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The Cranbury Minute

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The week in Town Hall, from the public record

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2026 · CRANBURY TOWNSHIP · MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N.J. · VOL. I · NO. 1

TOWNSHIP FINANCES

$26 MILLION STOLEN IN WIRE FRAUD; TOWNSHIP DISCLOSES THEFT FIVE WEEKS LATER

Investigators have frozen about $17.3 million. The Township Committee will move Monday to add two senior finance and administration posts and hire an outside accounting firm.

COMPILED FROM TOWNSHIP STATEMENTS AND PUBLIC RECORDS

CRANBURY — About $26 million that Cranbury Township had set aside to buy land for its affordable housing obligations was stolen through a fraudulent wire transfer on Sept. 28, township officials disclosed Friday.

The theft was announced Nov. 6 in an official statement and a letter to residents signed by Mayor Lisa Knierim on behalf of the Township Committee. Both said a task force of local, county, state and federal agencies, led by the Cranbury Police Department and the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, has frozen assets totaling nearly $17.3 million. The investigation remains active, and officials said further details cannot be shared.

The township has not said how the transfer was diverted. Police Chief Giuseppe DeChiara has briefed the committee throughout the investigation, and township employees have cooperated fully, according to the statement.

> *"The theft of public funds is an extremely serious matter, and the Township Committee recognizes its responsibility to protect the financial interests of Cranbury residents."*
> — MAYOR LISA KNIERIM

WHAT HAPPENS MONDAY

At its regular meeting Monday, Nov. 9, the committee is scheduled to introduce ordinances creating the positions of Assistant Township Administrator and Assistant Chief Financial Officer. Both would come up for adoption Nov. 23, and the township said it intends to fill them promptly after that. The agenda also includes a resolution awarding a professional services agreement for financial consulting to PKF O'Connor Davies LLP. Township representatives are reviewing insurance coverage for possible recovery.

QUESTIONS ABOUT TIMING

The disclosure came three days after the Nov. 3 general election. The New Jersey Globe reported Saturday that the mayor's letter does not explain why residents were not told before the vote. The township's statement cites the active criminal investigation as the reason details are limited. It does not address the timing of the announcement.

WHAT THE PUBLIC RECORD SHOWS

Since Sept. 28, the committee met in closed session at a 1 p.m. special meeting Oct. 6, called under the exemption for pending litigation and attorney-client privilege. Its Oct. 13 and Oct. 26 agendas also scheduled closed sessions, both listed as personnel matters and possible litigation. Monday's agenda lists another closed session on the same grounds. Under state law, closed-session minutes are released only once confidentiality is no longer needed. The approved minutes of the Sept. 28 public meeting, held the evening of the theft, do not mention it.

SOURCES: Official statement, Nov. 6 · Letter to residents, Nov. 6 · Nov. 9 agenda · Oct. 6 minutes · New Jersey Globe, Nov. 7

BY THE NUMBERS

$26M
Approximate amount of the stolen wire transfer, Sept. 28

$17.3M
Assets frozen by investigators so far

$8.7M
Not yet reported frozen or recovered (difference of the two figures above)

39
Days between the theft and the public announcement

ELECTION

Szczur wins open committee seat

Democrat Thomas Szczur Jr. defeated Republican Carol Haring, 1,197 votes to 700 (about 63% to 37%), for the Township Committee seat held by Matt Scott, who did not seek re-election, the New Jersey Globe reported. The result keeps all five seats in Democratic hands. Szczur is a certified public accountant. Results are unofficial until certified by the county.

SOURCES: New Jersey Globe, Nov. 4

ALSO THIS WEEK

MONDAY · Committee holds a work session on ICE and the use of municipal land, and introduces a local tax on recreational cannabis sales.

LAND USE · Planning Board meeting canceled for lack of a quorum; Cranbury Gates pump station hearing moves to Dec. 3.

HEALTH · Board of Health meets Tuesday for the first time since March.

LEAVES · Curbside leaf collection began Nov. 2 and runs through late December.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Page A2 · Meets second and fourth Mondays, 7 p.m., Town Hall

PREVIEW · MONDAY, NOV. 9, 7 P.M.

A full agenda: new finance posts, a cannabis tax and a talk on ICE

Town Hall, 23-A North Main Street · Streamed on the township YouTube channel

Monday's meeting also carries a public hearing on new stormwater rules, four first readings and nine consent resolutions. The Parks and Recreation Commission is also scheduled to report, including price quotes for Millstone Park improvements.

The committee will hold a **work session on ICE and municipal land**, plus its 2027 meeting schedule. In September, members added restricting ICE activity on township land to their list of action items. At the Sept. 14 meeting, a resident asked for an ordinance barring federal agents from using township property for ICE staging or processing. Mayor Knierim wrote in her Oct. 27 update that the session lets members review information and consider possible municipal action.

ORDINANCES

10-26-23 — Public hearing and adoption. Rewrites the stormwater control rules in §150-61 of the land development code to match state stormwater rules amended Jan. 20, 2026. Towns must comply by Jan. 29, 2027.

11-26-24 — Creates the position of Assistant Township Administrator. Second reading Nov. 23.

11-26-25 — Creates the position of Assistant Chief Financial Officer. Second reading Nov. 23.

11-26-26 — Amends the salary ordinance for township officials and employees. Second reading Nov. 23.

11-26-27 — Amends Chapter 50 on cannabis to set a municipal tax on recreational retail cannabis sales and to conform with P.L. 2026, c. 13. Second reading Nov. 23.

RESOLUTIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

R 11-26-120 — Payment of bills.

R 11-26-121 — Cancels taxes for a totally disabled veteran at Block 20, Lot 10.79, for 2026 onward, with a refund of taxes paid.

R 11-26-122 — Amends the employment contract of the Chief of Police.

R 11-26-123 — Cancels outstanding checks.

R 11-26-124 — Authorizes 2026 budget transfers.

R 11-26-125 — Change order with Fischer Contracting for the Four Seasons development roadway improvements.

R 11-26-126 — Professional services agreement with PKF O'Connor Davies LLP for financial consulting.

R 11-26-127 — Authorizes a developer's agreement with Cranbury Station Rd LLC.

R 11-26-128 — Changes the names on the township's PNC Bank accounts.

SOURCES: Nov. 9 agenda (PDF) · Mayor's Update, Oct. 27 · Ordinance 10-26-23 text

ADOPTED OCT. 13

Data centers and detention facilities banned in every zone

The committee adopted two zoning ordinances on Oct. 13 after unanimous introduction Sept. 14 and Planning Board consistency reviews Oct. 1.

Ordinance 09-26-20 defines a data center and adds it to the uses prohibited in all districts. The ordinance cites water and electricity demand, noise and grid strain, and the state's still-developing data center policy. It exempts server rooms that serve only a property's own business.

Ordinance 09-26-21 prohibits detention, correctional and other carceral facilities in all zones, explicitly including detention centers used for civil or immigration detention.

SOURCES: 09-26-20 · 09-26-21 · Sept. 14 minutes

ADOPTED OCT. 13

After 30 years, Municipal Alliance is dissolved

Ordinance 09-26-22 repeals Chapter 26 of the township code, which created the Municipal Alliance Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. Four speakers at the Sept. 28 meeting urged the committee to keep it, citing decades of school and prevention programs.

In her Oct. 14 update, Mayor Knierim wrote that its programs can continue through Cranbury School, the Police Department, the library and the Board of Health. She said both the police chief and the school superintendent, who sit on the Alliance, have committed to carrying them forward. The Alliance still meets Tuesday, with the committee's ordinance on its agenda.

SOURCES: Ordinance 09-26-22 · Mayor's Update, Oct. 14 · Sept. 28 minutes

RULES OF ORDER

New bylaws set five-minute public comment

Resolution R 09-26-105, adopted Sept. 14, sets the committee's order of business and gives each member of the public a single five-minute comment, up from three. It bars members from discussing township business by email among a majority of the committee and generally requires attendance in person.

SOURCES: Sept. 14 minutes

LAND USE

Page A3 · Planning Board, Zoning Board, Development Review, Historic Preservation

PLANNING BOARD

No quorum, no meeting; Cranbury Gates waits until Dec. 3

The Planning Board canceled its Nov. 5 meeting for lack of a quorum. Kerzner Associates' application for Cranbury Gates at 109 South Main Street (PB411-25) will be heard Dec. 3 without further notice. The application seeks amended Phase I site plan approval for a pump station and force main, and was continued from the board's Sept. 3 meeting.

New filing: William and Bonnie Murphy have applied to subdivide 56-58 Cranbury Neck Road (Block 23, Lot 98.02, A100 zone), PB417-26.

Pending: Mainpark LLC's site plan with bulk variances for 61-63 North Main Street (PB408-25) was on the Oct. 1 agenda. Minutes recording the outcome have not been posted.

SOURCES: Cancellation notice · PB417-26 filing · Oct. 1 agenda

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Route 130 garage site cleared for Enterprise move

The Zoning Board unanimously approved GSN Legacy Corp.'s use variance and site plan for 2681 Route 130 on Sept. 2. The plan calls for a roughly 7,200-square-foot commercial building, partly for the owner's existing use and partly for a relocated Enterprise Rent-A-Car. The board was to memorialize the approval Oct. 7.

Nov. 4 hearings: a rear-setback variance for 19 Washington Drive (ZBA424-26, Hiten Makwana), and front and rear setback variances for 9 Arthur Lane (ZBA421-26, PRC Development Co.), carried from October. Outcomes will appear when minutes are approved.

SOURCES: Sept. 2 minutes · Nov. 4 agenda

REVIEW & PRESERVATION

A Prospect Plains concept review; three historic district cases

The Development Review Committee took an informal concept review Oct. 1 from Sudler Development Co. for 280 Prospect Plains Road (Block 5, Lot 2.072, Light Industrial zone; DRC423-26). Its Nov. 5 meeting was canceled for lack of business, and it next meets Dec. 3.

The Historic Preservation Commission heard three applications Oct. 20: a shed at 7 Cranbury Neck Road (HPC294-26), window replacement at 68 North Main Street (HPC295-26) and an addition at 6 Scott Avenue (HPC296-26).

SOURCES: DRC Oct. 1 · HPC Oct. 20

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Page A4 · Volunteer bodies that advise the committee

BOARD OF HEALTH · TUE., NOV. 10, 7 P.M.

First meeting since March

The board will approve its March 3 minutes and take health officer and environmental reports covering March through October. It canceled its May, July and September meetings. New business includes 2027 meeting dates, a January 2027 rabies clinic, next year's budget and expiring terms.

SOURCES: Agenda

MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE · TUE., NOV. 10, 3:30 P.M.

Its agenda includes Red Ribbon Week, a speaker for Cranbury School students and "Township Committee Ordinance," the repeal adopted Oct. 13.

SOURCES: Agenda

HISTORIC PRESERVATION · TUE., NOV. 10, 7 P.M.

Depot application, design guidelines, Town Hall doors

The commission continues work on design guidelines for the Village and Cranbury Station Hamlet districts, a preliminary application for the railroad depot building, a state Certified Local Government grant and a five-year strategic plan. In September it asked to add molding to Town Hall's exterior doors. The committee wants a timeline, warranty and a sample first.

SOURCES: Agenda

PARKS, TREES & ENVIRONMENT

Court damage, a dock grant and a forestry plan

Parks & Recreation: Pickleball nets left on the Village Park tennis courts have damaged the surface. The courts remain under the contractor's performance bond, and new signs are coming. A $25,000 state grant will replace the floating dock and storage shed, with work expected in the spring. The commission next meets Nov. 18.

Shade Tree: The commission is soliciting quotes from three forestry consultants for its 2028–2032 Community Forestry Management Plan. Thirteen trees of eight species were planted in May.

Environmental: The commission meets Nov. 16. It is working on an adopt-a-catch-basin program and an outdoor classroom. It is also updating the township's community energy plan, a step needed to compete for a PSE&G grant; the plan advises replacing Town Hall's boiler.

SOURCES: Mayor's Update, Oct. 27 · Shade Tree agenda · Environmental agenda

Volunteers wanted. The township is seeking second alternates for the Environmental Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment, each for a term ending Dec. 31, 2027.

AROUND TOWN

Page A5 · Public works, safety and notices

PUBLIC WORKS

Leaf season is here, a week late

Heavy demand for curbside chipping pushed the start of leaf collection back one week, to Nov. 2. Collection continues through the last week of December, and each route takes about two weeks. Keep leaves separate from branches and out of storm drains. Final paving on Petty Road near the Regency development was expected the first week of November, weather permitting. DPW has two job openings.

SOURCES: Leaf notice · Collection rules

POLICE

How Cranbury uses license plate readers

After residents raised questions, the township published details of its automated license plate readers. It has 11 fixed cameras and 13 equipped patrol cars, using Axon, Flock and Backtrace systems, and has used the technology since about 2006. Only detectives and supervisors may run searches. Axon data is kept about 180 days, and the township's document gives a separate retention period for Flock under its contract.

SOURCES: ALPR fact sheet

FLOODING · FINANCES

Report your wet spots; a passing grade on best practices

Cranbury is part of a federally funded flooding study of 10 southern Middlesex towns and a six-town watershed assessment with the Watershed Institute. Residents can report flooding, standing water or eroding streambanks through the Upper Millstone survey.

The township scored 44.5 on the state's annual Best Practices checklist, above the 34 needed to keep full Energy Receipts Tax aid. The review recommended formally documenting the township's surplus policy.

SOURCES: Mayor's Update, Oct. 27

THE RECORD

Ordinances in progress and recorded votes

Ordinance tracker, 2026

NO.	SUBJECT	INTRODUCED	SECOND READING	STATUS
09-26-20	Prohibits data centers in all zones	Sept. 14 (5–0)	Oct. 13	**ADOPTED**
09-26-21	Prohibits detention and carceral facilities in all zones	Sept. 14 (5–0)	Oct. 13	**ADOPTED**
09-26-22	Repeals Municipal Alliance (Chapter 26)	Sept. 28 (5–0)	Oct. 13	**ADOPTED**
10-26-23	Stormwater control rules, §150-61	Oct. 13	Nov. 9	**HEARING NOV. 9**
11-26-24	Creates Assistant Township Administrator	Nov. 9 (scheduled)	Nov. 23	**ON AGENDA**
11-26-25	Creates Assistant Chief Financial Officer	Nov. 9 (scheduled)	Nov. 23	**ON AGENDA**
11-26-26	Amends salary ordinance	Nov. 9 (scheduled)	Nov. 23	**ON AGENDA**
11-26-27	Municipal tax on retail cannabis sales	Nov. 9 (scheduled)	Nov. 23	**ON AGENDA**

Recorded votes from approved minutes

MEETING	ACTION	MOTION / SECOND	VOTE
Sept. 14	Introduce 09-26-20 (data centers)	El-Badawi / Christopher	Unanimous
Sept. 14	Introduce 09-26-21 (carceral facilities)	Scott / Rogers	Unanimous
Sept. 14	Consent resolutions R 09-26-103 to 108: bills; liquor license transfer to Tasmac Cranbury LLC; committee bylaws; Wayfair escrow release; two fire company members; dock grant application	Rogers / Christopher	Unanimous
Sept. 28	Introduce 09-26-22 (Municipal Alliance repeal)	Christopher / Scott	5–0
Sept. 28	Consent R 09-26-110 to 111: bills; $25,000 state dock grant added to budget	Christopher / Scott	5–0
Oct. 6	Special meeting: enter closed session (pending litigation)	Christopher / Rogers	4–0, Scott absent

SOURCES: Minutes for Oct. 13 and Oct. 26 had not been approved as of this edition; the Oct. 13 adoptions are listed in the Mayor's Update of Oct. 14. Sources: Sept. 14 · Sept. 28 · Oct. 6 · Oct. 13 agenda

CALENDAR

Public meetings at Town Hall unless noted

MON 9 NOV — **Township Committee, 7 p.m.** *Regular meeting, then closed session*

TUE 10 NOV — Municipal Alliance, 3:30 p.m. *Also: "Eating Healthfully on a Budget," library, 12:30 p.m.*

TUE 10 NOV — Board of Health · Historic Preservation, 7 p.m.

WED 11 NOV — Veterans Day *Township offices closed*

THU 12 NOV — Library Board of Trustees, 7 p.m.

MON 16 NOV — Environmental Commission, 7 p.m. *Curbside recycling pickup*

WED 18 NOV — Parks & Recreation Commission, 7 p.m.

MON 23 NOV — **Township Committee, 7 p.m.** *Scheduled adoption of 11-26-24 to 27*

THU 26 NOV — Thanksgiving *Offices closed Nov. 26–27*

MON 30 NOV — Curbside recycling pickup

THU 3 DEC — Development Review, 5 p.m. · Planning Board, 7 p.m. *Cranbury Gates (PB411-25) hearing*

MON 14 DEC — Township Committee, 7 p.m. *Proposed work session on communicating with the public*

SOURCES: Township calendar · Agenda Center. The Winter Coat Drive continues through November.

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HOW TO READ IT. Every item links to its source. Minutes are the official record. Agendas show only what is scheduled, and results are reported once minutes are approved, usually several weeks later. When a source and this digest differ, the source governs.

THIS EDITION covers postings through Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026, at 7 p.m. Watch meetings live on the township YouTube channel. To get notices directly, sign up at Notify Me.