

**TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK  
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 21, 2026**

**OPENING ROLL CALL:**

Mayor Jacksic called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Committeeman Lovell and Deputy Mayor Meuse were present. CFO Rolef, Township Attorney Igor Bykov, and Municipal Clerk Shipp 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 Jersey Herald and The Express Times, following the Townships Annual Reorganization Meeting, at which the 2026 meeting schedule was adopted.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment.

**DEPARTMENT REPORT:**

**Chief Financial Officer Report.**

CFO Rolef updated the township's financial status and upcoming budget schedule. A preliminary budget will be prepared in coordination with the CFO, auditor, department heads, and Deputy Mayor Lovell prior to the scheduled April 15 budget workshop. The budget will be ready for introduction at the April 15 meeting following the 5:30 PM workshop session. The auditors are expected to arrive within the next three to four weeks to complete the year-end financial statements and closeout procedures. No other financial concerns were reported at this time.

**MINUTES:**

December 10, 2025, Public Session Meeting Minutes

**Motion made by Committeewoman Meuse, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lovell, and carried to approve.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. 2026-21 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2024-002

**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 9

Certificate Number 2024-002

Assessed to: Patterson, Thomas/McDonald, Eileen  
33 Stillwater Road  
Hardwick, NJ 07825

2. **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Committee of Hardwick Township that the Municipal Finance Officer is hereby authorized to issue checks for \$39,552.32 (lien) and \$15,200.00 (premium) payable to lien holder:

CHRISTIANA T C/F CE1/FIRSTTRUST  
 PO Box 5021  
 Philadelphia, PA 19111-5021

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	12259.01
Subsequent Payment	23179.65
*Redemption Fee	753.54
*interest on certificate	0.00
*interest on subsequent	3298.12
Other fees	62.00
Premium	15200.00
Total to lien holder	39552.32
*to be reported on 1099	4051.66

2. 2026-22 Resolution Appointing Nichole Meuse as Emergency Management Coordinator and Ty Coronato as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for Hardwick Township  
 WHEREAS, the Township of Hardwick requires the appointment of an Emergency Management Coordinator pursuant to N.J.S.A. App. A:9-40 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick has determined that it is in the best interest of the Township to appoint Nichole Meuse to serve as the Emergency Management Coordinator; and

WHEREAS, the Township further desires to appoint Ty Coronato to serve as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator to assist the coordinator in fulfilling the duties of the Office of Emergency Management; and

WHEREAS, both appointments shall be for three-year terms in accordance with applicable statutory requirements; and

WHEREAS, said appointments shall take effect January 1, 2026.

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

1. Nichole Meuse is hereby appointed as Emergency Management Coordinator for a three-year term commencing January 1, 2026 and expiring December 31, 2028.
2. Ty Coronato is hereby appointed as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for a three-year term commencing January 1, 2026 and expiring December 31, 2028.
3. A certified copy of this Resolution shall be provided to the Warren County Office of Emergency Management and any other agencies as required by law.

3. 2026-23 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.

4. 2026-24 Resolution to Cancel Lien on Property

WHEREAS, Tudor, Victoria own property known on the tax map of Hardwick as Block 601 Lot 17.02 (40 Sunset Lake Road),

WHEREAS, the property has an Added Assessment bill for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2025 and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2026 for Home/New Construction,

WHEREAS, the Added Assessment was based on the COAH calculation,

WHEREAS, the Home/New Construction is not yet been completed, the assessment is in error and the Tax Assessor has removed the Added Assessment on this property,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of Hardwick Township that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to cancel said Added Assessment for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2025 and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2026 from the tax records.

**Motion made by Deputy Mayor Lovell, seconded by Committeewoman Meuse, and approved by roll call vote: Lovell; yes, Meuse; yes, Jacksic; yes.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Nixle Increase**

The Committee discussed the increase in Nixle subscription costs and current resident enrollment levels. It was suggested to add Nixle sign-up information to the spring community postcard for community-wide cleanup and to post sign-up instructions on social media to increase resident enrollment.

**Motion made by Mayor Jacksic, seconded by Committeewoman Meuse, and approved by roll call vote: Deputy Mayor Lovell; yes, Committeewoman Meuse; yes, Mayor Jacksic; yes, to pay the increase for Nixle.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. January 6, 2026, Samatha Grape, Warren County Confidential Assistant  
Subject: Commissioner Kern Cover Letter-Data Center, Model Ordinance

**TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY:**

Attorney Bykov provided updates on the following matters:

**Cell Tower Exchange:**

Status update provided on the Gaelic cell tower exchange. A contract is expected to be received next week and will be provided to the Committee for review upon receipt.

**Vass Farmstead Site Visit:**

The rescheduled site visit to the Vass Farmstead with the Environmental Protection Agency is tentatively scheduled for February 20, 2026, at 10:00 AM.

**Affordable Housing Obligation:**

Attorney Bykov provided an update on the township's affordable housing obligations. There are currently three unsatisfied obligation units (rehabilitation obligation) that must be addressed as part of the consent order due this Friday. The township previously withdrew from the Warren County rehabilitation program due to poor management, but may consider rejoining under the program's new leadership, which has demonstrated improved responsiveness and communication.

The Committee has two options: rejoin the Warren County rehabilitation program or expand affordable housing trust fund monies directly. The Committee expressed interest in reviewing the Warren County contract for possible action at the next meeting. Attorney Bykov will verify rehabilitation unit accounting with the township planner (Fred/Megan Adam from Heyer Gruel) and obtain contract information from Warren County. A new development fee ordinance will need to be adopted in the future to comply with recently implemented state rules.

**TOWNSHIP CLERK:**

Clerk Shipps had no report.

**STILLWATER FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:**

Bill Hughes provided the year-end report on behalf of Fire Chief Dwayne. The department responded to 219 fire calls and 545 EMS calls in 2024. Approximately 30 technical rescue calls were handled during the year, with one occurring in Hardwick Township. The department's brush truck is nearing completion and is expected to be ready for service by the spring fire season.

**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REPORTS:****Committeewoman Meuse Report****Stillwater Fire Department Dispatch:**

Committeewoman Meuse reported progress on resolving the Stillwater fire dispatch issues. After multiple attempts to contact Warren County communications over the past year, she finally received a response. A meeting is scheduled to be set up with Warren County Communications Director Steve Howell, along with Sussex County representatives, to establish dual dispatch procedures. The goal is to ensure the Stillwater Fire Department receives proper dispatch notifications for calls in Hardwick Township, which has not been occurring consistently despite being the required protocol.

**Township Website:**

The new township website is complete and ready to launch. The site is currently live and has been reviewed. However, final publication is pending coordination between JP and Dave Heath to ensure the email server routing is properly configured so that township emails continue to be received correctly through JP; s server.

**Blairstown Hose Company Report:**

Committeewoman Meuse reported that the Blairstown Hose Company responded to 23 calls during the reporting period, including six public motor vehicle accidents, with one occurring on Maple Lane.

**Deputy Mayor Lovell Report****Property Acquisition Project:**

Deputy Mayor Lovell provided an update on the ongoing property acquisition project. He and DPW Supervisor Tom Campbell walked the property with Sandy Urgo from The Land Conservancy of New Jersey during the first snowfall and found it to be an excellent acquisition. Sandy has redesigned the remainder lot to follow existing fence lines and include an old cistern and building ruins with the private property, which will help avoid DEP cleanup requirements. The driveway easement issue is being addressed through a conservation agreement (rather than a conservation easement) being developed by Sandy in consultation with Igor and Mr. Lavery. This approach will clarify that the township is not responsible for long-term driveway maintenance. The driveway work is necessary to provide fire truck access for the minor subdivision approval before the Land Use Board and potentially the county board. The township's financial commitment to this project is approximately \$120,000 from open space funds. These funds were encumbered per the November email and are not available for other spending. Part of the township's involvement includes addressing the property tax situation, as the owners lost their farmland assessment (approximately \$6,000 in additional taxes). The township will complete the driveway work at a lower cost than the \$60,000 the private sector would charge, which benefits both parties. Once the subdivision is approved, the township will step aside, and the conservation group will complete the acquisition.

**Vass Farmstead:**

The site visit is scheduled for February 20, 2026, at 10:00 AM. Deputy Mayor Lovell expressed frustration with the slow state approval process despite submitting additional information as requested. He anticipates the project will be completed shortly after the February 20 meeting, pending final State House approval signatures. He received contact information from the state representative regarding alcohol/beverage policies at the site and will follow up to provide clarity for event planning. Several weddings are pending based on this information, with one June wedding already confirmed without alcohol service.

**Department of Public Works:**

Deputy Mayor Lovell commended the DPW crew for their performance during recent winter storms, particularly noting Dans leadership as the lead man during the last storm. He expressed

confidence in the decision to designate Dan as lead man with pay differential. The department is prepared for an anticipated significant storm on Sunday with all drivers organized.

**Mayor Jacksic Report**

Planet Networks Fiber Optic Installation:

Mayor Jacksic reported that Planet Networks is nearing completion of fiber optic installation in the township. A small section of Spring Valley Road remains for underground installation. Planet Networks received a rural infrastructure BEAD grant, which should facilitate completion of the final connections to homes.

JCP&L and Board of Education Initiatives:

Mayor Jacksic is scheduling meetings with neighboring mayors to address JCP&L service issues and explore a Board of Education feasibility study for potential school district consolidation. A new feasibility study is available that, unlike the previous 2017-2018 version, does not require all districts to agree to participate.

School District Regionalization Discussion:

Discussion was held regarding potential regionalization of elementary school boards of education under North Warren Regional School District. Key considerations include: the current inefficiency of four superintendents serving five small districts; two-thirds of township taxes going to education; declining school performance ratings; and the need for three binding referendums for any regionalization. The mayor will continue coordination with neighboring officials and provide updates.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion made by Mayor Jacksic, seconded by Committeewoman Meuse, and carried to adjourn tonight's meeting at 7:35 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Shipps  
Municipal Clerk, RMC  
Hardwick Township