

INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
Meeting held at the Municipal Building, Great Meadows, NJ.
June 13, 2023 7:00 p.m.

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:

Present: Mr. Stuber, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mrs. Kelsey, Mayor Giordano, and Dena Hrebenak. Also, present Engineer Mike Finelli and Attorney Leslie Parikh

Absent: none

Minute Approval: May 9, 2023

A motion was made by Mr. Pennington to approve minutes 5.9.23 as written. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Tax Collector – Report submitted via email

Construction/Zoning – Reports submitted via email.

Environmental – No meeting

Recreation/Green Acres – Community Band playing June 25 at the Pavilion. Pizza Night on July 30. Lunch cruise on Lake Hopatcong in July. Dinner/show Bus trip planned for October 5. Longwood Gardens in planned in November.

Police – Report submitted via email.

Emergency Services – Lt Finnigan gave a report on first aid squad. Chief Snyder gave a report on the fire department.

DPW – All is going well.

School – working on budget.

Land Use Board – No meeting.

PROFESSIONAL REPORTS:

Attorney Parikh: report submitted

Engineer Finelli: Spoke on Russling Road Section 2 & 3 Project, Woodmont, and Stormwater permit.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution 23-34

2023 Clean Communities Grant

WHEREAS, NJS 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 of Independence has received notice of an award of \$18,124.35 from the State of New Jersey, Special Legislative Grant and wishes to amend its 2023 Budget to include this amount as a revenue.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence in the County of Warren State of New Jersey hereby requests the Director and the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2023 in the amount of \$18,124.35 which is now available as revenue from:

Miscellaneous Revenues:

Special Items of General Revenue Anticipated
With Prior Written Consent of the Director of the
Division of Local Government Services:
State and Federal Revenues Off-set with
Appropriations: State of New Jersey Special Legislative Grant

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the sum of \$18,124.35
Be and the same is hereby appropriated under the caption of
General Appropriations:

(a) Operations Excluded from CAPS
State and Federal Programs Off-Set by
Revenues: 2023 Clean Communities Grant

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Clerk forward one certified copy of this resolution to the Director of Local Government Services for approval.

Resolution 23-35

REFUND OF DUPLICATE PAYMENT

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has determined that a payment has been made in error by the mortgage company; said error has caused an overpayment of taxes paid.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on this 13th day of June 2023 by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence that the individual below be refunded the overpayment of taxes.

ASSESSED TO AMOUNT	PROPERTY LOCATION	BLOCK/LOT
Alfredo Feliciano \$1,590.39	128 Route 46	11/24

Resolution 23-36

Title or Subject: 2023-2024 Renewal Liquor Licenses

WHEREAS, the renewal applications for the following liquor licenses have been submitted to the Municipal Clerk with the proper fees, and

WHEREAS, Clearance certificates from the State Division of Taxation have been received by the Municipal Clerk for all of the licenses, and

WHEREAS, the Officer In Charge has not indicated the need for special restrictions on any of the establishments,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Independence Township Committee, that the following liquor licenses be renewed for the period of July 1, 2023 thru June 30, 2024:

Club: Independence Twp Vol Fire Dept	2112-31-010-001
Retail: Zoey's LLC	2112-33-001-012
Nykuns Store Inc	2112-33-004-002
Maria Bonita, INC	2112-33-003-006
133 Route 46 LLC	2112-32-002-007

Resolution 23-37

Title: Tricky Tray Raffle

WHEREAS, Foundation for Hackettstown Medical Center is registered by the State of New Jersey to operate legalized games of chance, (181-4-31694) and,

WHEREAS, they have submitted applications for a Tricky Tray Raffle to be held on 9.9.2023 and all fees have been paid,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that RA# 2023-09 be issued to Foundation for Hackettstown Medical Center.

Resolution 23-38

Title: Draw Raffle

WHEREAS, Independence Twp Vol Fire Dept is registered by the State of New Jersey to operate legalized games of chance, (224-9-21561) and,

WHEREAS, they have submitted applications for a Draw Raffle to be held on 12.10.2023 and all fees have been paid,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that RA# 2023-10 be issued to Independence Twp Vol Fire Dept.

Resolution 23-39

2023 Stormwater Assistance Grant

WHEREAS, NJS 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 of Independence has received notice of an award of \$15,000.00 from the State of New Jersey, Special Legislative Grant and wishes to amend its 2023 Budget to include this amount as a revenue.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence in the County of Warren State of New Jersey hereby requests the Director and the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2023 in the amount of \$15,000.00 which is now available as revenue from:

Miscellaneous Revenues:

Special Items of General Revenue Anticipated
With Prior Written Consent of the Director of the
Division of Local Government Services:
State and Federal Revenues Off-set with
Appropriations: State of New Jersey Special Legislative Grant

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the sum of \$15,000.00
Be and the same is hereby appropriated under the caption of
General Appropriations:

- (a) Operations Excluded from CAPS
State and Federal Programs Off-Set by
Revenues: 2023 Stormwater Assistance Grant

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Clerk forward one certified copy of this resolution to the Director of Local Government Services for approval.

Resolution 23-40

Approval to submit a Grant application and execute a grant contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the Ryan Road Resurfacing project.

WHEREAS, Independence Township, Warren County, New Jersey has given Finelli Consulting Engineers the approval to submit this grant on the behalf of the Township of Independence,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Committee of the Township of Independence formally approves the grant application for the above stated project,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to submit an electronic grant application identified as **MA-2024- Ryan Road Resurfacing Project- 00080** to the New Jersey Department of Transportation on behalf of the Township of Independence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Township of Independence and that their signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and approves the execution of the grant agreement.

Resolution 23-41

Approval to submit a Grant application and execute a grant contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the Cemetery Road Resurfacing, Section 1 project.

WHEREAS, Independence Township, Warren County, New Jersey has given Finelli Consulting Engineers the approval to submit this grant on the behalf of the Township of Independence,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Committee of the Township of Independence formally approves the grant application for the above stated project,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to submit an electronic grant application identified as **MA-2024- Cemetery Road, Resurfacing Section 1- 00079** to the New Jersey Department of Transportation on behalf of the Township of Independence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Township of Independence and that their signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and approves the execution of the grant agreement.

Resolution 23-42

**Redemption of Tax Lien
Certificate #19-00029**

WHEREAS, on December 6, 2019, Tax Lien Certificate #19-00029 or property assessed to KATHLEEN COLLIGAN and known as Block 6.01; Lot 836; Qual C0001, Sold to US BANK/PRO CAP 8

WHEREAS, redemption of Certificate # 19-00029 was made by MEGAN BOTTI

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that the Tax Collector, having received redemption monies from MEGAN BOTTI and having received Tax Lien Certificate #19-00029 from US BANK/PRO CAP 8, be authorized to forward said redemption monies to US BANK/PRO CAP 8, the amount being \$30,402.23.

ALSO, the premium that was paid by US BANK/PRO CAP 8 be returned to them the amount being \$3,100.00

Resolution 23-43

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICER IN CHARGE TO MAKE
CONDITIONAL OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT TO MICHAEL
SAPUNARICH FULL TIME POLICE OFFICER**

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has placed within its budget funds necessary and appropriate for the hiring of one full-time Police Officer within the Independence Police Department; and

WHEREAS, the Officer in Charge has undertaken the interview process with regard to the Officers which may be hired;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of Independence Township, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that the Officer in Charge be and is hereby authorized to hire to Michael Sapunarich as a Police Recruit effective July 10, 2023 through successful completion of the Police Academy at which time he will be sworn in as a Police Officer for the Township of Independence.

Mrs. Gesumaria made a motion to approve Resolutions 23-34 thru 23-43 as written. Mr. Stuber seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Stuber, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mrs. Kelsey, and Mayor Giordano

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: Mr. Pennington

ORDINANCE:

Second Reading/Public Comment

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-04

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 175-2 OF THE
CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE
ENTITLED “CONSTRUCTION CODES; UNIFORM” TO
ADJUST THE CONSTRUCTION FEE SCHEDULE FOR
MECHANICAL FEES**

Mr. Pennington made a motion to open up discussion on this ordinance to the Public.
Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mrs. Kelsey and Mayor Giordano
Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None

There was one comments by Mr. Cullen. A motion was made by Mr. Pennington to close
the public hearing. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mrs. Kelsey and Mayor Giordano
Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None

A motion was made by Mr. Pennington to adopt Ordinance 2023-04 as written. Mrs.
Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mrs. Kelsey and Mayor Giordano
Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Wiseman asked about Ryan Road and speed limit sign.

BILLS: A motion was made by Mrs. Kelsey to pay the bills as presented. Mrs.
Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Pennington, Mr. Stuber, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mrs. Kelsey and Mayor Giordano
Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 7:29 pm – 8:11 pm

The following Resolution was approved at 7:29 p.m. to enter Executive Session with a
motion by Mr. Pennington, seconded by Mrs. Kelsey and followed by a unanimous roll
call.

WHEREAS: N.J.S. 2:4-12, Open Public Meetings Act, permits the exclusion of the
public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist:

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

The public shall be excluded from discussion of the hereinafter specified subject matters;

The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

Personnel

It is anticipated at this time that the above matter will be made public upon completion of the matter discussed.

A motion was made by Mr. Pennington 8:11 p.m. to return to regular session, seconded by Mrs. Kelsey.

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None

Approved 2 new labors and appoint Joseph King as the Assistant Supervisor.

Mrs. Kelsey made a motion to approve the 2 new labors and appoint Assistant Supervisor. Mr. Gesumaria the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mrs. Gesumaria to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None

Respectfully submitted,

Dena M. Hrebenak, RMC
Municipal Clerk/Administrator