

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 17, 2024 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on October 17, 2024 via Zoom Webinar and in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Council President Rizzuto presiding.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the public and the press on January 17, 2024 and was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-7.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Council President Rizzuto led the assemblage in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present were Council Members Natalie Buccieri, Jessica DeBenedetto, Bradley Sparta and Council President Patrick Rizzuto. Also, present were Mayor Anthony Rossi, Business Administrator Tina Kraus, Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio, Township Attorney Matthew Moench.

Council Member Higgins was not present.

PRESENTATION

Planet Networks

Mr. Robert Boyle, CEO of Planet Networks, updated the Council on the phone and internet upgrade in the municipal building.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Thank you, Council President. I hope everyone enjoyed their three-day weekend celebrating Columbus Day.

This past Tuesday, the Fire Department held its annual Memorial Day service in honor of those who are no longer with us. Thank you for inviting me to this special event.

Here are some additional updates from the town: Yesterday, the Pochuck Valley Fire Department received the new fire apparatus that the township ordered a couple of years ago. The engine will be in full service in about two weeks, once it receives its radios and license plates.

This weekend, we have Bulky Waste Day at the DPW on Saturday from 8 AM to 4 PM for anyone wishing to clean out their homes or yards.

We are accepting applications for Senior of the Year. Please visit our website to nominate someone you believe deserves this recognition.

We also have a new application for the Board of Recreation. I would like to put forward the name of Patricia E. Venskus for consideration.

Regarding the Town Center facelift project, we just received County approval to proceed. I posted on social media asking for votes on a clock design: the blue clock received around 249 votes, while the black clock received 49 votes. I hope to place the order for the clock next week. Additionally, we have placed a new planter on Route 94 under the welcome sign as you enter from Hamburg.

Finally, I want to remind everyone that we have our budget meetings in two weeks. I've always encouraged council members to participate in this process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (For Current Agenda Items Only, Limited to 3 Minutes Per Person)

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

All members were in favor.

Seeing no members from the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Buccieri
All members were in favor.

REVIEW OF BILLS LIST
The Council reviewed the bills list.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 9, 2024 – Regular Meeting

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the September 9, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Sparta, Rizzuto
NAYES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Higgins

Motion carries to approved the September 9, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

September 23, 2024 – Executive Session

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the September 23, 2024 executive session minutes.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Sparta, Rizzuto
NAYES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Higgins

Motion carries to approved the September 23, 2024 executive session minutes.

September 23, 2024 – Regular Session

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the September 23, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Sparta, Rizzuto
NAYES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Higgins

Motion carries to approved the September 23, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution #24-257: Resolution Authorizing Grant of Parking Easement Relative to Property Identified as Block 512, Lot 37 on the Official Tax Map of the Township of Vernon

Resolution #24-258: A Resolution Approving Participation with the State of New Jersey Federal Grant Program Administrated by the New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General

Resolution #24-259: Appointment of Office of Emergency Management Deputy Coordinator (Howard Lazier)

Resolution #24-260: Approving Active Volunteer Firefighter for Membership in the New Jersey State Fireman’s Association (Speight)

Resolution #24-261: Approving Active Volunteer Firefighter for Membership in the New Jersey State Fireman’s Association (Pallis)

Resolution #24-262: Approving Active Volunteer Firefighter for Membership in the New Jersey State Fireman’s Association (O’Connor)

Resolution #24-263: Approving Active Volunteer Firefighter for Membership in the New Jersey State Fireman’s Association (Enering)

Resolution #24-264: Authorizing the Use of Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council for Proposed Improvements to Glenwood Mountain Road – Section II

Resolution #24-265: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 302 Lot 3 (Muniz)

Resolution #24-266: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 436 Lot 14 (Chialkowski) – Amended

Resolution #24-267: Refund Overpayment Block 233 Lot 1 QFarm (Stephens)

Resolution #24-268: Refund Overpayment Block 263 Lot 2 QFarm (Stephens)

Resolution #24-269: Refund Overpayment Block 40 Lot 4 QFarm (Stephens)

Resolution #24-270: Refund Overpayment (Block 387 Lot 9 - Corelogic)

Resolution #24-271: Refund Overpayment (Block 529 Lot 248 -Clark)

Resolution #24-272: Resolution of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Procuring of Financial Advisory and Management Services LOSAP Program Competitive Contract

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

MOVED: DeBenedetto

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Higgins

Motion carries to approve the consent agenda.

RESOLUTION #24-257

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING GRANT OF PARKING EASEMENT RELATIVE TO PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS BLOCK 512, LOT 37 ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon (“Township”) is the owner of a 50’ Right of Way (“ROW”), known as “Canistear Road”, as more particularly described on a survey attached hereto as **Exhibit A**; and

WHEREAS, the fee owners of Block 512, Lot 37, commonly known as 692 Canistear Road, are seeking an easement from the Township for a portion of the Township’s ROW, pursuant to the terms of a Right of Way Parking Easement, substantially in the form attached hereto as **Exhibit B**; and

WHEREAS, the Township seeks to grant said Right of Way Parking Easement to the fee owners of Block 512, Lot 37 pursuant to the terms set forth in **Exhibit B**.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey:

1. The aforementioned recitals are incorporated herein as though fully set forth at length.
2. The Township hereby grants a Right of Way Parking Easement, substantially in the form attached hereto as **Exhibit B**, to the fee owners of Block 512, Lot 37, and shall record same and return to the fee owners.
3. All Township officials, including, but not limited to, the Mayor, Township Administrator, and the Municipal Clerk, are hereby authorized and directed to take such ministerial actions as are necessary to effectuate the provisions of this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Township Council.

RESOLUTION #24-258

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING PARTICIPATION WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY
FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT
OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.**

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon Police Department wishes to apply for funding of approximately \$45,150 with a match of \$142,057.90 in salary and fringe benefits for an approximate project total cost of \$187,207.90 for a project under the State of New Jersey Safe and Secure Grant Program, Subaward Period: 2/7/25-2/6/26, Grant #25-1922; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Township of Vernon has reviewed the accompanying application and has approved said request; and

WHEREAS, the project is a joint effort between the Department of Law and Public Safety and the Vernon Township Police Department for the purpose described in the application.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey that

1. As a matter of public policy the Vernon Township Police Department wishes to participate to the fullest extent possible with the Department of Law and Public Safety.
2. The Attorney General will receive funds on behalf of the applicant.
3. The New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General shall be responsible for the receipt and review of the applications for said funds.
4. The New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General shall initiate allocations to each applicant as authorized.
5. The Subrecipient’s Unit of Government/Non-Profit Organization is “authorized to accept” and/or “does accept” the Subaward.

RESOLUTION #24-259

**APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPUTY COORDINATOR
(Howard Lazier)**

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon is in need to appoint an Office of Emergency Management Deputy Coordinator and wishes to appointment of Howard Lazier for the position.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, and STATE OF NEW JERSEY, that Howard Lazier is hereby appointed as the Township of Vernon Office of Emergency Management Deputy Coordinator for the term effective October 18, 2024 through December 31, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Township Clerk shall send a certified copy of this resolution to the County Office of Emergency Management.

RESOLUTION #24-260

APPROVING ACTIVE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN’S ASSOCIATION (Speight)

WHEREAS, the Township Council recognizes the extraordinary contributions made by volunteer firefighters to our community and seeks to encourage their full participation in professional organizations; and

WHEREAS, Jack T Speight, an active firefighter and member of the McAfee Fire Department, is requesting approval to submit an application for membership to the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, Sussex County, New Jersey hereby approves Jack T Speight for membership in the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association.

RESOLUTION #24-261

APPROVING ACTIVE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN’S ASSOCIATION (Pallis)

WHEREAS, the Township Council recognizes the extraordinary contributions made by volunteer firefighters to our community and seeks to encourage their full participation in professional organizations; and

WHEREAS, Artemios (Timmy) J Pallis, an active firefighter and member of the McAfee Fire Department, is requesting approval to submit an application for membership to the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, Sussex County, New Jersey hereby approves Artemios (Timmy) J Pallis for membership in the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association.

RESOLUTION #24-262

APPROVING ACTIVE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN’S ASSOCIATION (O’Connor)

WHEREAS, the Township Council recognizes the extraordinary contributions made by volunteer firefighters to our community and seeks to encourage their full participation in professional organizations; and

WHEREAS, Niamh M O’Connor, an active firefighter and member of the Pochuck Valley Fire Department, is requesting approval to submit an application for membership to the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, Sussex County, New Jersey hereby approves Niamh M O’Connor for membership in the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association.

RESOLUTION #24-263

**APPROVING ACTIVE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE
NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION (Enering)**

WHEREAS, the Township Council recognizes the extraordinary contributions made by volunteer firefighters to our community and seeks to encourage their full participation in professional organizations; and

WHEREAS, Tyler N Enering, an active firefighter and member of the Pochuck Valley Fire Department, is requesting approval to submit an application for membership to the New Jersey State Firemen's Association.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, Sussex County, New Jersey hereby approves Tyler N Enering for membership in the New Jersey State Firemen's Association.

RESOLUTION #24-264

**AUTHORIZING THE USE OF MORRIS COUNTY COOPERATIVE PRICING
COUNCIL FOR PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
TO GLENWOOD MOUNTAIN ROAD – SECTION II**

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has a need for contracting services for Proposed Improvements to Glenwood Mountain Road – Section II; and

WHEREAS, the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council advertised and received bids for Milling & Paving, Line Striping, Guide Rails, and Drainage Inlet Accessories; and

WHEREAS, the bids received allowed for vendors to extend their pricing to municipalities who are a member of the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council, a State regulated County Contract Purchasing System; and

WHEREAS, the Vernon Township Engineer recommends the Township Council award contracts for Milling & Paving, Line Striping, Guide Rails, and Drainage Inlet Accessories, (subject to final approvals from the New Jersey Department of Transportation) through the use of the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council to the following contractors:

- 1) Milling & Paving: Riverview Paving, Inc. (Contract # 6) in an amount of **\$208,283.60**;
- 2) Line Striping: Denville Line Painting, Inc. (Contract #36) in an amount of **\$8,311.80**;
- 3) Guide Rails: Road Safety Systems, LLC (Contract #26) in an amount of **\$109,769.00**;
- 4) Drainage Inlet Access.: Campbell Foundry Co. (Contract#14) in an amount of **\$2,415.00**

WHEREAS, the Certified Municipal Finance Officer of the Township of Vernon has certified that the funds for these contracts are available in Account #C-04-24-010-01 Road Improvements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the vendors Riverview Paving, Inc. Denville Line Painting, Inc., Road Safety Systems, and Campbell Foundry Co. be utilized for the Improvements to Glenwood Mountain Road – Section II through the respective Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council contracts at the amounts not to exceed listed herewith, subject to the final approval from the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately according to law.

RESOLUTION #24-265

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 302 Lot 3 (Muniz))**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Paul Muniz a 100% permanent and totally disabled veteran: and,

WHEREAS, the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to refund 2024 property tax in the amount of \$2,085.01 to Paul Muniz.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Township Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION #24-266

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
Block 436 Lot 14 (Cialkowski) – Amended**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded Paul Cialkowski a 100% permanent and totally disabled veteran: and,

WHEREAS, the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to refund 2024 property tax in the amount of \$2,308.43 to Paul Cialkowski.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Township Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION #24-267

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
Block 233 Lot 1 Qfarm (Stephens)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Kirk Stephens in the amount of \$1,102.63 representing refund for overpayment of 2024 property taxes for Block 233 Lot 1 Qfarm.

RESOLUTION #24-268

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
Block 263 Lot 2 Qfarm (Stephens)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Kirk Stephens in the amount of \$654.50 representing refund for overpayment of 2024 property taxes for Block 263 Lot 2 Qfarm.

RESOLUTION #24-269

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
Block 40 Lot 4 Qfarm (Stephens)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Kirk Stephens in the amount of \$993.42 representing refund for overpayment of 2024 property taxes for Block 40 Lot 4 Qfarm.

RESOLUTION #24-270

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 387 Lot 9 – Corelogic)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Corelogic in the amount of \$2610.82 representing refund for overpayment of 3rd qtr. 2024 property taxes for Block 527 Lot 338.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Pidoto	387	9	\$2610.82
		TOTAL:	\$2610.82

RESOLUTION #24-271

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 529 Lot 248 – Clark)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Kyle Clark in the amount of \$1170.80 representing refund for overpayment of 3rd qtr. 2023 property taxes for Block 529 Lot 248.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Clark	529	248	\$1170.80
		TOTAL:	\$1170.80

RESOLUTION #24-272

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE PROCURING OF FINANCIAL ADVISORY AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES LOSAP PROGRAM COMPETITIVE CONTRACT

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has a requirement of Financial Advisory and Management Services for the LOSAP program; and

WHEREAS such services are authorized under the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law (N.J.S.A.40A:11-4.1(m)); and

WHEREAS the Township desires to evaluate such service offerings from vendors within the procedures as set forth in the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law (N.J.S.A.40A:11-4.1 et. seq. and N.J.A.C. 5:34-4 et. Seq.); and

WHEREAS the Township desires to enter into a contract for up to a five (5) year contract that will satisfy the needs of the Township; and

WHEREAS, as per statute the process will be administered by the Qualified Purchasing Agent (N.J.S.A 40A:11-4.5(d)).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The Qualified Purchasing Agent is hereby authorized to commence the competitive contract/ procurement as allowable under the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law for Financial Advisory and Management Services for the LOSAP program for the operations of the Township of Vernon, allowing for a minimum of 20 days’ notice after advertisement to receive responses, per Local Publics Contract Law.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance #24-22: An Ordinance of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex and State of New Jersey Amending Certain Portions of Chapter 99 Entitled “Vehicles and Traffic”

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-22.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Higgins

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-22.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance #24-21: An Ordinance of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey Amending Chapter 275 of the Township Code to Repeal Chapter 275 and Replace Same: to Adopt Flood Hazard Maps: To Designate a Floodplain Administrator; and Providing for Severability and an Effective Date.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public hearing on ordinance #24-21.

MOVED: DeBenedetto

SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the public hearing on ordinance #24-21.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to adopt ordinance #24-21.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Higgins

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #24-21.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Seeing no members of the public wishing to speak, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the meeting for Public Comments.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri
All members were in favor.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member DeBenedetto had no comments.

Council Member Buccieri had no comment.

Council Member Sparta clarified statements he made on the laws regarding trucks on Route 515. His statements were meant for public safety for the residents. He apologizes if anyone received his comments differently.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Rizzuto asked the Mayor to send an email to the Council regarding the preparation of the budget. Council President Rizzuto commented that he and the Mayor met with JCP&L regarding the high electric bills and the smart meters. They will be having another meeting with the concerned residents and JCP&L. JCP&L feels that the price difference was due to an extremely hot summer and the eight percent increase. Council President Rizzuto asked everyone to be cautious on Halloween and pay attention to children. Council President Rizzuto mentioned that he would like to cancel the November 25th and December 23rd Council meetings because of the upcoming holidays.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:46 pm Council Member Sparta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Buccieri.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

Patrick Rizzuto
Council President

Minutes approved: October 28, 2024