COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2025, 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL

---

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 February 12, 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 February 18, 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 2025-66:** Executive session – Potential Litigation

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

   The Governing Body went into closed session at 6:32 p.m.

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

   Mayor Buss called for a motion to return to open session at 7:12 p.m. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous voice vote, the meeting returned to open session.

6. **Proclamation(s)**

   a. Proclaiming March 2025 as Colorectal Cancer Awareness month within Colts Neck Township

   Mayor Buss read the proclamation and presented it to Michele Battista.

   Assemblywoman Margie Donlon was present to present a proclamation to Ms. Battista for her efforts in raising awareness of colorectal cancer. Assemblywoman Donlon

spoke of Michele's fundraising efforts and her efforts to continuously raise awareness of the importance of getting tested.

Ms. Battista shared her story of being a colorectal cancer survivor and urged the public to get tested. Ms. Battista spoke about her efforts to raise awareness and the importance of having a colonoscopy. Ms. Battista stated that Friday, March 7, 2025, is National Wear Blue Day to raise awareness for colorectal cancer screening.

Mayor Buss thanked Ms. Battista for continuing to share her story and raise awareness.

7. Minutes

a. February 12, 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 Deputy Mayor Viola and a unanimous roll call vote, the minutes were approved as presented.

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					

8. <u>New business:</u>

a. Ordinance 2025-7: An ordinance to exceed the municipal budget appropriation limits and to establish a cap bank, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14

Mayor Buss read the ordinance by title for first reading/introduction. Mayor Buss called for comments. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that this ordinance is annual business. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve the ordinance for introduction. On a motion by Deputy Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeeman Buzzetta and a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was approved for introduction. Mayor Buss stated that the public hearing is scheduled for March 12, 2025.

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					

b. 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 2025-67: Resolution confirming and certifying Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) credits for 2024, Colts Neck First Aid Squad

b. Resolution 2025-68: Resolution authorizing the extension of statutory budget deadlines extending the 2025 budget introduction and adoption dates

c. Resolution 2025-69: Authorizing refund of 1st quarter 2025 taxes, Michel

d. Resolution 2025-70: Confirming appointment of Chairman, Recreation Committee

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 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	S	X			
Rizzuto	M	X			
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

c. 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.

d. Administrator's Report
None

e. Township Committee Reports

Committeeman Buzzetta:

- Committeeman Buzzetta stated that he attended the Recreation Committee meeting. Committeeman Buzzetta commended the volunteers on the committee who are a dedicated group that come together to plan events for the community, for kids, seniors and family events. Committeeman Buzzetta stated that there is a resolution on the agenda this evening to appoint Chris Montalvo as the Chair of the Recreation Committee.

Committeewoman Fitzpatrick:

- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Environmental Commission met on February 18, 2025, and discussed upcoming events:
    - April 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. the Environmental Commission will host a clean up around the Town Hall complex in honor of Earth week. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that Chair Thom Hennessy has coordinated with the Colts Neck Recreation Committee to provide bags, glove and pick-up sticks. All are welcome to join.
    - In celebration of Arbor Day, the Sapling giveaway is scheduled for April 26, 2025, at the Recreation Community Center. The event will include a demonstration for the public.
    - Discussion on the forestry plan.
    - Discussion on the next steps needed for maintaining the township's bronze level with Sustainable NJ. Committee members will continue to gather information to accrue points that satisfy specific category criteria for certification.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Colts Neck Business Association (CNBA) held their general meeting at Huddy's Inn on February 19, 2025, and was well attended. Committeewoman Fitpatrick stated that the new board's first general meeting showed great enthusiasm and energy. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the 15th Annual luncheon will be held on March 21, 2025, at Trump National Golf Club.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the township held the budget workshop on Saturday, February 22, 2025. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick thanked the department heads for their attendance and work on their diligence in creating their proposed budgets. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick thanked Mayor Buss for providing bagels, donuts and coffee.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the Chili Cook Off at the Colts Neck Community Church along with Mayor Buss and Deputy Mayor Viola. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Governing Body had the task of taste testing all of the homemade chilis and selecting a winner and commented that she did pick the winner of the cook-off! Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she and Mayor Buss also attended Huddy's Inn Chili cook-off which was the first time Huddy's has hosted the event since Covid. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that there was an excellent group of entrees and a good crowd for tasting.

Committeeman Rizzuto:

- Committeeman Rizzuto stated that he is continuing budget discussions with OEM, First Aid, Fire and Police.
- Committeeman Rizzuto spoke about the trailer that the Police department was temporarily housed in during the construction of the new municipal building. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the trailer has been moved to the Department of Public Works yard where the police range is located. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the trailer has been renovated and now has classrooms, heat and air conditioning, bathroom facilities, etc. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that having this trailer for classes is a great benefit to the town and thanked Chief DeVito and the Department of Public Works for getting that all done.

- Committeeman Rizzuto called Mary Pahira, Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee to discuss current things happening with the Committee. Ms. Pahira stated that the last meeting was cancelled due to several members of the committee being ill. Ms. Pahira reported on upcoming events such as the 3rd grade trip to the Montrose School, Weekend in Old Monmouth which is scheduled for May 3, 2025 and May 4, 2025, and continuing to work on obtaining grant funding.

Deputy Mayor Viola

- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that all documents required by the court for the settlement agreement for Round 3 obligation are in place. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the township will have 90 days to appeal. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the hearing for Round 3 final compliance is scheduled for Friday, March 7, 2025 in Freehold.
- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the Budget Workshop held on Saturday, February 22, 2025, was time well spent, and he appreciates all of the work by the department heads, the Township Administrator and the Chief Financial Officer.
- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that it is pothole season and urged residents to report potholes that they see throughout the township on the township's website using Report a Concern.
- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that he received an email from First Energy stating that rates will be significantly increasing this summer. Deputy Mayor Viola discussed speaking with a broker to determine possibly utilizing another energy company with lower rates based on the number of households in the township. Deputy Mayor Viola explained that if the township does that, homeowners would have to opt out if they chose to stay with First Energy Corp.

Mayor Buss:

- Mayor Buss stated that the Executive Fire Council is currently hosting their annual fundraiser for the Fire Department and First Aid Squad and urged residents to donate if they are able to.
- Mayor Buss stated that at the Board of Education meeting, Dr. MaryJane Garibay recognized the following students:
    - Cedar Drive Middle School students Autumn Reineck and Liliana Nicholson, 2025 All-Shore Intermediate Band
    - Cedar Drive Middle School student Kayla Birkner, participant/panelist at the Monmouth County Schools Partnership for Wellness 2025 Symposium
- Mayor Buss stated that the Board of Education has a new newsletter which is on their website.
- Mayor Buss stated that the Prevention Alliance met and discussed the planning of National Night Out which is scheduled for August 2, 2025.
- Mayor Buss stated that she has provided flyers for the Friends of the Library's upcoming book sale, as well as the Colts Neck Library's 25th Anniversary party, which is being held this Saturday, March 1, 2025. Mayor Buss stated that the Friends of the Library is accepting book donations for their upcoming book sale.
- Mayor Buss thanked Administrator Capristo and John Antonides, CFO, for their hard work in preparing the budget.
- Mayor Buss thanked the Department of Public Works, Police Department, Fire Police, Fire Department and the First Aid Squad for all of their work throughout this winter with the storms, keeping roads safe, responding to calls, etc.
- Mayor Buss announced the passing of longtime Mayor Vito Perillo of Tinton Falls. Mayor Buss stated that Vito was 100 years old. Mayor Buss sent prayers to Mayor Perillo's family and the Tinton Falls community.

9. <u>Public Comment:</u>

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

Marianne Cucolo, resident, asked Deputy Mayor Viola for the date, time and location of the hearing next week. Deputy Mayor Viola responded, stating that he did not have the information with him and would get back to her with that information.

Kevin O'Brien, resident, spoke about transparency from the Governing Body stating that Deputy Mayor Viola rejected questions in regard to affordable housing at the Planning Board meeting held on January 14, 2025. Mr. O'Brien asked if there are two affordable housing subcommittees and why those meetings are not public meetings. Mr. O'Brien commented that the subcommittees should be open to the public and also should be open to include more members. Mr. O'Brien asked if the Planning Board will get the proposed plan in advance this time or will they receive it in the 11th hour like last time. Mr. O'Brien stated that he spoke with members of Tunnels to Towers who are more than willing to discuss possible affordable housing for veterans. Mr. O'Brien asked if Tunnels to Towers will be involved in discussions, and if not, why. Mr. O'Brien discussed the meeting minutes of the Environmental Commission meeting from September 17, 2024, stating that the minutes do not reflect the comments made by the public. Mr. O'Brien stated that he raised this concern to Attorney Bennett and has not received a response yet if the minutes will be revised to reflect the comments from the public. Mr. O'Brien stated that he ran into the Code Enforcement Manager, Antonio Cardoso, and was able to speak with him. Mr. O'Brien complimented Mr. Cardoso for the pleasant exchange and complimented his hard work.

Mayor Buss responded to Mr. O'Brien stating that the Governing Body shares his sentiment for the Code Enforcement Manager who does a great job. Mayor Buss responded to Mr. O'Brien's question in regard to the affordable housing subcommittee stating that the subcommittee is not a subcommittee of the Township Committee, it rather is a subcommittee of the Planning Board and members of that subcommittee are appointed by the Planning Board Chairman.

Mayor Buss responded to Mr. O'Brien stating that her mayoral question to report on this evening is that residents have inquired about veteran housing, senior housing, housing for special needs adults, etc. to fulfill the affordable housing requirements. Mayor Buss stated that the township is supportive of all types of homes. Mayor Buss stated that the township is looking at the whole plan and will continue to explore various avenues.

Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the November 21, 2024 court decision on our Round III application was received and disseminated to the governing body on November 25, 2024. Deputy Mayor Viola stated that in the months of July, August, November, and December we have only one township committee meeting, which those dates are adopted at the annual reorganization meeting. The public input session with the planning board (January 14, 2025) was planned in September, well before receiving the court's decision presenting only one opportunity, February 11, 2025 for the planning board to consider the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

Anthony Ursino, resident, spoke about the intersection of Bucks Mill Road and Route 537. Mr. Ursino raised concern on the line of sight trying to turn onto Route 537 from Bucks Mill Road and asked if there are any future plans to better this intersection.

Mayor Buss stated that the intersection belongs to the County as Route 537 is a county road. Mayor Buss stated that she has spoken with the County and the County does have plans for this intersection, which is next on their list to address.

Phyllis Camera, resident, Vice President of Board of Education and township liaison for Brian Scarpa to the township committee. Ms. Camera brought copies of the Board of Education's newsletter for anyone who is interested and passed them out to each Governing Body member.

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 Rizzuto and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was closed.

10. <u>Adjournment</u>:

As there was no further business, Mayor Buss called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Trina Lindsey, RMC
Municipal Clerk

APPROVED: 03/12/25