

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 10, 2024 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on June 10, 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, Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio, Township Attorney Matthew Moench.

Council Member Buccieri was not present.

**PROCLAMATION**

Eagle Scout – Dane Walker

**MAYOR COMMENTS**

Thank you, council president. I just have a couple of items to discuss. Again, congratulations to Dane Walker of troop 912. This is a huge step. Being an Eagle Scout will prepare you for the future. This is an achievement that must be added to your resume, because this tells you something about who this young man is.

Also, to all who you may or may not know Vernon only has 33 officers who cover 70 sq miles and close to 25k residents, this is significantly less than most townships. The resolution before you is for the new police hire Robert Baumann. This was initiated because SGT Mutz will be retiring in August. Last week we had a full panel interview headed up by Lt Dan Young Along with Capt. Jason Haw, Dt Curry myself and Business Administrator Tina Krause which was overseen by Chief Dan Young. We all had an opportunity to ask the applicant a series of questions. Mr. Baumann has obviously has gone through an extensive back ground check. To even get to this stage, plus he is currently a part time dispatcher for Bergen County dispatch center and Vernon. Mr. Baumann is also born and raised in Vernon.

To all of the contractors or homeowners in Vernon our building dept hours has changed from 8:30 to 4:00 to 8:00 to 4:00. I know this may not seem much to some but it does mean a lot to other. I have learned that we did have a few people come to our building dept at this time, so glad to see it is working.

There are a couple of other things happening in town:

June 12th there will be a helicopter flying low checking all the JCP&L transmission lines as a routine patrol, so don't be alarmed.

I know there has been many complaints about the vegetation on the median on 515. I just want to be clear that we have called this into the county to have taken care of, but some like to blame the Mayor for the weeds, so If that's all the complaints some may have I will take it.

Also, I want to mention 3 people who originally applied to the beautification committee. One person applied to the EDAC committee and she mentioned in her application or the beautification committee. I have selected her to be on the EDAC, because she was on that committee last year and wanted no part of it this year. I have asked her to please reconsider because we will have a whole new board and chairman. We have a great group of local businessmen and professionals who no server and these meetings are run professionally and respectfully by Mr. Peter Knipe, So that leaves me with 2 individuals, and I did not want to discuss this on this forum but the other applicant is my daughter Marissa and she is going to make me a grandfather, so as many first time mothers know it can be very exhausting and stressful being pregnant, plus she currently works as an awesome Mortgage broker, so that leaves only one applicant that I will not call because it's too much for one person to manage, but like everything else we welcome our volunteers.

Also, the old BOE property was addressed, this is another issue we addressed internally. We must work with our property owners and not fine them for over grown weeds, I'm not doing it! This is not business friendly approach! I have also requested to have new trees planted in the median on rt 515, and in between each of those trees will be stone planters made up of over 2 inches of concrete and wrapped in beautiful stone work (more to follow), This is just one step closer to enhancing the look of our town center which we can all agree looks horrible. We are also looking for donations for a town clock which would be surrounded by stone planters. Ya know the old saying when life hands you lemons you turn them into lemonade, and that's exactly how I view that median on Route 515. I will hope to have some more detailed plans for review soon.

Also, on Route 515 the catch basin in front of the back that was supposed to have been taken care of on 6/17 was moved up to this afternoon, so thank you to our county friends.

Also, thank you to our clerk's office and DPW for setting up the poll machines, their day began at 4:30 in the morning and went into the evening.

June 23rd is Vernon's first car show so please come to the Vernon fire house. There will be a lot to see plus it's for support of our local fire and EMS, so please come and support them.

Also, something else for next year. I am currently on bringing the Carnival back. I have had a discussion with the Warwick fire dept who said it's a huge revenue maker for them, so we will do the same for Vernon.

#### **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: Higgins

All members were in favor.

Thomas McClachrie – expressed concern in regards to the Veteran tax refunds.

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: Higgins

All members were in favor.

## REVIEW OF BILLS LIST

The Council reviewed the bills list.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### May 30, 2024 – Regular Meeting

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the May 30, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Buccieri

## CONSENT AGENDA

**Resolution #24-164:** Renewal of Liquor Licenses in the Township of Vernon for the 2024-2025 Licensing term

**Resolution #24-165:** Renewal of Inactive Liquor License (T&Z Holding Co. LLC) Requiring Special Ruling in the Township of Vernon for the 2024-2025 Licensing Term

**Resolution #24-166:** Resolution Requesting Authorization to Hire Certain Police Officers

**Resolution #24-167:** Approving a Charitable Solicitor's Permit: McAfee Volunteer Fire Department

**Resolution #24-168:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 436 Lot 14-Cialkowski)

**Resolution #24-169:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 106 Lot 21-Stewart)

**Resolution #24-170:** Chapter 159 Resolution Requesting Approval of Revenue and Appropriation Amending the 2024 Budget as a Revenue and Appropriation of \$69,435.11

**Resolution #24-171:** Resolution Opposing the Proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance to Change the Designation of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to a National Park Preserve

**Resolution #24-172:** Resolution Supporting Assembly Resolution AR133 and Senate Resolution SR93 Opposing All Proposals to Change the Designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to National Park and Preserve, Including Proposal by the Delaware River National Park Lenape Preserve Alliance

**Resolution #24-173:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 571 Lot 8-Corelogic)

**Resolution #24-174:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 571 Lot 8-Corelogic)

**Resolution #24-175:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 512 Lot 138-Corelogic)

**Resolution #24-176:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 512 Lot 138-Corelogic)

**Resolution #24-177:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 219 Lot 1-Corelogic)

**Resolution #24-178:** Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 219 Lot 1-Corelogic)

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 #24-164**

**RENEWAL OF LIQUOR LICENSES IN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON  
FOR THE 2024-2025 LICENSING TERM**

**WHEREAS**, all licenses to dispense alcoholic beverages must be renewed and reissued annually no later than June 30, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:1-1 et. seq., the Vernon Township Police Department has made the necessary inspections and reported same to the Township Clerk; and

**WHEREAS**, all of the licensees have complied with all of the regulations as set forth by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission of the State of New Jersey;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the following licenses shall be reissued for the 2024-2025 licensing period effective as of July 1, 2024.

**PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION**

<i>Highland General Store Inc.</i>	<b>1922-44-002-002</b>
Mac & Lindy’s L.L.C.	1922-44-012-002

**LIMITED RETAIL DISTRIBUTION**

<i>LWS2 Inc. (Lake Wanda Store)</i>	<b>1922-43-005-003</b>
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<b>PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION</b>	
Appalachian Liquors Corp	1922-33-007-016
1883 House LTD	1922-33-009-006
FLME Inc.	1922-33-008-004
Drews Tavern Inc	1922-33-001-004

<b>HOTEL EXCEPTION</b>	
Stone Hill Recreation SPE LLC	1922-36-011-003

**RESOLUTION #24-165**

**RENEWAL OF INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE (T&Z HOLDING CO. LLC) REQUIRING  
SPECIAL RULING IN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON FOR THE 2024-2025 LICENSING  
TERM**

**WHEREAS**, all licenses to dispense alcoholic beverages must be renewed and reissued annually; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:1-12.39 the following license required a Special Ruling by the State Division of Alcoholic Beverages, as the license is currently inactive, prior to its renewal; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Division of Alcoholic Beverages, on June 1, 2023, had issued said special ruling for the 2024-2025 license term; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:1-1 et. seq., the Vernon Township Police Department has made the necessary inspections and reported same to the Township Clerk; and

**WHEREAS**, the licensee have complied with all of the regulations as set forth by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission of the State of New Jersey;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the following inactive license shall be reissued for the 2024-2025 licensing period expiring June 30, 2025.

PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION

T&Z Holdings CO. LLC.

1922-33-004-007

**RESOLUTION #24-166**

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING AUTHORIZATION TO HIRE CERTAIN POLICE OFFICER**

**WHEREAS**, it is the desire of the Township of Vernon to hire a police officer, and

**WHEREAS**, the Vernon Township Police Department staff have conducted background checks and interviewed Police Officer candidates in accordance with all Civil Service guidelines; and

**WHEREAS**, the Vernon Township Police Department staff recommend the hiring of the following Police Officer Candidate:

***Robert Baumann***- at a Probationary Step level, \$49,693/year.

**WHEREAS**, the Township’s Chief of Police recommends hiring this officer; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Financial Officer has certified that there are sufficient funds in line item 4-01-25-240-01 Police Department Salaries & Wages.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by Mayor and Council of Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, approve the hiring of said Police Officer effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

**RESOLUTION #24-167**

**APPROVING A CHARITABLE SOLICITOR’S PERMIT: McAFEE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**WHEREAS**, McAfee Volunteer Fire Department has made application for a Charitable Roadside Solicitor’s Permit for the purposes of soliciting funds on June 22-23, July 27-28, August 24-25, October 19-20, 2024, 8 am to 3 pm, on Hamburg McAfee Road (Rt. 94); 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 McAfee Volunteer Fire Department, 88 Hamburg McAfee Road (Rt. 94), has made application for a Charitable Roadside Solicitor’s Permit for the purposes of soliciting funds on June 22-23, July 27-28, August 24-25, October 19-20, 2024, 8 am to 3 pm, on Hamburg McAfee Road (Rt. 94); 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 #24-168**

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

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

**WHEREAS,** the law exempts said property from taxation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** by the Council of the Township of Vernon hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to refund 2024 property tax in the amount of \$3,483.70 to Paul Cialkowski.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-169**

**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 Tax Collector.

**RESOLUTION #24-170**

**CHAPTER 159 RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF  
REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION AMENDING THE 2024 BUDGET  
AS A REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$69,435.11**

**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 \$69,435.11 Clean Communities 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 \$69,435.11 which is now available as a revenue,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a like sum of \$69,435.11 is hereby appropriated under the caption Clean Communities Grant.

**RESOLUTION #24-171**

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PROPOSAL BY THE DELAWARE RIVER NATIONAL PARK AND LENAPE PRESERVE ALLIANCE TO CHANGE THE DESIGNATION OF DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA TO A NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE**

**WHEREAS**, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) was established September 1, 1965, one of 10 National Recreation Areas of the National Park Service, currently encompassing nearly 70,000 acres in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and is a protected area in the United States established by an Act of Congress to preserve enhanced recreational opportunities in places with significant natural and scenic resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the DEWA offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, walking, bicycling, fishing, hunting, swimming, camping, canoeing, boating, cross country skiing, bird watching, horseback riding, sightseeing, and special events; cultural resources, infrastructural facilities, national resources, and rare, threatened and endangered species of plants, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon is aware of the initial proposal in 2022 and a revised proposal 2023 by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no insight, plan or benefit to the residents of Vernon Township in the proposed change in designation; namely the environmental, economic and agricultural impact to the DEWA and to the residents and local businesses of Vernon Township and Sussex County; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no insight or information on how the rights of public land and private property owners will be safeguarded and protected against eminent domain to acquire and public lands, namely, Stokes State Forest, High Point State Park and State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife lands as well as acquisition of private property; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance will reduce tax revenue realized by Vernon Township and surrounding municipalities, negatively impact enrollment of local school districts, and negatively impact our local economy by reducing access to recreational activities enjoyed by residents and visitors to Vernon Township and Sussex County; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on the plan to facilitate this change; the implementation of fee collection and location of collection stations; and how funding will be provided for this proposed National Park; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on the plan to compensate local volunteer first responders (Fire and EMS) on the inevitable increase in emergency calls and response, wear and tear on vehicles and equipment and devastation to these organizations both financially and in membership and will adversely impact and affect the safety, health and welfare of the residents of Vernon Township and Sussex County; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no insight or plan on funding and maintenance of infrastructure and vegetation management; changes agricultural leasing which will economically impact farmers who depend on crops to hold livestock over the winter months and farming for cash crops; causes agricultural fields to fallow and which will encourage invasive species such as Russian Olive to thrive allows Forest to Field Conversion which will leave approximately 58,000 acres in the proposed preserve open to timber degradation, land clearing, soil erosion, resource extraction, mineral, gas and oil exploration, and wildfires.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon firmly opposes the proposal of the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance, or any other organization, seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to a National Park and Preserve as this proposal offers no benefit to the residents of Vernon Township and Sussex County.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon requests copies of this resolution be sent to President Joe Biden; Governor Phil Murphy; New Jersey State Senator F. Parker Space; New Jersey State Senator Douglas Steinhardt; New Jersey Assemblyman Michael Inganamort;

New Jersey Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia; Assemblyman John DiMaio; NJ and PA State Assembly and State Senate members; US Congressman Josh Gottheimer; US Congressman Tom Kean; US Congressman Matt Cartwright; US Senator Cory Booker; US Senator Robert Menendez; US Senators and US Congressmen; Sussex County Board of County Commissioners; all municipalities of Sussex County; National Park Service, Charles Sams, Director; National Park Service Northeast Region, Gay Vietzke, Regional Director; Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Doyle Sapp, Superintendent; Delaware River Basin Commission; Partnership for the Delaware Estuary; National Lands Trust; Warren County Board of County Commissioners; New Jersey League of Municipalities; Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance; New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club.

## **RESOLUTION #24-172**

### **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION AR133 AND SENATE RESOLUTION SR93 OPPOSING ALL PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE DESIGNATION OF THE DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA TO NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE, INCLUDING PROPOSAL BY THE DELAWARE RIVER NATIONAL PARK AND LENAPE PRESERVE ALLIANCE**

**WHEREAS**, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) was established September 1, 1965, one of 10 National Recreation Areas of the National Park Service, currently encompassing nearly 70,000 acres in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and is a protected area in the United States established by an Act of Congress to preserve enhanced recreational opportunities in places with significant natural and scenic resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the DEWA offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, walking, bicycling, fishing, hunting, swimming, camping, canoeing, boating, cross country skiing, bird watching, horseback riding, sightseeing, and special events; cultural resources, infrastructural facilities, national resources, and rare, threatened and endangered species of plants, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon is aware of the initial proposal in 2022 and a revised proposal in 2023 by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no insight or plan for the change in designation; namely the environmental, economic and agricultural impact to the DEWA and to the residents and local businesses of Vernon Township and Sussex County; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on how the rights of public land and private property owners will be safeguarded and protected against eminent domain to acquire and public lands, namely, Stokes State Forest, High Point State Park and State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife lands as well as acquisition of private property; and

**WHEREAS**, conversion of private property to federal parkland would reduce tax revenue realized by Vernon Township and surrounding municipalities, negatively impact enrollment of local school districts, and negatively impact our local economy by reducing access to recreational activities enjoyed by residents and visitors to Vernon Township and Sussex County; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on the plan to facilitate this change; the implementation of fee collection and location of collection stations; and how funding will be provided for this proposed National Park; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no information on the plan to compensate local volunteer first responders (Fire and EMS) on the inevitable increase in emergency calls and response, wear and tear on vehicles and equipment and devastation to these organizations both financially and in membership and will adversely impact and affect the safety, health and welfare of the residents of Sandyston Township and Sussex County

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance offers no insight or plan on funding and maintenance of infrastructure and vegetation management; changes agricultural leasing which will economically impact farmers who depend on crops to hold livestock over



the winter months and farming for cash crops; causes agricultural fields to fallow and which will encourage invasive species such as Russian Olive to thrive allows Forest to Field Conversion which will leave approximately 58,000 acres in the proposed preserve open to timber degradation, land clearing, soil erosion resource extraction, mineral, gas and oil exploration, and wildfires.

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon firmly opposes the proposal of the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance, or any other organization, seeking to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to a National Park and Preserve as this proposal offers no benefit to the residents of Vernon Township and Sussex County.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon does hereby support New Jersey Assembly Resolution AR133 and New Jersey Senate Resolution SR93 opposing all proposals to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon requests copies of this resolution be sent to President Joe Biden; Governor Phil Murphy; New Jersey State Senator F. Parker Space; New Jersey State Senator Douglas Steinhardt; New Jersey Assemblyman Michael Inganamort; New Jersey Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia; New Jersey Assemblyman John DiMaio; NJ and PA State Assembly and State Senate members; Sussex County Board of County Commissioners; all municipalities of Sussex County; National Park Service, Charles Sams, Director; National Park Service Northeast Region, Gay Vietzke, Regional Director; Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Doyle Sapp, Superintendent; Delaware River Basin Commission; Partnership for the Delaware Estuary; National Lands Trust; Warren County Board of County Commissioners; New Jersey League of Municipalities; Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance; New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club.

**RESOLUTION #24-173**

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN  
(Block 571 Lot 8-Corelogic)**

**WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
awarded Sharon Mendoza 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 \$5,280.37 to Corelogic.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-174**

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN  
(Block 571 Lot 8-Corelogic)**

**WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
awarded Sharon Mendoza 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 \$5,075.80 to Corelogic.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-175**

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN  
(Block 512 Lot 138-Corelogic)**

**WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
awarded Michael Faller 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 \$2,685.60 to Corelogic.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-176**

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN  
(Block 512 Lot 138-Corelogic)**

**WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
awarded Michael Faller 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 \$2,685.60 to Corelogic.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-177**

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN  
(Block 219 Lot 1-Corelogic)**

**WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
awarded Heidi Castro 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 \$4,225.07 to Corelogic.

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

**RESOLUTION #24-178**

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN  
(Block 219 Lot 1-Corelogic)**

**WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
awarded Heidi Castro 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 \$4,231.24 to Corelogic.

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

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES**

**Ordinance #24-07:** An Ordinance Amending Chapter 5, Article XVI of the Municipal Code of the Township of Vernon

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-07.

MOVED: DeBenedetto  
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-07.

**Ordinance #24-11:** Ordinance of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey Addressing Limousine Licensing

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-11.

MOVED: Higgins  
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-11.

**Ordinance #24-12:** Ordinance of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Amending Chapter 374, Titled “Nuisances, Public Health” to Address Exterior Lighting Standards

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-12.

MOVED: Sparta  
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-12.

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

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

Steve Dunlop – asked if resolution #24-166 could be corrected. Mr. Dunlop questioned ordinance #24-12 and asked who was going to enforce the ordinance because there are other zoning issues. Mr. Dunlop questioned the cost of the lighting project at Maple Grange Park.

Thomas McClachrie – questioned the procedure to refund the disabled Veterans. Mr. McClachrie asked when the town is going to get rid of the property tax assessment system.

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 commented that there are a number of dilapidated houses in town that are vacant with old cars on the property. Council Member Higgins asked what the rules are for this.

Council Member DeBenedetto questioned if the town was going to have a carnival like they did in the past at the church.

Council Member Sparta thanked everyone who had a part in Vernon Day on Saturday. It was a nice day. Council Member Sparta commented saying this something that I have toiled with for the last few weeks. I am a staunch supporter of the delineation between the BOE and the council. We are two separate elected bodies with very distinct and separate responsibilities. Back in 2011 or 2012 Governor Christie allowed BOE to move their elections to November as long as their budget didn't go over a cap. Myself and John McGowan voted to keep the elections in April so the budget could be still voted on by the community. Needless to say, we were on the wrong side of that vote and the vote on the budget was removed. A few meetings ago a member of the community mentioned that there is a process by which the council can have the school budget moved back to April and be voted on by the community. I have some strong conflicting feelings on whether or not we as a council should consider this. I feel if we do decide to move forward with this it really blurs that line of distinction between the BOE and the council. Also, there are some community members that don't know there is a difference between the two bodies and this would only add to that confusion and may play a part in a delay in having a problem rectified by them going to the wrong elected body if they have an issue. On the other hand, the town is the fiduciary for the taxes received through property taxes. I have some significant concerns with where the school budget is at and where it is heading. I am not going to discuss those concerns here because it is not the time or the place. Mr. Council President, may I ask that we have a discussion item on the agenda for our next meeting where our attorney can present the process that is available to the council to place the school budget on the ballot for a community vote next April? And after that is presented to us, we as a council have a discussion as to whether this is something we want to consider doing or leave it as is.

## **COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS**

Council President Rizzuto commented that we are in the graduating season and school will be closing, he asked that everyone be careful on the roads with children playing outside. Council President Rizzuto feels that it is a good time to review the sign ordinance to extend some courtesy to businesses. He also feels

that our compliance officer needs to review setback for projects that are close to the road to check for safety issues.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:12 pm Council Member Higgins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member DeBenedetto.

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 24, 2024