

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 27, 2022 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on June 27, 2022 via Zoom Webinar and in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Council President Patrick Rizzuto presiding.

**STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the public and the press on January 14, 2022 and on May 3, 2022 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, Michael Furrey, Brian Lynch, Harry Shortway and Council President Patrick Rizzuto. Also present were Mayor Howard Burrell, Business Administrator Charles Voelker, Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio and Township Attorney Josh Zielinski.

**PROCLAMATIONS**

Designation of July as Park and Recreation Month

Council Member Shortway read the proclamation.

**MAYOR COMMENTS**

Vernon Township has been chosen by the Sussex County Division of Senior Services to host the 2022 Sussex County Senior Olympics!

This outstanding event will be held at our beautiful Maple Grange Park on Wednesday, June 29, from 9am to approximately 2:45pm.

The schedule for this event calls for the Olympians to arrive for a breakfast and check-in at 9am; the March of Olympians is scheduled for 9:45am; the formal Opening Ceremony is scheduled for 10am; the Olympic Games are scheduled to begin at 10:15am; and the Awards Presentation and Closing Ceremony is scheduled to begin at 1:45pm.

The event will feature six teams representing the municipalities of Hardyston, Hopatcong, Sparta, and Vernon; plus, one additional team representing the Sussex County YMCA.

The Sussex County Senior Olympic Games grew out of a Sussex County Senior Services' Assessment of Senior Citizen's Needs for Socialization and Recreation.

These Olympic Games will allow Sussex County residents who are 60 and older the opportunity to meet new friends, connect to their community, and to simply have a great time.

Research has found that social support can play a significant role in overall health as people age. Life doesn't make it easy to socialize as we get older, so this is just one of the events that the Sussex County Division of Senior Services hosts as part of their effort to create a connection to social supports and community involvement for our seniors.

This is but another example of Vernon Township playing a leading role in making Vernon and Sussex County a better place for all residents to live!

Please come out and show that VERNON CARES spirit, and to show your support for all of the Senior Olympians!

After a two-year absence caused by the COVID virus, the annual Vernon Township 4th of July Fireworks Display is back!

This year's fireworks display will take place on the grounds of Lounsberry Hollow Middle School, with related activities planned to start at 4pm.

I take this opportunity to again thank the Vernon and Highland Lakes Fire Departments for the time, effort and financial resources that they have put into the planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling actions needed to make this firework display possible for our town.

During these two-plus years that I have had the honor of serving as the town's Mayor, you have seen me highlight those instances when one of our town's many outstanding employees have done notable things which have brought positive attention and pride to Vernon Township.

I have highlighted these notable actions because one of my objectives as Mayor is to have our town viewed not simply as the largest municipality in Sussex County, but also a positive leader in Sussex County; and, several of our highest performing employees continue to contribute to our efforts to achieve this objective.

On tonight, it is my privilege to, again, highlight the notable achievement of one of those employees.

The employee is Ms. KRISTEN UMANSKY, the municipality's outstanding Tax Assessor.

As the Tax Assessor for our municipality, Ms. UMANSKY is responsible for all aspects of the valuing of all taxable property in our town. Her charge is the important task of ensuring that each property is valued fairly, so that each taxpayer pays no more, or no less, than his or her fair share of taxes.

She has performed this responsibility to such a high level of professionalism, that she has become recognized throughout our county as one of the county's premier Tax Assessors.

This recognition is reflected in part by her election as the Vice President of the Sussex County Tax Assessor's Association; and by the fact that during the first week of this month, she was the only Municipal Tax Assessor that was invited by the Sussex County Board of Realtors to join with the Sussex County Tax Administrator in an important, high-profile workshop aimed at educating the county's realtors about the Annual Property Assessment process.

The experience and training that Ms. UMANSKY brings to our municipality from her former position as the Assistant to the Executive Vice President of the largest property revaluation firm in the State of New Jersey, plus her credentials as a New Jersey Certified Tax Assessor, has made her not only a major asset to Vernon Township, but also one of those employees who has contributed to our town's image as a leading municipality in Sussex County.

Thank you, Ms. UMANSKY; I am honored to have you as a part of our municipal staff!

Since the construction of the Town Center Walking & Biking Trail started on May 17; and the construction of the Town Center Pump Track resumed on June 16, I have seen a spike in community excitement about these two new coming town amenities!

As I have previously said, my strong support for these two special amenities is based on the fact that they are investments in our Town Center area that I believe will serve as magnets to attract a host of individuals to our Town Center.

And, I also believe that capitalistic minded, smart, and enterprising individuals will view these host of visitors to our Town Center as potential new customers in need of goods and services, which will then be a significant motivation for these capitalistic minded, smart, and enterprising individuals to develop new commercial ventures in our Town Center.

This recent spike in community excitement has only strengthened my hope and belief that these two special amenities will serve as the people magnets that I have always believed that they would.

The excitement that I speak of is reflected in part in:

1. Offers that the town has received to sponsor some of the signage for both, the Pump Track and the Trail;

2. Offers that the town has received to donate items that will enhance the useability, and the user experience and enjoyment of these two special amenities. For example:

a. The Sussex Bike & Sports Shop has committed to purchasing and providing the town two 10 feet galvanized steel Bike Storage Racks that will be mounted at the Town Center Pump Track; each rack will be able to store 18 bikes;

b. The Sussex Bike & Sports Shop has also committed to purchasing and providing the town a state-of-the-art weatherable Outdoor Public Tire Bike Pump with a Gauge that will be mounted at the Town Center Pump Track;

c. Diamond Cycle of Montclair, NJ, which is owned by a Vernon resident, has committed to purchasing and providing the town (1) a state-of-the-art Park Tool Trail Head Work Station, a work station that has all of the key tools that bike riders may need to help them repair their bikes on the spot, and get back to enjoying the Pump Track; and (2) some picnic tables which will help to make what will already be a family comfortable and family friendly facility, an even better place that families will want to come to and enjoy; and ...

d. We have had others who have committed to making significant dollar amount contributions to purchase other items that will enhance the useability, and the user experience and enjoyment of these two special amenities, once these amenities are completed and additional needs are identified.

It is our hope and expectation that these two special amenities will not only serve as magnets to attract a host of individuals to our Town Center, but will also serve as high visibility, special Town Center venues where Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts will want to build and display their special projects; where civic organizations and local businesses will want to build and/or donate appropriate tasteful displays as an expression of their civic pride in Vernon Township; and where individuals and families will want to donate memorial benches, plant memorial trees - - especially along the approximately .6 miles stretch of the scenic Town Center Walking & Biking Trail from the Municipal Center to the Town Center Pump Track.

Any donation accepted by the municipality for the Town Center Biking & Walking Trail or Pump Track will be appropriately acknowledged and recognized by a plaque attached to or near the donated item.

Anyone wanting to donate should contact the Office of the Mayor.

**THE EXCITEMENT ABOUT, AND SUPPORT FOR, THE TOWN CENTER TRAIL AND PUMP TRACK IS GROWING!**

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

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

MOVED: Lynch

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken to open the meeting to the public

AYES: Buccieri, Furrey, Lynch, Shortway, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed to open the meeting to the public.

Eric Card – Highland Lakes, is trying to locate a survey of the pump track that is being built.

Jessica Paladini – Vernon Township, said that there is no survey for the pump track or trail. Ms. Paladini inquired about the payments on the bills list for internet services and asked if we still get free internet services.

Administrator Voelker explained that we were not getting free internet service. We did start getting internet service from Lightpath and now our internet service is much better.

Ms. Paladini feels that the salary ordinance increases are outrages. The Parity Bill is a state law that says all department heads have to get the same increases.

Peg Distasi – Glenwood, does not believe there has been an accounting of the funds spent on the trails to date. She would like to see a spreadsheet of expenditures on the project. Ms. Distasi feels that the salary ranges in ordinance 22-13 are too high. Ms. Distasi questioned why we have excessively high tax refunds.

Bill Diresta – Vernon Township, feels that the pump track is a reality. As far as salaries, he feels that if you want to have good people you have to pay them.

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

MOVED: Furrey  
SECOND: Lynch

All members were in favor.

### **REVIEW OF THE BILLS LIST**

The Council reviewed the bills list.

### **MINUTES**

June 9, 2022 – Special Meeting  
June 13, 2022 – Regular Meeting

#### **June 9, 2022 – Special Meeting**

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the June 9, 2022 Special Meeting minutes.

MOVED: Furrey  
SECOND: Lynch

AYES: Buccieri, Furrey, Lynch, Shortway, Rizzuto  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT:

Motion passed to approve the June 9, 2022 Special Meeting minutes.

#### **June 13, 2022 – Regular Meeting**

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the June 13, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED: Furrey  
SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor

Motion passed to approve the June 13, 2022 Regular Meeting minutes.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Resolution #22-164:** Refund Overpayment (Block 199-Lot 7 Corelogic)

**Resolution #22-165:** Refund Overpayment (Block 526 Lot 300-Corelogic)

**Resolution #22-166:** Refund Overpayment (Block 527 Lot 452-Jusupov)

**Resolution #22-167:** Refund Overpayment (Block 527 Lot 452-Coreologic)

**Resolution #22-168:** Refund Overpayment (Block 316 Lot 22 – Justin Gregory)

**Resolution #22-169:** Refund Overpayment (Block 512 Lot 68-Grace M Korth TST)

**Resolution #22-170:** Authorizing Contracts with Certain Approved State Contracts Vendors Northeast Communications, State Contacts 83924, A83898

**Resolution #22-172:** Authorizing Cancellation of Capital Fund Balances

**Resolution #22-174:** A Resolution Rescinding Resolution #21-208 Entitled “Renewal of Pocket Liquor License (JD Lodge and Inn LLC) Requiring Special Ruling in the Township of Vernon for the 2021-2022 Licensing Term

Council President Rizzuto asked for to approve resolutions #22-164 #22-165, #22-166, #22-167, #22-168, #22-169, #22-170, #22-172, #22-174

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:  
AYES: Buccieri, Furrey, Lynch, Shortway, Rizzuto  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT:

Motion passed to approve resolutions #22-164 #22-165, #22-166, #22-167, #22-168, #22-169, #22-170, #22-172, #22-174

**RESOLUTION #22-164**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 199- Lot 7 COREOLOGIC)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Coreologic in the amount of \$1656.36 representing refund for overpayment for the following property:

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Bergner	199	7	\$1656.36
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1656.36</b>

Butler- refund for overpayment totaling \$1656.36 of 4th qtr. 2021 property taxes for Block 199 Lot 7 also known as [REDACTED].

**RESOLUTION #22-165**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 526 Lot 300- States Title)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to States Title in the amount of \$823.93 representing refund for overpayment of 3rd qtr. 2021 property taxes for Block 526 Lot 300 also known as [REDACTED].

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Devlin	526	300	\$823.93
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$823.93</b>

**RESOLUTION #22-166**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 527 Lot 452- Jusupov)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Michael Jusupov in the amount of \$734.20 representing refund for overpayment of 4th qtr. 2018 property taxes for Block 527 Lot 452 also known as [REDACTED].

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Jusupov	527	452	\$734.20
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$734.20</b>

**RESOLUTION #22-167**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 527 Lot 452- Jusupov)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Michael Jusupov in the amount of \$1557.61 representing refund for overpayment of both 1st qtr. and 3<sup>rd</sup> qtr. 2019 property taxes for Block 527 Lot 452 also known as [REDACTED] New Jersey.

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Jusupov- 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr	527	452	\$740.58
Jusupov- 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr	527	452	\$817.03
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1557.61</b>

**RESOLUTION #22-168**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 316 Lot 22- Justin Gregory)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Justin Gregory in the amount of \$1452.69 representing refund for overpayment of 1st qtr. 2018 property taxes for Block 316 Lot 22 also known as [REDACTED].

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Gregory	316	22	\$1452.69
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1452.69</b>

**RESOLUTION #22-169**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 512 Lot 68- Grace M Korth TST)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Grace M Korth TST in the amount of \$1275.67 representing refund for County Board Judgement credit from 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020 for property taxes for Block 512 Lot 68 also known as [REDACTED].

OWNER	BLOCK	LOT	REFUND AMOUNT
Korth	512	68	\$1275.67
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1275.67</b>

**RESOLUTION #22-170**

**AUTHORIZING CONTRACTS  
WITH CERTAIN APPROVED STATE CONTRACT VENDORS  
NORTHEAST COMMUNICATIONS, STATE CONTRACTS 83924, A83898**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law N.J.S.A.40A:11-12, authorizes the Township of Vernon by resolution, and without advertising for bids or obtaining quotations, purchase any goods or services under the State Contract; and

<b>ORD</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>AMOUNT CANCELLED</b>
19-11	06-24-2019	Various Improvements	4,999.32
21-15	06-28-2021	Various Improvements	1,025.00

**WHEREAS**, the Township has the need on a timely basis to purchase goods and services utilizing State contracts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township intends to enter into contracts with Northeast Communications under State Contracts A83898, 83924 for the installation and implementation of Zetron Nextgen 911 systems for the police department emergency dispatch capabilities, in the total project amount of:

Labor, install and removal	\$31,765.00
Software licensing and warranty	\$15,498.00
Zetron 911 systems and accessories	\$105,800.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$153,063.00</b>

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Financial Officer certifies that funding is available in the amount of \$153,063.00 from line-item C-04-22-010.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, authorizes the Mayor to enter into a contract with Northeast Communications under State Contracts A83898, 83924 for the installation and implementation of Zetron Nextgen 911 systems for the police department emergency dispatch capabilities, in the total project amount of \$153,063.00.

#### **RESOLUTION #22-172**

##### **Authorizing Cancellation of Capital Fund Balances**

**WHEREAS**, certain projects have been completed and Capital Fund balances that were dedicated to those projects are no longer needed; and

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to formally cancel said balances so that the unexpended balances may be returned to the Capital Improvement Fund Balance:

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon that the following unexpended and dedicated balances of the Capital Fund balances be canceled and returned to the Capital Improvement Fund:

#### **RESOLUTION #22-174**

##### **A RESOLUTION RESCINDING RESOLUTION #21-208 ENTITLED “RENEWAL OF POCKET LIQUOR LICENSE (JD VERNON LODGE AND INN LLC) REQUIRING SPECIAL RULING IN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON FOR THE 2021-2022 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, JD Vernon Lodge and Inn LLC’s plenary retail consumption license (1922-33-009-004) (“License”) required a Special Ruling by the State Division of Alcoholic Beverages as the license was in the pocket prior to its renewal; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 2021, the State Division of Alcoholic Beverages issued said special ruling for the 2020–2021 and the 2021-2022 license terms; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:1-12.18 the License required a Special Ruling by the State Division of Alcoholic Beverages as the license’s failure to timely renew its license; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 2021, the State Division of Alcoholic Beverages issued said special ruling for the 2020–2021 license term; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 14, 2021, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon passed Resolution #21-208 renewing the License for the 2021-2022 licensing period; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance N.J.A.C. 13:2-2.5, the special ruling required JD Vernon Lodge and Inn LLC to advertise its application for the License; and

**WHEREAS**, upon further review, it has been determined that the advertisement requirement was not fulfilled and that Resolution No. 21-208 should be rescinded.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that Resolution #21-208 is hereby rescinded.

**Resolution #22-171:** Authorizing Contracts with Certain Approved State Contract Vendors  
Firefighter One for Purchase of Volunteer Fire Department Turnout Gear

Council President Rizzuto asked for to approve resolution #22-171

MOVED: Furrey  
SECOND: Shortway

A roll call vote was taken:  
AYES: Buccieri, Furrey, Shortway, Rizzuto  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN: Lynch  
ABSENT:

Motion passed to approve resolutions #22-171

**RESOLUTION #22-171**

**AUTHORIZING CONTRACTS  
WITH CERTAIN APPROVED STATE CONTRACT VENDORS  
FIREFIGHTER ONE FOR PURCHASE OF VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT TURNOUT  
GEAR**

**WHEREAS**, as provided for within the New Jersey Local Publics Contract Law (N.J.S.A.40A:11-12 et. Seq.) the Township of Vernon may by resolution, and without advertising for bids or obtaining quotations, purchase any goods or services under State Contract; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township has the need on a timely basis to purchase goods and services utilizing State contracts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township intends to enter into contract with Firefighter One 34 Wilson Dr. Sparta, NJ 07871, for the procurement of 30 sets of turnout gear at a cost of \$103,455.00 under New Jersey State Contract17-FLEET-00811/ T0790; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Financial Officer certifies funding is available in the amount of \$103,455.00 from line items C-04-19-016, C-04-21-012, C-04-22-009, and C-04-22-010.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, authorizes the Qualified Purchasing Agent to purchase certain goods and services from Firefighter One, through New Jersey State Contract17-FLEET-00811/ T0790 pursuant to all conditions of the individual State contracts; and

**Resolution #22-173:** Renewal of Liquor Licenses in the Township of Vernon for the 2022-2023  
Licensing Term

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #22-173

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:



AYES: Buccieri, Lynch, Shortway, Rizzuto  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN: Furrey  
ABSENT:

Motion passed to approve resolution #22-173

**RESOLUTION #22-173**

**RENEWAL OF LIQUOR LICENSES IN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON  
FOR THE 2022-2023 LICENSING TERM**

**WHEREAS**, all licenses to dispense alcoholic beverages must be renewed and reissued annually no later than June 30, 2022; 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 2022-2023 licensing period effective as of July 1, 2022.

**PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION**

Great Gorge Entertainment LLC	1922-33-003-008
Smokeys Glenwood Grill	1922-33-013-004

**PUBLIC HEARING/2<sup>ND</sup> READING OF ORDINANCE**

**Ordinance #22-11:** Ordinance of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Amending Section 330-160 Entitled “Schedule of Permitted, Conditional and Accessory Uses and Structures” to Prohibit Farmland Assessment on Properties Where Legal Cannabis is Cultivated

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to place ordinance #22-11 on the floor for consideration

MOVED: Furrey  
SECOND: Lynch

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public comments on ordinance 22-11

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Furrey

Bill Diresta – Vernon Township, feels that it is about time we start making money for the township.

Thomas McClachrie – Vernon Township, feels that there should be at least five for each zone. He feels that bringing in tax money is a good idea.

Seeing no one else from the public wishing to come forward, Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the floor to public comment on ordinance 22-11.

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

Council Member Buccieri is glad that we were able to adjust the ordinance to honor the commitment that was made to the two business owners have made to start their businesses. She is comfortable to vote no on this ordinance because she knows that this will pass but she is not for the sale of cannabis in Vernon.

Council President Rizzuto echoed Council Member Buccieri's feelings and he thanked her for her commitment to the businesses.

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to adopt ordinance #22-11

MOVED: Lynch

SECOND: Furrey

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Furrey, Lynch, Shortway

NAYES: Buccieri, Rizzuto

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed to adopt ordinance #22-11

### **ORDINANCE #22-11**

#### **ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AMENDING SECTION 330-160 ENTITLED "SCHEDULE OF PERMITTED, CONDITIONAL AND ACCESSORY USES AND STRUCTURES" TO PROHIBIT FARMLAND ASSESSMENTS ON PROPERITES WHERE LEGAL CANNABIS IS CULTIVATED.**

**WHEREAS**, on July 26, 2021, the Township Council of the Township of Vernon ("Township Council") passed ordinance No. 21-16 which authorized cannabis cultivation, cannabis delivery, cannabis manufacturing, cannabis wholesaling, and cannabis distribution in the Township of Vernon ("Township")

**WHEREAS**, on September 13, 2021, the Township Council passed ordinance No. 21-25 to permit retail sales of legalized cannabis.

~~**WHEREAS**, upon further review, a determination has been made that there is a need to update the Township's legal cannabis regulations to comply with current requirements prohibiting farmland assessments on property where legal cannabis is cultivated.~~

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

#### **SECTION 1**

§ 330-160 "Schedule of Permitted, Conditional and Accessory Uses and Structures" and "SCHEDULE A Permitted, Conditional and Accessory Uses and Structures" shall be amended and revised as follows:

No more than three of each of the following uses shall be permitted in the Light Industrial Zone: Cannabis Cultivator, Cannabis Delivery, Cannabis Manufacturer, Cannabis Wholesaler, and Cannabis Distributor. Additionally, no more than three Cannabis Cultivators shall be permitted in the McAfee Village Mixed Use Zone, on R-2 Zone properties with a minimum of 6 acres located west of County Road 517, and on R-1 Zone properties with a minimum of 6 acres located on the northbound side of County Road 517.

#### **SECTION 2**

Each section of this ordinance is an independent section, and the holding of any section or part thereof to be unconstitutional, void or ineffective for any cause shall not be deemed to affect the validity of constitutionality of any other sections or parts thereof.

#### **SECTION 3**

Any ordinances or parts thereof in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed as to their inconsistencies only.

#### **SECTION 4**

This Ordinance shall take effect upon final passage and publication as provided by law.

**Ordinance #22-13:** Ordinance Establishing the Salaries for Certain Officers and Employees of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey

Council President Rizzuto read by title Ordinance #22-13

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to place ordinance #22-13 on the floor for consideration

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Shortway

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public comments on ordinance 22-13

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Thomas McClachrie – Vernon Township, opposes the salary ordinance.

Bill Diresta – Vernon Township, feels that if you want decent people working in the town you have to pay decent salaries.

Peg Distasi – Glenwood, agrees with Mr. Diresta. She feels that the Council and the Mayor should start receiving proper payment for their services. Ms. Distasi feels that raises for existing people should be held off.

Jessica Paladini – Vernon Township, feels that we have wonderful employees. After doing a search of Sparta and Wantage, Ms. Paladini said that Vernon's salaries are much higher.

Sean Clarkin – Vernon Township, feels that the employees are thanking God that they stayed working in Vernon so they can roll out of bed and be at work in ten minutes.

Seeing no one else from the public wishing to come forward, Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the floor to public comment on ordinance 22-13.

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to place ordinance #22-13 on the floor for consideration.

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Furrey

All members were in favor.

Council Member Lynch explained that this ordinance is not for raises, it is a guideline used when determining a salary for someone.

Council Member Buccieri said that having a salary range is not unusual and she understands the need for it. It is a good guide for hiring. Council Member Buccieri asked the Mayor if Vernon has an official performance review process to review employee's job performance.

Mayor Burrell said that there is a plan to implement a performance review process and we will have an official review process as soon as possible.

Council President Rizzuto explained that we have various positions and these start and end points allow us to tell an employee that after a period of time, you can only gain so much experience in a particular position. That continued employment will only give you some increases but advanced training would

make you a greater benefit in terms of the amount of knowledge or experience that you bring to your job position.

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Furrey, Lynch, Shortway, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed to adopt ordinance #22-13

**ORDINANCE #22-13**

**ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE SALARIES FOR  
CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF  
THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

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

**Section 1.** The salary ranges for hereinafter listed Township Officers, employees, and positions shall be and are hereby fixed for the year, commencing January 1, 2022 and shall be the same until a new salary ordinance is adopted by the governing body.

<b>FULL TIME:</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>General Administration:</b>		
Business Administrator	90,000	140,000
Confidential Aide to the Mayor	55,000	75,000
Tax Assessor	75,000	105,000
<b>Clerk's Office:</b>		
Municipal Clerk	70,000	100,000
<b>Finance and Tax:</b>		
Chief Financial Officer	90,000	120,000
Tax Collector	65,000	95,000
<b>Construction and Land Use:</b>		
*Construction Code Official	90,000	120,000
*Sub Code Official-All	70,000	98,000
Land Use Department Head	50,000	85,000
Zoning Code Enforcement Officer	50,000	75,000
<b>Public Works</b>		
*DPW-Department Head	90,000	120,000
*Assistant Supervisor	70,000	85,000
*Supervising Mechanic	70,000	85,000
<b>Municipal Court</b>		
Municipal Court Administrator	60,000	90,000
Judge of Municipal Court	25,000	45,000
<b>Police:</b>		
Chief of Police	165,000	195,000
<b>Fire Prevention:</b>		
Fire Marshal	55,000	85,000
<b>Community Affairs/Senior Citizens:</b>		
Director of Community Affairs	60,000	90,000
Nutrition Site Manager	30,000	45,000

\*Work week is 40 hours

<b><u>PART-TIME:</u></b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>Municipal Offices:</b>		
OEM Coordinator	\$1,500/year	\$7,500/year
OEM Deputy Coordinator	\$1,000/year	\$3,000/year
Deputy Registrar	\$4,500/year	
Keyboarding Clerk (All Depts.)	NJ Minimum Wage	\$25 per hour
<b>Construction and Land Use:</b>		
Sub Code Officials/Inspectors (All)	\$20 per hour	\$45 per hour
Code Enforcement Officer (Zoning)	\$20/ hour	\$40 per hour
<b>Animal Control</b>		
Assistant Animal Control Officer	\$15 per hour	\$25 per hour
Animal Attendant	NJ Minimum Wage	\$15 per hour
<b>Public Safety</b>		
Fire Prevention Specialist	\$16 per hour	\$25 per hour
Court Security Guard	\$20 per hour	\$25 per hour
<b>Public Works</b>		
Laborer- General	NJ Minimum Wage	\$20 per hour
Laborer- Summer Seasonal	NJ Minimum Wage	\$20 per hour
Laborer/Driver- Winter Seasonal	NJ Minimum Wage	\$25 per hour
Garage Attendant	NJ Minimum Wage	\$25 per hour
<b>Police</b>		
Public Safety Trainee	\$15 per hour	\$20 per hour
Public Safety Tele-communicator	\$15 per hour	\$25 per hour
Police Special I	\$20 per hour	\$25 per hour
Police Special II	\$25 per hour	\$30 per hour
<b>Senior Citizens</b>		
Food Service Worker	NJ Minimum Wage	\$18 per hour

**Section II:** All ordinances of the Township of Vernon which are inconsistent with the provisions of the Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of each inconsistency.

If any chapter, article, division, section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or provision of the Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect all remaining portions of this Ordinance.

**Section III.** The Ordinance shall take effect twenty (20) days after final passage, approval and publication after adoption by the Township Council and shall be retroactive to January 1, 2022.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

MOVED: Lynch

SECOND: Furrey

All members were in favor.

Eric Card – Highland Lakes, never received an answer from the Mayor in reference to his application and why he needs a survey. He feels that there is nothing in Vernon’s ordinances that says he needs a survey. Mr. Card asked why the pump track does not need a survey to be built. He feels that there is selective enforcement.

Council Member Lynch explained that Mr. Card signed the zoning application that says he needs a survey.

Sean Clarkin – Vernon Township, feels that approving the salaries is lining the Mayor up to give raises in the future.

Peg Distasi – Glenwood, questioned the Mayor about marketing the pump track and trails. Ms. Distasi is in favor of putting a question on the ballot to form a Charter Study Committee because the current form of government is not working. Ms. Distasi would like the website looked at because it is not up to date.

Bill Diresta – Vernon, suggested allowing public comments to be seven minutes instead of three minutes.

Council President Rizzuto explained that the public gets a total of eight minutes to comment.

Mr. Diresta feels that unless you show up in person, you should be limited to four minutes. Mr. Diresta visited a cannabis store and he feels this is a money maker and the town is losing money by not having cannabis sold in Vernon. Mr. Diresta said that 70% of the voters were in favor of the current form of government.

Jessica Paladini – Vernon, asked for a title search to find out who owns Black Creek Drive because she feels that the documentation the Mayor has is bogus. Ms. Paladini feels that the Township Attorney gave bad advice at the last meeting. The Council can put a question on the ballot to have a Charter Study Committee.

Mr. Zielinski explained that there are three ways that the Municipality can change its form of government. Petition and referendum, Charter Study Commission or ordinance to put a question on the ballot. Ultimately, the citizens vote on the form of government.

Camila Diresta – Glenwood, explained that she gave a petition of all of the business that are for the pump track and said thank you for making it happen because she feels that it will bring a lot of traffic to the town's main street. Ms. Diresta visited a dispensary in Paterson called Rise. She feels it would be good to bring a dispensary to Vernon.

Council Member Buccieri explained that the Council did approve a resolution supporting a retail business as well as an ordinance to allow three retail establishments in Vernon.

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

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Lynch asked the Mayor if Black Creek Drive is on the list to get paved. He is very concerned about the most damaged roads and would like an eye kept on them.

Council Member Lynch questioned the Mondamin Road situation and asked if there was any update.

Council Member Lynch is concerned that part of the Council chooses to attend meeting via Zoom. He feels that the whole Council should be present in person at the meetings or the Council needs to decide how this should be handled going forward because if the whole Council decided to attend the meetings via Zoom, there would be no Council at the meetings in person.

Council Member Lynch feels that the vacant and abandoned property ordinance needs to be looked at because it is affecting some of the residents.

Council Member Lynch thanked the Mayor for speaking about the fireworks. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> year the fire department is hosting the fireworks and the town does not pay any money for them. The money comes from fundraising and the fireworks are very expensive. Council Member Lynch would like more people take advantage of going to the field to see the fireworks.

Council President Rizzuto explained that the fireworks are a big risk for the fire department. They are very expensive so please try to support the fire department in this endeavor.

Council Member Shortway read a letter of appreciation from Sussex County Pride.

Council Member Shortway commented saying, I will continue to strive to fulfill my campaign pledges to create a culture of well-being that incorporates passive and active recreation for all Vernon residents and guests. I also believe recreation is an economic driver. Although my proposals aligned with our Master, Open Space and Recreation plans, I have been met with stiff resistance by political opponents for the last 13 years. Yet, they offer no alternative economic sustainability plan. At the center of my agenda was the construction of a hiking and biking infrastructure to compliment the town center as the hub for business. This will allow mixed-use passive and active recreation uses within easy walking distance to connect our commercial, municipal complex and resort areas. On a side note, I will continue to advocate for an amphitheater to be constructed in the Town Center Park to accommodate the performing arts and a disc golf course.

Passing a resolution to name the park in the Vernon Town Center was short sighted. A better way to name the park in the Town Center was proposed by volunteers of the former GAAC. They would have sponsored a community wide contest to name the park and present names to the Mayor and Council for discussion. An ordinance would then be introduced and hopefully adopted with community input. Besides generating recreation and economic opportunities, this project made the wastewater easement more accessible and repairs were made to safeguard the sewer infrastructure that was jeopardized by erosion. We removed solid waste stored at this location by the Township. These plies of grit, dirt and asphalt are the result of former administrations not developing an adequate plan or the will to spend taxpayer dollars to remove these soils. These remedies protect our environment.

I take no issue with a memorial for Mr. Rinker. During my tenure as mayor, my administration continued the Bench/Tree Memorial Program in 2018 at Maple Grange Park.

The program incorporates the following: Anyone can sponsor a dedication which provides a lasting remembrance that can be enjoyed by all park visitors. Such donations will give back to the community in ways no other gift can. The placement of a tree or bench donation within the park is determined in collaboration with the Township. Donors will be given several locations from which to choose. For trees, the available options may be influenced by the species selected. The type of donation can be expanded. This same program can be extended to the Vernon Town Center Park and a memorial for Mr. Rinker can be donated. Based on our engineer's professional recommendations, we constructed the pump track and trail at the present location despite the blatant misinformation put forth by our advisories.

The closing date for Legends continues to be moved back and the monies owed to our community now exceeds \$4.5 million dollars. Seasons Condo Holdings Co. owes us an additional \$30,000 plus for its rooms at Legends. Seasons Condo Holdings Co. has the same address as Northwoods at Vernon. Legends is a blight on our community. I believe it's time to start discussion and analysis to condemn the property.

Council Member Furrey supports Council Member Shortway's comments. He strongly feels that the trail and the pump track are going to be an economic boom and bring people and businesses into Vernon.

Council Member Furrey had the opportunity to attend the Pride service on Thursday and he said a few words. He feels that the display was fantastic and it is good that we can accept them into our community.

Council Member Furrey also had the opportunity to attend The Glenwood for their grand opening/rebranding. He was struck by the fact that the owners used a lot of local contractors to restore their facility. They should be thanked for this and for bringing business into Vernon.

Council Member Buccieri commented that the proposed Senior Olympics is a great opportunity to highlight Maple Grange Park and collaborate with other towns. She feels that we have a lot of events for our seniors and she thanked the employees and volunteers who work on that.

Council Member Buccieri is excited about the fireworks, her family has been going to see them for 25 years. The fireworks are a fundraiser and a great community event.

Council Member Buccieri is pleased with the way the Glenwood looks and she is excited about the grand opening.

### **COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS**

Council President Rizzuto reminded everyone that school is closed and there are children playing outside and riding bikes. He asked that the public pay close attention on the roads. The township is working diligently with the sweeper to get the grit off the roads.

Council President Rizzuto understands Council Member Shortway's comments about Legends. The amount of work that is being done in order to close this proposed venture and the amount of earnest money that was placed in trust for this is non-refundable \$800,000. He does not see someone walking away from that amount of money. Council President Rizzuto said if this information is incorrect, he stands corrected. The problem that is emanating from the venture is that all of the ownership on the individual units was not digitized, it was all paper. Therefore, every individual owner has to be contacted and closed out before it can be moved on. At this point he has heard about several closing dates. Council President Rizzuto does not feel that taking action to condemn would do anything. He asked the Council to be patient.

Council Member Buccieri commented that she feels that it is important as a Council Member to be at the meetings in person. She would hate to not have the Zoom option because it gives the public the option to participate in the meetings from home. Council Member Buccieri feels that the Council has a level of commitment and she feels in person is important for the collaboration and the discussion. Unfortunately, she feels it does a disservice for the participants who are not here in person because they are not able to fully participate.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:50pm Council Member Lynch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Buccieri.

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: July 11, 2022