

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
JANUARY 18, 2024 COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Ring 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 DECEMBER 21, 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 Michael Kirsh  
Councilman Allen Kurdyla  
Councilman Howard V. Norgalis  
Councilman Filipe Pedroso  
Council President Timothy Ring

Also Present: Michael Pappas, Township Administrator  
Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney  
Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk

Council President Ring led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

Minutes will be presented for Council action at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

**Council Reports**

Councilman Kirsh

- Councilman Kirsh stated that both the Zoning Board and Planning Board reorganization meetings were postponed due to inclement weather.
- Attended the Martinsville Rescue Squad annual dinner and officer installation.
- Councilman Kirsh acknowledged the efforts of Administrator Pappas, Attorney Christopher Corsini, Clerk Grace Njuguna and their staff in being an integral part of the Council's success. He further commended the Clerk's office for their hard work in ensuring Council operations run

successfully.

- Councilman Kirsh expressed appreciation to his fellow Councilmen for their deepened relationships through countless conversations over the past year while serving as Council President.

#### Councilman Kurdyla

- Attended the Martinsville Rescue Squad dinner and had the privilege of issuing the Oath of Office to the members of the squad. He thanked each member for their service, as well as their families, for all they do for the Township of Bridgewater.

#### Councilman Norgalis (*verbatim*):

- Bridgewater residents have received their tax collection notice which resulted from the voter approval of the Board of Education plan for full day kindergarten. Please note that although this is remitted to the township tax collection agent, it is not a municipal government tax it is a BOE issue. Unfortunately, the township does cover the mailing costs and even the uncollectible component.
- For those of you who follow astronomical issues, in a few weeks on Monday April 8 there will be a total eclipse of the sun. Folks are reminded to not look at the sun without using protective devices.
- Attended the reorganization meeting of the all-volunteer Martinsville Rescue Squad. This is a wonderful organization which has been serving our township for well over 60 years. Fred Moench, the Mayors father, was recognized for 45 years of service.
- Visited the swearing in ceremony for the North Branch Vol Fire Co. Although based in our neighboring township of Branchburg, North Branch has been the primary Bridgewater fire responder for our northwest section since 1927.
- This is RADON awareness month and residents are encouraged to periodically test for this cancer-causing radioactive gas seeping into homes and businesses.
- Residents, especially senior citizens, are encouraged to be very careful about internet scams. Requests for personal information and offers that seem too good to be true are almost always bad people trying to steal your money and your information.

Councilman Pedroso:

Since there was no council report section and no opportunity to address the public during the Reorganization meeting, Councilman Pedroso read a statement that was intended for the Reorganization meeting.

Reflecting on the past year, I've had the privilege of working closely with our 2023 Council President, Michael Kirsh. While our perspectives didn't always align, I must commend Council President Kirsh for his unwavering professionalism and courtesy. He consistently kept me informed about Council activities, took the time to consider my opinions—even if he did not always adopt them—and demonstrated a genuine commitment to serving the residents of Bridgewater. His tireless work ethic and dedication to our community improvement are truly commendable. Congratulations on your well-deserved re-election and swearing-in tonight. I look forward to continuing our collaboration on this governing body in the upcoming year.

As we welcome Council President Ring to lead this governing body, I am confident in his readiness for the responsibilities ahead. I look forward to a productive partnership in the upcoming year. Congratulations, Council President Ring, on your re-election. Bridgewater is fortunate to have your insightful leadership.

To Mayor Moench, I express my sincere gratitude for maintaining an open-door policy and providing transparent insight into all government functions throughout your tenure. Over the past four years, we have achieved much under your leadership. You've steered Bridgewater through challenging times, upheld your campaign promises, and fostered a spirit of cooperation and unity within your team. Congratulations on your re-election, and I eagerly anticipate the remarkable accomplishments we will achieve together for the Bridgewater community in the upcoming year.

Council President Ring:

- Thanked the Clerk's office for their efforts on the Reorganization Meeting and commended them for the excellent job they did.
- Council President Ring stated he was interviewed by two young Bridgewater resident Scouts to discuss issues that they felt were important to the community. One Scout spoke about spotted lantern flies, while the other spoke about Council's involvement in Bridgewater Township roads. President Ring offered that he looks forward to seeing these two young men advance and hopefully someday become an Eagle Scout.

**Mayor's  
Reports**

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator reported on behalf of Mayor Moench

- During the recent and upcoming storms, Administrator Pappas commended the Public Works Department for a job well done in being responsive to any questions or concerns from residents.

**Presentation**

**2024 ROAD PROGRAM**

Thomas Genova, Director of Municipal Services & William Burr, Township Engineer were present to make a presentation on the 2024 Road Program.

Mr. Genova discussed year four (4) of the five (5) year Capital Road Project noting that both he and Township Engineer Burr presented updates to Council on October 5, 2023 and December 7, 2023 regarding a summary of the roads completed in the 2023 Capital Road Project. Mr. Genova stated that the Township has repaved 200 roads, which accounts for 30% of township owned roads. He expressed that this project has been an exceptional success.

Mr. Genova further explained that any project of this size requires countless hours of planning, organizing, budgeting, and directing. In order to continue this success, it is imperative that the Township follow the same plan as previous years where we were able to start very early in the calendar year. Mr. Genova mentioned that doing this will allow for the best pricing on the project and will also ensure that the project will be completed prior to late fall. He added that once the temperatures drop, it is not optimal for asphalt construction.

Township Engineer Burr presented a detailed summary of the proposed 2024 Capital Road Project.

Following the presentation, Mr. Genova and Engineer Burr fielded questions from the Governing Body.

**WEIGHT LIMIT RESTRICTIONS**

William H. Burr IV, P.E. made a presentation on proposed weight limit restrictions within Township roads. Engineer Burr recommended that Long Road, Wight Street, Prospect Avenue, Somerset Avenue, Hillside Avenue, Highland Avenue, Cross Road, and Allen Road should have weight limit restrictions imposed. This is due to the horizontal and vertical geometry of the roadways, which makes it inappropriate for larger vehicles to traverse. In addition, these roads are generally older and have not been built to withstand the weight of heavier truck traffic.

Following the presentation, Engineer Burr fielded questions from the Governing Body.

**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 Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

**Ishan Joshi and Ashish Joshi, 1067 Buxton Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Both gentlemen narrated an incident that occurred on December 20, 2023, and alleged discrimination by a Bridgewater Township Police Officer.

Police Chief Mitzak was present and offered that there will be an internal investigation conducted on said allegations.

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

**Resolutions**

**RESOLUTION TO CANCEL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION BALANCES FOR COMPLETED PROJECTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,947.00**

This resolution will allow the Chief Financial Officer to cancel capital appropriation balances so that the unexpended balances may be returned to each respective Capital Improvement Fund, Reserve or credited to Capital Fund Balance.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-041](#) is appended to the official minutes

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF OUTSTANDING CHECKS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$138,626.21 FROM VARIOUS ACCOUNTS**

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

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye

Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Council President Ring	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-042](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING SARAH HOUSMAN, QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT OF BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR CLAIMANT'S CERTIFICATION FOR A PURCHASE ORDER BELOW 15% OF THE BID THRESHOLD PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:5-16(c)(3)**

Township CFO, William Pandos explained that when purchases for items are equal to or less than 15 percent of the bid threshold, or \$6,600, the requirement to obtain the "Claimant's (Vendor) Certification" may be forgone so long as the Department Certification has been completed. This resolution will allow the Finance Department to expedite the payment process.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-043](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$19,490.94, POSTED IN CASH, AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PAWEL DABROWA OF PDD CONSTRUCTION, LLC, BLOCK 642, LOT 5, 5.01, & 5.02, 690 FOOTHILL ROAD**

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-044](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$90,007.19 TO BENECARD SERVICES, LLC OF NEW JERSEY TO PROVIDE PRESCRIPTION INSURANCE TO THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR A TOTAL PREMIUM AMOUNT OF \$2,040,607.19 FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR OF 2023**

Township Administrator Pappas stated that the increase is due to the fluctuation of employees who are covered by the insurance. This year, there were fourteen (14) additional employees that required coverage.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-045](#) is appended to the official minutes

**CONFIRMING AND ENDORSING COVERAGE AND MEMBERSHIP TERMS OF THE NEW JERSEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL INSURANCE FUND (NJIF) AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF THE NJIF’S INDEMNITY AND TRUST AGREEMENT**

This resolution will allow the Township to join as a member in the New Jersey Intergovernmental Insurance Fund for a period commencing on 1/1/2024 and terminating on 12/31/2026.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-046](#) is appended to the official minutes

**ADOPTING A PROTOTYPICAL SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH EMPOWER RETIREMENT, LLC TO CONTINUE THE DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN AND SERVICE AGREEMENT FORMALLY PROVIDED BY EMPOWER ANNUITY INSURANCE COMPANY OF AMERICA AT NO COST TO THE TOWNSHIP**

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-047](#) is appended to the official minutes

**RESOLUTION APPOINTING WELLS WINEGAR AND CHRISTINE MADRID AS BRIDGEWATER’S REPRESENTATIVES TO THE MIDDLE BROOK HEALTH COMMISSION FOR A PERIOD COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2024 THRU DECEMBER 31, 2024**

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-048](#) is appended to the official minutes

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF AN OPEN FLAME FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60 AND A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100.00 FOR THE SOMERVILLE ELKS, 375 UNION AVENUE, BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY 08807, FOR “JACK’S KIDS” TAILGATE FUNDRAISER EVENT ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2024**

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-049](#) is appended to the official minutes

**ACKNOWLEDGING TOWNSHIP COUNCIL’S REVIEW OF SALARIES FOR THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1, NO. 2, NO. 3, AND NO. 4 FOR THE YEAR 2024**

Council President Ring explained this resolution only acknowledges Council’s review of the salaries of Fire Commissioners for Fire District No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4 as recommended and adopted by the Board of Fire Commissioners. Said salaries are not subject to Council approval.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-050](#) 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 contract negotiations and public safety.

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 Pedroso, Council convened in closed session at approximately 9:51 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#24-01-18-051](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 10:35 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

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Timothy Ring  
Council President