

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Pedroso 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 5, 2021, BY SENDING WRITTEN NOTICE AND ELECTRONIC NOTICE 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. A SUBSEQUENT NOTICE WITH LIVESTREAM INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2021.

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

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

Also Present: Matthew C. Moench, Mayor
 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 Pedroso led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

SEPTEMBER 3, 2021 - EMERGENCY SESSION

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the September 3, 2021 Council minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2021 - REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the September 9, 2021 Council minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote. Council President Pedroso abstained.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh

- This past week was Restaurant week and he was able to patronize Rita's and Soprano's Pizza, both great experiences. He encouraged all to continue supporting our local restaurants.
- Attended the Basilone Parade to support Raritan Township.
- Attended the Center for Culture and Creative Exchange organized by Li Ching Jung.
- Attended the North Branch Volunteer Fire Department 9-11 ceremony. He also attended and spoke at his former town, Greenbrook during their 9-11 memorial ceremony.
- Attended Bridgewater's Community Day at the mall.

Councilman Norgalis:

- Attended 911 ceremony at the North Branch Volunteer Fire Department, an organization he has been proud to serve with for 37 years. He and Mayor Moench both spoke of their experiences related to that sad occurrence 20 years ago
- Attended and participated in the Bridgewater 911 Remembrance ceremony.
- Attended the Bridgewater Community Day activity at the Mall. It had three sponsors - the JCC, Mall and Bridgewater Township.
- During the course of the week, had numerous meetings with Township Officials as well as residents in dealing with flood damage issues.

Councilman Ring:

- He began the somber day of 9-11 by attending a 20th anniversary remembrance ceremony at the North Branch Fire House. The Fire Department did an excellent job of putting together a very touching and appropriate ceremony.
- Following their ceremony, he participated in the Township Ceremony here on the grounds of Municipal Complex. He extended his appreciation to the Office of Constituent Relations for putting together a very meaningful and appropriate ceremony, including engaging local scouts and the community to place 2997 American Flags on the grounds of the Municipal Complex. As touching as the service was, to his surprise and

disappointment he received a call the next day during which a resident shared with him someone felt it was appropriate to place a campaign sign supporting their candidates for elected office. There are no words for how disappointed it was to hear this.

- On September 12, he attended Community Day at the mall, sponsored in part by the Mall and JCC.
- This past week he was able to patronize several of our local restaurants as part of the Township's Restaurant Week.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Attended the 9-1-1 ceremonies at the North Branch Volunteer Fire Department and Municipal Building. He thanked those that put the programs together.
- Attended Bridgewater's Community Day at the mall.

Council President Pedroso

- Had travelled and not available at the 9-11 ceremonies.
- Attended the Hobbstown Centennial event and had the privilege of reading the proclamation that was signed by the Mayor and Council.
- Participated in the welcome home event for the 14U baseball team
- Missed the September 9th Council meeting which was the first missed meeting all year. He acknowledged the governing body for having a tremendous attendance record noting that a majority of them have not missed a single meeting.

Mayor's Reports

Mayor Matthew C. Moench

- Thanked the Council for their relentless support following the aftermath of hurricane Ida.
- Stated our infrastructure has been damaged which we are working on through various emergency repairs. Vosseller Avenue is the biggest one but thankfully our staff noticed the damage on the supporting wall and its now being repaired.
- Throughout the town there are numerous road repairs both on the emergency side and on our normal road program. For the emergency work, it is more limited and is done directly in response to the storm. We

are not able in most cases to just go in and repave the road. We are repaving portions that were damaged as a result of the storm and we will submit those expenses to FEMA and hopefully get our portion of those expenses returned to us. In addition, you will see that in some instances the roadwork has continued on our 2021 road program.

- We also have a lot of drainage issues that we are looking into. We are utilizing our DPW staff and in some instances specialized contractors to help us go in and deal with some of the individual storm drain or drainage cleanup issues. We have also discussed and will be coming to the Council in the future to retain an engineer who has expertise in looking at stormwater systems to conduct a comprehensive overview of our drainage infrastructure, just like we did with the roads. With drainage issues, they are extremely expensive and they only impact a small number of residents but for those residents that are impacted, it is significant. Administration will be presenting more information to the Council as it becomes available.
- Mayor Moench stated we are also going to be looking at opportunities to assist using affordable housing funds. Our COAH settlement plan allows us to assist with home rehabilitation not just for homes that are in the COAH program but also for homes that meet certain income eligibility limits. Furthermore, we will be looking into our Blue Acres program as some residents have asked about the possibility of having their homes bought out and others have discussed raising up their homes and funds are available for that as well.
- The pavement preservation program is also underway which is to resurface those roads that do not need to be rebuilt but are starting to show some wear and tear and this allows us to extend the roads for an additional 5 to 7 years at a fraction of the cost for rebuilding.
- The health department continues to issue COVID-19 related health reports and it shows a decrease in the number of reported cases.
- The township hosted a very moving 9-11 ceremony. Mayor Moench thanked the Office of Constituent Relations who planned that ceremony and executed a very moving event for our residents. He added he hopes this tradition can continue into the future. At the end of that day, Mayor Moench stated that he too attended the 9-11 ceremony at the North Branch Volunteer Fire Department which was also very nice and poignant and incredibly well-done event.

- We had another successful Community Day sponsored by JCC. The event worked out very well at the mall because it allowed us to expand and hopefully in the future we will have more vendors and with the help of our partners can make that a very premier event of the fall.
- With regard to restaurant week, this was our first annual and we will continue it. Mayor Moench thanked OCR and everyone that participated in it and hoped more restaurants will continue to join in order to make it an even bigger event.
- Mayor Moench stated he had an opportunity to meet with Varsity field hockey team, the Varsity football team and the Varsity cheerleaders. He will continue to try and meet with these student groups as their hard work should be celebrated and respected by the community.
- For those celebrating the autumn festival which is tomorrow, Mayor Moench wished everyone a happy autumn festival.
- Mayor Moench stated he was made aware recently that the school district voted to request the governor to give them permission to go to a virtual option with the schools. While he is still understanding the details of this, he expressed he is disappointed they would consider this instead of continuing to have students in person on a full-time basis in order to give them the education they deserve.
- On question of Councilman Kirsh, Mayor Moench encouraged everyone in need of curb side pickup as a result of hurricane Ida to sign up on township website which will alert us they need this service. Mayor Moench emphasized that this is for storm related debris only.

Proclamation NICK DIRLA

Nick Dirla was present to receive the proclamation. His family was present in the audience to show support. Mayor and Council acknowledged and appreciated Nick's heroic actions and for showing concern and bravery during hurricane Ida.

Matthew C. Moench, Mayor read the following proclamation:

WHEREAS, on the evening of September 1st, Nick Dirla was finishing a shift delivering packages for UPS; and

WHEREAS, with only a few packages left to deliver, the remnants of Hurricane Ida began to cause flash flooding and made his route impassable; and

WHEREAS, despite his truck breaking down and becoming surrounded by other disabled

vehicles on Route 22, Nick remained calm in the face of adversity and focused on the moment, never allowing a potentially tragic situation to get the best of him; and

WHEREAS, Nick displayed amazing presence of mind for an employee on the job for a mere three months by transforming his quick thinking into heroic action and ensuring that all the endangered drivers he encountered were pulled inside to the shelter of his UPS truck; and

WHEREAS, Nick, a 2017 graduate of Bridgewater-Raritan High School where he was voted as class clown, used his gift of humor to try and keep spirits high despite the dire circumstances; and

WHEREAS, Nick showed the real leadership skills by making the decision to exit the UPS truck and head for safer ground once the truck began taking on too much storm water; and

WHEREAS, thanks to Nick's heroic efforts all of the individuals he encountered that night were delivered to safety; and

WHEREAS, through his actions, Nick set the bar for what we should all aspire to when it comes to service to others;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, I, Matthew C. Moench, on behalf of the citizens and government of Bridgewater Township, do hereby express our most sincere thanks and gratitude to Nick Dirla for stepping up to serve his fellow citizens during the worst storm Bridgewater has witnessed in years. Nick displayed the best of humanity during a tremendously stressful situation without ever letting it get the best of him. Thank you, Nick.

Public Comment

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

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

Kathy Franco, 766 Weemac Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

- Thanked Council for celebrating and recognizing Nick Dirla whose actions were heroic and self-sacrificing
- Stated she truly appreciates everything the township, the DPW, the police and first responders have done during the emergency and everyday for our township.
- Noticed that the last few days there appears to be an undermined culvert by a guardrail on the westbound side of Gilbride Road located just west of House #1272. She requested that someone look at that

- She opined Mayor Moench should provide his judgment on the actions of the school district at their meetings instead of at a Council meeting.

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

Public
Hearing &
Final Action
Ordinances

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 206, ENTITLED “VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC”, SECTION 206-33 ENTITLED “SCHEDULE V: TRUCKS OVER FOUR TONS EXCLUDED” TO ADD CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL ROADWAYS, NAMELY: BELLACONE STREET, BRIDGEWATER AVENUE, EVAGROD STREET, SHAW AVENUE, THOMAS STREET, AND WHARTON AVENUE TO THE LIST OF ROADWAYS THAT TRUCKS OVER FOUR TONS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO UTILIZE WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER

Mayor Moench commended the Council for this Ordinance which really protects the quality of life of the residents in that neighborhood.

Councilman Kurdyla stated in his view this is the first step in addressing problems with multiple roads in that area and looks forward to working on a further Ordinance that would eventually route truck traffic from Finderne Avenue.

Councilman Norgalis offered our Master Plan states we want to limit commercial traffic on residential streets and is happy to see we have confronted this issue and found a working solution.

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

No one wished to be heard.

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

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

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

ORDINANCE #21-17 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#21-09-20-243](#) is appended to the official minutes

Resolutions

AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$100,000.00 EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION FOR ONGOING HURRICANE IDA RELATED BULKY DEBRIS/TRASH PICKUP SERVICES

AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER TO INCREASE THE EMERGENCY CONTRACT WITH INTERSTATE WASTE SERVICES, INC. 15 POLHEMUS LANE, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807 FOR HURRICANE IDA STORM BULK TRASH PICK-UP WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FROM \$30,000.00 FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$100,000.00, IN A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$130,000.00

Mayor Moench explained these resolutions will allow us to conduct bulky trash pick up for storm related debris.

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

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

THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.

Copies of resolution [#21-09-20-244 thru #21-09-20-245](#) are appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO PEREIRA ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING, INC. OF 205 LIBERTY STREET, METUCHEN, NJ 08840 FOR THE RE-INSTALLATION OF A NEW 200 AMP ELECTRICAL SERVICE FOR THE LANE-VOORHEES HOUSE LOCATED AT 551 MILLTOWN ROAD, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$21,100.00 FUNDED THROUGH THE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION FUND

Mayor Moench stated we received grant funding in 2019 for reclamation of the Lane-Voorhees property and part of the agreement was that we would provide electrical service to this residence. This resolution will allow us to move forward in our commitment. The monies to cover the electrical work will be funded through the grant.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#21-09-20-246](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING A REDUCTION IN THE PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE FROM \$225,162.60 TO \$119,208.00 FOR THE FOOTHILL ESTATES SUBDIVISION APPLICATION, POSTED BY LAROSA BROTHERS CONSTRUCTION, LLC, BLOCK 718, LOTS 160, 161 & 164 (NOW 160.01, 160.02, 160.03 & 160.04) ON WHITNACKS ROAD OFF FOOTHILL ROAD

Township Administrator Pappas stated the township engineer has recommended a partial reduction in the performance guarantee for this subdivision.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#21-09-20-247](#) is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO RARITAN VALVE & AUTOMATION OF PO BOX 10120, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08906-0120 FOR THE PURCHASE OF VALVES AND MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THE INSTALLATION OF THE PUMPS AT THE GILBRIDE SANITARY SEWER PUMP STATION, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$63,115.27 FUNDED THROUGH THE 21-13 SEWER BOND ORDINANCE

Township Administrator Pappas stated this will allow us to purchase materials on an emergency basis to install the newly purchased pumps at the Gilbride Pump Station. Councilman Kirsh thanked Councilman Norgalis for his diligence and work on keeping up with the pump station to ensure it has what is needed to continue to operate.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#21-09-20-248](#) is appended to the official minutes

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Filipe Pedroso
Council President