

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
APRIL 16, 2020 COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Thursday, April 16, 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: 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.

Minutes

FEBRUARY 13, 2020 - SPECIAL SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2020 - AGENDA SESSION
MARCH 2, 2020 - REGULAR SESSION
MARCH 12, 2020 - REGULAR SESSION
MARCH 30, 2020 - VIRTUAL SESSION

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the above

Council Reports

mentioned minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

Councilman Kirsh offered the following sentiments:

I want to acknowledge our Township staff for continuing to provide a highly functional government, albeit in ways none of us could have predicted. The staff members who have made this meeting possible, allowing us to conduct Bridgewater Township's necessary business include Wells Winegar, Scott Maraldo, Linda Doyle, and Grace Karanja. Please accept our sincere thanks for your efforts.

Board of Education

The Bridgewater-Raritan school district continues distance learning across all grades. Clearly the spring semester of 2020 is one that no family will soon forget. 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.

Land Use Boards

All scheduled meetings of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment have been canceled through the end of April.

2020 Census

The official Census Day—April 1—occurred just over two weeks ago. Residents who have not yet completed the census are encouraged to do so as quickly as possible-- online, by phone, or by mail. Paper forms have been distributed to anyone who did not respond early. Please spend the 10 minutes or so required to make sure that #BridgewaterCounts. The COVID crisis underscores the importance of the Census since some funding decisions for disasters like this are based on population numbers.

The next steps for the Census are less clear within the current COVID-19 environment. Typically, enumerators would be hired and dispatched to addresses that did not respond to previous invitations. Social distancing guidelines, which are likely to extend for many months, may make this impractical.

Again, the best way to avoid this within your individual household is to proactively respond online, by phone, or by mail.

As I learn more about next steps, I will work with Wells to update the page on the Township website devoted to the Census and also leverage social media.

I will continue to provide updates to the Township Council on the Census from time to time as conditions warrant.

Closing Thoughts

This Township Council met 17 days ago under the cloud of the 4 COVID-19 deaths the Bridgewater family had endured. As of today, we have 226 confirmed cases and have lost 25 precious souls to this plague. Our collective community heart aches even more at the same time it offers love and support to impacted families.

To those who are sick or have family members who are sick, we offer prayers for a speedy return to full health.

To our first responders, healthcare workers, and anyone else performing an essential role, we offer our sincere appreciation and wishes for your continued strength.

To those who are doing reasonably well, physically and emotionally, within this period of extraordinary stress, we offer hope that your formula for success will continue.

And to those who are troubled or have family members who are troubled, we encourage you to recognize these are extraordinary times. If you are experiencing physical or mental health challenges you are not alone. Please reach out to your primary healthcare provider or other resources to identify options for you.

If the past is an indicator, this collective nightmare may still get worse before it gets better. But by taking responsibility for what we can all reasonably control, like listening to the guidance we are provided about public interactions, we can be positive agents of change on our pathway to experiencing better days ahead.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Echoed Councilman Kirsh's comments regarding township residents, first responders and out township staff.
- Received an email today from Kimberly Towers regarding the Community Block Grant program. Councilman Kurdyla then reached out to Township Administrator Pappas. They will both be addressing this program that will soon be coming up.

Councilman Ring:

- Participated in the Emergency Management Council Meeting that was held by our newly appointed management members including Sergeant Edwards.
- Attended the COVID-19 Townhall meeting that was hosted by the Administration. He added it was a very nice and organized event and thanked everyone for their efforts.
- Sent his thoughts and prayers to everyone who has been affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

Council Vice President Pedroso:

- Echoed Councilman Kirsh's statements.
- His thoughts and prayers are with those that have been impacted by the pandemic.

Council President Norgalis offered the following sentiments:

Thanked Administrator Pappas and Deputy Administrator Wells for their assistance.

Received a telephone call from Tom Kean's Chief of Staff looking to setup food collection boxes in Bridgewater residential areas in support of the Somerset County Food Bank. I suggested that he also reach out to Administrator Pappas to add the municipal building as a collection point.

Somerset County has cancelled some recycling events including Hazardous Waste drop-off on 4-18, "Drop off for Framers" on 4-20, Composting Workshop on 4-22 and Operation Secure Shred on 4-25.

Just a reminder that April 22 is the 50th Anniversary of EARTH DAY. While April 22 is celebrated, the very first celebration took place on Mar. 21, 1970, the vernal equinox that year.

I participated in the Office of Emergency Management conference call chaired by Police Sgt. Jamie Edwards. Sgt. Edwards, who was formerly the Deputy OEM Coordinator, has been appointed by Mayor Moench as the Primary Coordinator. Sgt and his group have been intimately involved in the COVID-19 planning and operational process.

Listened in on Mayor Moench's Town Hall conference call in which a Q and A on COVID-19 was used to update Bridgewater residents.

Filipe Pedroso and I, as the Council Finance Committee, continue discussion with the Administration as we prepare to receive the Mayor's 2020 budget proposal in the coming weeks.

Administrator Pappas told me that Gov. Murphy, in his state of the state address today, recognized a former Bridgewater resident who passed from COVID -19. He sent me the following article: Margit Feldman, a former Bridgewater resident, passed away this week. She was a Holocaust survivor and was a featured speaker throughout the US and around the world. She was an articulate and passionate woman that shared her life story to all that would listen. She once said that she was thankful to God for sparing her life and that while she found it difficult to share her story, she did so in order that younger generations of people would understand what took place.

Township Administrator Pappas reported as follows:

**Mayor's
Report**

- Mayor Moench recently sent a letter to Governor Murphy and our legislative leaders outlining some of the challenges that municipalities are encountering during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Mayor Moench is appreciative of Councilman Kirsh's initiative in drafting a resolution to our legislative leaders advising them of our stand regarding aid. Same will be acted upon later on in the meeting.
- Mayor Moench has been invited to participate in a Mayor's conference call with the Governor's office this Sunday afternoon. The purpose of the call is to be advised of the governor's initiative and for an opportunity for the Mayors to pose any questions that they may have.
- As of today, a testing site has been opened at the Raritan Valley Community college. Advance registration and a letter from the doctor's office is required.
- The Township website has a list of those businesses that remain open. This is an attempt to assist the residents and support our businesses.
- A webinar has been scheduled for tomorrow, April 17, 2020, by the US Small Business Association who will be available to assist small businesses with information that can help them during this pandemic.
- Road projects and attention to the condition of our roads remains of importance to the administration. They are in the process of soliciting bids in order to investigate and study the condition of our roads and how best to respond moving forward.
- Thanked all that participated in making the Town hall conference meeting a success.
- On question of Council Kirsh, Administrator Pappas advised that the road study will likely be done when our roads regain normalcy in order that the data is an accurate representation of our needs.

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

**Public
Comment**

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 Pedroso
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

The following comments were read into the record:

Claudia Bateman, 94 Catherine Lane, Bridgewater, NJ. She requested that the governing body address any issues arising from potential decreased revenue given the COVID-19 pandemic. Council President Norgalis stated he will reach out to Ms. Bateman privately to discuss her concerns.

Carole Bianchi of JCP&L wished everyone well and advised she is available to address any concerns that the Township may have with regard to JCP&L.

The public was advised that in order for a comment to be received into the record, a name and address is required.

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

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

RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT FUND \$ 8,433,079.03

Township Administrator Pappas explained we are yet to introduce the budget. This resolution will allow us to continue operations while we wait for the 2020 budget to be adopted.

RESOLUTION PROVIDING ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF JOHN LANZA, ESQ. OF LANZA & LANZA OF 5 MAIN STREET, FLEMINGTON, NEW JERSEY AS CHIEF MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$53,334.00

Township Administrator Pappas explained administration is sad to see the former prosecutor who resigned leave but they are confident of Mr. Lanza's capabilities to fill this position.

AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE, ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITE IMPROVEMENTS, AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE MAINTENANCE GUARANTEE FOR SUNRISE SENIOR LIVING, 390 ROUTE 22 EAST, BLOCK 400, LOT 5.04

Township Administrator Pappas explained this is a standard procedure.

AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,317.68, AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITE IMPROVEMENTS, FOR CINGULAR WIRELESS PCS, LLC D/B/A AT&T MOBILITY FORMERLY KNOWN AS BLOCK 483, LOT 20, 4801 ROUTE 202/206, BRIDGEWATER, NJ

Township Administrator Pappas confirmed the work has been completed and monies for performance can be released.

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$430.00 AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FIREWORKS DISPLAY FOR THE SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION, 355 MILLTOWN ROAD, BRIDGEWATER, NJ ON SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2020

Township Administrator Pappas explained all County parks have been closed and this event may or may not occur.

AUTHORIZING FIREWORK DISPLAYS AT SOMERSET PATRIOTS STADIUM ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 1 (RAIN DATE 8-11), THURSDAY, JULY 2 (RAIN DATE 7-21), FRIDAY, JULY 10 (RAIN DATE 7-31) SATURDAY, JULY 11 (RAIN DATE 8-5) SATURDAY, JULY 18 (RAIN DATE 8-13) AND THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020 (RAIN DATE 8-16)

Councilman Ring requested that Somerset Patriots appear before the governing body to present a year's schedule and explain what their process is so that everyone is on the same page.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, 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 [#20-04-16-113 thru #20-04-16-118](#) is appended to the official minutes

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE LACK OF FEDERAL STIMULUS MONEY BEING AWARDED TO BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP (TO DATE) AND REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION FOR FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDS THAT MAY BE AWARDED IN THE FUTURE

Councilman Kirsh explained that on March 2020, the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate passed S. 3548, a \$2.2 Trillion “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act” also known as the “CARES Act”. The intention of the CARES Act was to provide relief to individuals, businesses, agencies, and governments to account for negative financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bridgewater Township was not among those municipalities that were able to acquire aid as we do not meet the requirements that have been set forth.

This resolution is to express to our elected Federal representatives to fight for Bridgewater Township to help minimize the impact of this crisis on its residents and property taxpayers.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the foregoing resolution 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 RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#20-04-16-119](#) is appended to the official minutes.

Council President Norgalis stated that we will resume our normal start time of 7:30pm for all future meetings.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President