate location is selected for planting. She further reported that the Township's annual liquor license renewal reminders had been sent by the State and that the Township had received an abnormally large number of raffle license applications in the past month, indicating an increased number of events in the Township.

POLICE: Captain Snyder, Police Department, reported on the March monthly activities of the Police Department, specifying background investigations, other investigations, arrests, motor vehicle warnings, tickets, accidents, radio calls, alarm calls, assist calls, animal complaints, property checks, and others. He indicated that tickets had increased as more people were getting out and that the following month would include a distracted driving crackdown. Upon questioning by Mayor Koury, Captain Snyder explained the Police Department's current Shared Services Agreements to assist and cooperate with other municipalities and the county.

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, requested an explanation of ticket revenue. Captain Snyder explained that revenue information would be acquired from the court. He and Committeeman Repmann further explained that ticket revenue was utilized to pay for court expenses and was not intended to generate revenue for the Township.

Frank Tota, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, questioned where ticket revenues could be found in the Budget. The CFO explained that ticket revenues would be included in "Permits and Fees" and were used to pay for the joint court that the Township shares with other municipalities. He further explained that the Township would incur a huge expense to host its own court. Captain Snyder reiterated that the Township could not profit from tickets.

BOE: Karen Sutton, Board of Education President, reported that the school Budget had been posted in the Hunterdon Democrat that morning and that the public hearing was scheduled for April 25th in the Franklin Township School. She further reported on the status of the repairs and maintenance of the school's underground oil tank. Upon questioning by Committeeman Repmann, Ms. Sutton indicated that the Budget was not materially different from the previous year. Deputy Mayor Burgess clarified that the Budget in question was strictly for the elementary school and that the regional high school budget was separate. The Committee and Ms. Sutton briefly discussed where residents could locate a copy of the proposed Budget.

Board of Health: None.

Old Business:

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

Committeeman Repmann read a brief update that he had received from Mike Chabra, Project Coordinator, and explained that further updates would be provided at the next meeting.

New Business:

1. Traffic Control –
 - a. Speed Limit Signs – Hamden Road
 - b. No Parking Signs – Frontage Road

Captain Snyder explained that Mike Mullen, 304 Hamden Road, had spoken to him the previous meeting expressing concerns on Hamden Road. He further explained that he had discovered that the road was not addressed in the Township Ordinance and provided a brief history of the speed limits on the road. He explained the procedures for setting speed limits. He indicated that he had forwarded his recommendation of including a speed limitation of 25 MPH on Hamden Road to the Township Attorney and Township Engineer.

Captain Snyder explained that tractor trailers had begun parking on Frontage Road during the COVID-19 pandemic and that the matter had been getting progressively worse. He clarified that the parking had been interfering with Clinton Town vehicles that require passage on the road to reach their fueling facility. He recommended that “No Parking or Idling” on Frontage Road be included in the Township Ordinance. Brief discussion followed. Mayor Koury indicated that Captain Snyder should follow up with the Township Attorney.

Committee Member Reports:

Committeeman Repmann indicated that he had already reported on the update to the New Municipal Building and reported that the Township’s Annual Fishing Derby was scheduled for the upcoming Saturday, April 16th, with a rain date of the following Saturday. He indicated that masks were not required.

Deputy Mayor Burgess reported that 500 trees had been authorized by the State’s Division of Forestry for distribution at the Township’s Tree Recovery Campaign Day to be held the following Saturday, April 23rd, between 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM at the current Municipal Building. She indicated that trees would be supplied at a limit of 5 trees per person and that information had begun to be distributed.

Mayor Koury reported that he had met with the Economic Development and Implementation Team (EDIT) on Tuesday night and that Marc Saluk, Hunterdon County Economic Development Director, had been in attendance. He explained that Mr. Saluk had recommended that the Township prepare a list of properties being considered for development. He advised caution regarding farmland preservation along county roads and encouraged smart preservation. Committeeman Repmann explained that the Open Space Tax was set to the minimum amount of collection allowed and the current amount in the

fund. Mayor Koury explained that utilization of the Open Space Fund had been authorized to assist with the restoration of the historic Little Red Schoolhouse.

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, requested an explanation of the Open Space Funds. The Township Attorney and Committeeman Repmann explained the history of the Open Space Tax, how it could be utilized, the Township's decision to reduce the amount collected and the steps needed to remove the tax. Deputy Mayor Burgess explained that the Open Space Tax was listed as a line item on the Tax Bill.

Frank Tota, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, also questioned the Committee regarding Open Space Funds and if the funds could be used to maintain the Capoolong Trail. Mayor Koury, Deputy Mayor Burgess and Committeeman Repmann explained that the State Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, owns the Capoolong Creek Wildlife Management Area and further explained the Committee's efforts to speak with the State regarding maintenance of the trail. It was further explained that the Hunterdon County Department of Parks and Recreation maintains the portion of the trail known as Landsdown Trail.

Rick Conley, 17 Landsdown Road, provided a brief history of the Capoolong Trail and explained that the trail had fallen into disrepair after the death of the former head of the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Mayor Koury, Deputy Mayor Burgess, and Mr. Conley cited the trail's connection to the Peach Exchange, the former train station, and a Superfund site.

Upon continuation of his report, Mayor Koury explained that the Land Use Board meeting had gone well the night before and that suggestions had been presented to the Land Use Board Chair and Township Planner regarding efforts to legally increase funds for the Township. Upon Elizabeth Basile's questions regarding the expiring school bond mentioned by Mr. Weiss at the Land Use Board meeting, Mayor Koury directed Ms. Basile to speak with the School Board of Education.

Karen Sutton, Board of Education President, confirmed that the introduced school budget was located on the school's website. Mayor Koury recommended that the school create email lists to forward information to subscribers.

Comments from the Public:

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, requested that the Master Plan Amendment that included cannabis business implementation be removed and that the Master Plan be returned to the original wording. Mayor Koury explained the timeframe for re-examination of the Master Plan and the costs associated with the Master Plan Review and subsequent amendments. Deputy Mayor Burgess recommended continuing to monitor the State before making additional changes. Upon Ms. Basile's and Mr. Tota's insistence that there would be no cost to remove the amendment, Mayor Koury advised that the matter should be brought to the Land Use Board.

Frank Tota, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, following Ms. Basile's comments, compared the cannabis business implementation amendment to the Master Plan, Ordinance 2022-01 and information provided by the

State. He described cannabis production as chemical processing. Deputy Mayor Burgess explained that the Master Plan provides a guideline regarding permitted and conditional uses in the Township and reiterated that there is a cost to altering it.

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, questioned what prevented a cannabis business from approaching the Land Use Board with an application. Mayor Koury reiterated that the matter should be directed to the Land Use Board. Ms. Basile indicated that she would return to the Land Use Board.

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 outside of the meeting room except for the Committee, the CFO/Human Resources Officer, the Township Clerk, Captain Timothy Snyder, 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: Repmann Second: Burgess
All in favor. Motion carried.

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:36 pm.

Topics discussed:

1. Personnel – Administration – Township Clerk
2. Personnel/Contractual – Police Department
3. Personnel/Contractual – Department of Public Works
4. Personnel – Administration – Chief Finance Officer

Committee exited Executive Session at 10:11 pm.

Motion to exit executive session and resume regular meeting: Repmann Second: Burgess
All in favor. Motion carried.

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

Action by the Committee: None.

Mayor Koury advised those present that the next meeting to be held on Thursday, April 28th, 2022, would be held at the same location.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Repmann Second: Donaruma

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:12 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk



Adopted: 4/28/2022