

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 23, 2025 7:00 PM**

This Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on June 23, 2025, in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Council President Rizzuto presiding.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

ROLL CALL

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

PRESENTATION

Ed Babcock – Head of the DPW Retirement

MAYOR COMMENTS

Council President this year the 250-year anniversary of the US Army was celebrated before us in Washington.

Congratulations to the Senior Olympians. Vernon took one gold two bronze and two silver medals at the Sussex Fair Grounds.

Vernon township held its 2nd annual successful car show. Thank you to the entire Recreation Department, DPW, and Police dept and EMS for all those who participated, during this event. This year Vernon unveiled the 50-anniversary patrol car. Thank you, Mindy Martin, for volunteering to be in the dunk tank.

Congratulations to the Vernon PD for being rated #9 safest in the US and second year of being number one safest town in NJ. This is a testament as to who we are as a municipality.

Lastly, asking for Vernon to say a little prayer for two Vernon residents who are stranded in Isreal due to the war between Iran and Isreal, and hope for a safe return.

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: Sparta

All members were in favor.

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: DeBenedetto
SECOND: Higgins

All members were in favor.

REVIEW OF BILLS LIST

The Council reviewed the bills list.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 29, 2025 – Executive Session

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the May 29, 2025 executive session minutes.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN: Buccieri, DeBenedetto,

ABSENT:

Motion carries to May 29, 2025 executive session minutes.

May 29, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the May 29, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN: Buccieri

ABSENT:

Motion carries to May 29, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

June 12, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Council President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve the June 12, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED: Buccieri

SECOND: Higgins

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to June 12, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution #25-171: Procurement Card Authorization

Resolution #25-172: Resolution Authorizing Sewer Main Relocation and Application to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for a Treatment Works Approval Application for Block 402, Lots 2 & 3 Owned by Red Hand, LLC

Resolution #25-173: Appointment of Vernon Township Director of the Department of Public Works / Principle Public Works Manager

Resolution #25-174: Renewal of Liquor License in the Township of Vernon for the 2025-2026 Licensing Term

Resolution #25-177: Authorize the Award of a Required Disclosure Contract with Granicus for Compliance Software

Resolution #25-178: Block 418 Lot 9 (Redacted) Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-179: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran Block 418 Lot 9 (Redacted)

Resolution #25-180: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran Block 418 Lot 9 (Redacted)

Resolution #25-181: Block 387 Lot 2 Cancelling Taxes for Total Disabled Veteran

Resolution #25-182: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran Block 387 Lot 2

Resolution #25-183: Refund for Totally Disabled Veteran Block 387 Lot 2

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

MOVED: Buccieri
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve the consent agenda.

RESOLUTION #25-171

PROCUREMENT CARD AUTHORIZATION

WHEREAS the State of New Jersey authorizes the use of a Procurement Card, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-16 (c) and N.J.A.C. 5:30-9a, and

WHEREAS the Township of Vernon seeks to authorize the issuance of a Procurement Card with a maximum monthly limit set at \$4,000 (annually not to exceed \$16,000) for the purpose of securing materials and supplies for Public Works projects which meet the criteria of specific circumstances as outlined in the rules at N.J.A.C.5:30-9A; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with N.J.A.C. 5:30-9A.4, the Township is permitted to name a Program Manager, who is given primary responsibility for day-to-day oversight of procurement card usage and the Township seeks to name the Director of Public Works the Procurement Card Manager; and

WHEREAS all such transactions must be turned into the Finance office for encumbering prior to ordering and all such transactions must be approved by the Director of Public Works, Administrator and Qualified Purchasing Agent, and must follow the rules set out in the Procurement Card Procedure document, and

WHEREAS the only authorized signers on the card would be the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Public Works.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon authorization is granted for the issuance of a Procurement Card with a \$4,000 limit with the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Public Works as authorized signers on the card.

RESOLUTION #25-172

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SEWER MAIN RELOCATION AND
APPLICATION TO THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A TREATMENT WORKS APPROVAL APPLICATION FOR
BLOCK 402, LOTS 2 & 3 OWNED BY RED HAND, LLC**

WHEREAS, Red Hand LLC owns Block 402, Lots 2 and 3 and is desirous of developing the vacant properties; and

WHEREAS, Block 402, Lots 2 and 3 are properties that are within the Vernon Township sewer easement for sewer main infrastructure that runs through the properties; and

WHEREAS, Red Hand LLC has an application before the Land Use Board and has received preliminary site plan approvals, along with an approval from the Vernon Township Municipal Utilities Authority to relocate 155 linear feet of 8-inch sewer main; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council recognizes that relocation of the sewer main requires a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Treatment Works Approval Application, which is to be filed by the applicant and property owner, Red Hand LLC; and

WHEREAS, the Treatment Works Approval Application requires certification by the Governing Body and Wastewater Conveyance System Owners of the sewer main infrastructure; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Vernon that the Mayor is hereby authorized to execute the Treatment Works Approval Application as the Governing Body endorsement and the Wastewater Conveyance System Owner endorsement and any further documents necessary to effectuate same; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Township Council.

RESOLUTION #25-173

APPOINTMENT OF VERNON TOWNSHIP DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

WHEREAS, the Township's Director of DPW, Ed Babcock, will retire effective July 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS, per the Vernon Township Administrative Code, the Director of the Department of Public Works shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, Howard Lazier has his certification as a Certified Public Works Manager (CPWM) pursuant to Section 3 of P.L. 1991, c.258 (C.40A:9-154.6c) as required to perform said position.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey that Howard Lazier is hereby appointed Director of the Department of Public Works for the Township of Vernon effective July 1, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption according to law.

RESOLUTION #25-174

RENEWAL OF LIQUOR LICENSE IN THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON FOR THE 2025-2026 LICENSING TERM

WHEREAS, all licenses to dispense alcoholic beverages must be renewed and reissued annually no later than June 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:1-1 et. seq., the Vernon Township Police Department has made the necessary inspections and reported same to the Township Clerk; and

WHEREAS, all of the licensees have complied with all of the regulations as set forth by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission of the State of New Jersey;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the following licenses shall be reissued for the 2025-2026 licensing period effective as of July 1, 2025.

PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION
Great Gorge Entertainment LLC

1922-33-003-008

RESOLUTION #25-177

**AUTHORIZE THE AWARD OF A REQUIRED DISCLOSURE CONTRACT
WITH GRANICUS FOR COMPLIANCE SOFTWARE**

WHEREAS, the Township of Vernon has a need for contractor for its operations in service of the residents of the Township, through Granicus LLC, as a required disclosure contract pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4; and,

WHEREAS, Sean Canning, Q.P.A., of the Canning Group, LLC has determined and certified in writing that the value of the acquisition will exceed \$17,500 and the anticipated term of this contract is for the year of 2025-2026; and

WHEREAS, Granicus LLC, 1152 15th Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC, 20005, in the aggregate is expected to provide more than the pay to play threshold of \$17,500.00; and

WHEREAS, Granicus LLC, has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification and a Personal Contribution Disclosure form which certifies that Granicus has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the *Township of Vernon* in the previous one year, and that the contract will prohibit Granicus from making any reportable contributions through the term of the contract, and

WHEREAS, subject to the governing bodies approval of future budgets the Chief Financial Officer hereby certifies that funds NOT TO EXCEED \$32,671.84 are available in Line Items:

2025: 5-01-20-100-20
2026: 6-01-20-100-20 (subject to the 2026 Budget)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Vernon authorizes the Business Administrator to enter into a contract with Granicus LLC, 1152 15th Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC, 20005, not to exceed \$32,671.84 for the 2025-2026 budget year for contractor services;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Business Disclosure Entity Certification and Personal Contribution Disclosure form, Determination of Value be placed on file with this resolution.

RESOLUTION #25-178

Block 418 Lot 9 (Redacted) CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Block 418 Lot 9 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 2025 in the amount of \$3,071.38.

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

RESOLUTION #25-179

REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN Block 418 Lot 9 (Redacted)

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Awarded Block 418 Lot 9 100% 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 \$947.45 to Block 418 Lot 9.

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

RESOLUTION #25-180

REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN Block 418 Lot 9 (Redacted)

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Awarded Block 418 Lot 9 100% 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 \$5,754.66 to Block 418 Lot 9.

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

RESOLUTION #25-181

**Block 387 Lot 2
CANCELLING TAXES FOR TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN**

WHEREAS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
awarded Block 387 Lot 2 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 2025 in the amount of \$1,854.22.

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

RESOLUTION #25-182

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
Block 387 Lot 2**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Awarded Block 387 Lot 2 100% 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 \$4,192.00 to Block 387 Lot 2.

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

RESOLUTION #25-183

**REFUND FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERAN
Block 387 Lot 2**

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Awarded Block 387 Lot 2 100% 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 \$3,823.32 to Block 387 Lot 2.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #25-175: Renewal of Inactive Liquor License for the 2025-2026 Licensing Term

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #25-175.

MOVED: Buccieri
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, DeBenedetto, Higgins, Sparta, Rizzuto

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve resolutions #25-175.

RESOLUTION #25-175

RENEWAL OF INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE FOR THE 2025-2026 LICENSING TERM

WHEREAS, the below inactive licensee has filed their 2025-2026 license renewal and paid their State and municipal renewal fee, and have no pending prior matters; and

WHEREAS, all necessary fees and documentation have been properly filed with the Vernon Township Municipal Clerk and State of New Jersey;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following inactive Liquor License shall be renewed effective July 1, 2025:

PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION

1833 House LLC 1922-33-009-006

Resolution #25-176: Renewal of Inactive Liquor License for the 2025-2026 Licensing Term

President Rizzuto asked for a motion to approve resolution #25-176.

MOVED: Sparta
SECOND: DeBenedetto

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Buccieri, Higgins, Rizzuto

NAYES: DeBenedetto. Sparta

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion carries to approve resolution #25-176.

RESOLUTION #25-176

RENEWAL OF INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE FOR THE 2025-2026 LICENSING TERM

WHEREAS, the below inactive licensee has filed their 2025-2026 license renewal and paid their State and municipal renewal fee, and have no pending prior matters; and

WHEREAS, all necessary fees and documentation have been properly filed with the Vernon Township Municipal Clerk and State of New Jersey;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following inactive Liquor License shall be renewed effective July 1, 2025:

PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION

T&Z Holding Co LLC

1922-33-004-007

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to 5 Minutes Per Person)

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

MOVED: Sparta

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to open the floor to the public.

Doreen Edwards - questioned if the Land Use Board would have a public hearing at their next meeting. Ms. Edwards asked for an update on Legends.

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

MOVED: Higgins

SECOND: DeBenedetto

All members were in favor.

Motion carries to close the floor to public comments.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Higgins commented on the Civil Service hiring. He feels that there has not been an answer as to if the Township is with compliance with Civil Service. Council Member Higgins asked questions and they were answered by the Mayor and Business Administrator.

Council Member DeBenedetto explained why she voted no for resolution #25-176.

Council Member Sparta had no comments.

Council Member Buccieri had no comments.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Council President Rizzuto commented that school is out for the summer and he asked everyone to be careful on the roads and watch for children playing outdoors.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:40 pm Council Member DeBenedetto 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: August 11, 2025