

**COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 28, 2025, 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL**

1. Mayor Buss called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Mayor Buss asked everyone to join her in the salute to the flag.
3. Municipal Clerk Lindsey read the following Sunshine Statement: "The notice requirements of the New Jersey Public Meetings Law have been satisfied by noticing the Asbury Park Press and the Two River Times on January 3, 2025, stating that a regular meeting of the Township Committee would be held on May 28, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., 1 Veterans Way, Colts Neck, NJ 07722, Town Hall. A copy is on file in the office of the Township Clerk."

"Further notice was provided to the Asbury Park Press and the Two River Times on May 20, 2025 noting the meeting time change from 7:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m."

4. Roll call by Municipal Clerk Lindsey indicated the following:

Present: Mayor Tara Torchia Buss, Deputy Mayor Michael Viola,
Committeeman Dan Buzzetta, Committeewoman Sue Fitzpatrick,
Committeeman Frank Rizzuto

Also Present: Kathleen Capristo, Township Administrator, Trina Lindsey,
Municipal Clerk, and Meghan Bennett, Township Counsel

Absent: None

5. **Resolution 2025-101: Executive Session – Potential Litigation and Personnel**

Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola		X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	M	X			
Rizzuto	S	X			
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

After closed session, Mayor Buss called for a motion to go back to open session. On a motion by Committeeman Rizzuto, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous voice vote, the Township Committee went back to open session at 7:06 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Viola stepped down from the dais and exited the meeting room.

6. **Resolution 2025-102: Resolution of Colts Neck Township, County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey, removing Planning Board member pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-69**

Attorney Bennett read the last paragraph of the Hearing Officer's conclusion and also read the resolution in its entirety. Mayor Buss stated that she felt reading the resolution in its entirety was important for the viewers on live stream. Mayor Buss stated that this situation has clouded many of the good things that happen in the township and has

been unfortunate for all involved. Mayor Buss asked for respect and professionalism from everyone.

Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeeman Buzzetta, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE						
	M	S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss			X			
Deputy Mayor Viola					X	
Buzzetta	M		X			
Fitzpatrick			X			
Rizzuto		S	X			
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent						

Deputy Mayor Viola returned to the dais.

7. Annual Audit 2024 – Chief Financial Officer, John Antonides

Chief Financial Officer, John Antonides was present to review the audit.

CFO Antonides stated the following:

The audit presented has a 2024 ending surplus balance of \$ 5,660,810.92 compared to the 2023 ending balance of \$ 5,375,684.82 an increase of \$ 285,126.10. In 2023 the surplus balance increased by \$ 1,059,073.35. This is a net decrease of \$ 773,947.25 in Surplus raised from year to year.

The % of tax collection was 99.03% in 2024. This is the highest collection rate since 2020, which was 99.10%.

Total debt as of 12/31/2024 was \$ 30,667,901.81 or \$ 3,080.03 per Capita, from the 2020 census population of 9,957. There is a budgeted amount of \$ 3,280,771.69 of debt service principal and interest in the Current Fund Budget to be paid in 2025.

There is also another \$ 61,498.85 in the Farmland Budget.

The net debt as a % of Equalized Tax Valuation is at 0.80%, which is the lowest % since 2019 which was 0.51%.

Once again there are no audit findings or deficiencies presented in the audit.

Therefore, the auditor has no recommendations for corrective action to present to the Township Committee based on the testing in the Finance/Tax Office. The staff does a remarkable job and cannot be commended enough for all their hard work helping to keep the audit clean and maintain all of the town's financial records.

CFO Antonides asked if the Township Committee had any questions.

The Township Committee expressed their gratitude for all of the work from Mr. Antonides and his department and congratulated him on the audit with no corrective action plan.

8. Minutes

- a. May 14, 2025 – Executive session
- b. May 14, 2025 – Regular meeting

Mayor Buss called for comments or changes to the minutes. Hearing none, Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeeman Rizzuto, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous voice vote, the minutes were approved as presented.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola		X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	S	X			
Rizzuto	M	X			
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

9. New business

a. Consent Agenda

All items listed on the "Consent Agenda" are considered routine by the Township and are adopted or approved collectively by a single motion and roll-call vote of a majority of the Township Committee. If discussion is desired on any item, it is considered separately.

- a. Resolution 2025-103: Governing Body certification of the annual audit
- b. Resolution 2025-104: Approving and authorizing the execution of a Qualified Public Community Service Agreement between Colts Neck Township and the Grande at Colts Neck Condominium Associates, Inc.
- c. Resolution 2025-105: Authorizing the purchase of two computer tablets with docking stations and installation for the Colts Neck Fire Department, NJ State Contract# 17-FLEET-00744, \$11,530.00
- d. Resolution 2025-106: Authorizing fireworks display on July 3, 2025 at Bucks Mill Park, Colts Neck Business Association

Mayor Buss called for a motion to approve. On a motion by Committeeman Buzzetta, seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous roll call vote, the consent agenda resolutions were adopted.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola		X			
Buzzetta	M	X			
Fitzpatrick		X			
Rizzuto	S	X			
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

e. Approval of Vouchers

Deputy Mayor Viola stated that he reviewed all of the vouchers and found all to be in order. Deputy Mayor Viola noted a few payments on the bills list, fire department tanker repair, JIF insurance payment and recycling payment.

Deputy Mayor Viola made a motion to approve the bills list.

Mayor Buss called for a second to Deputy Mayor Viola's motion, seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous roll call vote, the bills list was approved.

RECORD OF VOTE					
	M S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Torchia Buss		X			
Deputy Mayor Viola	M	X			
Buzzetta		X			
Fitzpatrick	S	X			
Rizzuto		X			
M - Moved S - Seconded X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab - Absent					

Committeeman Rizzuto recuses from any bills/vouchers in connection with the Colts Neck Fire Department.

Committeeman Buzzetta recuses from any bills/vouchers in connection with the Colts Neck Fire Department.

Mayor Buss recuses from any bills/vouchers in connection with the shared municipal court with Holmdel Township.

Deputy Mayor Viola recuses from any bills/vouchers in connection with Best Horticultural and Joleen Landscaping.

f. Administrator's Report

Administrator Capristo thanked CFO Antonides and his team and congratulated them on an outstanding audit report.

g. Township Committee Reports

Committeeman Buzzetta:

- Committeeman Buzzetta stated that he had nothing to report this meeting.

Committeewoman Fitzpatrick:

- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that the Environmental Commission met and reviewed the sapling giveaway. Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that Bob Lutkewitte spoke with the school principals about sending information to the schools to recruit young families to the Environmental Commission and Theresa Danile is handling the recertification process for Sustainable Jersey.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick thanked the Historic Preservation Committee for the invitation to a Thomas Jefferson reenactor at the Cedar Drive Middle School for 6th graders which was quite entertaining and the students were very much engaged in the program.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that on May 20, 2025 she had the honor of marrying Zachary and Xena Barr and congratulated the newlyweds on their marriage.
- Committeewoman Fitzpatrick stated that she attended the Memorial Day parade which was a wonderful representation of our community that came together to honor our fallen heroes.

Committeeman Rizzuto:

- Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the Police Department is hosting a child seat safety inspection on May 30, 2025 at Bucks Mill Park, please check the township website for details. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the Police Department is also continuously working on the festivities for National Night Out in August.
- Committeeman Rizzuto stated that he spoke with the President of the First Aid Squad and reviewed some maintenance issues with the building.
- Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the Thomas Jefferson reenactor that presented at Cedar Drive Middle School was very well received. Committeeman Rizzuto stated that the Historic Preservation Committee also continues to work on the Haunted Hayride and activities for that event in October. Michele Battista added that Weekend in Old Monmouth was well attended.

Deputy Mayor Viola:

- Deputy Mayor Viola reported that the Department of Public Works has completed all pick ups for brush and leaves.
- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that paving for Heyers Mill Road will begin sometime in the middle of June.
- Deputy Mayor Viola stated that the Planning Board will vote on the Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan at their meeting on June 9, 2025, and the Township Committee will have a presentation of the plan at the June 11, 2025 meeting.
- Deputy Mayor Viola congratulated CFO Antonides for two consecutive years with no audit comments.
- Deputy Mayor Viola reminded voters who vote in District 4 and District 5 that their new polling location is Colts Neck Fire Company #2 located at 50 Conover Road.

Mayor Buss:

- Mayor Buss stated that the Memorial Day Parade was an amazing day and extended her thanks to all of the volunteers of the Police Department, First Aid Squad, Fire Police, Fire Department, Women's Auxiliary, Colts Neck ROTC, the marching band, Lion's Club, the Colts Neck churches, Sports Foundation, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Daisies and Girl Scouts, Trail Riders Club, and all of the attendees to watch the parade. Mayor Buss thanked Colts Neck Fire Company #2 for opening up their building and thanked the Ryan family and the families who volunteered at the fire house for hot dogs and Root Beer. Mayor Buss also thanked Colby Marques, Recreation Director.
- Mayor Buss reported that the Executive Fire Council met and began discussions about the specifications for the new fire truck. Mayor Buss reported that there is no additional charge for specific fire truck colors. Mayor Buss reiterated to the public that a fire truck has not been purchased or ordered at this time. Mayor Buss stated that a resident previously expressed concern about the size of the fire truck and the truck being able to fit into the bay at Fire Company #1. Mayor Buss stated that the size of the truck and its ability to fit in the bays will absolutely be taken into consideration before the purchase.

10. Public Comment:

Mayor Buss called for a motion to open public comment. On a motion by Committeeman Rizzuto seconded by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was opened.

Bill Blaney, representing Kris Lukowitz, stated that he wished to correct the record stating that the hearing officer, Mr. Secare, was chosen by the Special Counsel hired by Colts Neck Township. Attorney Bennett stated that when Mr. Secare was chosen as an option, Mr. Blaney had no objection.

Kevin O'Brien, resident, complimented the Board of Education and their team for the effort on the annual school budget. Mr. O'Brien spoke about an OPRA request that he submitted where an extension notice was received. Mr. O'Brien stated that he was surprised that the invoices were not readily available. Mr. O'Brien spoke about dead trees and that the Shade Tree Commission refused a presentation from an expert. Mr. O'Brien spoke about cars being illegally parked on his street for 133 days and Mayor Fitzpatrick stating that she does not enforce the ordinances. Mr. O'Brien spoke about requesting records for 42 The Enclosure and he was told that the township was getting tremendous political pressure and that he is getting in the way. Mr. O'Brien spoke about being approached in a hostile manner by a Planning Board member. Mr. O'Brien spoke about Mayor Rizzuto violating his first amendment right at a previous affordable housing meeting.

Allan Ryan, resident, thanked the Governing Body for their kind words for the Memorial Day parade and celebration. Mr. Ryan stated that the thanks goes to the veterans who put their lives on the line. Mr. Ryan thanked his wife and his son who brought him to Colts Neck. Mr. Ryan thanked his fellow firefighters and their families. God Bless America and Colts Neck.

Fulton Wilcox, resident, requested that more information be included on the bills list. Mr. Wilcox spoke about a \$258,000 interest payment on a loan on the bills list and stated that simply adding a few more characters would better communicate what the payments on the bills list are for. Mr. Wilcox also asked about a \$16,000 payment in connection with the fire department.

Mayor Buss replied to Mr. Wilcox and stated that she did pass that request along to the Chief Financial Officer.

David Mann, resident, stated that the \$16,000 for the fire department was for replacement tires for a 20-year-old tanker.

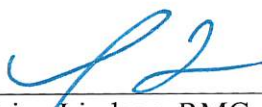
Elaine Mann, resident, spoke about aggressive behavior from Deputy Mayor Viola and asked him to resign from his position on the Township Committee. Ms. Mann stated that this will allow the Committee to restore the confidence of the people. Ms. Mann stated that the residents will show their love at the ballot box. Ms. Mann spoke about monies being spent on repairs on the new municipal building and not receiving any monies from the contractor. Ms. Mann commented on invoices from Bailey's, flowers for town hall and a lot of money spent on Memorial Day.

Mayor Buss stated that residents comment during public comment and there is no fact checking. Mayor Buss stated that residents comment and make accusations about things that are not township business.

As there were no further comments and/or questions from the public, Mayor Buss called for a motion to close public comment. On a motion by Committeewoman Fitzpatrick seconded by Deputy Mayor Viola and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was closed.

11. Adjournment:

As there was no further business, Mayor Buss called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Committeeman Buzzetta seconded by Committeeman Rizzuto and a unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.



Trina Lindsey, RMC
Municipal Clerk

APPROVED: 06/11/25