

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2, 2023 COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Kirsh 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 10 2023, WITH WRITTEN NOTICE AND ELECTRONIC NOTICE PROVIDED TO THE COURIER NEWS AND THE BREEZE 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 Allen Kurdyla
Councilman Howard V. Norgalis
Councilman Filipe Pedroso
Councilman Timothy Ring
Council President Michael Kirsh

Also Present: Michael Pappas, Township Administrator
 Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney
 Daniel Ahern, Office of Constituent Relations
 Grace Njuguna, Deputy Township Clerk

Councilman Norgalis led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

JANUARY 5, REORGANIZATION SESSION
JANUARY 9, 2023 - REGULAR SESSION
JANUARY 19, 2023 - CLOSED SESSION

The above referenced minutes will be presented for consideration at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Council Reports

Councilman Kurdyla

- Reminded members of the public that on February 18th, we will have our Fire Districts' Elections in the township and encouraged everyone to vote as these elections support our local fire departments and the volunteers who dedicate their time to protect our community.

- Attended the Somerset Patriots appreciation event that recognized the achievements of the Patriots over the past year.
- Congratulated Councilman Ring for an earlier presentation he had for boy scouts to discuss what government in Bridgewater is all about; excellent presentation!

Councilman Norgalis:

- Attended the meeting held by the Somerset Patriot Baseball team in which they expressed their appreciation to both the Somerset County Freeholders and to the Bridgewater Council and Mayor for the support which has contributed to the 25 years of minor league baseball success in our town. At that meeting, there were several very moving tributes to the late Steve Kalifer for his business leadership and especially his passionate support for his family and Bridgewater in general.
- Toured the Route 22 overpass over the brook next to the Lexus Dealer. This was the spot where the flooding disrupted the large township owned sewerage pipe as well as caused extensive damage to the highway service road. The State of NJ Dept of Transportation has completed bridge repairs but must still provide additional rock armoring to the river bank to protect our pipe and to prevent future problems.
- Yesterday, the Federal Reserve raised the borrowing rate by another 25-basis point (also known as a quarter of a point). This could have a dampening impact on our 2023 road commitment. In past years, low rates enabled us to go over and above in terms of road work.
- Attended the meeting of the Municipal Alliance which is the multi-dimensional group dealing with social and educational development. Peer Recovery Groups, and workshops such as “Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma” and “Love Shouldn’t Hurt” dealing with youth dating were discussed.

Councilman Pedroso:

- Attended the Somerset Patriots appreciation event that recognized the achievements of the Patriots over the past year.
- Attended a Somerset Regional Animal Shelter meeting at its annual reorganization meeting a few days ago.
- Attended the Green Knoll Rescue Squad banquet annual installation event. It was a pleasure to be part of the team that congratulated the

volunteers of our township.

- A fellow Council member in Sayreville, Eunice Dwumfour was shot and killed last night. Councilman Pedroso offered his condolences to her family.

Councilman Ring:

- As a follow up to our last council meeting, the Finance Committee recently met with the Administration to discuss the Bond Ordinance that is on the agenda this evening. Councilman Ring offered he will hold his comments on that till we get to the introduction of the ordinance in a little bit. They also discussed timing for the 2023 budget for our Township. While work is currently on-going on the 2023 budget, we were informed by the tax assessor that he is still waiting for the final assessment numbers from the County, which are very important in defining our revenues for the year and therefore how much money may be available to spend. The County plans to release this information on or about February 15.
- Working from that February 15th date, the Administration and Finance Committee mapped out a plan. Administration has committed to having a budget to the Finance Committee within 30 days or March 15. The Finance Committee will have 30 days to work through the budget, with a targeted introduction in mid-April and approval mid-May.
- The Somerset Patriots recently hosted an event to recognize their accomplishments in 2022 and to thank their partners. Councilman Ring stated he had the privilege of attending that along with his fellow Council and the Mayor.
- On January 26th, the Police Department recognized the services of Officer Daly and Officer Pelley, each of whom retired after 25-years of dedicated service to the residents of Bridgewater and wished them well in their future endeavors
- This afternoon, Councilman Ring stated he attended a meeting of the Somerset Shared Ambulance Shared Services group held here at the Municipal Complex. A productive discussion was held on ambulance service by the four towns, Manville, South Bound Brook, Raritan and Bridgewater, that comprise SASSA.
- Just prior to this meeting, Councilman Ring stated he had the pleasure of speaking to five scouts from Pack 46 in Martinsville about what the

governing body does and the importance of what we do and why we do the things we do. Councilman Ring explained he began his scouting days a few years back in Martinsville, so it was very rewarding to speak with these young children.

- Councilman Ring stated he recently shared on Facebook the clerk's office hours for dog registration this Saturday. A resident commented on this post as follows:
'I mailed in my check because it was easier for me. I didn't have my most up to date rabies on file and the clerk called my phone and asked me to send it in rather than just rejecting my license application. I like living in Bridgewater 😊' I do not know the resident who posted this comment, I think it says a lot when a resident posts a comment like this on social media. Not sure who in the clerk's office handled this, but THANK YOU!"

Some land use board updates

- On January 14, the Planning Board began hearing the application for a manufacturing facility on Route 202/206. There were a number of issues discussed and the application will be continued to be heard on March 14, 2023. The next meeting on February 14 will be a continuation of the Bridgewater Accessory Associates application for a warehouse on the corner of Chimney Rock Road and Route 22.
- Earlier this week, the Zoning Board of Adjustment started to hear an application to replace four office buildings on Route 22 with two warehouses. Board Chairman Foose raised a concern about the notification of the hearing made to the adjoining Laurel Circle complex. While notification of the hearing was sent to the property owner, notification was not sent to the couple of hundred tenants that reside at that location. The Board Attorney confirmed to the board that the applicant is not required under state land use law to notify the tenants, just the property owners. This application will continue to be heard at the March 7 ZBOA meeting.
- The next ZBOA will be February 7, which will be a continuation of a sign application on Route 22.

Council President Kirsh

- President Kirsh welcomed Grace Njuguna to dais
- Councilman Kirsh stated he is wearing his Cavalier King Charles tie in honor of his dog and to acknowledge that the time for dog licenses is

now. The deadline to register dogs is January 31st but a grace period without a late fee is being offered for an additional week. The Clerk's office is open during its regular business hours from 9am to 5pm and will be open this Saturday, February 4th from 9am to 1pm.

- Attended the Green Knolle Rescue Squad installation event on January 21st
- Attended the Somerset Patriots sponsor event on January 26th
- Attended a Budget/Finance Committee with Joe Sarno, Finance and Administrator Mike Pappas on January 30th
- Had the pleasure of speaking with a local resident, Alisa Hasanaj, is a senior at Albright college who was interested in having an interview about Bridgewater government as part of her coursework. Council President Kirsh stated he was happy to speak to her and gave her an open-ended opportunity to follow up should that be necessary
- The Bridgewater Raritan School District is having its referendum on March 14th. Community forums to discuss the referendum are scheduled as follows:
 - February 21st at 6:00 p.m. - BRRHS (Community Forum)
 - February 24th at 6:00 p.m. - Somerville Elks (Education Foundation)
- Acknowledged the untimely passing of Sayreville Councilwoman Eunice Dwumfour which occurred last night. Many questions remain unanswered about the circumstances of her death, he offered his condolences.

Mayor's Reports

Mayor Matthew C. Moench

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator reported on behalf of Mayor Moench:

- The last resolution on tonight's agenda with regard to John Nogueroles has been revised and circulated to all Council members for their review before action tonight
- Intersoft Technologies is the company that produces our tax and sewer bills and is on tonight's agenda. The amount is greater this year because we have now instituted an additional cycle for the sewer

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.

No one wished to be heard

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

Introduction
of
Ordinances

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$8,000,000 FOR VARIOUS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO FULTON AVENUE, HANCOCK AVENUE, DUVAL STREET, FARMER ROAD, JUNIPER LANE, BIRCH DRIVE, EVERGREEN DRIVE, HILLSIDE AVENUE, ORCHARD STREET, LOFT DRIVE AND EASTBROOK ROAD, INCLUDING CURBING, MILLING, PAVING, DRAINAGE, SEWER AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS IMPROVEMENTS AND VARIOUS ROAD OVERLAYS THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$7,600,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION.

Council President Kirsh stated we had a detailed presentation on this at our last meeting. He added \$400,000 will be considered at the next Council meeting as a resolution providing for an appropriation from the current capital improvements fund.

Councilman Ring stated there were concerns at the last meeting regarding our ability to move forward on this Ordinance without a budget for 2023 in place. The discussion that has taken place with the CFO, Administration and Finance committee assumes if we move forward with this Ordinance, by the time design work is done and all paperwork finalized, we will not see any payment due on this until August of 2024. Our CFO has submitted he is comfortable with us taking this additional payment starting in the second half of 2024.

Council President Kirsh offered he believes we can comfortably absorb this new commitment and the commitments from the last couple of years and still deliver what will be a fiscally conservative and tax payer friendly budget.

Councilman Pedroso offered although he supports the road program, he did not think it was fiscally responsible to support this Ordinance without the township approving its 2023 budget first and seeing the impact this Ordinance will have on the budget.

Councilman Kurdyla stated although he understands Councilman Pedroso's concerns, council made a commitment to repair the roads. He offered our CFO

is confident about proceeding with this bond in order to support this program. He added it is important to honor our commitment to get the roads repaired and we should take advantage of early pricing.

Councilman Norgalis expressed his support for the proposed Ordinance.

Council President Kirsh stated he is very comfortable that this year's budget will be able to accommodate this commitment and that this year's budget will properly account for previous year's commitment.

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

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

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-055](#) is appended to the official minutes

Grace Njuguna, Deputy 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 February 2023, 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; and

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

2023 APPOINTMENTS OF THE REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVES MAYOR APPOINTMENTS - MATTHEW MOENCH, MICHAEL J. PAPPAS & ANDREW FRESCO

Councilman Pedroso stated he is a representative on the Regional Center Partnership and has worked with the Mayor, Administrator Pappas and Andy Fresco and offered they are excellent contributors.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-056](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF A PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION LICENSE. THE MINIMUM BID FOR CONSIDERATION SHALL BE \$450,000

Township Administrator Pappas explained this will be the second time we are pursuing the sale of this license and are hopeful this will be successful.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-054](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES: MUNICIPAL PUBLIC DEFENDER TO SCOTT MITZNER, ESQ FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2023. COMPENSATION AT A RATE OF \$600 FOR EACH MUNICIPAL COURT SESSION NOT TO EXCEED \$20,000

There was no comment.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-057](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN AWARD OF CONTRACT TO REHABCO, INC. OF 44 EAST WATER STREET, TOMS RIVER, NJ 08753 TO SERVE AS THE TOWNSHIP'S ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PROVIDE HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM SERVICES FOR A TWELVE-MONTH PERIOD COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2023 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$180,000.00 PAID FROM THE TOWNSHIP'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

Township Administrator Pappas explained an administrative agent is an important part of the operation of the affordable housing program. Those individuals that would be interested in either purchasing an affordable housing unit or renting have to go through a vetting process as they have to be able to meet certain financial requirements. Rehabco is the main contact that facilitates the process. It was confirmed they will be asked to provide Council with a quarterly report of their undertakings.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-058](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT TO INTERSOFT TECHNOLOGIES, 195 CARTER DR, EDISON, NEW JERSEY 08817 FOR GENERAL

LEDGER COMPUTER SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS, ANNUAL MAINTENANCE, MAILING OF SEWER AND TAX BILLS IN AN AMOUNT OF \$55,000 TO BE FUNDED FROM THE 2022 CURRENT BUDGET ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2022 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2022

Township Administrator Pappas explained the amount is greater this year because we have now instituted an additional cycle for the sewer bills. It was confirmed this is a one-time charge.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-059](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE TO THE CONTRACT FOR KAUFMAN, SEMERANO & LIEBMAN, LLP, 2 EXECUTIVE DR #530, FORT LEE, NJ 07024 FOR LEGAL MATTERS REQUIRING A SPECIAL COUNSEL FROM \$10,000.00 TO \$18,000.00

Township Administrator Pappas explained we engaged this firm to assist in a project involving homeowners association fees, a matter that Township Attorney Corsini is recused on because he lives in that association.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-060](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING REIMBURSEMENT TO RETIRED BRIDGEWATER EMPLOYEE, JOHN NOGUEROL, OF HIS PENSION'S HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM AND MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENTS FOR BOTH JOHN NOGUEROL AND HIS WIFE JOAN NOGUEROL

FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2023 FOR \$640.84 PER MONTH FOR A TOTAL OF \$7,690.08

Following an extensive discussion, Council agreed to table this resolution to allow time for follow up and to acquire additional information.

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

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

**Closed
Session**

At the request of Township administrator Pappas, the closed session resolution was amended to include a discussion on personnel.

Councilman Norgalis made motion to amend the closed session resolution. Councilman Kurdyla seconded that motion which passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Bridgewater Township Council that this body will now hold a closed meeting to discuss land acquisition and 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 Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, Council convened in a closed session, as amended, at approximately 8:35 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#23-02-02-061](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 9:05 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Michael Kirsh
Council President