

**TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 2, 2024
A G E N D A**

OPENING ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order by Township Attorney Bykov at 6:00 pm those present were Committeeman Jacksic, Committeeman Lovell and Committeewoman Meuse.

FLAG SALUTE:

Attorney Bykov read the following statement.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting 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.

OATH OF OFFICE:

Senator Steinhardt administered the oath of office to Committeeman John Lovell

NOMINATION FOR MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2024:

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and carried to nominate Committeeman Jacksic as Mayor for 2024.

Mayor Jacksic was sworn in by Senator Steinhardt.

Mayor Jacksic took over the meeting at this time.

NOMINATION FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2024:

Motion made by Lovell, second by Jacksic and carried to nominate Committeewoman Meuse as Deputy Mayor 2024.

Deputy Mayor Meuse was sworn in by Senator Steinhardt.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. 2024-01 Various Appointments – Non-Compensated.

WHEREAS it is necessary to appoint various persons to fill various positions on various boards, committees and commissions of the Township of Hardwick, as required by the various ordinances adopted in connection therewith:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor of the Township of Hardwick that the following persons be appointed to the *Land-Use Board* for terms as set forth:

Nichole Meuse 1-year term, expiring on 12/31/2024, Class III

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Kristin Shipps shall serve as Public Agency Compliance Officer (PACO) and Affirmative Action Officer for a term of one year expiring December 31, 2024.

2. 2024-02 Designation of Official Newspapers.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the following newspapers of general circulation in the Township of Hardwick be designated as the official newspapers for the purpose of legal advertising and notices for the Township of Hardwick in the year 2024:

New Jersey Herald, Newton, NJ

Express Times, Iselin, NJ

3. 2024-03 Adopting Annual Meeting Schedule in Compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA).

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

1. The following schedule of meetings of the governing body of the Township of Blairstown is hereby adopted:

- A. The public portion of the meeting will be held on the third Wednesday of each month (unless otherwise noted with at *) in the Municipal Building at 40 Spring Valley Rd. from 7:00 PM until business has been concluded. Any meeting is subject to cancelation with proper public notification should there not be any significant pending items for discussion. Closed session will be at the end of the Committee meetings and may be called whenever necessary during the meeting. The Township Committee will adjourn to closed session after adoption of proper resolution, setting forth the purpose.

January 2, 2024, 5 pm (Reorganization Meeting)	January 17, 2024
February 21, 2024	March 20, 2024
April 17, 2024	May 15, 2024
June 12, 2024 *date change due to holiday	July 17, 2024
August 21, 2024	September 18, 2024
October 16, 2024	November 20, 2024
December 18, 2024	

****Formal action may be taken at all public meetings of the Township Committee****

- B. That each and every meeting shall be public for the purpose of transacting any business, either by the governing body alone, or in any joint meeting with other municipal groups, which may become necessary.

- C. A Special Meeting of the Township Committee may be called. Special Meetings are meetings not on the regular schedule. These Meetings must provide notice at least forty-eight hours before the meeting to the official newspapers.

- D. All meetings will be held in compliance with the rules set forth by the Township Committee.
2. The agenda for each of the foregoing meetings shall be as follows:
- a. Call to order; roll call
 - b. Flag Salute
 - c. Open Public Meetings Act Statement
 - d. Presentation
 - e. Public Comment five (5) minutes
 - f. Department Reports
 - g. Approval of Minutes
 - h. Ordinances
 - i. Consent Agenda for resolutions
 - j. Resolutions for discussion
 - k. Unfinished Business
 - l. New Business
 - m. Correspondence
 - n. From the Municipal Attorney
 - o. From the Municipal Clerk
 - p. From the Township Committee
 - q. Closed Session, if any
 - r. Adjournment
3. A copy of the Annual Meeting Schedule shall be prominently posted by the Municipal Clerk on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building at 40 Spring Valley Rd. and on the township website.
4. The Municipal Clerk, upon adoption of this resolution, will forward a copy of the Annual Meeting Schedule to the official newspapers for the Township of Hardwick, for publication of legal notices, pursuant to Section 3(d) of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.
5. A copy of this resolution, or any revision thereof, or any advance written notice of any regular, special or rescheduled meeting during 2024 will be mailed by regular mail to any person making written application for same, pursuant to Section 14 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 21, P.L. 1975, upon payment of \$10.00 to the Municipal Clerk. Notices of meetings requested by news media in writing shall be mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, to said news media with charge. All requests for notices made shall terminate on December 31st of each year, but shall be subject to renewal upon a new written request.
6. At the commencement of all regularly scheduled meetings, the Mayor will announce publicly and shall cause to be entered upon the minutes of the meeting an accurate statement, substantially as follows:

"Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231 setting forth the time, date, place and purpose of this Public Meeting

Tuesday January 2, 2024, Reorganization Meeting Minutes

through a legal notice published in New Jersey Herald and Express Times following the Township's Annual Reorganization Meeting at which the 2023 meeting schedule was adopted.

7. Robert's Rules of Order is hereby adopted as parliamentary authority for procedure in meetings.
8. The minutes of each meeting shall become public as soon as they are approved by the Township Committee.

4. 2024-04 Contracting for Professional Services in Accordance with the Local Public Contract Law (N.J.S.A. 40A-11.1, ET. SEQ.) – Municipal Attorney.

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick has a need to acquire a municipal attorney as a non-fair and open contract pursuant to provisions on 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, Law Firm of Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen. has agreed to provide attorney services; and

WHEREAS, Law Firm of Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen). will provide an itemized bill for litigation related serviced in the New Jersey Superior Court, Tax Court, Federal courts or any other core or administrative body; and

WHEREAS, Law Firm of Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen). has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certificate which certified that the firm has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Township of Hardwick in the previous year, and that the contract will prohibit Law Firm of Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen). 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 legal 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, of the County of Warren, that the Mayor and Clerk are authorized to enter into a contract with Law Firm of Lavery, Selvaggi, Abromitis & Cohen as described herein as Municipal Attorney on and in behalf of the Township of Hardwick for the year 2024; and

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

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

5. 2024-05 Contracting for Professional Services in Accordance with the Local Public Contract Law (N.J.S.A. 40A-11.1, ET. SEQ.) – Municipal Engineer.

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick has a need to acquire a municipal engineer as a non-fair and open contract pursuant to provisions on 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, French & Parrello Associates has agreed to provide engineering services for the rates broken out in the contract; and

WHEREAS, French & Parrello Associates has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certificate which certified that they have not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Township of Hardwick in the previous year, and that the contract will prohibit French & Parrello Associates 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 engineering 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, of the County of Warren, that the Mayor and Clerk are authorized to enter into a contract with French & Parrello. as described herein as Municipal Engineer on and in behalf of the Township of Blirstown for the year 2024; 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.

6. 2024-06 Contracting for Professional Services in Accordance with the Local
Public Contract Law (N.J.S.A. 40A-11.1, ET. SEQ.) – COAH Consultant.

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick has a need to acquire COAH Consultant as a non-fair and open contract pursuant to provisions on 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, Heyer & Gruel has agreed to provide COAH Consultant services for the rates broken out in the contract; and

WHEREAS, Heyer & Gruel has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certificate which certified that the firm has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Township of Blainstown in the previous year, and that the contract will prohibit Gibbons, PC 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 legal 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, of the County of Warren, that the Mayor and Clerk are authorized to enter into a contract with Heyer & Gruel as described herein as Counsel on and in behalf of the Township of Hardwick for the year 2024; 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.

7. 2024-07 Contracting for Professional Services in Accordance with the Local
Public Contract Law (N.J.S.A. 40A-11.1, ET. SEQ.) – 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 on 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, NISIVOCIA, LLP has agreed to provide Municipal Auditor services for the rates broken out in the contract; and

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WHEREAS, NISIVOCCIA, LLP has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certificate which certified that NISIVOCCIA, LLP has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Township of Hardwick in the previous year, and that the contract will prohibit NISIVOCCIA, 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, of the County of Warren, that the Mayor and Clerk are authorized to enter into a contract with NISIVOCCIA, LLP as described herein as auditors on and in behalf of the Township of Blairstown for the year 2024; 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.

8. 2024-08 Authorizing Investment of Idle Funds and Fund Transfers.

WHEREAS, it is desirable that idle funds of the Township of Hardwick 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 investment:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, that it does hereby authorize the Treasurer to request bids and to place orders for the investment of idle funds solely in legally authorized investment vehicles, such investments to be investing institutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Treasurer is hereby authorized to transfer funds by wire solely for the following purposes and subject to all pertinent regulations:

1. To or from Township checking or savings accounts to other Township accounts; and
2. To or from Township checking or savings accounts to or from accounts specified by banks of the State of New Jersey Cash Management Funds solely for the purpose of investing for the account of the Township of Hardwick.

9. 2024-09 Cancellation of Certain Real Estate Property Tax Balances.

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:5-17.1 promulgated by the New Jersey State Legislature, all real estate property taxes of less than \$10.00 (ten dollars) are to be cancelled of record:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, the Tax Collector is hereby authorized and empowered, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:5-17.1, to cancel and remove from the tax duplicate records all refunds and/or delinquent real estate property taxes of less than \$10.00 (ten dollars).

10. 2024-10 Collection of a Fee for Duplicate Tax Sale Certificates.

WHEREAS, P.L. 1900 C.90 was amended and signed into law, allowing municipalities to issue duplicate tax sale certificates at a fee not to exceed \$100.00.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that a fee of \$100.00 shall be collected for the issuance of a duplicate tax sale certificate.

11. 2024-11 Cash Management Plan (NJSA 40A:5).

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, that the Chief Financial Officer shall administer the cash management plan adopted on January 1, 2024 through compliance with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-1 et seq., prudent application of these cash management policies, which shall not conflict with the plan in any way.

I. Objectives: The priority of investing practices shall be, in order of descending importance, security, liquidity, and yield.

A. Security: The safety of principal is the foremost objective of the cash management plan. Investments shall be undertaken in a manner that seeks to ensure the preservation of capital in the overall portfolio. The objective is to mitigate credit risk and interest rate risk.

1. Credit Risk: Credit risk is the risk of loss due to failure of the security issuer or backer. Credit risk may be mitigated by:

- a. Limiting investments to the safest types of securities (indicate rating and agencies to be used).
- b. Pre-qualifying the financial institutions, broker/dealers, intermediaries, and advisors within which an entity will do business.
- c. Diversifying the investment portfolio.

2. Interest Rate Risk: Interest rate risk is the risk that the market value of the securities in the portfolio will fall due to changes in general interest rates. Interest rate risk may be mitigated by:

- a. Structuring the investment portfolio so that securities mature to meet cash requirements for ongoing operations, thereby avoiding the need to sell securities on the open market prior to maturity, and
- b. By investing operating funds primarily in shorter-term securities for one year.

- B. Liquidity** – The portfolio shall remain sufficiently liquid to meet all operating requirements that may be reasonably anticipated. Investments of various funds should be structured so that they match the potential need. Thus, investments of operating funds should be kept in investments with a maturity of not more than one year. Investments of a capital, or long-term trust fund nature should match the expected use of the funds, but not to exceed five years. Investments should consist of securities with active secondary markets or in mutual funds that permit liquidation at net asset value. Securities shall not be sold prior to maturity with the following exceptions:
1. a declining credit security could be sold early to minimize the loss of principal.
 2. a security swap would improve the quality, yield, or target duration in the portfolio.
 3. liquidity needs of the local unit require that the security be sold.
- C. Yield** – The investment portfolio must be designed with the objective of attaining a market rate of return throughout budgetary and economic cycles, taking into account the investment risk constraints and liquidity needs. Return on investment is of least importance compared to the safety and liquidity objectives described above. The core of investments is limited to relatively low risk securities in anticipation of earning a fair return relative to the risk being assumed. The chief financial officer shall carefully evaluate the legality, security, and yield attributes of any investment offering above market yields.

II. Standards of Care

A. Prudence

The standard of prudence to be used by investment officials shall be the “prudent person” standard and shall be applied in the context of managing an overall portfolio in accordance with State law and this policy. Chief financial officers acting in accordance with the cash management plan and policy shall be relieved of any liability for loss of such moneys due to their solvency or closing of any depository designated by, or the decrease in value of any investment authorized by, the cash management plan.

Investments shall be made with judgment and care, under circumstances then prevailing, which persons of prudence, discretion and intelligence exercise in the management of their own affairs, not for speculation, but for investment, considering the probable safety of their capital as well as the probable income to be derived.

B. Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Officers and employees involved in the investment process shall not have personal business activity that could conflict with the proper execution and management of the investment program, or that could impair their ability to make impartial

decisions. Employees and investment officials shall disclose any material investment in financial institutions with which they conduct business. They shall disclose any personal financial/investment transactions with the same individual with whom business is conducted on behalf of their entity. Personnel involved in investment activities shall comply with the Local Government Ethics Law.

C. Delegation of Responsibility and Authority

Responsibility and authority to manage the cash management plan and policy is granted to the chief financial officers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-14. No person may engage in an investment transaction except as provided under the terms of the policy and the written procedures established by the chief financial officer. The chief financial officer shall be responsible for all transactions undertaken and shall establish a system of controls to regulate the activities of subordinate officials.

III. Safekeeping and Custody

A. Authorized Banks for Deposit of Governmental Funds: The cash management plan shall list all authorized banks for depository of governmental funds. Only banks approved by the Department of Banking and Insurance under the Government Unit Depository Protection Act (GUDPA) can be approved depositories. See “Attachment B.”

B. Approved Security Broker/Dealers: The cash management plan shall list any approved security broker/dealers. See “Attachment B.”

C. Internal Controls

1. The governing body shall act to provide that the agency has an internal control structure that is established, defined and maintained to ensure that the assets of the entity are protected from loss, theft or misuse. The chief financial officer shall develop written internal controls and submit them to the governing body for approval. The internal control structure shall be designed to provide reasonable assurance that the assets of the entity are protected from loss, theft or misuse. The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes that:

- a. the cost of control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived.
- b. the valuation of costs and benefits of internal controls requires estimates and judgments by management.

2. Internal control practices shall address the following points:

- a. Control of collusion: Collusion is a situation where two or more employees are working in conjunction to defraud their employer.
- b. Separation of transaction authority from accounting and record keeping: By separating the person who authorizes or performs the transaction from the people who record or otherwise account for the transaction, a separation of duties is achieved.

- c. Custodial safekeeping: Securities purchased from any bank or dealer including appropriate collateral (as defined by N.J.S.A. 2A:9-105) shall be placed with an independent third party for custodial safekeeping.
 - d. Avoidance of physical delivery securities. Book entry securities are much easier to transfer and account for since actual delivery of a document never takes place. Delivered securities must be properly safeguarded against loss or destruction. The potential for fraud and loss increases with physically delivered securities.
 - e. Clear delegation of authority to subordinate staff members. Subordinate staff members must have a clear understanding of their authority and responsibilities to avoid improper actions. Clear delegation of authority also preserves the internal control structure that is contingent on the various staff positions and their respective responsibilities.
 - f. Written confirmation of telephone transactions for investments and wire transfer. Due to the potential for error and improprieties arising from telephone transactions, all telephone transactions should be supported by written communications and approved by the appropriate person. Written communication may be via fax if on letterhead and the safekeeping institution has a list of authorized signatures.
 - g. Development of a wire transfer agreement with the lead bank or third-party custodian. This agreement should outline the various controls, security provisions, and delineate responsibilities of each party making and receiving wire transfers.
- D. Delivery vs. Payment: All trades where applicable will be executed by delivery vs. payment (DVP). This ensures that securities are deposited in the eligible financial institution prior to the release of funds. Securities will be held by a third party custodian as evidenced by safekeeping receipts.

IV. Reporting

- A. Methods: The chief financial officers shall prepare an investment report to the governing body each month, including a succinct management summary that provides a clear picture of the status of the current investment portfolio and transactions made over the last month. This management summary will be prepared in a manner which will allow the governing body to ascertain whether investment activities during the reporting period have conformed to the investment policy. The report should be provided to the chief executive officer and the governing body. The report will include those items outlined in the cash management plan.
- B. Performance Standards: The investments portfolio will be managed in accordance with the parameters specified within the cash management plan and policy. The portfolio should obtain a market average rate of return during a market/economic environment of stable interest rates. Portfolio performance should be compared to appropriate benchmarks on a regular basis.

V. Policy

- A. Exemption: Any investment currently held that does not meet these guidelines shall be exempted from the requirements of the cash management plan. At maturity or liquidation, such monies shall be reinvested only as provided by the cash management plan and policy.
- B. Amendment: The cash management plan must be approved by the governing body, by resolution, on an annual basis, and may be amended at any time during the year to reflect changes due to changes in laws, funds or investments.

ATTACHMENT B

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, that for the year 2022, the following shall serve as the cash management plan of the Township of Hardwick.

The Chief Financial Officer is directed to use this cash management plan as the guide in depositing and investing the Township of Hardwick funds.

The following are suitable and authorized investments:

- Interest-bearing accounts and certificates of deposit in authorized banks, listed below for deposit of local unit funds.
- Government money market mutual funds as comply with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-15.1(e)
- Local government investment pools which comply with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-15.1(e) and conditions set by the Division of Local Government Services.
- New Jersey State Cash Management Fund.
- Repurchase agreements (repos) of fully collateralized securities, which comply with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-15.1(a).

Each month, the Chief Financial Officer shall prepare a schedule of investments purchased and redeemed, investment earnings, fees incurred and market value of all investments if applicable.

The following Government Unit Depository Protection Act approved banks are authorized depositories for the deposit of funds:

FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF HOPE, HOPE, NEW JERSEY
LAKELAND BANK, FREDON BRANCH
NJ CASH MANAGEMENT FUND, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

The following are approved security broker/dealers:

None

The CFO shall report to the governing body any account that does not earn interest.

12. 2024-12 Designating Authorized Signatures on Documents.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick that the Mayor and the Municipal Clerk be and are hereby authorized to execute and deliver agreements between the Township of Hardwick and any individual or corporation, either public or private; and

13. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Mayor, the Municipal Clerk and the Treasurer are authorized to sign checks and other drafts of the Township; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED in the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is authorized to sign documents or drafts of the Township.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that vouchers and/or purchase orders will require the signatures of three Committee members, one of whom must be the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

14. 2024-13 Authorization for Tax Assessor to File Corrective Appeals and Stipulations and Authorization for Township Attorney to Work with Tax Assessor in Defense on Tax Appeals with the Warren County Board of Taxation.

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick has been informed by the Tax Assessor of Hardwick Township that from time to time, errors are made in computing the tax assessments governing certain property locations within Hardwick Township; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Assessor of Hardwick Township has requested the Township Committee to authorize the Tax Assessor to file corrections of such errors with the Warren County Board of Taxation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the Tax Assessor is hereby authorized to file corrective appeals and stipulations with the Warren County Board of Taxation concerning those properties wherein errors were made; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tax Assessor send copies of such corrected assessments to the individuals involved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be supplied to the Warren County Tax Board, Belvidere, NJ and to the Municipal Assessor for the Township of Hardwick.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Township Attorney shall work with the Tax Assessor in defending tax appeals before the Warren County Board of Taxation.

15. 2024-14 Resolution of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren State of New Jersey Approving Temporary Budget for 2024.

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 2024 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 2023 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: \$1,220,514.90

WHEREAS, 26.25% of the total appropriations in the 2023 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: \$ 320,385.16

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 \$ 320,385.16 for the General Fund and that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Chief Financial Officer for recordkeeping.

16. 2024-15 Fixing the Rate of Interest to be Charged on Delinquent Taxes and
 Authorizing the Tax Collector to Hold Annual Tax Sale.

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A 54:4-67 permits the governing body of each municipality to fix the rate of interest to be charged for non-payment of taxes or assessments subject to any abatement or discount for the late payment of taxes or assessments for the late payment of taxes as provided by law; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 54:4-67 has been amended to permit the fixing of said rate of 8% per annum on the first \$1,500.00 of the delinquency, and 18% per annum on any amount in excess of \$1,500.00, and allows an additional penalty of 6% be collected against a delinquency in excess of \$10,000.00 on properties that fail to pay the delinquency prior to the end of the calendar year:

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

1. The Tax Collector is hereby authorized and directed to charge 8% per annum on the first \$1,500.00 of taxes becoming delinquent after due date and 18% per annum on any amount of taxes in excess of \$1,500.00 becoming delinquent after due date and if a delinquency is in excess of \$10,000.00 and remains in arrears beyond December 31st, an additional penalty of 6% shall be charged against the total delinquency.
2. Effective January 1, 2020, there will be a ten (10) day grace period of quarterly tax payments made by cash, check or money order.
3. Any payments not made in accordance with paragraph two of this resolution shall be charged interest from the due date as set forth in paragraph one of this resolution.
4. A certified copy of this resolution shall be provided by the Township Clerk to the Tax Collector, Township Attorney and Township Auditor for the Township of Hardwick.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Township Committee that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to hold a tax sale in accordance with law.

17. 2024-16 Cancellation of Certain Real Estate Property Tax Balances.

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:5-17.1 promulgated by the New Jersey State Legislature, all real estate property taxes of less than \$10.00 (ten dollars) are to be cancelled of record:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, the Tax Collector is hereby authorized and empowered, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:5-17.1, to cancel and remove from the tax duplicate records all refunds and/or delinquent real estate property taxes of less than \$10.00 (ten dollars).

18. 2024-17 Appointment of Qualified Purchasing Agent.

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick has a need to appoint a Qualified Purchasing Agent; and

WHEREAS Christine Rolef meets the statutory qualifications to hold the position.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESLOVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren State of New Jersey that Christine Rolef is hereby appointed as Qualified Purchasing Agent.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this appointment provides the Township of Hardwick with a bid threshold of \$44,000.

19. 2024-18 Resolution Authorizing Pre-Payment of Certain Bills for 2024.

WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick has budgeted funds for payment of obligations including, utilities, payroll, debt service, governmental fees and other statutory payments, insurance, and for the advertising, printing and mailing costs of the Township; and,

WHEREAS, the payment of these items occasionally arrives out of time for placement on the next available list of bills and claims, thereby inadvertently placing these bills and mailings in arrears because of the schedule of meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Township's Chief Financial Officer and Township Attorney have advised that the governing body may provide for the pre-payment of these items, so that they may be paid in a timely manner without penalty.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Hardwick, Warren County, State of New Jersey that the Chief Financial Officer be and is hereby authorized and directed to make pre-payment of the following items prior to the same appearing on the next meeting's list of bills and claims:

1. Utilities (electric, gas, water, sewer and telephone, cellular telephone, gasoline, diesel fuel, internet providers, etc.).
2. Township payroll and payroll agencies.
3. Debt service as evidenced by pre-authorized bonds and/or notes.
4. Health, dental and other insurance premiums and/or claims.
5. Governmental fees and other statutory payments (school, county, sewage authority, state and county fees).
6. Bills pertaining to the advertising, printing, and mailing costs of the Township.
7. Third party fees collected through pre-authorized credit/debit card processing.
8. Bills where vendor discounts are granted for timely payment. (Example 2% discount for payments made within 10 days.) Maximum dollar amount allowed is \$20,000.
9. Inter-fund Obligations
10. Purchase of Investments

Motion made by Meuse, second by Lovell and approved by roll call vote: Meuse—yes, Lovell—yes, Jacksic—yes for January 2, 2024, Consent agenda.

MAYOR APPOINTMENTS:

Land Use Board

Chris Jacksic	1-year term, expiring on 12/31/2024, Class I
Cynthia Caffrey	1-year term, expiring on 12/31/2024, Class II
Tyrone Coronato	2-year term, expiring on 12/31/2025, Alt. #2

COMMITTEE LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS:

Tabled until the next meeting.

FROM THE COMMITTEE:

Committeeman Lovell stated that he met with the township Tax Collector and the township is currently at a 97% collection rate.

Committeeman Lovell commented on a letter that was sent from the zoning officer and would like to invite him to the next meeting for discussion in Executive Session.

Committeeman Lovell would like to see two affordable housing rehabs done this year.

Committeeman Lovell spoke about the Open Space plan and that the former consultant is looking for payment which he would like to discuss during executive session at the next meeting.

Deputy Mayor Meuse thanked all the employees for their hard work in 2023. Deputy Mayor Meuse stated for 2024 she will work on updating the website and using social media to get information out to residents.

Deputy Mayor Meuse stated that the new ACO would like to put in the townships budget a program called trap and release. More discussion to follow.

Mayor Jacksic also thanked the employees for their hard work.

FROM THE PUBLIC:

No public comment

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Lovell, second by Meuse and carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Shipps, RMC