

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 600 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey, and via Zoom video conferencing.

Call to Order:

The Municipal Clerk reads the notice of Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call:

Mayor Tamburro, Deputy Mayor McEvoy, Councilman Roman, Councilwoman McGrath, Councilwoman Holland, Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan, Township Attorney Brian Aloia and Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan are present.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Tamburro congratulates Isabella Lambert as the Class of 2025 Valedictorian. The Mayor went to Staci's Sandwich Joint for their ribbon cutting. He thanks the DPW for acting so quickly in response to the water main break in front of his house. He welcomes Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan to his new seat on the dais and reports that BOE President Denise Verzella has invited the Council to participate in a joint meeting. The Mayor requests that this item be discussed in New Business.

Manager's Report:

Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan updates the Council on the construction at the Pool, which is still scheduled to be completed by April 30. He Reports on the Fairview Ave Well, specifically that the DEP has granted approval of the land exemption. He reports on road projects such as Linden Avenue, Dodd Terrace, Afterglow Way and Summit Road as well as the County's repaving of Bloomfield Avenue. He also reports on the construction of the pickle ball courts, Town Hall repointing and window replacement. He states that CFO Jennifer Muscara is present tonight with Department Heads to discuss the 2025 municipal budget.

Ms. Muscara gives a PowerPoint presentation on the budget and then goes through Administration, A&E, Executive, Municipal Clerk, Finance Department, Tax Assessor, Planning/Zoning/Rent Boards, Communications, Legal, Court, Civic Affairs and the Library Departments.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor McEvoy also attended the ribbon cutting at Staci's Sandwich Joint. He reminds the public that restaurant week is approaching. The Chamber of Commerce meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in the Library.

Councilman Alex Roman waives his time for this evening.

Councilwoman McGrath also attended Staci's Sandwich Shop. The Shade Tree Commission discussed their final recommendations for the Civic Center. The Neighborhood Traffic & Safety Committee will meet Wednesday on Zoom and present "walkable communities". MIAAC will hold their next meeting on February 26 at 7pm. The Library will hold an event Thursday at 6:30 for Black History Month.

Councilwoman Holland states she is excited for restaurant week. VMAC hosted a webinar on parenting and discipline and will hold Family Night in March. The Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee rescheduled their meeting to February 25, and will discuss turf versus grass fields. She reminds the public of the Winter Termination Program, that runs until the middle of March.

Public Comment:

None.

Hearing, Adoption or Amendment of Ordinances:

ORDINANCE No. 2025-03

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER A565-1 SCHEDULE OF FEES OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE TO CLARIFY STORMWATER PERMIT FEES

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance 2025-03 into the record.

Motion to move the ordinance is made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman.

Public Hearing:

None.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

Ordinance 2025-03 is adopted by a vote of 5-0. It will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2025-04

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER A565-7 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA - "POOL FEES"

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance 2025-04 into the record.

Motion to move the ordinance is made by Councilwoman Holland; seconded by Councilwoman McGrath.

Public Hearing:

None.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

Ordinance 2025-04 is adopted by a vote of 5-0. It will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE # 2025-05

FIXING THE SALARIES AND COMPENSATION OF THE SEASONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance 2025-05 into the record.

Motion to move the ordinance is made by Councilman Roman; seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy.

Public Hearing:

None.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

Ordinance 2025-05 is adopted by a vote of 5-0. It will be published according to law.

Consent Agenda:

Public comment on consent agenda:

None.

Minutes from the January 20, 2025 Special Meeting and the February 3, 2025 Meeting are unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION No. 2025-052

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman that the following resolution be adopted:

**AUTHORIZE BUDGET TRANSFERS BETWEEN APPROPRIATION ACCOUNTS
PURSUANT TO NJSA 40A:4-59**

WHEREAS, certain transfers of funds for various 2024 budget appropriations are necessary to cover anticipated expenditures; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40a:4-59 provides for transfer of appropriations with an excess over and above the amount deemed necessary to fulfil their purposes to those appropriations deemed to be insufficient;

WHEREAS, the appropriations subject to fund transfers hereby are not within those restricted by N.J.S.A. 40a:4-59 for transfer purposes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Verona that the Chief Financial Officer shall and is hereby authorized to make transfers between appropriations accounts of the 2024 Municipal Budget as follows:

	TO:	FROM:
Court - Operating Expenses	\$9,000.00	
Construction Code- Salary and Wages		\$9,000.00
TOTAL:	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00

ROLL CALL :

AYE: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAY:

RESOLUTION No. 2025-053

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman that the following resolution be adopted:

**AWARDING CONTRACT No. 2024-21
LANDSCAPING & MAINTENANCE SERVICES**

WHEREAS, on December 23, 2024 the Township of Verona advertised in the Star Ledger for bids for Contract No. 2024-21 - Landscaping & Maintenance Services setting the date for the return of bids as January 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2025 the Township of Verona received two (2) responsive and responsible bids for Contract No. 2024-21; and

WHEREAS, Caputo Bros. Tree Service, 325 Bowden Road, Cedar Grove, New Jersey 07009 is the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, for a period of twelve (12) months. The contract may be extended for all or part of four (4) twelve month periods, by mutual consent of the contractor and the Township of Verona at the same terms and conditions as the original twelve-month term.; and

WHEREAS, the Qualified Purchasing Agent has reviewed the proposal and recommends that Contract No. 2024-21 be awarded to Caputo Bros. Tree Service as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder; and

WHEREAS, this contract was advertised and is being awarded as an open-ended contract pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 5:30-11.10* and there shall be a maximum of 250 work orders as defined in the bid specifications per contract year (twelve-months); and

WHEREAS, the as required amount shall be chargeable at such time as a certification of available funds is made by the Chief Financial Officer upon receipt of a properly executed purchase order.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey as follows:

1. The preamble to this Resolution is hereby incorporated as if more fully set forth herein.
2. Contract No. 2024-21 shall be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Caputo Bros. Tree Service, for a twelve-month period beginning February 21, 2025 and terminating February 20, 2026.
3. The Township Manager, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Works and the Qualified Purchasing Agent shall be authorized to renew Contract No. 2024-12 for a maximum of three additional twelve month terms (February 21, 2026 – February 20, 2027, February 21, 2027 - February 20, 2028, February 21, 2028-February 20, 2029 and February 21, 2029 – February 20, 2030) without further authorization by the governing body.
4. No amount of this contract shall be chargeable until such time as to the certification of available funds is made by the Chief Financial Officer, upon receipt of a properly executed Purchase Order pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 5:30-11.10*
5. The Township Manager and the Township Clerk are hereby authorized to enter into any agreement necessary for the aforementioned services a copy of which shall be available for public inspection in the Office of the Township Clerk.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2025-054

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman that the following resolution be adopted:

APPROVING THE CERTIFICATION LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA FIRE DEPARTMENT QUALIFYING FOR CREDIT UNDER THE LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM (LOSAP) FOR 2024

WHEREAS, The Township adopted Ordinance #10-99 which created the Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP); and

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A. 40A:14-191* requires that the Fire Commissioner furnish the Township Council of the Township with an annual certification list of all volunteer members who have qualified for credit under the award program for the previous year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona that the list of the volunteer members of the Township of Verona Fire Department certified by the Fire Department Chief for the year 2024 is approved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of the list had been posted for at least thirty (30) days in the respective fire companies.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-055

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman that the following resolution be adopted:

**A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT PUBLISHING
LEGAL NOTICES ON OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT WEBSITES**

WHEREAS, the sunset provision of March 1, 2025 imposed under P.L. 2024 c.106 is fast approaching in what was a temporary solution that allowed local governments to comply with the public notice requirements under the law in time for annual reorganization meetings in January; and,

WHEREAS, local government officials serve as the stewards of property taxpayer dollars and should no longer be required to subsidize the newspaper industry with revenues collected from publishing legal notices in the press; and,

WHEREAS, long before NJ Advanced Media's announcement that it was terminating daily print publications in January of 2025, local government officials found it increasingly difficult to comply with the public notice requirements under the law as the media has become almost exclusively digitized and struggled to retain staff, resources, and publications; and,

WHEREAS, legislation that will authorize local governments to publish legal notices on a local government's official website will streamline an antiquated and overly burdensome process and save valuable time, resources, and property taxpayer dollars.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Verona in the County of Essex, New Jersey does in fact, hereby urge state leaders to pass legislation that will authorize municipalities, counties, school districts, and all local governments to publish legal notices in a clear, transparent, and timely manner on a local government's official website.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to Governor Phil Murphy, Senate President Nicholas Scutari, Speaker of the General Assembly Craig Coughlin, Senator Kristin M. Corrado, Assemblymembers Al Barlas and Christopher P. DePhillips, and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2025-056

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman that the following resolution be adopted:

PERMITTING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, 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 Council of the Township of Verona, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The public shall be excluded from discussion of an action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.

1. Purchase, Lease or Acquisition of Real Property pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (5)*
2. Pending, Ongoing, or Anticipated Litigation and Contract Negotiations pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (7)*

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

New Business:

The Mayor reads correspondence he received from the President of the Board of Education inviting the Council to participate in a joint meeting of the two entities. The meeting will be held on March 25, 2025 and no official action will be taken.

Public Comment:

Jessica Pearson, Verona, New Jersey

Council goes into Executive Session at 8:50 p.m. and returns to the Public Session at 9:47 p.m.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn is made by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilwoman Holland at 9:48 p.m.
Vote: 5 ayes.

The next meeting is March 3, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,


Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk


Christopher Tamburro, Mayor

APPROVED: March 3, 2025