

**TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025**

OPENING ROLL CALL:

Mayor Jacksic called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Committeeman Lovell, and Deputy Mayor Meuse were present. DPW Supervisor Campbell, CFO Rolef, Township Attorney Igor Bykov, and Municipal Clerk Shipps 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion made by Meuse, second by Lovell and carried to go into Executive Session at 6:30 pm.

2025-64 Resolution Authorizing Executive Session

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P. L 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from that portion of this meeting.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

A. Attorney Advice

As nearly as can be ascertained, the matter or matters to be discussed at this time will be disclosed to the public when such matters are resolved.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and carried out of Executive Session at 7:13. pm.

Township Attorney Bykov stated the following:

The Committee emerged from Executive Session at 7:13 PM. Two matters were discussed:

1. A matter related to affordable housing (attorney-client privilege).
2. A matter concerning development fees in the Township (attorney-client privilege).

No official action was taken at this time. Copies of these minutes shall be made available when the Committee determines there is no harm to public interest.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Comment.

DEPARTMENT REPORT:

DPW Supervisor Campbell Supervisor Campbell reported on the following:

Brush Cutting Operations: The Department has been actively cutting brush. An issue arose with a recently purchased brush head. After the equipment vendor was unable to resolve the problem, DPW Supervisor Campbell contacted the tool manufacturer directly. The manufacturer agreed to assist with repairs and honor the warranty despite it being over a year old, resulting in Savings of several thousand dollars for the Township.

Vehicle Damage: Damage occurred to a Township pickup truck during paving operations. DPW Supervisor Campbell consulted with the insurance company regarding a claim. Given the \$1,000 deductible, the Department obtained a repair estimate and determined it would be more cost-effective to pay for repairs directly rather than filing an insurance claim.

Bob Wolff- Forest Fire/ Stillwater Fire Department reported on the following:

Brush Truck Update: The brush truck is currently in the shop being painted. The body will be installed in a single day once retrieved. A slip-on unit with a tank, pump, and hose reel has already been acquired. The truck is expected to be completed and available for viewing early next year.

Emergency Response: No calls were received this month regarding delayed dispatchers; all responses were timely. The most recent call had a six-minute response time for a technical rescue over the weekend.

Forest Fire Conditions: Forest fire conditions remain critical. Despite recent rainfall, persistence

Winds continue to create dangerous fire conditions.

MINUTES:

September 17, 2025, Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

September 17, 2025, Public Session Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and carried to approve the above minutes.

ORDINANCES:**Introduction:**

2025-10 Ordinance of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey Amending and Supplementing Section 13-32 – Accessory Buildings, Structures and Uses of Chapter 13 Entitled “Land Development” to Repeal and Replace Table 1 Provided Under Paragraph C.1 Thereof.

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey has been made aware that Table 1 provided by Paragraph C.1 of Section 13-32 - Accessory Buildings, Structures and Uses – is unnecessarily confusing; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee wishes to amend Section 13-32 of Chapter 13 entitled “Land Development” of the Hardwick Township Code to simplify the setback requirements established therein; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment seeks to repeal and replace Table 1, provided by Paragraph C.1 of Section 13-32 and replacing same with a different table; and

WHEREAS, the amended table will establish a range of distances from the property line, as exhibited in Column 1 thereof, as opposed to having a specific distance defined with a note to address distances between table entries, as is presently established; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes that such amendment is in the best interest of the Township and its residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that Paragraph C.1 of Section 13-32 – Accessory Buildings, Structures and Uses – of Chapter 13 entitled “Land Development” is hereby amended and supplemented by the repeal and replacement of Table 1 provided therein, as follows:

SECTION I:

Table 1 provided in Paragraph C.1 of Section 13-32 – Accessory Buildings, Structures and Uses – of Chapter 13 entitled “Land Development” is hereby repealed in its entirety and is replaced as follows:

Table 1		
Distance from Property Line (feet)	Maximum Building Long Side Dimension (feet)	Maximum Building Height (feet)
10 to < 15	13	12
15 to < 20	17	14
20 to < 25	21	16
25 to < 30	25	17
30 to < 35	29	19
35 to < 40	34	21
40 to < 45	38	22
45 to < 50	42	24

SECTION II: Repealer.

All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistencies.

SECTION III: Severability.

If any article, section, subsection, paragraphs, phrase or sentence is, for any reason, inconsistent with the Code of the Township of Hardwick, or is held to be unconstitutional or invalid, said article, section, subsection, paragraph, phrase or sentence shall be deemed severable.

SECTION IV: Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon final passage and publication as provided by law.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and carried to introduce 2025-10.

Introduction:

2025-11 Ordinance of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey Amending and Supplementing Article X: “Communications Towers and Antennas” of Chapter 13 – Land Development – of the Hardwick Township Code to Create Section 13-106.10 Entitled “Substantial Modification Review” to Require the Posting of a One Thousand Dollar (\$1,000.00) Escrow Fee for Purposes of Eligible Facility Request Review.

WHEREAS, the Spectrum Act, codified as 47 U.S.C.A. 1455, limited the authority of state and local governmental units to deny approvals for the collocation of new providers on, or the modification of, existing telecommunications facilities where the proposed modifications do not substantially change the physical dimensions of the existing tower or base station(s); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the relevant federal law, while the Township is precluded from denying approvals for the collocation or modification of existing telecommunications facilities, the Township nonetheless expends municipal resources to assess whether such modifications constitute a “substantial change” under federal law; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure that the Municipality does not needlessly expend such resources, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick wishes to require the posting of a one-thousand-dollar (\$1,000.00) escrow amount, to compensate the Municipality for the Township Engineer’s review of the proposed modification of the existing telecommunication facilities located in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick believes that such amendment to Chapter 13 – Land Development – is in the best interest of the Township and its residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, that Article X: “Communications Towers and Antennas” of Chapter 13 – Land Development – be amended and supplemented by creating Section 13-106.10 entitled “Substantial Modification Review” to require the posting of a one thousand-dollar (\$1,000.00) escrow fee in Cellular Tower Review application(s) to assess whether such modifications constitute a “substantial change” under federal law, specifically 47 CFR § 1.6100, as follows:

SECTION I:

Additions to this Section shall be delineated by underlined text, thusly.

§ 13-106.10. Substantial Modification Review.

An Escrow Fee of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) shall be posted when the wireless telecommunication provider seeks to modify an existing telecommunication facility located in the Township, to assess whether such modifications constitute a “substantial change” under federal law, specifically 47 CFR § 1.6100. This fee shall be used solely to determine whether the proposed modification qualifies as an Eligible Facilities Request under federal law

SECTION II: Repealer.

All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistencies.

SECTION III: Severability.

If any article, section, subsection, paragraphs, phrase or sentence is, for any reason, held to be unconstitutional or invalid, said article, section, subsection, paragraph, phrase or sentence shall be deemed severable.

SECTION IV: Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and carried to introduce 2025-1.

Introduction:

2025-12 Ordinance of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, Amending and Supplementing Section 12-2.4, Entitled “Permit Requirements: Fees” of Chapter 12 – Soil and Soil Removal - of the Hardwick Township Code to Increase the Escrow amount Pronounced Therein and to Amend the Incorrect Citations in the Referenced Section.

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick has been advised that the escrow amount – presently set at \$150.00 – in Section 12-2.4 of Chapter 12, entitled “Soil and Soil Removal,” is insufficient to cover certain soil importation and/or exportation application reviews; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee, in consultation with its Engineer and Zoning Officer, believes that the \$150.00 escrow fee requirement pronounced under Section 12-2.4 merits an increase; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee wishes to increase the escrow requirement to one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) to cover the costs of the Township Engineer's review of the application(s) pursuant to the relevant provisions of Chapter 12; and

WHEREAS, the amendment to the above-mentioned Section shall also correct the improper reference to Section 12-2.7 entitled “Township Engineer Review; Violations,” as the citation presently provided in Section 12-2.4 incorrectly references Section 12-2.6; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes that such amendments are in the best interest of the Township and its residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that Paragraph a. of Section 12-2.4 entitled “Permit Requirements; Fees” of Chapter 12 – Soil And Soil Removal – is hereby amended and supplemented to increase the escrow amount from one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150.00) to one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00), and that the reference by Section 12-2.4 to Section 12.2.6 is corrected to reference Section 12.2.7, as originally intended, as follows:

SECTION I:

Deletions to this Section shall be delineated by strikethrough text, ~~thusly~~.

Additions to this Section shall be delineated by underlined text, thusly.

§ 12-2.4. Permit Requirements; Fees.

- a. No person shall import or engage in any preparatory site work to import soil or fill materials onto a site within the Township of Hardwick in quantities of 250 cubic yards or more without first having procured a permit thereof by the filing of an application for such soil importation with the Zoning Officer. The application shall be accompanied by a minimum fee of \$150 for a maximum of 500 cubic yards. For quantities in excess of 500 cubic yards, said fee shall be \$300. The applicant shall also deposit an escrow with the Township Clerk in the amount of ~~\$150~~ \$1,500.00 to cover the costs of the Township Engineer's review of the application pursuant to § 12-2.~~67~~. The Township Engineer may require additional escrow provided that Township Engineer's initial review results in a determination for additional engineering review or retention of professional services as described in § 12-2.~~67~~ herein.

SECTION II: Repealer.

All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistencies.

SECTION III: Severability.

If any article, section, subsection, paragraphs, phrase or sentence is, for any reason, held to be unconstitutional or invalid, said article, section, subsection, paragraph, phrase or sentence shall be deemed severable.

SECTION IV: Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and carried to introduce 2025-10.

Consent Agenda:

1. 2025-65 -Approval of the Execution of a Shared Service Agreement with the Town of Newton for Animal Control Services for the Calendar Year 2026.

WHEREAS the Township of Hardwick wishes to obtain animal control services from the Town of Newton and;

WHEREAS the Town of Newton is willing to enter into a Shared Services Agreement with Hardwick to provide the requested animal control services to Hardwick: and

WHEREAS the parties desire to enter into a Shared Services Agreement, a copy of which is attached, which sets forth the terms and conditions of the shared animal control services for the period commencing January 1, 2026, through and including December 21, 2026.

WHEREAS these types of shared services are just what the State of New Jersey envisions when it seeks to encourage the same through the uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act N.J.S.A 40A:65-1 et seq;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, do hereby authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to execute a Shared Services Agreement with the Town of Newton for Animal Control services.

2. 2025-66 Resolution of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Submission of a Five-Year Plan as it Relates to the Utilization of the Vass Farmstead, as Required by the Lease Agreement Entered into by and Between the Township of Hardwick and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Related to the Use and Operation of the Vass Farmstead.

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection have entered into a Lease Agreement for the restoration, preservation, development, improvement, maintenance, operation and interpretation of the Vass Farmstead as a historic site and making it available for public visitation and recreational uses; and

WHEREAS, Paragraphs 7 and 8 of Lease Agreement require the Township, as the Tenant of the Department, to – among other things – submit a Management Plan an Annual Plan and Budget; and

WHEREAS, the Township seeks to provide the required documentation to the Department, as required by the Lease Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the language of the Lease Agreement requires governing body authorization prior to the submittal of such documents; and

WHEREAS, the Township – wishing to be a good steward of the Property – is resolved in complying with the Lease Agreement’s requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that the draft Five-Year Plan related to the utilization of the Vass Farmstead is hereby authorized to be submitted to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, as required by the Lease Agreement entered into by

and between the Township of Hardwick and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

3. 2025-67 Approving Payment of Vouchers.

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.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and approved by roll call vote: Lovell—yes, Meuse—yes, Jacksic—yes October 15, 2025, Consent Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Township Fee Schedule- No update.

Health Benefits-

CFO Rolef provided an update on the Township's health insurance situation and ongoing efforts to explore alternative coverage options.

Current Status: CFO Rolef has reached out to both insurance brokers regarding alternative coverage options, including the New Jersey Health Insurance Fund. A message has been left with the Fund, and if the Township pursues this option, it will require adoption via resolution. However, it is unlikely this will be completed by year-end, as brokers are currently prioritizing larger municipalities and school districts. The Township submitted all required information in July when this issue was first identified.

Open Enrollment: Open Enrollment is currently underway. Residents should have received postcards in the mail outlining different plan options.

Roadside Clean Up-

Clerk Shippis provided an update on the upcoming roadside cleanup event. Ten groups have registered to participate:

- Five groups scheduled for November 8
- Five groups scheduled for November 15

Information packets are being sent to all registered groups. Two additional groups have expressed interest but have not yet confirmed their participation dates.

Hardwick MS4 Compliance-

The Committee discussed stormwater management compliance requirements and associated costs.

NEW BUSINESS:

Best Practice-

CFO Rolef provided an update on the Township's Best Practices submission. She will email the full report to the Committee, as she did not have it available at the meeting.

Point Deductions: The Township lost points in two areas:

1. Not having an electric vehicle charging station.
2. Not having electric vehicles in the municipal fleet.

CORRESPONDENCE:

9/25/2025 Sara Bennett NJ Office of Planning of Advocacy

Distribution of the Draft Infrastructure Needs Assessment (INA)- Warren

10/2/2025 Lisa Hibbs, Concord Energy

SWAEC-Information Packets about New Program Term in Mail to Eligible Residents

10/8/2025 Tara Mezzanotte:

Update -DOI RFI DWG Area Gateway Community-great job everyone

10/9/2025 Kostantinos Scharko

Municipal Beekeeping Information

TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY: No report.

TOWNSHIP CLERK:

Upcoming Events:

- Shredding Event: October 24 from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM (as noted in the postcard mailed to residents).
- Rabies Clinic: December 13 at Blairstown DPW (also included in the postcard).

Garbage Can Delivery Update: Clerk Shipps clarified that a previous email regarding garbage can delivery was misread. The garbage cans referenced were being delivered to another location, not the Township. The tentative delivery date for the Township's garbage cans is October 29.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Committeeman Lovell Report.

Committeeman Lovell publicly thanked several individuals for their contributions to recent Township event.

Committeeman Lovell raised a concern regarding difficulties posting Township information in the Ridge View Echo. Reporter Joe Phalon offered to assist by having materials sent directly to him for forwarding to the appropriate contacts at the publication.

Committeeman Lovell thanked the Committee for their continued support of the Vass Farmstead project. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will conduct an inspection of the Vass Farmstead within the next couple of weeks, prior to the lease being signed. Committeeman Lovell has been requesting this inspection for two years and will provide a tour. He invited the mayor to join if available.

Committeeman Lovell announced plans to increase publicity for this year's holiday party at the Vass Farmstead to encourage greater community attendance.

Deputy Mayor Meuse Report.

Deputy Mayor Meuse read the call outs for Blairstown Hose Company for the month of September.

Deputy Mayor Meuse read the Animal Control Officer (ACO) report which showed two incidents this month: a raccoon tracking complaint and a dog complaint.

Mayor Jacksic Report.

Hardwick Day Recap: Mayor Jacksic thanked Committeeman Lovell, Mrs. Lovell, and the Hardwick Historic Society for their outstanding work organizing Hardwick Day on Sunday. Despite questionable weather conditions, an early decision was made Saturday to proceed with the event to avoid confusion, though this resulted in the loss of six vendors. Weather conditions were acceptable, and the event was deemed successful.

2025 Planning Oktoberfest Event: For next year, the Committee plans to schedule the event earlier in the season, potentially coordinating with Stillwater Township to avoid conflicting dates.

Mayor Jacksic reported that Planet Networks fiber optic installation is nearing completion, with approximately 10-15% remaining.

Internet Service Provider Issues:

Optimum: Multiple residents throughout town have reported service outages, though Optimum has claimed no outages exist in the area. Service continues to experience intermittent connectivity issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT:

Lovell made a motion, seconded by Jacksic, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kristin Shipps, RMC