

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
OCTOBER 5, 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, October 5, 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 JANUARY 3, 2020, WITH A SUBSEQUENT MEETING NOTICED ON SEPTEMBER 24, 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 Township Administrator
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

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 - REGULAR SESSION, VIRTUAL ACCESS
SEPTEMBER 21, 2020 - REGULAR SESSION, VIRTUAL ACCESS**

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the September 10th and September 21st regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

Council Reports

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Attended the Township's Firemen's inspection this past Saturday. This year the format was changed in order to adhere to COVID-19 protocols. The inspection of men was held but the inspection of the apparatus and the dinner were cancelled. Councilman Kurdyla stated this remained a very well attended event by members of the volunteer fire department and commended everyone that participated.

Councilman Kirsh

- For the special education classrooms/programs, hybrid instruction began this morning. Hybrid instruction for the remainder of the students will commence next Monday, October 12th.
- The Census deadline has been extended to October 31ST. Councilman Kirsh stated he will work with Wells Winegar, Deputy Township Administrator to ensure the website reflects this new information. With regard to the 2020 Census, Councilman Kirsh made a statement as follows:

An accurate Census count, which remains a focus through a deadline extended to October 31, is critical so that states are allocated the appropriate numbers of Representatives in Congress and communities get the Federal aid they need. The story is more complex, though, since elected leaders must also fight for each district's fair share.

It's been more than 6 months since Congress passed the \$2.2 Trillion CARES Act and nearly that long since the Township Council unanimously approved "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 in the future." Resolution 11g on April 16 referred to at least \$250,000 in higher expenses and as much as \$1.8 million in lost revenue due to COVID-19. On the former, Bridgewater may (and the operative word is may) be on a pathway for some reimbursement. On the latter, the amount of lost revenue from a combination of the court, hotels, building permits, and Bridgewater Commons Mall is now remarkably close to that original projection, at \$1,813,000. The pathway toward any of that money is murky at best.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a disaster not of our making, is being solved entirely within our own borders. Adding insult to injury, Bridgewater residents and businesses send staggering amounts of tax money to Washington. At Bridgewater's time of need—our Hurricane Katrina, if you will—we've been ignored.

Our elected Member of Congress voted for a CARES Act that has provided massive amounts of money to big cities, \$1.4 billion to NJ Transit, and \$3.9 billion for the New York MTA, including a funding bridge to make up for lost

revenue. In Bridgewater and the towns across our Congressional District, we didn't get so lucky for the one and only bite at the apple for lost revenue relief. The appropriate reaction is not a deflection of blame to other politicians, accusations of partisan gamesmanship, or empty promises that help is coming. We've heard all of those. What Bridgewater needs from Congressman Malinowski, without delay, is a laser-like focus on this issue and this issue alone to get us a check for our fair and deserved share of Federal assistance.

Councilman Ring

- On the 24th of September, attended the monthly Board meeting of the Somerset Regional Animal Shelter (SRAS). Councilman Ring was pleased to announce the Board is slowly but surely moving forward in settling in on an estate that they will soon be a beneficiary of, a house that is now formally under contract.
- On Saturday, September 26th, attended the township sponsored bulky trash event and spent some time talking to the residents. Overall, there was great feedback from the residents who are very appreciative of this program. Councilman Ring reminded everyone that October 10TH is the last Bulky Trash day of this season.
- On October 1st, attended a well attended Recreation department's senior health fare.
- This past weekend, he and his wife completed their vote and dropped off their mail-in-ballot at the drop-box located outside the municipal building. Councilman Ring encouraged everyone to utilize this great resource that is very convenient and secure.

Council Vice-President Pedroso:

- A few weeks ago, attended a webinar regarding economic recovery for state and local governments.
- Attended a Centerbridge II board meeting. Councilman Pedroso explained that Centerbridge II is a senior housing program that has about 170 units. During the pandemic, there have been four (4) residents that were infected with COVID-19 but was happy to report there were no fatalities
- Councilman Pedroso sent his well wishes to President Trump and everyone that has had to deal with COVID-19 illness.
- Councilman Pedroso stated he has been advised that the issue discussed at an earlier Council meeting regarding vehicles that were illegally parked at the Center of Excellence property were removed. He expressed gratitude to those involved for their corporation and for ensuring this matter was resolved amicably without need for further action on the part of the Township.

Council President Norgalis:

- The tax bills have been mailed and the next quarterly payment is due on November 1st.
- Attended the County virtual Planning meeting chaired by Walter Lane the County planner.
- The second of three bulky trash drop off days was last Saturday at the Polhemus Lane site. The last day for the Fall season is this Saturday from 8am to 2pm. Proof of Bridgewater residency is required and no commercial vehicles or rented vehicles will be permitted. He thanked Thomas Genova, Director of Municipal Services and his DPW crew for keeping that process moving.
- The Somerset Regional Valley Sewerage Authority has set the new rate for sewer connections. The old rate for household connection was \$2198 and the new rate is \$2218, a \$20 or 1% increase.
- Open Road VW continues to park cars on the grass in front of their Route 22 dealership on Saturdays in violation of township ordinances. The zoning officer is following up on that issue.
- Lord and Taylor is in the process of closing its anchor store at the Bridgewater Mall and hoped a suitable replacement can be found.

Mayor's Reports

Michael Pappas for Mayor Matthew C. Moench

- Confirmed that the vehicles that were illegally parked at the Center of Excellence were removed, adding that administration is very pleased with the outcome.
- There are two (2) road projects for award of contract on tonight's agenda that have continued to attract a lot of interest. Administration is pleased that winning bids continue to come in well under what was projected.
- The Road Assessment program is being finalized. Administration hopes to have a presentation ready regarding this matter for the governing body in the near future.
- COVID-19 news continues to be reported regularly on township website.
- Administrator Pappas stated the closing of the Lord and Taylor department store will be a great hit to the township. Recently, Mayor Moench met with mall representatives and management. This was the first of many meetings that administration hopes to have as we are keenly interested in the successful operation of the mall.
- On tonight's agenda is another shared service agreement with the Bridgewater Raritan School District. Township Administrator Pappas stated Administration is pleased to continue shared services with the school noting we are keen to ensure safety for the school population.

- The senior center had a very successful fall festival. The manager of the senior center has been very diligent in ensuring the seniors remain connected with one another.
- The administration has been in the process of moving the tax collector's office to the lower level. This is a more convenient location for those visiting the municipal building for tax purposes.
- The Mayor is issuing a proclamation marking October as Breast Cancer awareness month. There will be pink bows decorating the municipal building and various parks. The purpose of this is to alert the residents to be advised of the early warning signs of breast cancer as this can allow for the successful treatment of the disease.

**Public
Comment**

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, 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.

- ⇒ Link for Public Comment Submission:
<https://bridgewaterocr.typeform.com/to/XG6BK5fg>
- ⇒ Use raise hand feature to give audio comments
- ⇒ Use Q&A feature for written comments
- ⇒ Text 908-912-4247 for written comments

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Pedroso, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

There was a four (4) 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

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

Bobby Huggins, 202 Love Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Is the township addressing the Somerset airports plans to cut down, or do trimming, on trees in Bridgewater? The possible airport expansion will impact our daily life in Bridgewater.

Cathy Franco, 766 Weemac Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

I just want to be certain that I understand the history of the cost of the Redwood Inn property to the taxpayers. Of course I recognize that this does not include the legal costs associated with the lawsuit however the following is my understanding:

- 3/2/17 - The property was rezoned to R-40
- 4/21/17 - Township paid \$1,885,000
- 11/30/2017 - The Town Council approved \$51,300 for engineering related to subdivision
- 9/8/20 - The planning board approved the subdivision with waivers as some of the properties are within wetland areas
- 9/20/2020 - The town council approved the subdivision (no permit fees paid due to township owned property)
- 10/5/2020 - The town council proposed at its last meeting and will be approving tonight \$200,000 for demolition of buildings on the property.
- So the Township has invested \$2,136,300 to date on this property
- Tonight the township is considering selling the land for the “appraised” value of \$1,750,000
- 7.41 acres of land with a Current assessment is 1,750,000
- The Township investment to date is \$2,136,300

So basically the township will take a loss of 386,300 not including the additional loss of permit fees on this property.

And basically 7.641 acres, divided by each the proposed purchase price for the 7 properties the average “land assessment” will be \$250,000/property.

Please include these when discussing the “sale”.

In addition can you clarify on staff who will be responsible for coordinating the sale of this property - also will there be assurances to residents that there will be no “conflict of interest” in the sale of this property.

Township Administrator Pappas stated that the proposed sale price is a minimum bid starting point. He added there will be a bidding process that will adhere to local bidding laws and will be guided by our attorney.

Council President Norgalis requested that Ms. Franco’s notes be forwarded to the Council for follow-up.

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

**Introduction
of
Ordinances**

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE PUBLIC SALE OF PROPERTY CONSISTING OF 7.641 ACRES AND KNOWN AS LOTS 36 and 37 IN BLOCK 653 ON THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX MAP AND LOCATED AT 1475 MOUNTAIN TOP ROAD, PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A: 12-13 (a)

Township Administrator Pappas stated the history of this property is long and detailed. There will be a public bidding process that will adhere to bidding laws. The tax assessor and township attorney have reviewed the lowest bid request analysis and administration is hopeful that we will be able to successfully sell this property.

Councilman Ring stated this property has been sitting for several years in decay and it will be nice to see something done with it.

Councilman Pedroso stated he will be abstaining on this matter. When this application first came before the Council to change zoning from R-50 to R-40, he voted “no”. Although he agrees that the property needs to be sold and has no issue with this Ordinance, he is being consistent as he has always felt this lots should have been zoned R-50.

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	Abstain
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution [#20-10-05-241](#) 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 19th day of October, 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.

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$200,000 FOR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING LOCATED AT 1475 MOUNTAIN TOP ROAD, BLOCK 653 LOTS 36 AND 37, IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$190,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION.

Township Administrator Pappas stated this is for the funds necessary to demolish the existing building, asphalt parking lot and driveway. Administration's goal is to have the ability to sell this property as a clean property. The reason the township is looking to clear the land is that they are already familiar with all of the environmental issues on the property.

Council President Norgalis stated that if we tried to sell this property as is, any new owner would certainly go through the same type of exhaustive analysis that we did and it would probably be late next year before it hit the market. He added this is a good strategy to try to paint closure on the issue but would request a much shorter payback on any bond or note. He would prefer a note paid back within one year.

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	Abstain
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution [#20-10-05-242](#) 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 19th day of October, 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.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Director of Finance will forward the Supplemental Debt Statement received this date electronically to the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs, Trenton, New Jersey.

Resolutions

AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AND BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO. 3, P. O. BOX 6655, PERMITTING THE FIRE DISTRICT TO TEMPORARILY USE THE SERVICES OF BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP'S QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT AS A SHARED SERVICE WITH NO COST TO THE FIRE DISTRICT THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2020

Township Administrator Pappas explained Fire District #3 has requested that the Township of Bridgewater permit the Fire District to use the services of the Township's qualified purchasing agent (QPA). He added the Administration is cognizant of the contribution of the Fire District and supports this shared service.

On motion of Councilman Ring, 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 [#20-10-05-243](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A POLICE SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS ("SRO") WITH BRIDGEWATER-RARITAN BOARD OF EDUCATION ("BOARD") LOCATED AT 836 NEWMANS LANE, P.O. BOX 6030,

BRIDGEWATER, NJ WITH COSTS TO BE PARTIALLY PAID BY THE BOARD FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR IN THE AMOUNT OF \$120,813.07

Township Administrator Pappas explained this is a continuation of a practice that has been in place for many years. Chief Payne has been instrumental in improving the structure and accountability of the resource officers providing services to the school district. He thanked Chief Payne for presenting a package that is an improvement from previous years.

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#20-10-05-244](#) is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO CCM CONTRACTING, INC. (336 ROUTE 22, GREEN BROOK, NJ 08812) FOR THE WOODLAND TERRACE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (WASHINGTON ROAD TO MOUNTAIN AVENUE), IN THE SUM OF \$340,426.62, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2019 CAPITAL FUND AND ACCEPTING THE REQUEST FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE BID IN THE AMOUNT OF \$283,603.78 SUBMITTED BY BLACK ROCK ENTERPRISES, LLC FOR THE SAME PROJECT

Township Administrator Pappas explained nine bids were received. We are looking forward to undertaking this project this year.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#20-10-05-245](#) is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO TOP LINE CONSTRUCTION CORP., (22 FIFTH STREET, SOMERVILLE, NJ 08876) FOR THE RUNNING BROOK ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF RUNNING BROOK ROAD, COMPTON WAY, AND HEATH DRIVE), IN THE SUM OF \$578,442.08, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2020 CAPITAL FUND

Township Administrator Pappas explained nine bids were received. We are hoping to undertake this project this year if possible.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, 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 [#20-10-05-246](#) is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO IBN CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION, (49 HERMON STREET, NEWARK, NJ 07105) FOR THE DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURES AT CAMP CROMWELL, 850 VOSELLER AVENUE, BLOCK 807, LOTS 1, 56 AND 71, IN THE SUM OF \$75,637.00, FUNDED THROUGH THE OPEN SPACE FUND

Council President Norgalis explained that last year, the winning bid for his project was well over \$100,000. The bid winner however did not act on it. Council President Norgalis acknowledged Thomas Genova, Director of Municipal Services who had assured him that if a new bid was sought, it would be well under that. Mr. Genova delivered on his promise.

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator stated Administration is working on a presentation regarding the Camp Cromwell within the next 30-days.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, 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 [#20-10-05-247](#) is appended to the official minutes

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President