

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor DeGiralamo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- 2. **"Sunshine Law" Announcement** - Adequate notice of this public meeting has been published in the Hunterdon Democrat and Courier News, posted on the municipal bulletin board and the Township website in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975. This notice has also been filed in the Municipal Clerk's office.

3. FLAG SALUTE

4. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Mr. Scott	x	
Mrs. Cherney		x
Mr. Wunder	x	
Mr. Stiger	x	
Dr. DeGiralamo	x	

Also present were Susan Sharpe, Esq., Robert Clerico, Engineer, Grace Brennan, CFO and Ella M. Ruta, Municipal Clerk.

5. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

- a. Regular and Executive Session Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2025

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott			x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder			x			
Mr. Stiger	x		x			
Dr. DeGiralamo		x	x			

Motion Carried

6. VISITORS - none scheduled

7. REPORTS RECEIVED

- a. State Police, Trooper Lorenzis – reported on vehicle stops, accidents and investigations in the prior months. Once again reminded residents to keep cars locked.
 - b. Road Dept.- Week Ending; 1/24/25; 2/07/25
 - c. Animal Control Officer – January 2025
 - d. Municipal Court – not submitted
 - e. Zoning Officer – not submitted
 - f. Pattenburg Volunteer Fire Company – not submitted
 - g. Recreation Committee – Mr. Wunder briefly summarized the report.
 - h. Environmental Commission
 - i. Engineer's Report
- Working on the Wash Bay/Garage Roof capital project.
 - Field work will begin on Baptist Church Section 4&5
 - Continuing work on MS 4 Permit and New Stormwater Regulations

- Waiting for official authorization to start working on the walking path and the parking lot improvements at Finn Road Park

8. CORRESPONDENCE/WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS –

Mayor DeGiralamo spoke of numerous complaints from a resident about trailer trucks parking on Route 173 close to Everett Rd. CFO Brennan advised that the State maintains this portion of the route. Briefly discussed.

Mr. Scott mentioned that he was provided with pictures and videos of malfunctioning manholes at QuickChek. Mayor DeGiralamo said he also received it and forwarded everything to the County Health Dept. and was assured that at the site inspection was ordered.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Leslie Kulig, a resident, asked if the most southern part of the Township is included in resolution adopting the Highlands Assessment Plan. The mayor answered that it does and clarified that 80% of the Township is already in a Highlands Preservation. He said that the resolution addresses the Planning Area only.

Karen Wisnosky, a resident, commented on the excessive amount of salt spread on her road during the last snowstorm.

Karen Wisnosky, PVFC Treasurer, asked if the Committee would again this year agree to a review instead of an audit of 2024 PVFC’s finances. The mayor asked CFO Brennan if that would be acceptable. She replied that it would be satisfactory.

Mayor DeGiralamo asked that the following motion be approved:

Allowing a review instead of an audit of 2024 PVFC’s finances with an understanding that an audit will be provided for 2025.

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott	x		x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder					x	
Mr. Stiger			x			
Dr. DeGiralamo		x	x			

Motion Carried

10. PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE 2025 - 1

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$620,000 (\$184,000 FROM THE 2023 NJ DOT MUNICIPAL ROAD AID PROGRAM AND \$183,348 FROM THE 2025 NJ DOT MUNICIPAL ROAD AID PROGRAM AND \$252,652 CURRENTLY LOCATED WITHIN THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND OF THE GENERAL CAPITAL FUND OF THE TOWNSHIP OF UNION, HUNTERDON COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY) FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO BAPTIST CHURCH ROAD SECTIONS 4 & 5

To open Public Hearing

Voice Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
-----------------	-------	----------	------	------	---------	--------

Mr. Scott		x	x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder			x			
Mr. Stiger	x		x			
Dr. DeGiralamo			x			

Motion Carried

To close Public Hearing

Voice Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott			x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder			x			
Mr. Stiger	x		x			
Dr. DeGiralamo		x	x			

Motion Carried

To adopt

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott			x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder		x	x			
Mr. Stiger	x		x			
Dr. DeGiralamo			x			

Motion Carried

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

12. NEW ORDINANCE – Introduction/1ST Reading

13. NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Township Committee and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

The mayor asked that Resolution Adopting the Initial Highlands Assessment Report & Petition for Plan Conformance in the Planning Area be removed from the Consent Agenda.

- a. **RESOLUTION #2025-44:** Appointing Judge of Union Township Municipal Court

**TOWNSHIP OF UNION
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

RESOLUTION #2025-44

Appointing Judge of Union Township Municipal Court

WHEREAS, the term of the present Judge of the Union Township Municipal Court expires on April 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the “Shared Services Agreement For A Shared Municipal Court Among the Township of Clinton and the Township of Union,” dated January 1, 2018, provides that the parties Shared Courts shall continue to share all personnel, as authorized by Statute including Judge(s), Prosecutor(s), Public Defender(s), Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrator(s) and clerical personnel, and that the staffing of these positions shall be from among the personnel currently employed or appointed and serving Clinton Township, and that Union Township’s portion of the compensation of such personnel shall be included in the payment of Union Township to Clinton Township pursuant to Paragraph X of said Interlocal Services Agreement; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding that Clinton Township and Union Township appoint the same persons as Judge, Court Administrator, Prosecutor, and Public Defender, the jurisdiction of the Municipal Court of each municipality shall be separate and each municipality retains its right of appointment as provided in N.J.S.A. 2B:12-4 (Judge) 2B:24-3 (Public Defender) and 2B:25-4 (Prosecutor) and in applicable case law;

WHEREAS, the above Shared Services Agreement For A Shared Municipal Court expires on December 31, 2022, and the parties have not yet had the opportunity to negotiate and agree to the terms of a renewal of said Shared Services Agreement;

WHEREAS, officials responsible for administration of the municipal courts have advised that the reappointment of the judge of the Union Township Municipal Court must be for a full three-year term notwithstanding the fact that the renewal of the said Shared Services Agreement For A Shared Municipal Court has not yet been accomplished.; and

WHEREAS, the Judge of the Union Township Municipal Court, Eric M. Perkins, has indicated in a writing dated 3/30/22 that if Union Township decides not to renew the inter-local court agreement with Clinton Township, he will resign from his position as the Municipal Court Judge for Union Township; and

WHEREAS, the judicial performance of Judge Perkins has been satisfactory to this Committee, and the Township Committee is satisfied with his assurance that he will voluntarily resign if Union Township and Clinton Township are unable to reach agreement on a renewal of said Shared Services Agreement For A Shared Municipal Court, and good cause appearing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Union, in the County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that Eric M. Perkins, the current Judge of the Clinton Township and Union Township Municipal Courts be, and is hereby, reappointed as the Judge of the Union Township Municipal Court effective as of April 1, 2025, for a three-year term ending March 31, 2028 in accordance with N.J.S.A. 2B:12-4; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the salary and benefits, including FICA, PERS contributions, workers compensation insurance and group health insurance of the said re-appointed Judge of the Union Township Municipal Court Eric M. Perkins shall continue to be paid by Clinton Township in accordance with Paragraph X of the above referred to Interlocal Services Agreement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of the within resolution shall be forwarded to the Municipal Clerk and the Administrator of Clinton Township, to the Judge and Court Administrator of the Clinton Township Municipal Court and to the Assignment Judge and the Municipal Division Manager of Vicinage 13 of the Superior Court, who will thereafter, through the Municipal Division Manager, provide a copy to the Administrative Office of the Courts.

- b. **RESOLUTION #2025-45**: Supporting Publishing Legal Notices on Official Government Websites

RESOLUTION #2025-45

**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 taxpayers’ 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,

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 Union Township, in Hunterdon County 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 Douglas J. Steinhardt, Assemblymembers John DiMaio and Erik C. Peterson, and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

c. Payment of Bills

End of Consent Agenda

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott			x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder	x		x			
Mr. Stiger			x			
Dr. DeGiralamo		x	x			

Motion Carried

Atty. Sharpe stated that the following resolution was prepared by Township Engineer Clerico and is petitioning Highlands Council to move forward with the conformance process. She clarified that if at any time the Committee wants to reverse this decision it can do so a resolution.

Engineer Clerico gave a brief overview of the Plan.

- d. **RESOLUTION #2025-46:** Adopting the Initial Highlands Assessment Report & Petition for Plan Conformance in the Planning Area

Resolution #2025-46

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF UNION, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE INITIAL HIGHLANDS ASSESSMENT REPORT DATED NOVEMBER 25, 2024 AND PETITION THE HIGHLANDS COUNCIL FOR PLAN CONFORMANCE IN THE PLANNING AREA

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act ("Highlands Act"), N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq., finds and declares that protection of the New Jersey Highlands is an issue of State level importance because of its vital link to the future of the State's drinking water supplies and other significant natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Act creates a coordinated land use planning system requiring the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council ("Highlands Council") to prepare and adopt a Regional Master Plan for the Highlands Region; and

WHEREAS, Section 13:20-15(a), of the Highlands Act states that for any municipality located wholly in the Planning Area or for the portion of a municipality lying within the Planning Area, the municipality may, by ordinance, petition the Highlands Council of its intention to revise its master plan, development regulations and other regulations, as applicable to the development and use of land in the Planning Area, to conform them with the goals, requirements and provisions of the Regional Master Plan ("Plan Conformance"), and

WHEREAS, a portion of Union Township (the "Township"), primarily located along the Route 78 corridor, lies within the Highlands Region Planning Area, as defined by Section 7 of the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council prepared and distributed to the Township and other municipalities within the Highlands Region guidelines outlining the process and procedures for petitioning the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance, which includes a comprehensive package of planning and implementation documents that meet the requirements of the Highlands Act, the Regional Master Plan, and the Highlands Plan Conformance Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, Plan Conformance by municipalities is strictly voluntary for lands in the Planning Area, and the Township may at any time voluntarily revise its master plan, development regulations, and other regulations, as applicable to the development and use of land in the Planning Area, to conform them to the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, at any time during the Plan Conformance process, the Township may withdraw from the Plan Conformance process and any approvals, rejections, or conditions of revised municipal master planning documents or development regulations recommended by the Highlands Council during the Plan Conformance process, will not be binding on the Township; and the Township may choose not to obtain conformance with the Regional Master Plan for the lands lying within the Planning Area; and

WHEREAS, should the Township make the determination that the Township shall petition the Highlands Council of its intention to revise its master plan, development regulations, and other regulations, as applicable to the development and use of land in the Planning Area, to conform them with the goals, requirements and provisions of the Regional Master Plan and Plan Conformance Guidelines, the Township shall enact an ordinance setting forth such intention, as required by the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, upon application of the Township, the Highlands Council has made, or will make, grant funding and other financial and technical assistance available to the Township for the reasonable costs associated with the revision of the master plan, development regulations or other regulations, as applicable to the development

THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED

UNION TOWNSHIP

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING February 19, 2025

and use of land in the Planning Area, which are designed to bring those plans and regulations into conformance with the Regional Master Plan and the Highlands Council shall provide grant funds for all mandatory aspects of Plan Conformance in accordance with the Plan Conformance Grant Program, and may also provide grant funds for the discretionary aspects of Plan Conformance as determined by the Highlands Council; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the Township Committee, Van Cleef Engineering conducted an assessment of potential Highlands conformance in the Planning Area and provided a report entitled, “Initial Highlands Assessment – Part of the Highlands Conformance Process” (the “Report”) dated November 25, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has reviewed and discussed the Report, including the potential impacts of Plan conformance; and

WHEREAS, the Committee now desires to adopt the Report and formally petition the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance in the Planning Area.

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

1. The “Initial Highlands Assessment – Part of the Highlands Conformance Process” (the dated November 25, 2024 is hereby adopted.
2. The Township hereby submits this Resolution to formally petition the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance in the Planning Area.

This Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott			x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder			x			
Mr. Stiger	x		x			
Dr. DeGiralamo		x	x			

Motion Carried

- e. **Motion to Approve:** Authorizing the Clerk to swear members of Pattenburg Volunteer Fire Dept who are in compliance with the Township Ordinance #2024-5 as members of Fire Police.

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott	x		x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder					x	
Mr. Stiger		x	x			
Dr. DeGiralamo			x			

Motion Carried

- f. **Motion to Approve:** Waiving the late fee of \$20.00 for the 2025 dog license renewal – Craig Kantor

CFO Brennan briefly explained the circumstances of the situation. Committee members voiced their opinions and waived the above-mentioned late fee with the following vote:

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott			x			

Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder				x		
Mr. Stiger	x		x			
Dr. DeGiralamo		x	x			

Motion Carried

- g. **Discussion** - QuickChek Septic – discussed earlier under correspondence

14. REPORTS

- a. **Attorney’s Report** – Atty. Sharpe said she has been working on matters regarding Affordable Housing.

b. Mayor’s Report

Second Graders Inspiration Project - students will be coming to the April Committee meeting to present this year’s projects.

The winter edition of the Newsletter/Magazine has been published. Eight advertisements are included in this issue. Proceeds of \$1,200 from advertisers will cover more than the printing cost.

Have been organizing “Pizza Side Chats” with local communities. Each time a different member of the Committee was in attendance. The first one was with Mr. Scott, the one with Mrs. Cherney. Mayor DeGiralamo extended an invitation to any Committee member or office staff to attend future chats.

The annual Finn Fest event had been scheduled for the month of May this year. No decision on a specific date yet.

Affordable Housing – deadline to argue the number of affordable units set by the State is February 28, 2025. The resolution to be submitted was adopted at the prior meeting.

c. Committee Reports

Mr. Stiger reported the following:

The Hunterdon County Library is comprised of three locations and six affiliate libraries. They host hundreds of programs a year coordinated by over 60 staff members. We are also a member of the MAIN library alliance allowing cardholders to borrow over 3 million items from over 50 libraries. Over 25,000 eBooks titles which one can read on their mobile devices or use a function within Libby to send title to a Kindle. eAudio had over 15,000 titles. Emagaiznes has over 4,000 magazines. Freegal offers over 15 million songs and kanopy over 30,000 films. There are also over 14,000 guided courses to develop technical and workplace skills through LinkedIn. Test and Career Prep for standardized tests with Petersons is available. Language Learning from Mango teaches conversational language skills in 78 languages. Investment info from Value Line and Morningstar. Other resources include Heritage Quest, Ancestry and Consumer Reports.

A new offering is being explored by the Finance Department, that being able to piggy back on the Triple A rating which the county has. Most municipalities have, at best, a Double A rating. If a municipality wants to buy a significant piece of equipment, the county is exploring a scheme whereby the county guarantees the payments, and the Tripple A rating is passed on to the municipality through the use of a letter agreement.

In the Q + A portion of the program

We complemented the Commissioners for taking advantage of the fact that we are the healthiest county in the state. They have taken steps to drop out of the NJ State Health Benefits Plan, the dominant government insurance pool used in the state to provide employee health insurance benefits. In 2023 the county budgeted \$13.786 for

health care insurance. In 2024 the cost rose to \$14.15 (2.6%) There is a significant adverse impact on Hunterdon as the blended rate for the state covers the adverse impact of a less healthy population. We asked the commissioners to consider expanding their reach and letting municipalities participate with them in the private plan provided by Aetna.

Mr. Scott reported the following:

- DR&F – no issues to report
- Planning Board – hoping that review of zoning districts will be placed on the next Planning Board meeting agenda for discussion

Mr. Wunder reported the following:

- Neighborhood Watch Program - nothing out of the ordinary has been reported in the past few months
- Recycling – asked that employees working at the center in the extreme weather conditions are thanked and appreciated for being there and doing a great job

d. Finance Officer –

- One of the Township employees will be going on the Family Leave on May 2, 2025. Two seasonal employees will be starting about the same time.

14. PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Leslie Kulig, a resident, asked about a resolution referencing Project #1025-02-075 Union Twp. Open Space Acquisition. She was wondering which property is being considered. Explanation was provided that the resolution references monies the Township receives for the prior acquisition.

Reddy Rameswara, a resident, reached out to Eric Meisner, Recreation Committee Chair seeking permission to play cricket at Finn Road Park. He said that he was instructed to present the request to the Committee. The mayor suggested that Mr. Rameswara work out details with Mr. Meisner and Mr. Meisner presents the final arrangement to the Committee. Mr. Wunder said the idea was already presented in this month’s Recreation Committee report and is being considered.

CFO Brennan asked that the following motion be approved:

To support the use of Finn Park for the game of Cricket as option B or 2 described in the report:

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Scott		x	x			
Mrs. Cherney						x
Mr. Wunder			x			
Mr. Stiger			x			
Dr. DeGiralamo	x		x			

Motion Carried

Nick Labelle, a resident, asked what improvements are planned for Baptist Church Rd. section 4 & 5. Engineer Clerico provided general information stating that the design work have not started yet. Mr. Labelle also commented on the Highlands Conformance Resolution adopted earlier tonight.

Mike Sadusky, PVFC Fire Chief asked about the timeline of adopting a False Alarms Ordinance. Also inquired about an ordinance allowing charging insurance companies and setting fees for responding to accidents on I-78. Mr. Sadusky said that being informed about road closures have improved.

16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Township Committee at this time, Mr. Stiger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. Mr. Wunder seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous favorable roll call vote.

Transcribed by: Ella M. Ruta, Municipal Clerk

David DeGiralamo, Mayor