

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MARCH 28, 2019 COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council President Moench read the following announcement:

Notice of Meeting

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of New Jersey, adequate notice of this meeting was provided on January 9, 2019 by sending written and electronic notice to the Courier News and the Star Ledger, posting on the Township website and on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, and filing with the Township Clerk.

On call of the roll, the following Council members were present:

Allen Kurdyla
Filipe Pedroso
Christine Henderson-Rose
Council Vice President Howard Norgalis
Council President Matthew C. Moench

Also Present: James T. Naples, Township Administrator
William B. Savo, Township Attorney
Linda J. Doyle, Township Clerk

Council President Moench led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

MARCH 14, 2019 - AGENDA SESSION
MARCH 18, 2019 - REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Pedroso, the March 14, 2019 agenda session minutes and March 18, 2019 regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote. Councilman Moench abstained on the March 18th regular session minutes.

Council Reports

Councilman Kurdyla

- Nothing new to report.

Councilwoman Rose:

- Attended the Library Advisory Board meeting and toured the new outside area for the children's library.

Councilman Pedroso

- Nothing new to report.

Council Vice President Norgalis:

- While cleaning out his basement he came upon a copy of the January 1, 1976 edition of the Somerset Messenger Gazette, a locally published weekly paper. One of the issues referenced was the Bridgewater Council discussing “fair share housing”. This was part of the court mandated fair share housing study due to be reviewed by Somerset County Court Judge Robert E. Gaynor on Feb 6, 1976. The same article noted that in Bedminster, a County Judge invalidated a portion of their zoning citing an effort to keep out low cost housing.
- Attended the Somerset County Planning Board “Planning Partners Forum” which is a quarterly meeting. Speakers included Mike Kerwin who talked about the Suburban Disadvantage Report, Tom D’Amico covering the County Preservation Plan and Ken Weeden describing the “Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County Study”
- The March 25th Planning Board meeting was cancelled for lack of application.

Council President Moench:

- Stated there was resident concern that administration appeared to be taking down comments on Face book that they didn’t like. While a memo from Township Attorney Savo indicated that comments from a fake or unverified account can be taken down, Councilman Moench offered his understanding of the law is that anyone can offer comment, adding that use of pseudo names is common. Councilman Moench inquired from administration what process was used to determine whether an account is unverified or otherwise invalid. He asked that administration provide what vetting process they use when checking face book messages so that residents understand when their comments are acceptable and when they are not.
- Councilman Pedroso asked that Administration provide copies of the comments that were deleted from the township’s social media websites. He expressed that it is troubling when government begins to censor public comment.

Mayor’s
Reports

Mr. Naples had no report.

Discussion

SOMERSET REGIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER (SRAS)

Natalie Zamen was present to provide an update on the Somerset Regional Animal Shelter (SRAS). She stated that adoption numbers have increased and

donation monies have also gone up as well. SRAS is in the process of getting organized in order to have a little more formalized relationship with the township and with the Friends of Somerset Regional Animal Shelter (FOSRAS).

Natalie Zamen added the shelter's 2019 goals are to have reports available online that will include adoption information, shelter minutes etc to allow for increased transparency.

Councilman Pedroso thanked and appreciated the efforts of the Shelter's administration to keep the animal shelter open and running. He expressed he is proud of how the governing body took charge approximately 6-years ago when the Mayor wanted to close the shelter but they worked hard to keep it running. He added the Shelter is of tremendous help to the community and especially teaches compassion for life.

Councilwoman Rose opined that she and the volunteers saved the shelter. She also expressed that while she is the liaison to the animal shelter, she was not aware there was to be a discussion on the animal shelter adding she should have been afforded the opportunity to gather a report, just as Natalie was able to provide a report to the council. Councilman Moench stated as the Council President, he is within his right to place items on the agenda without consultation.

**Public
Comment**

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Pedroso, the meeting was opened to the public.

Members of the public wishing to address the Council on any matter will be allowed two minutes to speak, unless there are unusual circumstances.

Michelle Smith, 927 Washington Valley Road was present. She expressed that March 10th was one of the hardest days of her life as she had to call 911 because her partner of 25-years was lying on the floor with an emergent situation. Ms. Smith comes from a small town but has lived here for 25-years and expressed that the Bridgewater Police Department really embraces a small town atmosphere. This being the hardest day of her life, there was a police officer that stayed with her the entire time and later that night, as the police were doing their rounds, they circled her home which was very comforting. Ms. Smith stated she wanted to put on the record that these officers made such a horrible day a little bit easier because she didn't feel completely alone.

Elizabeth Van Horne of the Van Horne House Middlebrook in Bridgewater, Township was present. Although they are County owned, they are located in Bridgewater and therefore invited the Council to their first ever heritage trail

association and first ever fundraiser that is scheduled for April 12, 2019. Ms. Van Horne stated they were gifted some Van Horne portraits which are being restored and will be unveiled on April 12th from 6pm-8pm. She also advised that the heritage trail association at the Van Horne house is one of the most prolific historic groups in Somerset and Middlesex counties. On June 8th, they will have a symposium on the Middlebrook Cantonment that will take place in the Bridgewater Municipal courtroom.

Councilman Pedroso remarked he has heard there were more revolutionary war battles in New Jersey than in any other state.

Geraldine Staub of 10 Braemar Place in Bridgewater, NJ was present. She echoed Michelle's comments indicating that she had a similar incident with a family member and the Police Department offered her excellent service.

Ms. Staub stated she had done the books for the animal shelter for the last 18years. She thanked Brian Bradshaw and his team for their phenomenal work and FOSRAS for supporting the shelter.

Ms. Staub talked about the center of excellence (COE) and expressed the COE will devalue their homes and community. She also expressed concern over a mailer she received from "out-of-towners" who are supporting Mayor Hayes noting she was disheartened by their comments adding they do not know what is best for Bridgewater.

Ms. Staub stated that as you head North on Route 202/206 beyond Talamini Road, a contractor came through and cut trees apparently to keep them away from the electrical wires. They then left all the debris lying along the side of the road which is very discouraging to look at. Ms. Staub was advised Township Administrator Naples will investigate the matter to determine best way moving forward.

Ms. Staub thanked the governing body for working on Braemar place but stated Muirfield Road is torn up, has huge potholes and is getting worse because of the winter. She questioned why Braemar was fixed and Muirfield wasn't noting it hasn't been repaired since the 1980s. Council president Moench stated that is a good question for the Mayor. Township Administrator Naples advised that every year, there is a comprehensive review of all the roads, the travel patterns etc. Administration then provides a report to the governing body at which time the Council allocates the monies and administration repairs the roads. Ms. Staub was advised to follow up with Administrator Naples to determine best way moving forward.

Councilman Pedroso spoke concerning Mrs. Staub's comments on the Center of Excellence noting they are right on but conservative. He stated the impact will exceed her neighborhood and will completely impact the entire town including traffic changes and changes to the character of Bridgewater and its quality of life. With regards to the mailers, he said that they are funded by an out-of-town PAC run by and funded by out-of-town people. He added that "out-of-towners" should not be telling us what is best for our township.

Alice Magee, 1923 Mastapeter Road in Martinsville, NJ 08836. She requested that the police department not be overburdened by not expanding them as we should. Ms. Magee stated her comments were removed from Face book by Councilman Pedroso who stated his is a personal page. Ms. Magee stated she has lived in Bridgewater Township for 25-years and this is the first Council meeting she has attended because things have been running smoothly. She opined that what is going on at the moment is a circus that needs to stop.

Kathy Healy, 514 Jackson Avenue Manville, NJ. Ms. Healy stated she is the president of FOSRAS which supports the shelter with outreach, volunteers and fundraising. She stated they would like assurance that they do not have to fight to keep the shelter open and that they can be there for many years to come. She added that residents can donate towels and sheets, canned food and money.

Councilman Pedroso stated he was not aware of the shelter being in any trouble that would disallow it from continued operation.

Maryanne Faliski of Bridgewater NJ stated she has been a resident for 44-years and has been to a lot of meetings. She expressed frustration with traffic and the proposed Center of Excellence.

Councilman Pedroso stated the Planning Board is continuing its discussion concerning the Center of Excellence and asked that anyone with concerns should attend their meetings as well to express their sentiments.

Jeffrey Foose 6 Forest View Drive in Martinsville, NJ 08836 was present. He expressed frustration with Mayor Hayes noting in 2011, he proposed to raise taxes by 6.5%. He added the Mayor pointed his finger to a 100-year war veteran and said "you will never get this property because this will only make backyards better in your neck of the woods". He added the Green Knoll Cell tower is a circus and he was not happy that "out-of-towners" telling us what is best for our township.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Pedroso, the public

comment portion was closed.

Resolutions There being no questions concerning the following resolutions, Council Vice President Norgalis read the resolutions by title and called for a consent vote:

AUTHORIZING A CHANGE ORDER TO THE CONTRACT WITH MUNICIPAL PUBLIC DEFENDER SCOTT C. MITZNER FOR THE YEAR 2018

AWARD OF EMERGENCY SNOW REMOVAL SERVICES TO FTS LANDSCAPING INC., 6 GASTON AVE., RARITAN, NEW JERSEY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$73,062.50

WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60.00 FOR BRIDGEWATER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH LOCATED AT 651 COUNTRY CLUB ROAD TO USE THEIR FIRE PIT FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOLDING AN EASTER SUNRISE OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE ON APRIL 21, 2019

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilwoman Rose, the foregoing resolutions were proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Councilwoman Rose	Aye
Council Vice-President Norgalis	Aye
Council President Moench	Absent

THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.

Copies of resolutions [#19-03-28-094 thru #19-03-28-096](#) are appended to the official minutes

**Closed
Session**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Bridgewater Township Council that this body will now hold a closed meeting to discuss contract negotiations.

When and if the matters discussed become public record, this will be made known to the public at that time.

The public is excluded from said meeting and further notice thereof is dispensed with all in accordance with Sections 8 and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act.

On the motion of Council President Moench, seconded by Councilman Pedroso, Council convened in a closed session at approximately 8:34 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations. All were in favor.

A copy of resolution [#19-03-28-097](#) is appended to the official minutes

On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Pedroso, the meeting reconvened to open session back in the courtroom at approximately 8:53 pm and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Matthew Moench
Council President