

**MAPLE SHADE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2026 – 6:30 PM**

Date: January 22, 2026

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Municipal Building, Maple Shade, NJ

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by the Mayor.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement

The Mayor announced that public notice of this meeting was provided pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act by:

Notifying the Township Clerk on December 23, 2025

Mailing notice to the *Courier Post* and *Burlington County Times* on December 23, 2025

Posting notice on the official municipal bulletin board on December 23, 2025

Members of the public were advised that comments would be permitted during the public portions of the meeting only.

Roll Call

Present:

Mr. Kauffman

Ms. Nunes

Mr. Simonsick

Mr. Zahradnick

Mayor Talarico

Also Present:

Township Clerk

Township Manager

Township Attorney

Other staff as appropriate

2. Board of Health Meeting (Open Board of Health Session)

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Report Presented:

The Township Manager reported:

- Three (3) new dog bite incidents (all owner-related)
- One (1) sanitary condition complaint
- Total of four (4) calls for service
- All issues have been fully remediated and addressed

Public Comment – Board of Health:

No public comments were offered.

Motion to Close Board of Health Meeting:

Motion made by: Kauffman and seconded by: Nunes

Vote: All in favor – Motion carried.

The Board of Health meeting was adjourned.

3. Presentation – VFW Post 2445 Annual Report

Announcement of Passing

The VFW Commander announced with regret the passing of Past Commander Ron Kulig, former Post Commander, Quartermaster, and District 11 Commander. Council and attendees were asked to keep his family in their thoughts and prayers.

VFW Overview and Facility Improvements

The Commander reported that VFW Post 2445 was established on October 18, 1944. Improvements completed in 2025 included:

- Over \$11,000 in electrical upgrades, including new electrical service and outlets
- Full interior repainting
- Landscaping improvements completed by Home Depot
- Future capital planning includes replacement of an air conditioning unit

Recognition

John Gunkel was recognized for his many years of service as Quartermaster and mentor to the new Quartermaster. He retired effective December 31, 2025.

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Quartermaster's Report – John Bearden

The Quartermaster requested continued waiver of the annual pull-tab license renewal fee, which assists the Post in serving the community.

Donations and Community Support (2025 Highlights):

Donations were made to numerous organizations including (but not limited to):

Maple Shade Youth Wrestling, Baseball, Babe Ruth, Soccer, Street Hockey, Football
Scholarships totaling \$2,000
Masonic Lodge #281
PBA Local 267
Tunnels to Towers
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
Vet Haven
Shriners
Toys for Tots
American Legion
Patriots Pen
Medal of Honor celebrations
Food gift cards totaling approximately \$5,000
Veterans Promise, Last Salute, Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation
Local schools and community groups

The Quartermaster stated that the Post's mission is continued service to the community and support of veterans.

Senior Vice Commander / Veterans Service Officer – Scott McCaffrey

Mr. McCaffrey provided an overview of services to veterans and families, including assistance with:

VA benefits
Healthcare
Education
Home loans
Burial benefits

Community activities included:

Hosting CPR classes for the public at no cost
Supporting Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
Hosting Pearl Harbor remembrance events
Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen scholarship competitions
Flag disposal and flag-folding ceremonies
Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies
Coordination with police, fire, funeral homes, and retirement communities

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Hospital visits for veterans
Toys for Tots collection
Donations to Veterans Haven totaling approximately \$8,000

Member Testimonial

A VFW member shared personal remarks regarding the supportive environment of Maple Shade and the importance of the VFW in providing emotional support and community for returning veterans.

VFW Auxiliary – Chuck Mars

Mr. Mars reported that efforts are underway to reinstate the VFW Auxiliary charter in Maple Shade.

The Auxiliary supports veterans, families, mental health initiatives, youth programs, and community outreach.

He encouraged eligible family members of veterans to join.

State Commander – Ken Hageman

Commander Hageman reported:

- New Jersey VFW Posts contributed nearly \$12 million in donations statewide
- Nearly 900,000 hours of community service
- Since October 1, VFW service officers helped recover approximately \$96 million in benefits for New Jersey veterans

4. Presentation – Maple Shade High School “UNLESS Project”

Students presented on environmental conservation initiatives in partnership with the Philadelphia Zoo, including:

Conservation of endangered species such as the Rodriguez fruit bat, Allegheny woodrat, blue-spotted salamander, and northern bobwhite quail

“Lights Out” campaign to reduce light pollution for wildlife

Recycling projects including self-watering bottles and mini greenhouses

Pollinator projects, community gardens, and bee hotels

Podcast and art competition to raise awareness

Council thanked the students for their environmental advocacy.

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5. Cannabis Business Application – 539 Route 38

Applicant: Rusty Gupta

Location: 539 Route 38 (former David’s Bridal site)

Request included:

Approval of Cannabis Regulatory Resolution
Expansion to include Class 1 (Cultivation) and Class 2 (Manufacturing) in addition to Class 5 (Retail)
Purchase of property anticipated the following month
Security and filtration systems to be installed
No Council questions were raised.

6. Ordinance – Introduction and First Reading

Ordinance 2026-01

AN ORDINANCE IN THE TOWNSHIP OF MAPLE SHADE, COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, AMENDING CHAPTER 181 “TAXATION OF CANNABIS” SECTION 22 “ESTABLISHMENT OF TRANSFER AND USER TAXES” AND SECTION 23 “ADMINISTRATION OF TRANSFER AND USER TAXES”

Motion: Introduction and first reading by: Kauffman Second: Nunes Comments: none

Roll Call: yes, Mr. Simonsick: no

Publication Date: January 27, 2026

Public Hearing: February 12, 2026

7. Consent Agenda

Resolutions 2026-R-33 through 2026-R-42

Resolution No. 2026-R-33 RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT TWO-YEAR MAINTENANCE BOND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$341,407.90 AND RELEASE PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE FOR THINK PAVERS HARDSCAPING, LLC WITH RESPECT TO THE PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS TO ACE’S PARK

Resolution No. 2026-R-34 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF SURPLUS THROUGH ONLINE AUCTION

Resolution No. 2026-R-35 AUTHORIZE AERIAL MOSQUITO CONTROL

Resolution No. 2026-R-36 AUTHORIZE INTERMUNICIPAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH BURLINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR DISPOSAL OF BIOSOLIDS AT THE BURLINGTON COUNTY C0-COMPOSTING FACILITY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOLID WASTE

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Resolution No. 2026-R-37 AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 / FINAL CHANGE ORDER DECREASING THE PRICE FROM \$505,382.30 TO \$484,958.53 FROM THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT AMOUNT, AND FINAL PAYMENT TO BLACK ROCK ENTERPRISES, LLC, THE RESURFACING OF NORTH COLES AVENUE AND ROLAND AVENUE

Resolution No. 2026-R-38 AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF JOSEPH DONOFRIO TO THE MAPLE SHADE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND ATTENDANCE AT THE GLOUCESTER COUNTY POLICE ACADEMY

Resolution No. 2026-R-39 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ESTABLISHMENT OF LIEN FOR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE FOR BLOCK 1 LOT 6

Resolution No. 2026-R-40 AUTHORIZE TRANSFERS BETWEEN BUDGET APPROPRIATION RESERVES

Resolution No. 2026-R-41 RESOLUTION FOR POLICE OFF-DUTY EMPLOYMENT RATE

Resolution No. 2026-R-42 REJECTING ALL BIDS FOR THE POLICE STATION HOLDING CELL ALTERATIONS PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING RE-BID

Motion to Approve: Zahradnick Second By: Kauffman Comments: none

Roll Call Vote:

Kauffman – Yes

Nunes – Yes

Simonsick – Yes

Zahradnick – Yes

Mayor Talarico – Yes

Motion carried.

8. Approval of Expenditure List

Current Fund: \$3,465,749.58

Utility Fund: \$643,914.15

Capital Fund: \$251,995.17

Utility Capital: \$83,326.32

Trust: \$504,984.51

Grant Fund: \$24,008.45

Includes school payments and health insurance expenses.

Motion to Approve: Nunes Second: Zahradnick Comments: none

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Roll Call: yes

Mayor Abstained due to potential vendor conflict.

Motion carried.

9. Approval December 2025 Meeting Minutes: Nunes Second: Zahradnick Comments: none

Roll Call Vote:

Kauffman – Abstain

Nunes – Yes

Simonsick – Yes

Zahradnick – Yes

Mayor Talarico – Yes

Public Portion

Public Comment

Speaker: Joanne Mortimer, 39 Lanci Road

Ms. Mortimer addressed Council regarding the recent citizen petition for repeal of Ordinance 2025-18. She stated that she participated extensively in circulating the petition by staffing petition locations, walking door-to-door, and distributing copies of ordinances to residents for informational purposes.

Ms. Mortimer reported that approximately 85%–90% of residents she encountered were unaware of the petition, despite its availability online. She expressed concern that Township communication methods are insufficient and urged Council to improve outreach to residents of all ages, including senior residents who may not rely on digital platforms.

She encouraged Council to avoid “tunnel vision” and to consider the full diversity of Township residents when adopting ordinances. Ms. Mortimer emphasized the importance of Council members working collaboratively and communicating with one another.

Ms. Mortimer further encouraged residents to communicate directly with Township officials when concerns arise and stated that disagreement is healthy and can lead to new ideas.

Council Response

Councilmember asked Ms. Mortimer to identify potential solutions to the communication challenges raised.

Ms. Mortimer recommended the creation of a resident communication committee comprised of residents of varying ages and backgrounds to develop improved outreach strategies. She

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referenced the former *Maple Shade Progress* newspaper as a possible model and suggested exploring multiple communication methods to reach different demographic groups, including schools, businesses, and senior residents.

Close of Public Portion

No further public comments were offered.

Motion to Close Public Portion: Made by: Kauffman and seconded by: Nunes

Vote: All in favor – Motion carried.

Staff and Professional Comments

Council Comments

Councilmembers extended New Year’s greetings and encouraged residents to exercise caution during upcoming winter weather.

One Councilmember commended the Department of Public Works Road Department for exemplary snow removal efforts during the previous storm, noting that Maple Shade road conditions were superior to surrounding municipalities.

Another Councilmember reported continued resident complaints regarding Amazon delivery vehicles stopping improperly, blocking driveways, and parking on the wrong side of roadways, particularly along Stiles Avenue. The Police Department has been working with Amazon to address these safety concerns, and residents were advised that enforcement efforts are ongoing.

Community Announcements

- The VFW Auxiliary is seeking new members.
 - A football trivia night fundraiser was announced at the VFW, featuring over 100 raffle baskets.
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Manager’s Report

The Township Manager reported that police, fire, EMS, and DPW leadership met to prepare for an anticipated snowstorm. A Township-wide Snow Emergency was declared effective Saturday at 7:00 PM through Monday at 7:00 PM.

No-Parking Snow Emergency Routes (Entire Length Unless Otherwise Noted):

- North & South Coles Avenue

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- South Fellowship Road
- North & South Forklanding Road
- East & West Main Street
- South Maple Avenue (Main Street to Mill Road)
- East & West Mill Road
- Stiles Avenue (Main Street to Route 73)

Residents were urged to park vehicles in driveways or off-street locations and to remove obstructions from curb lines (e.g., trash cans, basketball nets) to assist plowing and emergency response operations.

The manager emphasized that DPW crews are expected to work extended hours during the storm and that public safety is the Township's top priority.

Capital Projects Update

Upcoming bid solicitations include:

- Cutler Avenue and Buttonwood Park drainage improvements
- Jake's Place inclusive playground
- Woodlawn Avenue drainage improvements

Projects in design phase include:

- Windsor Avenue
- Thomas Avenue
- Maple Heights

Heritage on Main (Former Barrens Building)

The developer has received a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy and is actively accepting applications while completing compliance items.

Lead Service Line Replacement Program

Residents with properties identified as possibly containing lead, galvanized, or unknown service lines will receive letters from E&G Corporation. Inspections and replacements are mandatory under State law and will be performed at no cost to homeowners. Appointments must be

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scheduled by residents upon receipt of the letter. Approximately 175 properties remain pending inspection.

Grant Activity

The Administrator reported work on grant applications for:

- Gazebo Park improvements
- Train station improvements
- Potential acquisition of land for a small dog park

2025 Department Activity Highlights (Preliminary):

- Police: 27,155 calls for service
- EMS: 3,409 calls
- Fire: 565 calls
- Construction Office: 2,148 inspections
- Clerk's Office: 332 OPRA requests; 118 marriage licenses
- Tax Collector: 505 dog licenses; 98.96% collection rate
- Code Enforcement: Six abandoned properties addressed; all now sold or pending sale

The Manager's 2025 Annual Report will be published on the Township website upon completion.

Sustainability Advisory Committee Report

- Planning underway for the Green Fair (May 2026) and Spring Farmers Market
 - Urban Forestry Management Plan is in progress; residents were advised that survey personnel may be assessing trees on public property
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Water & Sewer Main Repair Responsibility

The Manager requested Council confirmation of the longstanding policy that:

- **Township responsibility:** From curblines into the roadway to the main
- **Homeowner responsibility:** From curblines back to the residence

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Council unanimously agreed to formalize this policy through ordinance.

Action: Ordinance to be prepared for introduction at the next Council meeting.

New Business

Petition Certification – Repeal of Ordinance 2025-18

Certification by Township Clerk:

- Petition received December 22, 2025
- Petition was untimely under NJSA 40:69A-185 and therefore invalid
- 958 valid signatures were required; only 907 valid signatures were verified
- 50 signatures lacked sufficient identifying information
- 77 signatures were submitted on defective circulator affidavits
- Due to untimeliness, deficiencies cannot be cured

The petition was declared insufficient and invalid.

VFW Raffle License

Council agreed to waive the local raffle fee for the VFW (State fee remains applicable).

Local Finance Notice – Public Notice Publication Changes

Council was advised that State law now requires municipalities to:

- Publish notices directing residents to the Township website
- Post all legal notices online beginning March 1, 2026
- Maintain notices online for required legal durations, then archive for one year

This change will significantly reduce publication costs. The Township website has been updated to include public notice access.

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Rynning Avenue Nature Walk / Walking Path

Council authorized staff to proceed with planning a natural walking path on Township-owned property behind residences on Rynning Avenue, using mulch and natural materials. DPW and Sustainable Maple Shade will coordinate outreach to impacted residents and obtain necessary easements.

2026 Green Acres Grant – Woodlawn Field

Council authorized staff to proceed with a Green Acres Grant application to fund:

- Replacement of failing turf field
- Parking lot improvements
- Retaining wall replacement
- Drainage improvements
- Optional sports lighting (subject to funding)

A public survey will be distributed to gather community input.

Light Pollution Ordinance

Council authorized staff, the Township Engineer, and Planning staff to collaborate with the Sustainability Advisory Committee to draft a comprehensive Outdoor Lighting / Light Pollution Ordinance for future Council consideration.

Council also requested staff explore existing noise pollution regulations for possible review.

Executive Session

Resolution 2026-R-43

Resolution to enter Executive Session for matters permitted by State law to be discussed in closed session.

Motion: Made by: Nunes and seconded by: Zahradnick

Vote: All in favor – Motion carried

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following completion of the agenda.

Council entered Executive Session at approximately 7:45 PM.