TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
September 8, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:32 PM with the Salute to the Flag.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:
The meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (as amended by Public Law 2025, chapter 72). Notice of this meeting and the agenda was posted on Knowlton Township's website and on the bulletin board at the municipal building.
Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Deputy Mayor Baley, Committeeman Mazza (participating by phone), Committeewoman Starrs, and Mayor Shipps. Also present: Clerk Shipps.
The fifth Committee seat remains vacant.

Statement Regarding the Committee Vacancy:
Mayor Shipps explained that this special meeting was required because, under N.J.S.A. 40A:16-11, a vacancy on the Township Committee must be filled within 30 days of its occurrence. The vacancy resulted from the Committee's prior removal of a member for absenteeism. Because the departing member was elected as a Republican, the Knowlton Township Republican Committee was required to submit three names to fill the vacancy: Vince Gaeta, John C. Stockton, and John Wurtemberg. The Knowlton Township Republican Committee separately designated Mr. Stockton as its candidate for the November general election ballot for the remaining two-year unexpired term; the winner of that election would be seated once the results are certified.

Resolution 2026-110 – Resolution Appointing an Individual to Fill a Vacancy on the Township Committee Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:16-11:

Mayor Shipps invited each Committee member to state their position before a vote was taken.

- Committeewoman Starrs stated her support for Vince Gaeta, citing his long service to the Township as OEM Coordinator and as a member of the Land Use Board and Environmental Commission, while acknowledging that Mr. Stockton is the Republican Committee's designated candidate for the November ballot.
- Committeeman Mazza stated his support for John Stockton, reasoning that it would be more practical to seat the Republican Committee's designated November candidate now, given the short remainder of the term.
- Deputy Mayor Baley likewise stated his support for John Stockton, citing a preference to move forward without further delay.
- Mayor Shipps stated that she could not support Mr. Stockton at this time, citing his lack of engagement with the Committee and unreturned attempts at communication, and that she could not support Mr. Gaeta out of concern for disrupting his current service on the

Land Use Board and Environmental Commission. Her position was to leave the seat vacant until the November election results are certified.

With the Committee's stated positions resulting in a 2 (Stockton) – 1 (Gaeta) – 1 (leave vacant) split, and no candidate receiving the majority needed for appointment, no action was taken. The Committee vacancy will remain unfilled.

Public Comment:
Pam Rusweiller (Columbia), identifying herself as a registered Republican, expressed disappointment with the Knowlton Township Republican Committee's nomination process, stating that two of the three names submitted were affiliated with the same local civic organization. She praised Vince Gaeta's long record of service to the Township and expressed concern that a candidate largely unfamiliar to the Committee had been placed on the November ballot. She thanked the Committee members for their service.

Adjournment:
Motion made by Mayor Shipps, seconded Committeewoman Starrs and carried (all in favor) to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Shipps,
Municipal Clerk, RMC