

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 14, 2025 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on July 14, 2025, in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Council President Rizzuto presiding.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the public and the press on January 19, 2025, and was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-7.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

ROLL CALL

Present were Council Members, Natalie Buccieri, Jessica DeBenedetto, William Higgins, Bradley Sparta and Council President Patrick Rizzuto. Also present were Mayor Anthony Rossi, Business Administrator Tina Kraus, CFO Donelle Bright, Township Attorney Peter King and Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Gun Carry Permit Fees

MAYOR COMMENTS

Today, I want to thank the Council for accepting my request to pass a parking ordinance for our Gold Star family members. A few months ago, Vernon initiated the Hometown Hero's banner program, which honors our Veterans, and I'm very honored to see so many Vernon residents who served or are currently serving in our military are recognized. Today Vernon Township recognizes the sacrifice that all Gold Star family members make when a father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, or other loved one dies in service to the nation. The brave men and women of our Armed Forces represent the very best of our great Nation, matched only by the families who walk beside them in their service. Americans of every generation owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who gave their lives in service to this Nation and to their families who remain forever changed. I know this recognition can never replace those we lost, but I hope a Gold Star family member, when parking on any of our Vernon Township properties, knows that our hearts and prayers are always with them and we will never forget the difficulties the Gold Star family members live with each and every day.

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: DeBenedetto

SECOND: Higgins

All members were in favor.

Rachel Rodriguez – Hopatcong Council, is in favor of reducing the fees for gun carry permits.

Joseph Laporta - a representative of a non-profit firearms organization, is in favor of reducing the fees for gun carry permits.

Concetto Formica - Franklin Borough, is in favor of reducing the fees for gun carry permits.

Alan Henderson – Lafayette Borough and County Commissioner, is in favor of reducing the fees for gun carry permits.

Jennifer Johnson – Hopatcong Council President, is in favor of reducing the fees for gun carry permits.

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

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

REVIEW OF BILLS LIST

The Council reviewed the bills list.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution #25-184: Approval to Submit a Grant Application and Execute a Grant Contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the Canistear Road Phase 2 Improvements Project

Resolution #25-185: Resolution Increase the Bid Threshold

Resolution #25-186: Authorizing the Cancellation of Outstanding Checks Over Six Months Old to Municipal Cash Balances

Resolution #25-187: Amending Resolution #25-03 Reauthorizing Petty Cash Funds for Calendar Year

Resolution #25-188: Approving a Charitable Solicitor's Permit: Vernon Emergency Medical Services Inc.

Resolution #25-189: Resolution of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Approving and Authorizing the Use of the Purchasing Procedures Manual and Vendor Manual

Resolution #25-190: Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of Not Exceeding \$10,788,000 Bond Anticipation Notes of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, New Jersey

Resolution #25-191: Refund Overpayment (Block 233 Lot 3-QFarm – Smith)

Resolution #25-192: Refund Overpayment (Block 1 Lot 1)

Resolution #25-193: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 164 Lot 1)

Resolution #25-194: (Block 164 Lot 1) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-195: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 537 Lot 27)

Resolution #25-196: (Block 538 Lot 27) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-197: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 8 Lot 3)

Resolution #25-198: Refund Overpayment (Block 321 Lot 5-QFarm – Pietrowski)

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

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the consent agenda.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #25-170: Resolution Endorsing the 2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #25-170.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve resolution #25-170.

Resolution #25-199: Resolution of Intent to Bond in the Event that there is a Shortfall in Funding to Effectuate Certain Affordable Housing Mechanisms in its Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #25-199.

MOVED: Buccieri
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to approve resolution #25-199.

Resolution #25-200: Resolution Adopting Fourth Round Spending Plan

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #25-200.

MOVED: Buccieri
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to approve resolution #25-200.

ORDINANCE TO INTRODUCE

Ordinance #25-10: An Ordinance Establishing Chapter 409, Parking for Gold Star Families, of the Code of the Township of Vernon

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #25-10.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #25-10.

PUBLIC HEARING/ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

Ordinance #25-09: Bond Ordinance Appropriating \$3,492,500, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,550,000 Bonds or Notes of the Township, for Various Improvements or Purposes Authorized to be Undertaken by the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public hearing on ordinance #25-09.

MOVED: Buccieri
SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to open the floor to the public for public hearing of ordinance #25-09.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the public hearing on ordinance #25-09.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to close the floor for public comment.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to adopt ordinance #25-09.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #25-09.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)

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

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to open the floor to the public.

Seeing no 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.

Motion carries to close the floor to public comments.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Sparta commented regarding the Atlantic City mercantile licenses and asked if the Council would consider this. He asked if there was potential to add a fee to add to room nights at the hotels in Vernon over and above the occupancy tax Vernon receives. Council Member Sparta also asked if short-term rentals could be added to this discussion.

Council Member Sparta asked when the Council can do something about Legends. He would like to discuss this at the next meeting.

Council Member DeBenedetto is in support of the resolution for the gun carry permit fees being lowered.

Council Member Higgins questioned the Civil Service processes.

Council Member Higgins questioned the IT discussion the Council had.

Council Member Buccieri had no comments.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Rizzuto had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:40 pm Council Member Buccieri made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member DeBenedetto.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

Patrick Rizzuto
Council President

Minutes approved: August 11, 2025