

North Jersey NIGP Chapter #7

Chartered October 26, 1977

President: *Maria J. Rivera*

Treasurer/Membership: *Ehab Salama*

Vice President: *Kevin O'Keefe*

Secretary: *Michael Kupec, Jr.*

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

MARCH 19, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by President Maria Rivera. All were asked to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Maria J. Rivera asked member to remain standing for a prayer.

President Maria J. Rivera acknowledged new members.

President Maria J. Rivera asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Ehab Salama /Treasurer reported the balance was approximately \$17,810.17. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion unanimously passed.

President Maria J. Rivera asked for a motion to accept the Minutes of the December 18, 2025. A Motion was made and seconded. Motion unanimously passed.

President Maria J. Rivera asked for a motion to review and update Chapter 7 bylaws to align with national purchasing associations and institutes. A motion was made and seconded to begin reviewing and updating our Chapter 7 bylaws. Motion was unanimously passed.

President Maria J. Rivera suggested that in preparation for the upcoming Purchasing Forum we order tote bags with our logo. Cost approximately \$2,500.00. A motion was made and seconded to order tote bags at the approximate cost of \$2,500.00. Motion was unanimously passed. (President Rivera noted that we would be sharing a table with the county association and NIGP Chapter 6. We would have a runner to identify Chapter 7.)

President Maria J. Rivera asked for a motion to establish a committee to review our website. She mentioned incorporating a message board that would report changes in the law and national news. A motion was made and second to establish a committee to review our website. Motion was unanimously passed.

President Maria J. Rivera then introduced our first guest speaker.

Guest Speakers

Jill A Goldy, CPA CFO/Treasurer – City of Perth Amboy

ETHICS

Session outline to include:

- Local Government Ethics Law Overview,
- Financial Disclosure Statements,
- Ethical Obligations of Municipal Officials, and
- “Illegal, Unethical, Immoral: WHO DECIDES?”

DISCLAIMER: Content is not legal advice; consult your attorney!

Jill Goldy’s emphasis was on importance and practical application of ethical standards.

- Topic Title: Local Government Ethics Law – Key Provisions
 - Description:
 - Purpose: ensure clear, consistent, enforceable ethical standards; require financial disclosure; advise and inform on conflicts.
 - Core prohibitions:
 - No substantial conflicts of interest in business activities for officers, employees, or immediate family.
 - No use of official position to secure unwarranted advantages.
 - No official action where there is direct or indirect financial/personal involvement causing potential conflict.
 - No employment or service that prejudices independence of judgment.
 - No solicitation or acceptance of gifts/favors/loans/contributions or promises tied to influencing official duties.
 - Enforcement powers:
 - Local Finance Board is empowered to investigate, hold hearings, and impose penalties.
 - Matters may first be heard by local ethics boards, if established; otherwise go directly to Local Finance Board.
 - Local ethics boards can investigate, hold hearings, and refer matters to county prosecutors.
 - Advisory opinions:
 - Available from Local Finance Board and local ethics boards; must be requested in writing.
 - Opinions are made public in generalized form; seek advice prior to acting.
 - Trust instincts; ensure full and accurate description; cannot request hypotheticals for others.
- Topic Title: Financial Disclosure Statement Requirements

- Description:
 - Annual filing required; due by April 30; filed online with ability to confirm “no change.”
 - Statements are accessible on the state site to promote transparency.
 - Reporting scope:
 - Report sources of income over 2,000 for the local government officer and immediate family (spouse or dependent child living in the same household); amounts not required.
 - The officer’s local government job is a source of income and must be listed.
 - Rationale includes identifying potential conflicts (e.g., spouse’s employer selling to the municipality).
 - Dependent child definition is contextual; consider significant support and tax dependency.
 - Evolving considerations discussed (e.g., supporting parents in the household).
- Conclusion:
 - Members reminded of the April 30 filing deadline and the importance of accurate, complete disclosures.
- Topic Title: Financial Disclosure Requirements for Public Officials (Additional Details)
 - Description:
 - Report sources (not amounts) of fees and costs over \$250 from a single source, including honoraria.
 - Gifts: report each source of gifts valued at \$500 or more; identify conflicts if gifts overlap with vendor/contracting relationships.
 - Business interests: list name and address of all business organizations tied to income; use 1099s and W-2s as indicators.
 - Real property: disclose address and description of real property interests, including primary and vacation homes; be precise as redaction occurs later.
 - Emphasis on accuracy: disclosures are difficult to amend; consult knowledgeable personnel before filing.
 - Conclusion:
 - Officials must file complete and timely FDS and carefully assess sources, gifts, business ties, and property interests.
- Topic Title: Conflict of Interest Scenarios and Ethical Judgment
 - Description:
 - Example: neighbor selling computer equipment and a purchasing agent showing favoritism—potential procurement conflict if not competitive/certified.
 - Guidance: avoid participating in decisions that directly or indirectly benefit you; do not accept gifts/favors from vendors; do not use insider information.
 - Use judgment: if a potential conflict exists, question legal advice or abstain to protect integrity.
 - Conclusion:

- Uphold impartiality and accountability; abstain when conflicts are reasonably perceived.
- Topic Title: Transparency, Public Confidence, and Communication
 - Description:
 - Maintain and update municipal websites; leverage social media for transparent communication.
 - Closed/executive sessions: exercise caution; understand what is disclosable and adhere to proper procedures.
 - Bribery: do not accept anything of value given to influence; a bribe remains a bribe even if not accepted.
 - Conclusion:
 - Transparency is central to accountability; communicate openly and document decision-making processes.
- Topic Title: Ethical Governance Beyond Legal Compliance
 - Description:
 - Ethics requires doing the right thing beyond merely following laws and regulations.
 - Moral compass is shaped by upbringing, community norms, religion, and life experience; perspectives vary.
 - Public servants face the “court of public opinion,” influencing perceptions of legality, morality, and ethics.
 - Illustrative discussion: differing generational views; example of Michael Vick’s return after serving time.
- Topic Title: Case Study—Use of Opioid Settlement Funds in Irvington, New Jersey
 - Description:
 - OSC findings: approximately \$632,000 of opioid funds spent on two “awareness concerts” in 2023 and 2024 without expert input or outcome tracking.
 - Expenditures included talent procurement, promotion, VIP trailers, and amenities; limited evidence of public health messaging or Narcan distribution.
 - Vendor issues: funds steered to businesses owned/controlled by township employees; contracts awarded without competitive bids; sham solicitations identified.
 - Governance response: Irvington declined OSC’s advisory to cancel an event, sued for defamation, and sought to restrain report release.
 - OSC recommendations: 28 recommendations for greater DHS oversight and guidance; referrals made to appropriate agencies.
 - Ethical framing: legality for courts to determine; discussion focused on morality and ethics of spending decisions.
 - Conclusion:
 - Case underscores risks of poor oversight, conflicts, and lack of measurable outcomes when spending public health funds.
- Title: Use of Public Funds
 - Description:

- Public servants are under scrutiny for how public money is spent.
- Question raised about extent of spending on opioid awareness versus entertainment.

The public has the right to their opinion; legality is for courts; ethical/moral aspects are subject to public opinion.

Followed by a Q and A.

President Maria J. Rivera introduced our Second Guest Speaker.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Olga Chaban – Senior Program Coordinator, Rutgers University – Center for Government Services

Dr. Chaban provided a brief overview of the 2026 Educational Forum. This upcoming conference is being finalized and will be held in Long Branch from April 23rd to 26th. The Center for Government Services offers the Valenti Stanton Scholarship for new QPAs, enabling free conference attendance. Ethics will be the focus of this year’s conference.

Description:

- Announcement of upcoming forum; details and hotel info available at www.gif.org.
- Theme: “fiesta de food”; reception at Land Shark on the beach; open to all with walk-ins accepted.
- One-on-one assistance available via link in the welcome email.
- Session topics include collaboration between purchasing, finance, and governing body; insurance and NJDOT improvement; sustainable projects.
- NG Startup to have tables and a session.
- Topic Title: Commodity Code Listing Project
 - Description:
 - Project to create a commodity code listing with corresponding units of measure.
 - Goal: ensure units of measure are identified correctly across departments (e.g., DOT standards).
 - The finalized list will be distributed.
- Topic Title: Mentorship and Succession Planning
 - Description:
 - Suggestion to consider mentorship programs for continuity.
 - Importance of training others in procurement for smooth transitions when staff leave or retire.
 - Proper planning ensures effective handoffs.

President Maria J. Rivera provided an update on ABA Procurement Code

An update from the National ABA regarding reviews was expected but not finalized. Reviews will be shared to discuss effects on New Jersey procurement.

Closing Comments

President Maria J. Rivera announced that reminders of important dates will be distributed via email once all details are available.

President Maria J. Rivera mentioned that our June 2026 meeting would be held at the Somerville Elks Lodge 1068, 375 Union Avenue, Bridgewater, NJ 08807.

A motion was requested for cupcakes at the forum food area. Certificates of attendance and a sign-in sheet are available on the table. Attendees were encouraged to email board members with questions.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 PM. Motion unanimously passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Kupec, Jr.
Secretary