

**Thursday, February 19, 2015**

**8:00 PM**

**AAC Minutes**

Meeting called to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law provision at 8:10pm

Roll call

Present: Councilman Chase, Cathy Blumig, Gary Randolph, Bob Puskas

Absent: Frank Hasner, Craig Feibel

Approval of the January 22, 2015 minutes

C. Blumig made a motion to approve the January 22 minutes with changes. G. Randolph seconded the motion. All members in favor. Motion passed.

Financial Report

F. Varacalli presented the financial report for CY ending 2014 and OSTF presented 2015 budget. B. Puskas noted that the OSTF budget included salary and wages for two DPW employees out of OSTF. B. Puskas would like to get a legal opinion to see if the DPW fringe benefits could be taken out of the OSTF. C. Blumig made a motion to seek legal opinion on whether we can fund salary and fringe benefits for new DPW positions out of the OSTF. If it is deemed allowable legal the recommendation would be to support the salary only from the OSTF and not fringe benefits. G. Randolph seconded. All members in Favor. Motion passes.

Seeing no one present the meeting was not opened for public comment.

1. New Business

M. Healey & F. Varacalli are working on a new Township Farmland Plan.

Higgins Agriculture Easement – Laurel Ave. Easement donated to town as a requirement of an EPA decree settlement. 30.1 acres.

Higgins Rt. 518 agriculture easement still needs to be donated to the town as a requirement of an EPA decree settlement.

Somerset County Annual Agriculture meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 10am at the Somerset County 4-H Fair Bldg. All are invited.

2. Old Business

a. Hutcheson Memorial Forest fence update

F. Varacalli reported that a meeting with Dr. Handel, Rutgers HMF Manager, for February 24<sup>th</sup> at the Township. The Agriculture Advisory Committee had the following recommendations ongoing deer management program. The Township should review the lease agreement with Rutgers university for the land contiguous to the HMF as a possible location for hunting. The issue with allowing permitted hunters through the Twp. Program is that there is no access or parking as the properties are landlocked.

b. National Agriculture Day, 2016 planning, Franklin Twp. Event

The Committee continued to discuss the ideas on how to promote Agriculture in Franklin Twp.

c. Deer survey – B. Puskas called the NJ DEP Fish and Wildlife for information for the infrared deer survey. NJ Fish and Wildlife recommended two companies.

Davis Aviation Ohio

HotShot – Colorado did survey for township 10 years ago

Winter is best time – beginning of April is the latest to do a survey before Spring. F. Varacalli & B. Puskas will get more information on costs and timeframes.

F. Varacalli requested date from the Police department regarding the location of car related deer crashes. We would plot this information on a GIS Map to see where accidents are occurring.

Deer Article – Bill Connell

F. Varacalli to reach out B. Connell to understand the intent of the article and the Committee will help guide the deer article.

Farm Leases - F. Varacalli sent a memo with questions to Twp. Attorney for opinion. Attorney has not responded to the request yet. The Committee will review leases for future lease.

8. Executive Session to discuss possible property purchases and negotiations.  
There was no need to enter into Executive Session
9. Adjournment  
C. Blumig Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:30pm. G. Randolph seconded. All members in favor. Motion passed.