MINUTES CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP

NEW JERSEY

THIS IS A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ON MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026 AT 7:07PM

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmember Kerry J. Coley, East Ward *(Arrived at 7:14pm)*
Councilmember Quantavia L. Hilbert, West Ward
Council Vice President Weldon M. Montague, III, At-Large
Councilmember Lynn A. Ogbourne, North Ward
Councilmember James H. Ward, III, South Ward
Council President Clifford R. Ross, At-Large

Also Present: Trisha A. Scipio, Acting Municipal Clerk
Gracia R. Montilus, Esq., City Attorney

Absent: Councilmember Adrienne K. Wooten

All Assembled recognized a Moment of Silence

SUNSHINE LAW

The Acting Municipal Clerk announced that the requirements of **N.J.S.A. 10:4-9 et seq.**, commonly known as the **Open Public Meetings Act ("Sunshine Law")**, have been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was published on the City's official website (**www.orangenj.gov**) on **Tuesday, August 11, 2026**. Notice was also posted on the Municipal Council's website (**www.orangetwpnjcc.org**), posted on the official bulletin board at City Hall, and filed in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

RESOLUTIONS

417-2026 A resolution to hold an Executive (Closed) Session
PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Personnel matters

A motion to adopt Resolution 417-2026 was made by Councilmember Lynn A. Ogbourne and seconded by Council President Clifford R. Ross.
Motion Adopted

A motion to enter into Executive (Closed) Session was made by Council Vice President Weldon M. Montague, III and seconded by Council President Clifford R. Ross.
Motion Adopted

Council entered into Executive (Closed) Session at 7:10pm

This was a special meeting of the Municipal Council of the City of Orange Township to conduct executive closed session interviews for three candidates seeking appointment to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The council interviewed Keane Cyrus, Christine Spencer, and Byron Nicholas to fill first, third, and fourth alternate positions on the zoning board. During the interviews, council members asked questions about the candidates' backgrounds, experience with boards, understanding of zoning responsibilities, and ability to make quasi-judicial decisions. The council learned that all regular member positions on the zoning board are currently filled, with the three open positions being alternate positions. After completing the interviews, the council decided to postpone voting on the three candidates to the September 1st Municipal Council meeting, with the resolutions removed from the consent agenda for individual voting consideration.

The first candidate interviewed was Keane Cyrus, who currently works for the state's Social Security Administration and has previous experience on the budget committee. The second candidate was Christine Spencer, who has lived in Orange for 18 years, works as a community advisor for Comcast, and has experience in marketing and advertising. Both candidates discussed their backgrounds, experience with decision-making, and approach to impartially evaluating zoning cases. The council members, including Council President Clifford R. Ross and Councilman James H. Ward, III (former zoning board chair), asked questions about the candidates' understanding of zoning board responsibilities and their ability to make difficult decisions while following city laws.

Christine Spencer emphasized her community roots, empathy, and willingness to learn. Christine confirmed she could attend required trainings and commit to the role despite working from home. Councilman James H. Ward, III provided guidance about the quasi-judicial nature of zoning board decisions and the importance of site visits. The council then moved on to interview Byron Nicholas, a professional planner and division chief with extensive experience in planning and zoning boards, who expressed interest in improving the public realm.

Councilman James H. Ward, III questioned Byron Nicholas, a planning professional with the county of Hudson, about potential conflict of interest concerns given his background in urban planning and his new role on the zoning board. Byron explained that as a certified planner, he would follow codes of conduct and recuse himself from matters involving developers he has worked with personally or professionally. Councilman James H. Ward. III advised Byron Nicholas to consult with both the board counsel and his workplace regarding conflict of interest guidelines, and suggested that Byron could contribute valuable professional expertise to the board even as an alternate member. Council members asked about his background, potential conflicts with his current employment, and his approach to historic preservation and development. Byron Nicholas expressed support for balancing historic preservation with new development to generate tax revenue, noting this is a common approach in New Jersey.

The council decided to postpone voting on their appointments to the September 1st meeting. The Acting Municipal Clerk explained that all regular board positions are filled, with three alternate positions available (first, third, and fourth alternate). Councilwoman Quantavia Hilbert asked about appointment procedures and whether current appointees could replace departing members, which Acting Municipal Clerk clarified is no longer required to follow the original appointment order.

A motion to reconvene was made by Council President Clifford R. Ross and seconded by Councilmember Lynn A. Ogbourne.
Motion Adopted

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council President Clifford R. Ross and seconded by Council Vice President Weldon M. Montague, III.
Motion Adopted

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11pm.

Approved: September 1, 2026

Trisha A. Scipio
Acting Municipal Clerk

Clifford R. Ross
Council President