

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP
OF WANTAGE, ON
APRIL 23, 2026**

Mayor VanderGroef called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requested that the Clerk call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Committeeman Ron Bassani, Deputy Mayor Justin Dudzinski, Mayor Justin VanderGroef. Also present: Melissa Morales, Township Clerk, Michael Restel, Administrator and Attorney Louise Karp.

Mayor VanderGroef stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. It has been properly noticed and certified by the Clerk."

PRESENTATION

Mayor VanderGroef read the Certificate of Recognition and presented it to Ariana from Father John's Animal House.

Mayor VanderGroef read the Proclamation of Recognition and presented it to Wantage Township Animal Control Officer, Melanie Monastra.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor VanderGroef requested a motion to approve Resolutions #75-2026 through #76-2026.

Mr. Bassani made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and seconded by Mr. Dudzinski.

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Dudzinski, VanderGroef Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

REPORTS

Administrator: Mr. Restel attended several meetings. He met with the septic company at Woodbourne Park; he had a Civil Service meeting on Tuesday 4/21; he attended the monthly 250th meeting, next meeting is scheduled for 5/12. Mr. Restel the bid opening for the proposed construction of the little league and parking lot at Papakating Park is scheduled for 5/13. Mr. Restel will be excusing himself at 7:30pm to attend the Sussex County Trails Grant virtual meeting. Mr. Restel stated today was "bring your child to work" day. There were many activities for the kids, and they all seemed to enjoy the day.

Attorney: Mr. Karp offered no report.

Mayor's Report: Mayor VanderGroef stated last week was Little League Baseballs opening day in which he had the pleasure of throwing out the first pitch. Mayor VanderGroef met with Viersma regarding the septic at Woodbourne Park. Mayor

VanderGroef stated the bid opening for the baseball fields is May 13th. Mayor VanderGroef has had residents come up to him regarding getting Wi-Fi at Woodbourne Park. Mayor VanderGroef stated he will be attending the NJSP quarterly meeting in Sandyston on April 24th. Mayor VanderGroef held a brief discussion on signage from the last meeting as well as short-term rentals. Mayor VanderGroef stated that Tractor Supply has an outdoor display area as well as is currently doing renovations on the building. Mayor VanderGroef recognized all the employees for Administration Assistance Day on April 23rd.

Deputy Mayor Dudzinski: Mr. Dudzinski stated he attended a short-term rental meeting today. Mr. Dudzinski asked about adding another playground at Woodbourne Park.

Committeeman Bassani: Mr. Bassani met with the pickleball court people regarding repairs that need to be done. Mr. Bassani stated he attended the 250th Celebration meeting and congratulated Mr. Restel and Nicole Dunn on their efforts putting everything together. Mr. Bassani stated the Habitat for Humanity house on Route 565 continues to do work on Wednesday and Saturdays. Mr. Bassani held a brief discussion on the data center issues that is currently going on in Andover.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Mayor VanderGroef requested a motion to approve the minutes of the Mayor and Committee Meeting on April 9, 2026.

Mr. Bassani made a Motion and was seconded by Mr. Dudzinski

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Dudzinski, VanderGroef Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

ORDINANCE:

Mayor VanderGroef requested a motion to adopt Ordinance #10-2026, Establish a Permanently Disabled Veterans Tax Exemption in the Township of Wantage.

Mayor VanderGroef opened the meeting to the public. There were no public comments.

Mr. Restel gave a brief overview of the Ordinance.

Mr. Bassani made a Motion and was seconded by Mr. Dudzinski

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Dudzinski, VanderGroef Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Mayor VanderGroef requested a motion to introduce Ordinance #11-2026, appropriating the sum of \$300,000 for various roadway improvements.

Mr. Bassani made a Motion and was seconded by Mr. Dudzinski

Mr. Restel gave a brief overview of the Ordinance.

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Dudzinski, VanderGroef Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Mayor VanderGroef requested a motion to introduce Ordinance #12-2026, appropriating the sum of \$72,000 for various Capital Improvements in the Township of Wantage

Mr. Bassani made a Motion and was seconded by Mr. Dudzinski

Mr. Restel gave a brief overview of the Ordinance.

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Dudzinski, VanderGroef Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Mayor VanderGroef requested a motion to take a brief intermission at 7:24 pm.

Mr. Bassani made a Motion and was seconded by Mr. Dudzinski

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Dudzinski, VanderGroef Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Meeting back to order at 7:41pm,

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION:

Norma Brand, Courtland Dr., Ms. Brand requested the Mayor and Committee put an ordinance in place for no future data centers in Wantage Township.

Emily Bittner, Armstrong Rd., Ms. Bittner asked how much the town spends on the Master Plan. Ms. Bittner recommended that they do not use Jessica Caldwell as their planner.

Lynn Panico, Coykendall Rd., Ms. Panico recommended an Ordinance or Referendum banning warehouses in Wantage Township. Ms. Panico requested possibly starting up an Environmental Committee.

Paul Stern, Wolfpit Rd., Mr. Stern asked the status on the Master Plan and what stage is it in.

Susan Weiss, Sherman Ridge Rd., Ms. Weiss held a discussion on virtual meeting options and the importance of having them.

Norma Brand, Courtland Dr., Ms. Brand commented on the Township having the option on virtual meetings.

Kathy Gorman, Fernwood Rd., Mrs. Gorman held a brief discussion on the Mater Plan and Ordinance. Mrs. Gorman suggested updating them.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor VanderGroef requested a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Bassani made a Motion and was seconded by Mr. Dudzinski

All were in favor.

Meeting Adjourned 8:13 pm

Respectfully submitted by

Melissa Morales
Township Clerk