

**KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
December 12, 2016**

The monthly meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held on this date at the Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey. This meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mayor Adele Starrs.

The Mayor read the following statement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: "In accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of publication with the Star Gazette and/or the Express-Times, filed in the Municipal Clerk's Office and posted in the Knowlton Municipal Building. "

Mayor Starrs led the public in the pledge of allegiance.

Roll Call

Present: Committeewoman Cuntala, Committeeman Farber, Committeeman Mathez and Mayor Starrs

Also present: Township Engineer Ted Rodman, DPW Supervisor Brian Peck, ACO Alan DeCarolis and Township Attorney Dick Cushing

Absent: Committeewoman Shipp

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion to go into Closed Session: Mayor Starrs. Seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried at 7:01.

Resolution

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P.L.1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from that portion of this meeting
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - A. Personnel Interviews for Professional Services

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, Seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to come out of Closed Session at 8:35p.m. and return to Regular Session.

Presentation by Matt Mulhall, Hydrologist with M² Associates

Mr. Mulhall spoke to the committee members and residents regarding being the advocate for the township regarding the salt contamination. Mr. Mulhall will review the information that NJDEP's Steve Spayd gathered to determine whether remedial pumping will work for the Township. Mr. Mulhall will also meet with the entities that are involved with the salt contamination and will determine what options will be best for the township.

Residents who had questions for Mr. Mulhall were asked to speak with him out in the hallway so the Committee could continue with other business.

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, Seconded by Committeeman Farber and carried by roll call vote Cuntala yes, Farber yes, Mathez yes, Shipp absent, Starrs yes to pass resolution 2016-125 RESOLUTION Authorizing the Hiring of Hydrologist as follows:

WHEREAS, there exists a need for the performance of services of a hydrologist for the Township of Knowlton ("Township") in connection with a hydrogeological matter; an

WHEREAS, funds are or will be made available for this purpose to be certified by the Treasurer; and

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1, *et seq.*, authorizes engaging a hydrologist without competitive bidding providing that the Resolution authorizing the award of contracts for “Professional Services” without competitive bidding and the contracts be available for public inspection;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. **MATTHEW J. MULHALL, P.G.**, (“Hydrologist”) is hereby appointed to act as a Hydrologist for the Township in connection with a hydrogeological matter for the Township.
2. The Mayor and Clerk are authorized to execute a mutually agreeable written Agreement with said Hydrologist consistent with the terms of the Proposal within thirty (30) days of the date of this Resolution, subject to the Chief Financial Officer certifying there are adequate funds in the Township’s budget to fund the agreement.
3. This Agreement is awarded without competitive bidding as a “Professional Service” under the provision of the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5.
4. Adequate funds have been or will be appropriated for the services of Hydrologist as certified by the Chief Financial Officer up to an amount not exceeding \$10,000.00.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

ACO- Alan DeCarolis

Mr. DeCarolis addressed the committee regarding a call that he received from resident Clint Jones. Mr. Jones found a cat in his garage. Mr. DeCarolis explained to Mr. Jones that Knowlton township does not ordinarily pick up cats. Mr. Jones offered to take the cat to the vet to have it euthanized since it was injured and bring it home to bury it. Mr. DeCarolis received a phone call the next day from Blairstown Animal Hospital stating that the cat had bitten Mr. Jones and needed to be tested for rabies, which is procedural. Mr. Jones was not present at the Township meeting but his wife, Amy Naia, was present. Ms. Naia explained that Mr. Jones went to the ER for a series of rabies shots because the Veterinarian told him he should and also they received a phone call from the Warren County Health Dept. that told him the same thing. Mr. Jones had to take a series of shots which caused him to get sick and miss work. Mr. Jones is asking for reimbursement from the Township for his medical bills. Township insurance agent Sharon Cooper stated that there is no deductible for bites, and the Township can submit the claim to insurance, which would be a way for Mr. Jones to get reimbursement at no cost to the Township. Mayor Starrs made a motion, Seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to submit the claim to the township Insurance once Mr. Jones provides all the medical documents to the Township.

Mr. DeCarolis also addressed the situation at 26 Station Rd. Mr. DeCarolis received a call from the state park police. That there were animals on a vacant piece of property, 2 dogs and several cats. There was no running water and there seemed to be several trailers that sat on the property. Mr. DeCarolis with the state park police took the animals to the Blairstown Animal Hospital. The owner of the dog and cats paid the bill at Blairstown Animal Hospital and took the animals back to 26 Station Rd. NJSPCA went back to the property a few nights later and picked up the dog again and bought it to Blairstown Animal Hospital. Owner of the dog came to pay the fee but Mr. DeCarolis said that the dog cannot be picked up unless other accommodations were made for the dog. The owner did find another person to foster the dog and the owner also agreed to find homes for the cats as well.

DPW Supervisor Brian Peck

Mr. Peck explained why he does not want to use grit/salt mix. Grit does not help with traction on the roads, clogs the drains, and in the springtime is a big cleanup project. Grit needs to be mixed with salt. The mixing occurs on the ground and then is pushed back into the salt shed. The DPW is not using any more salt than they have in the past when they did use grit/salt.

Mr. Peck also said that the apron in front of the salt shed has been paved, which should help prevent salt from falling from the shed and soaking into the ground.

Committeeman Mathez asked Mr. Peck if there is a way to significantly use a lot less salt in Columbia. Mr. Peck replied that in the past storm he spread salt only once in Columbia so he is using less salt in that area.

Mayor Starrs received a letter from Crown Castle which included the report that has been asked for several times and the report determined that Crown Castle did owe the township approximately \$2,500 which the township should be receiving shortly.

Mayor Starrs addressed to Attorney Dick Cushing that the township is not receiving annual reports as the lease agreement states. Mr. Cushing said that he will write a letter to Crown Castle following up.

Mayor Starrs made a motion, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve to have Attorney Dick Cushing send a letter to Crown Castle pursuing the cell tower reports.

Public Comment

No public comment

Resolutions:

2016-119- Resolution Regarding Columbia Lake Dam Removal and the Results of the November 2016 Referendum

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2016, the Knowlton Township Committee approved Resolution 2016-86 authorizing the nonbinding question "Do you support the removal of the Columbia Dam and the return of the Paulins Kill to a free-flowing river?" for inclusion on the November 2016 ballot; and

WHEREAS, Warren County, New Jersey, election results show that 67% of Knowlton residents voted "no," meaning that they wish the dam to remain intact;* and

WHEREAS, the ballot question was nonbinding because the land on which the dam exists is owned by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and thus the final decision for the dam's future rests with the NJDEP; and

WHEREAS, the referendum documents the will of the residents of Knowlton; and

WHEREAS, the decision of an informed electorate should be respected; and

WHEREAS, a public comment for residents to register their opinions with the NJDEP on this project was formally requested via Resolution 2016-56 on April 28, 2016; and

WHEREAS, that public comment has not yet been scheduled.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Knowlton Township Committee urges the Department of

Environmental Protection to respect the sentiments of Knowlton Township residents as reflected in the Public Question on the Knowlton Township November 2016 ballot and leave the dam intact.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township reiterates its request for a public hearing to be held on the issue of dam removal and that this public hearing be located in Knowlton Township.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the NJDEP, the Nature Conservancy, Warren County Municipalities, Warren County Freeholders, 23rd and 24th Legislators and the office of the New Jersey governor.

**Figure obtained from <http://www.co.warren.nj.us> and excludes the intentional undervote*

Motion made by Committeewoman Cuntala, seconded by Committeeman Farber and carried to approve by roll call vote Cuntala yes, Farber yes, Mathez yes, Shipp absent, Starrs Yes, resolution 2016-119 contingent upon Committeeman Mathez confirming the percentage used in the resolution.

2016-120- Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation NJS 40A:4-87 Warren County Municipal Alliance

WHEREAS, NJS 40A:4-87 provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by law and the amount was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget; and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for equal amount,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton in the County of Warren, New Jersey, hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2016 in the sum of \$4,113.00 which is now available from the Warren County Department of Human Services – Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Grant – Municipal Alliance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$4,113.00 is hereby

Appropriated under the caption Warren County Department of Human Service – council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Grant – Municipal Alliance along with a local match of \$1,234.00

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above is the result of funds from the

Warren County Department of Human Service – Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Grant – Municipal Alliance in the amount of \$4,113.00 and a local match of \$1,234.00

Motion was made by Committeeman Farber, Seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried by roll call vote Cuntala yes, Farber yes, Mathez yes, Shipp absent, Starrs yes, to approve resolution 2016-120.

2016-121-Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation NJS 40A:4-87 WCCHC Arts Grant

WHEREAS, NJS 40A:4-87 provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services

may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by law and the amount was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget; and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for equal amount,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton in the County of Warren, New Jersey, hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2016 in the sum of \$500.00 which is now available from the Warren County Cultural & Heritage Council Arts Grant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$500.00 is hereby Appropriated under the caption Warren County Cultural & Heritage Council Arts Grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above is the result of funds from the Warren County Cultural & heritage Council – Arts Grant in the amount of \$500.00

Motion was made by Committeeman Mathez, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve by roll call vote Cuntala yes, Farber yes, Mathez yes, Shipps absent, Starrs yes, to approve resolution 2016-121

2016-122-Resolution- Payment of Vouchers

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, that all claims attached are hereby approved as reasonable and proper claims against the Township of Knowlton.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that approval for payment is hereby given to the Chief Financial Officer to pay said claims, subject to the availability of funds.

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, seconded by Committeeman Farber and carried by roll call vote Cuntala yes, Farber yes, Mathez yes, Shipps absent, Starrs yes, to approve resolution 2016-122

2016-123-Extension of August Grace Period

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A 54:4-66.3 (d) requires a period of at least 25 days from the mailing tax bills before interest can be charged on taxes due August 1st. Billing cannot start until the governor signs the state budget around June 30th which sets the aid amounts. Once that occurs the county calculates and certifies the local rate. It was not possible for Knowlton Township to receive the certified rate, receive the extended tax duplicate from Vital Computer Resources, complete proofing, printing, stuffing and mailing of tax bills by July 15th which would have provided 25 days before August 10th which normally would end the 10 day grace period for taxes due August 1 which is provided for in the resolution adopted by the township committee in January.

WHEREAS, since the tax collector completed mailing of the bills on July 26 he was required by state law to extend the interest free period for taxes due August 1 to August 22 in order for the township to be in compliance with this state law.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, New Jersey on this 12th day of December 2016, the township committee acknowledges the action of the tax collector in extending the interest free period for taxes due August 1 from August 10 to August 22 in order to comply with state law. A copy of this resolution will be provided to the auditor for the 2016 audit

to avoid potential concerns regarding the collection of interest during that period.

Motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala , seconded by Committeeman Mathez and carried by roll call vote Cuntala yes, Farber yes, Mathez yes, Shipps absent, Starrs yes, to approve resolution 2016-123

2016-124 Refund of Duplicate November 2016 Payments

WHEREAS, the owner of the above property was in the process of selling a portion of it to NJDEP which required the taxes be paid current before the closing could be scheduled in early November. The owner paid the taxes before his bank which holds the mortgage paid them in order to not delay the closing. The mortgage holder Santander Bank paid the same taxes a few days later and are requesting their payment be refunded to them.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, New Jersey on this 12th day of December 2016, approves the refunds of the duplicate payments in the amounts of \$682.96 and \$144.53. The CFO is hereby authorized and directed to prepare a check payable to Santander Bank in the amount of \$827.49 .The check will be returned to the tax collector who will forward them to Santander Bank.

Motion was made by Committeeman Farber, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried by roll call vote Cuntala yes, Farber yes, Mathez yes, Shipps absent, Starrs yes, to approve resolution 2016-124

Old Business

eCode/ Knowlton ordinances online

Mayor Starrs announced to the Township Committee and residents that Knowlton's ordinances are now up and running online.

FEMA grant for Repeat Flood Homes

Mayor Starrs explained the next steps to have FEMA offer a buyout to residents who are affected by repeat flood.

Concord Energy Open House meeting

Acting Clerk Shipps stated that the Open House meeting will be held on January 19th at the municipal building from 2-4 and again at 5:30-7. Flyers will be sent out to residents.

New Business

Route 46 Shell Gas Station

Committeeman Farber met with the engineering firm that represents the owners of the Shell gas station. Developers bought the gas station next door to the Shell Gas Station. They are looking to build a new gas station with a Convenience Store. Committeeman Farber explained to the engineer that township residents might object to having another truck stop. The engineer is going to bring the plans in front of the Board of Adjustments in January.

Ted Rodman Township Engineer

Mr. Rodman received a quote for Van Cleef engineering services for the sewer plant. Mr. Rodman presented the quotes to the committee for their review. Committee will invite Mr. Mark Bahnick from Van Cleef to the next Township meeting to be interviewed during Executive Session.

Retroactive raise question

Will be addressed at the next committee meeting

Letter summarizing nuisance ordinance for posting

Mayor Starrs made a motion, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve a simplified letter summarizing the township nuisance ordinance for the service stations of Knowlton Township to post.

Correspondence

JCP&L Tree Trimming in Knowlton Township

JCP&L will be trimming trees in January. JCP&L will be putting door hangers on residents' doors when they will be in the area to cut trees .

Salt Water Testing

Committee agreed that the window for the township to pay for salt water testing is closed and that additional test results provided by residents will not be accepted. The reasoning is that the initial offering was widely advertised, by press release, on social media, and a door-to-door campaign.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala, seconded by Committeeman Mathez and carried to approve October 27, 2016 Public Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala, seconded by Committeeman Mathez and carried to approve October 27, 2016 Executive Minutes

Motion was made by Committeeman Mathez, seconded by Mayor Starrs and carried to approve November 14, 2016 Public Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala , seconded by Committeeman Mathez and carried to approve November 14, 2016 Executive Minutes

Motion was made by Committeeman Farber, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to approve November 30, 2016 Special Meeting Minutes. Committeeman Mathez abstained from this vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS -no public comments

Mayor Starrs thanked Committeeman Mathez for his many years of service as a committee member to Knowlton Township by reading a statement that highlighted his many contributions including preserving farmland and working to improve Knowlton's ambulance system.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, seconded by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Shipps
Acting Municipal Clerk