

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MARCH 30, 2020 COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Monday, March 30, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via electronic communication.

Council President Norgalis 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 3, 2020, WITH A SUBSEQUENT CHANGE IN THE TIME OF COMMENCEMENT OF SAID MEETING NOTICED ON MARCH 23, 2020 AND MARCH 27, 2020 IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 ET SEQ. AS AMENDED TO PERMIT PUBLIC BODIES AS THEREIN DEFINED TO CONDUCT PUBLIC MEETINGS BY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION OR OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT, AND WITH WRITTEN NOTICE AND ELECTRONIC NOTICE PROVIDED TO THE COURIER NEWS AND THE STAR LEDGER, POSTING ON THE WEBSITE AND THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AND FILING WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK.

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

Councilman Michael Kirsh
Councilman Allen Kurdyla
Councilman Timothy Ring
Council Vice President Filipe Pedroso
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

Also Present:

Matthew C. Moench, Mayor
Michael Pappas, Township Administrator
Wells Winegar, Deputy Administrator
Scott Maraldo, Director of Constituent Relations
Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney
Linda J. Doyle, Township Clerk
Grace Njuguna, Deputy Township Clerk

Council President Norgalis led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. There was a moment of silence to remember those affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh:

He acknowledged staff for making it possible to conduct Bridgewater Township's necessary business under unique circumstances in an extraordinary time. He particularly acknowledged Deputy Township Administrator Wells Winegar for coordinating the use of technology and Township Clerk staff members Linda

Doyle and Grace Karanja.

He also acknowledged the decisions and actions of Mayor Matthew Moench along with the efforts of Administrator Michael Pappas and municipal employees who have allowed the Council to continue delivering critical government services, albeit in ways we did not expect even a few weeks ago.

Board of Education

The Bridgewater school district is now in its 3rd week of distance learning. By all accounts, this effort is going well. Kitchen and dining room tables across town have been transformed into classrooms. Clearly the spring semester of 2020 is one that no family will soon forget. The Board of Education has also migrated to virtual meetings and met this way last Tuesday, March 24. It bears noting that the district moved to close schools in advance of the Governor's order to do so, but schools throughout the state will not open any sooner than the lifting of this order. Distance learning will continue through at least April 17. With federal social distancing guidelines now extended to April 30, it seems likely that distance learning will continue in Bridgewater for several more weeks.

The 2020-2021 tentative budget has been approved and sent to the county. The total school budget is \$172.46 million with a tax levy of \$152.33 million. Due to an increase in Bridgewater ratables, the school portion of the Bridgewater tax bill is anticipated to be reduced by \$13 per \$100,000 assessed.

At the March 12th meeting, Councilman Kirsh had noted that Superintendent Russell Lazovich will be leaving that position on July 1 and acknowledged that important news again.

Land Use Boards

All scheduled meetings of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment have been canceled through the end of April. Viability of holding meetings past that time will be assessed and communicated.

2020 Census

Councilman Kirsh explained that Bridgewater has undertaken the following actions—

- Mayoral proclamation of March as Census Awareness Month and April 1 as Census Day in the Township;
- Published a web page with basic information and links, accessible thorough our home page or directly at bridgewaternj.gov/2020-census;

- Intended social media has been scaled back due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting very high priorities, but I will work with Wells to make sure we get the word out about the importance of completing the Census;
- For the record, I plan to complete the Census for my family tomorrow, one day in advance of official Census Day and will post to social media.

A few quick reminders—

- Households have received as many as three mailings since March 12;
- For the first time in history, Census responses can be provided in three ways—online, by phone, and by mail;
- The 2020 Census will ask the following types of questions-- The number of people living in your household as of April 1, 2020, Each person's name, sex, date of birth, ethnicity, and race, The relationship between each person and the individual who is answering the Census on behalf of the household, Whether the home is owned with a mortgage, owned without a mortgage, rented, or occupied without payment of rent, and a contact phone number;
- The 2020 Census will not ask for the following types of information-- Citizenship status, Financial or banking information, Social Security Number;
- While Wednesday is Census Day, that is hardly the end of the effort across America;
- By responding this week, particularly online or by phone, residents will allow the Census to be completed in a cost- and effort-effective manner, reducing the need for Census staff to visit the community later this Spring and potentially into the summer. It is certainly possible that COVID-19 will make in-person visits more challenging than for previous Censuses.

An interesting result of the COVID-19 pandemic is that since individuals are to be counted based on where they reside on April 1, population numbers in some communities may be impacted. Under normal conditions, college students who live on or near campus would be counted from that location. With campuses now closed and students disbursed back to their permanent residences, we want to make sure that Bridgewater's young adults are properly counted.

Councilman Kirsh will continue to provide updates to the Township Council on the Census from time to time throughout the Spring.

Councilman Kirsh offered the following Closing Thoughts:

To those in the community with essential jobs, including healthcare

professionals, and those who are volunteering to help, thank you for stepping up in this time of extraordinary need. You are an inspiration.

Unfortunately, Bridgewater has already experienced considerable pain from this crisis. Our collective community heart aches for the four families that have been irreparably altered from this dreaded disease. We pray for you to find comfort and strength, and hope you can remain mindful of the love and support our township offers to you.

And for the many others who face illness and other impacts—whatever they are or will be -- may you also draw strength from knowing that you live in a supportive community and that we will collectively enjoy better days ahead.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- His work with the Open Space Committee is at a halt at this time as we all take the time to be safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Acknowledged all those affected by the pandemic, specifically those that are sick or have lost loved ones and offered them his sincere condolences.
- Asked for prayers and support to the first responders including the firefighters and police who continue to put their lives on the line for the sake of others
- Acknowledged the efforts of Mayor Moench and his administration in leading the Township through this pandemic.

Councilman Ring offered the following sentiments:

Let me first extend my thanks to everyone on the front line of this pandemic. From all of our healthcare workers to first responders to retail workers and everyone else involved- THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOUR ARE DOING!

I know these are challenging times for everyone. I thank the administration for sharing regular updates everyday. I know some residents have expressed a desire for more information about those impacted in Bridgewater. I don't want to speak for the administration but I do want to share that New Jersey has placed very strict requirements on how information on those impacted can be shared. For example, up till yesterday the NJ Attorney General forbid EMS from being told if they were responding to a residence of someone who tested positive for COVID 19. Fortunately for our first responders, the Attorney General relaxed that standard yesterday for not only EMS but Fire as well. The updated guidelines yesterday included language that threatens serious consequences for violations of the new policy. So while I understand the desire

for more information, I also recognize the restrictions placed on the town about what information can be shared. I urge everyone to adhere to the requests to stay home. It is the safest thing that we can do right now.

Also related to COVID 19- some brief liaisons reports-

Regarding the Municipal Alliance (Governors Substance Abuse Council) - as of March 23 the state has suspended the program until further notice.

The Animal Shelter continues to operate with limited staff taking care of those animals on site and providing animal control services within Bridgewater. However, consistent with township's emergency declaration, the facility is closed to the public for adoptions.

Lastly, while we are using some new technology tonight, I hope that when things return to normal, we can use this technology to share our meetings on-line on a regular basis.

Council Vice President Pedroso:

- His thoughts and prayers are with those that have been impacted by the pandemic. He encouraged everyone that we will get through this season together and asked all to remain positive and follow the social distancing recommendations.

Council President Norgalis offered the following sentiments:

I will shorten my report as many of the items I planned to cover have already been reviewed in significant detail.

Attended several Office of Emergency Management meetings where the township marshals its effort to confront the COVID 19 pandemic.

Received a phone call from Sekhar Vemparala, a prominent member of the Hindu Temple on 202/206, indicating the Temple is in the process of obtaining a supply of Personal Protective gear for use by township squads and police. When I receive it, I will give to Mr. Pappas for distribution.

Attended, along with Council VP Pedroso, numerous financial meetings with CFO Turchan, Admin Pappas and Mayor Moench to discuss the development of the 2020 Budget. It will be a very tough budget year.

Michael Kirsh please note, I completed my census input.

I ask for prayers and support for those Bridgewater families affected by COVID19.

Mayor's Report

- Mayor Moench sent out condolences to those that have lost their loved ones due to the pandemic.
- He reminded everyone that there are very strict rules to releasing numbers and gathering information regarding the pandemic. We will gather and release the information while doing it within the constraints of the law.
- Thanked Christine Madrid, Director of Human Services along with the Administrator and Deputy Administrator for their work during this pandemic.
- Staff members participate in weekly/daily calls to coordinate with others in the County, State, with the OEM coordinators, first responders and others to ensure we are up to date on what is required of us.
- The township has a link that provides residents updates on what businesses are up and running. He however urged that residents adhere to the social distancing restrictions.
- We are working with the municipal employees to ensure that they are protected even as they continue to work for the residents.
- Thanked the Bridgewater Chinese Association for their contribution of N95 masks and same will be provided to our first responders
- Reminded the members of the public to sign up to receive emails and updated information. He added that Face Book is not the most efficient way to communicate to the township. for any concerns or issues that need to be addressed, please call or email the township staff.
- The budget will not be introduced tonight because there are significant changes that need to be addressed due to impacts related to the Covid-19 crisis.

Public Comment

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting was opened to the public.

Members of the public wishing to address the Council on any matter will be allowed to provide public input via electronic transmission with all comments to be read into the record, unless there are unusual circumstances.

There was a five (5) minute recess to allow the public additional time to submit public comment via the link/portal provided.

Following recess, on the call of the roll by Township Clerk Doyle, the following Council members were present:

Councilman Michael Kirsh
Councilman Allen Kurdyla
Councilman Timothy Ring

Council Vice President Filipe Pedrosa
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

The following comments were read into the record:

Claudia Bateman, 94 Catherine Lane, Bridgewater, NJ.

First my family would like or extend our condolences to the families of Bridgewater Township that have lost loved ones to COVID-19. Second we'd like to thank Mayor Moench and his team for providing daily updates about the COVID-19 on Bridgewater Township's Facebook page. These are updates available for the world, country by country, state by state. However it's great to have an update specific to Bridgewater. Thank-you & everyone stay well.

Cathy Franco, 766 Weemac Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

With the Governor's request related to sewer and water authorities, how will or has Bridgewater sewer answered this in response to the Governor's request?

Cathy Franco, 766 Weemac Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

With the Governor's changes to mortgage payments, how will these effect tax payments which will be due on May 1?

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the public comment portion was closed.

Public
Hearing &
Final Action
Ordinances

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 4 (ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONS) ARTICLE XII (DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES) AND ARTICLE XVIII (DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PARKS MAINTENANCE) OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER SO AS TO FURTHER AMEND AND CLARIFY THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BOTH DEPARTMENTS

Mayor Moench said this ordinance was created in order to better match the current structure of operations in these departments.

There was no public comment regarding this Ordinance.

On motion of Councilman Pedrosa, seconded by Councilman Ring, the foregoing Ordinance was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council Vice President Pedrosa	Aye

Council President Norgalis

Aye

ORDINANCE #20-09 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution **#20-03-30-099** is appended to the official minutes

Introduction of Ordinances

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 26 ENTITLED “COMPENSATION AND PAY PERIODS,” SECTION 26-24 ENTITLED “OVERTIME” TO REMOVE SUBCODE OFFICIALS FROM THE LIST OF EXEMPT EMPLOYEES IN SUBSECTION B THEREOF FROM RECEIVING OVERTIME PAY

Mayor Moench explained this agreement for shared service already exists and this amendment reflects Raritan paying the overtime costs to cover the Township’s associated costs.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the foregoing Ordinance was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council Vice President Pedroso	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution **#20-03-30-100** is appended to the official minutes

Linda J. Doyle, Township Clerk read the following report:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the said pending ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised as required by statute fixing the 16th day of April, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. prevailing time on said day as the time and the Bridgewater Township Municipal Court Chambers at 100 Commons Way in said Township as the place for hearing and final action.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Clerk shall forthwith post on the bulletin board in the Township Municipal Building at 100 Commons Way, a true copy of said ordinance and make copies available to members of the general public and spread the same upon the minutes of the meeting.

Resolutions

Council President Norgalis read the following resolutions by title, asked for comment from Administration for each resolution then called for a consent vote:

AUTHORIZING BUDGET TRANSFERS FOR APPROPRIATION RESERVE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$336,868.04 IN SEWER UTILITY FUND

Mayor Moench explained this resolution allows for the transfer of funds from where they were not expended to the sewer fund where funds are needed.

AUTHORIZING BUDGET TRANSFERS FOR APPROPRIATION RESERVE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$818.00

Mayor Moench explained this resolution allows for the transfer of funds from where they were not expended to the appropriation reserve.

AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF VARIOUS DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SOMERSET COUNTY IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY'S SOMERSET MUNICIPAL BANC PROGRAM

Township Administrator Pappas explained that this resolution will allow us to utilize the Somerset municipal banc program for the purchase of police vehicles.

RESOLUTION AMENDING 20-03-12-096 AUTHORIZING THE EMPLOYMENT OF MICHAEL F. SULLIVAN, ASLA, AICP, OF THE FIRM OF CLARKE CATON HINTZ TO SERVE AS SPECIAL PLANNING CONSULTANT TO ASSIST IN THE DRAFTING AND REVIEW OF THE REDEVELOPER'S AGREEMENT FOR THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS CIP II/AR BRIDGEWATER HOLDINGS BLOCK 483 LOTS 17, 18 & 19 ROUTE 202/206 AS KNOWN AS THE BRIDGEWATER CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000

Council President Norgalis explained that Township Attorney Corsini has recommended the hiring of Planner Michael Sullivan who has significant expertise to represent us in managing the redeveloper's agreement for the COE.

AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER NO.1/FINAL CHANGE ORDER DECREASING THE CONTRACT PRICE FROM \$848,573.00 TO \$811,365.14 A DECREASE OF 4.38% OR \$37,207.86, AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROJECT, RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE BOND, ACCEPTANCE OF THE MAINTENANCE BOND, AND FINAL PAYMENT TO JTG CONSTRUCTION, INC. (188 JEFFERSON STREET, SUITE 387, NEWARK, NJ 07105) FOR THE PINE STREET SANITARY SEWER REHABILITATION PROJECT, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2017 CAPITAL SEWER FUND

No comment.

AUTHORIZING AN AWARD OF CONTRACT TO APPRAISAL SYSTEMS, INC. 264

SOUTH STREET, BUILDING 2, SUITE 1B, MORRISTOWN, NJ 07960 TO PERFORM PROFESSIONAL APPRAISAL INSPECTIONS AND RELATED SERVICES IN CONNECTION WITH THE TOWNSHIP REASSESSMENT PROGRAM FOR 2020 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$59,520.00

This resolution will allow for professional appraisal inspections and related services in connection with the 2020 Township Reassessment Program.

AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AND R.I. HERITAGE INN OF BRIDGEWATER, LLC AND S.S. HERITAGE INN OF BRIDGEWATER, LLC FOR A HOTEL, RESTAURANT, AND MEDICAL OFFICE FACILITY LOCATED ON BLOCK 222, LOTS 3, 4 AND 5 (FORMERLY KNOWN AS 1260 ROUTE 22, DAY'S INN) IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER

No comment

RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE VACATION TIME CARRYOVER PROVISIONS PURSUANT TO SECTION 26-31(B) OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FROM JUNE 30, 2020 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2020 IN CONSIDERATION OF STAFFING REQUIREMENTS RESULTING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Township Administrator Pappas explained that the Municipal Code of the Township of Bridgewater states that “vacation time should be used in the year in which it is earned. It may, however, be extended through June of the following year with the approval of the appropriate department director and Township Administrator. Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Administration has proposed extending this carryover requirement from June 30, 2020 to December 31, 2020 to afford employees more flexibility in the use of their accumulated vacation days and to avoid penalizing employees that have altered prior vacation time usage plans to assist the Township in responding to the aforementioned pandemic; and

TEMPORARY WAIVER OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10.00 CHARGED TO ANY PARTICIPANT REQUESTING A REFUND FROM A BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP RECREATION PROGRAM DURING THE DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY ISSUED ON MARCH 16, 2020

No comment.

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60.00 FOR

THE ARC OF SOMERSET COUNTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE “STEP UP FOR THE ARC” WALK AND 5K RUN HOSTED AT DUKE ISLAND PARK ON SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2020, FROM 7:30 AM TO NOON

No comment.

AUTHORIZING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT

Township Administrator Pappas explained that this resolution will allow us to solicit proposals for an affordable housing administrative agent. The cost of this will be paid from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

GOVERNING BODY CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION’S “ENFORCEMENT GUIDANCE ON THE CONSIDERATION OF ARREST AND CONVICTION RECORDS IN EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS UNDER TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964”

No comment.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Ring, the foregoing resolutions were proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council Vice President Pedroso	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.

Copies of resolution [#20-03-30-101 thru #20-03-30-112](#) is appended to the official minutes

Council President Norgalis stated that should the residents have any comments to offer on how the Council is doing, the following email address can be utilized: tellthecouncil@bridgewaternj.gov

The next Council meeting will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2020.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President