

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING – February 18, 2025**

Mayor Mueller *calls the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.* announcing that all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

PRESENT: Mayor A. Mueller, Deputy Mayor V. Panico, Mr. J. Albanese, Mr. J. Heller, and Mr. J. Huelsebusch

ALSO PRESENT: Municipal Clerk K. Parker and Attorney C. Corsini

ABSENT: Administrator R. Sheola

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Clerk read the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION
EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.*, the Open Public Meetings Act, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist and desires to authorize the exclusion of the public from the portion of the meeting in accordance with the act;

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

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the specified subject matter as set forth in the following Exhibit “A.”

EXHIBIT A

<u>Subject Matter</u>	<u>Basis of Public Exclusion</u>	<u>Date Anticipated</u> <u>When Discussion Will</u> <u>Be Disclosed to Public</u>
Administration	Personnel	Certain information at the discretion of Township Committee shall remain confidential
Clerks Office.....	Personnel	“ “ “
Planning & Zoning	Personnel	“ “ “
Conditional Redevelopers Agreement ... (Pulte Homes)	Contract Negotiations.....	“ “ “
Project Reference Map Services.....	Contract Negotiations	“ “ “
Facilities Project..... (MS4 Stormwater GIS Mapping)	Contract Negotiations	“ “ “
Van Cleef Engineering	Contract Negotiations	“ “ “
Executive Session Minutes..... • February 3, 2025	Attorney-Client Privilege.....	“ “ “
Affordable Housing.....	Potential Litigation.....	“ “ “

1. It is anticipated at this time that the stated subject matter will be made public on or about the time set forth in Exhibit "A".
2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

The meeting reconvened at 7:55 p.m.

Mayor Mueller led those present in the *Salute to the Flag*.

Executive Session:

Personnel / Administration Interviews

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Personnel / Clerks Office

Municipal Clerk Parker announced her retirement, thanking dedicated colleagues for their support, recognizing the strong connections she built with residents, and acknowledging the teamwork and mutual respect that kept the municipality running smoothly.

Mayor Mueller thanked Municipal Clerk Parker for her years of service.

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2025-57

RESOLUTION APPOINTING ANN MARIE LEHBEGER, RMC TO SERVE IN THE POSITION OF ACTING MUNICIPAL CLERK

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:9-133(a), in every municipality there shall be a municipal clerk appointed for a three (3) year term by the governing body of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, Karin Parker has served as a Municipal Clerk and wishes to retire; and

WHEREAS, Ann Marie Lehberger is certified in this position and qualified in the operations of the Municipal Clerk's Office; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Readington wishes to appoint Ann Marie Lehberger, *RMC* to serve as the Acting Municipal Clerk for a three (3) year term effective March 3, 2025 and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee recommends the annual compensation of Ann Marie Lehberger in the amount of \$112,000.00 for a thirty-five (35) hour workweek inclusive of longevity, Township meeting and Elections; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington that Ann Marie Lehberger, *RMC* is hereby appointed to serve as Municipal Clerk for a three (3) year term effective March 3, 2025.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

Personnel / Planning & Zoning

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Contract Negotiations / Conditional Redevelopers Agreement (Pulte Homes)

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Contract Negotiations / Project Reference Map Services

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the contract as amended for map services, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

Contract Negotiations / Facilities Project

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Contract Negotiations / Van Cleef Engineering (MS4 Stormwater GIS Mapping)

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Attorney-Client Privilege / Executive Session Minutes / February 3, 2025

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the Executive Session Minutes of February 3, 2025 for content only, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Potential Litigation / Affordable Housing

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Mueller read the following statement:

All items listed with an asterisk "" are considered to be routine by the Township Committee and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a committee member or citizen requests, in which event the item will be removed from the General Order of Business and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.*

Mr. Heller requested to remove *Items #1* and *#3* from the Consent Agenda.

1. * **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** of meeting of February 3, 2025
2. * **Release of Escrow / Block 4, Lots 51 & 52 (the Ridge at Readington)**

3. **Tax Lien Redemption*

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

READINGTON TOWNSHIP
HUNTERDON COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, an interested party has paid to the Tax Collector the amount necessary to redeem the lien on Block 21, Lot 4 and,

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Tax Collector to refund to the lienholder the redemption amount.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee that the Treasurer be authorized to refund the redemption amount of \$58,730.45, known as Tax Sale Certificate #2020-005, to the lienholder, Tad J. Dabrowski.

4. **Refund of Tax Overpayment*

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

READINGTON TOWNSHIP
HUNTERDON COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Tax Collector has recommended the following refund of a property tax payment for 1st Quarter 2025:

<u>BLOCK/LOT</u>	<u>REFUND TO</u>	<u>REASON</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
95/12.170	Viktoriia Lianna	Overpayment	\$121.84

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee that the Treasurer is hereby authorized to refund the amount recommended.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to approve the Consent Agenda (with the removal of items #1 and 3), seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC for items listed on the agenda only

Susan Masinda spoke to the approved length of runway 422 at Solberg Airport.

Rene Rao spoke to the urgent need for funding to repair the historic buildings in the Township specifically the porch at Bouman Stickney.

Julia Allen commented on the Solberg Airport Master Plan and requested that the Township Committee communicate with the DOT (Department of Transportation) via the revision of the Township ordinances and Master Plan.

Laurie Fisher echoed the comments of Ms. Allen and expressed concern about the potential for an EVTOL operation facility at the airport.

Jennifer Testa, a Branchburg resident, spoke to the lack of information that was available at the Solberg Airport public information meeting and expressed concern about preserving the rural nature and beauty of the community.

Barbara Nastro encouraged the Committee to work together with Branchburg regarding the residents' concerns over the potential airport expansion.

Pearl Buccine spoke to the need for a better way to communicate and consider the feedback and concerns of the community regarding the potential expansion of the airport.

PUBLIC HEARING

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to adjourn the regular meeting to hold a Public Hearing, seconded by Mr. Heller with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

An Ordinance Amending and Supplementing Portions of the Land Use Ordinance Found in Chapter 148 Entitled "Land Development" of the Code of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey Permitting Up to Two Detached Single-Family Dwellings on Lots with an Appropriate Lot Size in the SRR Special Resource Residential and RR Rural Residential Zones

Ordinance #01-2025

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the governing body.

Mr. Heller and Mr. Albanese opined that this affects very few properties and there are proper channels in the Township such as the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment for residents to go through if they wish to have a second dwelling on their property.

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the public.

Laurie Fisher questioned the lot size and specific regulations.

Eric Rhoades commented that something worse could potentially be built if the large property was sold to a different owner and subdivided.

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to close the Public Hearing and open the regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Nay
Mr. Heller	- Nay
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to adjourn the regular meeting to hold a Public Hearing, seconded by Mr. Heller with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

An Ordinance Supplementing and Amending Volume II Chapter 148 Entitled "Land Development" of the Code of the Township of Readington, 2000 to Create the HVC Highway Village Commercial, HC Highway Commercial, and the ROM-3 Research Office and Manufacturing Zoning Districts, and to Provide Use Provisions, Spatial and Design Standards, and Definitions Related thereto; to Remove the Village Residential Affordable Housing-1 Districts, and Amend the Zoning Map of the Township to Reflect the Amending Zoning Districts

Ordinance #02-2025

Township Planner Michael Sullivan provided some background on the ordinance and explained the focus of the subcommittee was to find a way through zoning to find opportunities to revitalize the Route 22 corridor for some of the places that were not really prospering or were forlorn while doing its best to protect the adjoining neighborhoods.

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the governing body.

There were none.

Mayor Mueller asked if there were any comments from the public.

Gaspar Ferrara spoke to the struggles he has had over the years to find tenants for his buildings due to the outdated zoning and urged the Committee to approve the proposed ordinance changes.

Scott Barton asked for clarification on the differences in the uses across the zones.

Tim Hionis spoke in favor of the proposed changes but questioned why one section of the corridor was left out of the rezoning.

Baljinder Singh also spoke to his hardship to maintain tenants for his properties with the current zoning And lack of sewer and urged the Committee to approve the proposed ordinance changes.

James Cardin expressed concern about the zoning changes proposed between Clark Lane and Route 523 due to negative impacts to residents in the historic district along Old Highway 28.

Mayor Mueller noted that there is a typo on page six of the ordinance in the chart, clarifying the Block and Lot listed should be *Block 21, Lot 29*.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to close the Public Hearing and open the regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

CORRESPONDENCE / OTHER INFORMATION

1. Letter dated February 10, 2025 from John Kalinich regarding ***Solberg Airport Master Plan Public Hearings***. No action taken.

OLD BUSINESS

1. ***Use of Open Space / Historic Preservation Funding***

Deputy Mayor Panico spoke to the preservation of historic properties in Township.

Mr. Albanese emphasized identifying the most urgent needs of historic properties for the Township Committee to evaluate the funding requirements.

Rene Rao, Chair of the Museum Committee, stated that the list is available and has been provided to the Administrator and the Committee.

Mayor Mueller discussed the County versus Township Open Space funds and recommended amending the Township ordinance to include preservation and maintenance of historic buildings.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ***An Ordinance Amending Ordinance #25-2024 Authorizing the Acquisition of Certain Real Property Known as Block 21, Lot 4 in the Township of Readington, Hunterdon County from Solis***

The following ordinance was offered for introduction:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE #25-2024 AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 21, LOT 4 IN THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON, HUNTERDON COUNTY FROM SOLIS

Ordinance #03-2025

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Readington adopted Ordinance #13-2024 on May 6, 2024 ("Ordinance") for the acquisition of real certain property consisting of approximately 4.4 +/- acres owned by Mario R. Solis, located 520 Mountain Road, and known as Block 21, Lot 4 of the official tax map of the Township of Readington ("the Property"), and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee adopted Ordinance #25-2024 on October 7, 2024, which amended Ordinance #13-2024; and

WHEREAS, the Township closed on the property on January 29, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the contract with the seller was amended to remove a demolition credit and provide for closing costs to be paid by the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Township now desires to amend Ordinance #25-2024 to conform to the amended contract.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, and State of New Jersey, that Ordinance #25-2024 shall be amended as follows (deletions are signified ~~thus~~ and new language is signified thus):

Ordinance #03-2025 cont'd:

Section One. Section Two of Ordinance #25-2024 is hereby amended as follows:

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Administrator, Township Clerk of the Township and designated Township Attorney are hereby authorized and directed to take all reasonable, necessary and lawful steps including execution of any and all necessary documents, toward the acquisition of said Property, in the manner and subject to the terms and conditions specified above, and are further authorized and directed to make the aforesaid payment to the owners of the Property. In addition, the Township may agree to amend the contract with Seller to allow for the Township (or its vendors) to undertake the demolition and/or removal of the structures on the Property, and/or other cleanup as required, prior to closing. ~~provided the Seller either reimburses or credits the Township for the costs thereof at closing.~~

Section Two. All other portions of Ordinance #25-2024 not amended by this Ordinance shall remain in effect.

Section Four. The amended contract dated January 29, 2025 is hereby ratified.

Section Five. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon final adoption and publication in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to introduce this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Nay
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

The Public Hearing was scheduled for March 17, 2025 at 7:45 p.m.

2. *An Ordinance of the Township of Readington Amending Section 187-26 (Allocation of Sewer Capacity) of Chapter 187 (Sewers) of the Municipal Code*

The following ordinance was offered for introduction:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON AMENDING SECTION 187-26 (ALLOCATION OF SEWER CAPACITY) OF CHAPTER 187 (SEWERS) OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE

ORDINANCE #04-2025

WHEREAS, the Township seeks to amend Section 187-26 (Allocation of Sewer Capacity) of Chapter 187 (Sewers) of the municipal code.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Committee of Readington Township as follows:

Section I

Section 187-26(B) of Chapter 187 of the municipal code of the Township of Readington is hereby amended as follows (struck through portions are to be removed; bolded and underlined portions are to be added):

Ordinance #04-2025 cont'd:

B. Applications for sewer capacity.

- (1) Allocations for sewer capacity from Readington's allocated portion of sewer capacity shall be made by the Readington Township Committee upon written agreement to be entered into with the applicant, ~~after the allocation request has been reviewed and a favorable recommendation has been made by the Readington Township Sewer Advisory Committee.~~
- (2) All requests for sewer allocation shall be made utilizing the Township's application form and considered according to the criteria which the Township hereby adopts as follows.
- (3) Fees for sewer allocation request.
 - (a) There shall be a nonrefundable application fee of \$100 for sewer allocation requests to cover administrative costs, payable at the time the application is made.
 - (b) There shall be an escrow fee of \$1,000 to cover the engineering review of submitted documents, **to** confirm that the site is located within the sewer service area, **to confirm the site** has access to a sewer main and for the purpose of providing a recommendation to the ~~Sewer Advisory~~ **Township** Committee.

Section II

Section 187-26(E) of Chapter 187 of the municipal code of the Township of Readington is hereby amended as follows (struck through portions are to be removed; bolded and underlined portions are to be added):

E. Allocation of sewer capacity may not be transferred from the owner without prior approval of the Readington Township Committee, ~~upon review and recommendation of the Readington Township Sewer Advisory Committee.~~

Section III

The application form referenced in Section I hereof is hereby amended as reflected in the document attached to this ordinance as Schedule A.

Section IV

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

Section V

If any section, paragraph, subdivision, clause or provision of this Ordinance shall be adjudged invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to this section, paragraph, subdivision, clause or provision and the remainder of this Ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.

Section VI

This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption and publication in the manner required by New Jersey general law.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to introduce this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Nay
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

The Public Hearing was scheduled for March 17, 2025 at 7:45 p.m.

3. *An Ordinance Amending and Supplementing the Readington Township Salary Ordinance*

The following ordinance was offered for introduction:

An Ordinance Amending and Supplementing the Readington Township Salary Ordinance for Officers and Employees of the Township of Readington

ORDINANCE # 05-2025

	Min.	Max.
DEPARTMENT MANAGERS		
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	\$110,000	\$155,000
	\$125,000	\$170,000

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to introduce this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Heller - Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Mueller - Aye

The Public Hearing was scheduled for March 17, 2025 at 7:45 p.m.

4. *Resolution to Increase the LOSAP Contribution Amount*

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2020-59

RESOLUTION ADJUSTING THE LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION

WHEREAS, the Township established a Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:14-183, et seq., and N.J.A.C. 5:30-14.1, et seq., in order to reward members of the Whitehouse Rescue Squad, Inc., and the Readington Volunteer Department. all volunteer first aid and fire organizations, for their loyal, diligent and devoted services to the residents of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Code at Chapter 21, Article III, provide for a fixed annual contribution to a deferred income account for each volunteer member who meets the criteria set forth in the Township Code; and

WHEREAS, the annual amount contributed for each volunteer has not changed since 2021; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Local Finance Notice 2025-02 issued by the Division of Local Government Services in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the Township may choose to provide a Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment from time to time wherein the LOSAP contribution may be increased by resolution up to a maximum equal to the amount noted in the NJ DLGS Local Finance Notice; and

WHEREAS, the CPI adjusted contribution is \$2,091 per person for 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes that it is appropriate to increase the annual LOSAP award in this fashion at this time;

Resolution #R-2025-59 cont'd:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED on this 18th day of February, 2025, by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that:

1. The Township's contribution for regular annual services for members of the Whitehouse Rescue Squad, Inc., and the Readington Volunteer Department, who qualify for LOSAP payments shall be and is hereby increased to \$2,091 per person based upon the cumulative CPI increase since 2022, up through and including 2024.
2. For the annual LOSAP contribution to be made in 2025, each qualifying member shall receive an annual payment of \$2,091.
3. The annual LOSAP payment shall increase automatically per the CPI as per Chapter 21-13.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

5. **Resolution Amending Resolution #2024-172 Authorizing the Award of Contracts for "Extraordinary Unspecifiable Services" for Three Bridges Fire Pumping Apparatus**

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2025-60

RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION #2024-172 AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF CONTRACTS FOR "EXTRAORDINARY UNSPECIFIABLE SERVICES" FOR THREE BRIDGES FIRE PUMPING APPARATUS

WHEREAS, in the Fall of 2024, the Three Bridges Fire Company notified the Township Administrator/QPA of a need to rehabilitate a 2008 4 Guys/Spartan fire pumping apparatus; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has funded the necessary repairs; and

WHEREAS, once the apparatus was taken apart at the repair facility, additional deficiencies were noted that require an additional expenditure of funds; and

WHEREAS, the Qualified Purchasing Agent has determined that detailed specifications for the additional rehabilitation work cannot be adequately prepared and determined due to the nature of the work; and

WHEREAS, it is the recommendation of the Qualified Purchasing Agent to further utilize the provisions of *N.J.S.A.40A:11-5(1)(a)(ii)*, known as the Extraordinary Unspecifiable Services provision; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Readington Township to approve an amendment to the original contract with Fire Line Equipment Company, 307 Twin Springs Court, New Holland, PA 17557 in the amount of \$12,314.10 per the proposal made part of this resolution making the grand total of all work to this point \$132,336.10; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 *et seq.*) requires that the resolution authorizing the award of contracts for "Extraordinary, Unspecifiable Services" without competitive bids and the contract itself must be available for public inspection.

Resolution #R-2025-60 cont'd:

CERTIFICATION OF AVAILABLE FUNDS

X-22-013-001 ~ CAPITAL ACCOUNTS ~ \$12,314.10

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

6. Special Event Permit Application / Jersey Man Triathlon

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to approve the special event permit, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

7. Resolution Authorizing the Award of Animal Control Solutions for Animal Control

Mr. Heller inquired as to how much this service was used by the Township due to the high cost of the contract. The Committee agreed to table this item to the next meeting when more information could be provided.

8. Resolution to Support Publishing Legal Notices on Official Governments Websites

Mr. Heller emphasized the need for a better solution for publishing legal notices.

Jerry Cook expressed his disappointment about the discontinuation of printing most of the local newspapers.

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2025-58

**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT PUBLISHING LEGAL NOTICES
ON OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT WEBSITES**

WHEREAS, the sunset provision of March 1, 2025, imposed under P.L. 2024 c.106 is fast approaching in what was a temporary solution that allowed local governments to comply with the public notice requirements under the law in time for annual reorganization meetings in January; and,

WHEREAS, local government officials serve as the stewards of property taxpayer dollars and should no longer be required to subsidize the newspaper industry with revenues collected from publishing legal notices in the press; and,

WHEREAS, long before NJ Advanced Media's announcement that it was terminating daily print publications in January of 2025, local government officials found it increasingly difficult to comply with the public notice requirements under the law as the media has become almost exclusively digitized and struggled to retain staff, resources, and publications; and,

Resolution #R-2025-58 cont'd:

WHEREAS, legislation that will authorize local governments to publish legal notices on a local government's official website will streamline an antiquated and overly burdensome process and save valuable time, resources, and property taxpayer dollars; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Readington does in fact, hereby urge state leaders to pass legislation that will authorize municipalities, counties, school districts, and all local governments to publish legal notices in a clear, transparent, and timely manner on a local government's official website.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to Governor Phil Murphy, Senate President Nicholas Scutari, Speaker of the General Assembly Craig Coughlin, Senator Andrew Zwicker, Assemblymembers Roy Freiman and Mitchelle Drulis and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

9. * **Release of Escrow / Block 4, Lots 51 & 52 (the Ridge at Readington)**

This matter was addressed under the Consent Agenda.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

In Administrator Sheola's absence, Mayor Mueller discussed the option for the Township to participate in the Hunterdon County Electric Co-Op for supplying electricity under a bulk price arrangement, noting it was not a binding agreement.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Albanese to participate in the County electric co-op program, seconded by Mr. Panico and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese	-Aye
Mr. Heller	- Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch	- Aye
Mr. Panico	- Aye
Mayor Mueller	- Aye

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Corsini stated that he had nothing further to report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

JOHN ALBANESE

Mr. Albanese stated that he had nothing further to report.

JONATHAN HELLER

Mr. Heller reported that the Environmental Commission is moving forward with the installation of the grant funded fence on the property of Dreahook Road and will be looking for volunteers soon to assist with the tree planting.

JUERGEN HUELSEBUSCH

Mr. Huelsebusch reported that an access agreement may be required for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to access the site at Rockafellows Mills, as well as a contract for filming the dam removal process.

ADAM MUELLER

Mayor Mueller reported that a letter was received from the Mayor of Flemington thanking the Township emergency services for their assistance during a recent fire.

VINCENT PANICO

Deputy Mayor Panico reported that there will be a historic chocolate making event at Bouman Stickney on March 2. Deputy Mayor Panico further spoke to the collaboration with Whitehouse Rescue and the police department on ice rescues and a thank you letter received from Congressman Kean in appreciation of the Police Department.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Rene Rao spoke to the Historic Commission grant process and stated that an additional \$140,000 from the County Open Space Fund would be needed to save the porch at Bouman Stickney.

COMMENTS FROM THE GOVERNING BODY

There were none.

As there was no further business, ***A MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico at 10:00 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Submitted by:

Karin M Parker, *RMC*
Municipal Clerk