

MINUTES
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE/BOARD OF HEALTH
WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 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 (present) Deanna Seiple (present)

Also present: Igor Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer (CFO) (arrived at 8:20 pm.)

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only:

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, questioned an item on the Bills List, specifically the check for "David Nowak". The Township Clerk confirmed that the item was a return of unused escrow money due to the completion of a project.

Proclamations & Presentations: None.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the September 14, 2023, minutes Township Committee Work-Session/Regular Meeting: Homulak
Second: Donaruma
Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye) Seiple (Abstain)

Payment of Bills:

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

Ordinances:

1. Introduction & First Reading of Ordinance 2023-05: Ordinance of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Removal of the Deed Restriction Concerning Block 30, Lot 17 and Block 35, Lot 26, as Memorialized in the Township of Franklin Land Use Board Resolution Approved on June 28, 2023, and Memorialized on July 26, 2023.
 - a. Public Hearing and Final Adoption scheduled for October 26, 2023.

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

Mayor Koury briefly explained that the ordinance was in response to a hearing held by the Land Use Board (LUB) in which the board approved the removal of the deed restriction.

Resolutions:

1. Resolution 2023-50: Public School Security Administration Salary

The Township Committee tabled the resolution pending the receipt and review of additional contractual documentation.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Committee Member Reports:

Deputy Mayor Homulak provided a brief update on the status of the New Municipal Building Renovation Contract, indicating that the contractor had started the preparation work and submitted the required permits. Committeeman Repmann advised that Mike Chabra, the Project Coordinator, was working with the contractor. Upon questioning by Mayor Koury, Deputy Mayor Homulak indicated that it was unknown if the materials had been ordered.

Committeeman Repmann commented that he had been reflecting on a complaint made at the previous meeting regarding the Township's oversight on Patriots Day (September 11th) by forgetting to lower the flag to half-staff. He indicated that it was upsetting that the member of the public, and former employee of the Township, was passionate about the oversight but had not gone to the Municipal Building to advise the staff of the oversight and, instead, chose to complain during a public meeting. Mayor Koury commented that there was no intention of malice by the staff or Township Committee and that the staff had made efforts to prevent a repeat of the error. Upon questioning by Committeeman Repmann regarding lowering the flag on weekends or holidays, Committeeman Donaruma explained that he had spoken with Chief Snyder, Police Department, who would address the issue with the officers. Mayor Koury spoke regarding his personal connection to the 9-11 (Patriots Day) tragedy and reiterated that the oversight was not an intended slight and did not indicate the Township staff or Committee were unpatriotic.

Committeeman Donaruma reported that he had spoken with Chris Vallat, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator, regarding the gas leak incident that took place on the Garden State Growers property several weeks prior. He indicated that the local Fire Marshall and County were involved. Mayor Koury requested that Mr. Vallat advise the Township Committee of such events. Committeeman Donaruma further reported on efforts to address fireworks complaints, indicating that officers would follow-up with the person making the complaint, that dispatch was giving the calls to the Police and that the officers were investigating. He explained that complaints should be directed to dispatch and not the Township offices. Committeeman Donaruma also provided a brief update on efforts to move a school bus stop on Laurelton Trail.

Committeewoman Seiple apologized for not issuing the summer newsletter and indicated that anyone who had anything to submit to the newsletter would have a deadline of October 5th. She explained that it had become complicated to follow-up with requests to contribute to the newsletter and that anyone seeking to contribute should utilize Facebook or email to submit their contribution for review. She further explained that the Township's "Trunk or Treat" event will take place on Friday, October 27th and provided a brief explanation of where and how to participate in the event. She reported that the school year had started and commented on the success of "Back to School Night". She indicated that the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) had room for volunteers and that anyone interested in volunteering should contact the PTA through the link on the school's website. She further indicated that there was a need for bus drivers.

Mayor Koury reported that he had discussed road drainage complaints with the Department of Public Works (DPW) supervisor. He further reported that the Land Use Board (LUB) had continued their efforts to recommend updates to the Township ordinance regarding ground mounted solar energy systems.

Comments from the Public:

Bobby Kappauf, 1st Class Scout, introduced himself and explained that he was attending the Township Committee meeting to earn his Citizenship Merit Badge. Mayor Koury praised the mentorship and volunteering efforts of the Scouts and explained that the minutes for this meeting would be approved at the next Township Committee meeting.

Committeeman Homulak briefly interjected a clarification to Committeewoman Seiple's report, indicating that the Township's "Trunk or Treat" event would take place at the Clinton Elks.

Ingrid Taff, 41 Upper Kingtown Road, questioned if the officer stationed at a Grow-A-Row facility was provided by the Township or paid for by Grow-A-Row. Committeeman Donaruma indicated that he would investigate.

Frank Tota, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, commented that the staff responsible for lowering the flag at the Municipal Building should have an "attention to detail" and know why the flag is being lowered to half-staff. He further commented that the Land Use Board (LUB) minutes had been approved but were not posted on the Township website. Mr. Tota indicated that there is no definition of "front yard" in the Township ordinance and that the Township Planner had commented at the Land Use Board meeting that a "front yard" is not clearly delineated on land-locked lots. Mayor Koury briefly explained how a "front yard" is typically determined and that the determination of the "front yard" is made by the Land Use Board and Zoning Officer. In response to Mr. Tota's recommendation to place a definition of a "front yard" in the Township ordinance, Mayor Koury indicated that the recommendation should be brought to the Land Use Board for discussion.

Executive Session:

Mayor Koury explained the need to enter Executive Session, that action may 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.

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

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:02 pm. (Cameron Keng, CFO/HR arrived at 8:20 pm.)

Topics discussed:

1. Personnel – Administrative and Part-time Salaries – Tax Assessor
2. Contractual – Shared Services – Union Township School Special Officer
3. Personnel/Contractual – Police Contract
4. Personnel/Contractual – Department of Public Works (DPW) Contract
5. Contractual – Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS) Lease

Committee exited Executive Session at 9:00 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, that action would be taken, and that minutes would become available once the need for confidentiality was no longer required.

Action by the Committee:

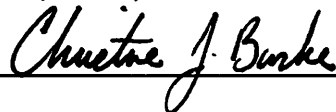
Motion to raise the salary of the Tax Assessor to \$27,500: Repmann Second: Homulak
Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye) Seiple (Aye)

Adjournment:

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

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk



Adopted: 10/12/2023