

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

March 17, 2026

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

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

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, March 17, 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, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.
Absent: None.

Also in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq., Municipal Manager, Tyler Newman, Esq., Municipal Attorney.

Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

There were no proclamations, recognitions or presentations.

Public Participation

Mayor Bobbitt read into record the following statement:

The focus of the Public Comment Period is for members of the public to inform the Governing Body of their views. This time is an opportunity for Township Council to listen

with care to the public and to consider what we hear in our deliberations. It is not a time for back-and-forth dialogue, as that can be difficult for us to give accurate responses to critical and complex issues on the spot. Rather, one can call or email members of Council, Manager or Clerk for additional information or response to an issue.

Mayor Bobbitt also read two excerpts from the Lawrence Township Administrative Code regarding the manner in addressing Council:

A person may address the Council upon recognition by the Chair. The person addressing Council shall write down their name and address on the sign-up sheet, step up to the microphone and give their name in an audible tone of voice, for the record, and shall have the right to address the Council for the amount of time designated by the Chair. No person having the floor shall be permitted to enter into discussion, either directly, or through a member of Council, without permission of the Chair. No question shall be asked of Councilperson except through the Chair. Also, decorum at Council meetings: any person making any impertinent or slanderous remarks or who shall become boisterous while addressing Council shall forthwith be barred from further audience before Council by the presiding officer unless permission to continue or again address the Council is granted by the majority vote of Council.

Mayor Bobbitt explained that he does not believe anyone will violate these things, but he wished to set the tone prior to the commencement of Public Participation.

Mr. Robert L. Lerner, President of the Rosedale Acres Homeowners Association, shared that he and his family have lived in Lawrence Township for approximately thirty years. He stated that he is present tonight regarding the recently adopted 2025 Fourth Round Housing Plan, specifically, the 800-unit redevelopment of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) property located on Rosedale and Carter Roads. Mr. Lerner believes he was not properly notified of the June 2025 Planning Board meeting where this information was first discussed. He is requesting that the Township immediately cease all further actions regarding the proposed development of ETS and provide the community with a public accounting of the following four questions: 1) Did the Township proactively engage in negotiations to find a more preservation-minded buyer? 2) Did the Township seek out boutique or mission-driven developers who specialize in lower-density inclusionary projects? 3) Did the Township conduct a formal analysis of shifting this density to underutilized commercial corridors, such as the Business Route 1 corridor? 4) Was any attempt made to utilize Green Acres funding, Mercer County Open Space funds, or New Jersey's farmland preservation tools to purchase a conservation easement on the 75-plus acres of the ETS campus, which is now slated for development.

Ms. Lillian LaSalle, Executive Director of the Lawrence Township Senior Center/Office on Aging, wished to thank Council, Mayor Bobbitt, Municipal Manager, Kevin Nerwinski, Municipal Clerk, Tonya Carter, and the Seniors of Lawrence Township for the awesome opportunity to serve as the Executive Director of the Office on Aging/Senior Center for the last 21 years. She stated that she will retire on March 31, 2026. She then read an open letter to Mr. Nerwinski in which she expressed her concerns

regarding the changes to the Senior Center upon her retirement. Ms. LaSalle relayed that without a designated advocate for the seniors, the social service and care needs of the aging population may not be prioritized. She supported the idea of promoting Recreation Leader, Ms. Natasha Pacera, to the position of Executive Director, and feels she will meet the needs of the Township's senior population and offer stability and a smooth transition upon her retirement. Ms. LaSalle believes this will send a message that Lawrence Township values its older adult community.

Ms. Marianne Mele stated that she attended last night's Planning Board meeting, and wishes to support Mr. Lerner's earlier statement, but clarified that the Fourth Round Housing Plan was actually dealing with the Gulick house, while the Third Round pertained to the 800 potential homes on the ETS property. She professed to be equally upset about both these issues due to the density and the resulting problems that may arise from implementing these plans. Ms. Mele suggested that, should these plans proceed, there would be a need for more police, firefighters, and public transportation, in addition to the creation of sidewalks. She believes that people may die if they are walking on a two-lane street with no sidewalks and increased road congestion. She encouraged Council to vote "no" on the Fourth Round Housing Plan tonight.

Mayor Bobbitt clarified that the Fourth Round Housing Plan is not on tonight's agenda.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that he believes there is a fundamental misunderstanding of what has happened and what is to happen in the future regarding this issue; therefore, he decided to read the 2025-2035 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan into record to offer clarification:

*TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE
COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY*

Understanding the Housing Element & Fair Share Plan (2025-2035)

What It Means for Residents and Nearby Properties

In July of 2025, the Township of Lawrence adopted its Housing Element & Fair Share Plan (HEFSP) as part of New Jersey's affordable housing requirements for the 2025-2035 cycle.

Some residents, particularly those living near properties identified in the Plan, have asked an important question:

Does this mean development has already been approved near my home?

The answer is no.

This article explains what the Plan does, what it does not do, and why the Township is required to identify potential sites.

What Is the Housing Element & Fair Share Plan?

The Housing Element & Fair Share Plan is a planning document required under New Jersey law.

Its purpose is to:

- *Identify how the Township will meet its affordable housing obligations;*
- *Outline potential locations where affordable housing could be developed;*
- *Demonstrate that the Township is providing a realistic opportunity for affordable housing; and*
- *Help the Township comply with State law and avoid unnecessary litigation.*

The Plan is part of the Township's Master Plan, which serves as a long-term planning guide for future land use and development.

What the Plan Does Not Do

It is very important to understand what inclusion in the Housing Plan does not mean.

- 1) *It does not approve any development.
No homes, apartments, or buildings are approved simply because a property is listed in the Plan.*
- 2) *It does not change zoning.
A property remains subject to its existing zoning unless and until the Township adopts a separate zoning ordinance through a public process.*
- 3) *It does not give developers the right to build.
A property owner or developer gains no automatic right to develop land merely because it appears in the Housing Plan.*
- 4) *It does not allow construction to begin.
No construction may occur unless a developer first obtains all required approvals through the formal land use process.*

What Would Need to Happen Before Any Development Could Occur?

If development were ever proposed on a site identified in the Plan, several additional steps would have to occur before any project could move forward.

The Township may first need to adopt a zoning ordinance to permit or encourage the type of development being proposed. That would require public notice and a public hearing.

After that, a developer would need to submit a formal application to the Planning Board or Zoning Board, depending on the nature of the proposal.

At that stage, New Jersey law would require direct notice to nearby property owners, including those within 200 feet of the property, as well as legal notice of the public hearing.

Residents would then have the opportunity to attend the hearing, ask questions, raise concerns and participate in the public process.

Finally, the appropriate municipal board would review the application in detail, including issues such as traffic, stormwater, utilities, design, density, and compliance with Township ordinances and applicable law.

Why Are Specific Properties Identified in the Plan?

This is one of the most important parts of the Housing Plan.

Under New Jersey law, municipalities are to permitted to simply say that they support affordable housing in general. They must demonstrate a realistic opportunity to create affordable housing.

That means the Township must identify specific properties or areas where such housing could potentially occur. Without identified sites, the Plan would be meaningless and likely viewed as non-compliant.

In other words, the Township must answer a basic question required by the affordable housing laws:

Where can this housing realistically happen?

Identifying sites is the Township's way of answering that question.

Why Doesn't the Township Just Leave Potential Sites Out of the Plan?

If the Township were to adopt a Housing Plan with no identified sites, it would place itself in a significantly weaker legal position.

A municipality that fails to identify sites risks being found out of compliance with New Jersey's affordable housing requirements. That can expose the municipality to builder's remedy litigation and other court action.

In those cases, developers may ask a court to permit higher-density housing on sites of their choosing, including locations and densities the Township would not otherwise prefer or permit.

In practical terms, if the Township does not do its own planning, a court or a developer may effectively do that planning instead.

That is why identifying sites is important. It helps the Township maintain control over where affordable housing may occur, how it may be integrated into the community, and what standards may apply.

What Is the Benefit to the Township of Identifying Sites?

By identifying appropriate sites in advance, the Township is better able to:

- Maintain local control over where housing may occur;*
- Plan for locations with appropriate infrastructure and access;*
- Establish reasonable density, design, and land use standards;*
- Strengthen its legal position under affordable housing law; and*
- Reduce the risk of litigation and court-imposed outcomes.*

This approach allows the Township to be proactive rather than reactive.

Addressing Resident Concerns

When a property appears in a Housing Plan, it can create the impression that development has already been approved or is about to happen. That is not the case.

Inclusion of a site in the Housing Plan means only that the property has been identified as a potential location that may help the Township meet its legal affordable housing obligations.

It does not mean that a project has been approved. It does not change the zoning on its own. And it does not eliminate the public's right to notice and participation if a future development application is filed.

If a development application is ever submitted for a site identified in the Plan, nearby property owners will receive notice as required by law, and the public will have the opportunity to participate in the hearing process.

Conclusion

The Housing Element & Fair Share Plan is a required planning document under New Jersey law. It helps the Township meet its affordable housing obligations while preserving as much local planning control as possible. The identification of properties in the Plan does not approve development, change zoning, grant development rights, or permit construction.

Instead, it reflects the Township's effort to comply with State law, avoid unnecessary litigation, and retain control over future land use decisions.

Any actual development proposal would still require additional approvals, public notice, and public hearings before anything could move forward.

Mr. John Gregg, a former Lawrence Township school board member, stated that he was appalled with regard to the Planning Board meeting where the Housing Plan pertaining to 800 potential homes on the ETS property was discussed, because he was not aware of this meeting. In addition, it is his understanding that no members of public were in attendance, and he believes that the procedures for the Statement of Proper Notice are improper. Mr. Gregg stated that, in terms of getting noticed, the people in North Lawrence Township are entitled by law to ask to receive personal notice of all the meetings and agendas at their request for a reasonable reimbursement rate. He would like Council to address what the reasonable reimbursement rate is for email and "snail-mail" so that they are not surprised in the future by a lack of transparency.

Mr. Howard Powers stated that he has grown up hiking and biking on the ETS property, and does so to this day. He remarked that if Council were to do something that would potentially have significant consequences on the nearby residents, then they should let the community members know. Mr. Powers expressed disappointment that a significant decision was made last June without informing the community, so residents did not have the opportunity to react. For this, he feels let down by the Township and hopes that they will do better in the future.

Ms. Kathryn Trenner stated that she has practiced law in this area for fifty-six years prior to her retirement, and previously worked for land-use attorney, Joseph Stonaker, Esq. She informed Council that when the original owners of the ETS property sold the land, they put in place a deed restriction, and she wonders if the Township planners are aware of this restriction. In addition, she believes that things are very different now from the way they were two years ago when the Township planners agreed to this plan, with regard to Mercer County's purchase of 65 acres of land from Rider University. Ms. Trenner suggested using current Rider University student dormitories for inclusion in the housing plan.

Mr. Fred Vereen first wished to recognize Ms. LaSalle as the Executive Director of the Lawrence Township Senior Center/Office on Aging and what she has done in that position over the years. He relayed that prior to the building of the Senior Center, the program was housed in the Community Room of Eggerts Crossing Village. He then stated that the *Eggerts Crossing Lawrence Nonprofit Housing* is in the process of creating a strategic plan to make sure the development is viable and serving its purpose in years to come, and asked if it could be presented at the April 21st Council meeting. Finally, Mr. Vereen asked if anything has been done by Council with regard to the Mayor's Task Force recommendations and the Community Center Building.

Mayor Bobbitt stated that he has not had the opportunity to speak with his colleagues on Council regarding what the Request for Proposal (RFP) will look like going forward. He then deferred to Mr. Nerwinski for his thoughts on the rebuilding the facility.

Mr. Nerwinski indicated that Council had agreed that there would be an RFP for the building to be occupied by an organization that satisfies most—if not all—of the recommendations reached by the Task Force.

Councilwoman Patricia Farmer disclosed that the Township has received a grant that will provide \$500,000.00 towards the Community Center through the office of Congressman Herb Conaway.

Further discussion was had regarding using the grant money to improve the building's infrastructure, waiting to receive communications from interested organizations, and the possibility of having community involvement in the process.

Ms. Jennifer Knill stated that she is here regarding the Ordinance for acquisition of the private property located at 840 Pretty Brook Road.

Mr. Bobbitt and Mr. Nerwinski both remarked that because this is an *Introduction of an Ordinance*, there is no public commentary; however, there will be public commentary at the second reading.

Ms. Knill requested that she be notified, because she had not received any notification that this was on the agenda this evening, and she is directly affected as she lives across the street. She believes that this shows both a lack of transparency and accountability from the Township.

Mr. Jack Chen stated that he formerly lived in West Windsor, but Toll Brothers built fifty-one town homes and a town center across the street from his home, which he believes destroyed his neighborhood. Mr. Chen felt that, because of the density of the population, he and his sons were no longer safe walking the roads. For this reason, he and his family moved to Rosedale Acres, a quiet, wide-open and safe neighborhood. Mr. Chen asked Council how the Township will protect this area in light of the potential development of the ETS property. He would also like to have an accounting of the other sites that were considered, and an explanation as to why they were considered unacceptable. Mr. Chen believes that there was insufficient notice provided for the Planning Board meetings, so he would like an investigation be performed as to why notice was not provided. Finally, he would like an understanding of how this development will meet the obligation of the land-use decision which was made in 2023, and where the site assessment is for this property.

Mr. Mark Gruber stated that he has been complaining about the artwork in Town Hall since December of 2025. He believes that this artwork sends bad messages, especially the picture of a man jumping over a chasm with the tagline, "take a risk," as chances are that this man will be killed. There is another picture of a turtle walking in the middle of the road, which he believes would, in reality, have that turtle smashed by an oncoming car. Finally, he believes, as a "sociologist with a specialty in subliminal information," that the subliminal information from these pictures are what caused former Councilwoman, Olympia Perry, to resign in January of 2026, and is currently causing Council to be under "mind control."

Mr. Jim Hooker shared that he has an interest in open space, and is on the Open Space Advisory Committee, although he is not speaking tonight on their behalf. He would

like Council to consider changing the Ordinance to have notification sent to people who live beyond the 200-foot requirement, as it would offer more transparency. Mr. Hooker discussed the "Big Woods" behind Rider University, and asked Council not to consider putting housing in this area. He feels a better option would be to consider the Quaker Bridge Mall area, as the infrastructure already in place would better support development. Finally, Mr. Hooker expressed that the area surrounding the ETS property is beautiful, and Council should do its best to keep it this way.

Ms. Felicia DeVincenzi stated that her street is a part of the Lawrence Woods Homeowner's Association, and she has lived there for thirty-five years. Over time she has noticed an increase in traffic, to where it becomes "bumper-to-bumper between 7:30 a.m. until 9:30 a.m.", and she believes these roads are not meant for this type of traffic. Ms. DeVincenzi also shared that she retired from ETS after thirty-five years, and had always known them to be good corporate citizens; however, the current leadership is not the same, and things have changed. She would like the community to be vigilant about change and would also like the Township to be more transparent and have a better communication methodology.

Mr. Stephen Pulpers stated that he has been a resident of Lawrence Township since 1991, and has recently joined the Lawrence Township Senior Center. He shared that he has been impressed by what he has seen and how Ms. Lillian LaSalle has run the Center. Although he understands that the Township has folded the Senior Center under the Department of Recreation, he believes that it should be "the other way around," as the senior citizens have special needs that are different from the needs of the children. He explained that the Center helps the seniors find housing and help for their needs, and does not wish to see this change. Finally, he conveyed that Recreation Leader, Natasha Pacera, should be promoted to run the Center.

Mr. Nerwinski clarified that the Senior Center has always been under the Recreation Department. Although Ms. LaSalle is retiring, he assured Mr. Pulpers that there will be no loss of programs, Lawrence Township cares about their seniors, and there will not be a diminishment of anything upon her retirement.

Mayor Bobbitt called for a five-minute break to allow for members of the public to leave if they no longer wished to stay for the remainder of the meeting, after which the *Adoption of Minutes* portion of the meeting began.

Review and Revisions of Agenda

Mr. Nerwinski requested that the agenda be amended to remove *Resolution No.145-26 (18-H.10) Authorizing a Closed Session of Council Immediately Following the Regular Meeting to Discuss Labor Negotiations* until the April 7th Council meeting.

On a motion by Councilwoman Santos, seconded by Councilwoman Farmer, Resolution No.145-26 (18-H.10) Authorizing a Closed Session of Council Immediately Following the Regular Meeting to Discuss Labor Negotiations was moved to be removed from the agenda.

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

Adoption of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, the Minutes of the Reorganization Meeting of January 1, 2026 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Ms. Farmer	X						X
Ms. Giglio					X		
Mr. Kownacki	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 January 20, 2026 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Giglio    |     |     |         |        | X       |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki  | 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 February 3, 2026 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

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

Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, Resolution (9-A) Authorizing Awarding of Bid 26-02: Lawn Service to RJM Landscape and Design was presented for adoption.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this is a bid for additional landscaping work that is a required supplement to the work being performed by the Lawrence Township Public Works Department.

Resolution No. 124-26

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2025, proposals were received for Bid 26-02 Lawn Services; and

WHEREAS, three (3) proposal were received and reviewed by the CFO and the Director of Public Works and RJM Landscape & Design met all requirements and is being awarded the bid; and

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

Acct.	Ord. No.	Name	Amount
6-01-28-375-255	----	Park Maintenance – Miscellaneous Contractual Services	\$45,000.00
6-16-56-843-299	----	Open Space	\$15,000.00

and;

WHEREAS, the bid amount for Option 1 Route One South (islands and basins) has also been accepted; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that the Township is hereby authorized to award the bid for Lawn Services Bid 26-02 to RJM Landscape & Design, 821 Parsonage Hill Drive, Branchburg NJ 08876 for the period of April 5, 2026 through November 14, 2026 in the total amount of \$60,000.00.

Adopted: March 17, 2026

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

Nays: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Introduction of Ordinances

Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "CALENDAR YEAR 2026 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, COUNTY OF MERCER (NJSA 40A:4-45.14)."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that when a township adopts this type of ordinance, it is creating a bank of unused cap authority that may be used, if needed, for the next two budget years. By determining that it is prudent to increase the 2026 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, we are creating a bank of \$421,990.02. This is NOT an increase in spending or taxation.

The Ordinance No. 2507-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

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

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Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE IN MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 840 PRETTY BROOK ROAD (BLOCK 7801, LOTS 33, 34 AND 35) FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this is required by eminent domain law for the Township to take a vote to allow for the process to unfold. He requested that notice requirements be reviewed by Council, as there were residents who felt they were not given proper notice, and suggested there be some type of additional process involved. He explained that the Township is required to comply with the notice requirements mandated by state and local laws, which is what they currently do; however, there is no property owner requirement for this particular Ordinance. Mr. Nerwinski recommended that, even though the Township is in compliance with the law, Council may wish to discuss with the Municipal Attorney how to satisfy the residents in a more transparent way.

Further discussion was had with regard to Council going "above and beyond" what is legally established, and the need to revisit the topic at a later date.

The Ordinance No. 2508-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

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

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### Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 15 OF THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ENTITLED "BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES" ORDINANCE NO. 2084-11 TO RENAME THE GROWTH AND REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AS THE "BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE."

Ms. Santos explained that the Growth and Redevelopment Committee devised a strategic plan last year that reidentified their mission, creating four pillars comprised of their main goals. The committee decided to rename itself the *Business and Economic Growth Committee*, based on these four pillars.

#### Ordinance No. 2506-26

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 15 OF THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ENTITLED “BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES” ORDINANCE NO. 2084-11 TO RENAME THE GROWTH AND REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AS THE “BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE”

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 2084-11 established the Growth and Redevelopment Committee to support initiatives related to economic vitality within the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council desires to clarify and expand the mission and focus of the Committee to better reflect its active role in fostering business development and economic sustainability within the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Committee facilitates local business networking and support by taking an active role in organizing and hosting annual networking events; and

WHEREAS, the Committee promotes local spending by launching awareness campaigns and incentives that encourage residents to “Shop Lawrence”; and

WHEREAS, the Committee advocates for technology to improve Lawrence’s business environment by supporting local businesses through digital platforms, including the further refinement of its committee website and online business directory; and

WHEREAS, the Committee enhances integration and advisory participation in planning and development by taking a more structured, proactive role in reviewing planning and zoning initiatives that impact business and economic growth; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council finds that renaming the Committee will more accurately reflect its purpose and responsibilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, as follows:

Section 1. Ordinance No. 2084-11 is hereby amended to rename the "Growth and Redevelopment Committee" as the "Business and Economic Growth Committee."

Section 2. All references within Ordinance No. 2084-11, the Township Code, and related resolutions to the "Growth and Redevelopment Committee" shall hereafter refer to the "Business and Economic Growth Committee."

Section 3. Except as expressly amended herein, all other provisions of Ordinance No. 2084-11 shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

Section 5. This Ordinance shall take effect upon final passage and publication according to law.

Adopted: March 17, 2026

The Ordinance No. 2506-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

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

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### Manager's Report –

Mr. Nerwinski submitted invoice listings for the month of March 2026 in the amount of \$1,277,103.53.

Mr. Nerwinski reported that there are two Resolutions Council will need to consider and vote upon, one of which is Resolution No. 125-26, "Authorizing Self-Examination of the 2026 Municipal Budget." He explained that the Township is in a cycle where they have the ability to self-examine based upon their financial situation and in terms of how the State views their condition. This Resolution, he noted, allows for the Township to do this.

Resolution No. 125-26 (12-A) was approved by the following roll call vote:

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

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Mr. Nerwinski reported that the second Resolution for Council to consider and vote upon is Resolution No. 126-26, "Introduction of the 2026 Municipal Budget." He stated that this will be the subject of a public hearing on April 21, 2026, and formally starts the budget process. He relayed that both he and Municipal CFO, Peter Kiriakatis, along with Municipal Treasurer, Chris Hart, are available to answer any questions that Council may have.

Resolution No. 126-26 (12-B) was approved by the following roll call vote:

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

Mr. Nerwinski reminded Council that Ewing Township had submitted a grant application to the State regarding funding for a roundabout at Bull Run Road and Federal City Road, as well as funding for a traffic light at Federal City Road and Federal Point. He revealed that Lawrence Township and Hopewell Township have joined in this application, and the application was granted with an award of \$800,000.00 for 2026, and \$800,000.00 for 2027. Mr. Nerwinski asked if Council wished to give him authority to gather information pertaining to potential costs to the Township for both of these items. He suggested that it will probably be less than if the Township decided to install the traffic light themselves, considering that the design must be expanded to include left-hand turn lanes. In addition, Mr. Nerwinski believes all three municipalities would benefit from these traffic-calming projects.

Council confirmed that they would like Mr. Nerwinski to continue his investigation into this matter, and Mr. Nerwinski stated that he will update Council as he receives more information.

Attorney's Report –

There was no attorney's report.

Clerk's Report –

Municipal Clerk, Tonya Carter, reported that the nominating petitions are due on March 23, 2026 by 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Carter stated that, regarding the subject of notices, the Township has a great deal of information on the Lawrence Township website pertaining to Resolutions, Ordinances, Agendas, and Planning Board information. This information can be found under "eCodes" in the *Public Notices* section of the website.

Mayor Bobbitt remarked that the eCode site is very complete in that it has the Township administrative code, along with agendas, resolutions, notices, etc.

Ms. Carter relayed that last year, a new public notice law was signed that allowed local governments to publish legal notices on their official websites instead of in the newspapers. She reiterated that this information can be found by accessing *Public Notices* on the Township website.

Unfinished Business –

There was no unfinished business.

Old Business/New Business –

Mayor Bobbitt stated that he understood from tonight's meeting that the public has questions about noticing requirements, as well as questions pertaining to how the Township can do a better job of disseminating information. He relayed that those Councilmembers who were at last night's Planning Board meeting "heard it loud and clear as well," and perhaps when more weighty issues occur, the Township should go above and beyond to provide the information to the public.

Mr. Nerwinski indicated that the Township has complied with the notification laws, but he feels it is not enough. He explained that the other part of the issue—as it relates to the Fair Share Housing element—involves properties all over the Township, which he believes becomes an issue of "providing personal notice to literally everybody." The situation is difficult, Mr. Nerwinski surmised, and hopes that it can be resolved in some fashion.

Further discussion was had regarding understanding what the baseline for notification is, bringing the Planning and Zoning Board attorneys into the conversation,

the fact that the Clerk's Office notifies residents within 200 feet under the Land Use Ordinance through both a certified and regular mailing, the reality that the housing element does not receive approval by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) until it is proven that it was publicized in newspapers and satisfied the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) and Planning Board requirements, the possibility of creating a Lawrence Township blog to address issues of interest, the fact that a great deal of information is disseminated via Facebook, Twitter, the Township website and that those who have an interest will easily find the information they are seeking.

Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –

Ms. Kathleen Norcia suggested that Council tweak the public's interest with the Township's message board. She stated that when there is important information the Township wishes to share, the message board can relay this information to the public. She also suggested placing this information on the Township website.

Ms. Susan Brahaney stated that she attended last night's Planning Board meeting, and she appreciates how Council is discussing ideas on ways to inform the public about what is actually being considered. She believes one of the problems that caused the public to become outraged was the fact that they felt they were not informed, so by disseminating the information earlier, people will have a calmer mindset.

Ms. Sylwia Kobus shared that she was also at last night's Planning Board meeting, and just as with the Master Plan meetings, this meeting was advertised and the information "was everywhere." She remarked that she is part of a group of people who are informed because they often search the Township website, they read the agendas and they are knowledgeable about what is transpiring in their town. Ms. Kobus commended Council for considering ways to be more informative and transparent to the public; however, she suggested that if she is able to figure out what is going on, then the lawyers and CEO's who live in the affected neighborhoods should as well. Finally, she stated that the onus is upon the individual to keep themselves informed.

Mr. Eric Barash stated that although he has been away for a time due to personal reasons, he was easily able to search the Township website to find the date of the next Council meeting, as the 2026 Council meeting schedule is posted online. He noticed that there was a full room of people in attendance tonight, but those who were outraged left the meeting soon after they had voiced their opinion. Mr. Barash noted that the few people who remained until the end have received the benefit of hearing Council's discussion regarding their efforts to be more transparent.

Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 127-26 (18-C.1) through Nos. 144-26 (18-H.9) were approved by the following roll call vote:

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

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

Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –

Ms. Farmer reported that she volunteered for Meals on Wheels this morning, which was a pleasure and a joy and is becoming her annual tradition.

Ms. Farmer relayed that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee will have a community conversation on April 16th at Town Hall in the lower level chambers from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Topics to be discussed will be *Immigration Equity* and *Building Trust in Our Community*.

Ms. Farmer shared that the Trails and Open Space Stewardship Advisory Committee discussed the dumping situation at the Lawrence Shopping Center and Council's work to remedy the situation. They also discussed the bridge over the Shabakunk, the Whitehead Road Extension Cross Country Trail, and the possibility of creating a map of the historical sites of the Revolutionary War.

Ms. Farmer discussed the Growth and Redevelopment Committee and the overall positive feedback they received from the job fair. She relayed that over one hundred people attended the fair, and the website advertising, which was done in partnership with Quaker Bridge Mall, received over 210,000 views. Ms. Farmer shared that the Committee hopes to host another job fair this autumn.

Mr. Kownacki relayed that the Patriotic Committee has been organizing the upcoming Memorial Day celebration, which will take place on May 23, 2026. He disclosed that Mercer County Executive, Mr. Daniel Benson, will participate in the parade, as well as Mayor Bobbitt and other members of Council. Mr. Kownacki stated that there will be a Scout group from South Jersey in attendance, as well as a brass band for musical entertainment.

Mayor Bobbitt reported that the Shade Tree Advisory Committee is finalizing the Community Forest Management Plan with help from consultant, Mr. Bill Barash, and they have scheduled to plant trees on Earth Day.

Mayor Bobbitt relayed that the Environmental and Green Advisory Committee are continuing to research the environmental impact of using synthetic turf in place of grass, as well as any related State rules and regulations that may need to be implemented.

Ms. Giglio reported that the Recreation Department will hold their annual Easter Egg Hunt at Central Park on Saturday, March 28, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Written Communications –

Mayor Bobbitt advised that he received various communications that he will make sure to forward to Council.

There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tonya D. Carter, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor