

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 12, 2024 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on August 12, 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, Bradley 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.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Dear Council President, last week, I held an online public chat live on Facebook with updates on various town projects. I have received a lot of positive feedback on the progress we've made, and I believe it is crucial to be transparent about our work. I have expressed serious concerns about the political violence in our nation, especially with the attempted assassination of President Trump.

There is a lot of misinformation circulating on platforms like news media and social media platforms, which can incite negative behavior. Unfortunately, this misinformation also affects our local community and doesn't stop with elected officials it extends to targeting municipal employees.

A few weeks ago, we found a large fishing hook attached to one of the pull-down handles protecting our department windows. This hook could have had fentanyl or some other dangerous substance. This is unacceptable; I immediately reported this to the police chief. Unfortunately, due to the lack of internal cameras, we couldn't identify the person responsible.

As a result, I have ordered additional cameras to be installed both inside and outside the building to ensure the safety of our staff. I want to assure you that the safety and well-being of our staff are my top priorities, and we are taking necessary steps to address any security concerns. The employees of Vernon didn't sign up for this. I ask If you have any issues with an employee, I encourage you to contact Tina our Business administrator at Businessadmin@vernontwp.com or myself at arossi@vernontwp.com and we will address them promptly. Do not contact council. It's not their job to field these types of complaints. I also want to emphasize that about 90 percent of the information on social media is not true. I'm in the inside and I see those 3 sides everyone always talks about, let's now focus on the progress we are making,

including the ongoing pavement project. Unfortunately, there has been a delay with completing Margaret Lane due to an overturned truck carrying the asphalt. That road has been rescheduled very soon. Also, I wanted to share that because we have a Shared service agreement with the BOE we were able to add their parking lots to our paving project which has resulted in close to \$100K in taxpayer savings and it allowed us to pave additional roads, because the more you pave the cheaper it is.

Tonight, we will be discussing the purchase of a new mini pumper for the fire department. This new vehicle will be more cost-effective and maneuverable than traditional engines, enabling us to access smaller roads and areas. Although the mini pumper has its limitations, it will significantly benefit our fire department and most importantly our community.

The purchase price is \$356k which I have looked at this fire apparatus myself, and it still has the new car smell to it and only has 2400 miles. This mini pumper also comes fully loaded with just over \$20k in tools. If we purchased this truck today the cost is \$457k and a 3 year wait time. This is a HUGE win for Vernon. Also, just a quick update Regarding the town center project, we have submitted the technical papers to the county engineers for final approval. I'm optimistic that we will receive their endorsement in the next couple of weeks.

Before I go into my other topic I want to Finally, enter Harris Salmon, into the Historical Preservation Commission, as many of you know we have restored the Historical preservation commission which was abolished. We must protect our history not erase it and lastly, I want to acknowledge the generous donation in the amount of \$9,860 from the Historical Society which is the total cost of the town center clock. This donation will be the center piece of Vernon and looking forward to completing this project. I have with me a certificate of appreciation I would like to present to the historical society, so can I have all members of the Historical society please come forward and accept our appreciation?

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 – commented on the ordinances to increase fees and fines. Mr. McClachrie questioned the salary ordinance for the OEM Coordinator.

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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 8, 2024 – Regular Meeting

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the July 8, 2024 2024 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:
AYES: Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto
NAYES:
ABSTAIN: DeBenedetto
ABSENT: Buccieri

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution #24-215: Authorizing the Cancellation of Outstanding Checks over Six Months Old to Municipal Cash Balances

Resolution #24-216: A Resolution Requesting Permission for the Dedication by Rider for Donations to the Police Department Trust Fund

Resolution #24-217: Chapter 159 Resolution Requesting Approval of Revenue and Appropriation Amending the 2024 Budget as a Revenue and Appropriation of \$20,000.00 (Spotted Lanternfly Program 2024-2026 Grant)

Resolution #24-219: Chapter 159 Resolution Requesting Approval of Revenue and Appropriation Amending the 2024 Budget as a Revenue and Appropriation of \$10,000.00 (State Insurance Fund SIF Risk Control Grant)

Resolution #24-222: Authorizing Contracts with Certain Approved State Contract Vendors

Firefighter One for Purchase of Volunteer Fire Department Turnout Gear

Resolution #24-224: Resolution of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Disposition or Salvage of Obsolete Equipment in the Possession of the Township at Auction on Municibid.com

Resolution #24-225: Approving a Charitable Solicitor’s Permit: Vernon Emergency Medical Services Inc.

Resolution #24-226: Authorizing Purchase of Fire Apparatus from the Borough of Harrington Park

Resolution #24-227: Block 530 Lot 123 (Bundy) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #24-228: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 530 Lot 123 (Bundy)

Resolution #24-229: Block 512 Lot 138 (Faller) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #24-230: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 512 Lot 138-Corelogic)

Resolution #24-231: Block 329 Lot 5 (Nunez) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #24-232: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 329 Lot 5 (Nunez)

Resolution #24-233: Authorizing a Date for Municipal Tax Sale

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

MOVED: Higgins
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 #24-215

AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF OUTSTANDING CHECKS OVER SIX MONTHS OLD TO MUNICIPAL CASH BALANCES

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has determined that the following Township checks have been outstanding for a period in excess of six months:

PAYROLL CHECKING ACCOUNT ENDING IN 3654:

16823	11/15/23	Jennifer Baarada	\$272.55
16835	11/15/23	Stephen Fafoutis	\$272.55
16840	11/15/23	Michael J Griffin	\$272.55
16864	11/15/23	Kurt Nelle	\$83.13
16999	12/29/23	Kevin Kiel	\$112.95
TOTAL			\$1,013.73

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the above outstanding checks be restored to the Township cash balances.

RESOLUTION #24-216

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR THE DEDICATION BY RIDER FOR DONATIONS TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TRUST FUND

WHEREAS, permission is required of the Director of the Division of Local Government Services for approval as a dedication by rider of revenues received by a municipality when the revenue is not subject to reasonably accurate estimates in advance; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon Police Department would like to accept funds as donations to be used to offset equipment and community outreach program expenditures; and

WHEREAS, the receipt and expenditure of said funds shall be in accordance with the Local Public Contracts Law, Local Budget Law, Local Fiscal Affairs Law, and applicable to Township Ordinances and procedures, directions from the applicable County prosecutor’s office or Attorney General, as appropriate; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-39 provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government services may approve expenditures of monies by Dedication by Rider.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, hereby requests approval from the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, for the establishment of a dedicated rider account pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-39 for an account to be entitled, “Police Department Donations.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said funds may be only be expended as directed by the Township of Vernon Police Department for Community Outreach programs and purchases of equipment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Clerk will forward two copies of this Resolution to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services for review and approval.

RESOLUTION #24-217

CHAPTER 159 RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION AMENDING THE 2024 BUDGET AS A REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$20,000.00

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 \$20,000.00 Spotted Lanternfly Program 2024-2026 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 \$20,000.00 which is now available as a revenue,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a like sum of \$20,000.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption Spotted Lanternfly Program 2024-2026 Grant.

RESOLUTION #24-219

**CHAPTER 159 RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF
REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION AMENDING THE 2024 BUDGET
AS A REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$10,000.00**

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 \$10,000.00 State Insurance Fund (SIF) Risk Control 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 \$10,000.00 which is now available as a revenue,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a like sum of \$10,000.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption SIF Risk Control Grant.

RESOLUTION #24-222

**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 turnout gear at a cost of \$66,782.10 under New Jersey State Contract17-FLEET-00811/ T0790; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer certifies funding is available in the amount of \$66,782.10 from C-04-24-008 Various Purpose Bond Ordinance.

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.

RESOLUTION #24-224

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON,
COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING
THE DISPOSITION OR SALVAGE OF OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT
IN THE POSSESSION OF THE TOWNSHIP AT AUCTION ON MUNICIBID.COM**

WHEREAS, the Township has requested that the Township Council authorize the disposition of equipment currently in the possession of Vernon Township and also request to salvage the equipment should the asking price and second offer be rejected; and,

WHEREAS, such surplus items may be sold at public auction to the highest bidder in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-36; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council has reviewed a request which describes the items aforesaid to be sold at the auction; and

WHEREAS, the items to be sold are:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| Lot #1 2007 Ford F- 550 4x4 Automatic | VIN# 1FDAF57P07EA01726 |
| Lot #2 2020 Extreme Vac Leaf Vacuum | VIN# 1Z9PL1610LR168115 |
| Lot #3 Surplus Auto Parts (open items - unreturnable) | |
| Lot #4 1999 TOW Master Trailer 20 Ton 8.5 x 24' Air Brakes | VIN# |
| 4KNFZ192XXL160090 | |

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

1. That the Division of Purchasing, or its designee, be and hereby is authorized to sell at auction to the highest bidder, any and all surplus items as described.
2. The sale of the surplus property shall be conducted through Municibid in accordance with the terms and conditions at <https://municibid.com/Home/Terms>: and
3. The sale will be conducted online, and the address of the auction site is www.Municibid.com
4. The sale is being conducted pursuant to Local Finance Notice 2019-15.
5. The surplus property as identified shall be sold in an “as-is” condition without express or implied warranties with the successful bidder required to execute a Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement concerning use of said surplus property.
6. The Township reserves the right to accept or reject any bid submitted. That the Division of Purchasing, or its designee, be and hereby is authorized to sell at auction to the highest bidder, any and all surplus items as described.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-36 that formal public notification will be provided by the publication of a Legal Notice in the official newspaper, the New Jersey Herald, not less than seven (7) or more than fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled auction.

RESOLUTION #24-225

APPROVING A CHARITABLE SOLICITOR’S PERMIT: VERNON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES INC.

WHEREAS, Vernon Emergency Medical Services Inc. has made application for a Charitable Roadside Solicitor’s Permit for the purposes of soliciting funds on September 21 and September 22, 2024, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (alternate weather dates September 28 and 29, 2024); 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 Vernon Emergency Medical Services Inc., Route 94 and Route 515; 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 #24-226

AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF FIRE APPARATUS FROM THE BOROUGH OF HARRINGTON PARK

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon is in need of certain fire apparatus for its operational needs; and

WHEREAS, the Township has identified equipment in a 2021 Ford 550 Pierce mini pumper currently owned by the Borough of Harrington Park, and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law at N.J.S.A.40A:11-36 allows for procurement without bids when “The contracting unit need not advertise for bids when it makes any such sale to the United States, the State of New Jersey, another contracting unit, any body politic to which it contributes tax raised funds, any foreign nation which has diplomatic relations with the United States, or any governmental unit in the United States”; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Township of Vernon to procure a 2021 Ford 550 Pierce Mini Pumper from the Borough of Harrington Park; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer certifies that funding is available in the amount of \$356,000.00 from line items: C-04-24-010 Various Improvement Bond Ordinance in the amount of \$349,011.75 and C-04-22-008 in the amount of \$6,988.25

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, authorizes the Mayor to enter into a contract with the Borough of Harrington Park to procure a 2021 Ford 550 Pierce mini pumper, in the amount of \$356,000.00.

RESOLUTION #24-227

**Block 530 Lot 123 (Bundy)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS on awarded Kirsten Bundy 100% permanent and total disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, as of said date the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2024 in the amount of \$1,727.11

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

RESOLUTION #24-228

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 530 Lot 123 (Bundy))**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS awarded Kirsten Bundy 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 \$1,940.43 to Kirsten Bundy.

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

RESOLUTION #24-229

**(Block 512 Lot 138 (Faller))
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS on
awarded Michael Faller a 100% permanent and total disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, as of said date the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon
authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2024 in the amount of \$1,515.35

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

RESOLUTION #24-230

**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 2024 property tax in the amount of \$2,785.65 to Corelogic.

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

RESOLUTION #24-231

**Block 329 Lot 5 (Nunez)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS on
awarded Axl Nunez 100% permanent and total disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, as of said date the law exempts said property from taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon
authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2024 in the amount of \$2,079.16.

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

RESOLUTION #24-232

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 329 Lot 5 (Nunez))**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Axl Nunez 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 \$2,079.16 to Axl Nunez.

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

RESOLUTION # 24-233

AUTHORIZING A DATE FOR MUNICIPAL TAX SALE

WHEREAS, the governing body of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, desires to collect all taxes, assessments and other municipal charges that are now delinquent; and

WHEREAS, The Tax Collector is directed to sell all municipal delinquencies through December 31, 2023 in a manner prescribed by N.J.S.A. 54:5-19, and as amended by Chapter 99, Public Laws of 1997.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized and directed to sell all municipal liens in accordance with New Jersey law, both as stated above, on Monday, October 28, 2024 via Electronic Tax Sale.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #24-218: Chapter 159 Resolution Requesting Approval of Revenue and Appropriation Amending the 2024 Budget as a Revenue and Appropriation of \$24,613.10 (Opioid Settlement)

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #24-218.

MOVED: Higgins
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to approve resolution #24-218.

RESOLUTION #24-218

**CHAPTER 159 RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF
REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION AMENDING THE 2024 BUDGET
AS A REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$24,613.10**

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 \$24,613.10 Opioid Settlement Funds 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 \$24,613.10 which is now available as a revenue,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a like sum of \$24,613.10 is hereby appropriated under the caption Opioid Settlement Funds Grant.

Resolution #24-220: Resolution Authorizing Fireworks to be Displayed on August 4, 2024
Within the Township of Vernon

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #24-220.

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Buccieri

Motion carries to approve resolution #24-220.

RESOLUTION # 24-220

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FIREWORKS TO BE DISPLAYED ON AUGUST 4, 2024
WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON**

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A.21:3-1et seq. Explosive and Fireworks, provides that a Municipal Governing Body must authorize the display of fireworks within its boundaries as a pre-condition to such display in accordance with the New Jersey Fire Prevention Code; and

WHEREAS, Highland Lakes Country Club and Community Association has submitted an application to Vernon Township to conduct fireworks display on Sunday August 4, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the proposed fireworks display will take place on Lakeside Drive East on the Dam of Highland Lakes on property owned by Highland Lakes Country Club & Community Association; and

WHEREAS, the Association has engaged in a contract with Garden State Fireworks, Inc. Millington NJ, to perform the public fireworks and special effects display and has provided the required certificate of liability insurance.

WHEREAS, the Fire Marshal and Applicant have acknowledged the late submission of the application and respectfully requests Township Council authorize approval of the Fireworks resolution after the event.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, hereby authorizes the fireworks display with special effects, performed by Garden State Fireworks, Inc. and sponsored by the Highland Lakes Country Club and Community Association on August 4, 2024 upon satisfaction of all statutory and departmental requirements.

Resolution #24-221: Chapter 159 Resolution Requesting Approval of Revenue and Appropriation Amending the 2024 Budget as a Revenue and Appropriation of \$75,000.00 (Local Recreation Improvement Grant)

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #24-221.

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Buccieri

Motion carries to approve resolution #24-221.

RESOLUTION #24-221

**CHAPTER 159 RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF
REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION AMENDING THE 2024 BUDGET
AS A REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$75,000.00**

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 \$75,000.00 2024 Local Recreational Improvement 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 \$75,000.00 which is now available as a revenue,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a like sum of \$75,000.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption 2024 Local Recreational Improvement Grant. and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Vernon hereby authorizes the Mayor and Township Clerk to sign and execute any agreements or documents necessary in connection with the 2024 Local Recreational Improvement Grant.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance #24-17: An Ordinance of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex and State of New Jersey Amending Certain Portions of Chapter 518 Entitled “Towing” of the Township Code

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-17.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-17.

Ordinance #24-18: An Ordinance of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex and State of New Jersey Amending Certain Portions of Chapter 250 Entitled “Fees and Escrows” and Chapter 330 Entitled “Fees” of the Township Code

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #24-18.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #24-18.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance #24-14: Ordinance Addressing Construction Records Clearance

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public hearing on ordinance #24-14.

MOVED: Jessica
SECOND: Higgins

All members were in favor.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the public hearing on ordinance #24-14.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to adopt ordinance #24-14.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #24-14.

ORDINANCE #24-14

ORDINANCE ADDRESSING CONSTRUCTION RECORDS CLEARANCE

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon (Township) seeks to require the issuance of a Construction Records Clearance prior to the sale of any residential structure within the Township, with certain limited exceptions; and

WHEREAS, the Township seeks to establish application requirements, fees, and penalties relating to the Construction Records Clearance.

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

SECTION 1. Part II, titled “General Legislation,” Chapter 205, titled “Construction Codes, Uniform” is hereby amended and supplemented as follows:

§ 205-8 Construction Records Clearance.

a. CRC Required. No building or structure shall be occupied in whole or in part prior to the issuance of a certificate of construction records clearance (CRC). A CRC shall be required prior to the sale of any residential structure within the Township.

b. Exceptions. The following transactions are exempt from obtaining a CRC as long as no change in physical occupancy occurs:

1. Transfer of title to correct a previously recorded deed.
2. Title eligible to be recorded as an ancient deed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 46:16-7.
3. Transfer of title between husband and wife, whether or not relating to divorce, or between former spouses if the transfer is incident to an order or judgment from any court of competent jurisdiction.
4. Transfer of title relating to new construction for which a certificate of occupancy is required.
5. Transfer of title by or to an executor, administrator or court order which affects a distribution of a descendant's estate in accordance with the provisions of the descendant's will or the applicable laws governing intestacy.
6. Transfer of title due to refinancing, home equity loans, and second mortgages.
7. Transfer of title by or to a receiver, trustee in bankruptcy or liquidation, or assignee for the benefit of creditors.
8. Residential rentals.

c. Responsibility. No owner shall permit the sale of a residential premises covered under this section unless the requisite CRC has been issued. No purchaser shall occupy any premises covered under this section until the requisite CRC has been issued. Owners and purchasers shall be jointly and separately responsible for failure to obtain the requisite CRC required hereunder. The owner or his authorized agent shall submit a written application and payment of fees at least 10 business days prior to the change of ownership on the form provided by the Township.

d. Preoccupancy records inspection. Prior to the issuance of any such certificate for any transaction, the enforcing agency shall conduct a records inspection to ensure that there are no open construction permits or zoning permits on the subject premises. Should there be open permits on the subject premises, all final inspections and prior approvals shall be obtained, and appropriate Uniform Construction Code certificates or zoning certificates shall be issued prior to the issuance of the CRC.

e. Fees. The applicant shall submit the following fees with the CRC application.

1. Requests more than 10 calendar days from change of occupancy or closing: \$40.
2. Requests within 10 calendar days from change of occupancy or closing: \$75.
3. Requests within 4 calendar days from change of occupancy or closing: \$125.

f. Violations and Penalties.

1. Any person, firm, or corporation violating any provisions of this section shall, upon conviction, shall be subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000.00, imprisonment for a period not exceeding 90 days, and/or a period of community service not exceeding 90 days.
2. The issuance of a CRC shall not preclude the imposition of penalties.

SECTION 2. Severability.

The provisions of this Ordinance shall be severable. In the event that any portion of this Ordinance is found to be invalid for any reason by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall be limited in its effect only to the portion of the Ordinance actually adjudged invalid and shall not be deemed to affect the operation of any other portion thereof, which shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 3. Repealer.

All ordinances and resolutions, and parts of ordinances and resolutions which are inconsistent with provisions of this ordinance shall be, and are hereby, repealed to the extent of any such inconsistency.

SECTION 4. Effective Date.

This ordinance shall take effect upon final adoption and publication in accordance with law.

Ordinance #24-15: Ordinance Amending the Salaries for Certain Officers and Employees of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public hearing on ordinance #24-15.

MOVED: Higgins
SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

Thomas McClachrie – commented on this ordinance.

Seeing no other members of the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the public hearing on ordinance #24-15.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to adopt ordinance #24-15.

MOVED: Higgins
SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #24-15.

ORDINANCE #24-15

**ORDINANCE AMENDING 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, 2024 and shall be the same until a new salary ordinance is adopted by the governing body.

PART TIME:	Minimum	Maximum
OEM Coordinator	2,500	10,000

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, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Higgins

All members were in favor.

Howard Burrell – expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Gerard Conforti – expressed concern with the smart meters installed by JCP&L.

Peg Distasi – expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Thomas McClachrie – questioned the resolution for a charitable solicitor’s license. Mr. McClachrie expressed concern with the assessment program.

George Nikanorov – expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Rich Carson - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Michelle Shapper – expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Steve Dunlop - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track. Mr. Dunlop commented on the processes of fulfilling OPRA requests.

Sally Rinker - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Joe Hernandez - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

John Hanson - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Sonia Hanson - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Cindy Weber - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Kristi LoRe - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Christa Gerry - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Shannon Geiger - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

Unknown person - expressed concern with the removal of the memorial at the pump track.

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: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Buccieri

Motion carries to close the floor to the public.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Higgins feels that a decision will not be reached tonight in reference to the memorial. Council Member Higgins explained that there are other memorial signs in Vernon that have been there for years. He feels that politics was involved with the removal of Jason Rinker’s memorial. Council Member Higgins said the Council needs to figure out, why this happened and what was the correct procedure to remove the memorial and why did the Mayor get involved. We will have to get legal representation for this.

Council Member DeBenedetto commented that a lot of people talk about the tone in the town. She feels that a lot of people who speak about this create the tone in the town and some self-reflection is needed. Council Member DeBenedetto would like to reinstate a wildlife education course that used to be in Vernon.

Council Member Sparta thanked everyone for coming to the meeting tonight and voicing their opinions and concerns. There is a lot to digest and we will have to rely on legal counsel.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Rizzuto said tonight was a difficult night because we have heard reflections and comments from two different sides. What becomes difficult is the separation of law from emotion. There were many comments made concerning the law. Council President Rizzuto spoke about naming the pump track park and commented that administration is responsible for the parks care. The actual naming of the park is the responsibility of the legislature. Council President Rizzuto does not believe that a park should be named after an individual but should be named after an organization. At the time the park was named, Mayor Burrell and the Council compromised on naming the pump park and allowing the Jason Rinker memorials. Council President Rizzuto feels that the decision will require litigation in order to put this behind us.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:07 pm Council Member Higgins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Buccieri.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

Patrick Rizzuto
Council President

Minutes approved: September 9, 2024