

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 16, 2025 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on October 16, 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, William Higgins, Bradley Sparta and Council President Patrick Rizzuto. Also present were Township Attorney Peter King and Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio.

Councilmember DeBenedetto was not present.

Council President Rizzuto announced that he will be adding to the agenda resolution #25-287: Resolution Authorizing the Township of Vernon to Purse the Acquisition of Certain Property and, If the Township is Unable to Acquire Such Property, Thereafter Referring Such Property to the Township Planning Board to Undertake an Investigation to Determine Whether All or a Portion of Such Property Constitutes a Condemnation Area In Need of Redevelopment

REVIEW OF BILLS LIST

The Council reviewed the bills list.

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

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

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to open the meeting to the public.

Steve Dunlop – asked if resolution #25-287 is available to the public. Mr. Dunlop read a facebook post regarding the sale of Legends.

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: Sparta

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to close the meeting to the public.

REVIEW OF BILLS LIST

The Council reviewed the bills list.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 8, 2025 – Executive Session

President Rizzuto asked for a motion approve the September 8, 2025 executive session minutes.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to approve the September 8, 2025 executive session minutes.

September 8, 2025 – Regular Meeting

President Rizzuto asked for a motion approve the September 8, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to approve the September 8, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

September 22, 2025 – Executive Session

President Rizzuto asked for a motion approve the September 22, 2025 executive session minutes.

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to approve the September 22, 2025 executive session minutes.

September 22, 2025 – Regular Meeting

President Rizzuto asked for a motion approve the September 22, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to approve the September 22, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution #25-268: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 58 Lot 1)

Resolution #25-269: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 58 Lot 1)

Resolution #25-270: (Block 58 Lot 1) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-271: (Block 58 Lot 1) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-272: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 526 Lot 104)

Resolution #25-273: (Block 526 Lot 104) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-274: (Block 526 Lot 104) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-275: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 527 Lot 196)

Resolution #25-276: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 527 Lot 196)

Resolution #25-277: (Block 527 Lot 196) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-278: (Block 527 Lot 196) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-279: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran (Block 599 Lot 40)

Resolution #25-280: (Block 599 Lot 40) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-281: (Block 599 Lot 40) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-282: (Block 599 Lot 40) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-283: A Resolution Appointing a Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner to the North Jersey Municipal Employee Benefits Fund

Resolution #25-284: Resolution Authorizing Leasing of Certain Vehicles for the Department of Police Through Soucewell National Cooperative #060618-EFM Through Enterprise Fleet Management Services Inc. (Quote No. 9186641)

Resolution #25-285: Resolution Rejecting All Bids for Bid #7-2025 – Proposed Dodgecagon Gazebo at Maple Grange Park Township of Vernon

Resolution #25-286: Chapter 159 Resolution Requesting Approval of Revenue and Appropriation Amending the 2025 Budget as a Revenue and Appropriation of \$7472.00

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

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to approve the consent agenda.

RESOLUTION #25-268

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 58 Lot 1)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Arnold Kostomaj 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 \$590.42 to Arnold Kostomaj.

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

RESOLUTION #25-269

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 58 Lot 1)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Arnold Kostomaj 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 2025 property tax in the amount of \$3,584.10 to Arnold Kostomaj.

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

RESOLUTION #25-270

(Block 58 Lot 1)

CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Arnold Kostomaj 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 2025 in the amount of \$4,129.52.

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

RESOLUTION #25-271

(Block 58 Lot 1)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Arnold Kostomaj 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 2026 in the amount of \$3,856.81.

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

RESOLUTION #25-272

REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 526 Lot 104)

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Carol Stelmach 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 2025 property tax in the amount of \$3082.60 to Carol Stelmach.

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

RESOLUTION #25-273

(Block 526 Lot 104)

CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Carol Stelmach 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 2025 in the amount of \$1,614.72.

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

RESOLUTION #25-274

(Block 526 Lot 104)

CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Carol Stelmach 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 2026 in the amount of \$2,968.77.

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

RESOLUTION #25-275

REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN

(Block 527 Lot 196)

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Scott Speno 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 \$1,058.83 to Scott Speno.

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

RESOLUTION #25-276

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 527 Lot 196)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Scott Speno 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 2025 property tax in the amount of \$3,329.97 to Scott Speno.

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

RESOLUTION #25-277

(Block 527 Lot 196)

CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Scott Speno 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 hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2025 in the amount of \$1,301.41.

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

RESOLUTION #25-278

(Block 527 Lot 196)

CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Scott Speno 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 hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2026 in the amount of \$2,315.69.

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

RESOLUTION #25-279

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
(Block 599 Lot 40)**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded George Triantafillos 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 2025 property tax in the amount of \$4,077.73 to George Triantafillos.

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

RESOLUTION #25-280

**(Block 599 Lot 40)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded George Triantafillos 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 hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes for 2026 in the amount of \$3,574.96.

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

RESOLUTION #25-281

**(Block 599 Lot 40)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded George Triantafillos 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 2025 in the amount of \$1,978.20.

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

RESOLUTION #25-282

**(Block 599 Lot 40)
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded George Triantafillos 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 2026 in the amount of \$3,574.96.

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

RESOLUTION #25-283

**A RESOLUTION APPOINTING A
FUND COMMISSIONER AND ALTERNATE FUND COMMISSIONER
TO THE
NORTH JERSEY MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FUND**

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon (hereinafter, the Township) is a member of the North Jersey Municipal Employee Benefits Fund (hereinafter, the NJHIF) for medical and prescription benefits, as part of the Employee Benefits Program effective September 1, 2023; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the by-laws and requirements of membership promulgated by the NJHIF, the Township must appoint a Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner to represent the Township in all pertinent Fund affairs.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that Tina Kraus, Business Administrator is hereby affirmed as Fund Commissioner for Fund Year 2025 and/or until a successor has been qualified and appointed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Detective Keith Curry is hereby appointed to serve as the Alternate Fund Commissioner for Fund Year 2025 and/or until a successor has been qualified and appointed, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the Fund through the Township's Health Benefits Consultant.

RESOLUTION #25-284

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LEASING OF CERTAIN VEHICLES FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE THROUGH SOURCEWELL**

**NATIONAL COOPERATIVE #060618-EFM THROUGH ENTERPRISE
FLEET MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC.**

(Quote No. 9186641)

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

WHEREAS, the governing body of Vernon Township approved in Resolution 19-164 authorizing leasing of certain vehicles through Sourcewell National Cooperative #060618-EFM through Enterprise Fleet Management Services, Inc., and this is an extension of that resolution; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Public Contract Law P.L. 2011, C.139 (the "Law" or "Chapter 139" and N.J.S.A.52:34-6.2 the regulations promulgated there under in Local Finance Notice LFN 2012-10, the following purchase without competitive bids from vendor with a National Cooperative Contract is hereby approved for municipalities, and;

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has the need to procure certain vehicles through lease program for Township services in accord with the Local Publics Contract Law N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et. Seq., and;

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has previously acted in accord with New Jersey public procurement statutes and regulations as promulgated by formally joining a recognized and compliant national cooperative, being the Sourcewell National Cooperative, and;

WHEREAS, the regulations as set forth within Local Finance Notice LFN 2012-10 have been fully complied with, and;

WHEREAS, the equipment and corresponding Sourcewell National Cooperative contract is #060618-EFM for Enterprise Fleet Management Services Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the cost savings determination as required under LFN 2012-10 is the cost of contract as there is currently no cooperative lease program in effect under the New Jersey Division of Purchase and Property; and

WHEREAS, the quoted cost under the Sourcewell National contract is \$50,979.84 (Quote No. 9186641); and

WHEREAS, that the governing body of Vernon Township pursuant to NJAC 5:30-5.5(b) (the certification of available funds), states that the Chief Finance Officer shall either certify the full maximum amount against the budget at the time the contract is awarded, or no contract amount shall be chargeable or certified until such time as the goods or services are ordered or otherwise called for prior to placing the order, and a certification of availability of funds is made by the Chief Finance Officer; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Business Administrator is hereby directed to effectuate the contract with Enterprise Fleet Management Services Inc. under Sourcewell contract #060618-EFM in accord with the provisions of the tenets as established within 40A:11-1 et. Seq.,

RESOLUTION #25-285

**RESOLUTION REJECTING ALL BIDS FOR
BID #7-2025 – PROPOSED DODECAGON GAZEBO AT MAPLE GRANGE PARK
TOWNSHIP OF VERNON**

WHEREAS the Township of Vernon received bids for Bid #7-2025 - Proposed Dodecagon Gazebo at Maple Grange Park on October 9, 2025, at 1100 A.M.; and

WHEREAS the Township received seven (7) bids to wit:

VENDOR	Bash Builders	Cynna Enterprises	Walkill Group	A-Tech Concrete	ATG Restoration Specialists, Inc.	In-Line Architectural Glass & Metal Inc	Moynihan Companies
BASE BID	\$184,348.00	\$174,000.00	\$153,000.00	\$295,000.00	\$178,000.00	\$98,700.00	\$113,713.00

; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law at N.J.S.A.40A:11-13.2(a). allows for rejection of bids where the lowest bid substantially exceeds the cost estimates for the goods or services.

WHEREAS, all bids were substantially in excess of cost estimates.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that all the bids for Bid #7-2025 - Proposed Dodecagon Gazebo at Maple Grange Park, are hereby rejected in accord with N.J.S.A.40A:11-13.2(a)

RESOLUTION #25-286

**CHAPTER 159 RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF
REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION AMENDING THE 2025 BUDGET
AS A REVENUE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$7,472.00**

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 \$7,472.00 Municipal Alliance Grant and wishes to amend its 2025 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 2025 in the sum of \$7,472.00 which is now available as a revenue,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a like sum of \$7,472.00 is hereby appropriated under the caption Municipal Alliance Grant.

RESOLUTION

Resolution #25-287: Resolution Authorizing the Township of Vernon to Pursue the Acquisition of Certain Property and, If the Township is Unable to Acquire Such Property, Thereafter Referring Such Property to the Township Planning Board to Undertake an Investigation to Determine Whether All or a Portion of Such Property Constitutes a Condemnation Area In Need of Redevelopment

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #25-287.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to approve resolution #25-287.

RESOLUTION #25-287

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON TO PURSUE THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY AND, IF THE TOWNSHIP IS UNABLE TO ACQUIRE SUCH PROPERTY, THEREAFTER REFERRING SUCH PROPERTY TO THE TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD TO UNDERTAKE AN

INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER ALL OR A PORTION OF SUCH PROPERTY CONSTITUTES A CONDEMNATION AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon (the “**Township**”) is a political subdivision of the State of New Jersey (the “**State**”), located in the County of Sussex (the “**County**”); and

WHEREAS, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.*, as amended and supplemented (the “**Redevelopment Law**”), provides a process for municipalities to participate in the redevelopment and improvement of an “area in need of redevelopment”; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the criteria set forth in the Redevelopment Law, the Township identified and designated various property within the McAfee Village commercial resort area, including the properties [then-]identified as Block 231.01, Lot 1¹, commonly known as the Legends Resort, as set forth on the official tax maps of the Township as an “area in need of redevelopment” (together, the “**Redevelopment Area**”) and adopted a redevelopment plan for the Redevelopment Area entitled, “McAfee Village Commercial Resort Redevelopment Plan” (as the same may be amended and supplemented from time to time, the “**Redevelopment Plan**”); and

WHEREAS, such designation of the Redevelopment Area as an “area in need of redevelopment” occurred prior to the enactment of P.L. 2013, c.159, which provides for a specific legislative process to designate property as a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area” or “Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area”; and

WHEREAS, the Township has determined to act as the “redevelopment entity” for the Redevelopment Area; and

WHEREAS, in order to effectuate the Redevelopment Plan, the Township wishes to purchase the Redevelopment Area; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6*, in the event the Township is unable to acquire the Redevelopment Area, which is necessary to effectuate the Redevelopment Plan, the Township wishes to initiate and follow the process set forth in *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6* to determine whether the Redevelopment Area is a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area”; and

WHEREAS, the Township wishes to authorize the Mayor and Business Administrator (and any written designees thereof) (each an “**Authorized Officer**”) to negotiate in good faith for the acquisition of the Redevelopment Area; and

WHEREAS, in the event such Authorized Officers cannot come to agreement with the owner(s) of the Redevelopment Area on the terms of such acquisition to the reasonable satisfaction of such Authorized Officers, as confirmed by the Township Council, then the Township hereby wishes to authorize and direct the Township Planning Board (the “**Planning Board**”) to conduct a preliminary investigation of the Redevelopment Area, along with all streets and rights of way appurtenant thereto, and

¹ Subject to confirmation.

to recommend to the Township Council whether the Township Council should designate all or a portion of the Redevelopment Area as an “area in need of redevelopment”, which redevelopment area determination requested hereunder would authorize the Township and the Township Council to use all those powers provided by the Redevelopment Law for use in a redevelopment area, **including** the power of eminent domain, and any redevelopment area so designated shall be referred to as a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area,” pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6*.

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

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are incorporated herein as if set forth in full.

Section 2. The Authorized Officers are each hereby authorized and directed, together with the Township’s general counsel, redevelopment counsel and other professionals, to negotiate in good faith for the acquisition of the Redevelopment Area. The Authorized Officers shall undertake such negotiations for as long as they reasonably believe such negotiations are progressing positively towards the acquisition of the Redevelopment Area. Upon such Authorized Officers, in their reasonable judgement, determining that (a) the Township will be unable to acquire the Redevelopment Area or (b) the Township will be able to acquire the Redevelopment Area on terms and conditions for consideration by the Township Council, then such Authorized Officers shall report same to the Township Council, and such Authorized Officers shall provide written notice to the Planning Board as set forth in Section 3 hereof.

Section 3. In the event the Planning Board receives written notice from the Authorized Officers that the Township is unable to acquire the Redevelopment Area, then the Planning Board is authorized and directed to conduct an investigation, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6*, to determine whether all or a portion of the Redevelopment Area satisfies the criteria set forth in *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5*, and to make a recommendation to the Township Council as to whether said Redevelopment Area should be designated as a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area.”

Section 4. As part of its investigation, the Planning Board shall prepare a map showing the boundaries of the Redevelopment Area and the location of the parcels of property contained therein, and appended thereto shall be a statement setting forth the basis for the investigation.

Section 5. The Planning Board shall conduct a public hearing in accordance with the Redevelopment Law, after giving due notice of the proposed boundaries of the Redevelopment Area and the date of the hearing to any persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the Redevelopment Area shall be an “area in need of redevelopment.” The notice of the hearing shall specifically state that the redevelopment area determination authorizes the Township and the Township Council to exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire any property in the delineated area, for the Redevelopment Area is being investigated as a Condemnation Redevelopment Area.

Section 6. At the public hearing, the Planning Board shall hear from all persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the Redevelopment Area is an “area in need of redevelopment.” All objections to a determination that the Redevelopment Area is an area in need of redevelopment and evidence in support of those objections shall be received and considered by the Planning Board and shall be made part of the public record.

Section 7. After conducting its investigation, preparing a map of the v, and conducting a public hearing at which all objections to the proposed designation are received and considered, the Planning Board shall make a recommendation to the Township Council as to whether the Township Council should designate all or a portion of the Redevelopment Area as an “area in need of redevelopment” and, more specifically, a Condemnation Redevelopment Area.

Section 8. The Township’s redevelopment planner, J Caldwell & Associates, LLC, Newton, New Jersey, is hereby authorized and directed to assist in the preliminary investigation of the Redevelopment Area and to prepare any reports, maps or other documentation and make any presentations to the Planning Board and the Township Council necessary to effectuate the purposes of this resolution.

Section 9. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

Ordinance #25-16: An Ordinance Amending the Vernon Township Administrative Code Chapter 250, Fees and Escrows, Section 250-13 Department of Public Works

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to introduce ordinance #25-16.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to introduce ordinance #25-16.

PUBLIC HEARING/ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance #25-14: An Ordinance to Establish a New Chapter in the Code of Vernon Township, Part 1 Administrative Legislation Chapter 2 Entitled “Restricted Areas to Safeguard the Public and Confidential or Exempt Records from Disclosure”

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public hearing on ordinance #25-14.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Higgins

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to open the floor to the public for public hearing of ordinance #25-14.

Seeing no members of the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the public hearing on ordinance #25-14.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to close the floor for public comment.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to adopt ordinance #25-14.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #25-14.

ORDINANCE #25-14

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CHAPTER IN THE CODE OF VERNON TOWNSHIP, PART I ADMINISTRATIVE LEGISLATION CHAPTER 2 ENTITLED, "RESTRICTED AREAS TO SAFEGUARD THE PUBLIC AND CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT RECORDS FROM DISCLOSURE"

WHEREAS, Vernon Township recognizes the importance of the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 6, of the New Jersey Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township acknowledges that as a matter of public policy, the rights afforded by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 6, of the New Jersey Constitution are not unlimited; and

WHEREAS, the rights afforded by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 6, of the New Jersey Constitution are subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Township officials and employees have a responsibility to maintain safety and safeguard public records that consist of confidential information; and

WHEREAS, to adequately comply with the New Jersey Open Public Records Act, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, and to comply with the statutorily defined responsibilities, the maintenance and custody of specific records are required; and

WHEREAS, municipal officials assigned this responsibility include, but are not limited to the Municipal Clerk, Police Chief, Chief Financial Officer, Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, Municipal Court Administrator, Municipal Prosecutor, Public Defender, Municipal Court Judge, Construction Official, Superintendent of Public Works, Fire Official, Board of Health Secretary/Registrar, DPW Director, Township Administrator, Fire Chief, Recreation Director, Senior Center Director and Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility for public safety and the maintenance and safeguarding of the public and records, reports, documents and information in municipal offices may not be available for immediate public view since they may contain personal information, phone numbers, social security numbers, dates of birth and other confidential information; and

WHEREAS, securing these records maintains the integrity of this information and when an Open Public Records Act request is received, it is determined that a requestor is entitled to the records, the records can be released individually and redacted as required by law; and

WHEREAS, it is not expected that municipal employees will physically intervene to protect a record or resident, and by creating secure areas with clear signage will help deter people from risk to their person or collecting records which they are not entitled to receive without following the process required by the Open Public Records Act.

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

SECTION 1. Part I, Administrative Legislation, of the Revised Ordinances of Vernon Township is hereby amended and supplemented by the addition of the following:

Chapter 2. Restricted Areas to Safeguard the Public and Confidential or Exempt Records from Disclosure (§2-1 - §2-3)

§2-1 Restricted Areas.

For the exception of public reception spaces: (1) the Municipal and Township Police Department office areas and police operational areas in Vernon Township Municipal Hall, 21 Church St., Vernon New Jersey; (2) the Department of Public Works building and garage area, 21 Church St., Vernon New Jersey; (3) Fire Department offices and operational areas at, 535 Route 515, Vernon New Jersey, 813 Canistear Road, Vernon New Jersey, Highland Lakes, 88 Route 94, Vernon New Jersey, McAfee, and 13 Lake Wallkill Road, Sussex New Jersey; (4) the Senior Center offices, 21 Church St., Vernon New Jersey; have been secured and such areas and offices are not open to the public for the purpose of protecting documents, digital data and other

written, copied or printed materials that are not subject to the Open Public Records Act, which may include, but are not limited to, personally identifiable information that is protected by the Statutes of the State of New Jersey and the Federal laws of the United States.

§2-2 Signage.

Vernon Township shall be required to post signs outside of offices or operational areas which read the following, but not limited, to the following wording: “Restricted Area”, “Authorized Employees Only”, “Recording or Photography is Strictly Prohibited”, and “Violators are Subject to Criminal Prosecution”. Any variation of the above language shall all include, “Violators are Subject to Criminal Prosecution”.

§2-3 Violations.

Persons that trespass at these posted, protected offices and areas may be subject to prosecution under N.J.S.A. 2C-18-3.

SECTION 2. All Ordinances of Vernon Township which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed as to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION 3. If any section, subsection, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such a decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 4. This Ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

Ordinance #25-15: 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 #25-15.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #25-15.

Motion carries to open the floor to the public for public hearing of ordinance #25-15.

Seeing no members of the public wishing to come forward, President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the public hearing on ordinance #25-15.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #25-15.

Motion carries to close the floor for public comment.

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to adopt ordinance #25-15.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Sparta

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto

Motion carries to adopt ordinance #25-15.

ORDINANCE #25-15

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 and shall be the same until a new salary ordinance is adopted by the governing body.

FULL TIME:	Minimum	Maximum
General Administration: Business Administrator	100,000	175,000
Finance and Tax: Chief Financial Officer	100,000	180,000

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.

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

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to open the meeting to the public.

Steve Dunlop – feels that all of the Township vehicles should be clearly marked as town vehicles. Mr. Dunlop commented on the salary ordinance

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: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: DeBenedetto,

Motion carries to close the meeting to the public.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Higgins explained that he wrote an endorsement in the Advertiser Newspaper for Pat Rizzuti, Natalie Buccieri and Sandra Ooms as well as some of the County petitioners. Council Member Higgins attended a meeting regarding IT and cyber security. He will share more about this in the future.

Council Member Higgins hopes that the CFO position is being advertised. He feels that we may have to use a headhunter.

Council Member Sparta had no comments.

Council Member Buccieri had no comments.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Rizzuto had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:30 pm Council Member Higgins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Sparta.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

Patrick Rizzuto
Council President

Minutes approved: November 10, 2025