

DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2022 at 7:00 P.M.

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Office on Monday, February 13, 2023 at 7:00p.m. Mayor Michael L. Rothman, presided. Deputy Mayor Larry Jordan, Committeemen Robert Campbell, Steve Byrne, and Edward Bart were in attendance. Municipal Solicitor Rebecca Bertram was also present.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / STATEMENT REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Mayor Rothman called the meeting to order; led the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell, and Rothman
Absent - 0

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- January 12, 2023 Regular Meeting
- January 2, 2023 Reorganization Meeting
- December 12, 2022 Regular Meeting
- September 12, 2022 Regular Meeting
- June 13, 2022 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Byrne the minutes of the previously mentioned meetings were approved as presented. Mr. Jordan abstained from voting on the approval of the January 12, 2023 meeting minutes due to his absence.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Rothman read the Tax Collector, Chief Finance Officer, and the Zoning Office Reports. The Township Committee acknowledged the receipt of the following report:

- Chief Finance Officer January 2023
- Tax Collector January 2023
- Zoning Office January 2023

MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Solicitor Bertram presented her report which consisted of information and updates on matters that should be discussed in Executive Session. Mrs. Bertram mentioned she received and email from the USDA that they have received our correspondence and they are working on it. They were reminded that time is of the essence.

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

Ordinance 2023-1 *An Ordinance Authorizing the Acquisition of Property Known as Raybins Beach (Block 143 Lot 4) on the Tax Map of the Township of Downe*

Mrs. Bertram stated this is being donated to the Township. It is a vacant lot.

Motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to introduce Ordinance 2023-1.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

RESOLUTIONS

R-36-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*
R-37-2023 *Resolution Approving the Engineers Proposal for the 2022 Transportation Trust Fund Program Construction Specifications and Inspection Support Services*
R-38-2023 *Resolution Approving the Engineers Proposal for the 2022 Municipal Aid Grant Program Construction Specifications and Inspection Support Services*
R-39-2023 *Authorizing Executive Session*
R-40-2023 *Resolution Authorizing the Township of Downe to Submit an Eligibility Determination and Funding Application to the USDA Acting Through Rural Utilities Service, Department of the Agriculture for the Downe Township Sewer Project*

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-36-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills* in the total amount of \$638,057.03.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Bart and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-37-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-38-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-39-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-40-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Byrne, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan and Rothman
Nay – 0
Vote: All in favor

Mayor Rothman stated the County has been notified about the condition of Fortescue Road. There was concern raised about a project on Fortescue Road. The County is repairing some of the ditches on the road. This project has not been completed. Work is progressing on a

temporary bulkhead repair in Fortescue. The property owner does have plans for a permanent bulkhead repair. There has been a number of properties that have received fines for the conditions of their properties. We have a couple of cases that are in court. We are making progress in getting these eyesores cleaned up. The County is working on a request for information to line up a contractor to complete the project on Maple Avenue. We have received just about everything we need for the sewer project. The project is finally out to bid. The bids will be received on March 30th. There is a pre-bid meeting scheduled for next week where potential contactor can asked questions about the project. A part of the pre-bid meeting is a visit to the site location. Mayor Rothman explained that due to the way of the world today it is anticipated that the project costs may increase. We will know very soon. It is important to recognize that a number of people have spent a lot of time getting this project to completion.

Mr. Jordan added there is a meeting scheduled in a couple of weeks with Mark Blauer our grant writer to discuss what grant opportunities may be available to help our residents with the sewer project. There may be funds available to assist with closing the current system and connection fees.

Mr. McPhillips of Fortescue he has seen some new signs in place that say stay off the dunes. Are there any plans to enforce that. There are a number of people who are not following the rules. Mayor Rothman stated there is a danger to being on the dunes and we just wanted to make that known with the signage. We can make an effort to try to keep people off the dunes. Mr. McPhillips spoke about a recent situation where there were people posing for pictures around the signage. Mayor Rothman commented if we have an ordinance you can call the State Police to enforce it.

John Cerrito of Newport asked if the township would re-visit putting our ambulance service back on. Not having our own service is a real cost to our township residents. It is believed that Inspira is double dipping because the township has a contract with them for servicing our area. An ambulance ride from here to Inspira costed \$2000. We had issues with our rescue squad a few years ago and it was shut down. Our residents are paying extra charges for the ambulance service. Mr. Cerrito mention there was a fee established when Inspira first took over that if you were a subscriber you didn't pay for service. What happened to this program. Mayor Rothman stated Inspira decided they could not honor the subscriber system. We contacted other local ambulance service providers, and they wanted a lot more than Inspira to take over our area. Discussion continued on the townships efforts to find another ambulance service. Mayor Rothman stated he would reach out to Inspira with those concerns.

Laura Williams of Fortescue stated there is a weight limit sign is broken at the south bridge so the weight limits information on the sign is not readable. Mayor Rothman stated we will reach out to the county.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue reported we have spent the last two years gathering information for the Heart and Soul project. We have collected a lot of data. We are processing the data onto a spreadsheet. Our next step is to come up with statements based on all the data that was received. Those statements will be released to the public emphasizing, this is what we think we heard, is this correct and if it is, this is what we can do with it. This will be the final feedback from the public before we start looking at spending money. The Heart and Soul data collecting project is wrapping up by the end of this summer. Ms. Cowley stated the Green Team had scheduled a Bear Swamp Walk but the weather didn't cooperate. The walk has been rescheduled for February 26th on Ackley Road from 2pm to 4pm. On February 25th we will be doing a roadway cleanup somewhere in the township. We meet at the OEM building at 8:30am and finish around 12noon.

Lastly we have totaled up all of our volunteer hours for the Green Team for 2022 and we had 1,665 hours of volunteering and that was 146 difference people who helped volunteer in this township. That is almost 10% of our population. This is awesome.

Liz Cowley reported that February 25th is the City of Millville Snowflake Swim (polar plunge) at Union Lake at 12noon. They were a big support for us so we would like to return the favor. Mayor Rothman will be participating in the Snowflake Swim.

There being no further comments, the public comment portion was closed on a motion by Bart and seconded by Campbell.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Bart had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Jordan had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Byrne stated music will be again starting on March 18th through the end of the year at Union Hall. There is flyer available that lists the events for the year. We also have our musical Sundays scheduled through the end of the year.

Mr. Campbell had nothing to report at this time.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Jordan and seconded by Bart, the meeting was closed to the public and the Executive Session was opened with no action to be taken after Executive Session. A contract issue will be discussed.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Bart, the Executive Session portion was closed.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Campbell and seconded by Jordan.

Vote: All in favor


Nadine E. Lockley, RMC
Municipal Clerk