

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 20, 2022 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on December 20, 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 special meeting has been provided to the public and the press on December 9, 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, Brian Lynch, Joseph Tadrack and Council President Patrick Rizzuto. Also present were Mayor Howard Burrell, Co- Administrators Bright and Young, Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio and Township Attorney Josh Zielinski.

Council Member Sparta was not present.

Council President Rizzuto asked for a moment of silence for Township employee Robert Westenberger who passed a way on December 6, 2022.

Council President Rizzuto commented that he feels that the additional Business Administrator's responsibilities between the Chief of Police and the CFO has been segmented and seems to be working quite well. Council President Rizzuto thanked them both for taking responsibility and doing a great job.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Resolution #22-303** – Resolution to Enter into Executive Session

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to enter in executive session.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Lynch

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Lynch, Tadrack, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Sparta

Motion carries to enter into executive session.

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to return to the regular meeting.

MOVED: Lynch

SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Lynch, Tadrack, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Sparta

Motion carries to return to the regular meeting.

**MAYORS COMMENTS**

I have placed Resolution # 22-304 on tonight's meeting agenda with the request that it be favorably considered by the Council.

This resolution asks the Council to approve a new partnership agreement between the Township and our Police Athletic League (PAL) for the conduct of a host of programs and activities that the municipality offers our residents of all ages. The municipality's current multi-year partnership agreement with the PAL expires at the end of this year, and this newly negotiated partnership agreement will carry us through 2026. This partnership agreement was put together through a host of meetings and discussions involving PAL Director, Vernon Police Lt. Jason Haw; PAL Assistant Director, Amy Hackett; Vernon Director of Recreation & Community Affairs, Mishelle Downtain; and me. The community programs and activities listed in this agreement are the ones that the PAL agrees to assume full responsibility for taking the lead in planning, organizing, developing, coordinating, implementing and controlling. However, because of the teamwork relationship between the PAL, Director Downtain, and the volunteers on the Board of Recreation, the PAL will be actively involved in many of the other community programs and activities that we offer our residents.

The 45K\$ annual compensation that this agreement proposes that the town pays the PAL, for the services and support that they will provide our town, is the same amount paid the PAL under the agreement that expires at the end of this year. The municipality has had some type of a service agreement with the PAL since at least 2016. We have had this type of agreement because it has been very beneficial to our town from a financial and a quality and quantity of municipal services standpoint. From what I have learned from attending meetings and seminars at the League of Municipalities Conventions, and from talking to mayors of other municipalities in Sussex County, as well as mayors in other parts of our state, Vernon is somewhat unusual and unique from the standpoint of our heavy reliance on a combination of volunteers and our PAL organization to provide a very large range of municipal recreation and other quality of life services to our town's residents.

For example, we rely heavily on a combination of volunteers and our PAL organization to provide municipal programs and activities such as:

- A "Safety Town" program for those entering kindergarten;
- Our Annual K through 6th Grade Fishing Derbys;
- Our Arts in the Park Series for those ages 5 and under;
- Our Sidewalk Art Festivals;
- Our Annual Easter Egg Hunts;
- Our Nature Walks with the Mayor series for our young ones;
- Several other programs for early age children, including, but not limited to, introduction to Sports such as Basketball, Lacrosse and Wrestling;
- Our Annual 8-weeks "Summer Fun Programs";
- Our "Pick-up Programs" for Soccer, Lacrosse, Volleyball and Basketball;
- Our Senior Citizen Exercise Programs;
- Our 5K Training Programs;
- Our Annual 5K Races;
- Our Annual Vernon Day Celebrations;
- Our Annual Halloween Events – Currently the Trick of Trail events held at Maple Grange Park;
- Our Summer and Fall Movie Nights;
- Our Yoga Programs;

- Our Archery Programs;
- Our Annual Municipal Holiday Tree Lightings;
- Etc.

The value and importance to our residents of these, plus a host of other community programs and activities not listed here, is evidenced by the large and growing number of residents who participate in, attend and express their enjoyment and appreciation of these community programs and activities. The financial benefit of providing these community programs and activities through a combination of volunteers and our PAL organization can be measured in the savings of municipal tax dollars, when compared to what other towns spend on their community programs and activities. And, many of the more costly community programs and activities that are offered by some towns, don't even come close to matching the quantity or quality of the community programs and activities that are offered by Vernon, through the combination of our many volunteers and our PAL organization. For example, the neighboring town of West Milford is similar to Vernon in the number of residents and in several other pertinent ways; however, a review of their budget reveals that for 2022, they budgeted to pay 171% more in salaries, and 200% more in operating costs as did Vernon to provide the same/similar types of community programs and activities. Vernon's cost savings are due directly to the strong support that our town gets from our PAL organization, and the outstanding support that our town gets from a host of volunteers. We want to continue to provide our residents the type of quality-of-life enhancement programs and activities that make Vernon a good town in which to live and raise a family; and, we want to continue to do this in the most cost effective and efficient manner. This new partnership agreement with the PAL will ensure that we can do this through the year 2026.

As we come to the close of the year 2022, I take one more opportunity to highlight the fact that this year marks the 230th Anniversary of our town's establishment as a municipality. In honor of this anniversary, our Director of Communications & Community Affairs, Mishelle Downtain, and our very active Board of Recreation, collaborated with our High School's Arts & Design Program to have students in this program to design and create a piece of artwork celebrating Vernon's 230th Anniversary. The winning piece of artwork is the creative work of Ms. KATALYN THIENEL, a Vernon Township High School senior. KATALYN is an active participant in the High School Theatre Program, and is passionate about creating art, both on paper and on the computer. KATALYN plans to attend Kutztown University where she will major in Computer Graphics, and minor in Marketing. We took KATALYN's winning design and turned it into a flag that will be hung in an appropriate place in the Municipality Center. I invited KATALYN and her parents, Mr. Jay and Ms. Michelle Thienel, to be here with us tonight, so that the Mayor and Council can formally thank her for this gift to the township. Thank you, KATALYN. As a result of your creative work, you will forever be a part of the history of our township!

**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

All members were in favor.

Peg Distasi – Vernon Township, thanked Katalyn for her hard work. Ms. Distasi asked if action could be taken on resolution #22-304 even though it was not on the agenda.

Jessi Paladini – Vernon Township, asked if resolution #22-304 was not on the agenda on the website.

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: Lynch  
 SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

**MINUTES**

November 28, 2022 – Executive Session

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the November 28, 2022 executive session minutes.

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:  
AYES: Buccieri, Lynch, Tadrick, Rizzuto  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT: Sparta

Motion carries to approve the November 28, 2022 executive session minutes.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Resolution #22-296** – Refund Overpayment (Block 576 Lot 86-Amrock)

**Resolution #22-297** – Refund Overpayment (Block 86 Lot 5-Goodman Dean Inc.)

**Resolution #22-298** – Authorizing Change Order #1 of Contract for Proposed Improvements of Milling & Paving to Various Streets within Vernon Township with Tilcon New York, Inc.

**Resolution #22-299** – Authorizing Change Order #1 of Contract for Proposed Improvements of Milling & Paving on Old Coach Road & Pleasant Valley Drive with Tilcon New York, Inc.

**Resolution #22-300** – Transfer Resolution – Balance Transfers

**Resolution #22-301** – Temporary Budget – Debt Service

**Resolution #22-304** – Resolution Authorizing Agreement with the Vernon Police Athletic League to Administer and Run Recreation Programs

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolutions #22-296, #22-297, #22-298, #22-299 #22-300, #22-301, #22-304

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

A roll call vote was taken:  
AYES: Buccieri, Lynch, Tadrick, Rizzuto  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT: Sparta

Motion carries to approve resolutions #22-296, #22-297, #22-298, #22-299 #22-300, #22-301, #22-304

**RESOLUTION #22-296  
REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 576 Lot 86-AMROCK)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to AMROCK in the amount of \$1516.25 representing refund for overpayment of 1st qtr. 2018 property taxes for Block 576 Lot 86 also known as [REDACTED]

| OWNER  | BLOCK | LOT           | REFUND AMOUNT    |
|--------|-------|---------------|------------------|
| Gaydos | 576   | 86            | \$1516.25        |
|        |       | <b>TOTAL:</b> | <b>\$1516.25</b> |

**RESOLUTION #22-297**

**REFUND OVERPAYMENT  
(Block 86 Lot 5- Goodman Dean Inc.)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, Vernon, New Jersey, that a warrant be drawn to Goodman Dean Inc. in the amount of \$1150.78 representing refund for overpayment of 4th qtr. 2018 property taxes for Block 86 Lot 5 also known as [REDACTED]

| <b>OWNER</b>  | <b>BLOCK</b> | <b>LOT</b>    | <b>REFUND AMOUNT</b> |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|
| <b>Thomas</b> | <b>86</b>    | <b>5</b>      | <b>\$1150.78</b>     |
|               |              | <b>TOTAL:</b> | <b>\$1150.78</b>     |

**RESOLUTION #22-298**

**AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER #1 OF CONTRACT FOR PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS OF MILLING & PAVING TO VARIOUS STREETS WITHIN VERNON TOWNSHIP WITH TILCON NEW YORK, INC.**

**WHEREAS**, on July 25, 2022, by way of adoption of Resolution #22-191, the Council of the Township of Vernon awarded a contract to Tilcon, New York, Inc. for Milling & Paving on Various Streets specifically Karen Road, Beaver Brook Road, Paddock Avenue and Lounsberry Hollow Road which contract provided for an expenditure of \$639,734.00; and

**WHEREAS**, in a memo dated December 5, 2022, the Township Engineer states that the contract requires a Change Order #1 by the addition of one extra item in amount of \$7,931.50, three (3) supplemental items in amount of \$103,927.26; and reduction of three (3) items in the amount of \$143,833.57; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Engineer, in concurrence with the Mayor, recommends approving Change Order No. 1 resulting in the adjusted decreased contract amount of \$607,759.19.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon that it hereby approves the Township Engineer's recommendations and authorizes the Mayor to execute said Change Order No. 1 for said project resulting in the adjusted decreased contract amount of \$607,759.19 for said project; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** those certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Tilcon New York, Inc. and the Township Engineer.

**RESOLUTION #22-299**

**AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER #1 OF CONTRACT FOR PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS OF MILLING & PAVING ON OLD COACH ROAD & PLEASANT VALLEY DRIVE WITH TILCON NEW YORK, INC.**

**WHEREAS**, on July 25, 2022, by way of adoption of Resolution #22-192, the Council of the Township of Vernon awarded a contract to Tilcon, New York, Inc. for Milling & Paving on Old Coach Road and Pleasant Valley Drive which contract provided for an expenditure of \$262,054.00; and

**WHEREAS**, in a memo dated December 5, 2022, the Township Engineer states that the contract requires a Change Order #1 by the addition of three (3) supplemental items in amount of \$42,293.59; and reduction of three (3) items in the amount of \$61,061.60; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Engineer, in concurrence with the Mayor, recommends approving Change Order No. 1 resulting in the adjusted decreased contract amount of \$243,285.99.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Township of Vernon that it hereby approves the Township Engineer's recommendations and authorizes the Mayor to execute said Change Order No. 1 for said project resulting in the adjusted decreased contract amount of \$243,285.99 for said project; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** those certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Tilcon New York, Inc. and the Township Engineer.

**RESOLUTION #22-300 (AMENDED)**

**TRANSFER RESOLUTION- BALANCE TRANSFERS**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Vernon Municipal Budget requires certain modifications to cover potential expenses that may occur in excess of the original budget;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the following Transfer of Appropriations (2022 Municipal Budget) in accordance with N.J.S.A 40A-58/59 are hereby approved.

| ACCOUNT                    | TRANSFER OUT     | TRANSFER IN      |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| FROM CURRENT FUND:         |                  |                  |
| POLICE DEPARTMENT – S&W    | 30,000.00        |                  |
| RADIO COMMUNICATIONS – S&W | 13,000.00        |                  |
| TO: CURRENT FUND           |                  |                  |
| BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – O/E  |                  | 3,000.00         |
| SOCIAL SECURITY – O/E      |                  | 15,000.00        |
| UTILITIES - O/E            |                  | 25,000.00        |
| <b>TOTAL TRANSFERS</b>     | <b>43,000.00</b> | <b>43,000.00</b> |

**RESOLUTION #22-301**

**Temporary Budget- Debt Service**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.40A:4-19 provides authority for appropriating in a temporary resolution the permanent debt service requirements for the coming fiscal year, and

**WHEREAS**, the date of this resolution is subsequent to that date, and

**WHEREAS**, principal and interest will be due on various dates from January 1, 2023 to January 31, 2023, inclusive, on bonds and notes issued and outstanding,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Township of Vernon, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, that the following appropriations be made to cover the period from January 1, 2023 to January 31, 2023 inclusive:

|                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Payment of Bonds  | \$1,125,000.00        |
| Interest on Bonds | <u>101,995.45</u>     |
| Total             | <u>\$1,226,995.45</u> |

**Resolution #22-304**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH THE VERNON POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE TO ADMINISTER AND RUN RECREATION PROGRAMS**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Vernon (“Township”) and the Vernon Police Athletic League (“PAL”) have contracted since January 1, 2016 to enable PAL to run and administer recreation programs on behalf of the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the current agreement between the Township and PAL will expire on December 31, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, it has been determined that it is in the best interest of the Township to continue this relationship for term January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, both the Township and PAL wish to enter into a new agreement enabling the PAL to continue to run and administer recreation programs on behalf of the Township; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Township of Vernon that the Mayor and Township Clerk are authorized to execute an agreement between the Township and the Vernon Police Athletic League with term January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2026.

**Resolution #22-302** – Settlement Agreement and General Release Between the Township of Vernon and Joseph Wallace

Council Member Lynch made a motion to table resolution #22-302 until the January 1<sup>st</sup> reorganization meeting. Seconded by Council Member Buccieri.

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to table resolution #22-302 until January 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

**Ordinance #22-24** – Ordinance Approving Town Center Redevelopment Plan Amendment to Add Block 391, Lot 11 to the TCLI Overlay Zone and to Permit Outdoor Storage with Buffering in the TCI

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to place ordinance #22-24 on the floor for consideration.

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the floor for public hearing on ordinance #22-24

MOVED: Buccieri  
SECOND: Lynch

All members were in favor.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to come forward, Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to close the public hearing on ordinance #22-24.

A roll call vote was taken to approve ordinance #22-24:

AYES: Buccieri, Lynch, Tadrick, Rizzuto  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT: Sparta

Motion carries to approve ordinance #22-24.

#### **ORDINANCE #22-24**

#### **ORDINANCE APPROVING TOWN CENTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADD BLOCK 391, LOT 11 TO THE TCLI OVERLAY ZONE AND TO PERMIT OUTDOOR STORAGE WITH BUFFERING IN THE TCI**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, *et seq.* (the “Redevelopment Law”), sets forth the procedures for the Township of Vernon (“Township”) to

determine whether certain properties are areas in need of redevelopment, along with the development and effectuation of a redevelopment plan for such properties; and

**WHEREAS**, by Resolution No. 17-169, the Township Council directed the Township Land Use Board (“Land Use Board”) to undertake an investigation to determine whether properties in a proposed redevelopment area, commonly referred to as the Town Center Zone (“TC Zone”) is a non-condemnation redevelopment area within the meaning of the Redevelopment Law (“Redevelopment Area”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Land Use Board adopted a resolution undertaking an investigation of the TC Zone and whether it or any portion constitutes an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to the Redevelopment Law; and

**WHEREAS**, the Land Use Board authorized Jessica Caldwell, P.P., A.I.C.P. of J. Caldwell & Associates (“Caldwell”) to prepare an investigative report of the TC Zone to determine if the TC Zone or any parcels within the TC Zone should be declared an area in need of redevelopment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Land Use Board held a public hearing to consider the findings of Caldwell’s investigative report of the TC Zone, at which time the Land Use Board determined that the Redevelopment Area satisfied the statutory criteria to be designated as an area in need of redevelopment in accordance with the Redevelopment Law; and

**WHEREAS**, the Land Use Board recommended that the Township Council designate the Redevelopment Area as an area in need of redevelopment and adopted a memorializing resolution at its April 11, 2018, meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council thereafter adopted Resolution No. 18-135 at its public meeting on April 23, 2018, designating the Redevelopment Area as an area as in need of redevelopment pursuant to Redevelopment Law; and

**WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 18-35 was transmitted to the Commissioner of the State of New Jersey, Department of Community Affairs, and the area in need of redevelopment designation became effective on or about May 10, 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 27, 2020, the Township Council, pursuant to the Redevelopment Law, adopted Resolution No. 20-74, directed the Land Use Board to consider and arrange for the preparation of a redevelopment plan to govern the Town Center Zone and to submit such redevelopment plan to the Township Council for its consideration and adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, at its February 10, 2021, meeting the Land Use Board reviewed the proposed Redevelopment Plan and heard public comment regarding same and issued a report deeming the Redevelopment Plan consistent with the Township Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council adopted the Redevelopment Plan as Ordinance 21-10 on April 26, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, a property within the TC Redevelopment Plan Area requested amendments to the Redevelopment Plan to assist in their operations and future expansion; and

**WHEREAS**, the Local Housing and Redevelopment Law permits amendments to Redevelopment Plans over time to meet the demands of the marketplace; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council has carefully considered the amendments to the Redevelopment Plan and find that they are in the best interest of the welfare of the general public;

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

Section 1. The Town Center Redevelopment Plan dated March 25, 2021, Amended November 2022 a copy of which is annexed hereto and made a part of this Ordinance, is adopted in accordance with the Redevelopment Law.



Section 2. This Ordinance constitutes an amendment to the zoning district map included in the Township's zoning ordinance.

Section 3. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

Section 4. If any section, paragraph, subdivision, clause or provision of this Ordinance shall be adjudged invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to such section, paragraph, subdivision, clause or provision and the remainder of this Ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.

Section 5. This Ordinance shall take effect upon (i) filing with the Sussex County Planning Board in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law; and (ii) adoption and publication in the manner required by New Jersey law.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS (On any topic Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)**

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to open the meeting for public comment.

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

Ann Larsen – Vernon Township, feels that the reevaluation is harassment and needs to be changed or ended. Ms. Larsen expressed concern over the ad for the business administrator.

Peg Distasi – Vernon Township, expressed concern for the business administrator ad.

Jessica Paladini – Vernon Township, agrees with Ms. Larsen's comments. Ms. Paladini does not believe that you can go into someone's home to collect data. Ms. Paladini asked to have a work session on this topic.

Walter Marsico – Vernon Township, questioned the Council about the municipal clerk's behavior. Mr. Marsico told the Council that there are consequences for their behavior.

Frank Pietrowski – Vernon Township, expressed concern because his taxes have gone up 30%. He hopes that taxes will reflect when home values go down.

Christine Dunn – Glenwood, expressed concern for the assessments.

Mark Heftler – Vernon Township, mentioned that New Jersey is offering the Affordable New Jersey Communities for Homeowners and Renters (ANCHOR) program. Homeowners can qualify for a rebate that can possibly help with their taxes.

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

MOVED: Lynch  
SECOND: Buccieri

All members were in favor.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Tadrack commented that he is sorry he was not at the meeting in person. He wished everyone happy holidays.

Council Member Lynch commented that last week he had the best opportunity to drive Santa on the fire truck and he saw good things driving around. He asked everyone to check on their neighbors and friends. He wished everyone happy holidays.

Council Member Buccieri cannot believe that it is the last meeting of 2022. She commented that she has enjoyed serving on the Council and she looks forward to 2023 and working more for Vernon. She wished everyone happy holidays.

### **COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS**

As this will be our last meeting prior to our reorganization meeting I would like to take this opportunity to review a few of the issues the council has had before them. I believe that the Reorganization meeting should be of positive note and visionary thoughts. This past year the council has completely changed due to election and/or illness.

Mr. Shortway left the council for health reasons and we all wish him well as he continues his journey to full health. Mr. Furrey has left the council due to the electoral process and we thank him for his service and his commitment to Vernon Township.

It has been readily apparent that there has been a significant difference between the council and the administration. The nature of these differences as presented by the council has always been founded, not only in its commitment to Vernon Township but in its belief on how these various goals are to be achieved. Over the past 12 months this council, newly elected and subsequently complemented by Mr. Sparta and Mr. Tadrick have all expressed similar views in the necessity to attend to issues arising out of past council and administrative actions. Whether we were successful or not it was necessary based on the commitments we made to the public and our constituents. In some cases, we were successful, in other issues we were not and in a very few times we were able to reach compromise.

I have frequently been asked why I, as Council President did not express a more conflicting point of view with the administration or a more aggressive stance in opposition to the mayor's comments. Clearly my answer has and will always be, to what end. I do not see continued conflict on issues where compromise or required change by statute is either not possible or is ignored is beneficial to our Township. Only when is it possible to have these differing points of view prevail is it advisable to use the electoral advantage provided by the voters for the benefit of our community should we move decisively and completely on achieving these goals. In the coming year I believe we will to have that advantage.

As council president I have tried to use this office to maintain a degree of decorum, not rising to the bait of inuendo and ego; in those cases where I have failed, I have offered my apologies to the community.

I would like to thank my fellow councilmembers Mr. Lynch, Mr. Tadrick and Mr. Sparta for their support this past year and especially Mrs. Buccieri as Vice President. Her advice and counsel have been greatly appreciated and her help in taking over council president responsibilities during the occasion of my wife, Barbara's, recent passing relieved me of significant concerns that needed to be addressed for the township's benefit.

I would ask that the clerk please take note that the council will hold its annual reorganization meeting on January 1, at 12 noon and to please make the necessary prolongations as required. I would also ask that invitations be issued to Senator Oroho, Assemblymen Wirth, and County commissioners Jill Space and Bill Hayden to come and be recognized at our meeting.

Finally, on behalf of the council I would like to wish our residents, employees a Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and a Blessed Kwanza.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:13pm Council Member Lynch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Sparta.

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR  
Municipal Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Lynch,  
Council President

Minutes approved: January 9, 2023