



The Long Hill Ledger

Verlezza Joins Township Committee

Victor Verlezza is the newest member of the Township Committee, elected this November. Victor grew up in Newark, attended Catholic grammar school in Irvington, graduated Nutley High School and did his undergraduate studies at Jersey City State College.

Victor received a doctorate degree in Chiropractic in 1995 and has been a practicing chiropractor for 25 years. He was the first chiropractor in the state to obtain "A" privileges at a hospital and was Chief of Chiropractic Medicine at two New Jersey hospitals. He is the founder and managing partner of New Jersey Spine and Rehabilitation



*Victor Verlezza,
Township Committee Member*

Centers, which operates in 10 locations and employs 50 employees and Victor manages a multi-million dollar budget. Victor has received numerous awards and proclamations from Newark and the Newark Police Department for his charitable work with the community.

A resident of Long Hill for more than 17 years, Victor raised his children here, coached girls softball for many years, volunteered many hours in the community and served on the Board of Education.

"I have a proven record of fiscal responsibility and fighting overdevelopment," he said when running for Township Committee. "Throughout my experience here in Long Hill Township, I have maintained my love for our community and I am very familiar with our town and the issues we currently face. I pledge to review our budget to look for ways to save money and increase services and I am open to exploring new ideas, such as cell phone towers on Township-owned land in strategic locations to raise revenue and improve cell service."

Victor said he would like to build a park across the street from Town Hall

with amenities for all citizens of the community to enjoy and to improve the Little League fields and local train stations.

"I believe that improving and beautifying our central corridor on Valley Road, as well as our local business districts, promoting responsible growth and not overdevelopment, maintaining our small-town appeal and improving our amenities while continuing to stabilize taxes will help to improve real estate values," he said. "I would also like to budget accordingly to make sure our police, fire and emergency services always have up-to-date or state-of-the-art equipment to help keep our community safe."

Victor has a history of working well with others while maintaining independent thinking.

"I have no problem with respectful disagreements that result in the greater good for our community," he said. "I believe improving the lines of communication between Town Hall and the residents of our Township will help to improve the level of confidence and trust in our local government. Remember, it's our town and our vision."

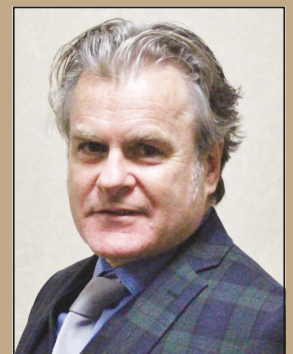
Message from the Mayor:

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to serve as Long Hill Township's Mayor in this first year of the new decade. This past year saw us say a sad good-bye on the Township Committee to our friend and valued colleague, Bruce Meringolo. He served Long Hill Township well over the last 15 years and we wish him well as he gets his life back. On a more upbeat note, we welcomed Victor Verlezza to the Committee in January. Victor and I served on the School Board together and I'm excited to work with him again. His passion for Long Hill, business experience and boundless energy will greatly benefit our community.

Amongst many other accomplishments, this year will see the consummation of the sale of the sewer system, completion of the Master Plan and progress in the Redevelopment Zone located at Valley Road and Main Avenue in Stirling. As we confront the many issues that will no doubt arise this year, we will most certainly have

differences of opinion. I encourage all residents to acquaint themselves with the facts and engage the Township Committee in productive discussion. This Township Committee has a long history of transparency and you can be assured your opinion will be heard, considered and respected.

On behalf of the Township Committee, I wish everyone in our Long Hill family a happy, healthy and successful New Year. I am optimistic that, united as a community, we will overcome the challenges that the next 12 months will surely bring and I am excited to celebrate our many successes.



Brendan Rae – Mayor

Administrator's Corner



Hometown Hero banners such as this are now available.

Your next opportunity to honor a veteran is here. If you would like to pay tribute to a member of the armed services by having a Hometown Hero banner displayed on Main Avenue or in Matthew Kantor Park, the form is now available on the Township website: www.longhillnj.gov. Submissions for this round will be accepted until March 30. The form must be completed and submitted to Town Hall along with a photo of the veteran in uniform.

If you'd like the photo returned, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Or you can pick up the photo at Town Hall after Memorial Day. Questions can be directed to Colette Armenti at adminassistant@longhillnj.gov or 908.647.8000, extension 200.

After an unanticipated delay, the new traffic pattern at the intersection of Valley Road and Mountain Avenue will be in place shortly. Once the new signal installation is complete, there will be a dedicated left turn onto Mountain Avenue when traveling east on Valley Road. We anticipate this measure will ease traffic flow and deter drivers from utilizing Lackawanna Boulevard as a short cut to the train station.

2020 Train Station Parking Permits are still available for the Gillette, Stirling and Millington stations. Permit holders for the Gillette station are permitted to park at any of the three train stations; Stirling permit holders can park at Stirling or Millington Stations; and Millington permit holders can park only at the Millington Station. Please note that a parking permit does not guarantee a space on any given day and that parking permits are non-transferrable and non-refundable. 2020 application forms are available on our website. If you have any questions, please call 908.647.8000, extension 210 or 215.



Nancy Malool – Township Administrator
administrator@longhillnj.gov

Welcome, Megan and Don

Long Hill Township in 2019 welcomed two new key municipal employees to our family, our new Town Clerk, Megan Phillips, and our new Fire Official, Don Huber.

Megan came to Long Hill in October from Warren Township, where she was Deputy Clerk. A graduate of Montclair State University with a bachelor's degree in health and physical education/fitness, Megan began her career as Aquatics Director at HRC Fitness in Hillsborough. But the nights and weekends were not conducive to raising a family – “I wanted to stop smelling like chlorine every night,” she said – so Megan took her education in another direction and became Administrative Assistant on the Warren Board of Health. A year later she became Deputy Clerk and early last year achieved state certification for Registered Municipal Clerk.

Megan said she loves government work, including working with the Township Committee.

“I really enjoy it,” she said. “There’s something new every day. And working with the Committee, it’s kind of the heartbeat of the town.”

Megan said she is looking forward to incorporating more technology into the Clerkship’s office, including a greater online presence – “Taking it to the next level,” she said.



*Megan Phillips
Town Clerk*

Megan is married with two children and spends her spare time enjoying their company.

Don came to Long Hill in February of last year. He previously served as Chief of Staff and Deputy Director of the New Jersey State Division of Fire Safety and before that as the Chief and Director of the Irvington Fire Department. He is certified by the State Division of Fire Safety as a Fire Official, Fire Investigator and Level II Fire Instructor.

While fire fighting and fire safety is in his family bloodline, Don really honed that passion while serving as a Fire Protection/Crash Rescue Specialist in the U.S. Air Force – “It shaped my vision of how I wanted to spend the rest of my life,” he said.

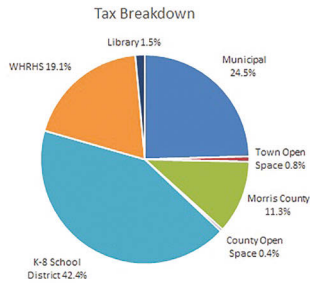
When asked about his passion for fire safety, he answered, “Service to others, at times under very challenging circumstances, brotherhood and sisterhood that develops among the troops and the capacity to hopefully be a good example and positive influence.” His message to Long Hill residents about fire safety is be educated, be prepared and be alert.

Don holds a bachelor of science degree in fire science and business administration. He is married with two adult children and enjoys spending time with them and creative writing.



*Don Huber
Fire Official*

Property Taxes – Where Does Our Money Go?



Elected officials are often asked where our money goes. The largest portion of your tax bill goes to the school system, followed by the Township and then the county. Smaller portions of your taxes go toward the library and open space in both the Township and county.

The Township collects the money from your property taxes as the central tax collection body and sends the money to different agencies that receive parts your tax dollars. New Jersey has many other taxes we pay, such as income taxes, sales taxes, gas tax, registration fees, taxes on utility payments and many others but these are not paid through your property taxes and are outside the control of local government.

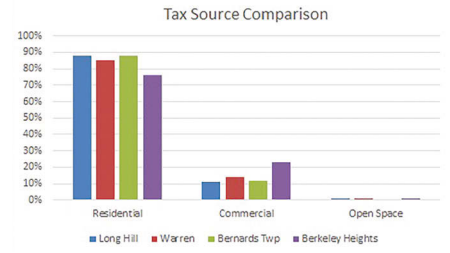
As the chart above shows, the breakdown of your property taxes has the schools representing more than 61 percent of the bill. The school portion has been the largest portion of your tax bill and has increased slightly over the past decade, with the county portion shrinking over that time. The Township has no oversight over school budgets except when they would be put to a vote and rejected. That has not occurred in Long Hill since the schools moved their elections to November.

When you break down the individual budgets, most of the money we pay in property taxes goes to pay the salaries and benefits of employees. Some goes to pay for street lighting and garbage collection but the majority is dedicated to the hard working folks who keep us safe, educate our kids and fix our roads.

In Long Hill our property taxes are paid primarily by residential homeowners, or approximately 88 percent. Only 11 percent is paid by our commercial base, with a very small

portion of other revenue sources. This translates into 88 cents on the dollar and when you hear the term “tax levy” keep in mind that residential homeowners pay 88 percent of that levy. Below is a chart that compares Long Hill to our neighbors:

Long Hill has the lowest commercial revenue base and is tied with Bernards Township for the highest percentage from residential homeowners. This small commercial revenue base is the main reason our property taxes are high.



There are a couple ways to reduce this tax burden, including a larger commercial rate base, more revenue generated by means other than taxes or reducing costs. Each option is difficult to achieve and has an impact on our community. The Walgreens and Goddard School are examples of increasing the commercial base while cell towers on Township property are how non-tax revenue is generated. Reducing costs means cutting services and possibly staff, which no one favors. Redevelopment and tax programs for redevelopment are good ways to expand the commercial base and do not affect the funding our schools receive. Long Hill currently does not have any of these programs but all our neighboring communities do and they help lower the tax burden on the residential homeowner.

Taxes are always a hot issue and the Township Committee is always working to keep the burden as low as possible. We encourage your input by coming to township meetings and having your voice heard.

Bruce Meringolo
Former Township Committee Member

Public Safety

Winter Fire Safety

Approximately half of all home fires and more than half of home fire fatalities in the United States occur between November and March, with January typically highest. There is much we can do to make our homes and community safe against unwanted fires and other mishaps throughout the winter season and beyond. Here are six simple but important tips:

- 1. Use Candles Wisely:** Keep lit candles on a secure, non-combustible surface, away from drafty areas and at least 12 inches from any combustible surface or material. Never leave lit candles unattended or accessible to children or pets. Battery-operated candles can be an excellent substitute.
- 2. Observe Fire-Safe Habits when Cooking:** Do not leave cooking food unattended. Keep children and pets out of the kitchen or at least three feet from the stove, oven or other hot surfaces. Avoid reaching over hot stove tops or open flames while wearing loose clothing. Pot and pan handles on the stovetop should be turned inward.
- 3. Maintain Safe Distances from Heat Sources:** Keep combustible materials at least three feet from heating sources or open flames. Properly installed, working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms should be present in homes with gas-fired appliances, fire places and attached garages.
- 4. Be Smart with Electricity:** Be careful not to overload circuits. Use only properly rated and approved power strips

and extension cords. Do not hide extension cords under carpets or place them where they can be a tripping hazard. Discard electrical cords or appliances with frayed, exposed or damaged wiring or compromised insulation.

5. Have a Home Fire Escape Plan: Families should develop, review and practice a fire escape plan. Critical parts of the escape plan should include staying low to the floor when escaping during a real fire and having a pre-arranged safe family meeting place outside to make sure everyone is accounted for.

6. Maintain a Clear Entry and Exit Path Around Your Home: For your own safety and that of your family and all those who may have a legitimate need to access your home (i.e., police, fire, EMS personnel, postal carrier, delivery services, etc.), keep your doorways, pathways and sidewalks clear of snow, ice and other obstructions at all times.

In the event of an emergency, call 9-1-1. For further information or assistance, please contact me, Don Huber, at fireofficial@longhillnj.gov or by calling the Long Hill Fire Prevention Office at 908.647.8000, ext. 307. While supplies last we also have free 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms for eligible residents, courtesy of the NJ State Division of Fire Safety and the Township Committee.

Don Huber – Fire Official
fireofficial@longhillnj.gov



Township of Long Hill
915 Valley Road
Gillette, NJ 07933

Around the Township

Weekly Yoga Classes (no experience necessary)

Historic Millington School House Building

Gentle Viniyoga

Starting Jan. 23 • Thursday Mornings • 10:30 am-11:30 am

Mindful Yoga

Starting Jan. 27 • Monday Mornings • 10:30 am-11:30 am

Registration is through the Rec. Dept.

Evening programs also available

Red Cross First Aid and CPR/AED Classes

Long Hill First Aid Squad Building

Available to the community through the collaborative efforts of the Recreation Dept. and the Long Hill First Aid Squad. Upon successful completion, participants will receive a certificate from the Red Cross valid for two years. Registration is \$25. Schedule and registration can be found on the Recreation pages of the Township website, under Coaching Course/Community Courses.



TOWNSHIP OF LONG HILL
PARKS AND RECREATION

Follow us at:

Longhillparkrec (Instagram)

www.longhillnj.gov

Library Programs

Join us. All programs are free of charge.

Movies

Come in from the cold and enjoy a newly released movie. Most Mondays at 6:00 pm and Wednesdays and Thursdays at 1:00 pm. Movie schedules are available at the library.

Adult Craft 3D Snowflake Workshop

Tuesday, Jan. 21 • 11 am and 6:30 pm

Registration required

Long Hill Beaders

Tuesdays • 1:00 pm-3:00 pm

Bracelets, necklaces, earrings – your hearts fancy!

Gates Avenue Knitters (Crocheting too)

Second and fourth Wednesday of the month • 7:00 pm

Fiddling Traditions in America

History and Demonstrations

Saturday, March 21 • Noon

Looking for more? Visit the Library website at

www.longhilllibrary.org

Holiday Closings

Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

Monday, January 20

Monday, February 17

Winter Fun – Snowman Contest!

All winter long. Snap a picture of your creation and send it in to Parks & Recreation at recreation@longhillnj.gov