COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 25, 2025, 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL

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1. Mayor Buss called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Mayor Buss asked Allan Ryan to lead everyone in the salute to the flag.

3. Administrator Capristo read the following Sunshine Statement: "The notice requirements of the New Jersey Public Meetings Law have been satisfied by noticing the Asbury Park Press and the Two River Times on January 3, 2025, stating that a regular meeting of the Township Committee would be held on June 25, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., 1 Veterans Way, Colts Neck, NJ 07722, Town Hall. A copy is on file in the office of the Township Clerk."

4. Roll call by Municipal Clerk Lindsey indicated the following:

Present:	Mayor Tara Torchia Buss, Deputy Mayor Michael Viola, Committeeman Dan Buzzetta, Committeewoman Sue Fitzpatrick
Also Present:	Kathleen Capristo, Township Administrator, Trina Lindsey, Municipal Clerk, and John Glynn, Township Counsel
Absent:	Committeeman Frank Rizzuto and Meghan Bennett, Township Counsel

5. **Minutes**

   a. June 11, 2025 – Regular meeting

Mayor Buss called for comments or changes to the minutes. Hearing none, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeeman Buzzetta and a unanimous voice vote, the minutes were approved as presented.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	M	X			
Buzzetta	S	X			
Fitzpatrick		X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

6. **New business**

   a. **First reading/introduction:** Ordinance 2025-12: An ordinance amending Chapter 222 of the code of Colts Neck Township entitled "Vehicles and Traffic"

Mayor Buss read the ordinance by title for first reading/introduction. Mayor Buss called for comments. Administrator Capristo stated that this ordinance introduction is at the request of the Police Department for parking restrictions on Clover Hill Lane. Administrator Capristo stated that our current ordinance does not include Clover Hill Lane, and this ordinance introduction is to amend the current ordinance to include no parking restrictions on Clover Hill Lane. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick seconded by Deputy Mayor Viola and a majority roll call vote, the ordinance was approved for introduction. Mayor Buss stated that the public hearing is scheduled for July 9, 2025.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	S	X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	M	X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

b. **First reading/introduction:** Ordinance 2025-13: Ordinance appropriating $275,700 from the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund for the acquisition of a conservation easement in and by Colts Neck Township, in the County of Monmouth, New Jersey

Mayor Buss read the ordinance by title for first reading/introduction. Mayor Buss called for comments. Administrator Capristo stated that this ordinance is in connection with the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Spinella property and is a cost sharing partnership with Naval Weapons Station Earle, Monmouth County, and Monmouth Conservation Foundation. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a majority roll call vote, the ordinance was approved for introduction. Mayor Buss stated that the public hearing is scheduled for July 9, 2025.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	M	X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	S	X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

c. Resolution 2025-119: Approval to submit a grant application and execute a grant contract with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the MA-2026 Improvements to Hominy Hill Road – 00456

Mayor Buss called for comments. Administrator Capristo stated that this resolution is to authorize making application for a grant with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for paving of Hominy Hill Road. Administrator Capristo stated that the Engineer's estimate for paving a portion of Hominy Hill Road is approximately $690,000.00 therefore any monies the township can receive in grant funds to alleviate that cost is beneficial. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick seconded by Deputy Mayor Viola and a majority roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	S	X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	M	X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

d. Resolution 2025-131: Resolution authorizing the extension of affordability controls on 22 Parker Pass by exercising right of first refusal to purchase said unit from the property owner

Mayor Buss called for comments. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that Resolution 2025-131 and Resolution 2025-132 are owner occupied units that are being put on the market for sale. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the Township will exercise the right of first refusal rights to potentially purchase those units and sell them within the affordability controls to receive credit towards the Round 4 obligation. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a majority roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	M	X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	S	X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

e. Resolution 2025-132: Resolution authorizing the extension of affordability controls on 34 Federal Key by exercising right of first refusal to purchase said unit from the property owner

Mayor Buss called for comments. Hearing none, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a majority roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	M	X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	S	X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

f. Consent Agenda

All items listed on the "Consent Agenda" are considered routine by the Township and are adopted or approved collectively by a single motion and roll-call vote of a majority of the Township Committee. If discussion is desired on any item, it is considered separately.

a. Resolution 2025-120: Approving and authorizing execution of a Shared Services Agreement between Colts Neck Township and the Colts Neck Township Schools Board of Education for Special Law Enforcement Officers, III (SLEO III)

b. Resolution 2025-121: Approving and authorizing execution of a Shared Services Agreement between Colts Neck Township and the Freehold Regional High School District Board of Education for Special Law Enforcement Officers III (SLEO III)

c. Resolution 2025-122: Approving renewal of a liquor license for the 2025/2026 renewal year, Dante Deo, LLC (Colts Neck Inn)

d. Resolution 2025-123: Confirming hiring of Colts Neck Township Summer Camp Supervisory staff

e. Resolution 2025-124: Establishing 2025 fees for recreation facilities and programs

f. Resolution 2025-125: Authorizing and approving execution of an employment agreement, Daniel DeVito, Chief of Police

g. Resolution 2025-126: Authorizing and approving execution of an employment agreement, Brian Caswell, Lieutenant

h. Resolution 2025-127: Authorizing and approving execution of an employment agreement, Morgan Savage, Lieutenant

i. Resolution 2025-128: Confirming appointments to the Planning Board (Evan Stivala and Christopher Montalvo)

j. Resolution 2025-129: Confirming hiring seasonal part-time Recreation and Parks Maintenance staff, Antonio Macaluso

k. Resolution 2025-130: Authorizing summer camp program fee refund

Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick, seconded by Committeeman Buzzetta and a unanimous roll call vote, the consent agenda resolutions were adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola		X			
Buzzetta	S	X			
Fitzpatrick	M	X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

l. Approval of Vouchers

Deputy Mayor Viola stated that he reviewed all of the vouchers and found all to be in order.

Deputy Mayor Viola made a motion to approve the bills list.

Mayor Buss called for a second to Deputy Mayor Viola's motion, seconded by Committeeman Buzzetta and a unanimous roll call vote, the bills list was approved.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	M	X			
Buzzetta	S	X			
Fitzpatrick		X			
Rizzuto					X
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

Committeeman Buzzetta recuses from any bills/vouchers in connection with the Colts Neck Fire Department.

Mayor Buss recuses from any bills/vouchers in connection with the shared municipal court with Holmdel Township.

Deputy Mayor Viola recuses from any bills/vouchers in connection with Best Horticultural and Joline Landscaping.

m. Administrator's Report
Administrator Capristo took a moment to recognize all of the first responders, Police, Fire Department, First Aid, Department of Public Works for their hard work and efforts during the recent storms which resulted in down trees, blocked streets and power outages. Administrator Capristo recognized their efforts in keeping everyone safe and getting through the aftermath of the storms.

Mayor Buss added that she was at an Executive Fire Council meeting when the storm last week hit Colts Neck. Mayor Buss stated that she saw firsthand the number of calls that were being dispatched to the Fire Department and the firefighters were all hands-on deck to serve the community. She proceeded to thank the fire fighters, the fire police, the EMS, the police and DPW for their wonderful response- all hands were on deck and greatly appreciated.

n. Township Committee Reports

Committeewoman Fitzpatrick:

- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended two ribbon cutting ceremonies for two new businesses in town, Institute for a Better Living dealing with depression and coping with infertility which is located in the old Wells Fargo building, side entrance, and Advanced Heart & Vascular which is located at the Orchards Plaza, 2nd floor.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the Eagle Scout ceremony for Christopher Quincannon, Jr.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the June 7th Concert in the Park series, unfortunately last week's concert was cancelled due to weather, however, there is another great band scheduled to play tomorrow evening, The Black Ties. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the concert series in the park are all weather permitting and reminded residents to sign up for News & Notifications on the township website to be updated in regard to a cancellation.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the June 9th Long Range Planning meeting where the group discussed an ordinance for animals on sports fields that must be on a leash, as well as an ordinance for private dumpsters, must be on the lawn or driveway and not placed on the street.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the Father's Day Fishing Derby at Bucks Mill Park, Gio Lotano caught the biggest fish. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she hopes all of the father's had a wonderful Father's Day.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Environmental Commission received the renewal of the accreditation of our Arboretum.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the Cedar Drive Middle School graduation last week and attended just today the Colts Neck High School graduation which was in record heat and done in record time. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick congratulated fellow Committeeman Rizzuto's daughter on graduating from the Colts Neck High School.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the CNBA fireworks are coming up on July 3rd at Bucks Mill Park. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that this is a wonderful event to attend with food and games, the Women's Club is looking for entries for the apple pie contest, anyone interested can contact Anita Dedalis. The Community Band will be playing at the event and the CNBA is asking for parking donations of $10.00.

Committeeman Buzzetta:

- Committeeman Buzzetta stated that there are 170 campers signed up for summer camp which is kicking off next week. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that the Recreation Director, Colby Marques has assembled a great staff.

- Committeeman Buzzetta stated that the Senior Citizen's Club has 273 members. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that they host monthly luncheon meetings and have a boat trip planned this month as well as a showing of Steel Magnolias at Bell Works.
- Committeeman Buzzetta stated that a resident of the township built and donated a portion of the stage for the summer concert in the park series. Committeeman Buzzetta thanked the resident for their generosity and the donation and commented how wonderful it is to see resident's give to the community and get involved.

Deputy Mayor Viola:

- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the Township adopted the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan for Round 4 at the last Township Committee meeting.
- Deputy Mayor Viola thanked all of the first responders and the Department of Public Works staff for their efforts during the storm. Mayor Buss asked if there would be an additional brush pick up for storm related brush. Administrator Capristo responded, stating any time there is an event such as the storm she asks the professionals to assess the township to determine if an extra brush collection is needed. Administrator Capristo stated that the professionals determined that an extra brush collection was not warranted, however, the Department of Public Works did extend the hours at the Department of Public Works yard for residents to drop off storm related brush. Administrator Capristo stated that any residents who put brush at the curb will receive a reminder from Code Enforcement to remove the brush.

Mayor Buss:

- Mayor Buss stated that she attended the Eagle Scout ceremony for Christopher Quincannon, Jr. and stated that it was an honor to attend his ceremony and she is always so amazed at the efforts the kids put in to receive the rank of Eagle Scout.
- Mayor Buss stated that she attended the Colts Neck High School graduation today with record heat. Mayor Buss congratulated Principal Donahue for keeping the graduation short due to the extreme heat. Mayor Buss congratulated fellow Committeeman Rizzuto's daughter on graduating as well as Colts Neck firefighter Matt Thompson who also had a daughter who graduated today.

7. **Public Comment:**

Mayor Buss read the following statement:

The public comment portion of Township Committee meetings is an important aspect of the governance of our Town and is welcomed and valued by every member of the Township Committee. It allows the public - the residents who live in Colts Neck and who together create the vibrant and beautiful community we all call home - the opportunity to speak on township topics of their choice- whether it is bring up a concern about e-bikes and the kids riding around town with no helmets, to seek redress concerning policies some may disagree with or consider unreasonable or unfair, offer suggestions and ideas to help improve the way the Township operates and the way we interact with each other, or simply to acknowledge someone for a job well done. When each of us contributes to the discourse in a respectful, considered, thoughtful, and meaningful manner, we all benefit, and Colts Neck is better off because of it.

In the past year or so, and perhaps even before that, some members of our community who participate in the public comment portion of these meetings have used their allotted time to personally attack members of the Township Committee, to raise past grievances that have been fully investigated and resolved, perhaps not in the way some would like, but they were resolved nonetheless. Others have chosen to make accusatory statements without evidence or facts to support their accusations. And, yes, some have even used their time to spread misinformation and lies, whether intentionally and knowingly, or not. The coarseness we see in debates on the national stage has at times, unfortunately, made its way into these meetings. You can show your displeasure and tell us you disagree with us without being rude and without being arrogant. When we first began to interact with others, it starts in preschool, we all learn certain rules- be polite; be respectful; be honest; spread kindness, not hatred.

To be clear, I recognize that the First Amendment does not regulate kindness or tone, and everyone has the right to express themselves and say what they want, and how they want, within certain clearly-defined guidelines, and I am not here to infringe on anyone's constitutional rights or to set rules about this speech. I recognize our Constitution gives people the right to be disrespectful and to act in a boorish manner. But I'm appealing to a different sensibility. Colts Neck is a small town of about 11,000 people. Our neighbors are our friends; our children are friends and go to school with each other and play on sports teams together. At some point, most of us are going to run into each other at DO, the post office, Orlandos, or in our parks. and we all want to live in peace and harmony in our community. Our personal interactions matter; how we treat each other in this room and outside this room, matters. Our children and grandchildren also take cues from us, the adults. How we speak to each other; what we write; how we treat each other, it all matters and our kids and our neighbor's kids are watching.

Disagreements are inevitable, but we must take it upon ourselves to disagree with respect and dignity, not by casting falsehoods and spreading rumors. Many of you invest a lot of time and energy to come to meetings and raise issues and engage in discussions with us. Those efforts can bear the most fruit if our relationship is premised on a foundation of mutual respect and tolerance for differing viewpoints. We will not always agree, but at least we will disagree after having heard each other and exchanged viewpoints without animosity and without making enemies.

And this is a two-way street. All of us on the Township Committee need to redouble our efforts to listen to dissension and your disagreement with our decisions with civility, and to show respect to you, the public, every day and in every interaction. Sometimes, the best outcome is to simply say, "I hear you, and let's agree to disagree", but at least that is a step in the right direction and better than the alternative.

And so, I hope you take my words to heart and think about them when you approach the podium. We want to get to the right place and find the right answers as much as you do. We care about this town as much as you do. We want to work with you, not against you, every day to make Colts Neck the best that it can be. WE, together, are Colts Neck, and this community is defined by how we interact with each other and how we treat each other. We won't always get it right, and we'll make mistakes at times, but know that we are always striving to do our best and we are always working to do what's best for the residents of Colts Neck.

Mayor Buss called for a motion to open public comment. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeeman Buzzetta and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was opened.

Michele Battista, resident, stated that she has volunteered her time for many years in Colts Neck with various different volunteer groups. Ms. Battista stated that she has not felt appreciated by the Township Committee. Ms. Battista made note of an incident where she felt she was yelled at and when she spoke to a member of the Township Committee about this incident she was told to make friends with the individual. Ms. Battista noted that she has volunteered for the township, the school and has been a resident of the township since 1993 with slim to no appreciation from the Governing Body.

Mayor Buss thanked Ms. Battista for her comments and stated that she is sorry that she has felt unappreciated because the Township Committee does appreciate her efforts and volunteerism.

As there were no further comments and/or questions from the public, Mayor Buss called for a motion to close public comment. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was closed.

8. <u>Adjournment</u>:

As there was no further business, Mayor Buss called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Trina Lindsey, RMC
Municipal Clerk

APPROVED: 07/09/25