**COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP**
**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**
**APRIL 30, 2025, 6:30 P.M.**
**TOWN HALL**

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1. Mayor Buss called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Mayor Buss asked everyone to join her 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 April 30, 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."

   "Further notice was provided to the Asbury Park Press and the Two River Times on April 25, 2025 noting the meeting time change from 7:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m."

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, Committeeman Frank Rizzuto |
| Also Present: | Kathleen Capristo, Township Administrator, Trina Lindsey, Municipal Clerk, and Meghan Bennett, Township Counsel |
| Absent: | None |

5. **Resolution 2025-89:** Executive Session – Potential Litigation

   Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous 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 | | X | | | |
| Rizzuto | S | X | | | |
| M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent | | | | | |

   After closed session, Mayor Buss called for a motion to go back to open session. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick, seconded by Deputy Mayor Viola and a unanimous voice vote, the Township Committee went back to open session at 7:10 p.m.

6. **Proclamation(s)**

   a. Arbor Day in Colts Neck Township

      Mayor Buss read the proclamation and presented it to Committeewoman Sue Fitzpatrick, liaison to the Environmental Commission.

7. **Minutes**

   a. April 1, 2025 – Special Meeting/Public Hearing
   b. April 9, 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 Committeewoman Fitzpatrick, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto 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 | | X | | | |
| Buzzetta | | X | | | |
| Fitzpatrick | M | X | | | |
| Rizzuto | S | X | | | |
| M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent | | | | | |

Mayor Buss took a moment to speak about Resolution 2025-95 on the consent agenda and invited Michelle Donnelly of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to come forward and explain what they do.

Michelle Donnelly stated that she is from the Daughters of the American Revolution, Middletown chapter and stated that the chapter's goal is to find revolutionary graves and put grave markers on them. Ms. Donnelly spoke about an inventory that was conducted in the early 1900's that shows that Tobias Polhemus is buried in Colts Neck. Ms. Donnelly stated that DAR is seeking approval from the township to put a grave marker on the site where Mr. Polhemus is buried. Ms. Donnelly stated that her chapter has marked 23 graves to date. Ms. Donnelly stated that once the chapter is done with their work, they will pass along all of the records for Mr. Polhemus to the township.

Mayor Buss commented that the work DAR is doing is wonderful and is bringing history to the public.

After brief discussion, the governing body thanked Ms. Donnelly for attending and commended the work DAR is doing.

**8. Discussion Item**

a. 8 Holling Road – Street opening moratorium relief

William Scott and Michael Heist, owners of 8 Holling Road were present and explained that they acquired the property in January. The property has been abandoned for approximately two years and there were no means of heating or cooling at that time. Mr. Scott and Mr. Heist explained that they are seeking moratorium relief to have gas and electric lines run to the property.

Administrator Capristo stated that she has spoken with Tim Anfuso, Township Planner and Glenn Gerken, Township Engineer who have no objection to the relief, with the following conditions:

- Saw cut the opening and install base course up to the surface at the time of the street opening.
- Return in 60-90 days and infrared heat the area removed two inches and install surface course.

The Governing Body unanimously approved the request with the conditions outlined by the Township Engineer. Attorney Bennett will draft an agreement for execution.

**9. 2025 Municipal Budget**

Comments from the Chief Financial Officer

Chief Financial Officer, John Antonides was present and gave a summary of the budget.

Mr. Antonides stated the following:

Preparation of the Municipal Budget is a time-consuming process that begins late in the fall and ends in the following spring of any given year. The Business Administrator and CFO review every line item of each Departmental Budget. Once this review is complete, the Budget is presented to the Township Committee and finalized by the Township Auditor, formally introduced and forwarded to the State for review, if required.

The total 2025 Budget Current Operating is $ 20,620,918.52.

State Law mandates that municipal budgets must be balanced, with revenues equaling appropriations. The main sources of revenue for the Borough are:

Property Tax $ 12,573,284.34
Open Space Property Tax $ 543,414.76
Federal and State Grants $ 56,248.42
State Aid $ 2,004,221.00
Surplus $ 3,000,000.00
Local Revenues $ 997,500.00
Miscellaneous Revenues $ 1,146,250.00 which includes $ 881,250.00 which offsets the appropriation, this is mandated by State Budget law
Delinquent Taxes $ 300,000.00

The Committee in preparing the municipal budget have maintained all existing services which results in a 0.96% increase for municipal operations, or .003 of a penny. The tax rate has gone from .275 in 2024 to .278 in 2024. The average home in Colts Neck $ 1,264,807.

This was done despite an increase of 21.68% in State mandated Pension costs and a 5.25% increase in Recycling Costs.

The $ 3,000,000 in Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) is $ 700,000 more than last year. This money allows the Township the ability to do pay as you go Capital on most projects:

$ 2,005,000 in Road Improvements (including Grant Funds)
$ 2,500,000 for a Fire Truck
$ 284,281 in DPW Equipment, Repairs and Vehicles
$ 334,523 in Police and Fire Vehicles and Equipment

This still leaves a Capital Improvement Fund balance of just under $ 1.1 million which can be used as Pay as You Go Capital or as a downpayment for any long-term financing.

As mentioned, the Surplus balance as of 12/31/2024 was $ 5,660,810.92 and $ 3,000,000.00 was used to balance the budget leaving $ 2,660,810.92 left. This is using 53% of the Surplus this year. The average Surplus used the last four years was 54%. So the Township is in the average range from the last four years.

The balance of Surplus after the budget as compared to Appropriations is 13%. The average over the last four years was 12.25%, so once again the Township is within the average range of Surplus retained.

Deputy Mayor Viola stated that he received concerns from residents who have received communication and incorrect information from other residents.

Deputy Mayor Viola stated that in the last five years the township has paved approximately 18 miles of roads, reconstructed 4.8 miles of curb and 208 inlets. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that he received a question from a resident asking why the township did not build bathrooms for Five Points park. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the grant from Monmouth County was rescinded. Deputy Mayor Viola spoke about $400,000 spent on the turf field at Five Points Park, equipment for the fire departments

and first aid. Deputy Mayor spoke about the First Aid Squad and their struggle with aging members, and the challenge of acquiring new members. Deputy Mayor Viola spoke about two electric carts that the township purchased for the First Aid Squad to assist the members who respond to emergency calls. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that two years ago the township purchased a new pumper for Fire Company #1 and have budgeted for a new fire truck this year as well. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that there was information put out to the public from a resident stating that the township pays for expenses at the annual NJ League of Municipalities conference, Deputy Mayor Viola stated that is incorrect.

Committeeman Buzzetta asked why the township is paying for recycling costs and why that is not paid for privately by the residents, as the residents pay privately for trash pick up. Deputy Mayor Viola responded stating that recycling collection by the municipality is required by the State. Deputy Mayor Viola spoke about the cost increase in recycling going from approximately $90K in 2018 to over $400K now due to China refusing to take recyclables, the cost has risen by 400% or more.

Mayor Buss called for a motion to open the public hearing. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous voice vote, the public hearing for the budget was open.

Robert Scales, resident, spoke about the percentages of the property tax breakdown from school taxes, to open space tax, library tax, etc. stating that school taxes are a very large part of the budget. Mr. Scales spoke about school taxes being flat and stated that he is trying to figure out where the discrepancy is with the distribution of taxes in the township budget. Mr. Scales spoke about an increase in taxes for the residents and asked where the increase is going from the tax increase when school taxes have remained flat.

Chief Financial Officer, John Antonides responded stating that a municipality cannot use capital funds for the current fund as a Board of Education can do.

Elaine Mann, resident, asked if reorganizing the Department of Public Works has been beneficial to the tax payers of the township. Ms. Mann spoke about the salaries of the Superintendent and the Supervisor and Foreman of the department. Ms. Mann spoke about the Superintendent and the Supervisor being provided township vehicles to take to and from their residents to work. Ms. Mann spoke about a clothing allowance and shoe allowance for the department. Ms. Mann stated that in the previous years work was done by the department and now the township outsources much of the work.

As there were no further comments or questions from the public, Mayor Buss called for a motion to close public comment for the 2025 budget. On a motion by Committeeman Rizzuto, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was closed.

**10. New business**

a. Resolution 2025-90: Authorizing adoption of the 2025 Municipal Budget

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 unanimous 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 | | | | | |

b. Resolution 2025-91: Establishing 2025 salaries and wages for non-union township positions

Mayor Buss called for comments. Administrator Capristo stated this resolution is in connection with the adoption of the budget and establishes the 2025 salaries for non-union employees. Hearing no further comments, 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 resolution was 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 | | | | | |

c. Ordinance 2025-9: Ordinance amending Chapter 102 "Development regulations", § 106 "Signs" of the code of Colts Neck Township, County of Monmouth, and State of New Jersey

Mayor Buss read the ordinance by title for first reading/introduction. Mayor Buss called for comments. Attorney Bennett explained that this ordinance amendment is to remove language in connection with political signs as the language is not constitutional. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeeman Rizzuto, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was approved for introduction. Mayor Buss stated that the public hearing is scheduled for May 14, 2025.

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

d. Ordinance 2025-10: Ordinance appropriating $2,343,868, $2,099,230 of which is from the Capital Improvement Fund and $244,638 of which is from a State of New Jersey Department of Transportation Grant, for various capital improvements 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 direct connection with the 2025 municipal budget that was just adopted. 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 unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was approved for introduction. Mayor Buss stated that the public hearing is scheduled for May 14, 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 | | | | | |

e. Ordinance 2025-11: Bond ordinance providing for the acquisition of a fire truck in and by Colts Neck Township, in the County of Monmouth, New Jersey, appropriating $2,510,000 therefor and authorizing the issuance of $2,384,500 bonds for notes of the township to finance part of the cost thereof

Mayor Buss read the ordinance by title for first reading/introduction. Mayor Buss called for comments. Administrator Capristo stated that this ordinance is also in connection with the 2025 budget that was just adopted for the purchase of a fire truck. 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 unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was approved for introduction. Mayor Buss stated that the public hearing is scheduled for May 14, 2025. Committeeman Buzzetta and Committeeman Rizzuto abstained.

| 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 2025-92: Authorizing fireworks display on June 2, 2025 Trump National Golf, One Trump National Boulevard, Serpico Pyrotechnics

b. Resolution 2025-93: Accepting the resignation of Morgan Savage from the Planning Board (Class II)

c. Resolution 2025-94: Appointing Registrar and Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics, Linda Stagliano and Kelly Marshall

d. Resolution 2025-95: Resolution authorizing grave markers to be placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) on township owned property

e. Resolution 2025-96: Resolution authorizing the acceptance of the donation and authorizing execution of an agreement between the County of Monmouth and Colts Neck Township for the donation of an Amida AL4000 Light Tower

Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto 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 | | X | | | |
| Fitzpatrick | M | X | | | |
| Rizzuto | S | X | | | |
| M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent | | | | | |

g. 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 Committeewoman Fitzpatrick 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 | | X | | | |
| Fitzpatrick | S | X | | | |
| Rizzuto | | X | | | |
| M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent | | | | | |

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

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 Joleen Landscaping.

h. Administrator's Report
Administrator Capristo thanked Chief Financial Officer, John Antonides and all of the department heads for their assistance with the 2025 municipal budget.

i. Township Committee Reports

**Committeeman Buzzetta:**

- Committeeman Buzzetta provided a summary of the status of affordable housing. Committeeman Buzzetta spoke about the balance of 138 units from the round 3 mandate. Committeeman Buzzetta spoke about the judgment of repose that the township received and the mandate for the township to set aside $2 million dollars for water and sewer which the township appealed. Committeeman Buzzetta spoke about the township rezoning 78 acres of land for affordable housing. Committeeman Buzzetta

spoke about the round 4 obligation of 101 units which spans from 2025-2035. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that the township adopted the round 4 mandate, under protest. Committeeman Buzzetta spoke about the township professionals and the affordable housing subcommittee working on a plan that will be submitted to the planning board and will be filed with the court by June 30, 2025. Committeeman Buzzetta spoke about the false information being circulated in social media and other platforms. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that the township has a plan and is working on that plan. Committeeman Buzzetta spoke about the possibility of extending the affordability controls for the units in The Grande as well as converting market homes to affordable homes in The Grande which would satisfy a large portion of the mandate with no new development. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that the township is looking into veteran housing and senior housing because that will have no impact on the schools. Deputy Mayor Viola added that the round 4 time frame is ten years therefore the township does not have to have everything in place by July 1, 2025. Deputy Mayor Viola spoke about the lawsuit initiated by the Mayor of Montvale, stating that unfortunately at every step of the way, the lawsuit has been unsuccessful.

- Committeeman Buzzetta stated that the Recreation Committee has planning underway for the upcoming Memorial Day parade, as well as the Sounds of Summer Concert series which will feature 12 concerts throughout the summer on Thursday evenings. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that as of last week there were 150 children enrolled in summer camp. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that the Police Department is offering a Youth Police Academy for kids in grades 5-7.
- Committeeman Buzzetta stated that last week was a difficult week for the Fire Department who responded to two fires, one being a barn fire and one a house fire. Committeeman Buzzetta commended his brothers of the fire department for their service and also thanked the fire department for assisting with the wildfire in South Jersey.

**Committeewoman Fitzpatrick:**

- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the clean-up of the town hall complex on April 15, 2025 was well attended by volunteers from the Recreation Committee and the Environmental Commission including long-time resident, former Mayor and Environmental Commission Chair, Thom Hennessy. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the group encountered many residents who were walking on the path around the complex who thanked them for their efforts in keeping the arboretum clean.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the sapling giveaway was held this past Saturday on April 26, 2025 in recognition of Arbor Day. Mayor Buss, Committeeman Buzzetta and Deputy Mayor Viola joined the Environmental Commission. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick thanked Environmental Commissioner, Tom Pacheco, owner of Colts Neck Nursery for obtaining the saplings. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Commission wanted specimens that are native to New Jersey for a better survival rate. The saplings were Easter Red Bud, Magnolia, White and Red Oaks. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Red Bud and Magnolias were big hits and went quickly. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she took the leftover saplings to the Friends of the Library book sale and all saplings found a new home. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that they also gave away seed packets of different herbs such as basil, oregano, sage, thyme and chive. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that you can plant the seeds in a pot to keep the deer and rabbits away and pick fresh herbs for your salads and sauces. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick gave a shout out to former Mayor JP Bartolomeo who moved the sapling giveaway from the town hall parking lot to the community center which is a perfect location to drive up and stay out inclement weather.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she, Mayor Buss, Deputy Mayor Viola and Committeeman Buzzetta attended the ribbon cutting on April 16, 2025 for The Grind, the event was well attended and the owners provided delicious samples from their menu.

- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the 60th Anniversary celebration of the Cedar Drive Middle School along with Mayor Buss, Deputy Mayor Viola and Committeeman Buzzetta. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the event was a walk down memory lane, as the halls were lined with memorabilia from all of the years. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she saw photos of each of her four children during the various activities. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she also saw a picture of her with the girls championship basketball team that she coached. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that it was a wonderful collection of alumni, parents and former teachers.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she was looking forward to seeing the little leaguers on opening day, however, the event was cancelled due to the weather.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Colts Neck Lion's Club Kentucky Derby even is this Saturday, May 3, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Bucks Mill Park.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Colts Neck Women's Club is having a special event, tea on Saturday, May 10, 2025 at the Colts Neck Library, a very special day with lovely sandwiches, desserts and tea.

**Committeeman Rizzuto:**

- Committeeman Rizzuto thanked the Police Department, Fire Department and the First Aid Squad for their response to the recent fires. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that he was present at the house fire and there was good, unified command and everyone did a great job. Committeeman Rizzuto thanked all of the surrounding fire departments who assisted, especially their partners at Naval Weapons Station Earle.
- Committeeman Rizzuto stated that he met with the Chief of Police. Committeeman Rizzuto reminded the public that the police department has two officers who are certified in correctly installing infant car seats. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the police department has started a youth academy over the summer. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the department is working on the Facebook page and is looking to launch that soon, as well as continuing to plan for National Night Out in August.
- Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the Historic Preservation Committee hosted a third grade class trip to the Montrose School. Special thanks to Michelle Warendorf who was instrumental in organizing that field trip. Committeeman Rizzuto reminded residents that Weekend in Old Monmouth is coming up as well.

**Deputy Mayor Viola:**

- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the township received notification from the Department of Transportation (DOT) that the Conover Road north Route 34 Bridge will be constructed in two phases and construction is expected to begin in 2028.
- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that Clean-up day is this Saturday, May 3, 2025 at Mazza Recycling. Deputy Mayor Viola reminded residents who are disabled or senior citizen residents that they can have their items picked up curbside by the Department of Public Works, the deadline to call to be put on that list is tomorrow at 3:00 p.m.
- Deputy Mayor Viola thanked the Recreation Department for the Easter festivities.

**Mayor Buss:**

- Mayor Buss stated that she attended the Cedar Drive School 60th Anniversary celebration. Mayor Buss stated that the school did a wonderful job and thanked Dr. Rigby, Dr. Garibay, the staff, the Board of Education and the students.
- Mayor Buss stated that the Friends of the Library book sale was a huge success, she will report on the exact numbers once they have been received.
- Mayor Buss stated that she attended a launch meeting for NJHomes where DCA Commissioner, Jacquelyn Suarez was present along with Gavin Rossi, Director of the Data Center Administration and Fair Share Housing. Mayor

Buss stated that the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), rolled out a beta test of a technical assistance tool to assist municipalities with housing development. The NJ HOMES Choice website would allow municipalities to create hypothetical scenarios of diverse types of housing stock to see how it would impact a municipality's affordable housing obligation and fit with their master plan. Additionally, the website will provide contacts and data concerning specific types of projects of interest to municipalities. DCA expects to launch the official website after the start of FY2026. Additionally, the DCA announced that it will be releasing a Request for Proposals on May 1 for municipalities seeking financial and professional assistance in developing affordable housing projects. DCA is seeking 10 to 20 municipalities interested in building lifecycle housing within the next 2 years. They are allocating $8-10 million in funding, along with funding for a staff person to manage the development process. Priority will be given to municipalities looking to supplement funding through their Affordable Housing Trust Fund and willing to work with non-profit stakeholder organizations in their communities.

- Municipal Clerk Lindsey responded to a question from Mr. Kevin O'Brien in regards to the number of attendees on the live stream video stating that the April 9, 2025 meeting had 10 attendees and tonight's is currently at 20 attendees, although it fluctuates throughout the meeting.

**11. Public Comment:**

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

Kevin O'Brien, resident, stated that at the last Township Committee meeting, Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the only reason the affordable housing topic is getting so much attention is because of a political campaign. Mr. O'Brien spoke about Committeeman Rizzuto violating his first amendment right at the township committee meeting held at the school. Mr. O'Brien stated that he has asked three times if there will be another affordable housing meeting and he has not received a response. Mr. O'Brien thanked Committeeman Buzzetta for his presentation and noted a conflict in numbers on a flyer that was distributed. Mr. O'Brien quoted Committeewoman Fitzpatrick in an article from the Two River Times where Mr. O'Brien stated that Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated the township can satisfy the affordable housing mandate without new construction. Mr. O'Brien asked if Committeewoman Fitzpatrick could explain that statement. Mr. O'Brien asked if Committeewoman Fitzpatrick has responded to the League of Women's Voters and if so, when will that take place.

Mayor Buss responded stating that the township is present to discuss township business, not political candidate debates.

Deputy Mayor Viola responded to Mr. O'Brien stating that the Planning Board's meeting is June 9, 2025 where they will review the affordable housing plan, the Township Committee will meet June 11, 2024 where Beth McManus will be present to review the plan.

Committeeman Rizzuto responded to Mr. O'Brien stating that Mr. O'Brien did advance the to several investigative bodies the claim that he violated Mr. O'Brien's first amendment right and the ACLU did not agree.

Deputy Mayor Viola responded to Mr. O'Brien stating that the numbers in the flyer were in connection with the round 3 affordable housing obligation.

Robert Sayko, resident, stated that he wanted to correct a statement that was made at the last Township Committee meeting. Mr. Sayko stated that he has not been working

with Lieutenant Mayer. Mr. Sayko stated that he has reached out to Lt. Mayer and has spoken with him about meeting to review the stop signs and speed limit signs, however that meeting has not taken place yet. Mr. Sayko stated that he feels the township should address electric bicycles stating that electric bikes can go as fast as 30 mph, and he has witnessed kids in town riding them that ignore stop signs, and are wearing air pods or headphones and cannot hear other vehicles or traffic warnings. Mr. Sayko asked if the township can seek the opinion of a professional engineer before proceeding with the placement of the remainder of the stop signs. Mr. Sayko stated that he visited the recycling yard at the Department of Public Works and noticed an old street sweeper on the property. Mr. Sayko asked if the street sweeper is still in use and stated that it appeared to be rusted. Mr. Sayko asked how the conversion of the market priced units to affordable housing units will work.

Deputy Mayor Viola responded stating that the conversion of market priced units to affordable units will depend on the motivation of the current owner of the unit. Deputy Mayor Viola agreed with Mr. Sayko in regards to the electric bicycles and stated that he has seen children riding them in town as well. Deputy Mayor Viola asked Attorney Bennett how the township could handle this. Attorney Bennett responded stating that the township can adopt an e-bike ordinance and she will forward some examples from other towns.

Committeeman Rizzuto responded stating that he also agrees with Mr. Sayko in regards to the electric bicycles and stated he will speak to the Chief of Police to have the patrol officers keep an eye out for kids on those bikes.

Committeeman Buzzetta responded stating that he will speak with Lt. Mayer and ensure that Lt. Mayer meets with Mr. Sayko.

Deputy Mayor Viola responded stating that the street sweeper has been operational and the township will do a buy vs. build analysis on the equipment to see which is better, and the township may also use Monmouth County.

Elaine Mann, resident, stated that she is puzzled why the township committee has not looked into the legislatures in Trenton who are opposed to affordable housing stating that those legislatures are writing amendments to bills currently. Ms. Mann commented that working with the legislatures in Trenton is the only way the Township Committee is going to change the affordable housing mandates. Ms. Mann questioned if it was beneficial for the township to take the tanker from Fire Company #2 stating that the tanker was used for fires and for pool fills. Ms. Mann stated that residents are still asking about pool fills. Ms. Mann asked if the township received the grant for the DeAngelis property. Ms. Mann stated that the township not only has issues of the public purse, the township has issues of government trust.

Attorney Bennett responded stating that the township received $326,000 in grant funds for the acquisition of the DeAngelis property.

Committeeman Rizzuto responded stating that the tanker that was taken from Fire Company #2 was out of service when it was removed and was past its service life stating that the tanker could not have passed inspection.

Deputy Mayor Viola responded stating that the township is looking into the legislators in Trenton and the amendments they are writing opposing affordable housing mandates.

Anthony Ursino, resident, asked about the process for converting market rate homes to affordable units and asked if the citizens of Colts Neck could help in any way.

Committeeman Buzzetta responded stating that the township is currently in negotiations with a third party for units that exist within the boundaries of Colts Neck to convert those units to affordable housing units.

Marianne Cucolo, resident, spoke about the township losing $2.5 million dollars by not recapturing 50% of the affordable housing units that were sold to a buyer for $97,000 per unit.

Deputy Mayor Viola responding explaining that those units were sold prior to the affordable housing controls expiring, therefore, the township could not collect 50% at that time.

Marianne Cucolo asked why the right of first refusal was not exercised.

Committeeman Buzzetta responded stating that there was no recapture fee to gain because the units were sold prior to the expiration date of the affordable controls and right of first refusal could not be exercised.

Attorney Bennett responded stating that the township has no rights until the 30 year expiration date of the affordable controls expires.

Lauren Francolucas, resident, stated that she is having a hard time finding information in regards to the final test results from the NJDEP for the septic system that will be in place for the Colts Neck Manor project.

Deputy Mayor Viola responded stating that the township's environmental attorney is working with the NJDEP and actually has to submit an OPRA request to the NJDEP to obtain that information.

Ms. Francolucas asked what would happen if the test results are received and the system is not sufficient and the developer is still building. Ms. Francolucas asked what will happen when the system fails and spoke about taxes being raised, sewer spills going down Route 537. Ms. Francolucas stated that the budget and tax increases are a big concern for the residents.

Deputy Mayor Viola responded stating that the developer did apply for entry into MRSA (Monmouth Regional Sewerage Authority) and was denied.

Mayor Buss responded stating that the township is working with the environmental attorney to look into the system and does agree with Ms. Francolucas that the system could fail. Mayor Buss stated that if the system does fail it will be the responsibility of the developer, not the township.

Committeeman Rizzuto responded stating that there is no circumstance where the township would be on the hook for a catastrophic event. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the system will be constantly monitored, stating that the State has very strict mandates for monitoring those systems.

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 Committeeman Buzzetta and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was closed.

**12. <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 9:06 p.m.

Trina Lindsey, RMC
Municipal Clerk

**APPROVED: 05/14/25**