

AGREEMENT
between
BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN,
COUNTY OF MERCER
and
OFFICE & PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION AFL-CIO, LOCAL 32
(Blue Collar Unit)

JANUARY 1, 2026 through DECEMBER 31, 2027

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PREAMBLE

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into as of this ___ day of _____ 2026 by and between the Borough of Hightstown, in the County of Mercer, a Municipal Corporation of the State of New Jersey, hereinafter referred to as the "Borough," and Office & Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, Local 32 (Blue Collar Unit), a labor organization hereinafter referred to as the "Union," represents the complete and final understanding on all negotiable issues between the Borough and the Union.

ARTICLE I
RECOGNITION

A. The Borough of Hightstown hereby recognizes the Union as the sole and exclusive bargaining agent for all blue collar employees in the Department of Public Works, Sewer Treatment Plant and Water Department employed by the Borough, excluding clerical employees, craft employees, police, firefighters, zoning officer, tax assessor, construction code official/building inspector, fire inspector and fire sub-code official, building inspector and building sub-code official, professional employees, confidential employees, managerial executives, and supervisors of the Borough of Hightstown in all those matters specifically provided for herein pertaining to wages, hours and conditions of employment.

B. Wherever used herein, the term "employees" shall mean and be construed only as referring to all blue collar employees employed by the Borough of Hightstown in its Department of Public Works, Sewer Treatment Plant and Water Department.

ARTICLE II
MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

A. The Borough hereby retains and reserves unto itself, without limitation, all powers, rights, authority, duties and responsibilities conferred upon and vested in it prior to the signing of this Agreement by the laws and Constitution of the State of New Jersey and of the United States, including, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following rights:

1. The executive management and administrative control of the Borough Government and its properties and facilities and activities of its employees, utilizing personnel methods and means of the most appropriate and efficient manner possible as may from time to time be determined by the Borough.

2. To make rules of procedure and conduct, to use improved methods and equipment, to determine work schedules and shifts, to decide the number of employees needed for any particular time and to be in sole charge of the quality and quantity of the work required.
3. The right of management to make such reasonable rules and regulations as it may from time to time deem best for the purposes of maintaining order, safety and/or the effective operation of the Borough after advance notice thereof to the employees.
4. To hire all employees, to promote, transfer, assign or retain employees in positions within the Borough.
5. To suspend, demote, discharge or take any other appropriate disciplinary action against any employee for just cause according to law.
6. To lay off employees in the event of lack of funds or under conditions where continuation of such work would be inefficient and non-productive.
7. The Borough reserves the right with regard to all other conditions of employment not reserved to make such changes as it deems desirable and necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the Borough.

B. In the exercise of the foregoing powers, rights, authority, duties and responsibilities of the Borough, the adoption of policies, rules, regulations, Code of Conduct and practices in the furtherance thereof, and the use of judgment and discretion in connection therewith, shall be limited only by the specific and express terms of this Agreement and then only to the extent such specific and express terms hereof are in conformance with the Constitution and laws of New Jersey and of the United States.

C. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to deny or restrict the Borough of its rights, responsibilities and authority under R.S. 40A:1-1 *et seq.* or any other national, state, county or local law or regulations.

ARTICLE III
RULES AND REGULATIONS

All written rules and regulations shall be provided to the Union immediately upon promulgation.

ARTICLE IV
NON-DISCRIMINATION

A. The Borough and the Union agree that there shall be no discrimination against any employee because of race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, political affiliation, familial status, sexual preference or orientation, or disability if otherwise qualified to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

B. The Borough and the Union agree that all employees covered under this Agreement have the right without fear of penalty or reprisal to form, join and assist any employee organization or to refrain from any such activity. There shall be no discrimination by the Borough or the Union against any employee because of the employee's membership or non-membership or activity or non-activity in the Union.

ARTICLE V
MAINTENANCE OF WORK OPERATIONS

A. The Union hereby covenants and agrees that during the term of this Agreement, neither the Union nor any person acting in its behalf will cause, authorize or support, nor will any of its members take part in any strike, work stoppage, slow-down, walk-out or other illegal job action against the Borough. The Union agrees that such action would constitute a material breach of this Agreement only if the Union authorizes, approves or condones such action.

B. The Union agrees that it will make every reasonable effort to prevent its members from participating in any strike, work stoppage, slow-down or other activity aforementioned, or from supporting any such action by any other employee or group of employees of the Borough and that the Union will publicly disavow such action and order all such members who participate in such activities to cease and desist from same immediately and to return to work.

C. Nothing contained in this Agreement shall be construed to limit or restrict the Borough in its right to seek and obtain such judicial relief as it may be entitled to have in law or in equity for injunction or damage, or both, in the event of such breach by the Union or its members.

D. The Borough agrees that it will not engage in the lockout of any of its employees.

ARTICLE VI
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. The purpose of this procedure is to secure at the lowest possible level an equitable solution to the problems which may arise affecting the terms and conditions of employment under this Agreement.

B. Nothing herein shall be construed as limiting the right of any employee having a grievance to discuss the matter informally with any appropriate member of the Department.

C. The term "grievance", as used herein, means an appeal by the Union on behalf of an individual employee or group of employees, from the interpretation, application or violation of any provisions of this Agreement.

D. The following constitutes the sole and exclusive method for resolving grievances between the parties covered by this Agreement, and shall be followed in its entirety unless any Step is waived by mutual consent:

Step One: The Union shall institute action under the provisions hereof within five (5) business days after the event giving rise to the grievance has occurred, and an earnest effort shall be made to settle the differences between the aggrieved employee and the immediate supervisor for the purpose of resolving the matter informally. Failure to act within said five (5) business days shall be deemed to constitute an abandonment of the grievance.

Step Two: If no agreement can be reached orally within five (5) calendar days of the initial discussion with the immediate supervisor, the aggrieved or the Union may present the grievance in writing within ten (10) calendar days thereof to their respective Department Head or his/her designated representative. The written grievance at this Step shall contain the relevant facts, the applicable Section of the Contract allegedly violated, and the remedy requested by the grievant. The Department Head or his/her designated representative will answer the grievance in writing within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the written grievance.

Step Three: If the Union wishes to appeal the decision of the Department Head, such appeal shall be presented in writing to the Borough Administrator within ten (10) calendar days thereafter. This presentation shall include copies of all

previous correspondence relating to the matter in dispute. The Borough Administrator shall respond, in writing, to the grievance within twenty (20) calendar days of the submission.

Step Four: If the Union wishes to appeal the decision of the Borough Administrator, such appeal shall be presented in writing to the governing body within twenty (20) calendar days thereafter. This presentation shall include copies of all previous correspondence relating to the matter in dispute. The governing body shall consult and respond to the grievance within thirty (30) calendar days of the submission.

Step Five: If the grievance is not settled through Steps One, Two, Three and Four, either party shall have the right to submit the dispute to arbitration pursuant to the rules and regulations of the Public Employment Relations Commission within twenty (20) calendar days after receipt of the governing body's response.

- E.
 - 1. Unless the parties agree otherwise, no more than one (1) issue shall be presented to an arbitrator in any single case.
 - 2. The fees and expenses of the arbitrator shall be borne equally by the parties. Any other expenses incurred by the parties, including but not limited to the presentation of witnesses, shall be borne by the party incurring same.
 - 3. The arbitrator shall be bound by the terms and conditions of this Agreement and shall not have any power to add to, subtract from or in any way modify any of the terms of this Agreement.
 - 4. The decision of the arbitrator shall be in writing with the reasons therefore and shall be binding upon the parties, subject, however, to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 2A:24-1 et. seq.

F. Upon prior notice to and authorization of the Borough, the designated Union representatives shall be permitted as members of the Grievance Committee to confer with employees and the Borough on specific grievances in accordance with the grievance procedure set forth herein during work hours of employees, without loss of pay, provided the conduct of said business does not diminish the effectiveness of the Borough or require the recall of off-duty employees.

G. The time limits expressed herein shall be strictly adhered to. If any grievance has not been initiated within the time limits specified, then the grievance shall be deemed to have

been abandoned. If any grievance is not processed to the next succeeding Step in the grievance procedure within the time limits prescribed there under, then the disposition of the grievance at the last preceding Step shall be deemed to be conclusive. If a decision is not rendered within the time limits prescribed for decision at any Step in the grievance procedure, then the grievance shall be deemed to have been denied. Nothing herein shall prevent the parties from mutually agreeing to extend or contract the time limits for processing the grievance at any Step in the grievance procedure.

ARTICLE VII

DISCIPLINE

A. The parties recognize the concept of progressive discipline. Discipline may include any or all of the following:

Verbal reprimand
Written reprimand
Suspension without pay
Termination

The list above is illustrative and does not require it be used in the order of the list.

B. The Borough may utilize any or all of the above types of discipline depending upon the severity and/or the repetitive nature of the conduct to be disciplined.

C. Employees may request an interview with the Borough Administrator whenever disciplined.

D. Employees shall have the right to have a representative present, at the employee's written request, at any and every step of the disciplinary procedure. A copy of a disciplinary action shall be given to the Shop Steward.

ARTICLE VIII

DUES DEDUCTIONS

A. The Borough agrees to deduct from the salaries of its employees, subject to this Agreement, initiation fees and dues for the Union. Such deductions shall be made in compliance with Chapter 123, Public Laws of 1974, N.J.S.A. (R.S.) 52:14-15.9e, as amended.

B. A check-off shall commence for each employee who signs a properly dated authorization card supplied by the Union and verified by the Borough Treasurer during the month following the filing of such card with the Borough.

C. If during the life of this Agreement there shall be any change in the rate of membership dues, the Union shall furnish to the Borough written notice thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of such change and shall furnish to the Borough either new authorizations from its members showing the authorized deduction for each employee, or an official notification on the letterhead of the Union and signed by the President of the Union advising of such changed deduction.

D. The Union will provide the necessary "check-off authorization" form and the Union will secure the signatures of its members on the forms and deliver the signed forms to the Borough Clerk.

E. Any such written authorization may only be withdrawn between the period of the 1st of April and the 30th of June by filing a withdrawal notice with the Borough Treasurer or as provided by law. The filing of notice of withdrawal shall be effective to halt deductions in accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-15.9e, as amended.

F. The United States Supreme Court decision in the case of Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 outlawed the collection of agency fees in the public sector. Therefore, the Borough will not collect agency fees (fair share fees) while this remains the law.

G. The deduction shall commence for each employee who elects not to become a member of the Union during the month following written notice from the Union of the amount of the fair share assessment. A copy of the written notice of the amount of the fair share assessment must also be furnished to the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission.

H. The fair share fee for services rendered by the Union shall be in an amount equal to the regular membership dues, initiation fees and assessments of the Union, less the cost of benefits financed through the dues and available only to members of the Union, but in no event shall the fee exceed eighty-five (85%) percent of the regular membership dues, fees and assessments.

I. The sum representing the fair share fee shall not reflect the costs of financial support of political causes or candidates, except to the extent that it is necessary for the Union to engage in lobbying activity designed to foster its policy goals in collective negotiations and contract administration, and to secure for the employees it represents advances and wages,

hours and other conditions of employment which ordinarily cannot be secured through collective negotiations with the Borough.

J. Prior to January 1st and July 31st of each year, the Union shall provide advance written notice to the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission, the Borough and to all employees within the unit, the information necessary to compute the fair share fee for services enumerated above.

K. The Union shall establish and maintain a procedure whereby any employee can challenge the assessment as computed by the Borough. This appeal procedure shall in no way involve the Borough or require the Borough to take any action other than to hold the fee in escrow pending resolution of the appeal.

L. The Union shall indemnify, defend and save the Borough harmless against any and all claims, demand, suits or other forms of liability that shall arise out of or by any reason of action taken by the Borough in reliance upon salary deduction authorization cards or the fair share assessment information as furnished by the Union to the Borough, or in reliance upon the official notification on the letterhead of the Union and signed by the President of the Union, advising of such changed deduction.

ARTICLE IX

HOURS OF WORK AND OVERTIME

A. The Union recognizes the right of the Borough to schedule all bargaining unit personnel to work a forty (40) hour per week shift. Normal working hours are an employee's scheduled work period as prescribed by the Borough. Normal working hours for Public Works employees only shall not begin before 7:00 a.m. or end after 6:00 p.m. with the Borough providing fourteen (14) calendar days' notice to the employee(s) and the Union of a schedule change, except in the case of an emergency.

B. Sewer plant employees assigned staggered or rotational shifts, working before 8:30 A.M. or after 4:30 P.M., shall receive a shift differential payment of one dollar (\$1.00) per hour for those hours worked before 8:30 A.M. and after 4:30 P.M.

C. Employees must be present and ready for work at the designated starting time for their operation. Employees must not leave work until the designated quitting time.

D. 1. Lunch breaks of a one-half (1/2) hour duration are staggered where necessary to afford maximum availability to the public, unless

otherwise approved by the Department Head, and employees must return to work at the designated time. Continuous work schedules without lunch breaks are prohibited under normal circumstances. Under no circumstances shall the lunch break commence later than five (5) hours after the starting time.

2. Employees shall be entitled to two (2) fifteen (15) minute coffee breaks, one (1) in the morning and one (1) in the afternoon, as designated by the Borough.
3. The breaks set forth above shall not be used at the beginning of the shift and//or at the end of their shift and/or to extend their lunch break at the beginning and/or at the end of same.

E. Overtime is any approved time worked over and above the normal workweek. If the needs of the Borough require work done on an overtime basis, employees may reasonably be required to work beyond the hours normally worked.

F. Overtime will be scheduled and authorized in advance by the Department Head or Supervisor as necessary.

G. Volunteers shall be sought for overtime on a rotating seniority basis first. If there are no volunteers, the assignment of overtime shall be made on a rotating basis among those employees who are capable of performing the work as determined by the Department Head.

H. A Department Head or Supervisor who anticipates the need for considerable overtime should give employees advance notice of required overtime work pending if possible.

I. For emergency situations, employees will be expected to work overtime. Refusal to work overtime shall be cause for disciplinary action.

J. A rotation system of overtime assignments should be in effect when more than one person in the organization is capable of performing the work to be done. The rotation shall be in order of seniority after consideration of reasonable limits on hours of work and/or consecutive hours of work set by the Borough which shall not be used in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

K. Absence on approved leave during the basic workweek should not reduce the amount of overtime pay to which an employee may be entitled. Whenever the hours of the work week are shortened by a legal holiday or other officially excused day, time worked in excess of the shortened hours is considered overtime.

L. Unauthorized working of overtime shall be cause for disciplinary action.

M. Employees working beyond their normally scheduled workweek of forty (40) hours per week will be compensated at the overtime rate .

N. Employees working over forty (40) hours per week must be paid at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times their hourly rate.

O. All hours worked overtime and the reasons for the overtime will be properly recorded on the employee's time sheet after being authorized in advance by the Department Head.

P. An employee who must return to work after regular hours which are not contiguous to his regular workday or on a weekend or holiday will be paid for a minimum of two (2) hours work at the appropriate rate of pay.

Q. Department Heads will authorize in writing in advance all overtime to be worked by employees within their department.

ARTICLE X

SALARIES AND WAGES

A. Retroactive to January 1, 2026, the bargaining unit members shall receive a two dollar (\$2.00) increase to the hourly rate for each bargaining unit member.

B. Effective January 1, 2027, the bargaining unit members shall receive a one dollar twenty-five (\$1.25) increase to the hourly rate for each bargaining unit member.

C. 1. The Borough will automatically change the salary rate of a new employee who started at the lowest rate in the pay scale, upon a satisfactory performance review during the first five (5) years of employment. The increases shall be One Dollar (\$1.00) after year 1 and Fifty Cents (\$.50) after years 2, 3 and 4.

Effective January 1, 2026, the minimum starting hourly rate will be \$18.00 per hour.

Effective January 1, 2027, the minimum starting hourly rate will be \$19.00 per hour

2. The Borough has the sole discretion to place any new hire and or promoted/transferred employee at any rate in the scale based on the new employee's experience, training and/or qualifications not to exceed the mid-

point of the range.

3. The Borough also has the discretion to increase an employee's salary to a higher salary within the Borough's salary scale .

D.. Whenever an employee in the Sewer Treatment Plant and/or Water Department obtains a required license, upon submission of proof of same, said employee shall have added to his/her base salary an additional Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) for receiving the first (1st) license and One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500) per license thereafter, up to four (4) licenses for a total of Seven Thousand Dollars (\$7,000). The payment is conditional upon the eligible employee providing the necessary/required services to the Borough.

E. An hourly bargaining unit employee who is designated as on-call shall be entitled to a stipend of Seventy-Five (\$75) Dollars per week of on-call duty. The on-call rate shall be increased to a stipend of One Hundred (\$100) Dollars per week effective upon the date of ratification of this agreement. To receive the on-call stipend, the employee must:

1. Be officially designated by the Department Head as on-call;
2. Be reachable by telephone or pager during the assigned on-call period;
3. Restrict personal travel to permit immediate availability;
4. Respond by phone within ten (10) minutes and/or arrive within thirty (30) minutes when notified by pager, unless otherwise stipulated by the Department Head.

F. The Borough agrees to pay the annual renewal fee for C.D.L.s (Commercial Driver's Licenses), so long as the eligible employee is providing the necessary/required services to the Borough. Laborers who obtain their CDL will receive a pay increase of \$3.00 per hour and will be promoted to the title of Driver/Laborer.

G. Employees covered by the terms of this agreement who are called back following the completion of their scheduled workday or are called into work on their scheduled day off shall be granted a minimum of three (3) hours pay plus all hours worked beyond three (3) hours at one and one-half times their regular rate of pay. Time clocks or equivalent devices shall be used to record employee starting and quitting times.

ARTICLE XI

LONGEVITY

Each employee covered by this Agreement shall, in addition to his or her regular wages and benefits, be paid longevity increments based upon years of service with the Borough in

accordance with the following schedule:

- After five (5) years of service \$650.00
- After ten (10) years of service \$1000.00
- After fifteen (15) years of service \$1350.00
- After twenty (20) years of service \$1700.00
- After twenty-five (25) years of service \$2100.00

Effective January 1, 2015, no employee hired after this date shall be eligible for longevity increments.

ARTICLE XII
VACATIONS

A. All employees shall be entitled to vacation with no loss of pay in accordance with the following schedule of service to the Borough:

Years of Service	Days of Vacation
Date of hire to December 31 of that calendar year	One day for each full month of employment up to a maximum of ten (10) working days
After one (1) full year of service	Ten (10) working days per year
After five (5) full years of service	Fifteen (15) working days per year
After ten (10) full years of service	Twenty (20) working days per year
After twenty-five (25) years of employment with the Borough	Twenty-five (25) working days per year

B. When increased through longevity, additional vacation time shall be credited on a pro-rata monthly basis.

Example: Employee completes five full years of service as of July 1, 2008. He/she would receive a prorated share (in this case, 50%) of the additional vacation days for that year. Vacation days credited for 2008 in this example would be 12 1/2.

C. The vacation schedule shall be sent to each employee to select their vacation period. In preparing the final vacation schedules, the Borough shall endeavor to assign vacations on the basis of department seniority of its employees.

D. Vacations may be taken at any time between January 2nd and December 31st. Final scheduling shall be with the approval of the Borough. A maximum of five (5) days vacation time not taken during the calendar year in which it is earned may be submitted for pay by the Borough at the employee's current rate of pay in the first (1st) pay period of the next succeeding year. If the employee is denied taking vacation due to Borough business

requirements, the employee may carry said vacation over, with Borough written approval, until the next calendar year upon which it shall be used or lost if not used in the next calendar year.

E. No more than one (1) employee in each department shall be entitled to take vacation at any one time. More than one (1) employee in each department may take vacation at the same time at the sole discretion of the Borough Administrator.

F. An employee who terminates his/her employment with the Borough, or whose employment is terminated by the Borough, shall be entitled to paid for vacation time accrued during that calendar year but not yet taken, on a pro-rata basis. However, any such employee shall forfeit his right to such monies if he or she fails to provide two (2) weeks advance written notice to his/her department head of the resignation or is terminated for cause.

G. Vacation days shall be accrued on a pro-rata monthly basis. When an employee is absent for more than fifty (50%) percent of his scheduled work days in any given month due to disciplinary suspension, sick leave, or leave of absence with or without pay, said employee shall not accrue any vacation for that month. The term "leave of absence with or without pay" shall not include contractual time off not mentioned in this section (i.e., vacation leave, holidays, injury leave, etc.).

H. Employees shall receive their vacation pay on their last day worked before the start of their vacation, provided that the employee makes the request for such payment two (2) weeks in advance.

ARTICLE XIII

HOLIDAYS

A. 1. During each year of this Agreement, the Borough agrees to grant all employees with the bargaining unit twelve (12) paid holidays in accordance with the following schedule:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday	Columbus Day
President's Day	Veterans Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Day After Thanksgiving
Independence Day	Christmas Day

2. In lieu of holidays off, employees in the Sewer Department shall receive

twelve (12) days' pay, of which six (6) days will be paid twice each year.

B. Employees receiving holidays off pursuant to Section A who work on any of the above holidays shall receive pay at the rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked on the holiday plus their regular holiday pay. To be eligible for holiday pay, said employee must work the scheduled work day before and the scheduled work day after the holiday, unless the day is an excused day with pay or there are extenuating circumstances to be stated in writing.

C. If a holiday falls on Saturday or Sunday, it may be celebrated and compensated accordingly on the day preceding or the day following such holiday, at the discretion of the Borough.

D. If a holiday falls within the vacation period of an employee, the employee shall receive pay for same, or an additional day of vacation, at the discretion of the Borough.

ARTICLE XIV

PERSONAL DAYS

A. Employees covered by this Agreement will be eligible for personal days to be used for personal, business, household or family matters as described in this Article, as follows:

After four (4) months of employment — one (1)
day per year

After eight (8) months of employment -- two (2)
days per year

After one (1) year of employment — four (4) days per year. Personal
days shall be non-cumulative.

B. Business means an activity that requires the employee's presence during the work day and is of such a nature that it cannot be attended to at a time outside of the work day.

C. Personal, household or family refers to matters where the employee's absence from duty is necessary for the welfare of the employee or his/her family.

D. Application in duplicate for a personal day containing the reasons for the leave must be submitted at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. Personal days may be granted without forty-eight (48) hours advance notice for an unforeseen occurrence which necessitates the presence of the employee and for which the employee had no prior knowledge and is unable to resolve the situation outside of the work day. However, said days shall be charged against sick

leave. Personal leave will not be granted if it interferes with the manpower needs of the Department.

ARTICLE XV

SICK LEAVE

A. Sick leave is hereby defined to mean absence from post or duty by an employee by reason of personal illness, accident or exposure to contagious disease, or to care for a sick family member consistent with the provisions of the New Jersey Family Leave Act and the Federal Family Medical Leave Act.

B. An employee who is absent for reasons that entitle him to sick leave shall notify his supervisor promptly, but not later than two (2) hours before the employee's usual reporting time.

C. Sick leave shall accrue for regular full-time employees at the rate of one (1) working day per month in every calendar year of employment, beginning after completion of six (6) months of employment, and shall accumulate, from year to year, up to a maximum of ninety (90) days.

D. Sick leave shall commence from the first day of illness and may be used to care for a sick family member consistent with paragraph A. above. A certificate of a reputable physician in attendance shall be required as proof of need of the employee's leave after three (3) consecutive days sick leave or after five (5) days sick leave in any one (1) year, unless such illness is of a chronic or recurring nature requiring absences of one (1) day or less, in which case only one (1) certificate shall be necessary for a period of six (6) months, provided, however, the certificate must specify that the chronic or recurring nature of the illness is likely to cause a subsequent absence from employment.

E. If an employee's supervisor requires proof of fitness to return to work pursuant to this Section, the employee shall be examined by the Borough physician or any other physician designated by the Borough at the Borough's expense. If the employee chooses to be examined by any other physician, the examination shall be at the employee's expense.

F. In cases of leaves of absence ordered by the Borough physician and/or County Board of Health due to exposure to contagious disease, a certificate from the Department of Health shall be required before the employee may return to work, and time lost will not apply to sick leave time or any loss of pay.

G. When an employee reports for work and is forced, because of illness, to leave

work after working at least two (2) hours, the maximum deduction from the employee's sick leave will be one-half (1/2) day.

H. If an employee is absent from work for more than fifty (50%) percent of his/her scheduled work days in any given month due to disciplinary suspension, sick leave, or leave of absence with or without pay, said employee shall not accrue sick time for that month. The term "leave of absence" shall not apply to any other contractual time off (i.e., injury leave, vacation leave, holiday leave, etc.).

I. Upon retirement pursuant to the Public Employees Retirement System an employee with twenty (20) years or more of service to the Borough shall be entitled to pay for all accumulated unused sick leave up to a maximum of ninety (90) days or Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000), whichever is less.

ARTICLE XVI

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

A. In the event of a death in the employee's immediate family, the employee shall be entitled to three (3) days funeral leave, which must be taken on consecutive work days, and which must commence between the day of death and the day of the funeral.

B. The term "immediate family" shall be defined as the employee's parents, parents-in-law, spouse, child, stepchild, brother, sister, stepparents or grandparents.

C. The Borough may, in its sole discretion, grant the employee one (1) leave day for the death of any other member of the employee's family, which shall be the day of that person's funeral.

D. The employee, with the written approval of the Department Head and the Borough Administrator, may take additional time off for funeral leave by utilizing his or her accumulated time off (vacation days, personal days, etc.).

ARTICLE XVII

JURY LEAVE

A. Any permanent full-time employee who loses time from his or her job because of jury duty as certified by the Clerk of the Court shall be paid by the Borough the difference between his or her daily base rate of pay (up to a maximum of the normal number of hours per day) and the daily jury fee subject to the following conditions:

1. The employee must notify the Department Head immediately upon receipt of a

summons for jury service;

2. The employee has not voluntarily sought jury service;

3. No employee is attending jury duty during vacation and/or other time off from Borough employment; and,

4. The employee submits adequate proof of the time served on the jury and the amount received for such service.

B. If on any given day an employee is attending jury duty, he or she is released by the Court prior to 12:00 Noon, that employee shall be required to return to work by 1 PM that day in order to receive pay for that day.

ARTICLE XVIII

INJURY LEAVE

A. 1. In the event an employee becomes disabled by reason of service-connected injury or illness and is unable to perform his duties, then, in addition to any sick leave benefits otherwise provided for herein, he may be entitled to full pay for a period of up to thirty (30) days. In the event an employee is granted said injury leave, the Borough's sole obligation shall be to pay the employee the difference between his regular pay and any compensation, disability, or other payments received from other sources provided by the Borough. At the Borough's option, the employee shall either surrender and deliver his entire salary payments, or the Borough shall pay the difference.

2. If an employee returns to work from injury leave of less than thirty (30) days, he may return to injury leave for the same injury for an additional period of time which, when added to the initial period of injury leave, totals no more than thirty (30) days.

3. When an employee returns from injury leave, he shall be entitled to a new period of injury leave for a period of up to thirty (30) days if the employee submits a new injury claim due to an independent event causing re-injury or a new injury.

B. When an employee requests injury leave, he or she shall be placed on "conditional injury leave" until a determination of whether or not an injury or illness is work related, and whether employee is entitled to injury leave is initially made by the Boroughs Workmen's Compensation carrier, with the final determination, if necessary, to be made by the Workmen's Compensation Bureau or Court. When and if it is finally determined that the injury or illness is not work related and that the employee is not entitled to job inquiry compensation, the employee shall be denied

injury leave and shall have all time off charged against his or her accumulated sick time and, if necessary, against any other accumulated leave time. If the employee does not have enough accumulated time off, he or shall be advanced sick time to cover the absence. If the employee leaves the employ of the Borough prior to reimbursing the Borough for such advanced time, the employee shall be required to reimburse the Borough for such advanced time.

C. Any employee who is injured, whether slight or severe, while working, must make an immediate report within two (2) hours thereof to their Department Head.

D. It is understood that the employee must file an injury report with their Department Head so that the Borough may file the appropriate Worker's Compensation Claim. Failure to so report said injury shall result in the failure of the employee to receive compensation under this Article.

E. The employee shall be required to present evidence by a certificate of a physician designated by the insurance carrier that he is unable to work, and the Borough may reasonably require the employee to present such certificate from time to time.

F. If the Borough does not accept the certificate of the physician designated by the insurance carrier, the Borough shall have the right, at its own cost, to require the employee to obtain a physical examination and certification of fitness by a physician appointed by the Borough.

G. In the even the Borough-appointed physician certifies the employee fit to return to duty, injury leave benefits granted under this Article shall be terminated, unless the employee disputes the determination of the Borough-appointed physician. Then the Borough and the employee shall mutually agree upon a third physician who shall examine the employee. The cost of the third physician shall be borne equally by the Borough and the employee. The determination of the third physician as to the employee's fitness to return to duty shall be final and binding upon the parties. In the event the third physician also certifies the employee fit to return to duty, injury leave benefits granted under this Article shall be terminated.

H. An employee who has abused his privileges under this Article will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

ARTICLE XIX
FAMILY LEAVE

The Borough shall be governed by the Borough's Family Leave Policy.

ARTICLE XX
MILITARY LEAVE

All bargaining unit employees shall be entitled to Military Leave in accordance with State Statutes.

ARTICLE XXI
UNION LEAVE

Up to two (2) days per year of Union leave shall be provided for standard training and conferences for Steward(s) only. The Union will give the Borough thirty (30) days' notice in writing in advance of such attendance.

ARTICLE XXII
LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

A. Upon making timely application, employees may apply to the Borough Administrator for a leave of absence without pay for a period not exceeding thirty (30) days. Such leave may be granted to employees who are temporarily or physically handicapped or incapacitated to such an extent that they are unable to perform their duties.

B. Leave may also be granted to attend an approved school with a course of study designed to increase an employee's usefulness upon return to service.

C. A leave of absence will not be granted to employees as a matter of convenience or temporary advantage to such employees by reason of place of work, hours of work or increased compensation. Employees seeking a leave of absence without pay shall submit such a request in writing, stating the reasons, when the leave is desired, and the expected return to duty date.

D. Any employee leaving a position prior to receiving such written authorization by the Borough Administrator shall be deemed to have left said position and abandoned such job title. Further, such an act shall be considered a resignation from the employment of the Borough.

E. While on unpaid leave status, no seniority shall accrue, nor shall any employee be entitled to benefits under this Agreement. An employee may, however, make appropriate arrangements to repay health insurance premiums for the time of such leave.

ARTICLE XXIII
ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE

Absence without notification for three (3) consecutive days shall constitute a resignation, except in the event of extraordinary circumstances which would make it impossible for the employee or a member of the employee's family to communicate with the Borough. Such cases will be individually evaluated by the Borough Administrator.

ARTICLE XXIV
HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

A. The Borough shall provide health insurance for all employees and their families covered by this Agreement. The parties agree that the Borough may provide health benefits through the New Jersey State Health Benefits Plan or comparable plan with stand alone prescription. Local 32 members may select any base plan offered. The parties will be bound by any program changes made by the state. In the event that the cost of the above insurance coverage(s) escalates to become prohibitive to the Borough, the Borough may replace the existing coverage(s), provided that coverage under the new plan is equivalent coverage, and further provided that employees will be covered under the new plan for any and all pre-existing conditions for which they have been covered under the existing plan. Prior to making any change to the insurance benefits currently offered to the bargaining unit, the Borough will provide the Union with at least sixty (60) calendar days' notice in advance of any change, and will offer the Union an opportunity to bargain over the impact of the changes if requested by the Union."

The following incentives are for bargaining unit employees who select either the OMNIA Plan, the Low- High Deductible Plan, or the High-High deductible plan:

Omnia Plan–

\$1,000 annual cash taxable incentive for Single Coverage

\$2,500 annual cash taxable incentive for Employee/spouse/Parent/ child(ren) and Family Coverage.

Such amount to be quarterly over the course of the calendar year.

For employees who switch to the High Deductible plans at the commencement of 2026, the following amounts will be contributed to a Health Savings Account for the calendar year as follows:

High Deductible Low

Family Plan, H/W and P/C - \$1,700 to be paid into an HSA in January 2026.

Single Plan - \$850 to be paid into an HSA in January 2026.

High Deductible High

Family Plan, H/W and P/C - \$4,200 to be paid into an HSA in January 2026.

Single Plan - \$2,100 to be paid into an HSA in January 2026.

The decision to enroll in the above plans shall be entirely the employee's own decision. Members of the bargaining unit have the option to enroll in the above plans with the HSA, and an employee will not have access to the HSA if the employee decides to enroll in any plan other than those listed above.

The HSA contributions are based on the current plans within the New Jersey Health Benefits Program. If the parties agree to change to a new program/or plan, the amount of contributions to an HSA, if any, will be subject to negotiation.

B. Employees covered under this contract will contribute towards their medical benefits as prescribed by Chapter 78 of the New Jersey State Statutes.

C. Each employee shall have a complete annual physical examination by the physician of his or her choice. The employee shall cause the physician to have a general report of the examination forwarded to the Borough in which report the physician shall indicate in general terms that the state of the employee's health and fitness to perform his or her duties. The Borough may, with reasonable cause, direct an employee to undertake more frequent physician examinations, at its cost, and with its physicians.

D. Employees who have retired in good standing from the Borough's employment may opt to purchase, at their own expense, medical insurance through the Borough's group insurance plan for a period of up to one (1) year following expiration of their COBRA eligibility. Payment for such insurance shall be made to the Borough monthly, in advance. In the event of nonpayment, the Borough may terminate such coverage immediately.

ARTICLE XXV

PERSONNEL FILES

A. The Borough shall establish personnel files or confidential records which shall be maintained under the direction of the Borough.

B. An employee covered under this Agreement shall, by a written request during normal business hours, review, in the presence of the Borough Administrator or designee, any written evaluation reports or written complaint which may be contained in the employee's personnel file. Upon written request, an employee shall receive, with a reasonable time after said request, a copy of any document in the employee's personnel file.

C. Whenever a written complaint concerning an employee is placed in his personnel file, a copy shall be furnished to him and he shall be given the opportunity to rebut same in writing within ten (10) calendar days.

ARTICLE XXVI

BULLETIN BOARD

A. The Union shall have sole use of the designated Union bulletin board located in the Municipal Building for the sole purpose of posting notices relating to meetings and official business of the Union only. The Borough shall provide and install this bulletin board in a mutually agreeable location.

B. Only material authorized by the signature of the Union Representative and/or the Shop Steward shall be permitted to be posted on said bulletin board.

C. The Borough shall have removed from the bulletin board any material which does not conform with the intent of the above provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE XXVII

PROMOTION

A. Promotion is an advancement in job class having a higher level of duties and responsibilities and/or a salary range having a greater maximum.

B. Promotion is based on merit and fitness with proper qualifications. Seniority in lower level positions will also be a factor in considering an employee for promotion.

C. All job openings in the Borough shall be posted for a minimum of ten (10) working days prior to the application deadline for the position.

D. When an employee is promoted and has been paid at a rate equal to or exceeding the minimum of the new position, the appointment will be made at the rate within the range which grants an incremental increase of two (2.0%) percent upon promotion.

ARTICLE XXVIII
PROBATIONARY PERIOD

A. New employees will serve a probationary period of three (3) months. An extension of three (3) months may be added to the probationary period upon notice by the Borough to the Union. Probationary employees may be suspended or dismissed at any time during the probationary period. The Union will be notified upon extension of the probationary period.

B. The purpose of the probationary period is to evaluate the employee's work performance and conduct, and to determine whether the employee merits permanent status.

C. A written evaluation will be conducted prior to the end of the probationary period by the Department Head. The probationary period may be extended for an additional six (6) month period in the event the Department Head is unable to determine that the employee should be granted a regular appointment at the end of the initial period, or that the employee shall be dismissed. Only one (1) extension shall be granted.

D. Unless otherwise provided by law, an employee will not be considered permanent due to expiration of the probationary period and failure of the Department Head to evaluate his or her status. Permanent status will result only from authorization by the Borough Administrator.

E. A probationary employee who has successfully completed their probationary period will be granted status as a regular employee with all rights and privileges pertaining to that employment or position.

F. An employee who is to be dismissed during the probationary period shall be notified in writing of the dismissal and the reasons for the action.

ARTICLE XXIX
SENIORITY

A. Seniority is denied as an employee's total continuous years of service within the defined employment category (full-time, part-time, part-time equivalent, etc.).

B. The services of an employee who is transferred or reassigned to another department within the Borough will be considered continuous for the purpose of seniority and fringe benefits.

C. The seniority of an employee who transfers from one category to another (for example, part-time to full-time) shall be calculated from the time of the transfer.

D. The Finance Department will maintain records on employee seniority and will calculate benefits accordingly. Employees and Department Heads should verify their own record with those of the Finance Department.

ARTICLE XXX
LAYOFF AND RECALL

A. Layoff is the separation of a permanent employee from a position for reasons other than delinquency or misconduct. Classes of employees subject to layoff will be determined by the Borough Administrator with the approval of the Mayor and Council.

B. 1. Layoff or demotion of permanent employees shall be in the order of seniority with the last employee hired as the first laid off or demoted.

2. For the purposes of layoff, demotion, recall and bumping, seniority within the Department shall control over seniority in the classification. However, in order to exercise their rights with respect to Departmental seniority, an employee must have a minimum of six (6) months in that classification, otherwise seniority within the classification shall control.

C. 1. Employees displaced by a reduction in force may apply for other municipal positions covered by this bargaining agreement which are presently held by employees with less calculated seniority.

2. Displaced employees bump laterally or down to lower classifications and receive the rate of pay specified for the lower classification.

3. An employee subject to layoff shall receive at least forty-five (45) days' notice of the layoff, except in extenuating fiscal circumstances. The employee must notify the Borough Administrator, in writing, of his or her intention to exercise bumping rights within ten (10) working days of receipt of the layoff notice. All employees subsequently affected by the exercise of bumping rights shall be notified in writing, and shall have an opportunity, if applicable, to exercise their bumping rights within five (5) working days. However, the total time period within which the bumping rights must be exercised will be forty-five (45) days from when the first employee received his or her layoff notice. It is understood that any employee laid off because another employee exercised his or her bumping rights will not receive the forty-five (45) days' notice prior to their layoff because of the exercising of bumping rights pursuant to this

Agreement.

4. A displaced employee may only bump into a position where he or she has the ability and necessary specified or implied educational background to properly learn the new job to a proficient level within a four-week period. If training is necessary for the break-in period, the rate of pay shall be commensurate with the productivity anticipated during the break-in period.

5. If the employee's old position opens as a full-time position, this employee will be given first right to that open full-time position if he or she is still qualified for that position.

6. Probationary employees do not have bumping rights.

D. All employees who are laid off shall have first right to be re-employed in the same or a similar position for which the laid-off employee is qualified, in the inverse order in which they were laid off, and the Borough shall not employ anyone until all laid-off employees have been fully reinstated with all pay and privileges. This right shall extend for a period of one (1) year from date of termination, but shall not apply as a right to employees who had a performance rating of less than "acceptable" when laid off.

E. If an employee refuses reinstatement during the one (1) year period, then all re-employment rights are relinquished.

F. Part-time employees shall not be eligible to bump full-time employees.

ARTICLE XXXI

TRANSFER

A. Employees who desire to transfer voluntarily within the Borough may do so if a position vacancy exists, and the supervisor of the vacant position finds the employee qualified and the Mayor approves.

B. Employees whose service in a given position is no longer required or who can be better utilized in a different position temporarily or permanently, may be transferred involuntarily to a different position.

C. A probationary period of six (6) months will be mandatory following transfers. Permanent status and anniversary date will not be affected by transfers.

D. An employee transferred involuntarily for administrative reasons shall suffer no loss of pay.

ARTICLE XXXII

SEPARABILITY AND SAVINGS

A. If any clause or provision of this Agreement is deemed illegal and/or invalid through a court decision or legislation, that clause or provision shall become null and void. All other clauses or provisions of this Agreement shall not be effected, and shall remain in full force and effect.

B. If any clause or provision of this Agreement is deemed illegal and/or invalid, the Borough and the Union, upon the request of either party, shall meet and discuss the clause or provision in question. Neither the Borough nor the Union shall be obligated to agree to a modified, alternate, or replacement clause or provision.

ARTICLE XXXIII

FULLY BARGAINED AGREEMENT

A. This Agreement represents and incorporates the complete and final understanding and settlement by the parties of all bargainable issues which were or could have been subject to negotiations.

B. The parties acknowledge that during the negotiations that resulted in this Agreement, each had the unlimited right and opportunity to make demands and proposals with respect to any matter or subject not removed by law from the area of collective bargaining and that the understanding and agreements arrived at by the parties after the exercise of that right and opportunity are set forth in this Agreement.

C. The Borough and the Union, for the life of this Agreement, each shall voluntarily and unqualifiedly waive all bargaining rights, and each agrees that the other shall not be obligated to bargain or negotiate with respect to any subject or matter referred to or covered in this Agreement or with respect to any matter or subject not specifically referred or covered in this Agreement, even though each subject to matter may not have been within the knowledge of contemplation of either or both parties at the time they negotiated or signed this Agreement.

D. This Agreement may be modified in whole or part by the parties by an instrument, in writing only, executed by both parties.

E. It is the intent of the parties that the provisions of this Agreement will supersede all prior agreements and understandings, oral or written, expressed or implied, between the parties and shall govern their entire relationship and shall be the sole source of

any and all rights or claims which may be asserted in arbitration hereunder or otherwise. The Union, for the life of this Agreement, hereby waives any rights to request or negotiate or bargain with respect to any matters contained in this Agreement. It is mutually understood that this clause is a clear waiver as to any right or claim not expressed in this Agreement.

ARTICLE XXXIV

MISCELLANEOUS

The Borough shall supply job descriptions for all classifications.

ARTICLE XXXV

BOOT ALLOWANCE

All Blue Collar employees will be entitled to annual allowance of \$200.00 to be used towards the purchase of work boots.

ARTICLE XXXVI

CLOSING DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the Mayor deems it appropriate to close Borough Hall due to inclement weather, all essential bargaining unit employees required to do work beyond closing time shall be paid one and one-half (1 ½) times their hourly rate of pay for hours worked beyond closing time. Sewer plant employees working shift work shall be paid at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times their hourly rate of pay for all hours worked between 12:01 a.m. and 12:00 midnight on the day of closing, except that payment for any hours worked during which Borough offices are open shall be at the regular (non-overtime) rate.

ARTICLE XXVII

DURATION

This Agreement shall become effective January 1, 2026 and shall terminate on December 31, 2027. This Agreement shall continue in full force and effect from year to year thereafter, until one party or the other gives notice, in writing, no sooner than one hundred and fifty (150) and no later than one hundred and twenty (120) days prior to the expiration date of this Agreement of the desire to change, modify or terminate this Agreement.

The terms set forth in this Agreement shall remain in effect after December 31, 2027 and during such time that the Agreement for replacement of same is being negotiated. However, all

salaries shall remain frozen from the date of expiration of this agreement until a new collective negotiations agreement is approved and ratified.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have hereunto affixed their signatures.

ATTEST:

BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN

By: Margaret Wagner

Susan Bluth

Susan Bluth, Mayor

Dated: 3/22/26

ATTEST:

LOCAL 32, OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL
EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

By: [Signature]

Basilia Ral

Dated: 4/1/2026

4/1/26