

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MAY 7, 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, May 7, 2020 at 7:30 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 MAY 4, 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.

Minutes

APRIL 16, 2020 - REGULAR SESSION, VIRTUAL ACCESS

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the above mentioned minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

Council Reports

Councilman Kurdyla:

- He along with Township Administrator Pappas worked on the Block grant program and submitted their recommendations. He expressed disappointment that one organization did not receive funding and on that

end contacted the chairperson to express his discontent.

- He reached out to administration about the possibility of working with the Fire Districts to assist them in conducting virtual public meetings. While Administration has agreed, he is waiting to hear back from the fire districts in this regard.
- He thanked all the first responders and township staff that continue to work in order that the business of government may continue.

Councilman Ring:

- Participated, along with Administration and Council President Norgalis in the local emergency council meeting that was conducted by Bridgewater OEM. The discussion was regarding COVID-19 and the Township's continuing efforts to ensure appropriate response.

Councilman Kirsh:

- On May 12th, the Planning Board has scheduled a meeting for administrative purposes.
- The Zoning Board is scheduled to meet on May 19th for administrative purposes.
- The Governor has announced that the schools will be closed thru the remainder of the school year.
- As far as the census, we remain at a period where all are required to fill this out. He encouraged everyone to take part in the Census in order to reflect real numbers as aid is based on population.
- Acknowledged that our community is hurting as many have lost loved ones. He sent his thoughts and prayers to those residents that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council Vice President Pedroso:

- He echoed Councilman Kurdyla's thoughts on acknowledging our first responders and township employees who continue to work and allow for government business to continue.
- He echoed Councilman Ring's sentiments in sending his thoughts and prayers to those that have been affected by the pandemic.

Council President Norgalis offered the following sentiments:

- Participated in several Office of Emergency Management Conference calls regarding State, County and Township COVID activities and results.
- Several weeks ago I reported that COVID victim Margit Feldman, a holocaust survivor and former Bridgewater resident was eulogized by Gov. Murphy. She was a national and an International speaker. Sadly her husband Harvey passed away just nine days after Margit.

- Received a phone call from Sekhar Vemparala, a prominent member of the Hindu community. Besides being an Investment Analyst, Sekhar is an accomplished chef and would like to prepare some meals in support of the police department. I put him in touch with Sgt. James Edwards, the head of our Office of Emergency Management group.
- Claudia Bateman reached out to the Council to ask for help in understanding the deed restriction on the 4 ½ acre Glenwood Terrace Home Owners Association property. She believes that the deed restriction came about from township Council action sometime in the 1950s. I have asked her to provide a copy of the deed for Township Legal review.
- Just a quick word about the COVID-19 results as they relate to Bridgewater. The number of confirmed cases involving our residents is 407. This number has changed somewhat as cases are reviewed. The coding of the individual reports are being refined as more information is available. The fatality number was 48 as of today with the vast majority being residents from the numerous nursing and extended care facilities.
- The Center of Excellence project on 202/206 continues to make news as the developer, Advance Realty, has again sued the Township in an attempt to avoid having the project return to the Planning Board for review of the supermarket and hotel floor plans. Advance has asked the Court to simply approve their plans in clear violation of the agreements reached in public meetings of the Planning Board. More to follow in the future on that issue.

**Mayor's
Report**

Mayor Matthew C. Moench reported as follows:

- The municipal building is not open to the public. Township employees have been working remotely from their homes and arrangements have been made for public works employees to work in a safe way. Administration is currently working on a plan to bring employees back to work responsibly.
- Administration has been working to provide more and accurate information regarding those affected by COVID-19.
- Administration has been in touch with nursing homes and long term care facilities in an effort to support them whenever possible.
- Mayor Moench thanked the staff that has continued to support and provide services for our residents.
- Mayor Moench thanked resident Barbara Ronka for the donation of a tree for Arbor Day which has been planted at the Municipal building.
- Hoffman Road has been in dire need of reconstruction. Nine (9) bids were received and the lowest bidder for this project came in \$62,000

under what we had budgeted. Mayor Moench stated he hoped this trend will continue as it will allow us additional funds to address more roads.

- While the County is working on roads that were not completed last year, the township continues to work on roads that were awarded in 2019.
- We have a partnership with Boxcar. This allows residents to pre-order groceries and pay for same online. The residents then pull-up in the municipal building and their groceries are placed in their trunk with very limited interaction. 50-residents took part in this free service last weekend.
- The grace period for tax payment is being extended. In that regard, Mayor Moench thanked the school district for allowing us additional time to make payments to them. We are waiting to hear back from the County and hoping that they follow suit. Fire Districts have to be paid immediately and in full in order that there are no gaps in service.
- Mayor Moench has partnered with a few other Mayors to talk about legislation that will allow towns to if necessary issue COVID-19 relief bonds that we can pay off slowly. Mayor Moench expressed COVID-19 has negatively affected our finances which is part of the reason that we are yet to adopt this year's Budget. He stated administration is actively looking for funds without adversely affecting our budget or burdening the residents with a huge tax increase.
- All departments are scheduled to meet with CFO Natasha and Administrator Pappas to discuss budget cuts. Notices have been sent out to all employees alerting them of potential cuts in the work force.
- Administration has agreed to work with our Fire Districts to assist them in conducting virtual public meetings.
- Administration has agreed to partner with Fire District #3 in offering QPA services.

**Public
Comment**

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, 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 Pedroso
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

Deputy Administrator Wells Winegar read the following resident comments into the record verbatim:

Stephanie Black, 5 Ann Place - I'm interested in: construction resuming in Bridgewater and across the state 'not' just for construction projects for the state of NJ; the courts re-opening using CCTV, PPEs, and/or online. and government employees furloughed until we need their services.

Geraldine Staub, 10 Braemer Place - I very much appreciate the Bridgewater Newsletter that is published, which I receive via Email. As part of the newsletter, there are updates on what is going on within various departments of our township. So I would like to request that the township newsletter include updates on what is going on at the Somerset Regional Animal Shelter. I am sure that Brian Bradshaw, Manager, would be more than happy to give our town an update on how they contribute to our community. Thanks

Geraldine Staub, 10 Braemer Place - I believe it was 2 years ago the street of Braemar Place was repaved. I reached out to Mike Pappas, who referred me to Tom Genova. It seems to me that the street which is actually a cul de sac, is cracking & already crumbling down at the cul de sac. This street gets virtually no traffic. Tom Genova did come out & I think he did take a look at the street condition. I would like the town to know that this quality of workmanship should not be acceptable. After waiting 30+ years for this street to be repaved, I would hope that it would last a little longer. I would like the township to address this situation. Thank you

Michael Babulski, 1060 Hoffman Road - My comment is regarding resolution 11 (d). I would like to thank Mayor Moench for moving this project forward. I, along with several of my neighbors have attempted to contact the prior administration including the Mayor and Council without even the courtesy of a response. When candidate Moench came to my home seeking support he received an ear full from me. He stood there and took the verbal beating while explaining his frustrations and putting forth his plan for the future. My family, friends, and neighbors supported him and I take this project as a positive sign of a responsive elected body. I hope it continues in this the Township we love to be a part of.

Cathy Franco - I would like to start with thanking all the township employees

who continue to “serve” our residents whether in person or remotely for your continued service to our residents. My questions and comments related to tonight’s agenda

1- I am hopeful that the council will support the Mayors plan to delay the late payment date for property tax payments Many residents/property owners have not received their stimulus payments, unemployment checks or rental payments This making it difficult to pay these without penalties or interest. In addition seniors who may rely upon 401k distribution may be hoping for some market recovery before taking out funds to pay property taxes

2- Without a proposed township budget - how will property tax bills be calculated- and should residents expect “revised” statements down the road?

3- will there/can there be additional funds allocated to volunteer rescue squads who rely completely on local Township and county grants as well as donations from “district residents” - can these additional funds be allocated based upon call volume by squad response and transport of township residents as some squads staff through volunteer efforts alone many day, evening, and weekend calls serving the needs of the entire township residents and businesses outside of their “district” through “mutual aide agreements”

4- is there a way for our health department to identify the age ranges of positive test results for township residents? (the county provides this as well as other townships, ie., Montgomery). Thank you as always for your consideration of my comments, questions and input.

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

Public
Hearing &
Final Action
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 services already exists. This Ordinance amendment ensures that Raritan pays the overtime costs to cover the Township’s associated costs.

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

No one wished to be heard.

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

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, 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

ORDINANCE [#20-11](#) WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#20-05-07-120](#) is appended to the official minutes

Introduction
of
Ordinances

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 206-6.1 (“RESTRICTED PARKING IN ELECTRIC VEHICLE DESIGNATED LOCATIONS”) IN THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, IN CHAPTER 206 (“VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC”) TO SET ENFORCEMENT MEASURES FOR THE IMPROPER USAGE OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS OPERATED ON TOWNSHIP PROPERTY

Councilman Ring stated two (2) dual port charging stations for electric vehicles were installed at the Bridgewater Township Municipal Complex and at the Somerset County Library System, Bridgewater Branch. This Ordinance will prohibit motor vehicles from parking or standing in any space designated for electric vehicle charging unless same is an electric vehicle. This Ordinance also gives the Police Department the authority to direct, enforce and issue citations to violators.

On motion of Councilman Ring, 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 [#20-05-07-121](#) 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 18th day of May, 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:

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT FUND \$ 1,466,432.25

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR SEWER UTILITY FUND \$ 1,804,812.94

Mayor Moench explained these resolutions will allow us the ability to continue business fiscally until the Budget is adopted.

EXTENDING THE GRACE PERIOD FOR THE PAYMENT OF PROPERTY TAX PAYMENTS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2020 FROM MAY 11, 2020 TO JUNE 1, 2020

Mayor Moench explained Administration does not have the ability to simply extend the grace period for payment of property taxes. The Governor has however allowed municipalities, if they so choose, to extend the grace period in which residents can pay their taxes. He advised that residents have until June 1st to pay their taxes without penalty or interest. If taxes are not received by June 1st, the resident will incur penalty and interest beginning May 1st.

AUTHORIZING THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX COLLECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER TO PREPARE AND MAIL ESTIMATED TAX BILLS FOR 2020 CALENDAR YEAR IN ACCORDANCE WITH P.L. 1994, c. 72

No comment.

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO DESANTIS CONSTRUCTION, INC (491 ELIZABETH AVENUE, SOMERSET, NJ 08873) FOR THE HOFFMAN ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - ENTIRE LENGTH, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2019 CAPITAL FUND IN

THE AMOUNT OF \$351,627.65

No comment.

APPROVING PARTICIPATION WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY IN A SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY UP TO THE AMOUNT OF \$60,000.00

No comment.

AUTHORIZING AN AWARD OF CONTRACT TO COMMUNITY GRANTS, PLANNING & HOUSING, LLC OF 1249 SOUTH RIVER ROAD, SUITE 301, CRANBURY, NJ 08512 TO SERVE AS THE TOWNSHIP'S ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PROVIDE HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM SERVICES FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$105,980.00

It was noted that this resolution will have no impact to the budget as these funds will be expended from the Affordable Housing trust fund.

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, 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 [#20-05-07-122 thru #20-05-07-128](#) is 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 litigation, contract negotiations & personnel.

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 Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, Council convened in closed session at approximately 8:18 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#20-05-07-129](#) is appended to the official minutes.

Following the closed session, 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

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 8:43 p.m.

Resolutions **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING QUALIFIED VENDORS FOR VARIOUS OPEN-ENDED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING AND RELATED SERVICES FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR THE YEAR 2020**

Township Administrator Pappas stated that administration has proposed this resolution to allow for efficient & expedited future bidding process. The engineering firms listed have been reviewed by Township Attorney Corsini, Township Engineer Burr and Thomas Genova, Director of Municipal services who found them to be acceptable.

AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP'S QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT TO SOLICIT PROPOSALS FOR A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.1 ET SEQ. FOR THE OPERATION OF THE TOWNSHIP'S VEGETATIVE WASTE DROP-OFF CENTER ("YARD WASTE SITE") FOR THE YEARS 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, AND 2024

Township Administrator Pappas explained the arrangement that had been in existence with the yard waste site has expired. Township officials have met with the vendor and agree it is in the best interest of the Township to continue this contract.

APPOINTMENT OF KENNETH BURDI TO SOMERSET REGIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AS REGULAR MEMBER AND ROBERT DEVNANI AS ALTERNATE MEMBER

Councilman Ring explained the Somerset Regional Animal Shelter agreement between Bridgewater and Manville is to have 3-board members from Bridgewater. There has been a recent resignation on this Board and this resolution will allow us to be in compliance.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE BRADLEY GARDENS RESCUE SQUAD, THE FINDERNE RESCUE SQUAD, THE GREEN KNOLL RESCUE SQUAD, AND THE MARTINSVILLE RESCUE SQUAD AS 911/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR THE PURPOSES OF PARTICIPATION IN COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT REQUIRE SUCH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councilman Ring explained there was a recent death of a first responder in South Jersey due to COVID-19 while in the line of duty. The department of justice has programs that offer relief to families of first responders but in this case declined to provide benefits to the family citing there was no formal record designating the volunteer rescue squad as an emergency medical service provider. This resolution will allow us to cover our first responders in the event that any one of them is affected by the pandemic and can receive federal benefits from the department of justice.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Pedroso, 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 [#20-05-07-130 thru #20-05-07-133](#) is appended to the official minutes

Council President Norgalis stated the Council meeting scheduled for May 14th has being cancelled. The next Council meeting will be held on Monday, May 18th at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President