

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

October 7, 2025

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Farmer welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting and stated that she hopes everyone is enjoying the newly-renovated Council Meeting Room. She remarked that she would like to give a special "shout-out" to Municipal Clerk, Tonya Carter, who was the project leader on this initiative, and reported that she did a marvelous job and Council is most appreciative of her efforts. The audience then gave Ms. Carter a round of applause.

Mayor Farmer next explained that she must pause the meeting to address a member of the community, as Ms. Rhonda Abbott had come up to the podium to speak. Ms. Carter informed Mayor Farmer that she was going to communicate with Ms. Abbott by writing her a note, as she is deaf, and proceeded to ask Ms. Abbott to her to join her in the hallway in order for them to discuss her concerns.

After a brief pause, Ms. Carter stated for the record that IT personnel were on-site earlier today to see whether YouTube was configured to support closed captioning. However, they informed Ms. Carter that the system does not have the capability at this time, but when the new video system is installed next year it will have this functionality. Ms. Carter stated that she emailed this information to Ms. Abbott this morning.

Mayor Farmer announced that we are currently having technical difficulties with the YouTube visuals; however, the audio is working. She also reported that it was brought to Council's attention that closed captioning is unavailable under our current system, but a solution is being investigated to rectify the situation.

Ms. Carter explained to Council that she also tried to schedule an American Sign Language interpreter for tonight's meeting, but they were unavailable.

At this time, Ms. Abbott stated that she could not understand what was being said, as she is one hundred percent deaf. After asking Mayor Farmer if she was speaking to her, she repeated that she is deaf, does not understand what is being said to her, and asked not to be discriminated against at this Council meeting. She exclaimed that she gave plenty of notice for Closed Captioning to have been put up on the screen.

Mayor Farmer explained that the screens were currently not working, but Council will work to address this issue in the near future in order for those with disabilities to be accommodated.

At the commencement of the meeting Mayor Farmer 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, October 7, 2025, 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 19, 2024.

The roll was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Kownacki, Perry, Santos and Mayor Farmer.
Absent: None.

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

Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

Mayor Farmer read the following proclamation regarding Younity's 2025 "Communities of Light Day" into record:

Proclamation

WHEREAS, it is the policy of Lawrence Township to recognize organizations that have contributed to the overall benefit of the community; and

WHEREAS, Younity (formerly Womanspace), founded in 1977, has demonstrated a unique ability to provide comfort, support services, crisis intervention and safety to women, men and children who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and strangulation; and

WHEREAS, Younity (formerly Womanspace), in the belief that "peace begins at home", has asked the Mercer County Community to join them in their struggle against violence by participating in their annual Communities of Light project; and

WHEREAS, Younity (formerly Womanspace) has provided emergency shelter in secure locations and comprehensive services for victims of domestic violence since 1977, sexual assault since 2002 and strangulation since 2024, for more than 130,204 women, 17,782 children and 9,397 men. Additionally, Younity (formerly Womanspace) has assisted more than 332, 296 hotline callers over the last 48 years; and

WHEREAS, Younity (formerly Womanspace) in November of 2025 change their name to show growth as an organization and their commitment to inclusivity. While honoring Womanspace's legacy, the new name reflects their mission of fostering unity, empowerment, and healing for survivors from ALL backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Township commends Younity (formerly Womanspace) for their efforts to bring an end to the cycle of interpersonal violence imposed on women, men, and children; and

WHEREAS, as Mayor of Lawrence Township I urge that each and every household demonstrate their support of the concept that "peace begins at home" by placing luminaries along their driveways and sidewalks on Monday, October 27, 2025, as a visible symbol of that support; and

WHEREAS, the proceeds from Communities of Light 2025 will be used to fund vital services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, strangulation and human trafficking.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Patricia Farmer, Mayor of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim October 27, 2025, as

COMMUNITIES OF LIGHT DAY

and hereby honor Younity (formerly Womanspace) on its many accomplishments and wish them continued success with Communities of Light in the years to come.

"Peace Begins at Home. It Shines Through Our Communities."

Date: October 7, 2025

Public Participation

Ms. Deborah Dorner stated that she is here tonight as a member of Friends of Colonial Lake Park, and would first like to thank the old and new Council members who made a positive change regarding the Sheft parcel of land, which was converted from a blacktop parking lot into a passive park that leads to a new park trail, along with providing for shoreline restoration. Ms. Dorner explained that she is also here to discuss the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's plans to no longer stock Colonial Lake Park with trout in 2026. She expressed concern for the fishermen who come from all over the State and have been fishing here for years, as well as for the ecosystem, which contains an abundance of wildlife who catch and eat the trout. She relayed that members of Friends of Colonial Lake Park have filed a Change.Org petition to collect signatures in support of maintaining the quality of life at Colonial Lake Park, and she is asking for Council's support on this issue as well.

Councilman Bobbitt responded that Council will be in conversation about reaching out to the legislative Assembly members and Senate leaders as well as the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to resolve this issue.

Mr. Chris Woolley thanked Council for their attention to the information provided by the Mayor's Task Force, and expressed his gratitude for everything Council has done to support the Task Force. He observed that the candidates for Town Council were interviewed by the Lawrence Gazette, and commented that each one used the Community Center as a platform for their position, which makes the issue's importance to the community apparent. Mr. Woolley then spoke to the issue of strategic partnerships and their ability to offer fiscal assistance with achieving the Community Center goals as expressed in the Task Force report. Finally, he relayed that he will be present until the end of the meeting if any Council member would like to speak with him regarding the contents of the Task Force report.

Ms. Rhonda Abbott stated that she is not sure if her voice is loud enough, as she cannot hear her own voice. She disclosed that she sought accommodations for tonight's meeting under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and New Jersey laws against discrimination, and feels that if the Municipal Clerk was not able schedule an interpreter then she could have at least put captions up on the screen. She next recounted that she first came to Lawrence Township in December 2024, and found that the State-mandated public accommodation posters were not yet up, even though they were released in August of 2022, so she expressed that she had to advocate for their display. However, she commented that only one poster was displayed and it was not at eye level, nor was there an accompanying Spanish version. Ms. Abbott relayed that tonight she noticed the poster was displayed both outside the Council Meeting Room and at the Police Station for the first time, but observed that posters "cannot make magic" as it is compliance with the law that matters. She remarked that the Police Department does not comply with ADA Title II Laws against discrimination and they do not understand the concept of "public accommodation."

Mayor Farmer asked Ms. Abbott if the posters she was holding are the ADA posters she wished to have hung up, to which Ms. Carter replied that they are currently displayed in the Township Building. Ms. Abbot then addressed Mayor Farmer stating that she has a hundred-decibel hearing loss and can't hear her. She then proceeded to discuss New Jersey anti-discrimination laws as related to the ADA.

Ms. Carter stated that she wished to set the record straight. She reported that Ms. Abbott first came to the Municipal Clerk's Office one year ago with her request to have the ADA posters displayed, so Ms. Carter purchased and erected a new bulletin board in which to display the posters. In addition, Ms. Carter requested that the Township appoint an ADA Compliance Officer, to which the Township agreed and appointed Director of Public Works Greg Whitehead to the position. She explained that ADA information is also posted on the Township website. Ms. Carter revealed that she had informed Ms. Abbott that IT personnel were unable to provide closed captioning for live stream tonight, but that the Township will purchase a new system that will allow for closed captioning in the near

future. She also informed Ms. Abbott that an American Sign Language interpreter was unavailable for tonight's Council meeting. Ms. Carter relayed that the Lawrence Township Police Department scheduled a meeting with Ms. Abbott for yesterday, with an interpreter; however, she did not show up, and Ms. Carter noted that interpreters are very expensive. In addition, she shared that Mr. Whitehead sent Ms. Abbott an email on Saturday at 5:13 p.m. informing her that he would meet with her, and Ms. Carter has continued to email Ms. Abbott all week, keeping her abreast of the situation, letting her know that the Township is doing everything they can to comply with ADA regulations.

Ms. Farmer thanked Ms. Carter for her clarification of events, and stated that it is good that this has been brought to Council's attention. She confirmed with Ms. Carter that the ADA posters had been displayed, and both Mr. Whitehead and the Police Department had reached out to Ms. Abbott regarding the ADA compliance laws.

Ms. Milena Bimpong stated that she is a lifelong resident of Lawrence Township, and is here on behalf of a coalition of environmental, residential, and local advocacy groups opposing the Williams/Transco Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) Pipeline Project. She proceeded to detail the environmental hazards that NESE will bring to the area, and explained that many towns across New Jersey have already passed Resolutions opposing the NESE project. Ms. Bimpong urged Council to consider providing a Resolution opposing the NESE project also, and have it adopted at the next Town Council meeting.

Mayor Farmer stated that they have not yet discussed the agenda for the next Council meeting but can discuss the issue this evening.

Mr. Fred Vereen, Jr. stated that he will not take up too much time, but wished to share a packet of information with Council which contains photos of the Neighborhood Center in various stages of construction and refurbishment. He provided some background information on the Center's history, and declared that history allows a person to move forward to where they wish to go, adding that it is worthwhile to learn how people throughout this Town have made this Community Center possible.

Ms. Integra Feliciano stated that she and her mother are residents of Lawrence Township, and she is the Treasurer on the board of Every Child Valued (ECV). She explained that as a child, she participated in the various ECV after school programs and summer camps, and as an adult, she has tutored children in program. She expressed to Council the positive impact and profound influence that ECV has had on her life, and continues to have for the children in the Lawrence Township Community. Ms. Feliciano suggested that ECV not only needs access to the Community Center, but it actually needs an increased amount of access to continue to provide resources to students in the community.

Ms. Kiya King Green relayed that she is not a resident of Lawrence, but she is an educational and community leader in Lawrence at Every Child Valued (ECV). She shared her belief that ECV has an incredible legacy, ensuring that students have resources and

support, especially at young ages. She stated she is excited to celebrate the partnership between ECV and the Lawrence Township Public Schools, and eager for the program to continue to expand its services to students, not just at Eggert's Crossing, but throughout all of Lawrence Township. Ms. King Green asked that Council ensure that the Community Center's policy and practices will fully include all children and develop strategic partnerships.

Mr. Ken Kiernan thanked the Mayor's Task Force members for all of their hard work in writing their report. He stated that he has several questions concerning transparency with regard to the report. His first question asked if the Task Force was best led by Dr. Christopher Woolley, indicating that there may be a conflict of interest with regard to Every Child Valued. His second question asked if the report's recommendation to create a governing body to oversee the Community Center—which would be separate from Town Council—is legal given Lawrence Township's form of government. He expressed that he does agree with most of the information found within the Mayor's Task Force report, and declared that Lawrence Township must keep Every Child Valued within the community; however, he wondered if Every Child Valued is still needed now that Lawrence Township Schools are providing preschool for three and four-year-old children. Mr. Kiernan stated his research shows that there is no example in the State of New Jersey of an instance where a building is shared between a Township department alongside of a nonprofit volunteer organization, and wondered if this is what is being recommended. Finally, Mr. Kiernan relayed that he wished there were more survey responses from the community as only .5% of the total population was represented, so he suggested that more time should have been taken to procure more surveys in order to make better judgements.

Ms. Martha Friend requested that the Township provide a digital display board reminding residents about Early Voting. She then wished to address Mr. Kiernan's last point, and shared that the members of the Task Force had deep discussions regarding whether or not enough data was provided. She stated that because the Task Force members were not statisticians, they brought in an expert to help them with providing a representative sample of the community to be used for the report.

In response to Ms. Friend's request, Ms. Carter shared that the Township will be providing the digital display, beginning October 25, 2025.

Mayor Farmer stated that the Task Force members themselves represented various groups within Lawrence Township, which was also taken into consideration with regard to representation.

Mr. Christopher Woolly thanked Mr. Kiernan for bringing up this issue, stating that it was not the first time this issue has been raised. He relayed that the Task Force received 159 survey responses, which is not a large number when compared to 31,000 residents of Lawrence Township. He reflected that the expert the Task Force engaged to assist with the surveys explained that in surveys such as this, it is not usually the number of respondents received but the demographics represented that makes the

difference. He stated the key feedback offered was that the Community Center should be for all Lawrence Township residents, and the community should continue to be included in conversations as things move forward. Lastly, Mr. Woolley acknowledged that the people giving feedback were reflecting on needs of the whole community, not just themselves, and observed that there is more complexity to survey research than simply focusing on the numbers.

Ms. Sylwia Kobus stated that although she was not involved with the Community Center Task Force, she was asked to translate a few flyers into Polish. She explained that there was a big push to involve as many people as possible with regard to the survey; however, she remarked that one cannot force involvement. In this regard, she commented that the Task Force cannot be blamed for people's unresponsiveness, and more should be done to encourage people to get involved.

Mr. Kiernan relayed that he previously forgot to make one more point regarding the Recreation Department. He relayed that they provided seven pages to the presentation on how they could lead by bringing in and working with other nonprofits; however, he did not feel their input was discussed or reviewed. Mr. Kiernan then asked how their input factored into Dr. Mary McKillip's formulations.

Review and Revisions of Agenda

Mr. Nerwinski explained that Resolution Nos. 323-25 (18.H-3) and 324-25 (18.H-4) are actually bid awards, and should be changed to Resolutions 9.A & 9.B.

On a motion by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Santos, the Agenda was amended to move Resolution No. 323-25 (18.H-3) Authorizing Award of Contract to Master Build and Design for Lawrence to Perform Rehabilitation at 351 Fountayne Lane as well as Resolution No. 324-25 (18.H-4) Authorizing Award of Contract to Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling, LLC, to Perform Rehabilitation at 724 Puritan Avenue to *Awarding and/or Rejecting of Bids* making (18.H-3) now 9.A and (18.H-4) now 9.B by the following roll call vote:

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

Adoption of Minutes

On a motion by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Santos, the Minutes of the Special Meeting of June 5, 2025 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

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

On a motion by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Santos, the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 17, 2025 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

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

Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

On a motion by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Santos, Resolution (9-A) Authorizing Award of Contract to Master Build and Design for Lawrence to Perform Rehabilitation at 351 Fountayne Lane was presented for adoption.

Resolution No. 323-25

WHEREAS, on Thursday, September 18, 2025 bids were received and publicly opened for the project known as the Lawrence Township Home Improvement Program for 351 Fountayne Lane; and

WHEREAS, three (3) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Master Build and Design that submitted a bid in the amount of \$24,336.66 to perform the tasks required in the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is:

Acct.	Ord. No.	Name	Amount
5-19-56-853-299	-----	Affordable Housing Trust Fund	\$24,336.66

; and

WHEREAS, Master Build and Design has performed satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, Alina Kowalski Knight, owner of 351 Fountayne Lane has been deemed eligible to participate in the rehabilitation program;

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 Manager, the Mayor and the Municipal Clerk hereby authorize the acceptance of the bid and the execution of a contract with Master Build and Design, 400 Broadway, Suite 4, Long Branch, NJ 07740 for the purposes of rehabilitating 351 Fountayne Lane;

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: October 7, 2025

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

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On a motion by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Santos, Resolution (9.B) Authorizing Award of Contract to Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling, LLC, to Perform Rehabilitation at 724 Puritan Avenue was presented for adoption.

#### Resolution No. 324-25

WHEREAS, on Thursday, September 18, 2025 bids were received and publicly opened for the project known as the Lawrence Township Home Improvement Program for 742 Puritan Avenue; and

WHEREAS, three (3) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Silviu Nedelcu Painting & Remodeling, LLC that submitted a bid in the amount of \$25,900.00 to perform the tasks required in the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is:

| Acct.           | Ord. No. | Name                          | Amount      |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 5-19-56-853-299 | -----    | Affordable Housing Trust Fund | \$25,900.00 |

; and

WHEREAS, Silviu Nedelcu Painting & Remodeling, LLC has performed satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, Alina Kowalski Knight, owner of 742 Puritan Avenue has been deemed eligible to participate in the rehabilitation program; and

WHEREAS, approval for exceeding the program's cap was based upon several factors, including the financial inability for the property owner to make any contribution;

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 Manager, the Mayor and the Municipal Clerk hereby authorize the acceptance of the bid and the execution of a contract with Silviu Nedelcu Painting & Remodeling, LLC, 4475 Route 27, Princeton, NJ 08540 for the purposes of rehabilitating 742 Puritan Avenue;

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: October 7, 2025

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

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#### Introduction of Ordinances

Mayor Farmer read by title, an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, IN

THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$29,588.85, THEREFORE, AND DIRECTING THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE COST THEREOF."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this is part of Lawrence Township's Sidewalk Improvement Program whereby property owners can opt in to the program. He explained that the \$29,588.85 is an appropriation, meaning the property owners will eventually pay that amount over a period of over five years, per the terms of the program.

The Ordinance No. 2500-25 was approved on the following roll call vote:

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

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Mayor Farmer read by title, an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE TO VACATE, RELEASE AND EXTINGUISH ANY AND ALL DEDICATION OF PUBLIC RIGHTS IN OR TO CERTAIN PORTIONS OF HAVESON AVENUE ADJACENT TO BLOCK 302, LOT 2 IN THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that "paper streets" are a part of the original Master Plan where there was an intention to build a street, but that street was never built, so they remain on the plan, but as a paper street only. From time to time, if there is determined to be no need to create a street, it may be vacated to the adjoining property owner, which in this case is Harney's Corner Auto Body, and be part of the Township's tax roll.

The Ordinance No. 2501-25 was approved on the following roll call vote:

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

Adoption of Ordinances

There was no adoption of ordinances.

Manager's Report –

Municipal Manager Kevin Nerwinski submitted invoice listings for the month of October 2025 in the amount of \$2,123,913.06.

Mr. Nerwinski reported that the Township has advertised for Deputy Municipal Manager position and has received approximately twenty applications. He relayed that he will be reviewing the submissions and anticipates contacting several of the more qualified candidates for interviews next week.

Mr. Nerwinski also reported that he would like to work with the Municipal Clerk regarding the hearing-impaired woman, Ms. Abbott, who spoke earlier in the meeting. Various artificial intelligence (AI) devices have been discussed, and as well as opportunities for the Township to be fully prepared should a hearing-impaired individual attend without prior notice. He will explore these options with the Clerk over the next few days and will contact the appropriate State agency for further guidance.

Mr. Bobbitt stated that he hopes the ADA Coordinator and Township Attorney can be a part of this conversation to ensure Lawrence Township is complying with all State and Federal laws.

Mr. Nerwinski reiterated that the Township only recently appointed an ADA Coordinator, who has completed a survey of all Township buildings, and has been meeting with ADA Coordinators from other municipalities to learn how they implement ADA policies, and will be taking a State-run course to ensure Lawrence Township understands and meets all legal compliance requirements. Mr. Nerwinski reported that he will also meet with Police Chief, Kevin Reading, tomorrow to discuss the concerns that Ms. Abbott expressed.

Mayor Farmer wished to add that one of the reasons that the Council meeting room was refurbished was to ensure that it is ADA compliant.

Attorney's Report –

Mr. Sypek stated that a Closed Session will be needed tonight to discuss matters dealing with litigation on the Township's fourth-round obligation filing, real estate matters involving open space, a potential land acquisition and personnel matters.

In addition, Mr. Sypek reported that both he and Mr. Nerwinski will not be in New Jersey for the next Council meeting, and wished to know if Council would like to cancel this meeting due to their absence. He informed Council that if they would like to proceed with the meeting, then he can have Tyler Newman, Esq. come in his stead.

Mr. Nerwinski shared that postponing the meeting until the last week of October would present a problem regarding the Sunshine notifications, as it would be only one week before the November 6th meeting. He revealed that Municipal CFO, Peter Kiriakatis, confirmed that there is nothing that would present an issue for the functioning of the municipal government that would necessitate a second meeting if Council felt it appropriate to cancel the October 21st meeting.

Mayor Farmer asked for a poll to inquire if Council would like to keep the October 21st Council meeting on the calendar:

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

Clerk's Report –

Ms. Carter reported that in-person, early voting will begin October 25, 2025 through November 2, 2025, the Ballot Box is opened, and Election Day will be held on November 4th.

Ms. Carter also wished to thank Manager Nerwinski for his collaboration in refreshing the Council Meeting Room, as well as Public Works for their hard work beautifying the space. She stated that she is very pleased with how attractive the room turned out and hopes that everyone enjoys it.

Unfinished Business –

There was no unfinished business.

Old Business/New Business –

Councilwoman Perry recapped the three companies that were chosen for consideration from which Council will select a winner. The first firm, she revealed, was CGR Consulting, a company based out of Rochester, New York. She stated that they are a nonprofit with an award-winning staff who have worked on several similar New Jersey-based projects. Ms. Perry revealed the second firm to be chosen was H2M Architects and Engineers, a company based out of Wall Township. She shared that they have municipal management experience from their New Jersey-based projects, which aligns well with the needs of the study. The third and final firm to be chosen was the Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM), a national firm based out of Washington, D.C., she relayed, with a strong portfolio of projects across the country, including work up and down the east coast.

Ms. Perry revealed that after careful review, the Subcommittee has recommended CGR. She confirmed that all of the bids were still valid, except for CGR, which increased their bid by three percent, bringing their new total to \$58,700.00.

Councilman Bobbitt stated that he knows the subcommittee has worked on this project with Ms. Perry, but wondered if she had shared this information with the Public Safety Committee, also.

Ms. Perry responded that she presented the bid proposals, the rubric used, as well as the subsequent subcommittee report to the Public Safety Committee.

Mr. Bobbitt stated that he was curious about H2M, considering they had a similar ranking to the other consultants. He also wondered if there was much conversation and debate with regard to the three bid proposals.

Ms. Perry responded that she liked the structure and process of CGR's project management compared to H2M. She also noted that there was conversation and debate as the subcommittee reviewed the bids. She explained that the committee included experts with institutional knowledge of the Township, and she facilitated the conversation with support from the Township Attorney while the matters were being debated.

Ms. Perry revealed that one the main issues reflecting the company's professionalism was their presentation, and recounted that several companies simply gave the subcommittee a stapled flyer for their bid presentation. Another important factor was the company's experience, as many had New Jersey-based projects but were not from New Jersey, which would affect how well they know Lawrence Township, and how they would proceed to master the analysis of the Township. Most importantly, she declared, was the expertise of the people who work for the company. With regard to CGR, Ms. Perry explained that they had at least three former Fire Chiefs on their staff, as well as two strong analytical staff members. Another detail that Ms. Perry noted was that CGR is a nonprofit, which she feels will help them search for the best solution for Lawrence Township, not just look at the bottom line.

Mr. Bobbitt next asked what their timeline is, as their original proposal stated that they would be done in July of 2025, to which Ms. Perry responded that the timeline, in most cases, was between nine to twelve months. However, being that the process was starting at a later time, she explained that the timeline would be revised based on when the bid goes out.

Mr. Bobbitt stated that the 2020 Rodger's Report, there were thirty-eight recommendations about operational staffing, etc. He asked if they were going to revisit the entire fire service once more.

Ms. Perry responded that much of the Rodger's Report recommendations were initiated and started by the Fire Department. Since then, she explained, many factors have changed, so it is necessary that the recommendations be revisited.

Councilman Kownacki thanked Ms. Perry and her committee for all that they have accomplished. However, he expressed that two studies have already been commissioned over the last four years, and from these studies Council has learned about manpower, equipment, and what needs to be done, so he would simply like to know where the new fire station should be built. He relayed that he does not feel that commissioning a third study is necessary for making this decision.

Ms. Perry replied that she agrees with Mr. Kownacki, but respectfully stated that she was tasked to bring an impartial party to clearly give the Township what they asked for, which is an objective result and analysis of both the right location and model for the Township. Consolidation, she explained, may not be the right model for Lawrence Township, so by selecting this firm to do the analysis, the Township will be given an unbiased opinion on the best model for Lawrence Township to have a productive and safe environment.

Further discussion was had between Mr. Kownacki, Ms. Perry, and Mr. Sypek with regard to the hard work that was involved regarding her commission, the need for a third Fire Study, the professionals involved in the decision-making process, the possible location of the new fire station, and the fact that no vote or definitive contract is being awarded tonight as Council is simply giving Mr. Sypek the ability to contact CGR and obtain the necessary legal documents to move forward.

Mayor Farmer clarified with Mr. Sypek that there is a difference within the study between hiring fire personnel and determining the location of the fire station. Mr. Sypek agreed that that they are two divergent issues, which lends itself to a diverse contract, versus a "one-size-fits-all" agreement. He suggested that because of issues such as changes to the Master Plan and the construction of future housing developments, it may actually be a good idea that the report was not acted upon sooner as it may not be valid based upon these factors.

Mayor Farmer inquired as to the funding for the new study, to which Mr. Nerwinski replied that it was a \$725,000 grant given in 2023, but revealed that they may lose this grant money due to the delay. He suggested that he can make a request of the DCA to see if they would grant a one-year extension; however, there is no guarantee that they will agree to this request.

Mr. Nerwinski articulated that Lawrence Township is a Council/Manager form of government, with Council appointing the Manager, who is the Chief Executive Officer responsible for the day-to-day operations and the running of each department. In October of 2023, Mr. Nerwinski stated that he and Emergency Management Coordinator, Jack Oakley, recommended that Lawrence Township needed to consolidate and have their own facility located at this Municipal Complex, which was based upon six years of research. He believes that Council has taken authority away from the Chief Executive Officer to professionally manage the Township's government, and he is now unsure whether the new consultants will be directing Council or the Manager in creating and operating a fire department. He stated that he has no issue with the proposed location of

the new fire station, as that is a policy matter; however, he is concerned that Council is seeking outside guidance on how to run a department, when individuals have already been appointed to lead their respective departments. He believes this is setting an unwelcome precedent and would like to preserve the Council/Manager form of government.

Mr. Nerwinski then discussed the necessity for Lawrence to have their own fire facility to house a full-time career fire department in order to be compliant with various fire safety issues, the addition of full-time firefighters with their varying degrees of experience and levels of pay, and the inclusion of the volunteer firefighters to continue to serve their community if they so desire.

Mr. Sypek expressed that this would be a non-binding report that would simply be used as a tool for Council and the Manager to make an informed decision regarding the placement of the fire station and other issues that must be addressed given the changes in the demographics of the Township.

Councilwoman Santos apologized for not having the history regarding the previous fire studies and noted that she is approaching this issue from a procurement standpoint. She added that she is pleased that the subcommittee selected CGR, explaining that, as someone who reviews contract proposals for a living, she too had ranked CGR as her top choice. She appreciated that their consulting team consisted of mostly fire and EMS professionals, but more importantly, she remarked that they were the only firm that highlighted their flexibility in adapting to the scope of the work, which she believes is important moving forward. She then asked how soon it would be before they could begin.

Mr. Sypek responded that he will contact CGR tomorrow and indicate that there is an intent to move forward, with a concern about time constraints and a desire to have a more definitive timetable along with a contract as quickly as possible.

Mr. Nerwinski clarified that if Council selects CGR and directs Mr. Sypek to negotiate an agreement with them and place it on the November 6th meeting agenda for a vote, this will strengthen the Township's appeal to the DCA regarding grant funding.

Mr. Bobbitt addressed Mr. Nerwinski's concern about policy versus day-to-day operations, noting that Phase 1 of the project specifies that CGR will meet with Township representatives and the Public Safety Committee. During this meeting, Mr. Bobbitt relayed, they will discuss and clarify the roles of Township leadership and agency leaders within the study. He suggested that CFO, Peter Kiriakatis, be involved in the meetings as well.

Mr. Sypek recommended that a motion be made to authorize him to contact CGR and request a formal contract as soon as possible.

On a motion by Mayor Farmer, seconded by Councilwoman Perry, it was directed that Attorney Arthur Sypek, Esq, should contact the vendor CGR to request their form contract

agreement with the understanding that Council wishes to have all negotiations concluded and a vote to be taken with regard to this form agreement by November 6th of this year.

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

Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –

Mr. Ken Kiernan stated that he has over five years' experience as a flight medic, with ten years' experience as both a paid and volunteer EMT. He noted that last year, when he asked about the possible location of the fire station, a single location was never confirmed. He believes that when considering a single location for a Township that is 22 miles long, it is important to evaluate the actual coverage and response times. He questioned whether there is any precedent in New Jersey for a municipality of a similar size relying on a single location to provide adequate coverage.

Mr. Newinski responded that it was never a single location; the Township was going to retain one, if not more. He stated that, ultimately, this is information that will be revealed in the study.

Mr. John Clark stated that he is a former United States diplomat, having served in several crisis zones, and is also a Lawrence Township resident. He first wished to thank Councilwoman Perry for her leadership within the subcommittee, as well as Mr. Sypek for serving on the subcommittee. He then stated that there is a need for multiple opinions and expertise when discussing multi-million-dollar investments pertaining to public safety. He believes that, given the increasing impact of natural disasters and climate change, consolidating all first responders in one part of the city creates a higher level of risk. He stated that maintaining multiple locations would be a safer and more effective approach.

Mr. Bobbitt responded that Mr. Clark is highlighting the challenge Council will face when they receive the new study. He also noted that not everyone will be happy with the outcome, and that Council will need to navigate those concerns thoughtfully.

Mr. Robert Smith stated that he has been a resident of Lawrence Township for fifteen years, and wished to commend Council for spending the time to commission the study. He expressed that it was very helpful to hear Councilwoman Perry explaining what she and the subcommittee had done to come to their decision to choose CGR, along with sharing their thoughts regarding the process. He believes the fact that the Township had not gone through with the previous studies was beneficial, given the influx of new residents to the community. Finally, Mr. Smith thanked the Council for hearing the concerns of the residents, and asked that they continue to provide feedback to the public with the decisions that are made as the process unfolds.

Resolutions

Mr. Bobbitt made a motion to move Resolution Nos. 313-25 (18-A.1) though 322-25 (18-H.2) in a block, then 325-25 (18-H.5) through 328-25 (18-H.8) in a block which was seconded by Ms. Santos. He reminded Council that the agenda was amended to move 323-25 (18-H.3) and 324-25 (18-H.4) to 9.A and 9.B.

Resolution Nos. 313-25 (18-A.1) through 322-25 (18-H.2) and 325-25 (18-H.5) through 328-25 (18-H.8) were approved by the following roll call vote:

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

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

Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –

Councilman Bobbitt reported that the Environmental and Green Advisory Committee has a subcommittee researching the impact of using artificial turf within the Township, with regard to the disposal and recycling aspect of this product.

Councilwoman Perry reported that the Growth and Redevelopment Committee will have a job and networking event on Wednesday, October 15th at the Senior Center, from 5:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. One of the main speakers will be the Anthony Carabelli, Jr., Director of Economic Development for Mercer County.

Councilwoman Perry also reported that this Saturday is the *International Day of the Girl*, which is a great opportunity to celebrate young women in the Lawrence Township community. She noted that there will be an event at the Foundations Academy from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., and although this is not a Lawrence Township event, she relayed that it is a wonderful way to celebrate and support our young women.

Councilwoman Perry disclosed that a dear member of the Lawrence Township Community, Lorraine Williams Burnett, recently passed away, and shared that she was a model of community service, volunteering with WomenSpace, HomeFront, and Shiloh Baptist Church. There will be a celebration of life for Ms. Williams Burnett on Thursday, October 9th.

Councilman Kownacki announced that the Lawrence Township Senior Center celebrated their 34th Anniversary last week, and had speakers and events held throughout the day.

Mayor Farmer announced that the Recreation Department did an outstanding job with Community Day, and noted that there was a nice turnout for the event.

Mayor Farmer wished to make sure Council had the opportunity to read the Mayor's Task Force report on the Community Center, and to please reach out to her with any questions that they may have.

Mayor Farmer reported that there was a very well-attended symposium at the Lawrenceville School regarding the Lewisville Road marker. She relayed that it was a tremendous event held in partnership with the Historical Society of Lawrence, Lawrence Township Public Schools, the Lawrenceville School, The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville, and Lawrence Neighbors Together.

In addition, Mayor Farmer disclosed that the Planning Board met last night, and there were many questions raised regarding the Master Plan. She emphasized that the Planning Board is still working on the Master Plan; however, there is a Housing Plan that is currently taking precedence and Council must first work through these challenges to meet their legal obligations.

Mayor Farmer stated that the Trails, Open Space and Stewardship Advisory Committee will be hosting a walk within the next week at the Bossio-Salt Preserve, so anyone interested in joining this event can find out more information on the Lawrence Township website. The committee has been inquiring about the sidewalk issue at Colonial Lake, and they are looking into making sure it is constructed safely when the development is constructed.

Once again, Mayor Farmer announced that the Recreation Department ran a well-organized, fantastic Community Day event, and did an outstanding job as always. She expressed that it was nice to see the community come out to support the event.

Lastly, Mayor Farmer thanked Mr. Nerwinski for the parking lot improvements, and thanked the Police Department for successfully handling a Silver Alert pertaining a gentleman from Ohio who was lost near the Chic-fil-A.

Written Communications –

Mayor Farmer disclosed that Council is in conversation with several municipalities regarding Trenton Water Works and will continue to keep residents informed about the situation. She then shared information from a letter she received from Hamilton Township Mayor, Jeff Martin, regarding this matter.

Mayor Farmer reported that the New Jersey League of Municipalities is requiring an annual audit statement covering the financial activities for the fiscal year from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

Mayor Farmer shared a thank you note from Kevin Nerwinski for the beautiful flower arrangement sent to his family.

Councilwoman Perry relayed that The Community Well will be holding a luncheon pertaining to civic wellness, with Mayor Patricia Farmer featured as the keynote speaker. The event will be held on October 30, 2025 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at 2688 Main Street.

There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tonya D. Carter, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

Patricia Farmer, Mayor