

**Independence Township Committee
Regular Meeting Agenda
February 11, 2025
7:00 pm**

This is a regular meeting of the Township Committee of Independence Township, Warren County, New Jersey. This meeting was called to order by Mayor Robert Giordano at 7:00 p.m. with the following announcement: “Adequate notice of this meeting was given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by providing a schedule of regular meetings to the Herald Times and The Express Times, posting a copy thereof on the Township bulletin board and filing a copy thereof in the office of the Municipal Clerk.” The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was led by Mayor Giordano.

Roll Call: Mrs. Gesumaria, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mayor Giordano

Also present: Ms. Hrebenak

Absent: Mrs. Kelsey

Department Reports:

Joe King explained that the department has been dealing with a number of snow events, currently there is a truck down and the loader also is not working. Salt has been ordered.

Chief Prell had nothing to report.

Presentation: Michael Mai, Superintendent, GMRSD Referendum

Mr. Mai and Business Administrator Westberg were present to explain the Referendum and answer questions.

Consent Agenda:

RESOLUTION NO. 25-16

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A CERTIFICATE OF
SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION FOR WOODMONT INDEPENDENCE URBAN
RENEWAL, LLC**

WHEREAS, the Township of Independence (the “Township”) executed a Redevelopment Agreement with Woodmont Independence Urban Renewal, LLC (the “Redeveloper”) dated January 12, 2016 pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 *et seq.*) (the “Agreement”) regarding the development of property designated as Block 6.02, Lot 3 as a residential apartment complex (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, Section 2.02 of the Agreement requires the Township to issue a Certification of Substantial Completion when the Project “has been completed in conformity with the Final Site Plans and Construction Plans;” and

WHEREAS, all certificates of occupancy have been issued for the units in the Project; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Independence, in the County of Warren, New Jersey, as follows:

1. Based upon the issuance of the certificates of occupancy for the Project, the Township Committee deems the Project “substantially complete.”
2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE

Warren County, New Jersey

No. 25-17

Date of Adoption: February 11, 2025

Title: Tricky Tray & 50/50 Raffle

WHEREAS, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Warren County is registered by the State of New Jersey to operate legalized games of chance, (31-4-29993) and,

WHEREAS, they have submitted applications for a Tricky Tray and a 50/50 Raffle to be held on April 25, 2024 and all fees have been paid,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that RA# 2025-01 (50/50) and RA# 2025-02 (Tricky Tray) be issued to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center.

25-18

2024 APPROPRIATION RESERVES TRANSFERS

WHEREAS, there appears to be insufficient funds in the below listed account(s) to meet the demands thereon for the balance of the current year, and

WHEREAS, there appears to be a surplus in the below listed account(s) over and above the amount deemed necessary for the balance of the current year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence that, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-58, part of the surplus in the account(s) heretofore mentioned be and same are hereby authorized as transfers to the account(s) mentioned as being insufficient, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Finance Officer is hereby directed to make the following transfers:

FROM	AMOUNT	TO	AMOUNT
Police S&W	\$ 1,600.00	Public Works S&W	\$ 1,600.00

25-19

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO FEES FOR RECREATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, Independence Township sponsors programs for both youth and adults; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation Director has made recommendation to the Township Committee for the year 2025; and

2025 Recreation Program Fees

SPORT	Fee
Softball	
Ponytail *min 6 players	\$55
Junior *min 8 players	\$90
Intermediate *min 8 players	\$90
Senior *min 8 players	\$90
Soccer	
Micro *min 4 players	\$55/player
D6 *min 6 players	\$80
D5 *min 7 players	\$80
D4 *min 9 players	\$90
D3 *min 11 players	\$90

Field Hockey	
Micro *min 4 players	\$40
2-4 *min 6 players	\$80
5/6 *min 8 players	\$90
7/8 *min 11 players	\$90
Youth Basketball	
1/2 *min 4 players	\$55/player
3/4 *min 5 players	\$90/player
5/6 *min 5 players	\$90/player
7/8 *min 5 players	\$90/player
Men's Basketball	
Summer	\$700/team
Max 10 players per team	
Adult Softball	
Spring/Summer	\$475/team
Fall *Men's	\$375/team

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, on this 11th day of February, 2025 that the Township Committee of Independence Township, County of Warren, State of New Jersey approves the above fee schedule.

RESOLUTION 25-20

AUTHORIZING INDEPENDENCE FIRST AID SQUAD TO SOLICIT FUNDS IN THE ROADWAYS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE

WHEREAS, Ordinance 2022-05 permits application to be made to the Township of Independence by charitable organizations to solicit funds in the roadway of the Township of Independence; and

WHEREAS, Independence First Aid Squad has submitted an application to the Municipal Clerk as required per said ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the dates and times of the charitable solicitation are listed within the written application submitted by the Independence First Aid Squad and included on this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police of the Township of Independence has reviewed the application of the Independence First Aid Squad and has determined that there is no public safety reason for the Township of Independence to deny this application; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee, of the Township of Independence, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, hereby grants permission for the

Independence First Aid Squad to solicit funds on the roadways of Independence Township on the dates as set forth below.

April 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025, May 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 2025, July 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025, August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 2025, September 7, 14, 21, 28, 2025, October 5, 12, 19, 26, 2025, November 2, 9, 16, 23, 28, 2025

Mr. Pennington made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria.

Ayes: Mrs. Gesumaria, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mayor Giordano

Nays: None

Absent: Mrs. Kelsey

Abstain: None

Ordinance:

First Reading

**TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

ORDINANCE 2025-02

**ORDINANCE AMENDING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BLOCK 6.02,
LOT 3/ 922-930 ROUTE 517**

WHEREAS, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq.*, authorizes municipalities to determine whether certain parcels of land in the municipality constitute areas in need of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, on April 8, 2013, the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Independence (the “Committee”) adopted a resolution authorizing and directing the Township Land Use Board to conduct an investigation pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6* to determine whether Block 6.02, Lot 3 located within the Township could be designated as an “area in need of redevelopment” (the “Property”); and

WHEREAS, after a review of the Property and recommendations of the Township Land Use Board on July 9, 2013, the Committee adopted a resolution designating the Property as an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to of *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5* (the “Redevelopment Area”); and

WHEREAS, the Township Planner prepared a Redevelopment Plan entitled, “REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF BLOCK 602, LOT 3 922-930”, (the “Redevelopment Plan”) in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7*; and

WHEREAS, on October 9, 2014, pursuant to Ordinance 2014-05, the Township Committee adopted the Redevelopment Plan for the Property; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution 2014-05, adopted on October 9, 2014, the Township Committee designated Woodmont Independence Urban Renewal, LLC (“Woodmont”) as the redeveloper for the Property; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the Redevelopment Plan, the Township Land Use Board granted approval to Woodmont, pursuant to a Resolution adopted on September 18, 2017, to develop a 120 unit (108 market rate and 12 affordable) residential apartment complex on the Property; and

WHEREAS, the Township entered into a Redevelopment Agreement with Woodmont dated January 12, 2016 pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (*N.J.S.A. 40A:T2A-1 et seq.*) and a Financial Agreement dated December 6, 2016 pursuant to the Long Term Tax Exemption Law (*N.J.S.A. 40A:20-1 et seq.*); and

WHEREAS, the Township entered into a Rider to the Redevelopment Agreement dated June 14, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Woodmont has requested that the Township allow the conversion of the “model unit” on the Property to a unit to be occupied by a staff member, bringing the total number of residential units on the Property to 121 units; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Independence, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

Section 1. The aforementioned recitals are incorporated herein as though fully set forth at length.

Section 2. The Redevelopment Plan is hereby amended to permit 121 residential units on the Property.

Section 3. If any part of this Ordinance shall be deemed invalid, such parts shall be severed and the invalidity thereby shall not affect the remaining parts of this Ordinance.

Section 4. A copy of this Ordinance and the Redevelopment Plan shall be available for public inspection at the office of the Township Clerk during regular business hours.

Section 5. This Ordinance shall take effect in accordance with all applicable laws.

Mr. Pennington made a motion to approve the introduction of Ordinance 2025-02, which was seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria.

Ayes: Mrs. Gesumaria, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mayor Giordano

Nays: None

Absent: Mrs. Kelsey

Abstain: None

2025-03 Flood Ordinance

Mr. Pennington made a motion to approve the introduction of Ordinance 2025-03, which was seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria.

Ayes: Mrs. Gesumaria, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mayor Giordano

Nays: None

Absent: Mrs. Kelsey

Abstain: None

Second Reading

2025-01

CALENDAR YEAR 2025

MODEL ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

(N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

WHEREAS, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S. 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget up to 2.5% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

WHEREAS, the Township of Independence in the County of Warren finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2025 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the governing body hereby determines that a 1% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$37,829.32 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

WHEREAS the governing body hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township of Independence, in the County of Warren, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that, in the CY 2025 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of Independence shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$132,402.62, and that the CY 2025 municipal budget for the Township of Independence be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that any that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

Mr. Pennington made a open the floor to the public for comment on Ordinance 2025-01, which was seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria.

Ayes: Mrs. Gesumaria, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mayor Giordano

Nays: None

Absent: Mrs. Kelsey

Abstain: None

Bill List

Mr. Stuber made a motion to approve the bill list as presented, which was seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria.

Ayes: Mrs. Gesumaria, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mayor Giordano

Nays: None

Absent: Mrs. Kelsey

Abstain: None

Public Comment:

John Snyder, Route 46, commended Mr. King and the Department of Public Works on the great job that they have been doing to keep the roads clear during the bad weather.

Mr. Stuber made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 pm, which was seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria.