

**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting held at the Municipal Building, Great Meadows, NJ.**  
**July 11, 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 NJ Herald 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 (arrived at 7:01pm), Mayor Giordano, and Dena Hrebenak.

*Absent:* none

**Minute Approval:** June 13, 2023

A motion was made by Mrs. Gesumaria to approve minutes 6.13.23 as written. Mr. Stuber seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

**Presentation of Awards:**

Independence Township Police Lt. Prell presented Independence Township Police Sgt. Stocker, Ptl. Ortiz and Hackettstown Police Ptl. Blankenship the Meritorious Service and Life Saving awards. They were recognized for their actions during a structure fire on 06/24/2023. Deputy Mayor Mike Pennington presented Independence Township Volunteer Fire Chief Clyde Snyder the Meritorious Service award recognized for his actions by the Township Committee.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

Tax Collector – Report submitted via email

Construction/Zoning – Reports submitted via email.

Environmental – No meeting

Recreation/Green Acres – 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 –Chief Snyder gave a report on the fire department.

DPW – All is going well.  
School – 2 new principles meet and greet.  
Land Use Board – No meeting.

**PROFESSIONAL REPORTS:**

Attorney Parikh: report submitted

Engineer Finelli: report submitted.

CFO Derek Macchia spoke on the Township audit results.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Resolution 23-46**

**FORM 1B**

**WHEREAS**, the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse in communities throughout New Jersey.

**WHEREAS**, The Township Council of the Township of Independence County of Warren, State of New Jersey recognizes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages; and therefore has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent such abuses in our community; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council has applied for funding to the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the County of Warren;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township of Independence, County of Warren, State of New Jersey hereby recognizes the following:

1. The Township Council does hereby authorize submission of a strategic plan for the Great Meadows Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2024 in the amount of:

DEDR	\$1,611.00
Cash Match	\$402.75
In-Kind	\$1,208.25

2. The Township Council acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

**Resolution 23-47**

**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 ADDITIONAL LEGAL FEES and having received Tax Lien Certificate #19-00029 from US BANK/PRO CAP 8, be authorized to forward said legal fees to US BANK/PRO CAP 8, the amount being \$178.15.

**Resolution 23-48**

**GOVERNING BODY CERTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT**

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A: 5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions, and

WHEREAS, the Annual Report of Audit for the year 2022 has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant with the Municipal Clerk to N.J.S.A. 40A: 5-6, and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 52:27BB-34 authorizes the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey to prescribe reports pertaining to the local fiscal affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Local Finance Board has promulgated N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5, a regulation requiring that the governing body of each municipality shall, by resolution, certify to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that all members of the governing body have reviewed, as a minimum, the sections of the annual audit entitled "Comments and Recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have personally reviewed, as a minimum, the Annual Report of Audit, and specifically the sections of the Annual Audit entitled "Comments and Recommendations, as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the governing body attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, such resolution of certification shall be adopted by the Governing Body no later than forty-five days after the receipt of the annual audit, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5; and

WHEREAS, all members of the governing body have received and have familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State

of New Jersey, as stated aforesaid and have subscribed to the affidavit, as provided by the Local Finance Board; and

WHEREAS, failure to comply with the regulations of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey may subject the members of the local governing body to the penalty provisions of R.S. 52:27BB-52, to wit:

R.S. 52:27BB-52: A local officer or member of a local governing body who, after a date fixed for compliance, fails or refuses to obey an order of the director (Director of Local Government Services), under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, in addition shall forfeit his office.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the *Township Committee of Independence Township*, hereby states that it has complied with N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5 and does hereby submit a certified copy of this resolution and the required affidavit to said Board to show evidence of said compliance.

#### **Resolution 23-49**

#### **A RESOLUTION OF AWARD, RESURFACING OF RUSSLING ROAD SECTION 2**

Be it resolved, that on July 11, 2023 the Township Committee of the Township of Independence adopted this resolution to award unit bid prices for individual construction items to perform the necessary construction to complete the Resurfacing of Russling Road Section 2, a New Jersey Department of Transportation Local Aid funded project with a total project grant award in the amount of \$122,200.

Be it further resolved, that the Township Committee of the Township of Independence does hereby award unit prices for individual construction items based unit prices as awarded under the individual contracts awarded by the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council bidding process with a total cost of \$122,182.55. The award is made to the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council vendor, South State Inc.,

Be it further resolved, that the Township Committee of the Township of Independence does hereby award unit prices for individual construction items based unit prices as awarded under the individual contracts awarded by the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council bidding process with a total cost of \$2,176.00. The award is made to the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council vendor, Denville Line Painting, Inc,

#### **Resolution 23-50**

### **A RESOLUTION OF AWARD, RESURFACING OF RUSSLING ROAD SECTION 3**

Be it resolved, that on July 11, 2023 the Township Committee of the Township of Independence adopted this resolution to award unit bid prices for individual construction items to perform the necessary construction to complete the Resurfacing of Russling Road Section 3, a New Jersey Department of Transportation Local Aid funded project with a total project grant award in the amount of \$128,500.

Be it further resolved, that the Township Committee of the Township of Independence does hereby award unit prices for individual construction items based unit prices as awarded under the individual contracts awarded by the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council bidding process with a total cost of \$127,094.95. The award is made to the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council vendor, South State Inc.,

Be it further resolved, that the Township Committee of the Township of Independence does hereby award unit prices for individual construction items based unit prices as awarded under the individual contracts awarded by the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council bidding process with a total cost of \$2,122.96. The award is made to the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council vendor, Denville Line Painting, Inc,

#### **Resolution 23-51**

**Title or Subject: Extension of The Grace Period on the Third Quarter Taxes**

**WHEREAS, the date of the mailing of the Independence Township tax bills cannot be determined at this time, and**

**WHEREAS, NJSA 54:4-66.3 provides that no interest shall be charged for a minimum of 25 days after tax bills are mailed or otherwise delivered,**

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Independence Township Committee as follows:

**No interest shall be charged on 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter taxes, due August 1, 2023, if payment of said taxes is received by Independence Township on or before the 25<sup>th</sup> day after the date of a mailing as certified by the Tax Collector to the Municipal Clerk and provided further, however, that if any such payment is not received on or before the 25<sup>th</sup> day, interest at the usual rate will be charged from August 1, 2023.**

#### **Resolution 23-52**

**Title or Subject: CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN 2022 AUDIT**

***WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts, and financial transactions, and***

***WHEREAS, The Annual Report of the Audit for the year 2022 has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant with the Municipal Clerk, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-6, and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body, and***

***WHEREAS, all members of the governing body have received and have familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey, as stated in Resolution 23-48 adopted July 11, 2023 and have subscribed to the affidavit, as provided by the Local Finance Board, and***

***WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has prepared the attached Corrective Action Plan for the 2021 Annual Audit, responding to the Schedule of Findings and Recommendations.***

***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Township Committee of Independence Township, that the attached Corrective Action Plan for the 2022 Audit is hereby approved for submission to the Division of Local Government Services, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.***

Mr. Pennington made a motion to approve Resolutions 23-46 thru 23-52 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

**ORDINANCE:**

**2023-05 First Reading**

**ORDINANCE 2023-05**

**TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE  
COUNTY OF WARREN**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED SALARIES AND  
COMPENSATION**

***Be It Ordained by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, the following salary ranges, being established for Township employees for the year 2023.***

<b>Construction</b>	
<b>Construction Official</b>	\$ 10,000- \$ 19,000
<b>Building Subcode</b>	\$ 10,000- \$ 20,000
<b>Fire Subcode</b>	\$ 5,000- \$12,000
<b>Electrical Subcode</b>	\$ 5,500- \$14,000

<b>Plumbing Subcode</b>	\$ 6,000- \$14,000
<b>DPW</b>	
<b>Assistant Supervisor</b>	\$54,000- \$60,000

Mr. Pennington made a motion to introduce Ordinance 2023-05 with a public hearing advertised to be held on August 8, 2023, which was seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria.

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Second Reading August 8, 2023

**OLD BUSINESS:** none

**NEW BUSINESS:** none

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** none

**BILLS:** A motion was made by Mr. Pennington 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

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Mrs. Gesumaria to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 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