

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, January 5, 2026, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 600 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey, and via Zoom video conferencing.

Call to Order:

The Municipal Clerk reads the notice of Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call:

Mayor Tamburro, Deputy Mayor McEvoy, Councilman Roman, Councilwoman McGrath, Councilwoman Holland, Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan, Deputy Township Manager Michael Kraus, Township Attorney Brian Aloia, and Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan are present.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Tamburro holds a moment of silence for the recent passing of former Verona HS student and firefighter, Gavin Martin. He offers his condolences to the family and encourages residents to support the family in any way they are able. The Hannukah celebration was very well attended and the mayor thanks all involved in making it such a successful event. He had the honor of attending the clap out for Detective Tim Banta and thanks him for his service and congratulates him on his retirement. He wishes all of the four newly sworn in police officers' luck and thanks all involved parties in opening up the new pool registration. Lastly, Mayor Tamburro thanks all of the township employees for all they do in regards to keeping this town going and thriving.

Manager's Report:

Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan welcomes to the lectern the Township's Affordable Housing Attorney, Jaime Placek to provide an update on affordable housing and explain a resolution tonight's agenda to approve a settlement Skyline Properties regarding 885 Bloomfield Avenue.

Motion to change the agenda to move N-1 and make it E-2 is made by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes.

RESOLUTION No. 2026-002

A motion was made by Councilman Roman; seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy that the following resolution be adopted:

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT
WITH JMF PROPERTIES, LLC FOR
BLOCK 1201, LOT 12 KNOWN AS 251 ½ GROVE AVENUE**

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2024, Governor Murphy signed P.L. 2024, c.2. into law, which established a new framework for determining and enforcing municipalities' affordable housing obligations under the Mount Laurel doctrine and the Fair Housing Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq. (the "Amended Act"); and

WHEREAS, the Amended Act required the Department of Community Affairs (the "DCA") to prepare a report with the calculation of the regional and municipal Prospective Need and the municipal Present Need for the Fourth Round in accordance with the formula required by the Amended Act; and

WHEREAS, the DCA released this report entitled "Affordable Housing Obligations for 2025-2035 (Fourth Round)" on October 18, 2024 (the "DCA Report"); and

WHEREAS, the DCA report concluded that the Township of Verona's (the "Township") fair share obligations for the Fourth Round included a Present Need of 0 units and a Prospective Need of 173 units; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council adopted the required binding resolution of participation on January 20, 2025 (the “Resolution”), proposing to set the Township’s affordable housing obligations for the Fourth Round for both Present Need and Prospective Need, and, on January 22, 2025, the Township filed the necessary complaint, with the Resolution annexed thereto as Exhibit A, with the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Essex County Vicinage (the “Court”) initiating a declaratory judgment action bearing Docket No. ESX-L-594-25 (the “DJ Action”) before the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program (the “Program”), established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-313.2 of the Amended Act, in accordance with the requirements of the Amended Act, and the timeframes set forth in Directive #14-24 issued December 13, 2024 by the Administrative Office of the Courts (the “Directive”); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the timeframes set forth in the Amended Act and the Directive, FSHC filed a timely objection to the Township’s Resolution, as presented in the DJ Action, on February 28, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Court entered an Order on April 7, 2025 fixing the Township’s Fourth Round Present Need obligation as zero (0) affordable units and the Township’s Fourth Round Prospective Need obligation as one hundred fifty-five (155) affordable units and authorized the Township to move forward with the adoption of its proposed Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (the “HEFSP”) incorporating these Present Need and Prospective Need obligations, with the HEFSP required to be adopted on or before June 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Township, on June 25, 2025, filed with the Court its HEFSP, as adopted by the Township Planning Board and endorsed by the Township Council; and

WHEREAS, JMF Properties, LLC (“JMF”), on August 29, 2025, filed a challenge (the “JMF Challenge”) with the Court pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(f)(2)(b) and the Directive regarding the Township’s HEFSP and property in which JMF holds a legal interest that is located in the Township, is commonly known and identified as 251 ½ Grove Avenue and is designated on the official tax map of the Township as Block, 1201, Lot 12 (the “Property”)

WHEREAS, the Township and JMF have participated in the Program and, as a result of that process, the Township and JMF have agreed to amicably resolve the JMF Challenge on those terms and conditions negotiated by and between the Township and JMF as said terms and conditions are set forth and contained within the attached memorandum of agreement (the “JMF MOA”); and

WHEREAS, the Township and JMF have further agreed that, upon execution of the JMF MOA by the Township and JMF, the fully executed JMF MOA shall be presented by the Township to the Program and, upon entry of a Compliance Certification by the County-level Mount Laurel Judge in the DJ Action, JMF shall formally and fully withdraw the JMF Challenge with prejudice; and

WHEREAS, resolving the JMF Challenge, thereby resolving issues raised by the JMF Challenge to the HEFSP pertaining to the Property, allows the Township to avoid further unnecessary costly litigation and to move forward within the Program with the finalizing of necessary amendments to the HEFSP, confirming its compliance with the Amended Act, upon which the Township will rely in seeking the entry of the Compliance Certification in the DJ Action which is important to the interests of the Township and the interests of lower-income households; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council, acknowledging the benefits of resolving the JMF Challenge by way of an agreement with JMF, consent to the execution of the attached JMF MOA on behalf of the Township and the submission of the fully executed JMF MOA to the Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Verona, Essex County, New Jersey, hereby authorizes and directs the Township’s Affordable Housing Counsel, Jaime R. Placek, Esq. of DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP, to execute the JMF MOA in the form attached hereto on behalf of the Township, with such changes thereto that may be deemed appropriate and necessary by the Township’s Affordable Housing Legal Counsel, and to take all actions necessary to effectuate the terms set forth in the JMF MOA.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro
NAYS:

Public Comment:

None.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro
NAYS:

E-2 will be numbered 2026-002 and passes 5-0.

Various projects including the Fairview Avenue Well, Peckman River Bank Stabilization, Linden Avenue and Everett Field have been paused due to holiday season and weather. The Township also received a grant for the Bloomfield Avenue Streetscape.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor McEvoy thanks the mayor for the moment of silence conducted for Gavin Martin's unexpected passing and extends his condolences to the family for their loss.

Councilman Roman also expresses his condolences to the family of Gavin Martin and thanks all involved in putting together the holiday celebrations. He was able to attend the very enjoyable OLL Mass on Christmas Day and the swearing in of our four new VPD recruits.

Councilwoman McGrath extends her condolences to the Martin family and wishes everyone a happy new year. She thanks all of her colleagues for their dedication, all of the time that they spend serving our community and all of their many great accomplishments throughout the years. She thanks our staff for all of their hard work addressing our water and sewer infrastructure and also thanks all of the volunteers and chair people for the committees in which Councilwoman McGrath is a liaison council member of. She continues to be enthusiastic to serve this great community and will continue to work hard over the next few years on behalf of all Verona residents.

Councilwoman Holland begins by wishing everyone a happy new year and sharing in her fellow council members sentiments regarding all holiday events. She recognizes all of the hard work that went into putting those events together and thanks all involved for facilitating them all successfully. She lastly thanks DPW for their hard work clearing the roads during some of our recent snow events and reminds all residents to utilize the winter termination program for utilities if needed.

Public Comment:

Sandra Alvarez, Verona, New Jersey
Sandy Batazzi, Verona, New Jersey

RESOLUTION No. 2026-003

A motion was made by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Mayor Tamburro that the

following resolution be adopted:

**DESIGNATING THE REGULAR, CONFERENCE AND LEGAL MEETING
DATES OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL FOR THE 2026 CALENDAR YEAR**

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975, requires all public bodies covered by said Act, at least once each year, and within seven (7) days following the annual reorganization meeting of such body, to post and maintain posted throughout the year, a schedule of the regular meetings of the public body to be held during the succeeding year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, County of Essex in the State of New Jersey, as follows:

- 1. The schedule of regular meetings of the Township Council of the Township of Verona will be held in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building located at 600 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey and via Zoom conferencing platform, as deemed necessary is hereby adopted:

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL 2026 MEETING DATES

Meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers

Monday, January 19, 2026 *	Monday, July 6, 2026
Monday, February 9, 2026	Monday, July 20, 2026
Monday, February 23, 2026	Monday, August 3, 2026
Monday, March 9, 2026	Monday, August 17, 2026
Monday, March 23, 2026	Monday, September 14, 2026
Monday, April 6, 2026	Monday, October 5, 2026
Monday, April 20, 2026	Monday, October 19, 2026
Monday, May 4, 2026	Monday, November 9, 2026
Monday, May 18, 2026	Monday, December 7, 2026
Monday, June 8, 2026	Monday, December 21, 2026
Monday, June 22, 2026	Monday, January 18, 2027 *

** Reorganizational Meeting of the Township Council*

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2026-004

A motion was made by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Mayor Tamburro that the following resolution be adopted:

**PERMITTING THE REMOVAL OF AN EXTRAORDINARY TREE PURSUANT TO
CHAPTER 493, ARTICLE II, PARAGRAPH 21(C) OF THE CODE OF THE
TOWNSHIP**

WHEREAS, the property owner at 17 Sutton Place, Block 603, Lot 9, had requested a permit to remove a Pin Oak tree located on their property; and

WHEREAS, the tree has a diameter of thirty-six (36) inches, said tree is defined as extraordinary trees in Chapter 493, Article II of the Township Code; and

WHEREAS, the Township Forester has reported that the tree has a very thin crown, the stalk has multiple cankers and about 15’ of the stalk is decayed and is therefore a hazard to the homeowner and neighbor’s house, recommending the tree be removed; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 493, Article II, paragraph 21(C) of the Township Code states that removal of extraordinary trees shall be prohibited except upon the specific written recommendation of the Zoning Official after consultation of the Township Forester and approval by resolution of the Township Council; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Official is in agreement with the Township Forester’s recommendation as stated in the attached memorandum.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Verona that due to the forester’s concern, immediate removal of the tree was warranted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall serve as the written authorization pursuant to Chapter 493, Article II, Paragraph 21(C).

ROLL CALL:

AYES: **Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro**

NAYS:

Council enters into Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. and returns to the Public Session at 8:21 p.m.

A. NEW/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Appointments of Board, Committees and Commissions

a. Board of Adjustment		Term Expiring
i. Kevin Ryan	Public Member	1/17/2030
ii. Jesus Cuartas	Public Member	1/17/2030

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: **Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro**

NAYS:

b. Green Team		
i. Kerry Bass	Public Member	1/17/2027
ii. Rebecca Delgado	Public Member	1/17/2027
iii. Jami Bjornstad-Bal	Public Member	1/17/2027
iv. Christine Liaukus	Public Member	1/17/2027
v. Casey Sisco	Public Member	1/17/2027
vi. Daniel Murray	Public Member	1/17/2027
vii. Steve Pope	Public Member	1/17/2027

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: **Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro**

NAYS:

c. Historical Preservation Commission		
Teena Schwartz	Public Member	1/17/2030
Alena Sticha	Public Member	1/17/2030

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: **Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro**

NAYS:

d. Library Board		
Chris Barrows	Public Member	1/17/2031
Carole Monroe	Public Member	1/17/2030

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Councilman Roman

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

- e. Neighborhood Traffic & Safety Advisory Committee
 - i. Paul Mickiewicz Public Member 1/17/2028
 - ii. Bryan Cantrell Public Member 1/17/2028
 - iii. Jon Verzella Public Member 1/17/2028

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Councilman Roman

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

ABSTAIN: Mc Grath

- d. Open Space Advisory Committee
 - i. Larry Raff Public Member 1/17/2029

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Councilman Roman

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

- h. Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
 - i. Michelle Nunez Public Member 1/17/2027
 - ii. Michael Passero Public Member 1/17/2029
 - iii. Christopher Randion Public Member 1/17/2029
 - iv. Jan Zales Public Member 1/17/2029

Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan appoints Nicole Tolve as the Manager's Designee

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

- i. Planning Board
 - ii. Tim Camuti Public Member 1/17/2030
 - iii. Julie Parker Public Member 1/17/2030
 - iv. Jim Day Alternate #1 1/17/2027
 - v. Dylan Magarrell Alternate #2 1/17/2026

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: Jeremy Katzeff, Verona, NJ

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

ABSTAIN: Holland, McGrath

- j. Rent Control Board
 - i. Maria Barone Public Member 1/17/2030

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

k. Shade Tree Commission

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------|---------------|-----------|
| i. | Kathy Rutherford | Public Member | 1/17/2031 |
| ii. | Carol Thomas | Chairperson | 1/17/2027 |

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

l. Verona Municipal Alliance

- | | | | |
|------|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| i. | Colin Boyle | Public Member | 1/17/2029 |
| ii. | Carol Lyn Moy | Public Member | 1/17/2029 |
| iii. | Verena Mikhael | Public Member | 1/17/2029 |

Motion made by Mayor Tamburro; Seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy

Public Comment: none

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

Public Comment:

None.

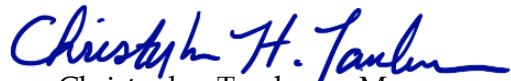
Adjournment:

A motion is made by Councilman Roman to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.; seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy. Vote: 5 ayes

The next meeting is January 19, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,


Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk


Christopher Tamburro, Mayor

APPROVED: January 19, 2026