Township of Hillside

CAUCUS MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MINUTES

March 10, 2026 @ 6:44pm *Agenda subject to change*

The Caucus Meeting of the Township of Hillside Township Council was held on March 10, 2026 in the Municipal Building, 1409 Liberty Avenue Hillside, New Jersey 07205 at 6:30pm.

CALL TO ORDER
Dr. Angela R. Garretson, Council President called the meeting to order.

FLAG SALUTE
Dr. Angela R. Garretson, Council President, led the flag salute.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE
Rayna E. Harris, Township Clerk read the following statement: This Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was sent to the Star Ledger on January 20, 2026. In addition, copies of notice were posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, posted on the Town Hall doors, and field in the Office of the Township Clerk. Notices on the bulletin board have remained continuously posted. Proper notice having been given; the Township Clerk is directed to include this statement in the minutes of this meeting.

ROLL CALL
Rayna E. Harris, Township Clerk, read the roll call.

PRESENT
Council Member Lisa Bonanno, Council Member George L. Cook III, Council Member Armando DaSilva, Council Vice President David Feuerstein, Council President Dr. Angela R. Garretson,

EXCUSED
Council Member Daryl Joyner; Council Member Calvin Lofton

ALSO PRESENT
Faheem J. Ra'Oof's, Business Administrator & Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Williee Parker, Esq. Township Attorney; Dwayne D. Warren, Esq., LRO; Brook L. Nieves, Deputy Clerk and Rayna E. Harris, Township Clerk

CEREMONIAL RESOLUTIONS
1. **Woman's History Month** (Read by Councilmember Bonanno)
2. **St. Patrick's Day 2026** (Read by Councilmember DaSilva)

MINUTES:
December 9, 2025
Motioned by Council Vice President Feuerstein; Seconded by Council Member Bonanno
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**
December 23, 2025
Motioned by Council Vice President Feuerstein; Seconded by Council Member Bonanno
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

February 10, 2026
Motioned by Council Member Cook; Seconded by Council Vice President Feuerstein
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

February 24, 2026
Motioned by Council Vice President Feuerstein; Seconded by Council Member Cook
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

PAYMENT OF BILLS: March 10, 2026
Motion by Council Member Cook; Seconded by Council Vice President Feuerstein
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

ORDINANCES

O-26-01 >> First Reading & Introduction
An Ordinance Amending Chapter 291, Section 10, Paragraphs "A" through "J" Overnight Parking of Truck and/ or Buses Prohibited
Motion by Council Member DaSilva; Seconded by Council Member Cook
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

O-26-02 >> First Reading & Introduction
An Ordinance Amending Chapter 188, Section 44, Paragraph D to Increase the Fee for a Zoning Permit Application
Motion by Council Member DaSilva; Seconded by Council Member Cook
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

RESOLUTIONS

R-26-047 Appointing Risk Management Consultant for the 2026 Fund Year

WHEREAS, Township of Hillside (hereinafter "Local Unit") has joined the Statewide Insurance Fund (hereinafter "Fund"), a joint insurance fund as defined in N.J.S.A. 40A:10-36 *et seq.*; and

WHEREAS, the Bylaws require participating members to appoint a Risk Management Consultant, as those positions are defined in the Bylaws, if requested to do so by the "Fund"; and

WHEREAS, the Local Unit has complied with relevant law with regard to the appointment of a Risk management Consultant; and

WHEREAS, the "Fund" has requested its members to appoint individuals or entities to that position; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the governing body of "Local Unit", in the County of Union and State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. **Township of Hillside** (Local Unit) hereby appoints **Fairview Insurance Agency Associates** its Risk Management Consultant.

2. The **Mayor** and Risk Management Consultant are hereby authorized to execute the Risk Management Consultant's Agreement for the year **2026** in the form attached hereto.

Name of Entity: **Township of Hillside**

Motion by Council Member Cook; Seconded by Council Member Bonanno,
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

R-26-048 Appointing a Municipal Alliance Coordinator to the Township Municipal Alliance Committee

WHEREAS, the Township of Hillside recognizes that substance abuse remains a serious public health and safety concern affecting individuals, families, and the overall quality of life within the community; and

WHEREAS, the Township participates in the Municipal Alliance Program, a County initiative established to support community-based efforts to prevent and reduce substance abuse through evidence-based prevention strategies; and

WHEREAS, the Township Municipal Alliance Committee is responsible for planning, implementing, and coordinating community-level prevention initiatives designed to reduce substance abuse throughout the Township; and

WHEREAS, the effective operation of the Municipal Alliance Committee requires the appointment of a qualified individual to serve as Municipal Alliance Coordinator to oversee programming, grant administration, reporting, and collaboration with community partners.

NOW, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Hillside, upon recommendation of Mayor Andrea L. Hyatt, consents to the appointment of Captain Shonda Burgess-Mason to be appointed as Coordinator of the Municipal Alliance for a one-year term expiring March 31,2027; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Motion by Council Vice President Feuerstein; Seconded by Council Member Cook
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

R-26-049 Support for the County to Seek Federal Funding and to Request that the County of Union Design and Install New Traffic Signals

WHEREAS, the Director of the Department of Public Works has requested the adoption of a resolution authorizing the proper Township Officials to request that the County of Union design and install a new traffic signal at the intersection of LIBERTY AVENUE (County Route 509) and HILLSIDE AVENUE (County Route 628) and the intersection of LIBERTY AVENUE (County Route 509) and Maple Avenue (a Township roadway); and

WHEREAS, the existing traffic signals at these intersections are obsolete and in need of upgrades and replacement; and

WHEREAS, the County of Union is seeking funding sources for the traffic signal replacements; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Hillside supports any and all efforts to obtain said funding; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Hillside is authorized to enter into a cost sharing agreement defining the responsibilities and expectations of all parties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Hillside authorizes the proper Township Officials to request that the County of Union design and install new traffic signals at the intersections of LIBERTY AVENUE (County Route 509) and HILLSIDE AVENUE (County Route 628) and the intersection of LIBERTY AVENUE (County Route 509) and Maple Avenue (a Township roadway), provide support as the County seeks funding and enter into a cost sharing agreement defining the responsibilities and expectations of all parties, and execute any and all documents related to this request, if applicable.

Motion by Council Member Cook; Seconded by Council Member Bonanno
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

R-26-050 Auth. an Agreement Between Township of Hillside Department of Health and Seton Hall University School of Nursing for the Term February 12, 2026 through February 12, 2029

WHEREAS, the Seton Hall University School of Nursing will provide nurse case management, health education and field services for Township residents.

WHEREAS, there is no cost to the Township for the nursing services outlined on the Agreement term of February 12, 2026 through February 12, 2029.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Hillside that

1. The term of the Agreement for the services is approved from February 12, 2026 through February 12, 2029.
2. There is no cost to the Township for the services described in the attached Agreement.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Motion by Council Member Cook; Seconded by Council Member Bonanno
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

R-26-051 Auth. a Revaluation of Property within the Township of Hillside to be Effective for 2027 the Tax Year (TABLED)

WHEREAS, the Township of Hillside has a need for a revaluation of all real property for tax equalization purposes, which will be performed by a state qualified professional revaluation firm to provide such services by way of the professional's compliance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 19: 44-let.seq. and N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5(1)(a)(i); and

WHEREAS, The Union County Board of Taxation, pursuant to its statutory duty to revise, correct and equalize the assessed value of all property in the respective taxing districts (NJSA 54:4-47), has determined that the assessments of the Township of Hillside result in an unequal distribution of the tax burden within the Municipality; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N. J. S. A. 54:3-13, the Union County Board of Taxation has the responsibility to secure the taxation of all property within Union County at its taxable value prescribed by law in order that all property, except as exempt by law, shall bear its full equal and just share of taxes; and

WHEREAS, the Union County Board of Taxation has ordered that the Township and the Tax Assessor shall implement a Township wide assessment revaluation by October 1, 2026, and to be effective for the tax year of 2027.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED that the Township Council of Hillside authorize a revaluation of all real property within the Township of Hillside to be effective for the 2027 tax year.

Motion to Table by Council Member Cook; Seconded by Council Vice President Feuerstein
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. Motion Carries

CONSENT AGENDA - RESOLUTIONS

R-26-052 Auth. Payment of Accumulated Severance Liabilities – Kenneth Orenge, Fire Department

WHEREAS, Kenneth Orenge will be retiring from the Township of Hillside after 26 years and 28 days of service, effective February 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, under the applicable collective negotiated agreement between the Township of Hillside and the bargaining unit from which he is a member, he is entitled to a severance payout as indicated on the attached "Severance Pay Worksheet" in the total amount of $76,739.05.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HILLSIDE THAT:

1. The compensation set forth below is hereby approved for payment through Payroll, which must be funded from the appropriation Accumulated Severance Liabilities.

2. Payment in the amount of $76,739.05 shall be made to Kenneth Orenge upon approval of this Resolution.

3. This resolution shall take effect immediately, and a certified copy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

R-26-053 Auth. Payment of Accumulated Severance Liabilities – Francisco Vega, Police Department

WHEREAS, Francisco Vega will be retiring from the Township of Hillside after 20 years of service, effective February 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, under the applicable collective negotiated agreement between the Township of Hillside and the bargaining unit from which he is a member, he is entitled to a severance payout as indicated on the attached "Severance Pay Worksheet" in the total amount of $76,033.30.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HILLSIDE THAT:

1. The compensation set forth below is hereby approved for payment through Payroll, which must be funded from the appropriation Accumulated Severance Liabilities.

2. Payment in the amount of $76,033.30. shall be made to Francisco Vega upon approval of this Resolution.

3. This resolution shall take effect immediately, and a certified copy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

R-26-054 Auth. Payment of Accumulated Severance Liabilities – Hope M. Smith, Department of Administration

WHEREAS, Hope M. Smith will be retiring from the Township of Hillside after 32 years of service effective February 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, under the applicable collective negotiated agreement between the Township of Hillside and the bargaining unit from which she is a member, she is entitled to a severance payout as indicated on the attached "Severance Pay Worksheet" in the total amount of $52,925.76.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HILLSIDE THAT:

1. The compensation set forth below is hereby approved for payment through Payroll, which must be funded from the appropriation Accumulated Severance Liabilities.

2. Payment in the amount of $52,925.76 shall be made to Hope M. Smith upon approval of this Resolution.

3. This resolution shall take effect immediately, and a certified copy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Motion by Council Member Bonanno; Seconded by Council Vice President Feuerstein
All Council Members voted in the Affirmative. **Motion Carries**

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Motion to Open Public Comments by Council Member Cook; Seconded by Council Member Bonanno, **All-In-Favor**

Janice Cadwell – 140 Baltimore Ave.

- She would like to begin by congratulating the new council members. Regarding Resolution R-26-051, property taxes have increased by 20%. Why does the property revaluation need to be conducted so soon? The council should discuss the next steps to prevent further burden on the residents of Hillside. Another concern she has is for senior citizens, what will happen to them as their property taxes increase?

Gail Hunter – 1045 Bailey Pl.

- She would like to congratulate the new council members and ask that they introduce themselves, along with the new individuals in the administration. She would also like an explanation of how the property revaluation assessment works, particularly for business and commercial properties

Vincent - 555 Pearl St.

- As for the pool project, will there be any additional charges for the different phases of construction? Currently, we only have a small spray park and a small pool for children

Annie Davis – 1544 Morris Pl.

- What is the current status of the restaurant across the street? Additionally, what is the status of the Bristol Myers property? She also has concerns about parking. She lives on a dead-end street where there are many trucks and cars parked in front of her house. As a result, she is unable to sit outside and enjoy her property. Additionally, the parking ordinances are not being followed and should be more strictly enforced. How are individuals who run businesses from their homes taxed?

Faith Fryerson – 72 Hillside Ave.

- She would first like to congratulate the new council members and administration. She lives in a two-family home and has chosen not to rent it out but would like to know if there are any two-family homes that have been converted into three- or four-family homes and whether those conversions are legal. She also noted that there are Airbnb rentals across the street and would like clarification on that situation, as well as how property revaluation would be handled for homes where the owners do not reside on the property.

Michelle Hunter – 1480 Compton Ter.

- She believes LLCs should not be allowed to operate Airbnb for business purposes, or that they should be more strictly regulated by the town. She also has concerns about the new apartment construction, if it has a 10-year tax abatement, how will that affect the township, and can additional charges be applied given the size of the property? Lastly, she would like to know whether the town plans to hire a part-time employee for nighttime code enforcement or if this responsibility will be handled by existing overtime employees.

Emmanuel Ighu – 1045 Thomas St.

- He spoke against the revaluation and the increase in taxes.

Val Mayo – 1424 Liberty Ave.

- She is very upset about the lack of communication with residents; as a taxpayer, she feels she has the right to be informed about what is happening in the town. She also has concerns regarding the Bristol Myers property, specifically the presence of food trucks, and would like to know if they are properly paying taxes. Additionally, she noted that on Randy the hot dog vendor's property, there are many trucks parked, which creates an unattractive appearance for the neighborhood.

Richard Carter – Clark St.

- He appreciates the mayor for her work, including recording the meetings, even though he would prefer that she be able to focus on her mayoral duties. He would like to know if there is a budget to hire a dedicated videographer for the meetings. Additionally, he has concerns about the ordinance regarding overnight parking for trucks and

  wonders if there might be a way to better accommodate commercial vehicles; he would like the council to reconsider this issue.

Lisa McDuffie – N/a

- Every day, she goes to Herb's Diner for breakfast and sees children walking to school. She is concerned about safety at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Hillside, where cars are often rushing to get to work and continue to make right turns on red without stopping. She fears that the town is waiting for a child to be injured before acting and strongly believes that a police officer should be stationed there as soon as possible to ensure safety.

Charisa Moulton – 1027 Summit Woods

- She noted that, as a realtor, she is seeing some of the highest taxes in the housing market and advises against rushing the property revaluation process. She also mentioned that the restaurant across the street is scheduled to have a soft opening on March 13th

Motion to Close Public Comments by Council Vice President Feuerstein; Seconded by Council Member Bonanno, **All-In-Favor**

COUNCIL REMARKS

Council Member DaSilva
Council Member Cook
Council Member Bonanno
Council Vice President Feuerstein
Council President Dr. Garretson

Motion to Adjourned by Council Vice President Feuerstein; Seconded Council Member Bonanno, All-In-Favor

Adjourned at 8:29pm

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Dr. Angela R. Garretson, Council President

Rayna E. Harris, Township Clerk

DATE: 03/26/2026