

REGULAR MEETING
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM – UPPER LEVEL

January 20, 2026

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was opened with the Inspiration and Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Municipal Clerk.

Mayor Bobbitt welcomed everyone, stating that it is great to see everyone in attendance tonight, and revealed that today will be a happy day because new officers will be sworn in tonight, which he expressed is always exciting. He then reiterated that it is great to see so many community members present at tonight's Council meeting.

At the commencement of the meeting Mayor Bobbitt read the following statement of proper notice:

STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE: "Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Council being held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, has been provided through the posting of the annual meeting schedule of said Council in accordance with Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act." Said Notice was forwarded to The Trentonian, The Times and The Princeton Packet on December 12, 2025.

The roll was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Farmer, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.
Absent: Councilwoman Perry.

Also in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq., Municipal Manager, and Arthur Sypek, Esq., Municipal Attorney.

Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

Oath of Office Administered to New Police Officers

Lawrence Township Interim Chief of Police, Kevin Reading, introduced himself and thanked everyone for being present tonight for the swearing in of the new police officers. He stated that this evening is about commitment, and the officers being sworn in tonight have chosen a profession of service and integrity. He relayed that they have worked hard

to reach this moment, and will have a career dedicated to protecting others, and serving the Lawrence Township Community with honor. Chief Reading shared that welcoming these new officers has strengthened the department and enhanced their ability to serve the community, while demonstrating their continued commitment to public safety.

Chief Reading disclosed the new graduates have all graduated from the Cape May County Police Academy. He then introduced the 2025 graduates from Class 57: Zachary Thomas, Kaylie Sanfilippo and Kaynon Smith. Next, he introduced the 2025 graduates from Class 58: Emmie Yard and Guiseppe Erardi. Finally, he introduced the 2026 graduates from Class 59: Kyeon Taylor and Anthony DiTorrice. Chief Reading proceeded to share a brief biography for each police officer, prior to Mayor Bobbitt issuing their oath of office. Afterward, he once more congratulated each of the newly sworn officers and urged them to "remember that every interaction matters, the words you choose, the decisions you make, and the integrity you demonstrate, especially when no one is watching, will define not only your career, but the reputation of this department. Never lose sight of why you chose this profession, and always hold true to the values."

Mayor Bobbitt thanked Chief Reading, and made sure to note all of the Lawrence Township Police Officers in attendance, stating that it is always good to see them supporting their newly sworn-in members.

Presentation by Trails, Open Space, and Stewardship Advisory Committee to Discuss the Committees Focus for 2026

Mr. David Mizenko and Mr. Michael Meriney introduced themselves to Council, and began their presentation. They discussed their committee's focus for 2026, which was organized into three top priorities: *Saturn Chemical*, *Shabakunk US1B Bridge*, and *Greenways*.

Saturn Chemical, they explained, contains contamination that needs to be addressed. They relayed that in 1984, the Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act (ECRA) was triggered due to the presence of contamination, followed by a state assessment that took place in 1996, which revealed the presence of groundwater and soil contamination—information that was confirmed in 2019. In a positive step forward, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in partnership with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) has provided grant funding through the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund (HDSRF), a grant for which the Township can apply that would allow for the complete remediation of the property in coordination with redevelopment.

Regarding the Shabakunk US1B Bridge, they discussed the need for pedestrian safety for Colonial Lake Park. They examined the existing bridge proportions versus the preferred replacement design, and highlighted the opportunity presented by the bridge replacement, while advocating for the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)

to incorporate pedestrian safety measures that will make this crossing safer for pedestrians.

Finally, they discussed Greenways, with respect to the opportunities provided to help fund new trails, such as the Mercer County Trail Grant Program. This program, they explained, is open to applicants through September 1, 2026 and may fund 50% of the projected costs.

Discussion was had with regard to the address of the Saturn Chemical property and the fact that this location will provide for open space for the southern section of Lawrence Township, as well as the clarification that it is not a Superfund site. In addition, discussion addressed the reality that the applications for grants must be sought for each individual project and are not covered "in a block," the possible timeline for the bridge replacement, the cost-estimates of the remediation projects, and the Colonial Lake bridge safety improvements not costing the Township due to DOT modification advantages.

Mayor Bobbitt asked Mr. Nerwinski if he had knowledge of the timeline for the Colonial Lake Bridge, to which he responded that he does not know. However, Mr. Nerwinski stated that there were discussions with the state DOT representatives about widening the bridge to make it safer for pedestrian use, but the Township did not receive a positive response back. In addition, he stated that there has always been a plan to put a pedestrian bridge over the eastern portion of Colonial Lake to keep the trail away from Route 1 traffic, and explained that there would likely be grant funding for the project.

Mayor Bobbitt thanked Councilwoman Farmer, Mr. David Mizenko and Mr. Michael Meriney for providing this presentation, stating that it has given Council much to think about, and he is excited about the year ahead for the Trails, Open Space, and Stewardship Advisory Committee.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Review and Revisions of Agenda

Mr. Sypek stated that since the agenda was printed, a matter has come up involving litigation that will need to be addressed with Council, so he asked that the agenda be amended to reflect a closed session with regard to pending litigation.

On a motion by Councilwoman Farmer, seconded by Councilwoman Santos, the agenda was amended to add Resolution No. 68-26 (18-H.5) Authorizing a Closed Session to discuss items dealing with pending litigation.

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.
 Nays: None.
 Absent: Councilwoman Perry.
 Abstain: None.

Adoption of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 21, 2025 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Ms. Farmer	X						X
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Ms. Perry				X			
Ms. Santos	X					X	
Mayor Bobbitt	X						

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On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 6, 2025 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Mr. Kownacki  | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Ms. Perry     |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Ms. Santos    | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Bobbitt | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

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### Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Mr. Kownacki, Resolution (9-A) Authorizing Awarding of Bid to Techna-Pro Electrical, LLC for Traffic Signal Maintenance – 2026 was presented for adoption.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that the Township does maintain traffic lights throughout the municipality and this company has been retained to provide certain maintenance when needed. The contract amount is not to exceed \$46,550.

#### Resolution No. 54-26

WHEREAS, on Monday, January 5, 2026 bids were received for the project known as Maintenance Services for Various Traffic Signals - 2026; and

WHEREAS, one (1) quote was received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Techna-Pro Electric, LLC who submitted a bid in the amount of \$46,550.00; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:30-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is:

| Acct.           | Ord. No. | Name                        | Amount      |
|-----------------|----------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 6-01-31-430-249 | -----    | Utilities                   | \$17,958.00 |
| C-04-55-501-249 | 2468-24  | Traffic Signal Improvements | \$28,592.00 |

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Engineer, the Mayor and Municipal Clerk are hereby authorized to execute a contract with Techna-Pro Electric, LLC, 100 Pike Road, Building #B, Mount Laurel NJ 08054 in an amount not to exceed \$46,550;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Adopted: January 20, 2026

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.

Nays: None.

Absent: Councilwoman Perry.

Abstain: None.

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### **Introduction of Ordinances**

Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2502-25 SALARY ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE—UNCLASSIFIED AND/OR EXEMPT, SEASONAL, EMERGENCY (NON-UNION) EMPLOYEES FOR 2023-2025 – Deleting the Title of Municipal Treasurer from Schedule B, Grade 18, and Adding the Title of Municipal Treasurer to Schedule B, Grade 23."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that the current CFO, Peter Kiriakatis, agreed to delay his retirement date from December 1, 2025 to June 1, 2026 to provide a seamless succession plan for when the Municipal Treasurer, Mr. Christopher Hart, assumes the role of CFO for Lawrence Township.

Ms. Farmer asked if Mr. Hart will come on board prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>, to which Mr. Nerwinski responded in the affirmative.

The Ordinance No. 2503-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki  | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Perry     |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Ms. Santos    | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Bobbitt | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

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Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY ON ALTMAWR AVENUE FOR OPEN SPACE PURPOSES."

Mr. Sypek stated that this Ordinance would allow the Township to purchase a vacant lot on Altamawr Avenue. He reported that this was highly negotiated, with an agreement reached for a reasonable fair market value in the amount of \$82,000. Mr. Sypek noted that this is not an actual acquisition, but the preliminary steps that will allow for the Township to go to contract.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this is a companion lot adjacent to the "Pitt Stop" area that will fit into the Township's open space plan. Once the Pitt Stop has been cleaned up and turned into a passive park, he explained, this property will be essential to expanding the area and making it more prominently situated on Lawrence Road for a better community experience.

The Ordinance No. 2504-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki  | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Perry     |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Ms. Santos    | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Bobbitt | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

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### Adoption of Ordinances

There was no adoption of ordinances.

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## **Manager's Report –**

Mr. Nerwinski submitted invoice listings for the month of January 2026 in the amount of \$886,846.69.

Mr. Nerwinski reported that the Township submitted a preliminary design for two left-hand lane turn changes for the light they would like to have installed at Federal Point. He explained that the Township's initial plans did not provide for left-hand turns; however, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) stated that they would like to see the left-hand turns included in the Township's plans, so the Township resubmitted the plans with these inclusions. Mr. Nerwinski expressed that this will improve the safety in navigating that intersection, and although it will require some right-away negotiations with the adjacent property owners, he does not consider it so significant as to cause an issue. He relayed that once the NJDOT gives their approval for the concept plan, the plan will then be put into final design and submitted to the NJDOT for approval. Mr. Nerwinski shared that Municipal Engineer, James Parvesse, estimated a target date for the summer of 2026, if all goes well.

Mr. Nerwinski disclosed that Ewing Township has informed Council that the grant they were seeking from the NJDOT was awarded in the amount of \$800,000, which was for the installation of a roundabout at Federal City Road and Bull Run Road as a traffic calming device to stop the problem of speeding at that location. He indicated that the Mayor of Ewing has reached out and asked for cooperation from both Lawrence and Hopewell Townships; however, Mr. Nerwinski stated that he is waiting to find out what their level of cooperation is for Lawrence's traffic light, as the entire strip affects Ewing, Hopewell and Lawrence Townships and should be addressed collaboratively.

Mr. Nerwinski recounted that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) filed a lawsuit against Trenton Water Works and the City of Trenton several years ago. He confirmed that Lawrence, Hopewell, Ewing, and Hamilton Townships joined that suit and have been actively advocating on behalf of Lawrence resident-customers for Trenton Water Works. That litigation had essentially not gotten very far, he revealed, as the NJDEP exercised regulatory action over Trenton Water Works, causing the litigation to simmer down. However, Mr. Nerwinski observed that it has now picked up steam, as the presiding judge asked the Towns, the NJDEP, and the City of Trenton to exchange discovery at a quicker pace. He explained that a meeting with the NJDEP was held on Friday, where he was informed that the NJDEP had selected a firm to do an in-depth study of Trenton Water Works. They explained that the firm was hired to investigate the needs of Trenton Water Works and investigate what regionalization may look like involving the outside water users, and informed Mr. Nerwinski that they are proceeding on this path at the same time that litigation is proceeding. Mr. Nerwinski expressed his hope that Trenton Water Works customers understand that every Town is doing what they can and advocating for their residents in this situation.

Mr. Nerwinski reported that the Fire Study has begun, whereby the firm selected by Council has come to Lawrence and has conducted meetings to obtain background information in order to form the basis of their study. Public Safety Director, Christopher Longo, has taken over control for the Township with regard to the study, and has scheduled a meeting with the firm to provide a presentation, as well as answer questions from those in attendance with regard to what they are doing and what they should expect at the end of this process. This meeting will take place at Town Hall on February 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Nerwinski was happy to report that an offer the Township had made to purchase 31 Landover Road was accepted. He relayed that this is the small schoolhouse building across from the Lawrence Neighborhood Center, and the Township's vision is to preserve the property and turn it into a museum to celebrate the history of that area, especially as the property was once the former Community Center. He disclosed that Mr. Sypek and the attorney for the property have been working to craft an agreement, which will come before Council as a Resolution.

Finally, Mr. Nerwinski revealed that the recommended CFO Budget Presentation is scheduled for February 17, 2026, and department heads will provide their presentations to Council on March 3, 2026. He reported that the introduction of the 2026 Budget will occur on March 17, 2026, and the adoption vote will occur on April 21, 2026.

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#### **Attorney's Report –**

Municipal Attorney, Arthur Sypek, reported that his discussion will be in closed session, as indicated earlier, with regard to some pending litigation.

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#### **Clerk's Report –**

Municipal Clerk, Tonya Carter, shared that the new OPRA program is up and running, and all departments have been pleased with its success.

Ms. Carter reported that there is a new law regarding public notices, so the Clerk's Office has been working hard behind the scenes to provide this information to residents via the Township website. Items which can now be found are Minutes, Resolutions, Agendas, Contracts, etc.

Ms. Carter recounted that Councilwoman Perry resigned at the January 1, 2026 Reorganization Meeting, and informed Council that a press release has been posted on the Township website providing information as to her resignation effective date (January 31, 2026), and the process for choosing a new Councilperson. She explained that the Democratic Municipal Committee has fifteen days in which to present three names to

Council, and Council has thirty days in which to choose from one of those names. If they fail to do so, the choice will return to the Committee who will then select a name. Ms. Carter stated that she should have the name of the nominee by February 10<sup>th</sup>. She revealed that she has reached out to Mercer County Clerk, Paula Sollami Covello, and they agreed that because this has happened before the Primary Election, a Special Election will not be needed, but Ms. Sollami Covello will confirm this information with her legal counsel. Ms. Carter disclosed that March 23, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. will be the cut off for the Clerk's Office to receive nominating petitions.

Ms. Farmer asked Mr. Sypek if the vacancy would impact the Budget season, with Mr. Sypek explaining that it will have no impact at all.

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### **Unfinished Business –**

There was no unfinished business.

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### **Old Business/New Business –**

Mayor Bobbitt stated that the Council will now make the appointments to the Boards and Committees.

The following appointments were made:

Resolution No. 69-26

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey that the following individuals be and are hereby reappointed to the following Boards or Committees as indicated:

Affordable Housing– 3-year term ending 12/31/28

Denis Michel

Murali Mallampati

Jean Washington

Construction Board of Appeals– 4-year term ending 12/31/29

Nick Sferra

William Hart

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee – 3-year term ending 12/31/28

Patricia Deeney  
Paige Johnson  
Riya Patel  
Yingxin Zhang

Environmental and Green Advisory Committee – 4-year term ending 12/31/29

Michael Meriney  
Donald Little  
Ryan Coulter  
Annette Loveless

Growth and Redevelopment Committee – 3-year term ending 12/31/28

Edward Garcia  
Melissa Clark  
Peter Ferrone

Health Advisory Board – 3-year term ending 12/31/28

Maureen T. Adams

Municipal Alliance on Drug and Alcohol Abuse (Class III) –2-year term ending 12/31/27

Michael Patanella

Planning Board – (Class IV) 4-year term ending 12/31/29

Ian Dember  
Terrence Leggett

Public Safety Advisory Committee – 2-year term ending 12/31/27

James S. Kownacki  
Charles Sista

Recreation Advisory Committee – 3-year term ending 12/31/28

Ed Budzinski  
Glenn Collins  
Bonne Giglio  
Ernest Cerone III  
Kenneth Kiernan

Senior Executive Committee – 4-year term ending 12/31/29

LaVerne Snead  
Melvina Israel

Trails, Open Space and Stewardship Advisory Committee – 3-year term ending 12/31/28

Jeffrey Lang  
David Bosted  
John Emmons

Adopted: January 20, 2026

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki  | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Ms. Perry     |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Ms. Santos    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Mayor Bobbitt | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |

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**Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –**

There was no public participation.

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**Resolutions**

Resolution Nos. 55-26 (18-A.1) through No. 68-26 (18-H-5) were approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki  | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Perry     |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Ms. Santos    | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Bobbitt | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

Cited Resolutions are spread in their entirety in the Resolution Books of the Township of Lawrence.

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**Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –**

Ms. Farmer wished to place on the record that yesterday was Martin Luther King Jr. Day (MLK DAY).

Mayor Bobbitt once again thanked the Trails and Open Space Committee for their presentation. He stated that this was a great way to kick off the year, and an example for

other committees to follow when they are ready to update Council on what they are working on, what their interests are, and how Council can help.

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**Written Communications –**

There were no written communications.

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There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Tonya D. Carter, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

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Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor