

TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

**RE-ORGANIZATION MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2021**

The yearly Re-Organization meeting of the Hardwick Township Committee was held on this date at the Municipal Building, 40 Spring Valley Road, Hardwick, New Jersey. This meeting was called to order at 2:00PM by the Township Clerk Judith Fisher who noted that this meeting was being held in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act".

Mrs. Fisher noted that since the Municipal Building is closed to the Public, this is a virtual meeting being done through Zoom because of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

In accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice with the New Jersey Herald and/or the Express-Times, filed in the Municipal Clerk's Office and posted in the Hardwick Municipal Building and the Township Website. Mrs. Fisher then led the Public in the pledge of allegiance.

Mrs. Fisher thanked those that have joined us today using Zoom.

Roll Call:

Present: Committeeman Kevin Duffy, Committeeman-Elect John Lovell

Absent: None

Also present: Township Attorney Michael Lavery

OATH OF OFFICE - JOHN C. LOVELL, JR, COMMITTEEMAN 1/1/2021 TO 12/31/2023

Mrs. Fisher, Township Clerk noted that the County Clerk, Holly Mackie has sent the Certificate of Election for Committeeman-Elect John C. Lovell, Jr. Mr. Lovell had received the majority of votes cast in the General Election held in November 2020 for a three-year term. At this time, the Oath of Office was administered by Attorney Michel Lavery, Esq.

BUSINESS: Nomination of a Chairperson/Mayor

Mrs. Fisher asked for nomination for Mayor/Chairman.

Committeeman Lovell moved to nominate Committeeman Kevin Duffy for Mayor. Seeing that there were no other nominations, Mr. Duffy accepted. This motion was then second by Mr. Lovell Motion carried followed by a roll call vote:

Roll Call

Ayes: Mr. Lovell, Mr. Duffy

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

Mr. Duffy was then sworn in as Mayor for 2021 by Attorney Michael Lavery

The Chair was then turned over to Mayor Kevin Duffy.

Mayor Duffy made the following announcement that at the Committee's Year End Meeting, December 30, 2019, Mr. James Perry verbally announced that effective January 5, 2021 he will be resigning from the Hardwick Committee.

Mr. Lovell then move to formally accept Mr. Perry's resignation effective January 5, 2021, second by Mr. Duffy. Motion carried followed by a roll call vote:

Roll Call

Ayes: Mr. Lovell, Mr. Duffy

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

Nomination for Deputy Mayor

A motion was made by Mayor Kevin Duffy to nominate Mr. John Lovell for Deputy Mayor. There were no other nominations, Mr. Lovell accepted. Motion was then second by Mr. Lovell. Motion carried followed by a roll call vote.

Roll Call

Ayes: Mr. Lovell, Mr. Duffy

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

Mr. Lovell was then sworn in as Deputy Mayor for 2021 by Attorney Michael Lavery

CONSENT APPOINTMENTS

A motion was made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried to approve for the following appointments on the Consent Agenda:

Township Attorney Michael B. Lavery, Esq.
Law Firm of Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Municipal Clerk Judith M. Fisher, RMC (Tenured)

Township Committee Liaisons to various Departments for 2021

Mr. Lovell: Zoning-Code Enforcement, Director of Public works, Environmental Committee, Finance

Mr. Duffy: Open Space Committee, Agriculture Committee, Municipal Attorney, Municipal Clerk, Hardwick Seniors, Land Use Bd, Tax Collector, Tax Assessor

COAH Consultant Heyer & Gruel
Municipal Housing Liaison Judith M. Fisher

Tax Collector Donna Van Tassel 01/2018 – 12/2021
Tax Search Official Donna Van Tassel 01/2018 – 12/2021
Deputy Tax Collector Judith Fisher 12/2021

CMFO/Treasurer Christine Rolef 01/2021 – 12/2024
Qualified Purchase Agent Christine Rolef 2021
Auditors/Accountants Anthony Ardito, Ardito & Company

Tax Assessor David Gill, CTA Tenured

Assessment Search Official Judith M. Fisher
Affirmative Action Officer Judith M. Fisher

Registrar Judith M. Fisher, CMR 12/2023
Deputy Registrar Robin Keegan, CMR 12/2023

Secretary to Local Board of Health Judith M. Fisher
Right to Know Coordinator Judith M. Fisher

Recycling Coordinator Judith M. Fisher

COURT - Municipal Court of North Warren at Hope
Acting Municipal Judge: William G. Mennen
Court Administrator: TBA
Township Prosecutor: Richard Ralph
Municipal Public Defenders – Alternates: John Caleca, III and Scott Wilhelm

Township Engineer: French & Parrello
Driveway Opening Official Norton TBA
Certified Public Works Mgr.: Thomas Campbell, CPWM

Zoning/Code Enforcement: George Boesze

Construction official State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

Sanitary SubCode Official: Warren County Board of Health

Animal Control Officer Alan DeCarolis, ACO
Dog Licensing Clerk Judith Fisher

Emergency Management Coordinator Joseph Dunn 3/2021
Deputy Emergency OEM Desiree Dunn 6/2021
911 Coordinator Judith Fisher 2021

Roll Call

Ayes: Mr. Lovell, Mayor Duffy

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

Mr. Duffy noted that Mr. Rodman has sold his Engineering Business to French & Parrello of Hackettstown, NJ. They submitted their contract for 2021 that was reviewed by the Committee and Attorney. Mr. Duffy moved to accept French & Parrello’s contract for 2021, second by Mr. Lovell. Motion carried followed by a roll call vote:

Roll Call

Ayes: Mr. Lovell, Mayor Duffy

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS

Land Use Board: Mayor Duffy made the following reappointments

Kevin Duffy	Class I
Cynthia Caffrey	Class II (Also Grant Coordinator)
VACANT	Class III
VACANT	Class IV (2) 12/2024
Jodi Butler	Alternate #1
VACANT	Alternate #2 12/2023
VACANT	Alternate #3 12/2023

Environmental Committee Mayor’s Appt. (One Year Term)

Jodi, Butler, John Decker, Kevin Duffy, Mayor

Open Space Advisory Committee

On a motion made by Committeeman Perry, seconded by Committeeman Carrazzone and carried to appoint the following members to this Advisory Committee

Kevin Duffy	12/2021
VACANT	12/0224
Jim McKim	12/2024
Vacant	12/2024

Agriculture Advisory Committee

On a motion made by Mr. Lovell and seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried the following appointments were made:

Robert Wolff, John Crisman and Michael Fee

Emergency Management Coordinator	Joseph Dunn	3/2021
Deputy Emergency Management	Desiree Dunn	6/2021
911 Coordinator	Judith Fisher	12/2021

Grant Committee, 2020

On a motion made by Mr. Carrazzone and seconded by Mr. Perry and carried the following appointments were made to the Committee:

Kevin Duffy, Bill Hughes, Cynthia Caffrey, Robert (Bob) Wolff and Desiree Dunn

Liaison for:

Warren County on Aging	Laura Randazzo
Clean Communities Coordinator	Richard Schemm
Public Events Coordinators	Desiree Dunn & Bob Wolff
Insurance Liaison	TBA Committeeman
	Judith Fisher, Alternate
Risk Manager	Sharon Cooper
Consultant, PAIC Fund	

RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolutions 2021-01 to 2021-13 were adopted on the Consent agenda on a motion made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried. **Resolution 2021-07 will be on HOLD until the**

Committee works on the 2021 Budget

A voice vote was unanimous.

2021-01 Meeting Dates and Meeting Place

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK
ESTABLISHING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS
PURSUANT TO THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT AND EMERGENCY REMOTE
MEETING PROTOCOL FOR LOCAL PUBLIC BODIES**

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings, Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.* (“OPMA”), provides that within seven (7) days following the annual organization meeting of the Governing Body, or if there be no such organization meeting, then, by no later than January 10th, every public body shall establish by resolution a schedule of regular meetings of the Governing Body to be held during the succeeding year; and

WHEREAS, said schedule shall contain the location of each meeting to the extent it is known and the time and date of each meeting; and

WHEREAS, said schedule must be posted in a prominent location and remain posted throughout the year, be timely submitted to two newspapers, including the designated official newspaper for the Township, and be provided to persons requesting the same; and

WHEREAS, the Emergency Remote Meeting Protocol for Local Public Bodies, N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.1 *et seq.* (“Emergency Protocol”), requires that for meetings held remotely during a declared emergency, without physical attendance by members of the public, notice must additionally be provided electronically on the municipal website and posted on the main access door of the municipal building, and that such notice must include instructions for accessing the remote meeting, the means for making public comment, and where relevant documents are available; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick does seek to establish such schedule for the year 2021, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the OPMA and Emergency Protocol, and in consideration of the ongoing Governor-declared COVID-19 State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency and the Township’s duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizen, the Township is scheduling such meetings remotely via Zoom webinar.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the 2021 Annual Open Public Meetings Act Resolution does hereby designate the following meeting dates and other requirements:

1. A. REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING & WORKSHOP MEETING DATES
January 6, 2021 (Reorg) & January 20, 2021
February 3, 2021 & February 17, 2021
March 3, 2021 & March 17, 2021
April 7, 2021 & April 21, 2021
May 5, 2021 & May 19, 2021
June 2, 2021 & June 16, 2021 (June 8th – Primary Election)
July 7, 2021 & July 21, 2021
August 4, 2021 & August 18, 2021
September 1, 2021 & September 15, 2021
October 6, 2021 & October 20, 2021
November 3, 2021 & November 17, 2021 (2nd General Election, 16th NJLM)
December 1, 2021 & December 15, 2021

B. All meetings referred to herein above shall commence at 7:00 p.m.

In accordance with the OPMA and Emergency Protocol, and in consideration of the ongoing Governor-declared COVID-19 State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency and the Township’s duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens, the regular public meetings and workshop meetings will be held remotely via Zoom webinar. Formal action may be taken at the regular and work session public meetings.

Members of the public may participate in the meeting at the designated time by calling in or via Zoom. All login information can be found by visiting the Township webpage at <https://www.hardwick-nj.us>. Members of the public can register with Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9803512070?pwd=L1VIY05QZII0d01ObWpFNDBORjJ6QT09>

The agenda to the extent known will be available prior to the meeting at the above link or may be requested from the Township Clerk at hardwicktpclerk@yahoo.com or (908) 362-6528 ext. 8. Members of the public will be muted during the meeting but may speak during the designated public comment portion by the "raise hand" icon (Zoom app), and waiting to be recognized by the host, who will unmute individuals to speak and mute them afterward. Written public comments may also be submitted to the Township Clerk by email to hardwicktpclerk@yahoo.com or by mail to Township Clerk, 40 Spring Valley Road, NJ 07825. Written public comments must include the individual's name, full address, and contact information, and identify the meeting (and ordinance, if applicable) they are intended for.

Written public comments must be received by the Clerk no later than 3 p.m. on the meeting date and will be read into the record at the end of the public comment portion. There is a five-minute time limit on all public comments.

2. In the event that the above schedule of meetings is hereinafter revised, the Committee within seven (7) days following the revision of same shall cause notice of such revised meetings dates to be noticed in accordance with the OPMA and Emergency Protocol.

3. The New Jersey Herald, a newspaper circulating in Warren County, is the Township's official newspaper and is hereby designated as the newspaper for the publishing of all legal notices of the Committee as required by the Open Public Meetings Act. Such notices will also be published in the New Jersey Herald.

4. A copy of this Resolution shall be mailed to the above-named newspapers.

5. A copy of advance notices of special meetings not listed herein shall be submitted to the aforementioned newspapers.

6. A copy of advance notices of special meetings of the Committee shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of:

A. N.J.S.A. 10:4-8d, including among other things, the Agenda to the extent known for any such special meeting;

B. N.J.S.A. 10:4-9b, relating to matters of such emergency or importance that delay for the purposes of providing adequate notice would be likely to result in substantial harm to the public interest. It should be noted that meetings held under this subparagraph (h) of the Statute require the affirmative vote of 3/4 of the members of the Committee present at any such meeting; and

C. Any other applicable provisions of the OPMA and Emergency Protocol.

7. Pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-19, any person may request in writing that the Committee through the Township Clerk mail to him copies of any meeting schedule or revision.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

Judith M. Fisher, RMC
Township Clerk

Official Newspaper	New Jersey Herald
Additional Newspaper	Express/Times
Depositories for Township Funds	
	PNC Bank, Blairstown
	First National Bank of Hope
	Lakeland Bank, Stillwater Branch
	NJ Cash Management Fund, Trenton, NJ

2021-02 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY AND/OR SPECIAL TAX COUNSEL TO EXECUTE STIPULATIONS, CORRECT ASSESSMENTS IN TAX COURT, FILE ADDED, OMITTED, OMITTED/ADDED ASSESSMENTS, ROLL-BACK TAX COMPLAINTS AND TAX APPEALS.

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, has been informed that in certain instances, the Township Attorney and/or Special Tax Counsel may be required to execute, stipulate and make corrections or adjustments resulting from tax appeal complaints filed against the Municipality. The Township Attorney and/or Special Tax Counsel will need further approval to file omitted assessments and farmland roll-back complaints, all in the name of the Township of Hardwick, and

WHEREAS, the Warren County Board of Taxation requires a resolution of the Township Committee to authorize such actions by the Township Attorney and/or Special Tax Counsel retained by the Township which are authorized to act as agents for the Township Committee, and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee desires to grant such authority to the Township Attorney and/or Special Tax Counsel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the aforementioned individuals, individually or collectively, are hereby authorized to file, stipulate, modify, agree upon and otherwise perform the duties which are required to aid the Township Attorney and/or Special Tax Counsel in the above forenamed circumstances which are within the jurisdiction of the Warren County Board of Taxation and the New Jersey Tax Court.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2020-03 AUTHORIZING INVESTMENT OF IDLE FUNDS AND FUND TRANSFER

WHEREAS, it is desirable that idle funds of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren be invested in legal investment vehicles at all times; and

WHEREAS, it is occasionally necessary to transfer funds for the purpose of meeting current Township expenses or for the purpose of effecting investments.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on the 6th day of January 2021, by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, in the County of Warren that it does hereby authorize the Chief Financial Officer to request bids and to place orders for the investment of idle funds solely in legally authorized investment vehicles, such investments to the investing institution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the above Chief Municipal Financial Officer is hereby authorized to transfer funds by wire solely for the following purpose and subject to all pertinent regulations:

1. To or from Township checking or saving accounts to other Township accounts.
2. To or from Township Checking or saving accounts to or from accounts specified by banks or the State of New Jersey Cash Management Funds solely for the purpose of investing for the account of the Township of Hardwick in the County of Warren.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2021-04 CASH MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, P. L. 1983, Chapter 8, Local Fiscal Affairs Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-2 has amended to require that each Municipality designate a Cash Management Plan for the deposit of Local Unit monies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on this 6th day of January 2021 by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick:

A. Designation of Official Depositories:

1. The following financial institutions are designated an Official Depositories:

PNC Bank
First Hope Bank
Bank of America
Lakeland Bank
New Jersey Management Fund

2. Designated Official Depositories are required to submit to the Treasurer of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, a copy of the State of New Jersey, Department of Banking, Governmental Unit Deposit Protection Act notification of eligibility which must be filed semiannually in the Department of Banking as of June 30 and December 31 of each year.
3. Designated Official Depositories are required to submit to the Treasurer a copy of Institution's "Annual Report" on an annual basis.

B. Deposit of Funds

All funds shall be deposited within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt in accordance with State Statute.

1. Operating funds shall be deposited into interest bearing accounts to maximize interest earnings
2. Capital and Debt Service Funds may be deposited into interest bearing accounts. Non-interest-bearing accounts shall be regularly monitored for the availability of funds for investment.
3. Trust Funds may be deposited into interest bearing accounts. Non-interest-bearing accounts should be regularly monitored for availability of funds for investment except where either State or Federal laws prohibit the earning of interest on such funds.
4. Payroll and Agency remittance funds shall be maintained in regular checking accounts
5. Change Fund not in excess of fifty dollars (\$50.00) may be established annually for use by the Tax Collector and shall be closed out to the Township Treasurer by fiscal year end.

C. Designation of Allowable Investment Instruments:

The Township may permit deposits and investment in such depositories as permitted in section 4 of P. L. 1970, Chapter 236 (C.17:9-44).

D. Definition of Protection of Township Deposits:

1. All depositories shall obtain the highest amount possible Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) coverage of all Township deposits.
2. All depositories must conform to all applicable State statutes concerning depositories of public funds including coverage under the NJ Governmental Unit Deposit Protection Act.

E. Reporting Procedures:

1. The Treasurer shall prepare for the Township Committee a detailed listing of all investment purchasing in the prior month, specifying the amount, interest percent per annum and maturing date.
2. The Treasurer shall prepare a schedule of outstanding investments for the independent Auditors as of December 31 of each year and at other such times required by the Auditors.
3. The Treasurer shall report to the Township Committee on a quarterly basis, the financial conditions of each official depository holding township funds.

F. Maximum Maturity Policy:

Investments shall be limited to maturity not to exceed one year on all operating funds unless a longer maturity is permitted within the provisions of regulation promulgated by either the Federal or State governments.

G. Investment Procedures:

1. Bid for Certificate of Deposits and Repurchase Agreements must be solicited if the amount is \$100,000.00 or greater
2. Telephone bids will be solicited of at least three depositories by the Treasurer or his/her designated staff member
3. The depository shall specify the principal amount of the investment bid on, interest rate and number of days used to calculate the interest to be paid upon maturity. Interest paid shall be from the date the bid was awarded to the date of maturity.
4. All bidders may request the results of the bid after the bid is formally awarded
5. A check or wire transfer of funds will be made available to the winning bidder the same business day the bid is awarded
6. Each quotation shall be documented to record the date and time of quote, the parties in the discussion, the instrument(s), maturities and rates. A bid form from the Township may be used. The winning depository must forward a confirmation letter to the Treasurer within 48 hours of the day the bid is awarded.

H. Compliance

The Cash Management Plan of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren shall be subject to the annual audit conducted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2021-05 CANCELLING BALANCES between \$.50 and \$10.00

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-17 allows for the cancellation of property tax overpayments or delinquent amounts of less than \$10.00; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body may authorize the Tax Collector to process, without further action on their part, any cancellation of property tax overpayments or delinquencies (except those representing a full quarter or more of taxes) of less than \$10.00.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to cancel said tax amounts as deemed necessary.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2021-06 RATE OF INTEREST FOR DELINQUENT TAXES

WHEREAS, R.S. 54:4-67 implies that affirmative action on the part of the governing body is required to set the rate of interest on delinquent taxes and assessments.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Township Committee hereby establishes an interest rate of 8% on delinquent taxes for 2021 to be computed quarterly, with a ten (10) day grace period, in addition, the rate so fixed shall not exceed 8% per annum on the first \$1500.00 of the delinquency, and that 18% (as allowed by State Statute) per annum on any amount of delinquency in excess of \$1500.00, with a ten (10) day grace period. An additional penalty of 6% shall be added on delinquencies in excess of \$10,000.00, which are not paid prior to the end of the calendar year. The penalty so fixed shall not exceed 6% of the amount of delinquency.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey hereby authorizes the Tax Collector to collect the rate of interest on delinquent taxes and assessment as deemed necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2021-07 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY RAISING THE OPEN SPACE TAX TO THREE (3) CENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDINANCE PREVIOUSLY PASSED BY THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE. HOLD

2021-08 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES for 2021 HOLD

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey, requires that a resolution authorizing the award if contract for Professional Services without bid be publicly advertised.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick as follows:

1. That Michael B. Lavery, Esq. of the Law Firm of Lavery Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen, 1001 Route 517, Hackettstown, New Jersey 07840 is hereby appointed as the Municipal Attorney for the year 2021
2. That Ardito & Co., LLP, 18 S. 9th Street, Stroudsburg, PA, 18360 Registered Municipal Accountants, are hereby appointed Township Auditors for the year 2021
3. That French & Parrello, 43A Newburgh Road, Hackettstown New Jersey is hereby appointed as Township Engineer for the year 2021

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these appointments are awarded without competitive bidding as a Professional Service under the provision of the Local Public Contract Law, and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick is hereby authorized to execute this resolution and advertise the same according to law.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2021-09 AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES – MUNICIPAL AUDITOR

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick has a need to acquire a municipal Auditor as a non-fair and open contract pursuant to provisions of N/J/S/A/ 19:44A-20.5; and,

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has determined and certified in writing that the value of the acquisition will exceed \$17,500; and

WHEREAS, the anticipated term of this contract is one year; and

WHEREAS, ARDITO & CO., LLP has submitted a proposal, indicating they will provide the auditor services for the anticipated fee of \$22,260.00; and,

WHEREAS, ARDITO & CO., LLP has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which certified that ARDITO & CO., LLP has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Township of Hardwick in the previous one year, and that the contract will prohibit ARDITO & Co., LLP from making any reportable contributions through the term of the contract; and,

WHEREAS, the required certificate for the availability of funds has been filed by the Chief Financial Officer providing that legally appropriated balances are available to cover the amount of the contract as required by N.J.A.C. 5:30-14.5 and that fees for the aforementioned auditing and non-auditing services shall be made available by appropriate inclusion in either an annual municipal budget which includes current, revenue sharing and utility provisions, by budget amendments for Federal program spending or by inclusion in an appropriate bond ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick to authorize the Mayor and Clerk of the Township of Hardwick to enter into a contract with ARDITO & CO., LLP as described here in as auditors on in behalf of the Township of Hardwick for the year 2020; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Business Disclosure Entity Certification and Determination of value be placed on file with this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a notice of this action shall be printed once in a legally designated publication.

Political Contribution Disclosure. This contract has been awarded to Ardito & Co., LLP based on the merits and abilities of Ardito & Co., LLP to provide the goods and services as described herein. This contract was not awarded through a "fair and open" process pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 et seq. As such, the undersigned does hereby attest that Ardito & Co., LLP, its subsidiaries, assigns or principals controlling in excess of 10% of the company has either made a contribution, that is reportable pursuant to the Election Law Enforcement Commission pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:44A-8 or 19:44A-16 in the one (1) year period preceding the award of the contract that would, pursuant to P.L. 2004, c. 19. affect its eligibility to perform this contract, nor will it make a reportable contribution during the term of the contract to any political party committee in the municipality if a member of that political party is serving in an elective public office of that municipality when the contract is awarded, or to any candidate committee of any person serving in an elective public office of the municipality when the contract is awarded.

Exhibit "A" (Mandatory Affirmative Action Language), Exhibit "B" (Employee Information Report), Exhibit "C" (Business Registration Certificate), Exhibit "D" (Business Entity Disclosure Certification), Exhibit "E" (Political Contribution Disclosure Certification), and Exhibit "F" (Insurance) are attached to and made part of his contract.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2020-10 MUNICIPAL HOUSING LIAISON FOR 2020

BE IT RESOLVED that Judith M. Fisher is hereby appointed as the Municipal Housing Liaison for the Township of Hardwick, Warren County, New Jersey

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that her appointment will expire December 31, 2021

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2020-11 Tonnage Grant

WHEREAS, the Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act, P.L. 1987, c102, has established a recycling fund from which tonnage grant may be made to municipalities in order to encourage local source separation and recycling programs; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent and the spirit of the Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act to use the tonnage grants to develop new municipal recycling programs and to continue and to expand existing programs; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has promulgated recycling regulations to Implement the Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act; and

WHEREAS, the recycling regulations imposed on municipalities certain requirements as a condition for applying for tonnage grants, including but not limited to, making and keeping accurate, verifiable records of materials collected and claimed by the municipality; and

WHEREAS, a resolution authorizing this municipality to apply for the 2020 Recycling Tonnage Grant will memorialize the commitment of this municipality to recycling and to indicate the assent of the Township of Hardwick to the effort undertaken by the municipality and the requirements contained in the Recycling Act and recycling regulation; and

WHEREAS, such a resolution should designate the individual authorized to ensure the application is properly completed and timely filed.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick that the Township of Hardwick endorses the submission of the recycling tonnage grant application to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and designated Judith Fisher as the recycling coordinator to ensure that the application is properly filed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the monies received from the recycling tonnage grant be deposited in a dedicated recycling trust fund to be used solely for the purposes of recycling.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2020-12 Public Agency Complaisance Officer (P.A.C.O.)

WHEREAS the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey is required to designate a Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick has appointed/designated Judith M. Fisher as the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the Township of Hardwick for the Year 2021.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2020-13 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY SETTING THE OFFICE HOURS FOR TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS FOR 2020

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick believes that to provide efficient and cost effective services for the taxpayers of Hardwick, that the Township Officials should be available for a minimum numbers of hours per week, and that those hours be publicized, and

WHEREAS, The Township Committee believes that it is important that the taxpayers may rely on the various municipal officials to be available during their scheduled hours, and

WHEREAS, in order to keep the tax burden to a minimum, it is important to notify the taxpayers that certain services will only be available during certain hours, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick that the Township Committee sets the office hours for the following positions:

Registered Municipal Clerk, Registrar	Hours: -Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Tax Collector	Hours: Wednesday	12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Tax Assessor	Hours: Friday	12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. or by appointment
Construction Department:		908-362-6663, Ext 223
NJ Dept of Community Affairs		(Tuesday & Thursday) 8am – 12pm
Code Enforcement Officer	Hours: Wednesday	9:30am to 12:30pm
Dog Licensing Clerk	Hours:	Same as Township Clerk
Department of Public Works	Hours: Monday - Friday -.	7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith M. Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and exact copy adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick on January 6, 2021

2020-14 Temporary Budget for 2020 \$276,219.40

Motion made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried to adopt Resolution 2020-14 as follows:

WHEREAS, Title 40A:4-19 known as the Local Budget Law, provides that where any contracts, commitments or payments are to be made prior to the final adoption of the 2020

budget, temporary appropriations be made for the purposes and amounts required in the manner and time therein provided, and;

WHEREAS, the total appropriations in the 2017 budget, less appropriations made for the Capital Improvement Fund, Debt Service, Relief for the Poor (Public Assistance) and Deferred Charges are as follows:

General Fund: \$1,048,531.00

AND;

WHEREAS, 26.25% of the total appropriations in the 2017 budget, less the appropriations made for Capital Improvement Fund, Debt Service, Relief for the Poor (Public Assistance), and Deferred Charges are as follows,

General Fund: \$275,239.39

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren that the temporary appropriations be made in the amount of \$276,219.40 for the General Fund and that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Chief Financial Officer for recordkeeping.

Roll Call

Ayes: Mr. Lovell, Mayor Duffy

Nays: None

Abstentions: None **Absent:** None

Ordinance 1st Reading

A motion was made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried to introduce **Ordinance 2020-01** for first reading:

ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14) 2021-01

WHEREAS, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S. 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget up to 1.0% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick in the County of Warren finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2021 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the Hardwick Township Committee hereby determines that a 2.5% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$20,866.18 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

WHEREAS the Hardwick Township Committee hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, in the County of Warren, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that, in the CY 2021 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of Hardwick shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$29,212.65, and that the CY 2021 municipal budget for the Township of Hardwick be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that any that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced on first reading at a regular meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick held on January 06,

2021 and ordered published in accordance with the law. Said Ordinance will be considered for final reading and adoption at a regular meeting of the Township Committee to be held on February 03, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the Township Committee may hear this Ordinance at the Municipal Building, 40 Spring Valley Road, Hardwick, New Jersey, at which time all persons interested may appear for or against the adoption of said Ordinance.

Judith Fisher, R.M.C.
Township of Hardwick

Motion: Mr. Lovell

Second: Mr. Duffy

Roll Call: Mr. Lovell: yes Mayor Duffy: yes

Mrs. Fisher noted that 2nd Reading and Public Hearing will be on February 3, 2022 at 7PM or as soon thereafter as possible.

NEW BUSINESS: None

Public Alliance Insurance Coverage - 3 year Renewal 2021 – 2023

Motion made by Mr. Lovell, second by Mr. Duffy and carried to adopt the following Resolution 2021-15:

Roll Call: Mr. Lovell: yes Mayor Duffy: yes

2021-15 PUBLIC ALLIANCE INSURANCE COVERAGE FUND RESOLUTION TO JOIN

WHEREAS, a member of local units have joined together to form the Public Alliance Insurance Coverage Fund, hereinafter referred to as “**FUND**”, as permitted by N.J.S. 40A:10-36; and

WHEREAS, the statutes governing the creation and operation of a Joint Insurance Fund contain elaborate restrictions and safeguards concerning the sale and efficient administration of the public interest entrusted to such a **FUND**; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick, here in after referred to as “**PUBLIC ENTITY**” has determined that membership in the Public Alliance Insurance Coverage Fund is in the best interest of the local unit; and

WHEREAS, the **Public Entity** agrees to be a member of the **FUND** for a period of three (3) years, effective January 1, 2021 at 12:01am standard time and said membership to terminate on January 1, 2023 at 12:01am standard time, and

WHEREAS, the **Public Entity** has never defaulted on claims if self-insured and has not been canceled for non-payment of insurance premiums for two (2) years prior to this Resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Public Entity** does hereby agree to join the Public Alliance Insurance Coverage Fund for all types of coverage offered by the Fund which are applicable to the Public Entity; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Public Entity** will be afforded the following types of coverages:

Worker’s Compensation

Package – Property, Boiler & Machinery, Crime, Cyber, Auto, General

Liability, Police Professional & Environmental Impairment Liability

Public Officials Liability

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that **TBD** is hereby appointed as the **Public Entity’s** Fund Commissioner and that Judith Fisher is hereby appointed as the Alternate Fund Commissioner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Public Entity’s** Fund Commissioner is authorized and directed to execute the Indemnity and Trust Agreement and such other documents signifying membership to the **Fund** as are required by the Fund’s bylaws and to deliver same to the Administrator of the Fund with the express reservation that said documents shall become effective only upon the **Public Entity’s** admission to the Fund.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify the foregoing Resolution to be a true and accurate copy adopted by the Township Committee on January 6, 2021.

Judith Fisher, RMC
Township Clerk

Motion made by Mr. Lovell, second by Mr. Duffy and carried to adopt the following Resolution 2021-16:

Roll Call: Mr. Lovell: yes Mayor Duffy: yes

2021-16 PUBLIC ALLIANCE INSURANCE COVERAGE FUND INDEMNITY AND TRUST AGREEMENT

This Agreement, made the 6th day of January, 2021, in the County of Warren. State of New Jersey, by and between the Public Alliance Insurance Coverage Fund, hereinafter referred to as "FUND", and the Governing Body of the Township of Hardwick hereinafter referred to as "Public Entity", and

Whereas, the Fund seeks to provide its members with insurance coverage; and

Whereas, two or more public entities have collectively formed a joint insurance fund as is authorized and described in N.J.S.A. 40A:10-36 et.seq. as the regulations promulgated pursuant thereto; and

Whereas, the Public Entity has agreement to become a member of said Fund in accordance with and to the extent provided for in the bylaws of the Fund and in consideration of such obligations and benefits to be shared by the membership of the Fund.

Now, Therefore, it is agreed as follows:

1. The Public entity hereby agrees to be a member of the Fund for an initial period of three (3) years, the commencement of which shall coincide with the effective date of the Public Entity's membership of the Fund.
2. The Public Entity hereby ratifies and affirms the bylaws and other organizational and operational documents of the Fund and as from time to time amended and altered by the Fund and/or Department of Banking and Insurance in accordance with the applicable statutes and regulations as if each and every one of said documents were executed contemporaneously herewith.
3. The Public Entity agrees to be a participating member of the Fund for the period provided for and to comply with all of the rules and regulations and obligations associated with said membership.
4. The Public Entity certifies that it has never defaulted on any claim if self-insured and has not canceled for non-payment of insurance premium for a period of at least two (2) years prior to the date hereof.
5. The Public Entity agrees that as a member of the Public Alliance Insurance Coverage Fund the Public Entity must purchase all types of coverage offered by the Fund which are applicable to the Public Entity.
6. In consideration of renewal of membership in the Fund, the Public Entity agrees that for those types of insurance in which it participates, the Public Entity shall jointly and severally assume and discharge the liability of each and every member of the Fund all of whom, as a condition of membership in the Fund, shall execute a verbatim counterpart to this agreement. By execution hereof the full faith and credit of the Public Entity is pledged to the punctual payment of any sums which shall become due to the Fund in accordance with the bylaws thereof, the Agreement or any part applicable statute or regulation.
7. If the Fund, in the enforcement of any part of this Agreement, shall incur necessary expenses or become obligated to pay attorney's fees and/or court costs, the Public Entity agrees to reimburse the Fund for all such reasonable expenses, fees and costs on demand.
8. The Public Entity and the Fund agrees that the Fund shall hold all monies paid by the Public Entity to the Fund as Fiduciaries or the benefit of Fund claimants all in accordance the applicable statute and/or regulations.
9. The Fund shall establish and maintain Trust Accounts in accordance with N.J.S.C.11:15-2.13 and such other statutes and regulations as may be applicable.
10. Each Public Entity that becomes a member of the Fund shall be obligated to execute the agreement.
11. The Fund Commissions designated in the Resolution to Join is hereby authorized to execute this agreement.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify the foregoing Resolution to be a true and accurate copy adopted by the Township Committee on January 6, 2021.

Judith Fisher, RMC
Township Clerk

Motion made by Mr. Lovell, second by Mr. Duffy and carried to adopt the following Resolution 2021-17:

Roll Call: Mr. Lovell: yes Mayor Duffy: yes

2021-17 PUBLIC ALLIANCE INSURANCE COVERAGE FUND RESOLUTION APPOINTING A RISK MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick, has resolved to join the Public Alliance Insurance Coverage Fund ("PAIC") following a detailed analysis; and

WHEREAS, the Bylaws of PAIC require that each Entity designate a Risk Management Consultant to perform various professional services as detailed in the Bylaws and Risk Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Bylaws indicate that PAIC shall pay each Risk Management Consultant a fee to be established by the Executive Committee;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Hardwick hereby appoints Public Alliance Insurance Coverage Fund (PAIC), as its Risk Management Consultant in accordance with the Fund's Bylaws.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify the foregoing Resolution to be a true and accurate copy adopted by the Township Committee on January 6, 2021.

Judith Fisher, RMC
Township Clerk

WC Dept of Land Preservation – letter from Teresa Kaminski, RE: Cost Share Support for the Farmland Preservation

Motion made by Mr. Duffy, second by Mr. Lovell to adopt Resolution 2021-18

Roll Call: Mr. Lovell: yes Mayor Duffy: yes

2021-18 Granting Approval of the Purchase of a Development Easement on the 7 Old Orchard Road, LLC Farm, Block 1201 Lot 1 in Hardwick Township Consisting of Approximately 76.45 (3%+) Net Acres

WHEREAS, the Warren County Agriculture Development Board has determined that the property known as the Old Orchard Road, LLC Farm, c/o Shahzad Khan, Corporate Secretary/Partner, located on Block 1201 Lot 1, Hardwick Township and consisting of approximately 76.45 (3%+) net acres has available for purchase a development easement in accordance with the requirements of the farmland preservation program; and

WHEREAS, the pressures from development have significantly heightened the degree of imminence of change of land use from productive agriculture to nonagricultural uses; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.9A(b) on July 11, 2019 it was determined by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) that the application for the sale of a development easement was complete and accurate and satisfied the criteria contained in N.J.A.C. 2:76-17A.9(a); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17A.11, on January 23, 2020 the State Agricultural Development Committee has certified a development easement value of \$3,600 per acre based on zoning and environmental regulations in place as of 9/11/19 with an estimated total value of \$275,220; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.12, the Owner accepted the County's negotiated offer of \$4,000 per acre, which is the highest appraisal value for the development easement for the Property; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick has agreed to participate in cost-share for the development easement of \$600 per acre, with an estimated total price of \$45,870 for their portion in the negotiated purchase price for the development easement on the Property with an estimated total purchase price of \$305,800.00; and

WHEREAS, the property is part of the approved Warren County Planning Incentive Grant Application and is funded by the Warren County Open Space, Farmland, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund; and

WHEREAS, the tract would encourage the survivability of production agriculture in Hardwick Township, and said tract falls within a predetermined County Agricultural Development Area and is in the North Project Area; and

WHEREAS, the purchase of the development easement on the property will encourage the survivability of the productive agriculture in Hardwick Township and Warren County; and

WHEREAS, preliminary approval for the purchase of development rights on this farm has been granted by the State Agricultural Development Committee; and

WHEREAS, the SADC is expected to grant final approval for funding amount on said application at its March 25, 2021 meeting; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.13 on January 21, 2021, the Warren County Agriculture Development Board is expected to approve the funding for the development easement with cost share

contribution by the SADC and Hardwick Township as follows: SADC \$186,538.00, Warren County \$73,392.00; Hardwick Township \$45,870.00 and

WHEREAS, the WCADB approval included the following conditions:

- a. No existing structures on premises
- b. No existing agriculture labor housing on premises
- c. Exceptions
 - 1) One acre non-severable exception are for future single family residence and for future flexibility.
- d. No Residual Dwelling Site Opportunities (RDSO's)
- e. No preexisting non-agricultural uses on premises
- f. Access easements to be determined by title search
- g. No proposed trails
- h. SADC funding from Base grant, competitive round or both
- i. Warren County is requesting SADC funding for a 3% buffer on the final surveyed acreage

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of Hardwick as follows:

The Township Committee hereby grants permission for their cost-share and on the purchase of the development easement by the County of Warren under the Farmland Preservation Act as set forth above.

CERTIFICATION

I, Judith Fisher, Clerk of the Township of Hardwick, do hereby certify the foregoing Resolution to be a true and accurate copy adopted by the Township Committee on January 6, 2021.

Judith Fisher, RMC
Township Clerk

Announcements

Dog Licensing due by the end of February
Auditors - Financial Review , January 15 & 16, 2020
Committee Budget Meeting - TBD
Budget Meeting with Auditors - TBD

Public Comments:

A motion was made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried to open this portion of the meeting for comments from the Public.

Jackie Espinoza from JCP&L wish all a Happy New Year and that she is looking forward to working with all.

Joe Liccese, Spring Valley Road asked about the lease for the Vass Farmstead. And the Cemetery on Spring Valley Road.

Tom Campbell, CPWM wished John the best and he is looking forward to working with him and his liaison for the DPW.

Motion was then made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried to close this portion of the meeting to the Public.

Committee Reports

Mr. Lovell:

To: Citizens of Hardwick

Date: January 5, 2021

Subject: 2021 Service on the Hardwick Township Committee

I begin my term by thanking the citizens who supported my election to the Town Committee. During the 2020 campaign season, I received a call from a resident who indicated that she was struggling with the idea of voting for me due to my political affiliation. My response to her and all Hardwick citizens is that you vote for the person and not the party. Throughout my years of service in municipal government I came to the conclusion that there are good people on both sides of the political aisle and that neither party is without its strengths and weaknesses. The bottom line is that I look to serve all of Hardwick.

We begin 2021 with a variety of challenges. Many of the immediate challenges are fiscal matters that will impact the town's cost of operations in the current year and beyond.

The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the state government's fiscal health. In 2020, the state issued bonds to remain afloat. It is not clear if the amount borrowed will prove adequate to weather the duration. If not, the state may implement reductions in aid to local governments as has been the tradition going back several administrations when New Jersey was faced with pending revenue shortfalls.

Several weeks back, members of the Blairstown Committee requested the opportunity to explore additional cost sharing for the provision of fire services in Hardwick. Talks have not started but rest assured that this inquiry is about tax dollars.

The Affordable Health Care Act will be back on center stage this year. The outgoing administration refused to implement a tax on higher cost health plans to fund the program. If a policy reversal is implemented in 2021, the health insurance plans provided to Hardwick employees are vulnerable to significant premium increases to fund the tax.

Hardwick's employees have requested consideration for funding medical insurance coverage into retirement. This is a common practice in many municipalities, boards of education as well as the state government. Such a move has fiscal consequences to be weighed.

The retirement of Hardwick's long time engineering consultant has resulted in the town pursuing options for engineering services. I am not convinced that we will be able to match the current level of service at a comparable cost. We are indeed fortunate that Ted Rodman will remain on staff for a while given his institutional knowledge of Hardwick Township accrued through many years of service.

Several key staff members are contemplating their retirements in the next several years. We need to begin succession planning so as to recruit and train equally talented replacements to serve our community into the future.

Beyond the immediate concerns over tax liabilities, there are several issues of merit that I presented to our citizens during 2020. Hardwick's official website is simply inadequate. One does not have to look far to see municipal websites that are better organized and easier to navigate. The time to move on this issue is now. With this said, not everyone is connected to the web, most notably our oldest and most vulnerable population. We need to utilize all official mailings as opportunities to communicate about our town activities.

I remain concerned over Hardwick's future liability for development on a very large scale. Our town is burdened with an enormous obligation to permit development of low income and moderate-income housing units. Our reliance on a lack of utilities is vulnerable as is the long-standing belief that Hardwick is too remote to interest developers. The clock on protections is running out and if we continue to be complacent, we will inevitably see a major developer control Hardwick's destiny. I remain convinced that Hardwick needs to aggressively pursue land acquisitions that are targeted towards permanently preserving properties most vulnerable to future development.

I look forward to being a part of team that looks to the future and seeks the best path forward for our town.

Respectfully,
John C. Lovell

Mr. Duffy talked about the newest number for the COVID-19 Virus and that the numbers are climbing. The Republic Committee, Fred and Judy Butcher for Hardwick has submitted 3 names to choose from to replace the vacant seat caused by Mr. Perry's resignation. The names submitted are Chris Jacksic, Bill Hughes and Jodi Butler. A Special Meeting will be scheduled to interview the candidates.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Duffy and carried to adjourn this afternoon meeting of the Hardwick Township Committee at 2:48PM

Respectfully submitted,

Judith M. Fisher, RMC
Township Clerk