

MINUTES
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE/BOARD OF HEALTH
WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 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 (absent)

Also present: Igor Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen)
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources Officer (CFO/HRO)
Frederick Roll, Department of Public Works (DPW) Supervisor
George Reichert, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator (retired)
Alexa Tarby, Newly Elected Committee Member (2024-2026)

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only:

Lori Vail, 10 Tara Way, thanked the Mayor and the Township Committee for their efforts to address tax concerns, remain fiscally responsible, maintain the Township's Police and Public Works Departments, and listen to the residents.

Mayor Koury responded by commenting on the Township Committee's efforts to address the legalization of cannabis businesses in the State, citing that there was no initial outcry from the residents as the Township Committee followed the legislative process. He explained that the residents expressed their opinions regarding the legalization of cannabis businesses in the Township upon the introduction of an ordinance and that he had held meetings to clarify the Township Committee's efforts. He indicated that the Township Committee was a great team and thanked the staff for their supportive efforts. He explained that Township Committees do the best they can do at the time but must also require forward thinking. He encouraged the Township Committee to continue having dialogue with the residents. He explained that his efforts as a Township Committee member were made for the benefit of the residents and the Township and were not for his own benefit.

Proclamations & Presentations:

1. Commendation – George Reichert – In Recognition of Over 30 Years of Service to Franklin Township.

Mayor Koury presented a commendation award to George Reichert, retired Township official, and read the following engraving:

“In Recognition (of) More than 30 Years of Service, George Reichert. For your dedicated service to the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey as Office of Emergency Management Coordinator, Firefighter & Fire District Commissioner, Zoning Officer & Health Inspector, Building Inspector & Construction Official, Member and Chairman of the Board of Adjustment. Always remember that you made a difference! March 9, 2023.”

Mr. Reichert expressed his appreciation as he accepted the commendation award.

2. Commendation – Roger Soltys – In Recognition of Over 30 Years of Service to Franklin Township.

Mayor Koury explained that Roger Soltys, Land Use Board (LUB) Chairman, had passed on earlier in the year and explained how Mr. Soltys had gotten involved in land use by standing up against questionable practices proposed to be utilized on farmland. Mayor Koury further explained that Mr. Soltys’ wife could not attend the meeting and that he would take the commendation award to her the following day.

The award engraving reads as follows:

“With Our Deepest Appreciation, Roger A. Soltys. In recognition of over 30 years of commitment serving as a member of the Township Committee, Environmental Commission and Land Use Board.”

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the November 9, 2023, minutes Township Committee Work-Session/Regular Meeting & Executive Session: Homulak Second: Repmann

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

Payment of Bills:

Motion to approve the Bills List: Donaruma Second: Homulak

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

Ordinances:

1. Public Hearing and Final Adoption of Ordinance 2023-08: Ordinance of the Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey Creating Chapter 298 Entitled “Stormwater Quality”.

Mayor Koury read the explanatory statement provided by the Township Attorney:

The Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey has a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit from the State of New Jersey. The Township has obtained a new five (5) year Municipal Stormwater Permit from the State of New Jersey in 2023 to cover the five-year period commencing on January 1, 2023, and expiring on December 31, 2027. The Township was classified as a Tier B municipality prior to the renewal of its five (5) year municipal stormwater permit in 2023. However, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Project recently reclassified the Township as Tier A municipality. Following such reclassification, the

Township is now subject to the Community-Wide Ordinance requirements of the new Tier A Municipal Stormwater Permit, which prompts the adoption of the above-captioned Ordinance before January 1, 2024. Such requirement is imposed upon the Township by the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Ordinance seeks to put in place certain guidelines as they pertain to stormwater management in the Township, establishes prohibited conduct, and designates an enforcement entity charged with the enforcement of this Chapter.

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

No members of the public spoke regarding Ordinance 2023-08.

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

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2023-08: Donaruma Second: Homulak

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

Resolutions:

1. Resolution 2023-57: Resolution Appointing Risk Management Consultant for Statewide Insurance Fund.

Motion to adopt: Repmann Second: Homulak

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

2. Resolution 2023-58: Resolution Appointing Fund Commissioner for Statewide Insurance Fund.

Motion to adopt: Homulak Second: Donaruma

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

3. Resolution 2023-59: Amending Resolutions #2019-59, #2020-58, #2021-50, and #2022-49: "Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Fiscal Grant Cycle July 2020 – June 2025, Form 1B".

Motion to adopt: Repmann Second: Donaruma

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

4. Resolution 2023-60: Resolution to Adopt the Town Committee/Board of Health 2024 Annual Meeting Schedule.

Motion to adopt: Homulak Second: Donaruma

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

5. Resolution 2023-61: Setting the Salaries for Administrative Employees for CY2024.

Motion to adopt: Homulak Second: Repmann

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

6. Resolution 2023-62: 2023 Budget Appropriation Transfer Resolution.

The CFO explained that the resolution was standard good practice and is done every year even if no items are being transferred.

Motion to adopt: Homulak Second: Donaruma

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

7. Resolution 2023-63: CY 2023 Budget Insertion – Special Items of Revenue – NJDOT Grants (Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87 (Chapter 159 P.L. 1948).

The CFO explained that the resolution must be adopted to add the grants to the Budget.

Motion to adopt: Donaruma Second: Homulak

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

8. Resolution 2023-64: Appointment – Municipal Court Judge – Judge Edward R. Martin – 3 Year Term.

Motion to adopt: Donaruma Second: Repmann

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

Old Business: None.

New Business:

1. Letter of Support – Franklin Township Fire District #1 of Hunterdon – Grant Application – PPE/Turnout Gear.

Mayor Koury explained that he had signed the Letter of Support the week prior so that the Fire District could meet the application deadline. He further explained that he did not anticipate any criticism of the Fire District's efforts to save money. Deputy Mayor Homulak further explained that it was common for grant applications to seek governing body support.

2. Environmental Commission 2023 Annual Report.

Mayor Koury read selected items from the Environmental Commission 2023 Annual Report and indicated that the report would be available for review on the Township website. The Township Clerk indicated that she would attach the report to the minutes.

Committee Member Reports:

Deputy Mayor Homulak thanked Mayor Koury for his leadership and guidance for the community. He indicated that it was hard to appreciate how much work goes into municipal governance until a person was sitting on the Township Committee.

Committeeman Repmann reported on the status of the New Municipal Building renovation project, indicating that permits had been issued and the work was progressing. He further reported that he had attended a 78/22 Coalition meeting and that not much was happening. He thanked Mayor Koury for his efforts on the Township Committee and indicated that no one was more dedicated to the job. He further expressed that it was an honor and privilege to serve alongside him. Mayor Koury responded he had followed Committeeman Repmann as mayor and expressed his excitement for the progress on the New Municipal Building. Mayor Koury indicated that anyone who did not believe that the New Municipal Building was a needed update should take a tour of the current Municipal Building.

Committeeman Donaruma reported that there had been burglaries reported on Baker Road that the Township Police Department were investigating. He further reported that there had been an uptick in package thefts and encouraged anyone who sees anything suspicious to call the Police Department. Committeeman Donaruma also thanked Mayor Koury for his service and expressed his appreciation.

Mayor Koury reported that a dog was lost because of an accident around the Route 78 Exit 15 and requested that all residents keep their dogs leashed when outside. He further reported that Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L) would be conducting planned outages for maintenance on December 15th between 11:30 PM and 12:00 AM and on December 16th between 6:00 AM and 6:30 AM. He indicated that JCP&L would contact any affected residents at the phone number they have on file. He reported that the Land Use Board (LUB) meeting scheduled for the previous evening had been cancelled but that the LUB would be conducting a Year End Meeting to approve outstanding minutes.

Comments from the Public:

Elizabeth Basile, 16 Upper Kingtown Road, requested an update on efforts to address repairs and maintenance of the Capoolong Trail. The Township Attorney explained that his follow-up with the State contact person indicated that the State's anticipated meeting with a federal agency in mid-November did not take place. Ms. Basile questioned Committee member-elect Alexa Tarby regarding statements made by County Commissioner Sue Soloway at the Senior Group meeting regarding utilizing the New Municipal Building as an emergency shelter. She questioned statements made regarding the building's septic system and its capacity. The CFO and Mayor Koury confirmed information regarding the site's septic systems. Mayor Koury explained that the County had not contacted the Township regarding any use agreements and that the Township's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator would likely be involved. Committeeman Donaruma explained that Township facilities being utilized as warming centers assists in grant opportunities. Mayor Koury explained the purchase history of the building, specifying efforts to communicate and cooperate with the County. The Township Committee reiterated that there was no current communication with the County regarding any facility use agreements. The Township Attorney indicated that it was early for talk of facility use agreements.

Rick Conley, 17 Landsdown Road, expressed concerns regarding the Landsdown Trail crossing at Sidney Road, citing recent accidents by drivers unfamiliar with the intersection of the trail and the road. He recommended that posts with a gate be utilized to prevent further incidents. Frederick Roll, Department of Public Works (DPW) Supervisor, explained that barricades are up to prevent further incidents and that it was all that could be done during the winter months. Committeeman Repmann explained difficulties in communicating with the State regarding such efforts and questioned if the Township could put up signs.

Frederick Roll, Department of Public Works (DPW) Supervisor, expressed his appreciation for Mayor Koury's leadership and all he had done for the community.

Mary Marzinsky, 151 Old Franklin School Road, explained her efforts to apply for Farmland Assessment at the end of July by placing her application in the black drop box in front of the Municipal Building and indicated that she received a denial notice months later. She further commented on the increase in her mortgage and indicated that her efforts to contact the Tax Assessor have met with failure. The CFO/HRO explained that the Township's Tax Assessor is generally more reasonable and responsive than other Tax Assessors and offered to take Ms. Marzinsky's contact information so that he might investigate the matter. Mayor Koury explained that the Tax Assessor is a part-time employee who only works on Tuesday evenings. Multiple recommendations were made to bring documents into the building and to get a receipt.

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, requested an update on efforts to address maintenance of the Capoolong Trail. Mayor Koury read a response received from the State on December 5th. The Township Attorney indicated that he would follow up again. Mayor Koury indicated that he had recommended that the State give the property to someone who would maintain it if the State did not have the time or resources to maintain the property. He further indicated that the State was not inclined to spend money on a trail that does not bring in revenue as firearms are not permitted on the property and there are very few bow hunters that utilize the property. Mayor Koury explained that if the Township were to take over the repairs and maintenance of the property, the Township would have to encumber millions of dollars. Mr. DeRites explained that he wished to rejuvenate and revitalize the trail and that the onus was on the County, citing that the County was building three new parks. Committeeman Repmann indicated the residents were free to reach out to the County Commissioner and Assemblyman that live in the Township but explained that they were likely to explain that the County has a finite number of resources, and that money was already allocated to other projects. Mayor Koury explained that discussions on repairing and maintaining the trail have been ongoing for years but go nowhere.

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, further commented that no one knows about the recent burglaries on Baker Road. Mayor Koury indicated that he would have Chief Snyder provide information to the Township Clerk to place on the Township website and email blasted to subscribers. Committeeman Donaruma explained that if the Township Committee receives such information, it would be stated at the Township Committee meetings. He further explained that Chief Snyder may provide limited information regarding on-going investigations.

Executive Session:

Mayor Koury explained the need to enter Executive Session, that action would be taken, and that all attendees of the meeting could wait outside of the meeting room except for the Committee, the Township Clerk, the Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources Officer (CFO/HRO) and the Township Attorney. Newly elected Committee-member, Alexa Tarby, was also invited 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: Donaruma
All in favor. Motion carried.

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:39 pm.

Topics discussed:

1. Personnel/Contractual – Police Contract
2. Contractual/Attorney-Client Privilege – Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS) Lease
3. Personnel/Contractual – Land Use Board (LUB) Professionals

Committee exited Executive Session at 9:36 pm.

Motion to exit executive session and resume regular meeting: Homulak Second: Donaruma
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 accept the Police Contract as discussed in Executive Session: Homulak
Second: Donaruma

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

Motion to authorize the Township Attorney to draft and forward the letter as discussed in Executive Session: Homulak
Second: Donaruma

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

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Repmann Second: Unrecorded

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk



Adopted: 12/28/2023