COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP
Township Committee Regular Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2026 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall, 1 Veterans Way, Colts Neck

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

2. Mayor Viola asked everyone to join in the salute to the flag, led by members of the Colts Neck Fire Department.

3. Mayor Viola asked for a moment of silence.

4. Township Administrator/Municipal Clerk Kathleen Capristo read the following Sunshine Law 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, 2026 STATING THAT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE WOULD BE HELD ON APRIL 29, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M., TOWN HALL, 1 VETERANS WAY, COLTS NECK. A COPY IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE TOWNSHIP CLERK."

5. Roll call by Deputy Municipal Clerk O'Malley indicated the following:

   Present: Mayor Michael Viola, Deputy Mayor Dan Buzzetta, Committeeman Frank Rizzuto, Committeewoman Tara Torchia Buss, Committeeman John Tobia

   Also Present: Township Administrator/Municipal Clerk Kathleen Capristo, Township Attorney Meghan Bennett, Deputy Municipal Clerk Brian O'Malley, Chief Financial Officer John Antonides, Township Auditor John Swisher, Fire Chief Michael Cusate

6. Announcement: Mayor Viola announced to the public that for the remainder of the year, Township Committee meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.

7. Proclamations:

   Mayor Viola read a proclamation in honor of Parkinson's Awareness Month.

   Mayor Viola read a proclamation in honor of Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month. Mayor Viola recognized resident Pat Miller to offer remarks.

8. Discussion Items:

   a. New Fire Truck Specifications: Mayor Viola recognized Colts Neck Fire Chief Cusate to introduce the discussion of specifications for the new fire truck. Chief Cusate stated that after meeting with three different vendors, he and the specification committee recommend to the Township Committee the purchase of a rear-mount truck from the vendor Spartan.

      Committeewoman Buss commented that the current ladder truck is a rear-mount truck.

      Committeeman Tobia inquired about warranties included with the purchase of the vehicle and recommended the acquisition of warrantees for the vehicle. Mr. Tobia expressed his concerns about the selection of a rear-mount truck. Mr. Tobia requested the Fire Department's operation plan for their pumper trucks.

      Mayor Viola requested that the Fire Department provide the Township Committee with all requested documents and follow up as soon as is feasible.

Committeewoman Buss expressed her appreciation to the Truck Spec Committee for their work as well as her support for the committee's recommendation of a rear-mount truck.

Committeeman Tobia reiterated and clarified his comments and expressed his support for the Township purchasing warrantees for the proposed vehicle. Mr. Tobia suggested a separate meeting between the Truck Spec Committee and any interested Township Committee Members prior to the purchase being raised at a future public meeting.

Mayor Viola requested that all parties prioritize this issue and work to bring it to closure.

9. Approval of Minutes

   a. April 8, 2026– Regular Meeting
   b. April 20, 2026 - Executive Session
   c. April 20, 2026 – Regular Meeting

Mayor Viola asked for any comments or changes. Mayor Viola called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeewoman Buss, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto, and on a roll call vote, the motion was approved.

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

10. New Business

   a. **First Reading/Introduction:** Ordinance 2026-08 Amending and Supplementing the Code of Colts Neck Township Establishing Regulations Regarding Motorized Bicycles and Low Speed Electric Scooters on Public Property

Mayor Viola asked for any comments from the Township Committee.

Committeeman Rizzuto shared that Colts Neck Police Chief Devito is in support of adopting this ordinance.

Committeeman Tobia commented in support of the ordinance, especially in relation to the equestrian community.

Committeewoman Buss explained how this ordinance builds upon the existing state regulations.

Deputy Mayor Buzzetta commented in support of the ordinance.

Mayor Viola called for a motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-08. On a motion from Committeewoman Buss, seconded by Committeeman Tobia, and on a roll call vote, the motion was approved, and the public hearing was scheduled for May 13, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

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

b. **First Reading/Introduction:** Ordinance 2026-09: Amending and Supplementing the Code of Colts Neck Township Establishing Regulations Regarding "Cottage Food Operations"

Mayor Viola asked for any comments from the Township Committee.

Committeewoman Buss provided context and explanation for the ordinance.

Mayor Viola called for a motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-09. On a motion from Committeewoman Buss, seconded come Committeeman Rizzuto, and on a roll call vote, the motion was approved, and the public hearing was scheduled for May 13, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

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

c. Resolution 2026-77 – Resolution Authorizing Adoption of 2026 Municipal Budget

Mayor Viola asked for any comments from the Township Committee.

Deputy Mayor Buzzetta commented in support of the budget resolution, reducing spending without sacrificing critical services.

Mayor Viola directed CFO Antonides to introduce the discussion of the municipal budget.

Mr. Antonides further explained the details of the municipal budget resolution. Mr. Antonides introduced Township Auditor Swisher to provide comments.

Mr. Swisher commented that the municipal budget proposal is in compliance with state regulation. He further stated that that the Township is under state review this year (a once every three-year requirement), requiring additional documentation as part of the budget process. Mr. Swisher stated that the Township has been very consistent with both its surplus as well as budget as a percentage of total appropriations.

Mayor Viola requested a motion to open the public hearing. On a motion from Committeewoman Buss, seconded by Deputy Mayor Buzzetta, and on a voice vote, the public hearing was opened.

As there were no requests for public comment, Mayor Viola requested a motion to close public hearing. On a motion from Committeeman Rizzuto, seconded by Deputy Mayor Buzzetta, and on a voice vote, the public hearing was closed.

Mayor Viola requested a motion to approve Resolution 2026-77. On a motion by Committeeman Rizzuto, seconded by Deputy Mayor Buzzetta, and on a roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

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

Committeeman Tobia commented on the budget, thanking the Township Administrator and department heads. Mr. Tobia further commented his belief that there are additional areas to reduce costs as well as areas of concern, including fleet management, police salaries, legal costs, and recreation costs.

Committeewoman Buss commented in support of the budget, which she stated was a compromise process.

Committeeman Rizzuto commented against the purchase of an additional police vehicle and expressed his support for the Police Department, which just received re-accreditation.

Deputy Mayor commented about the costs of adding additional vehicles and police officers to the budget, and that any increase in spending would require an increase in revenue.

Mayor Viola commented in support of what he called a fiscally conservative budget and thanked the Township Administrator, CFO, and department heads.

Committeeman Tobia responded to the comments of the Township Committee and provided further clarification for his vote. Mr. Tobia requested the Township Administrator provide the maintenance records for all vehicles for the past two years.

d. Resolution 2026-78 – Establishing 2026 Salaries and Wages for Non-Union Township Positions

Township Administrator Capristo explained the purpose of this resolution.

Mayor Viola requested a motion to approve Resolution 2026-78. On a motion by Committeewoman Buss, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto, and on a roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

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

Committeeman Tobia commented that he believes police lieutenants should be eligible for overtime and that there should be a discussion on the take-home use of police vehicles.

Deputy Mayor Buzzetta commented regarding the Township Committee stipend.

Mayor Viola commented on the process for determining salaries and contracts.

e. Resolution 2026-79 – Resolution Opposing S-1836

Mayor Viola provided context and explanation for this resolution.

Committeewoman Buss commented in support of the resolution.

Mayor Viola called for a motion to approve Resolution 2026-79. On a motion by Committeewoman Buss, seconded by Deputy Mayor Buzzetta, and on a roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Viola		X			
Deputy Mayor Buzzetta	S	X			
Rizzuto		X			
Torchia Buss	M	X			
Tobia		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 2026-80 Authorizing the Purchase of Firearms Equipment for the Colts Neck Police Department
B. Resolution 2026-81 Authorizing Summer Camp and Spring Line Dance Program Fees Refund
C. Resolution 2026-82 – Authorizing Grave Markers to be Placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) on Township Owned Property

Mayor Viola called comments from the Committee. Mayor Viola called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeewoman Buss, seconded by Deputy Mayor Buzzetta, and on a roll call vote, the consent agenda resolutions were adopted.

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

Committeeman Tobia commented on Resolution 2026-80, thanking Township Attorney Bennett for her work on the related report.

g. Approval of Vouchers

Deputy Mayor Buzzetta highlighted a few key expense categories and advised that he found all to be in order. Mayor Viola advised that he found the fire department related vouchers to be in order.

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

Mayor Viola called for a second to his motion, seconded by Committeewoman Buss, and followed by a roll call vote, the bills list was approved.

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

Mayor Viola recuses from and bills/vouchers in connection with the Best Horticultural, Buck's Tree Service, and Jolene Landscaping.

Deputy Mayor Buzzetta recuses from and bills/vouchers in connection with the Colts Neck Fire Department.

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

Committeewoman Buss recuses from and bills/vouchers in connection with the Municipal Court.

h. Administrator's Report – Township Administrator Capristo announced Clean Up Day at Mazza. Administrator Capristo further reminded that seniors and disabled residents can take advantage of the curbside collection, residents can visit the Township website for additional information on these items. Township Administrator Capristo deferred to Township Attorney Bennett to provide information on the Hall Corporation litigation.

   Township Attorney Bennett stated that Hall Corporation has initiated litigation against the Township to recover costs that they claim they incurred to correct the sanitary sewer. The Township denies these allegations and will vigorously defend this litigation.

i. Township Committee Reports

Committeeman Tobia:

- Committeeman Tobia reported that the Sports Foundation had a very successful opening day and wished them the best of luck for a great season. The Environmental Committee will be moving forward with the purchase of a 250 Liberty Tree, and are in the process of soliciting quotes. From Farmland Preservation, August 7th is the deadline to have any questions put on the ballot for the November election. There will be some recommendations coming to the Governing Body for an open space and preservation and maintenance tax.

Committeewoman Buss:

- Committeewoman Buss reported that the Friends of the Library is holding their book sale on May 2 – 3, 2026. EFC is requesting that the Township reach out to the County about getting an emergency response hybrid beacon for the fire house on Rte. 537. [Committeeman Tobia responded, explaining the process for making this request] [All members of the Township Committee consented to the Township Administrator reaching out to the County]. Long Range Planning discussed tree removal ordinances to be in compliance with DEP. Colts Neck Prevention Alliance met and adopted new by-laws and discussed upcoming use of grant funds.

Committeeman Rizzuto:

- Committeeman Rizzuto reported that the Police Department will be presented with accreditation at the May 13, 2026 Township Committee meeting. The department will be conducting a DWI Awareness event with the high school students around prom time. First Aid Squad is looking into legal requirements for ambulance drivers in an attempt to

provide additional drivers. Historic Preservation Committee has scheduled a date with the Monmouth Daughters of the Revolution to restore the Bennett Cemetery, May 6th at 5:30 p.m. "Weekend in Old Monmouth" is this upcoming weekend, Montrose Schoolhouse will be open for visitors, along with sites around the county. Historic reenactors will be going into the schools to speak to students over the next few weeks. CNBA Barn Tour is May 6th. Mr. Rizzuto and several residents visited the Bucks Mill to clean it. Deadline for artwork for the PTO calendar is May 8th.

Deputy Mayor Buzzetta:

- Deputy Mayor Buzzetta reported on the recent Board of Education meeting, that the board issued two proclamations, one of which was received by Captain Smith of NWS Earle. Affordable Housing mandates were also discussed. A public presentation of the Board of Education budget will be held on May 6th at 6:30 p.m. at the Conover Road Primary School. The Affordable Housing Committee will be adding a dedicated section to the Township website. It will host the relevant documents that are discussed at public meetings. Mr. Buzzetta provided an update on a lawsuit against members of the Township Committee; this lawsuit has been dismissed.

Mayor Viola:

- Mayor Viola provided a statement regarding affordable housing. Mayor Viola attended the Brookdale President's Summit of Monmouth Mayors focusing on agrotourism in the county. The event was very well attended. "Made in Monmouth" is this upcoming weekend May 2nd from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The County has a paper shredding event on May 9th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m at Eatontown Borough Hall. CNBA hosted a ribbon cutting for a new business: Hope Happens Healing – welcome to Colts Neck. Recreation Committee held an open for public input to drive the future development of recreation assets. Summer Concerts will occur for twelve Thursdays across the summer. Summer camp June 29th to August 6th. Provided update on the Senior Club. This Saturday the Colts Neck Lions Club will host their Derby Tasting fundraiser. Mayor Viola provided a follow up reply to a resident regarding leaf disposal.

11. Public Comment

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

Scott Duprex, resident, commented requesting that the Township install signs to remind drivers to giver cyclists four feet of right-of-way on the road. Mayor Viola asked Township Administrator Capristo to look into this.

Jimmy Carfora, resident, commented on behalf of the Sports Foundation, thanking the Township Committee for including field improvements and enhancements in the budget. Thanked Committeeman Tobia for serving as the foundation's liaison and for his support. Reiterated that opening day was a success and thanked those who attended. Invited the public to upcoming games and events. Thanked the Recreation Department and Public Works for clearing out the area between Laird 3 and 4. Shared some request to put in irrigation at Cedar, reseed Cedar, and install batting cages and a new storage shed at Laird – expenses that the Sports Foundation will pay for.

Elaine Mann, resident, thanked Mayor Viola for looking into the possible leaf disposal and the associated figures. Thanked CFO Antonides for his work on the budget. Thanked Committeeman Tobia for questioning actions and costs.

Elizabeth Wilcox, resident, commented in support of the E-bike ordinance. Commented in support of a possible tree ordinance.

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

12. Adjournment

Township Attorney Bennett advised that the Township Committee would be going into executive session and would not return to take and further public action. Ms. Bennett read the executive session resolution into the record, that the general subject matter to be discussed would be potential litigation and that the session is anticipated to last thirty minutes.

On a motion from Mayor Viola, seconded by Committeewoman Buss, and on a unanimous voice vote, the executive session resolution was adopted.

As there was no further business, Mayor Viola called for a motion to adjourn public session. On a motion by Committeewoman Buss, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto, and on a unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Kathleen Capristo

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Kathleen Capristo, RMC
Municipal Clerk

APPROVED: May 13, 2026