

MINUTES  
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE/BOARD OF HEALTH  
WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2024  
7:30 PM

**Franklin Township Municipal Building, 202 Sidney Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Homulak at 7:32 pm. Mayor Homulak read the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) Statement and led the flag salute.

Roll Call: Sebastian Donaruma (present) Michael Homulak (present)  
Craig Repmann (present) Deanna Seiple (arrived 7:33 pm) Alexa Tarby (present)

Also present: Igor Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen)  
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk  
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources (CFO/HR)

Mayor Homulak briefly explained the agenda, moved the "Committee Member Reports" to be addressed after the approval of the minutes, and added a "New Business" discussion item.

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 January 4, 2024, Township Committee/Board of Health Re-Organization/Work-Session/Regular Meeting minutes: Donaruma

Second: Tarby

Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Repmann (Aye) Seiple (Abstain) Tarby (Aye)

Motion to approve the December 28, 2023, Executive Session minutes: Donaruma

Second: Seiple

Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Repmann (Abstain) Seiple (Aye) Tarby (Abstain)

Committee Member Reports:

Mayor Homulak reported on a zoning violation complaint made against 24 Baker Road, explaining the timeline of the complaint and the efforts of the Zoning Officer to address the matter. He explained the steps that would be taken by the Zoning Officer and the options of the property owner to rectify the situation. He further explained that the property owner had the option to seek a Use Variance from the Land Use Board (LUB) and recommended that interested residents attend the LUB meetings. He further recommended that residents seeking additional information, or to provide further documentation of

suspected inappropriate activities on the property, contact the Zoning Officer directly. The Township Attorney and Deputy Mayor Donaruma advised that the property owner had until February 4<sup>th</sup> to remediate the situation, after which penalties would be imposed.

The following members of the public spoke regarding this topic:

Dolores Reich, 56 Baker Road  
Jane Bowers, 32 Baker Road  
Bob Godown, 12 Baker Road

Public comments included questions regarding septic inspections on the property during the real estate sale, questions regarding the number of people living on the property versus the number of bedrooms and farm residences, the inability to communicate with individuals on site, praise for the Zoning Officer's responsive efforts, continued activity despite the violation notice, and personal negative experiences regarding the situation.

Mayor Homulak reiterated that additional questions, comments, and further documentation regarding the complaint should be directed to the Zoning Officer. The CFO/HR explained that neighboring residents would be advised of any upcoming LUB public hearings due to LUB application requirements and briefly explained the process of obtaining a 200' property owner abutment list. Deputy Mayor Donaruma provided further explanation of the remediation efforts.

Mayor Homulak continued his report by praising the efforts of the Department of Public Works (DPW) during the recent winter storm event. He provided a brief update on efforts to seek grants for a pickleball court and connect the Landsdown Trail to the New Municipal Building property for trail users to have access to the parking lot. Committeeman Repmann reminded those present that the open space next to the New Municipal Building is county owned property. Mayor Homulak indicated interest in funding the building of a pavilion on the New Municipal Building property.

Mayor Homulak further reported that he was considering separating the combined Work-Session/Regular meetings into their separate meetings as some other towns do. He indicated that discussion regarding agenda topics would take place at the Work-Session meetings, but action would not take place until the Regular meetings. Deputy Mayor Donaruma indicated that this would allow the public two opportunities to hear the topics. The CFO/HRO explained that Bills Lists could still be addressed at each meeting, but resolutions would be presented at a work-session meeting but not adopted until a regular meeting.

Deputy Mayor Donaruma indicated that he would wait until the added New Business discussion item as his report pertains to the Capoolong Trail.

Committeeman Repmann reported that he has spoken with the Township/Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) Planner regarding the Hunterdon Growth Plan and that work on the New Municipal Building was progressing and seemed to be going well.

Committeewoman Seiple reported on the Franklin Township School's efforts to address complaints regarding busses not showing up at bus stops to pick up students.

**Payment of Bills:**

Motion to approve the Bills List: Donaruma

Second: Seiple

Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Repmann (Aye) Seiple (Aye) Tarby (Aye)

**Ordinances:** None.

**Resolutions:**

1. Resolution 2024-19: Authorizing Interlocal Agreement – Pollution Control Financing Authority of Warren County (PCFAWC) – Solid Waste Disposal at the Warren County District Landfill.

The Township Attorney explained the purpose of the resolution and that the agreement was for the benefit of the residents. Committeeman Repmann further explained that the Department of Public Works (DPW) supervisor had recommended the agreement and was utilizing the service to discard the township's street sweepings.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2024-19: Donaruma

Second: Repmann

Roll call: Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Repmann (Aye) Seiple (Aye) Tarby (Aye)

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:**

1. Presentation/Discussion: Capoolong Creek Trail Project Advisory Committee

Bruce DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, explained that he asked the Township Committee for support on a new Capoolong Creek Trail Project Advisory Committee. He explained that the proposed advisory committee wished to explore available options to assist township residents in their efforts to restore and maintain the Capoolong Creek Trail. He provided a copy of the proposal and briefly went over the proposed advisory committee's mission, goals, and initial objectives. He further explained the history of attempts to address repairs and maintenance of the trail.

Committeeman Donaruma further explained historic efforts to repair and maintain the Capoolong Creek Trail via Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) grants with the approval of the Division of Fish and Wildlife. He explained that the proposed advisory committee is seeking Township permission to seek grants and requesting official support of their efforts. Mayor Homulak explained that the advisory committee is a "grass roots" committee and requested that a Township Committee member be a liaison. Deputy Mayor Donaruma volunteered to be the Township Committee's liaison to the advisory committee. Mr. DeRites questioned utilizing Open Space Trust Funds for the repair and maintenance of the trail. Deputy Mayor Donaruma explained that the intent is to go out and seek funding for the repair and maintenance of the trail.

**Comments from the Public:**

Anna Marie DeRites, 119 Locust Grove Road, commented on property tax relief options available on the State website and described a family member's success in utilizing the programs offered. Upon her recommendation that information regarding the state's property tax relief programs be placed upon the Township's website, the CFO explained that the links were already on the Township's website as required by the State's Best Practices. He further indicated that additional information could be included on the notice that is sent out with the annual tax bills. Upon questioning regarding sending a separate mailing from the tax bills, the CFO explained that mailing printed notices costs approximately \$3,500 on postage alone. Ms. DeRites recommended visiting the Senior Group to further advise township residents. Upon questioning by Bruce DeRites, Committeewoman Seiple indicated that information could be included in the township's digital newsletter.

Charlie Flynn, Quakertown Memorial Works, 241 Quakertown Road, explained his efforts to pay his taxes, citing that he had spoken with a Township employee that advised him of the process to pay off a tax lien. He further explained his business, Quakertown Memorial Works, which specializes in stone engraving services.

**Executive Session:**

Mayor Homulak 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 Township Clerk, the Chief Finance Officer/Human Resources Officer (CFO/HRO) 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: Donaruma  
All in favor. Motion carried.

Committee entered Executive Session at 8:14 pm.

**Topics discussed:**

1. Personnel – Department of Public Works (DPW)
2. Attorney-Client Privilege/Potential Litigation/Contractual – Lease of Township Owned Property – Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS)

Committee exited Executive Session at 9:01 pm.

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

The Township Attorney explained the topics discussed in Executive Session, that action would not be taken, and that minutes would become available once the need for confidentiality was no longer required.

Action by the Committee: None.

Adjournment:

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

Meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk

  
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Adopted: 02/08/2024