

**TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025**

**OPENING ROLL CALL:**

Mayor Jacksic called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Committeeman Lovell and Deputy Mayor Meuse were present. DPW Supervisor Campbell, Township Attorney Igor Bykov, and Municipal Clerk Shippis were also present.

**SUNSHINE STATEMENT:**

"Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law. " Act, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, setting forth the time, date, place, and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in the New Jersey Herald and The Express Times, following the Township's Annual Reorganization Meeting, at which the 2025 meeting schedule was adopted.

**Beth Styler Barry- Paulina Dam Update.**

Beth Styler Barry from the Nature Conservancy reported the following:

- Crews have been mobilized despite rain delays.
- Project completion is expected by mid-September, weather permitting.
- A two-day trucking period is scheduled for next week, requiring traffic control.
- Tree planting (50-100 trees) is planned for September.
- Habitat specialists are involved to ensure proper placement away from stream edges.
- Previous tree planting projects show an 87% survival rate with GPS tracking.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Tara Mezzanotte reported that the "Fix the S curve" project was not included in the long-range transportation plan despite local and state support.

The committee agreed to a letter being sent expressing disappointment and seeking further action, as long as the surrounding townships agree to the same.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and carried to approve the letter to be sent.**

Mrs. Mezzanotte reported on the Explore Act and Gateway Communities.

- Gateway community liaisons have been appointed.
- National Park Service is expected to meet with municipalities.
- Need to identify municipal representative for coordination.

**DEPARTMENT REPORT:**

DPW Supervisor Campbell reported that catch basins are being rebuilt and the Evergreen development overlay has been completed.

Bob Wolff reported for the Stillwater Fire and Rescue that there were two technical rescues conducted and one drowning incident.

CFO Rolef stated that there will be a 36.5% increase in health benefit costs. CFO Rolef is currently looking into other private benefit costs.

**MINUTES:**

June 18, 2025, Public Session Meeting Minutes.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Jacksic, and carried to approve June 18, 2025, Public Session Meeting Minutes.**

**ORDINANCES:**

Public Hearing/ Adoption:

2025-07 – An Ordinance Authorizing a Special Emergency Appropriation Pursuant to N.J.S.A.40:4-53 for Preparation and Execution of a Program of Revaluation of Real Property.

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Governing Body of the Township of Hardwick, Warren County, New Jersey that in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:4-53:

1. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A-53: the sum of 170,000.00 is hereby appropriated for preparation and execution of a program of revaluation of real property shall be deemed a special emergency appropriation as defined and provided for in N.J.S.A. 40A:4-53.
2. The Authorization to finance the appropriation shall be provided for in succeeding annual budgets by the inclusion of at least 1/5 of the amount authorized pursuant to this act (N.J.S.A.40A:4-55).
3. A copy of this ordinance as adopted shall be filed with the Director of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey.
4. This ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and carried to open a public hearing.**

No public comment.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and carried to close the public hearing.**

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and approved by roll call vote: Lovell—yes, Meuse—yes, Jacksic the adoption of Ordinance 2025-07.**

Public Hearing/ Adoption:

2025-08- An Ordinance Authorizing a Special Emergency Appropriation Pursuant to N.J.S.A.40:4-53 for Preparation of a Master Plan.

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Governing Body of the Township of Hardwick, Warren County, New Jersey that in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:4-53:

1. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A-53: the sum of 10,000.00 is hereby appropriated for preparation of a Master Plan, shall be deemed a special emergency appropriation as defined and provided for in N.J.S.A. 40A:4-53.

2. The Authorization to finance the appropriation shall be provided for in succeeding annual budgets by the inclusion of at least 1/5 of the amount authorized pursuant to this act (N.J.S.A.40A:4-55).
3. A copy of this ordinance as adopted shall be filed with the Director of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey.
4. This ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and carried to open a public hearing.**

No public comment.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and carried to close the public hearing.**

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and approved by roll call vote: Lovell—yes, Meuse—yes, Jacksic the adoption of Ordinance 2025-08.**

Public Hearing/ Adoption:

2025-09- An Ordinance to Provide for the Acquisition of Department of Public Works Equipment, Road Overlays, and Renovation of Township Garage within the Township of Hardwick and to Provide for the Funding Thereof.

BE IT ORDAINED the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren and State of New Jersey, that the following be properly authorized:

Acquisition of Department of Public Works Equipment, Road Overlays and Renovation of Township Garage -	\$200,000.00
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BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the financing for the above is as follows:

Capital Improvement Fund	\$200,000.00
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BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the period of usefulness of the improvements is in excess of the five (5) year statutory requirement, and that no debt shall be incurred by the Township for this improvement authorization.

The capital budget conforms with the provisions of this ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency therewith and the resolution promulgated by the Local Finance Board showing full details of the Capital Budget and Capital Program as approved by the Director, Division of Local Government Services as on file with the Municipal Clerk is available for public inspection.

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon passage and publication in accordance with the law.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and carried to open a public hearing.**

No public comment.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and carried to close the public hearing.**

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and approved by roll call vote: Lovell—yes, Meuse—yes, Jacksic the adoption of Ordinance 2025-09.**

**Consent Agenda:**

1. 2025-47- Governing Body Certification of the Annual Audit.

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions, and

WHEREAS, the Annual Report of Audit for the year 2024 has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant with the Municipal Clerk pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-6, and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body; and,

WHEREAS, R.S. 52:27BB-34 authorizes the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey to prescribe reports pertaining to the local fiscal affairs; and,

WHEREAS, the Local Finance Board has promulgated N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5, a regulation requiring that the governing body of each municipality shall by resolution certify to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that all members of the governing body have reviewed, as a minimum, the sections of the annual audit entitled “Comments and Recommendations, and,

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have personally reviewed as a minimum the Annual Report of Audit, and specifically the sections of the Annual Audit entitled “Comments and Recommendations, as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the governing body attached hereto; and,

WHEREAS, such resolution of certification shall be adopted by the Governing Body no later than forty-five days after the receipt of the annual audit, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5; and,

WHEREAS, all members of the governing body have received and have familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey, as stated aforesaid and have subscribed to the affidavit, as provided by the Local Finance Board, and

WHEREAS, failure to comply with the regulations of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey may subject the members of the local governing body to the penalty provisions of R.S. 52:27BB-52, to wit:

R.S. 52:27BB-52: A local officer or member of a local governing body who, after a date fixed for compliance, fails or refuses to obey an order of the director (Director of Local Government Services), under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, in addition shall forfeit his office.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Township of Hardwick Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, hereby states that it has complied with N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5 and does hereby submit a certified copy of this resolution and the required affidavit to said Board to show evidence of said compliance.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE MEETING HELD ON July 16, 2025.

2. 2025-48 Resolution Approving the Corrective Action Plan for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2024.

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40-A:5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to cause an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions to be made and completed within six months after the close of its fiscal year; and

**WHEREAS**, the audit for fiscal year ending December 31, 2024 was present to the governing body on July 16, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the Corrective Actions Plan shall cover all findings and recommendations, including state, federal, and general or financial statement findings in the audit report; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Financial Officer shall prepare said Corrective Action Plan with the assistance from other officials affected by the audit recommendations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Corrective Actions plan must be approved by the governing body of the local unit and is to be submitted to the Division of Local Government Services no later than sixty days from the receipt of the audit report; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, and State of New Jersey that the Corrective Action Plan for fiscal year ended December 31, 2024 is hereby approved

3. 2025-49 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Execution of a Contract for Providing a Complete Revaluation of All Real Property for Tax Equalization Purposes Between the Township and Appraisal Systems, Inc. in the Amount not Exceeding One Hundred Fifty-Seven Thousand, Six Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$157,650.00). tabled
4. 2025-50 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Execution of a Contract for Providing a Master Plan Reexamination Between the Township and Heyer & Gruel & Associates in the Amount Not Exceeding Nine Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$9,500.00). tabled
5. 2025-51- Approving Vouchers and Claims.  
**WHEREAS** all claims as reviewed and listed on the attached bill list are approved as reasonable and proper claims against the Township of Hardwick to be paid from its current fund; and

**WHEREAS**, the CFO has certified that funds are available to pay such claims.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the bills on the attached bill listed are authorized to be paid.

6. 2025-52 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2024-003.

**WHEREAS**, the Tax Collector of Hardwick Township has been paid the amount necessary to redeem with interest calculated in accordance with the New Jersey Statutes and said payment has been deposited in the current account of Hardwick Township on lands known on the Tax Maps and in the Tax Duplicate as the following:

Block 1003, Lot 11  
Certificate Number 2024-003  
Assessed to: Riscinti, Mark  
35 Stillwater Road  
Hardwick, NJ 07825

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Committee of Hardwick Township that the Municipal Finance Officer is hereby authorized to issue two checks for \$23,182.72 (lien) and \$23,500.00 (premium) payable to lien holder:

Bala Partners LLC  
PO Box 303  
Pottersville, NJ 07979

and that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to cancel said lien from records and forward cancelled Tax Sale Certificate to redeeming party.

Information for Finance Officer

Tax Cert. Amount	2980.04
Subsequent Payment	18541.97
*Redemption Fee	59.60
*interest on certificate	0.00
*interest on subsequent	1539.11
Other fees	62.00
Premium	23500.00
Total to lien holder	46682.72
*to be reported on 1099	1598.71

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, and approved by roll call vote: Lovell—yes, Meuse—yes, Jacksic—yes on Consent agenda items 1-2 & 5-6. Consent agenda items 3 & 4 were pulled and will be voted on at a later meeting.**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **Website Update-**

Deputy Mayor Meuse reported that she will need to reach out to the township IT, Jean Paul, for transfer.

### **Township Fee Schedule-**

Attorney Bykov reported that the Fee schedule amendment is a larger undertaking than anticipated, and he hopes to have the ordinance for the next meeting.

### **Vass Farmstead Lease Update-**

The Department of Environmental Protection is still reviewing the application.

### **Alina Lodge Meeting-**

No meeting scheduled.

### **North Warren Court-**

Township is considering revisiting the municipal court contract due to financial concerns.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Applicant requesting a refund of the application fee for the withdrawn land use board application.

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Meuse, approved by roll call vote: Lovell—yes, Meuse—yes, Jacksic—yes, to refund the application fee for 11 Hardwick Rd, which is an application fee for the Land Use Board.**

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. June 26, 2025, Tara Mezzanotte  
Subject: DOI Takes Steps to Implement Explore Act Mandates
2. June 27, 2025, Tracy Matlock, Deputy Clerk for Warren County Board of County Commissioners  
Subject: Resolution Opposing any Affordable-Housing Project that Relies on the Use of Eminent Domain to Condemn Active or Preserved Farmland
3. July 1, 2025, Melissa Hayes, New Jersey Planning Authority  
Subject New 5-23 Add Hardwick Resolution Re: NJTPA Long Range Plan Fix the S-Curve Project Request from Knowlton Township.
4. July 2, 2025, Max Carlson, Senior Planner, Warren County Planning Department  
Subject: State Plan Negotiation Session
5. July 3, 2025, Tara Mezzanotte  
Subject: NJTPA responds to D23 Fix the S-Curve Long Range Transportation Plan
6. July 9, 2025, Tara Mezzanotte  
Subject: Amtrak Update
7. July 11, 2025, Tara Mezzanotte  
Subject: Comprehensive July I-80/611 DWG Area Update

## **TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY:**

No Report.

**TOWNSHIP CLERK:**

Clerk Shipps Reported on the following:

**Tax Bills**

- Tax bills have been mailed, and residents should receive them this week or early next week.
- Due date: August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Information posted on the township website.

**Animal Control Officer**

- Website updated regarding animal control officer position.
- Kai is no longer serving in this role.
- Replacement not yet named.
- Residents should continue calling the existing number.

**Fire Wise Grant**

- Grant application submitted successfully.
- Process was easier than anticipated.
- Bob confirmed participation in the program.

Clerk Shipps addressed the committee regarding an inquiry from restaurant owners questioning their obligation to pay a non-residential development fee. The township attorney confirmed that the fee applies since the property was demolished and reconstructed, making it subject to the 2.5% equalized assessed value fee under the township's reinstated ordinance. The attorney recommended that the burden should be on the restaurant owners to demonstrate why they shouldn't pay the approximately \$25,000 fee. Discussion took place regarding entering into a payment plan, which Attorney Bykov will investigate further.

**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Committeeman Lovell reported on the following:

**Key Updates:**

- New public work employee hired and settled in well.
- White Lake kayaking event was successful with 57 participants.
- Cell tower maintenance observed; zoning review recommended.

**Historic Preservation:**

- Grant application submitted to Warren County Historic Preservation Fund for house improvements.
- Wedding planner discussions are ongoing to market the venue and manage social media.
- Historic Society coordinating garage sale event with the Mayor for Hardwick Day.

Deputy Mayor Meuse – No report.

Mayor Jacksic reported on the following:

**Community Events:**

- Attended Stillwater bicentennial celebration, praised the organization and setup by the township and historian.



- Also attended county bicentennial event, noted excellent attendance and comprehensive activities, including stage performances and garden events.

**Infrastructure/Public Works:**

- Spring Valley Road operations are proceeding smoothly with no bobcat activity reported.
- Road closure on Spring Valley today caused traffic delays; an incident involving a speeding Tesla that displaced other vehicles from the roadway.

**Utilities:**

- Unusual power outage occurred with downed main line and fallen tree, but only two residents reported outages (significantly lower than typical).
- Power blinks reported in multiple areas, including Shannon Road.
- Response time issues with the utility company; the Mayor intervened to expedite crew dispatch.
- Internet connectivity issues persist in some areas following the outage.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Resident Ohl spoke about concerns regarding trees on personal property and the danger to other properties

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Lovell made a motion, seconded by Jacksic, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Kristin Shipps, RMC