

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 22, 2024 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on April 22, 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 Jessica DeBenedetto, William Higgins, Badley Sparta and Council President Patrick Rizzuto. Also, present were Mayor Anthony Rossi, Business Administrator Tina Kraus, CFO Donelle Bright, Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio, Township Attorney Ryan Windels

Council Member Natalie Buccieri was not present

PROCLAMATIONS

Autism Month

MAYOR COMMENTS

Thank you, Council President Rizzuto. On April 12th Vernon lost a true hero last week Sverre “Chris” Christiansen. Chris moved to the United States from Norway in 1956. He lived in Brooklyn and settled in Vernon in 1972. Chris served in the US Army during the Vietnam War. After his military service, he began his long career as a tugboat captain. Chris was a volunteer with the McAfee Fire Department for over fifty years, and he enjoyed Friday nights at the firehouse. He loved cruises, trips to Atlantic City, Fox News, and lunch with his buddies. He was also an avid Jets and Mets fan. I never met Chris, but seeing and hearing some of his stories, I think we would have been good friends. I attended the wake on Friday evening, and I got to learn a lot about Chris. I think Chris and I would have been good friends. I ask at this time for a moment of silence for Chris..... Thank you.

After the wake I attended the installation dinner for the Vernon Fire Department. I want to congratulate all of the new men and women on their promotions and most importantly their sacrifice and dedication to serving our community.

Since we have been talking about fire department-related topics I have another topic I want to share. The brotherhood we see for our men and women in the fire department is incredible. Our Fire department has so many strong relationships with other fire departments across NJ and NY. This being said I'm pleased to announce that the Mahwah Fire Department has graciously offered to lease to the Highland lakes Fire Department a tanker at ZERO COST. LET ME BE CLEAR ZERO COST to Vernon. They could have sold this tanker for a couple hundred thousand but they have chosen to help their fellow brother and sisters out. This couldn't have come at a better time, because we currently have a tanker on order and another tanker with a leak in it, which I'm currently working on sending it to Chicago for repairs, but that's a topic for another day I will personally be taking a ride with John Cosh our fire commissioner and a member of the Highland lakes fire department to pick this tanker up tomorrow or Wednesday evening. I would like to personally thank the Mahwah fire department for thinking of us, and how appreciative Vernon is. I will also send a thank you letter to the Mayor and Council for approving this deal.

Speaking of heroes Council President, you may or may not know the following people

- Disp. Cathy Southard
- Disp. Laura Krause
- Disp. David Smith
- Disp. Tyler Mueller
- Disp. Stephanie McPherson

Disp. Kevin Duffy
-Disp. Deborah Rivera

They are among our nation's first responders, rarely seen but always heard and appreciated. The calm voices transmitting over radio airwaves are the heroes behind the scenes who ensure an ambulance, Fire truck or police crew responds to every 911 request for emergencies.

Last week as part of the New Jersey Tree Recovery Campaign which is part of Earth Day recognition. Mischelle from our Rec dept initiated the application for 300 free trees to be given out to our residents. The rec dept worked with our Environmental Commission on handing out these seedlings, so thank you to Stephanie, Catherina and Ann, and Mishelle for all of your work in making this a success.

Vernon Township has won the 2023 Healthy Town For the second year in a row, the Township of Vernon has received a Healthy Town designation. Vernon's access to outdoor space and trails is a cornerstone of the MWC programming MWC means Mayor Wellness Campaign. Incorporating physical activity into community-building events is just one of the ways that the township has created a culture of health in the community.

This Saturday, April 27th @ 11:00 am we will be having a Blue Star Memorial. This Blue Star Memorial is the 3rd of all of Sussex County to be given this honor. I want to thank our Rec dept Michelle Downtain and former Mayor Burrell who initiated this Blue Star Memorial. I have invited all of our elected officials in the county and our local Council. This is an opportunity to honor our past, present, and future armed forces. I will be speaking followed by Senator Space and former Mayor Howard Burrell.

I'm finally pleased to announce that on May 1st 12 noon we will be having our groundbreaking ceremony for the 55-unit building. There is still plenty of work being done behind the scenes as we continue to work with the developers and our building department on areas of the construction project. Thank you that is all my comments for today. I will keep everyone updated on the progress.

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: DeBenedetto
SECOND: Higgins

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: Higgins

All members were in favor.

REVIEW OF BILLS LIST

The Council reviewed the bills list.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 8, 2024 – Executive Session

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the April 8, 2024 executive session meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto
NAYES:

ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Buccieri

Motion carries to approve the April 8, 2024 executive session meeting minutes.

April 8, 2024 – Regular Meeting

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the April 8, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: DeBenedetto
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:
AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto
NAYES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Buccieri

Motion carries to approve the April 8, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution #24-116: Governing Body Certification of Compliance with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s “Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964”

Resolution #24-117: Approving Active Volunteer Firefighter for Membership in the New Jersey State Fireman’s Association (Mueller)

Resolution #24-118: Refund Overpayment Due to Tax Court Judgement (Sangare – Block 541 Lot 48)

Resolution #24-119: Resolution Authorizing Award of Contract to Vendor with National Cooperative Contracts HGACBUY

Resolution #24-120: Authorizing the Township of Vernon to Accept Loan of Fire Tanker from the Township of Mahwah

Resolution #24-121: Authorizing the Cancellation of Outstanding Checks Over Six Months Old to Municipal Cash Balances

Resolution #24-122: Authorizing Approval of Sussex County Contributions to Vernon Emergency Medical Services (VEMS)

Resolution #24-123: Refund Overpayment Due to State Tax Court Judgement (Spiotti & Associates) Block 220 Lot 1

Resolution #24-124: Refund Overpayment Due to State Tax Court Judgement (Spiotti & Associates) Block 220 Lot 1

Resolution #24-125: Refund Overpayment Due to State Tax Court Judgement (Spiotti & Associates) Block 220 Lot 1

Resolution #24-126: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 106 Lot 21-Stewart)

Resolution #24-127: (Block 106 Lot 21) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #24-128: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 8 Lot 3-Rivera)

Resolution #24-129: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 8 Lot 3-Rivera)

Resolution #24-130: (Block 8 Lot 3-Rivera) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #24-131: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 306 Lot 16-Gerry)

Resolution #24-132: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 306 Lot 16-Gerry)

Resolution #24-133: (Block 306 Lot 16- Gerry) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #24-134: Refund Overpayment (Block 106 Lot 43-Humphreys)

Resolution #24-135: Refund Overpayment (Block 526 Lot 279-Russell)

Resolution #24-136: Refund Overpayment (Multiple Block & Lots-Corelogic)

Resolution #24-137: Refund Overpayment (Block 529 Lot 176-Corelogic)

Resolution #24-138: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 355 Lot 6-Grullon)

Resolution #24-139: Resolution Authorizing Leasing of Certain Vehicles for the Department of Administration Through Sourcewell National Cooperative #060618-EFM Through Enterprise Fleet Management Services Inc. (Quote No. 7846810 1 x Agate Black Metallic)

Resolution #24-140: A Resolution Expressing Community Support for Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Projects

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

MOVED: DeBenedetto

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Buccieri

Motion carries to approve the Consent Agenda.

RESOLUTION #24-116

GOVERNING BODY CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION'S "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964"

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5 as amended by P.L. 2017, c.183 requires the governing body of each municipality and county to certify that their local unit's hiring practices comply with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *as amended*, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.*, (April 25, 2012) before submitting its approved annual budget to the Division of Local Government Services in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have familiarized themselves with the contents of the above-referenced enforcement guidance and with their local unit's hiring practices as they pertain to the consideration of an individual's criminal history, as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the governing body attached hereto.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the *Township Council* of the *Township of Vernon*, hereby states that it has complied with N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5, as amended by P.L. 2017, c.183, by certifying that the local unit's hiring practices comply with the above-referenced enforcement guidance and hereby directs the Clerk to cause to be maintained and available for inspection a certified copy of this resolution and the required affidavit to show evidence of said compliance.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE MEETING HELD ON *APRIL 22, 2024*.

RESOLUTION #24-117

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

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 J. Mueller, an active firefighter and member of the Highland Lakes 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 J. Mueller for membership in the New Jersey State Firemen's Association.

RESOLUTION #24-118

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT DUE TO STATE TAX COURT JUDGMENT
(Sangare – Block 541 Lot 48)**

WHEREAS, a Tax Court Judgment has been favorably awarded for the year 2022: and,

WHEREAS, such Judgment has resulted in an overpayment of 2022 property taxes for Block 541 Lot 48 also known as 18 Eric Trail, Sussex, New Jersey.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon, to authorize the Tax Collector to refund the overpayment in the amount of \$1,499.71 to Chenisa Sangare.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Township Treasurer and Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION #24-119

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT TO VENDOR WITH NATIONAL
COOPERATIVE CONTRACTS HGACBUY**

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

WHEREAS, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Public Contract Law P.L. 2011, C.139 (the "Law" or "Chapter 139" and N.J.S.A.52:34-6.2 the regulations promulgated there under in Local Finance Notice LFN 2012-10, the following purchase without competitive bids from vendor with a National Cooperative Contract is hereby approved for municipalities, and;

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has the need to procure certain specialized ambulance vehicle and equipment in accord with the Local Publics Contract Law N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et. Seq., and;

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has previously acted in accord with New Jersey public procurement statutes and regulations as promulgated by formally joining a recognized and compliant national cooperative, being the Houston Galveston Area Cooperative, and;

WHEREAS, the regulations as set forth within Local Finance Notice LFN 2012-10 have been fully complied with, and;

WHEREAS, the Business Administrator has complied with the public notification provisions of public advertisement and has received no protests in accord with law and regulation, and;

WHEREAS, the equipment and corresponding Houston Galveston Area Cooperative contract proposal from First Priority Vehicles an authorized dealer under HGAC contract AM10-20, in the amount of \$194,595.20 is allowable under N.J.S.A. 40A:11-36; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer certifies that funds are available in the amount of: \$194,595.20 through line items: C-04-23-015-04 and C-04-21-0125-05

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Mayor is hereby authorized to effectuate the purchase of herein approved equipment for the approved cost of \$194,595.20 through First Priority Vehicles an authorized under HGAC contract AM10-20.

RESOLUTION #24-120

AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON TO ACCEPT LOAN OF FIRE TANKER FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH

WHEREAS, the Township of Mahwah desires to loan Fire Tanker 425, a 2004 Seagrave, with VIN# 1F9EE38T34CST2090 (the "Equipment") to Vernon Township for a term ending June 30, 2025 (the Term"), at no cost; and

WHEREAS, during the Term, Vernon Township shall be solely responsible for all costs of operation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of the Equipment; and

WHEREAS, at the end of the Term, Vernon Township shall return the Equipment to the Township of Mahwah in substantially the same condition that it was at the beginning of the Term; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township shall furnish the Township of Mahwah with a Certificate of Insurance showing coverage for bodily injury of at least \$250,000/\$500,000 and property damage of at least \$100,000.00 and the Certificate of Insurance must clearly indicate that the township of Mahwah is an additional insured on all liability policies and shall contain a ninety (90) day notice of cancellation to the Township; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township agrees to save, hold and keep harmless and indemnify the Township of Mahwah from any and all claims and liability for losses or damage to the Equipment or other property, or injury to any persons caused by them or their agents occurring during and relating to this loan of Equipment

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

1. The loan to Vernon Township of Fire Tanker 425, a2004 Seagrave, with VIN#1F9EE38T34CST20900 9the "Equipment") for a term ending June 30, 2025 (the "Term"), at no cost, is hereby authorized.
2. During the Term, Vernon Township shall be solely responsible for all costs or operation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of the Equipment.
3. At the end of the Term, Vernon Township shall return the Equipment to the Township of Mahwah in substantially the same condition that it was at the beginning of the Term.

4. Vernon Township shall furnish the Township of Mahwah with a Certificate of Insurance showing coverage for bodily injury of at least \$250,000/\$500,000 and property damage of at least \$100,000.00 and the Certificate of Insurance must clearly indicate that the township of Mahwah is an additional insured on all liability policies and shall contain a ninety (90) day notice of cancellation to the Township.
5. Vernon Township agrees to save, hold and keep harmless and indemnify the Township of Mahwah from any and all claims and liability for losses or damage to the Equipment or other property, or injury to any persons caused by them or their agents occurring during and relating to this loan of Equipment
6. This resolution and loan are subject to any other conditions deemed applicable by the Administrator.

RESOLUTION #24-121

AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF OUTSTANDING CHECKS OVER SIX MONTHS OLD TO MUNICIPAL CASH BALANCES

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has determined that the following Township checks have been outstanding for a period in excess of six months:

CENTRAL CHECKING ACCOUNT ENDING IN 3102:

59514	03/20/23	Nicole Bene	\$10.00
59516	03/20/23	Nicole Postel	\$28.00

TOTAL			\$38.00
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PAYROLL CHECKING ACCOUNT ENDING IN 3654:

16485	10/14/22	Kevin Kiel	\$67.70
16694	05/31/23	Officer	\$1,776.79
16738	07/14/23	Officer	\$36.15

TOTAL			\$1,880.64
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THEREFORE, be it resolved that the above outstanding checks be restored to the Township cash balances.

RESOLUTION #24-122

AUTHORIZING APPROVAL OF SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRIBUTION TO VERNON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (VEMS)

WHEREAS, Vernon Township is in receipt of Request for Certification for Rescue Squad Contribution of \$5,000.00 per squad from the County of Sussex; and

WHEREAS, per a resolution approved by the Board of Chosen Freeholders on February 28, 2001, Sussex County established policy to appropriate aid to Emergency Rescue Squads for the benefit of the county residents; and

WHEREAS, the policy stated that prior to approval, the appropriate municipality must approve the Emergency Rescue Squad seeking financial assistance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon that it hereby approves the Certification for Rescue Squad Contribution to Vernon Emergency Medical Services within Vernon Township and approves the receipt of financial assistance in the amount of \$5,000.00 per squad for the calendar year 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Sussex County Administrative Center, and Vernon Emergency Medical Services.

RESOLUTION #24-123

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT DUE TO STATE TAX COURT JUDGMENT
(Spiotti & Associates) Block 220 Lot 1**

WHEREAS, a Tax Court Judgment has been favorably awarded for the year 2016: and,

WHEREAS, such Judgment has resulted in an overpayment of 2016 property taxes for Block 220 Lot 1 also known as 9 Wisteria Ct., Vernon, New Jersey.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon, to authorize the Tax Collector to refund the 2016 overpayment in the amount of \$2,980.76 to Spiotti & Associates, Attorneys for Plaintiff

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION #24-124

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT DUE TO STATE TAX COURT JUDGMENT
(Spiotti & Associates) Block 220 Lot 1**

WHEREAS, a Tax Court Judgment has been favorably awarded for the year 2017: and,

WHEREAS, such Judgment has resulted in an overpayment of 2017 property taxes for Block 220 Lot 1 also known as 9 Wisteria Ct., Vernon, New Jersey.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon, to authorize the Tax Collector to refund the 2017 overpayment in the amount of \$1,349.82 to Spiotti & Associates, Attorneys for Plaintiff

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION #24-125

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT DUE TO STATE TAX COURT JUDGMENT
(Spiotti & Associates) Block 220 Lot 1**

WHEREAS, a Tax Court Judgment has been favorably awarded for the year 2018: and,

WHEREAS, such Judgment has resulted in an overpayment of 2018 property taxes for Block 220 Lot 1 also known as 9 Wisteria Ct., Vernon, New Jersey

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon, to authorize the Tax Collector to refund the 2018 overpayment in the amount of \$1,386.90 to Spiotti & Associates, Attorneys for Plaintiff

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION #24-126

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 106 Lot 21-Stewart)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded William Stewart 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 \$1,077.82 to William Stewart.

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

RESOLUTION #24-127

(Block 106 Lot 21)

CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS on awarded William Stewart a 100% permanent and total disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, as of said date the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2024 in the amount of \$1,616.73

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

RESOLUTION #24-128

REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN

(Block 8 Lot 3-Rivera)

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded Jason Rivera 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 2023 property tax in the amount of \$1,792.96 to Jason Rivera.

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

RESOLUTION #24-129

REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN

(Block 8 Lot 3-Rivera)

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded Jason Rivera 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 \$3,014.10 to Jason Rivera.

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

RESOLUTION #24-130

**(Block 8 Lot 3 - Rivera)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS on awarded Jason Rivera a 100% permanent and total disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, as of said date the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2024 in the amount of \$3,014.09.

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

RESOLUTION #24-131

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 306 Lot 16-Gerry)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded Robert Gerry 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 2023 property tax in the amount of \$1,875.10 to Robert Gerry.

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

RESOLUTION #24-132

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 306 Lot 16-Gerry)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded Robert Gerry 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 \$2,647.19 to Robert Gerry.

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

RESOLUTION #24-133

**(Block 306 Lot 16 - Gerry)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS on awarded Robert Gerry a 100% permanent and total disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, as of said date the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2024 in the amount of \$2,647.18.

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

RESOLUTION #24-134

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 106 Lot 43 – HUMPHREYS)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Amy Humphreys in the amount of \$2059.41 representing refund for overpayment of 4th qtr. 2023 property taxes for Block 106 Lot 43.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Humphreys	106	43	\$2059.41
		TOTAL:	\$2059.41

RESOLUTION #24-135

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 526 Lot 279 – RUSSELL)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to William Russell in the amount of \$1187.50 representing refund for overpayment of 3rd qtr. 2023 property taxes for Block 526 Lot 279.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Russell	526	279	\$1187.50
		TOTAL:	\$1187.50

RESOLUTION #24-136

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Multiple Block & Lots- 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 representing refund for overpayment for the following properties:

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Turgil	526	182	\$1223.75
Walter	156	20	\$1597.33
		TOTAL:	\$2821.08

Turgil- refund for overpayment totaling \$1223.75 of 4th qtr. 2021 property taxes for Block 526 Lot 182.

Walter- refund for overpayment totaling \$1597.33 of the 4th qtr. 2021 property taxes for Block 156 Lot 20.

RESOLUTION #24-137

REFUND OVERPAYMENT

(Block 529 Lot 176-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 \$945.26 representing refund for overpayment for the following properties:

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Winstock	529	176	\$945.26
		TOTAL:	\$945.26

Winstock- refund for overpayment totaling \$945.26 for 1st qtr. 2022 property taxes for Block 529 Lot 176.

RESOLUTION #24-138

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 355 Lot 6–Grullon)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded George Grullon 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 2023 property tax in the amount of \$2,789.56 to George Grullon.

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

RESOLUTION #24-139

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LEASING OF CERTAIN VEHICLES FOR THE DEPARTMENT
OF ADMINISTRATION THROUGH SOURCEWELL**

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE #060618-EFM THROUGH ENTERPRISE

FLEET MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC.

(Quote No. 7846810 1 x Agate Black Metallic)

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

WHEREAS, the governing body of Vernon Township approved in Resolution 19-164 authorizing leasing of certain vehicles through Sourcewell National Cooperative #060618-EFM through Enterprise Fleet Management Services, Inc., and this is an extension of that resolution; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Public Contract Law P.L. 2011, C.139 (the “Law” or “Chapter 139” and N.J.S.A.52:34-6.2 the regulations promulgated there under in Local Finance Notice LFN 2012-10, the following purchase without competitive bids from vendor with a National Cooperative Contract is hereby approved for municipalities, and;

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has the need to procure certain vehicles through lease program for Township services in accord with the Local Publics Contract Law N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et. Seq., and;

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has previously acted in accord with New Jersey public procurement statutes and regulations as promulgated by formally joining a recognized and compliant national cooperative, being the Sourcewell National Cooperative, and;

WHEREAS, the regulations as set forth within Local Finance Notice LFN 2012-10 have been fully complied with, and;

WHEREAS, the equipment and corresponding Sourcewell National Cooperative contract is #060618-EFM for Enterprise Fleet Management Services Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the cost savings determination as required under LFN 2012-10 is the cost of contract as there is currently no cooperative lease program in effect under the New Jersey Division of Purchase and Property; and

WHEREAS, the quoted cost under the Sourcewell National contract is \$45,354.60 (Quote No. 7846810); and

WHEREAS, that the governing body of Vernon Township pursuant to NJAC 5:30-5.5(b) (the certification of available funds), states that the Chief Finance Officer shall either certify the full maximum amount against the budget at the time the contract is awarded, or no contract amount shall be chargeable or certified until such time as the goods or services are ordered or otherwise called for prior to placing the order, and a certification of availability of funds is made by the Chief Finance Officer; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Business Administrator is hereby directed to effectuate the contract with Enterprise Fleet Management Services Inc. under Sourcewell contract #060618-EFM in accord with the provisions of the tenets as established within 40A:11-1 et. Seq.,

RESOLUTION #24-140

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

WHEREAS, the 117th Congress reinstated the process of providing funding for local governments through the “Community Project Funding” program in 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Township has been informed of Community Project Funding availability for the 2023 Congressional Fiscal Year; and

WHEREAS, Community Project Funding helps fund projects that are considered by the Interior Subcommittee of the Environmental Protection Agency for local drinking water and wastewater infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Community Project Funding also funds projects that are considered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative for the construction/capital improvements of public facilities, including wastewater facilities; and

WHEREAS, applications for Community Project Funding require proof of community support; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township wishes to express support for wastewater infrastructure projects that would benefit the Township and be funded by Community Project Funding;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon hereby expresses support for wastewater projects served by the Community Project Funding program that would enhance services to residents and businesses in the Township of Vernon and benefit the community.

RESOLUTION

Resolution #24-115: Resolution Opposing the Department of Environmental Protection’s Reassignment of Municipalities from Tier B to Tier A for Permitting of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #24-115

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to approve resolution #24-115.

RESOLUTION #24-115

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION'S REASSIGNMENT OF MUNICIPALITIES FROM TIER B TO TIER A FOR PERMITTING OF MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEMS

WHEREAS, in 1999, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued rules for regulating Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4's) under federal law through state permitting programs; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in response to the EPA's rules, implemented the Municipal Stormwater Regulation Program and created a tier system for municipalities to obtain permits, including Tier A and Tier B; and

WHEREAS, Tier A, meant for densely populated municipalities, is a costlier designation requiring greater compliance with additional regulations and would be burdensome for smaller, rural municipalities; and

WHEREAS, Tier B was created for municipalities with smaller populations, essentially 1,000 residents or less and within rural regions; and WHEREAS, in 2022, the DEP eliminated the Tier B classification, with over one hundred municipalities notified that they were reassigned to Tier A after nearly two decades of complying with the less costly Tier B, effectively placing nearly all municipalities with the same MS4 requirements with no regard for the size, population or location of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Stormwater Regulation Program's purpose is to implement federal law, but there is no federal requirement that all municipalities must be regulated the same despite their size, population and location differences, and in fact allows for waivers for smaller, rural municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon being a newly reassigned municipality is faced with rapidly approaching deadlines to comply with a new set of requirements, not only the need to comply with current Tier A requirements which recently did not apply to their municipality, but also any new and future regulations, thereby creating a new host of expenses within a short timeframe; and

WHEREAS, this new single tier system burdens the Township of Vernon being a newly reassigned municipality with an outsized share of costs and regulations despite their rural population and also already having adequate stormwater management systems, thereby significantly impacting their limited funds and burdening taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, rural municipalities such as the Township of Vernon have a disproportionately large amount of public road miles to residents compared to the denser populations initially regulated under Tier A, while having very few current MS4's due to their long history of compliance under Tier B regulations; and

WHEREAS, some municipalities are so rural that the municipality does not have the resources to accomplish the requirements of the Tier A designation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township of Vernon, opposes the DEP's reassignment of municipalities from Tier B to Tier A, and urges the DEP to reinstate the original tier system recognizing a separate distinction for municipalities with rural populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, to the members of the New Jersey General Assembly, the New Jersey State Senate, the Senate President, Speaker of the Assembly, and the Governor of the State of New Jersey.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)

Before Council President Rizzuto opened the floor to public he commented saying that following our last meeting a number of comments were addressed to me and to my colleagues concerning the comments that were made by members of the public regarding issues that were not germane to any issues on the agenda or related to township business. In retrospect I believe that the subject matter brought by many residents in the five-minute session have been issues not of council concerns.

We strive to provide an open forum for discussion of matters that be may on the mind of residents but not yet part of an agenda. In many cases this is how a problem is brought to our attention or to the attention of the administration. A perfect example was the matter of autism, brought to our attention by a resident, and a request that April be proclaimed Autism Month. Another was the issue of “Squatting” and home protection rights brought to our attention by Mrs. Larsen, which the council acted on very quickly.

I believe and the council supports this position that we cannot allow our business meetings to become a place of interpersonal conflicts. To sit and allow comments regarding accusations of lack of integrity, or individual efforts on matters not within our control or oversight does not promote a productive meeting.

Therefore, as council president I will respectfully ask that the public restrict its comments to matters concerning the township or its welfare or issues that can be resolved by the administration or the council.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the meeting for public comment.

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

Scott Cassell – expressed gratitude with the questions concerning the bills list. Mr. Cassell feels that the Township budget will be overshadowed by the school budget.

Sean Clarkin – expressed concern with the State requirements for municipal storm sewer systems. Mr. Clarkin would like to see work begin on the 2025 budget. Mr. Clarkin commented on the open seats for the Board of Education.

Jessi Paladini – expressed concern with the comments made by Council President Rizzuto in reference to open public comments. Ms. Paladini questioned a piece of equipment that is being auctioned off.

Goerge Nikanorov – thanked the Council and Mayor for listening to constituents. Mr. Nikanorov questioned if the Zoom meeting process is being discussed.

Thomas McClachrie – commented on the towns storm sewer systems. Mr. McClachrie feels that the Board of Education’s budget and the town’s election can be moved to the April election.

Ann Larsen – expressed concern with a piece of equipment that is on the bills list. Ms. Larsen feels that the Township should sell the MUA. Ms. Larsen also feels that the Board of Education’s budget should be put on the ballot.

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

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Higgins

All members were in favor.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Higgins explained that there is a difference between the Mayor’s salary and a stipend. Council Member Higgins asked to have the Township website updated to the current census. Council Member Higgins asked when the budget will be adopted and are we getting close to the deadline. Council Member Higgins feels that the budget needs to be more detailed and he explained that even though there may be a zero percent increase people’s taxes can still go up.

Council Member DeBenedetto announced that Mary Jo Grinchard who is running for Congress for the NJ 5th Congressional District and is having a meet and greet at the Vernon VFW on April 28th at 2-4 pm. Council Member DeBenedetto thanked Council President Rizzuto for his comments on the public comment part of the meetings.

Council Member Sparta had no comments.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Rizzuto asked that with the weather getting nicer that everyone be careful on the roads and watch for youngsters who are playing and riding bicycles.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:21 pm Council Member Higgins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member DeBenedetto.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

Patrick Rizzuto
Council President

Minutes approved: May 13, 2024