

TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
6:30 pm Executive Session/7:30 pm Regular Session

December 3, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Lopatcong Township Council was called to order by Mayor Wright. The meeting was held in the Municipal Building located at 232 S. Third St., Phillipsburg, New Jersey.

A Prayer was offered followed by the Oath of Allegiance.

Mayor Wright stated “adequate notice of this meeting has been provided indicating the time and place of the meeting in accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975 by advertising a Notice in The Star Ledger and The Express-Times Warren County Zone and by posting a copy on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building.”

Present: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Marinelli, Councilman McQuade, Council President Palitto, Mayor Wright. Also, present were Attorney Baldwin and Engineer Wisniewski.

Motion to resume Regular Session by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Councilman Marinelli. All in favor.

Attorney Baldwin reported items listed on the Executive Session were discussed with no action to be taken. Attorney Baldwin asked for a motion to deny PBA grievance on motion by Mayor Wright, seconded by Councilman Marinelli. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Marinelli, Councilman McQuade, Council President Palitto, Mayor Wright.

NAYS: None

Public Comment - Agenda items only – no comments.

Old Business:

Minutes – Motion to approve Executive and Regular Session minutes for November 5, 2025 by Councilman Marinelli seconded by Councilman McQuade. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Marinelli, Councilman McQuade, Council President Palitto, Mayor Wright.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Councilman Belcaro

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 25-165

R 25-165

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING CONSENT AGENDA FOR COUNCIL'S
CONSIDERATION

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby approve and authorize a Consent Agenda to move routine items of business requiring no discussion; and

WHEREAS, there are listed Items one through eleven on the Consent Agenda.

1. Resolution - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 99 Lot 117 Qualification C0066 in the amount of \$82.15.
2. Resolution - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 99 Lot 27 Qualification C0214 in the amount of \$118.49.
3. Resolution - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 124 Lot 10 in the amount of \$1,880.65.
4. Resolution - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 86.01 Lot 23 in the amount of \$2,849.24.
5. Resolution - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 85.05 Lot 11 in the amount of \$1,842.92.
6. Resolution – Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 7 Lot 2.12 in the amount of \$1,900.78.
7. Resolution – Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 38 Lot 13 due to a Disabled Veteran Exemption in the amount of \$782.97.
8. Resolution – Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 50 Lot 9 due to a Disabled Veteran Exemption in the amount of \$928.57.
9. Resolution – Authorizing the Transfer of Appropriations of the 2025 Municipal Budget during the last two months of the year in the amount of \$25,000.00.
10. Appoint Brian Race as Asst. Public Works Superintendent per Civil Service Certification of Eligibles PL251860.
11. Appoint Terry Lawler as Fire Official per Civil Service Certification of Eligibles OL251482.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, November 5, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Motion to approve Consent Agenda by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Councilman McQuade. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Marinelli, Councilman McQuade, Council President Palitto, Mayor Wright.

NAYS: None

Resolution No. 25-166 - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 99 Lot 117 Qualification C0066 in the amount of \$82.15.

R 25 –166

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR
BLOCK 99, LOT 117 QUALIFICATION C0066

WHEREAS, it has been found that on October 1, 2025, the resident paid \$82.15 for 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, it has also been found that on November 6, 2025, the resident's mortgage company paid \$82.15 for the 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, this has resulting in an overpayment on the account in the amount of \$82.15; and

WHEREAS, a refund has been requested by the resident.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby authorize the CFO to process a refund in the amount of \$82.15 to: Williams, Gina Marie, 66 Overlook Drive, Stewartsville, NJ 08886.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-167 - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 99 Lot 27 Qualification C0214 in the amount of \$118.49.

R 25-167

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR BLOCK 99, LOT 27 QUALIFICATION C0214

WHEREAS, it has been found that on October 27, 2025 the resident paid 4118.49 for 4th quarter 2025 added taxes; and

WHEREAS, it has also been found that on November 6, 2025 the resident's mortgage company paid \$118.49 for the 4th quarter added taxes; and

WHEREAS, this has resulted in an overpayment on the account in the amount of \$118.49; and

WHEREAS, a refund has been requested by the resident.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby authorize the CFO to process a refund in the amount of \$118.49 to: Wisbeski, Tina, 214 Bald Eagle Drive, Stewartsville, NJ 08886.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-168 - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 124 Lot 10 in the amount of \$1,880.65.

R 25-168

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR
BLOCK 124, LOT 10

WHEREAS, it has been found that on September 22, 2025 the resident's title company paid \$1,880.65 for 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, it has also been found that on November 6, 2025 the resident's mortgage company paid \$1,880.65 for the 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, this has resulted in an overpayment on the account in the amount of \$1,880.65; and

WHEREAS, a refund has been requested by the title company.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby authorize the CFO to process a refund in the amount of \$1,880.65 to: State Title Services, LLC, 54 Old Highway 22, Suite 301, Clinton, NJ 08809.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-169 - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 86.01 Lot 23 in the amount of \$2,849.24.

R 25-169

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR
BLOCK 86.01, LOT 23

WHEREAS, on September 26, 2025 the Tax Assessor approved a Disabled Veteran Exemption for the resident of Block 86.01, Lot 23; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2025 Resolution 25-160 was passed by the Mayor and Council allowing the Tax Collector to make the necessary adjustments to the Tax Account; and

WHEREAS, the Mortgage Company paid for Quarter 4 2025 in the amount of \$2,849.24 on November 6, 2025 resulting in an overpayment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby authorize the CFO to process a refund in the amount of \$2,849.24 to: Jeffrey & Kelly Smigelsky, 1 Foxwood Lane, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No.25-170 - Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 85.05 Lot 11 in the amount of \$1,842.92.

R 25-170

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR BLOCK 85.05, LOT 11

Whereas, it has been found that on November 5, 2025 the resident's title company paid \$1,842.92 for 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, it has also been found that on November 6, 2025 the resident's mortgage company paid \$1,842.92 for the 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, this has resulted in an overpayment on the account in the amount of \$1,842.92; and

WHEREAS, a refund has been requested by the title company.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby authorize the CFO to process a refund in the amount of \$1,842.92 to: Rocket Close, LLC, 662 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48226.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-171 – Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 7 Lot 2.12 in the amount of \$1,900.78.

R 25-171

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR BLOCK 7, LOT 2.12

WHEREAS, it has been found that on October 31, 2025 the resident's title company paid \$1,900.78 for 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, it has also been found that on November 6, 2025 the resident's mortgage company paid \$1,900.78 for the 4th quarter 2025 taxes; and

WHEREAS, this has resulted in an overpayment on the account in the amount of \$1,900.78; and

WHEREAS, a refund has been requested by the title company to be sent to the resident.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby authorize the CFO to process a refund in the amount of \$1,900.78 to: Biesty, Ryan/Slesarevich, Katerina, 155 Beers Street, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-172 – Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 38 Lot 13 due to a Disabled Veteran Exemption in the amount of \$782.97.

R 25-172

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR
BLOCK 38, LOT 13 DUE TO A DISABLED VETERAN EXEMPTION

WHEREAS, the Tax Assessor has approved a disabled Veteran Exemption for the resident of Block 38, Lot 13 on 10/13/2025; and

WHEREAS, due to the exemption status, property taxes will be cancelled as follows:

Quarter 4, 2025 - \$ 782.97

Quarter 1, 2026 - \$1,145.94

Quarter 2, 2026 - \$1,145.93

WHEREAS, the 4th quarter 2025 property taxes were paid on November 3, 2025 in the amount of \$1,167.78 resulting in an overpayment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on this 3rd day of December 2025, that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey hereby authorize the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes and the Chief Financial Officer to refund the overpayment in the amount of \$782.97 to: Francis Aiello, 705 Lynda Road, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-173 – Issue a Refund for a Tax Overpayment for Block 50 Lot 9 due to a Disabled Veteran Exemption in the amount of \$928.57.

R 25-173

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT FOR
BLOCK 50, LOT 9 DUE TO A DISABLED VETERAN EXEMPTION

WHEREAS, the Tax Assessor has approved a Disabled Veteran Exemption for the resident of Block 50, Lot 9 on 10/16/2025; and

WHEREAS, due to the exemption status, property taxes will be cancelled as follows:

Quarter 4, 2025 - \$ 928.57
Quarter 1, 2026 - \$1,114.90
Quarter 2, 2026 - \$1,114.89

WHEREAS, the 4th quarter 2025 property taxes were paid on November 6, 2025 in the amount of \$1,197.55 resulting in an overpayment.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED on the 3rd day of December 2025, that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong hereby authorize the Tax Collector to cancel the taxes and the Chief Financial Officer to refund the overpayment in the amount of \$928.57 to: Eiver Angulo, 312 Brakeley Avenue, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-174 – Authorizing the Transfer of Appropriations of the 2025 Municipal Budget during the last two months of the year in the amount of \$25,000.00.

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk for the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-175 - Assistant Public Works Superintendent Civil Service Appointment
- Appoint Brian Race as Asst. Public Works Superintendent per Civil Service Certification of Eligibles PL251860.

R 25-175

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY APPOINTING BRIAN RACE AS ASSISTANT PUBLIC WORKS
SUPERINTENDENT PER CIVIL SERVICE CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBLES PL251860

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 24-89 dated June 5, 2024 appointed Brian Race to Assistant Public Works Superintendent pursuant to NJ Civil Service Certification of Eligibles PM2045F dated May 30, 2024; and

WHEREAS, an appeal was filed wherein an employee of the Department of Public Works and after the Civil Service Commission investigated the matter, a test was given and the employee who appealed was allowed to sit for the exam; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey upon the second Certification of Eligibles No. PL251860 authorized the appointment of Brian Race as Assistant Public Works Superintendent.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby appoint Brian Race per NJ Civil Service Certification of Eligibles No. PL251860 to the title of Assistant Public Works Superintendent.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk for the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Resolution No. 25-176 - Fire Official Civil Service Appointment - Appoint Terry Lawler as Fire Official per Civil Service Certification of Eligibles OL251482.

R 25-176

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO APPOINT TERRENCE LAWLER AS FIRE OFFICIAL PER CIVIL SERVICE CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBLES NO. OL251482

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey hereby appoint Terrence Lawler as Fire Official per Civil Service Certification of Eligibles No. OL251482.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council authorize the appointment of Terrence Lawler as Fire Official as shall be paid a salary in accordance with the Salary Resolution.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk for the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC

Announcements – End of the year meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 6:30 pm Executive Session and 7:30 pm Regular Session.

Council Reports:

Councilman McQuade – Provided an update on the sewer negotiations with the Town of Phillipsburg. He noted he attended a meeting on November 12 with the following updates: rate Study in being prepared consistent with the old agreement and still moving forward towards the privatization.

Councilman Belcaro – No report

Councilman Marinelli – No report

Council President Palitto – Reported the Music in the Park application has been filed with the County. Santa will be at Fire House No. 2 on Strykers Road on December 20th from 1 to 3 pm.

Mayor Wright – Received calls on a property located at the Southwest corner of Stonehenge and Red School Lane that is dilapidated – what is the status. Clerk Dilts noted that property has a 30/50 permit from the DEP to remediate that property. Attorney Baldwin will look into this further. The other property is located at the corner of Rt. 57 and Rt. 519, the old Santini Farm that has buildings that have collapsed. There is also a silo across the street. Mayor Wright asked if that area could be cleaned up.

Engineer's Report – Fox Farm Road permits are being filed with the DEP and a scope of work for the Council on the design of the improvements. The Sally Port Project was awarded last month and the working with contractor to start construction. Park Improvement Projects is out to bid and those bids will be opened next week. Stonehenge Drive Improvements started two weeks ago with some portions of the project having to be completed in the spring. Jade Lane has some outstanding matters to be finished. The public works garage work has been completed and finally the S. Fifth Street curbing work has been completed.

Police Report – Police Chief Garcia looked into traffic complains from the last Council meeting which have been addressed. The department participated in a statewide endeavor called Gold Zero to drive vehicular deaths down to zero. Funding from the State enabled this event. The November Traffic Report includes 291 motor vehicle stops with 45% of the drivers' receiving citations and out of those 23% were commercial motor vehicles overweight.

DPW Report – Brian Weeks reported leaf pickup is ongoing and the final sweep is being completed. Rowe Lane will be closed tomorrow for paving.

School Report – Ernie Gallant NJ single accountability (inaudible) completed once every three years includes five areas of evaluation with Lopatcong has achieved a designation of high performing and in the County Lopatcong is the highest performing in the County.

Approve Dept. Reports - Motion by Council President Palitto, seconded by Councilman Marinelli. All in favor.

Payment of Bills – Motion to approve payment of bills by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Mayor Wright. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Marinelli, Councilman McQuade, Council President Palitto, Mayor Wright.

NAYS: None

Public Comment – 3-minutes

Richard Merker – 1400 Belvidere Road – Myself and fellow neighbors of Smith Street asked the town to take the road over which is owned by the First Baptist Church. The road has potholes and many kids use that walking home from school. Water and sewage are right down at the end of Red School Lane and we would like access to both and ultimately have that road paved. Mayor Wright indicated that he walked Smith Street and said the Township would look into this matter to possibly pave the road. Mr. Merker also asked if the sidewalk project will be completed on his property there. Engineer Wisniewski said the County and State DOT have been communicating the submissions have been resubmitted to both and waiting for the County to respond. James Blackford of Smith Road said they cannot maintain the road.

Motion to Adjourn the meeting by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Councilman Marinelli. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret B. Dilts, MMC
Clerk/Administrator

William D. Wright
Mayor