

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 30, 2024 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on May 30, 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, 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 Matthew Moench.

**MAYOR COMMENTS**

Thank you, Council President Rizzuto and the rest of the council. This past Monday was Memorial Day, and I would like to share some words I spoke at the VFW on Memorial Day.

Memorial Day was a holiday, and to some that mark the first day of summer. To some, it means an extended weekend. Still, too many families across America, including our very own Gold Star mom council VP Natalie Buccieri, on the loss of her son has a much different meaning to her and her family. Memorial Day's intention is for Americans to spend time remembering our Military Members who gave their lives serving our country. These men and women made the ultimate sacrifice.

Some of these men and women were killed in combat or training. Some have even taken their own lives due to trauma from combat that they couldn't escape. Just because war may be over for some, that battle continues for those men and women who are equally deserving of our honor. These men and women never got to see their children grow up or never become a father, mother, husband, wife or grandparent. They gave up everything for our country we owe them a debt that we can never repay! All we can do is remember them, honor them, and to make sure we always be their voice because they no longer have a voice, so today and every day forward we must make it our duty to remind the next generations what Memorial Day truly means. We MUST be their voice so long as we shall live. My God bless our past, present, and future fallen service men and women until we have peace on earth. At this time, I want everyone to rise for a moment of silence to honor our fallen heroes.... Thank you.

Council president, if removing history was easy, I'm sure we would forget days like D-Day, the Vietnam War, and 911, but we can't, nor should we. We learn from our history, whether it is good or bad. When I took office, I said I would fix the problems of the past that may haunt us Today, whether that was to fix a spiteful ordinance or work on changing how we do business in Vernon. So today, I have asked the council to restore the Vernon Historic Preservation Commission. This commission was decommissioned by the council president back in 2021. It was apparent and made public that he had an issue with the chairwomen, so to silence the chairwomen, he decommissioned the commission altogether. This action put Vernon's history in jeopardy and must be restored immediately. I also want to be clear: This is about the history of Vernon Township, and that's all I care about, so several months ago, I asked Mrs. Paladini to join the commission because, like her or not, she is one person who knows Vernon Township's history better than most, but she has since declined. We are several months into the new year, but We must restore the commission and ask anyone who would like to join to please do so on our website or contact my office. We are also accepting applications for the Arts Advisory Committee, which I believe we have already received one or two applications. In case you didn't know, the Arts advisory addresses ways to provide visual and performing cultural activities for Vernon. This committee will strive to create and strengthen partnerships among schools, arts and community organizations to enhance arts education and arts participation of all Vernon citizens. The committee consists of seven to nine members appointed by the Mayor, with each member serving a one-year term. I want to be clear because I know there are some people out there who are spewing, and when I say by spewing, it means it's a lie; it's basically vomit. When you volunteer for Vernon, you are not Volunteering for the Mayor; you are Volunteering because you care or want to serve the community you love; the people who spew this garbage want to see me fail.

If I fail, Vernon fails, and I won't let that happen during my term as Mayor. In a few short months, we have made a lot of progress, and we will continue to push forward. One of the things I have been pushing for is getting people in the mindset that we need to start acting like a close community, and it has been widely accepted and refreshing to see this for a change. We have all seen this between the BOE and my administration, which is why when asked if there were any grants or bonding options available for one of our firehouses, I asked Donelle to look into what we can do for our local heroes. After talking with our bond counselors, they advised us that we could offer this assistance. Remember, this is a bond, a loan that gets paid back to Vernon at a 5% interest rate; just an FYI, I didn't even want the 5% interest back, but it is required by law, so we must charge the 5% which is basically the same if we just left it in the bank. This is the result of a supportive council and a staff willing to go above and beyond to help. This has been my mission, and we will continue to help and build relationships in our community. I also want to thank the citizens of Vernon, especially the Highland Lakes community. I loved hearing and seeing the overwhelming support towards our fire department because things like this make our community proud, especially our volunteers. So, thank you.

Today, the council is asked to pass the 2024 budget. I want to remind people that we all worked hard on this budget, with a zero percent increase for the 3rd year in a row, which is not recommended by our CFO and auditor. Please understand This is our CFO's job is to manage the township's financials and advise us. Look, I'm not a fan of taxes, and I don't like to pay them just like everyone here, but we have an obligation and responsibility to our citizens, and we must provide these much-needed services. We will continue to find more ways to save money and reduce spending. Also note after the first review of the budget, which council seemed to like, and I believe even Mr. Higgins stated that this is a quote a "good budget." Since then, we have taken additional steps and reduced our cap plan by close to 1.8 million without any loss of services to the community. In addition, I want people to know I have placed a \$50k after-school bus grant on the original budget; we were going to use this grant with help from the BOE to determine if the after-school buses were actually needed. We were going to accomplish this with mandatory data analysis on how many children were actually using the buses, or perhaps we didn't need to have as many businesses, locations, etc... This could have been a tool used that could have saved the taxpayers over \$130k year, I have always said that I would try to help secure money for the after-school buses and this was an option. I have even run a public poll showing support, but Now the BOE has since asked for it to be in their budget going forward, so I guess we may never know, or perhaps they will do their own research to determine if they need it or not. I want to be clear: The council and I have different objectives at times because of the roles we play, but that objective should always be for the betterment of Vernon and not what I like to call the two percenters. I have a lot of respect for the council, and I like to think the feelings are mutual. We may not always agree on everything, as you can see, and this was one of those times., but I'm not going to allow this to ruin the relationship I have with the council because of 2 reasons. The first is that I think most of us are a like-minded group, and the second is that it doesn't help Vernon if we don't work together. I do not want to repeat bad history in Vernon. I refuse to go down that road. We were all elected to do what's best for Vernon. Example: The other day, Pat and I had an argument over some topics, and the conversation abruptly ended in my office. A couple of days later, we both spent the morning together inhaling fumes from Vernon's sewage treatment plant. So now I can say Pat and I have been together in the Sh!t. I'm not sure if anyone has seen some of the videos I posted during our visit, but Tina and I think Pat even learned a lot about the difference between the old treatment process and the new treatment process.

Water expansion update, our attorney has completed drafting up this agreement which we are fine tuning it at the moment and hope to be completed as early as next week. This is for our town center and Ryan homes area. Council will be included prior to signing off, and I look forward to hearing input from them. A few weeks ago, I asked our DPW crew to help clean up the breakneck road. They have spent an entire day doing this cleanup; I had DPW also create several new signs for these troubling areas as a reminder that if you are caught littering by law, we can oppose a max fine of \$1000 or imprisonment of 90 days second offense of \$2000 or imprisonment of 120 days and 3rd offense of \$3500 and imprisonment of 180 days which brings me to a bigger issue. Some of the trash that was collected contained beer cans and other bottles of liquor. I will be working closely this summer with our police department on drinking and driving initiatives because I do not want to wait to take action after a family someone or some family has been killed. We will take any action to protect the citizens of this town. That's all my comments for today. Thank you.

### **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.

Steve Dunlop – expressed concern in regards to resolution #24-162 and only livestreaming Council meetings.

George Nikanorov – is in favor of resolution #24-162 and only livestreaming Council meetings.

Stephanie Blaine – is in favor of resolution #24-162 and only livestreaming Council meetings.

Thomas McClachrie – disagrees with the CFO about BANS and bonding.

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: DeBenedetto

SECOND: Sparta

All members were in favor.

### **REVIEW OF BILLS LIST**

The Council reviewed the bills list.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### **May 13, 2024 – Special Joint Meeting MUA/Township Council**

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the May 13, 2024 Special Joint Meeting MUA/Township Council meeting minutes.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the May 13, 2024 Special Joint Meeting MUA/Township Council meeting minutes.

#### **May 13, 2024 – Regular Meeting**

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the May 13, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: DeBenedetto

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the May 13, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

#### **May 14, 2024 – Special Emergency Meeting**

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the May 14, 2024 special emergency meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the May 14, 2024 special emergency meeting minutes.

### **PUBLIC HEARING 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET AMENDMENT**

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the meeting to Public Comments on the 2024 municipal budget amendment.

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Erin Crumb – CEO of Vernon Emergency Medical Services, commented that she would be happy to answer questions that the Council had in reference to line items in the budget.

Thomas McClachrie – questioned the need for an emergency meeting.

Seeing no other members from the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the meeting to Public Comments on the 2024 municipal budget amendment.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

### **ADOPTION OF THE 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET**

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion at approve the 2024 municipal budget amendment.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve 2024 municipal budget amendment.

#### **Resolution #24-163: Adoption of the 2024 Municipal Budget**

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #24-163 and adopt the 2024 municipal budget.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve resolution #24-163 and adopt the 2024 municipal budget.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Resolution #24-153:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 8 Lot 3 – Soler)

**Resolution #24-154:** Refund Overpayment Due to State Tax Court Judgement (Jennifer R. Jacobus)  
Block 541 Lot 48

**Resolution #24-155:** Resolution Requesting Authorization to Purchase Five (5) Cardiac Science Automatic External Defibrillators (AED’s) from the Newton Medical Center Foundation.

**Resolution #24-156:** Continuation of the Art Advisory Committee

**Resolution #24-157:** Chapter 159 Resolution Requesting Approval of Revenue and Appropriation Amending the 2024 Budget as a Revenue and Appropriation of \$202,000.00

**Resolution #24-158:** Authorizing Issuance of Estimated Property Tax Bills

**Resolution #24-159:** Resolution of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Procuring of Telephonic Communications System, Service, Software and Hardware through the Competitive Contracting Process

**Resolution #24-160:** Resolution of the Township of Vernon Authorizing the Award of CC# 5-2024 Grant Writing Services Vendor Through the Competitive Contracting Process

**Resolution #24-161:** Authorizing Change Order # 2 for PS No. 2: PCO No. 5 – Pressure Reducing Valve Change

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

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the Consent Agenda.

**RESOLUTION #24-153**

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN  
(Block 8 Lot 3 - Soler)**

**WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS** awarded Jonathan Soler 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 \$1,979.11 to Jonathan Soler.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-154**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT DUE TO STATE TAX COURT JUDGMENT**

**(Jennifer R. Jacobus) 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 2022 overpayment in the amount of \$1,499.71 to Jennifer R. Jacobus, Trustee for the plaintiff.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-155**

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE FIVE (5) CARDIAC SCIENCE AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFRIBILLATORS (AED's) FROM THE NEWTON MEDICAL CENTER FOUNDATION.**

**WHEREAS**, it is the desire of the Township of Vernon to use \$4,150 from the Opioid Settlement Fund to purchase five (5) AED's replacing five (5) AED's which are at the end of their serviceable life.

**WHEREAS**, the Vernon Township Police Department responds to and provides care for individuals suffering from symptoms of an overdose and cardiac arrest, sometimes requiring use of an AED for defibrillation.

**WHEREAS**, the Vernon Township Police Department Police Chief recommends the purchase of the listed defibrillators at a subsidized rate through the Newton Medical Center AED Grant program.

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Financial Officer has certified that there are sufficient funds in the Opioid Settlement Fund.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by Mayor and Council of Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, approve the purchase of five (5) Cardiac Science AED's from the Newton Medical Center Foundation, effective May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**RESOLUTION #24-156**

**CONTINUATION OF THE ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**WHEREAS**, the Council of Vernon Township established a Arts Advisory Committee via resolution 17-45 on January 30, 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council of Vernon Township wishes to continue the Arts Advisory Committee consisting of seven to nine members to be appointed by the Mayor.

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

1. The Arts Advisory Committee established via Resolution No. 17-45 on January 30, 2017 is hereby continued.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the Township Clerk shall send a certified copy of this resolution to the following:

- a. Chairperson of the Arts Advisory Committee

**RESOLUTION #24-157**

**CHAPTER 159 RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION AMENDING THE 2024 BUDGET AS A REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$202,000.00**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87 provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by law and the amount thereof was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget; and

**WHEREAS**, said Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for an equal amount; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township has been awarded a \$202,000.00 Highlands Task 15 - Lake/Watershed Management Plan Grant and wishes to amend its 2024 budget for the difference of the awarded amount as a revenue.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2024 in the sum of \$202,000.00 which is now available as a revenue,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a like sum of \$202,000.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption Highlands Task 15 - Lake/Watershed Management Plan Grant.

### **RESOLUTION #24-158**

#### ***Authorizing Issuance of Estimated Property Tax Bills***

**WHEREAS**, the Council of the Township of Vernon finds and declares that Township financial officials have determined that there could be insufficient cash flow to support operations in late July, 2024 unless third quarter revenue is received on time; and

**WHEREAS**, the and Council further finds and declares that the Chief Financial Officer, Donelle Bright, has reviewed and computed an estimated tax levy in accordance with N.J.S.A. 54:4-66.3 and is recommending authorization to issue property tax bills based upon this estimated tax levy;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Township of Vernon as follows:

1. That Vernon Township Tax Collector, Lisa A. Kimkowski, is hereby authorized and directed to prepare and issue estimated tax bills for the Township of Vernon for the third quarter of 2024, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 54:4-66-2;
2. That the entire estimated tax levy for CY 2024 is hereby set at \$83,866,576.28; and
3. That Vernon Township Tax Collector, Lisa A. Kimkowski, is hereby authorized to undertake any and all additional steps deemed necessary and appropriate to immediately implement the substance of this Resolution.

### **RESOLUTION #24-159**

#### **RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE PROCURING OF TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, SERVICE, SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE THROUGH THE COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROCESS**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Vernon has a requirement of telephonic communications system, service, software and hardware for the operations of all aspects of the Township of Vernon daily operations; and

**WHEREAS** such services are authorized under the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law (N.J.S.A.40A:11-4.1(i)) to be procured through the competitive contracting process; 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 telephonic communications system, service, software and hardware 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.

#### **RESOLUTION #24-160**

#### **Resolution of the Township of Vernon Authorizing the Award of CC# 5-2024 Grant Writing Services Vendor Through the Competitive Contacting Process**

**WHEREAS**, the Township has authorized the competitive contract procurement for grant writing services vendors through resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township received and opened in a public manner competitive contract responses on May 2, 2024, at 10:00 A.M.; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township established a rating committee, rating the proposals upon the standards of Price and Other Factors, those factors being Technical, Managerial and Cost, in accord with N.J.A.C.5:34-4; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township received six (6) proposals; and

**WHEREAS** the report produced by the committee, recommended Millenium Strategies, 60 Columbia Road, Building B, Suite 230, Morristown, New Jersey, 07960 and was made available to the public and governing body at least 48 hours prior to the meeting of the governing body in accord with N.J.S.A 40A:11-4.1 and N.J.A.C 5:34-4; and

**WHEREAS**, Millenium Strategies, 60 Columbia Road, Building B, Suite 230, Morristown, New Jersey, 07960, has provided a proposal deemed responsive and responsible under the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law (N.J.S.A.40A:11-1 et. Seq.,) as well as most advantageous based upon Price and Other Factors (N.J.A.C. 5:34-4); and

**WHEREAS**, it is the recommendation that the Township enter into an agreement for services under competitive contract with Millenium Strategies, 60 Columbia Road, Building B, Suite 230, Morristown, New Jersey, 07960, for a period of five (5) years under the terms and tenets as set forth in the competitive contract procurement.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Mayor is authorized to execute contract with Millenium Strategies, 60 Columbia Road, Building B, Suite 230, Morristown, New Jersey, 07960 under the precepts of competitive contract grant writing services vendor CC# 5-2024.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Township Clerk shall forward a certified copy of this Resolution to the Business Administrator; Chief Financial Officer; and Purchasing Agent.

#### **RESOLUTION #24-161**

#### **Authorizing Change Order # 2 for PS No. 2: PCO No. 5 – Pressure Reducing Valve Change**



**WHEREAS**, on November 28, 2022, by way of adoption of Resolution #22-284, the Council of the Township of Vernon awarded a contract to Coppola, 28 Executive Parkway, Ringwood, NJ 07456, for Pump Station No. 2 Replacement which contract provided for an expenditure of \$ 1,584,890.00; and

**WHEREAS**, the contractor has encountered unforeseen circumstances requiring the change order as proposed (N.J.A.C. 5:34-11-8(c)(1)); and

**WHEREAS**, on August 2, 2023, the Contractor stated it was found that the water connection would require a pressure reducing valve, which was not anticipated in the initial plans requiring Change Order #2 in amount of \$1,783.10; and

**WHEREAS** the amount of change order requested is a net increase of \$1,783.10, which represents in the aggregate, an increase of 0.11%, which is less than the aggregate maximum increase of 20% change order as required at N.J.A.C 5:34-11-3(a)(9); and

**WHEREAS**, the design engineer, in concurrence with the Mayor and Business Administrator, recommends approving Change Order No. 2; and

**WHEREAS**, the new total price for the change order project in the aggregate of base bid award and change orders is \$1,609,663.94, with an aggregate change order amount of \$24,773.94.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon that it hereby approves the design engineers' recommendations and authorizes the Mayor to execute said Change Order No. 1 for said project resulting in the new contract amount of base bid and aggregate change orders to be \$24,773.94 for the project known as Pump Station No. 2 Replacement; and

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **Resolution #24-162: Resolution Regarding Livestreaming of Vernon Township Council Meetings**

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #24-162

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve resolution #24-162.

## **RESOLUTION #24-162**

### **RESOLUTION REGARDING LIVESTREAMING OF VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Vernon ("Township") holds regularly scheduled Council Meetings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township seeks to increase opportunities for Township residents and members of the public to witness the Meetings of the Township Council, but who may not be able to attend Township Council Meetings in person; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township seeks to utilize existing and available technology to permit the livestreaming of its Township Council meetings over the internet; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Township Ordinance § 5-7(E), there are specific requirements and procedures for members of the public to address the Township Council, and which procedures cannot be observed utilizing existing and available livestreaming technology.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Township of Vernon that effective immediately, all Meetings of the Township Council, except portions which may be legally privileged or contain otherwise confidential proceedings, such as an executive session, shall be livestreamed or otherwise broadcast over the internet utilizing existing and available technology such as, but not limited to, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and/or Google Hangouts Meet; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that members of the public watching the Meetings of the Township Council via livestream shall not have the right to address the Township Council as if they were attending the Meeting in person; and

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

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES**

**Ordinance #24-08:** Capital Ordinance providing for various improvements by the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, appropriating therefore the sum of \$160,000.00 and providing that such sum so appropriated shall be raised from General Capital Reserves and the Capital Improvement Fund of the Township

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-08.

MOVED: DeBenedetto  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-08.

**Ordinance #24-09:** Bond Ordinance Providing for the Improvement of the Highland Lakes Fire Department Building In and By the Township of Vernon, In the County of Sussex, New Jersey, Appropriating \$105,750 Therefor and Authorizing the Issuance of \$100,000 Bonds or Notes of the Township for Financing Such Appropriation.

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-09.

MOVED: DeBenedetto  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-09.

**Ordinance #24-10:** Bond Ordinance Appropriating \$3,483,624, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,220,000 for Various Improvements or Purposes Authorized to be Undertaken by the Township of Vernon, In the County of Sussex, New Jersey.

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-10.

MOVED: DeBenedetto

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-10.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)**

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

George Nikanorov – thanked the Council for approving resolution #24-162.

Thomas McClachrie – commented that he does not agree with resolution #24-162.

Erin Crumb – questioned if local volunteer agencies can use the grant writing services that was approved tonight.

Brian Lynch – explained that the bond ordinance #24-09 is for the Highland Lakes Fire Department and will be paid back by the Highland Lakes Fire Department.

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: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Higgins questioned the legal fees to SCUMA for a lawsuit that the town lost against them.

Council Member Higgins questioned the EDU fees for the MUA.

Council Member Higgins also questioned the LOSAP program and if we have gotten any new members.

Council Member DeBenedetto had no comments.

Council Member Sparta commented on a draft ordinance the mayor sent to the Council for review.

Council Member Buccieri had no comments.

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS**

Council President Rizzuto had no comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:36 pm Council Member Buccieri 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: June 10, 2024