

**MINUTES**  
**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE/BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023**  
**7:30 PM**

**Franklin Township School, 226 Quakertown Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Philip Koury at 7:30 pm. Mayor Philip Koury read the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) Statement and lead the flag salute.

**Roll Call:** Mayor Philip Koury (present) Deputy Mayor Michael Homulak (present)  
Sebastian Donaruma (present) Craig Repmann (absent) Deanna Seiple (present)

**Also present:** Igor Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)  
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk  
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources (CFO/HR)  
Chief Timothy Snyder, Police Department  
Heidi Wohlleb, Township Auditor, Nisivoccia  
John Benscoter, Environmental Commission

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

Lori Vail, 10 Tara Way, expressed concern regarding the representation of her statements as reflected in the March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Township Committee Work-Session/Regular Meeting minutes. She specified her comments made after the Budget Presentation regarding having the Police Department paid for by the State. She clarified that her question should have read, "could some of the costs of patrolling the hotel be sent to the State" and that "the State should chip in" since they are occupying floors of the hotel.

**Proclamations & Presentations:**

1. Oath of Office – Police Officer – Damjan Nef

The Township Attorney administered the oath of office to newly hired Police Patrolman, Damjan Nef, in the presence of the Township Committee, staff, and members of the public.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Motion to approve the April 13, 2023, minutes Township Committee Work-Session/Regular Meeting & Executive Session: Homulak Second: Seiple  
Roll call: Donaruma (Abstain) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Absent) Seiple (Aye)

Chief Timothy Snyder and other members of the Police Department left the meeting at 7:37 pm.

**Payment of Bills:**

Motion to approve the Bills List: Donaruma Second: Homulak  
Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Absent) Seiple (Aye)

**Budget:**

1. Public Hearing and Final Adoption of Ordinance 2023-02: Calendar Year 2023 – Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank.

Mayor Koury read the following:

“This ordinance is a standard good practice that establishes a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and a Cap bank. The Cap bank preserves the ability to use funds in the future which is used to offset unfunded mandates from the State that can’t be planned for. This ordinance provides financial flexibility to the Township.”

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

No members of the public spoke regarding Ordinance 2023-02.

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

Motion to adopt: Homulak                            Second: Donaruma

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

2. Public Hearing of CY2023 Municipal Budget
  - a. Resolution 2023-30: Adoption of 2023 Municipal Budget of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, for the Year 2023

Mayor Koury read the following:

“Be it Resolved by the Committeepersons of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, that the budget hereinbefore set forth is hereby adopted and shall constitute an appropriation for the purposes stated of the sums therein set forth as appropriations, and authorization of the amount of:

- (a) \$ 2,563,172.18 (Item 2 below) for municipal purposes, and
- (d) \$ 27,427.41 (Sheet 43) Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Levy”

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

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, questioned how the school’s decision to raise taxes another one percent at their last meeting would affect the Township’s budget. Mayor Koury and the CFO explained that the school’s decision would not affect the Municipal Budget, that the taxes are separate and that the Municipal Tax Collector only serves as a pass-through for the collection of other agencies’ taxes. The CFO further explained that the Township had an agreement with the school regarding the availability of a police vehicle at the school, indicating that a vehicle would only be available if it was not needed elsewhere. Mayor Koury reiterated that the Township Committee had no jurisdiction or control over another agency’s budget.

Rick Conley, 17 Landsdown Road, questioned the cost of the Class III Officer for the school. Committeeman Donaruma explained that it had been made clear that the school would cover all costs associated with the officer.

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

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

The CFO and Township Auditor left the meeting at 7:46 pm. Mayor Koury introduced Heidi Wohlleb, Township Auditor, Nisivoccia, as she was exiting.

Ordinances: None.

Resolutions:

1. Resolution 2023-31: Appointment – Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator – Unexpired Term – Chris Vallat.

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

Mayor Koury explained the decision to appoint Chris Vallat as the new OEM Coordinator. Upon questioning by Rick Conley, 17 Landsdown Road, regarding the qualifications of Mr. Vallat, Committeeman Donaruma and Mayor Koury provided further explanation regarding Mr. Vallat's experience. Mr. Conley further commented on the experience of the new Police Officer.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Committee Member Reports:

Committeeman Donaruma reported on the efforts to hire the new Police Officer and the status of furniture donation for the New Municipal Building.

Committeewoman Seiple reported on the status of the newsletter. She explained that once the draft was approved, she would send it out. Committeeman Homulak indicated that he had some comments regarding the draft newsletter. John Benscoter, Environmental Commission, commented that email addresses had been collected at the Tree Recovery Campaign Day event, that the list was being shared with the Clerk's Office for inclusion in the Township's list of subscribers, and requested that the newsletter be delayed until the addresses were added. Mayor Koury indicated that he would prefer having the newsletter published and forwarded sooner rather than later.

Committeeman Homulak reported on the status of the New Municipal Building project bid package, thanking the Township Attorney, Clerk and CFO for their work. He explained that an extension of the timeframe for the receipt of bids and additional advertising efforts were being considered. He indicated

that an update would be included at the next meeting. The Township Attorney explained that the document was quite large and would require an extensive amount of time to review. Committeeman Homulak explained that the document would be handled digitally to save on printing costs. He further explained that he had received email correspondence from Lora Jones, the Township Historian, regarding the building. Committeeman Donaruma recommended a bid service website to which the Township Attorney advised caution.

Mayor Koury reported that the Land Use Board (LUB) had approved the Quakertown Solar Farm application at the previous night's meeting and explained that the project was not yet ready for construction. He further reported that Roger Soltys, the LUB Chairman, would be taking a leave of absence due to illness. Mayor Koury reminded the Township Committee that discussion still needed to take place regarding charging fees for the disposal of mattresses. Committeeman Homulak indicated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) subcommittee would be addressing that topic at their next meeting.

Mayor Koury reported that the Township Engineer had provided an update regarding the New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) plans to change the Route 78, Exit 15 interchange. He explained that he had been provided a copy of the plans and found them confusing. He further explained that he would be attending a meeting the following week with the Township's professionals. He indicated that he had requested the Township Engineer and Township Planner to specifically address concerns regarding access to the affordable housing development property located behind the Cracker Barrel Restaurant.

Mayor Koury advised those present of an electrical vehicle charging station grant opportunity and commented on the success of Tree Recovery Campaign Day. John Benscoter, Environmental Commission, explained that the boy scouts and others assisted at the event and that the Environmental Commission had distributed more than 300 trees due to donations.

Mayor Koury reported that the emergency exit stairs behind the current Municipal Building were currently being repaired and that the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Construction Department were working together to ensure proper repairs were made. He explained that the current Municipal Building could not host meetings until the repairs were complete.

Comments from the Public:

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, commented that the women's prison located in Union Township on Pittstown Road, would be closing this year and that discussions regarding the utilization of the property had begun. He expressed concerns regarding possible truck traffic and how the development of the property may affect Franklin Township's development opportunities. Mayor Koury explained that the prison property had its own sewer and water, and that the State was considering giving the property to Union Township. Mayor Koury expressed concerns regarding the Route 78, Exit 15 intersection.

Mr. DeRites further commented that speeding traffic on Locust Grove Road had not changed and expressed concern that there was not enough radar enforcement on the road. Committeeman Donaruma indicated that a new police officer had been hired and that he would speak with Chief

Snyder. Upon Mr. DeRites' expressed interest in speed humps, Committeeman Donaruma explained that the road did not meet the State's criteria for the inclusion of speed humps. Mayor Koury commented on the risks of conducting a traffic study.

Frank Tota, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, indicated that he wished to see the New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) plans to change the traffic pattern at the Route 78, Exit 15 interchange. Mayor Koury explained that the plans were still in the planning stages and expressed reluctance in handing out drafts at this stage.

Executive Session: None.

Action by the Committee: None.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Homulak    Second: Donaruma

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk

  
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Adopted: 05/11/2023