

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 12, 2025 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on May 12, 2025, 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 19, 2025, 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, William Higgins, Bradley Sparta and Council President Patrick Rizzuto. Also present were Mayor Anthony Rossi, Business Administrator Tina Krause, CFO Donelle Bright, Township Attorney Peter King and Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio.

Council Member DeBenedetto was not present.

**PRESENTATION**

Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA)

**DISCUSSION ITEM**

Site Manager – Nutrition Program

**MAYOR COMMENTS**

Mayor Rossi wished all of the mothers a Happy Mother's Day. His grandson was just baptized at the Holy Lutheran Church. Mayor Rossi appointed Nicole Albert, Kimberly Russo and Claudin Guillen to the Beautification Committee. The Beautification Committee members will all be sworn in on May 14, 2025 and we now have eight members. Mayor Rossi told everyone that the trees on Route 515 have been planted and flowers will be planted in the next two weeks. Also, the Hometown Hero Banners have been installed and this has been a long time coming. Mayor Rossi thanked Mishelle and Tina for their hard work. We received a \$1200.00 donation from Sussex Cultivation and this reduced the cost of the banners. Mayor Rossi is happy to report that Vernon won a case for Affordable Housing. The State wanted us to have a certain number of units and we got that number reduced to a much lower number of units thanks to Jessica Caldwell, the Township's Planner.

**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: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

John Cosh – Fire Commissioner, commented on some of the needs of the Fire Services in Vernon.

Jane Damstra – questioned why she is being denied the right to join the union.

Christa Gerry – commented on all of the work Jane Damstra does in the Senior Center.

Frank Masherone – commented that the wrong thing is happening to the right person.

Blessing DoMuzio – questioned why there is not a Union representative at the meeting.

Jim Damstra – commented on all of the hard work that Jane Damstra does.

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

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

## **REVIEW OF BILLS LIST**

The Council reviewed the bills list.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **April 28, 2025- Regular Meeting**

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the April 28, 2025 regular meeting minutes with corrections.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN: Sparta

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to approve April 28, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

## CONSENT AGENDA

**Resolution #25-136:** Approving a Solicitors Permit – Direct Sales Marketing LLC

**Resolution #25-137:** Approving a Solicitors Permit – Direct Sales Marketing LLC

**Resolution #25-138:** Approving a Solicitors Permit – Direct Sales Marketing LLC

**Resolution #25-139:** Approving a Charitable Solicitor's Permit: Pochuck Valley Fire Department Inc.

**Resolution #25-140:** Authorizing Approval of Sussex County Contribution to Vernon Emergency Medical Services (VEMS)

**Resolution #25-141:** A Resolution of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Execution of a Fire Mutual Aid Agreement between the Township of Vernon and McAfee Fire Department and the Township of Hardyston and Hardyston Township Fire Department

**Resolution #25-142:** A Resolution of the Township of Vernon Adopting the 2025 Sussex County Hazard Mitigation Plan

**Resolution #25-143:** NJ Department of Community Affairs LEAP Challenge Grant Resolution FY25

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

MOVED: Sparta  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Sparta, Buccieri, Higgins, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to approve the consent.

### RESOLUTION #25-136

#### APPROVING A SOLICITOR PERMIT – Direct Sales Marketing, LLC

**WHEREAS,** Douglas Shamlin has made an application for a Solicitor Permit for the purposes of Fiber Optic Internet Services; and

**WHEREAS**, upon receipt of the application for a Solicitor Permit, by Douglas Shamlin of Direct Sales Marketing, LLC, the Vernon Township Police Department investigated the applicant's moral character and found it to be satisfactory and in good order for the protection of the public good; and the necessary application has been filed and all documentation is in order;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that approval be granted for a Solicitor Permit for Douglas Shamlin of Renewal by Anderson.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Township Clerk is hereby authorized to issue a Solicitor's Permit to the aforesaid applicant in accordance with Chapter 428 of the Code of the Township of Vernon.

#### **RESOLUTION #25-137**

#### **APPROVING A SOLICITOR PERMIT – Direct Sales Marketing LLC**

**WHEREAS**, Christopher Leon has made an application for a Solicitor Permit for the purpose of fiber optic internet service; and

**WHEREAS**, upon receipt of the application for a Solicitor Permit, by Christopher Leon of Direct Sales Marketing LLC the Vernon Township Police Department investigated the applicant's moral character and found it to be satisfactory and in good order for the protection of the public good; and the necessary application has been filed and all documentation is in order;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that approval be granted for a Solicitor Permit for Christopher Leon.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Township Clerk is hereby authorized to issue a Solicitor's Permit to the aforesaid applicant in accordance with Chapter 428 of the Code of the Township of Vernon.

#### **RESOLUTION #25-138**

#### **APPROVING A SOLICITOR PERMIT – Direct Sales Marketing LLC**

**WHEREAS**, Delano Ebanks has made an application for a Solicitor Permit for the purpose of fiber optic internet service; and

**WHEREAS**, upon receipt of the application for a Solicitor Permit, by Delano Ebanks of Direct Sales Marketing LLC the Vernon Township Police Department investigated the applicant's moral character and found it to be satisfactory and in good order for the protection of the public good; and the necessary application has been filed and all documentation is in order;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that approval be granted for a Solicitor Permit for Delano Ebanks

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Township Clerk is hereby authorized to issue a Solicitor's Permit to the aforesaid applicant in accordance with Chapter 428 of the Code of the Township of Vernon.

**RESOLUTION #25-139**

**APPROVING A CHARITABLE SOLICITOR'S PERMIT: POCHUCK VALLEY  
FIRE DEPARTMENT INC.**

**WHEREAS**, Pochuck Valley Fire Department Inc., has made application for a Charitable Roadside Solicitor's Permit for the purposes of soliciting funds on May 24, 2025, July 5, 2025 and August 30, 2025 8 am to 5 pm, on Route 565 and Route 667; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Ordinance 18-12, the Vernon Township Police Department has reviewed the necessary application found that all documentation is in order.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that approval be granted for a Charitable Roadside Solicitor's Permit for Pochuck Valley Fire Department Inc., 13 Lake Wallkill Road, Sussex, NJ 07461, has made application for a Charitable Roadside Solicitor's Permit for the purposes of soliciting funds on May 24, 2025, July 5, 2025 and August 30, 2025 8 am to 5 pm; subject to the approval of the County of Sussex and State of New Jersey as needed.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Township Clerk is hereby authorized to issue a Charitable Roadside Solicitor's Permit to the aforesaid applicant in accordance with Chapter 428 of the Code of the Township of Vernon upon receipt of the approval from the County of Sussex.

**RESOLUTION #25-140**

**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 2025; 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 #25-141**

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A FIRE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON AND MCAFEE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDYSTON AND HARDYSTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Fire Service Resource Emergency Deployment Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14E-14, municipalities in the State of New Jersey shall adopt a Fire Mutual Aid Plan ('Fire Mutual Aid Plan'); and

**WHEREAS**, the fire departments located in the Township of Vernon and the Township of Hardyston desire to establish a Fire Mutual Aid Plan to better serve the residents therein; and

**WHEREAS**, under the Fire Mutual Aid Plan, each municipality or fire district must prepare and adopt a local fire mutual aid plan which sets forth policies and procedures to coordinate the effective utilization of fire service resources where the implementation of the Fire Mutual Aid Plan is determined to be necessary or appropriate; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fire Mutual Aid Plan must be based upon the planning criteria, objectives, requirements, responsibilities, and concepts of operation essential for the implementation of all necessary and appropriate protective or remedial measures to be taken in response to emergency incidents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fire Mutual Aid Plan must take the form of an agreement to be adopted via resolution by participating municipalities; and

**WHEREAS**, a Fire Mutual Aid Agreement ('Fire Mutual Aid Agreement') has been recommended for execution by the Township of Vernon and McAfee Fire Department and Township of Hardyston and Hardyston Township Fire Department; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Township Council of the Township of Vernon wish to enter into the Fire Mutual Aid Agreement.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, and State of New Jersey that the Mayor is hereby authorized to execute a Fire Mutual Aid Agreement with the Township of Hardyston and Hardyston Township Fire Department.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of the form of mutual aid agreement and this Resolution will be placed on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution will take effect immediately upon its passage.

**RESOLUTION #25-142**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON ADOPTING  
THE 2025 SUSSEX COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Vernon recognizes the threat that natural hazards pose to people and property within Township of Vernon; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Vernon has prepared a multi-hazard mitigation plan, hereby known as the 2025 Sussex County Hazard Mitigation Plan in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2025 Sussex County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies mitigation goals and actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property in Township of Vernon from the impacts of future hazards and disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, adoption by the Township Council of Vernon demonstrates their commitment to hazard mitigation and achieving the goals outlined in the 2025 Sussex County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON**, New Jersey, that:  
Section 1. The Mayor and the Township Council of Vernon adopts the 2025 Sussex County Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan, approved by the community, may be edited or amended after submission for review, but will not require the community to re-adopt any further iterations. This only applies to this specific plan and does not absolve the community from updating the plan in 5 years.

**RESOLUTION #25-143**

**NJ DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEAP  
CHALLENGE GRANT RESOLUTION FY25**

**WHEREAS**, the State of New Jersey has allocated \$150,000 within each county for a statewide total of \$3.15 million in Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) funds to promote innovation among peer local units across New Jersey, and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) administers the LEAP grant program; and

**WHEREAS**, the LEAP Challenge Grant exists to challenge municipalities and counties to collaborate on more extensive partnership and collaborations to produce efficiencies through shared services; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon will work in partnership with the Township of Lafayette, the Township of Hardyston, the Borough of Hamburg, the Borough of Franklin, the Township of Montague, and the Borough of Ogdensburg, have determined to apply for a LEAP Challenge Grant through the State of New Jersey Local Efficiency Achievement Program in the amount of \$150,000.00; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has agreed to be the lead agency in this program; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Township of Vernon is acknowledging and accepting the responsibility of acting as applicant and administrator for this grant on behalf of all participating local units.

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has made LEAP grants available to assist local units to study, develop and implement new shared services initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the project submitted in this grant application is intended to provide benefits to the participant local units' residents through the sharing of Animal Control Services through the expansion of the Animal Control Building project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Vernon, that the Township of Vernon does hereby make application for a LEAP challenge grant to support undertaking this endeavor.

## **ORDINANCES TO INTRODUCE**

**Ordinance #25-06:** Bond Ordinance Appropriating \$3,492,500, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,550,000 Bonds or Notes of the Township, for Various Improvements or Purposes Authorized to be Undertaken by the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #25-06.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #25-05.



**Ordinance #25-07:** Capital Ordinance Providing for Various Improvements by the Township of Vernon in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, Appropriating Therefore the Sum of \$265,000.00 and providing that such Sum so Appropriated Shall Be Raised from the Capital Improvement Fund of the Township

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #25-07.

MOVED: Sparta  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #25-07.

**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.

Motion carries to open the floor to the public.

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.

Motion carries to close the floor to public comments.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Higgins had no comments.

Council Member Sparta had no comments.

Council Member Buccieri feels that our senior program is very valuable and there are a lot of opportunities for different demographics in our town. Most of the programs in town focus on the younger generation but our Senior Center focuses on a different demographic for our seniors. Council Member Buccieri hopes that the Council can consider the resolution in a slightly adjusted form soon rather than later and move forward with adjusting Ms. Damstra's salary.

### **COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS**

Council President Rizzuto agrees with Council Member Buccieri and hopes that there is a way to come to an agreement on this resolution. Council Rizzuto knows that a lot of the seniors who attend the Senior Center do so for entertainment and to stay active. He hopes this issue can be resolved without any ill feelings.

Council President Rizzuto looks forward to seeing everyone at the Memorial Day Parade.

Council Member Buccieri attended the EMS dedication for The Al Monzo Training Center. The facility looked great. Council Member Buccieri commented that she liked Council Member Sparta's idea to ask the County for more money towards the Senior Center.

Council Member Higgins explained that he knows that Jane does a great job and the decision was not about the seniors.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:31 pm Council Member Higgins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Sparta.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR  
Municipal Clerk

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Patrick Rizzuto  
Council President

Minutes approved: May 29, 2025