

MINUTES
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORK-SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022
7:30 PM

**(Location Returned to Franklin Township Municipal Building
202 Sidney Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867.)
Masks are optional.**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koury at 7:30 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 (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)
Igor V. Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources Officer
Captain Timothy Snyder, Police Department
Virginia Evans, Board of Education

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only:

No one from the public spoke regarding Agenda Items.

Proclamations & Presentations:

1. Resolution 2022-25: Proclamation – EMS Week – To Designate the Week of May 15-21, 2022, as Emergency Medical Services Week

As members of the Quakertown Fire Company’s emergency medical services were delayed in attending the meeting, Mayor Koury moved this proclamation to later in the meeting.

2. Resolution 2022-26: Resolution Designating the Month of May as “Bag Up NJ” Month

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the April 28, 2022 minutes Work-Session/Regular Meeting and Executive Session:

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

Payment of Bills

The CFO gave a brief statement explaining some items on the Bills List.

Motion to approve the Bills List: Burgess Second: Donaruma

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

Proclamations & Presentations: (continued)

1. Resolution 2022-25: Proclamation – EMS Week – To Designate the Week of May 15-21, 2022, as Emergency Medical Services Week

Motion to adopt: Burgess Second: Homulak

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

Mayor Koury thanked the members of the Quakertown Fire Company's emergency medical services for their efforts.

Ordinances:

1. Introduction & First Reading of Ordinance 2022-05: An Ordinance of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, Amending Chapter 75 Police Department, of the Code of the Township of Franklin to Include the Position of Chief of Police.
 - a. Public Hearing and Final Adoption scheduled for June 9, 2022.

Motion to introduce: Donaruma Second: Homulak

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

Resolutions:

1. Resolution 2022-24: Re-Appointing Township Clerk

Motion to adopt: Donaruma Second: Burgess

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

Mayor Koury thanked the Municipal Clerk for her work.

2. Resolution 2022-27: Refund Tax Overpayment – Consolidated Lots – Blocks 22 & 23, Various Lots

Motion to adopt: Burgess Second: Homulak

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

Motion to approve an increase of the Clerk's salary by \$5,000 as discussed in Executive Session on April 14th: Homulak Second: Repmann

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

Staff Administrative Reports:

POLICE: Captain Snyder, Police Department, reported on the April 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. Upon questioning, Captain Snyder indicated that advisory warnings would be issued for a length of time before administering tickets for violations of no parking on Frontage Road. The Township Attorney recommended putting up signs in anticipation of the adoption of Ordinance 2022-04.

CFO: The CFO reported that the introduction to the annual budget took place at the previous meeting and that the public hearing would take place at the following meeting. He indicated that his office is open to answering any questions the public may have. He further reported that the second quarter taxes were in and that posting was up to date. Upon questioning by Mayor Koury, the CFO explained that the current collection rate for the second quarter was 93% and that he had been receiving questions from the public seeking understanding of the budget document. Mayor Koury explained that the school bond was a school issue. The CFO explained that the municipality was informed regarding school finances in the same manner as residents based on the type of school system. Mayor Koury and Deputy Mayor Burgess requested that an advisory flyer be placed with the new tax bills and explained that the township is legally obligated to make school payments even if taxes had not been collected.

ADMINISTRATIVE: The Township Clerk advised that the Vote-By-Mail drop box on the side of the Municipal Building was open to receive Vote-By-Mail ballots and that County Sheriff Officers picked up the ballots daily.

BOE: Virginia Evans, Board of Education, indicated that she did not have anything to report as the Board of Education would have its next meeting on May 16th.

Board of Health: None.

Old Business:

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

Committeeman Homulak provided a brief update on the status of the New Municipal Building and indicated that plans were being reviewed by the subcommittee. He explained the need for complete plans from the architect before beginning the permitting process and applying for grants. Upon questioning by Deputy Mayor Burgess, Mr. Homulak indicated that supply chain shortages were a concern and that a phased approach had been considered.

New Business:

1. Engineer Recommendation – NJDOT FY2023 Local Aid Grant Application – Oak Grove Road Phase III – 220 Oak Grove Road to Croton Road (CR 579)

Mayor Koury and the Township Attorney explained that grants were being utilized to improve Oak Grove Road, that a third phase to the project would likely be approved, and that the third phase would complete the whole road.

Motion to authorize the Township Engineer to submit an NJDOT FY2023 Local Aid Grant Application for Oak Grove Road Phase III Project: Homulak Second: Donaruma

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

Committee Member Reports:

Deputy Mayor Burgess reported that the tree distribution event conducted by the Environmental Commission was a great success. She indicated that the event was led by John Bencoter with the assistance of residents. She explained that Resolution 2022-26 was in response to the statewide ban on single-use plastics that began on May 4th. She further explained that large stores could no longer supply plastic bags to their customers. She advised those present that well testing kits were available for purchase in the Municipal Building through the following Monday and recommended that everyone test their wells. She further advised that Raritan Headwaters had an interactive map on their website that residents could view.

Deputy Mayor Burgess further reported that she had met with Superintendent Diaz regarding the water issues at the school and indicated that she was advised that the school was responding to the oil leak that is scheduled to be remediated over the summer. Upon questioning by Mayor Koury and Committeeman Homulak, Deputy Mayor Burgess explained that the school was responding to water concerns of their own initiative and that they were working with their insurance company regarding the cost of remediation efforts.

Deputy Mayor Burgess advised those present that there would be a Meet & Greet event regarding the Capoolong Trail between various government agencies on Saturday, May 21st, 2022, and explained residents' initiative to see what needs to be done to maintain the trail. The Township Attorney explained that the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife was funded with hunting and fishing licensing fees and was not allowed to use that revenue for other activities. The Township Attorney indicated that the County had advised that a request be sent to them to see about taking over the trail from the state. The Town Committee requested that that Township Attorney draft said letter.

Deputy Mayor Burgess reported that the Department of Public Works (DPW) had started searching for a replacement of one of their trucks and that the cost of said replacement was in the Budget.

Committeeman Homulak reported that he had spoken with residents and answered their questions regarding the annual budget.

Mayor Koury reported that the Land Use Board had not held the meeting scheduled for the previous evening due to lack of quorum. He explained that residents had questioned the status of submitted Citizen Leadership Forms and that the Clerk had responded with an explanation of the purpose of the form and that there were currently no vacancies on the Land Use Board. He advised those present that the SADC representative would be at the next meeting regarding farmland preservation and that he had concerns regarding development in the Township.

Comments from the Public:

Richard Conley, 17 Landsdown Road, spoke regarding the Capoolong Trail, explaining his familial connection to the Division of Fish and Wildlife and his awareness of retirements in the division. Mayor Koury provided an additional explanation of the Township's efforts to maintain the trail and restore the historic buildings connected to it. Committeeman Repmann requested that safety concerns be expressed to the state.

Frank Tota, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, spoke regarding maintenance of the Capoolong Trail and suggested that pictures be sent along with the letter being drafted by the Township Attorney. Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, indicated that she was already working on taking pictures with John Thonet. Committeeman Homulak responded to Mr. Tota's questions regarding the safety status of the current Municipal Building, indicating that there were no issues forcing the staff out of the building. Mayor Koury responded to Mr. Tota's questions regarding the Land Use Board's involvement in the upgrades to the New Municipal Building, indicating that the Land Use Board would not be involved and that all permits would be a matter for the Construction Department.

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, requested a status update on the cannabis business request posed by Mr. Maynard at the previous Committee meeting. Mayor Koury indicated that there has been no additional contact.

Ingrid Taff, 41 Upper Kingtown Road, questioned if any other cannabis business requests had been received by the Township. Upon confirmation with the Township Clerk, the Mayor indicated that no other requests had been received by the Township.

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, indicated that he had received the Township Clerk's explanation regarding Citizen Leadership Forms and requested additional clarification regarding the process of making appointments. The Township Attorney provided a brief explanation. Mayor Koury advised that three or four Citizen Leadership Forms had been received in the last two years. Upon Mr. DeRites' criticism of the cancellation of the previous evening's Land Use Board meeting as an inappropriate way to conduct business, the Mayor and Township Attorney explained that the board consisted of volunteers and not paid employees. Upon further questioning by Mr. DeRites, Committeeman Homulak indicated that the Township was looking into placing a hybrid in-person and online meeting system in the New Municipal Building, explained the limitations of the "OWL" system, and that factors to be considered were cost, record keeping and management. Mayor Koury reminded those present that the Township could not require that a member of the public attend a hybrid meeting online if they desired to attend in person and that they would be required to cancel the meeting should a meeting room exceed capacity.

Frank Tota, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, requested a clarification of Land Use Board term limits. The Township Attorney explained the possibility of member reappointment and that there were no statutory limitations on reappointments.

Ray Buch, 10 Duke Court, requested that solutions be sought to attendance caps at meetings and questioned what caused them. It was explained that the Fire Code regarding building occupancy caused attendance caps to buildings. The Township Attorney advised that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a change in statute regarding online meetings.

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, questioned if Erica Amon had been on the Land Use Board in the past and why she hadn't been reappointed. Mayor Koury indicated that she had been on the board three years ago but had chosen to resign for work reasons.

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, 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 recording of the meeting.

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

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:29 pm.

Topics discussed:

1. Personnel/Contractual – Police Department
2. Personnel/Contractual – Department of Public Works

Committee exited Executive Session at 9:05 pm.

Motion to exit executive session and resume regular meeting: Repmann Second: Homulak
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.

Mayor Koury congratulated Igor B. Vikov on passing the Bar Exam.

Action by the Committee: None.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Repmann Second: Unrecorded

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk



Adopted: 5/26/2022