

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 18, 2026 7:00 PM**

This Special Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on May 18, 2026, in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Council President Rizzuto presiding.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE: STATEMENT: Adequate Notice of this Special Meeting was posted on the Vernon Township website and was posted at the Municipal Building in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A.10:4-7. The purpose of this Special Meeting is to carry any business from the May 11, 2026 regular meeting that was cancelled. Action will be taken.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

ROLL CALL

Present were Council Members, Carl Contino, Sandra Ooms, Patrick Rizzuto, Bradley Sparta and Council President William Higgins. Also present were Mayor Anthony Rossi, Business Administrator Tina Kraus, CFO Patricia Reiche, Township Attorney Peter King and Assistant Clerk Lauren Shaw.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Hiring Freeze

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

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

MOVED: Contino

SECOND: Ooms

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to open the meeting to the public.

Doreen Edwards – commented that Vernon Day is going to be a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States. She wants to make sure that word gets out about Vernon Day and also that the Memorial Day Parade has been moved. Ms. Edwards questioned resolution #26-169 and the bills list. She reminded everyone to get out and vote in the primary election.

Sally Rinker – commented on the number of employees the Township has.

Peg Distasi – spoke about initiating a hiring freeze.

Ms. Stohl – spoke against Data Centers.

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

MOVED: Rizzuto

SECOND: Contino

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to close the meeting to the public.

REVIEW OF BILLS LIST

The Council reviewed the bills list.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 20, 2026 – Executive Session

Council President Higgins asked for a motion to approve the April 20, 2026 executive session minutes.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Contino

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Contino, Ooms, Rizzuto, Sparta, Higgins

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the April 20, 2026 executive session minutes.

April 20, 2026 – Regular Meeting

Council President Higgins asked for a motion to approve the April 20, 2026 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Rizzuto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Contino, Ooms, Rizzuto, Sparta, Higgins

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the April 20, 2026 regular meeting minutes.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution #26-168: Approving a Charitable Solicitor’s Permit: Pochuck Valley Fire Department

Resolution #26-169: Resolution of the Mayor and Governing Body of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey Adopting the “Affirmative Marketing Plan” for the Township of Vernon

Resolution #26-170: Resolution of the Mayor and Governing Body of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey Adopting the “Affordability Assistance Policies and Procedures Manual” for the Township of Vernon

Resolution #26-171: Approval of the 2025 LOSAP List

Resolution #26-172: Reauthorizing Petty Cash Funds for Calendar Year 2026

Resolution #26-173: Authorizing Change Order #1 of Contract for Proposed Improvements of canister Road with Denville Line Painting Inc.

Resolution #26-175: Refund Overpayment (Block 95 Lot 9 – Garcia)

Resolution #26-176: Refund Overpayment (Block 432 Lot 58 - Mathes)

Resolution #26-177: Refund Overpayment (Block 526 Lot 284 – McElwain)

Resolution #26-178: Refund Overpayment (Block 526 Lot 284 – McElwain)

Resolution #26-179: Refund Overpayment (Block 526 Lot 284 – McElwain)

Council President Higgins asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda,

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Contino

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Contino, Ooms, Rizzuto, Sparta, Higgins

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approved the consent agenda.

RESOLUTION #26-168

APPROVING A CHARITABLE SOLICITOR'S PERMIT: Pochuck Valley Fire Department

WHEREAS, Pochuck Valley Fire Department has made application for a Charitable Roadside Solicitor's Permit for the purposes of soliciting funds on May 23, 2026, July 4, 2026 and September 5, 2026 from 8am-5pm; 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, 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 #26-169

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND GOVERNING BODY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ADOPTING THE "AFFIRMATIVE MARKETING PLAN" FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Fair Housing Act and the New Jersey Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (N.J.A.C. 5:80-26-1, et seq.), the Township of Vernon is required to adopt an Affirmative Marketing Plan to ensure that all affordable housing units created, including those created by the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan within the Township of Vernon, are affirmatively marketed to very low, low and moderate income households, particularly those living and/or working within Housing Region #1, the Affordable Housing Region encompassing the Township of Vernon.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Governing Body of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, do hereby adopt the Affirmative Marketing Plan attached hereto.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

RESOLUTION #26-170

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND GOVERNING BODY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ADOPTING THE "AFFORDABILITY ASSISTANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL" FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Fair Housing Act and the New Jersey Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (N.J.A.C. 5:80-26-1, et seq.), the Township of Vernon is required to adopt an Affordability Assistance Policies and Procedures Manual.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Governing Body of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, do hereby adopt the Affordability Assistance Policies and Procedures Manual attached hereto as Exhibit A.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

RESOLUTION #26-171 APPROVAL OF 2025 LOSAP LIST

WHEREAS, the Vernon Township Volunteer Fire Companies and Vernon Emergency Services and Rescue Squad have provided to the Township Committee annual certification identifying all active volunteer members who have qualified for credit for the year 2025; and

WHEREAS, after initial review by the Township Council the lists have been posted in the respective buildings of each participating emergency service organization for a period of at least 30 days for

review by members; and

WHEREAS, there has been no objection or complaint received from any member of those organizations or from the organizations themselves, or the lists have been corrected, and the lists have again been reviewed by the Township Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey that the attached lists indicating qualified members for each agency for the respective year and amounts are approved.

RESOLUTION #26-172

REAUTHORIZING PETTY CASH FUNDS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2026

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-21 authorizes the establishment of a Petty Cash Fund in municipalities by application and resolution; and

WHEREAS, Resolution #26-02, Resolution Reauthorizing Petty Cash Funds for Calendar Year 2026, listed the custodians of the Township Petty Cash Funds; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Township of Vernon update Resolution 26-02 to:

Department	Custodian	Amount Authorized
DPW	Howard Lazier	\$100.00
Finance	Patricia Reiche	\$300.00
Police	Daniel B. Young	\$500.00

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of Vernon hereby authorizes such action and that the Township Clerk file two copies of this resolution with the Division of Local Government Services, State of New Jersey.

RESOLUTION #26-173

AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER #1 OF CONTRACT FOR PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS OF CANISTEAR ROAD WITH DENVILLE LINE PAINTING, INC.

WHEREAS, on August 11, 2025, by way of adoption of Resolution #25-212, the Council of the Township of Vernon awarded a contract to Denville Line Painting, Inc. for Line Striping the Canistear Road which contract provided for an expenditure of \$13,765.07; and

WHEREAS, in a memo dated April 23, 2026, the Township Engineer states that the contract requires a Change Order #1 by the reduction of one (1) item (*772 linear ft of striping*) in amount of \$223.11 decreasing the total contract amount to \$13,541.96; and

WHEREAS, the Township Engineer, in concurrence with the Mayor, recommends approving Change Order No. 1 resulting in the decreased contract amount of \$13,541.96.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon that it hereby approves the Township Engineer’s recommendations and authorizes the Mayor to execute said Change Order No. 1 for said project resulting in the adjusted decreased contract amount of \$13,541.96; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Denville Line Painting, Inc. and the Township Engineer.

RESOLUTION #26-175

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 95 Lot 9 – Garcia)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to in the amount of \$465.49 representing refund for overpayment for 1st qtr. 2026 property taxes for Block 95 Lot 9.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Garcia	95	9	\$465.49
		TOTAL:	\$465.49

RESOLUTION #26-176

REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 432 Lot 58 – Mathes)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to in the amount of \$1915.87 representing refund for overpayment for 2nd qtr. 2026 property taxes for Block 432 Lot 58.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Mathes	432	58	\$1915.87
		TOTAL:	\$1915.87

RESOLUTION #26-177

REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 526 Lot 284 – McElwain)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to in the amount of \$280.91 representing refund for overpayment for 3rd qtr. 2021 property taxes for Block 526 Lot 284.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
McElwain	526	284	\$280.91
		TOTAL:	\$280.91

RESOLUTION #26-178

REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 526 Lot 284 – McElwain)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to in the amount of \$1072.21 representing refund for overpayment for 2nd qtr. 2023 property taxes for Block 526 Lot 284.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
McElwain	526	284	\$1072.21
		TOTAL:	\$1072.21

RESOLUTION #26-179

REFUND OVERPAYMENT
(Block 526 Lot 284 – McElwain)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to in the amount of \$3063.43 representing refund for overpayment for 1st and 4th qtrs. 2024 property taxes for Block 526 Lot 284.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
McElwain	526	284	\$3063.43
		TOTAL:	\$3063.43

RESOLUTION

Resolution #26-174: Resolution to Award Gazebo Bid to Amish Country Gazebos for Bids 7-2025/7R-2025

Council Member Sparta made a motion to discuss resolution #26-174. Seconded by Council Member Contino.

Council Member Rizzuto requested the resolution be amended to read the said gazebo be named “the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Stage” in recognition of those who gave their lives in the service of our Country.

A motion was made by Council Member Ooms to amend resolution #26-174. Seconded by Council Member Contino.

Council President Higgins asked for a motion to approve resolution #26-174 as amended.

MOVED: Rizzuto
SECOND: Ooms

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Contino, Ooms, Rizzuto, Sparta, Higgins
NAYES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve resolution #26-174 as amended.

R E S O L U T I O N #26-174
RESOLUTION TO AWARD GAZEBO BID TO AMISH COUNTRY GAZEBOS FOR BIDS 7-2025/7R-2025

WHEREAS the Township of Vernon has procured two (2) bids for a Gazebo project as put forth in bids 7-2025/ 7R-2025; and

WHEREAS, the Township had sought obtaining a vendor through two (2) bids, 7-2025/ 7R-2025 on October 9, 2025, and December 4, 2025, where all bids received were in excess of budgetary estimates, and rejected in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-13.2; and

WHEREAS the Township availed itself of the negotiations remedy under the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law at N.J.S.A.40A:11-5(3); and

WHEREAS, the Township representatives engaged in negotiations with all vendors including Amish Country Gazebos, 340 Hostetter Road Manheim, PA, 17545, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(3) for the terms and tenets as contained within bids 7-2025/ 7R-2025; and

WHEREAS Amish Country Gazebos has proposed providing one (1) gazebo in accordance with specifications as sought in bids 7-2025/ 7R-2025, acceptable to the Township, and consistent with bid specifications, in the amount of \$33,328.78; and

WHEREAS the Chief Financial Officer certifies funding is available in the amount of \$33,328.78 from Line Item: G-02-40-785-00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex as follows:

Amish Country Gazebos, 340 Hostetter Road Manheim, PA, 17545 is hereby awarded the bid for providing one (1) gazebo, consistent with specifications as sought in bids 7-2025/ 7R-2025, acceptable to the Township and consistent with bid specifications, in the amount of \$33,328.78, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(3).

NOW ALSO, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the gazebo be named “The Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial Stage” in recognition of those who gave their lives in the service of our country.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

Ordinance #26-11: Ordinance Amending Chapter 330 of the Township Code of the Township of Vernon to Define and Prohibit “Data Centers”

Council Member Contino made a motion to amend ordinance #26-11 to add the term:

Shall not include customary accessory information technology or server equipment incidental to a permitted principal use, including but not limited to schools, hospitals, government buildings, financial institutions, or ordinary business operations.

The term shall not include telecommunications facilities, public utility infrastructure, cellular facilities, fiber optic networks, central offices, switching stations, or similar communications infrastructure primarily engaged in providing telephone, cable, wireless, broadband, or internet access services.

Seconded by Council Member Ooms.

Council President Higgins asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #26-11as amended.

MOVED: Contino
SECOND: Ooms

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Contino, Ooms, Rizzuto, Sparta, Higgins
NAYES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Motion carries to approved the consent agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)

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

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Ooms

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to open the meeting to the public.

JoAnn – spoke against Data Centers.

Peg Distasi – commented on the Council receiving too much legal advice from the Township Attorney.

Doreen Edwards – disagreed with Peg Distasi about receiving legal advice from the Township Attorney.

Barbara Hunter – spoke against Data Centers.

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

MOVED: Rizzuto
SECOND: Contino

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to close the meeting to the public.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Contino thanked the Council for agreeing to the Data Center ban. He would like to see the hiring freeze resolution on the next agenda. Council Member Contino would like to see the salaries in the salary control box that the Council was given to make proper decisions on the budget. Council Member Contino thanked everyone who worked on the Economic Development Forum. Council Member Rizzuto spoke about the Economic Development Forum. He feels that it was very valuable.

Sandra Ooms suggested that if a Data Center comes to the Land Use Board, people should attend and state their opinions.

Council Member Rizzuto reminded everyone that the 250th Anniversary of the United States and he will not be able to attend.

Council Member Sparta has walked in the parade and hopefully everyone can make it for a great day.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Higgins commented that the Council are not lawyers and he relies on the Township Attorney for advice. Council President Higgins also suggested that people attend the Land Use Board meetings for information and education. Council President Higgins reminded everyone that the budget will be voted on at the next meeting. He spoke about the salary lines from the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:41 pm Council Member Rizzuto made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Contino.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

William Higgins
Council President

Minutes approved: June 8, 2026