

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 21, 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, December 21, 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 (Absent)  
Councilman Howard V. Norgalis  
Councilman Filipe Pedroso  
Councilman Timothy Ring  
Council President Michael Kirsh

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

Councilman Norgalis led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

**DECEMBER 7, 2023 - REGULAR SESSION**

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the December 7, 2023, regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

**Council Reports**

Councilman Norgalis (*verbatim*):

- Winter officially arrives in just a few short hours. With it comes cold temperatures and icy roads. If you are a driver, please take care of yourselves and your vehicle. Keep your cell phone charged when on the road.
  
- I want to thank Michael Kirsh for his Presidential leadership during 2023. The job of the Council President is to plan the meeting agenda, run the Council meeting and serve as the public interface for the Council.

Michael went above and beyond, including his personal mission to update the township logo.

- Attended the Somerset County Business Partnership Annual meeting where outstanding companies were recognized. The keynote speaker was an investment advisor from Raymond James who discussed the health of the national economy.
- Attended the quarterly Somerset County Planning Partners meeting where Planning Director Walter Lane introduced Donna Rendeiro who is the Executive Director and Secretary of the State Planning Commission and the Executive Director of the Office of Planning Advocacy. Donna provided an intense overview of the evolving state development plan. In many ways the state planning direction will be at odds with the basic plans that we enjoy in Bridgewater. In its simplest terms the state is looking for more intense development including more rental units.
- Attended the fourth annual Menorah lighting at the administration building. An additional candle is lit each night during the eight days of Hanukkah. It was very well attended.
- Attended the Centerbridge Holiday Party where the residents of both buildings which are located by the post office enjoyed a festive time.
- Attended a meeting of Healthier Somerset sponsored by the RWJ Barnabas Health Network. The keynote speaker was Christine D'Ercole; speaker, writer, accomplished athlete, original Peloton instructor, and founder of Wordshop™, a workshop in self-talk, Christine asserts that the most powerful thing anyone can say to us is what we say to ourselves. Our inner dialogue is a powerful driver of the direction and quality of our lives.
- In closing I want to wish everyone a MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR if you celebrate them and a Happy Holiday if you do not and may GOD BLESS our Township and our Country.

Councilman Pedroso:

- Attended the Somerset County Governing Officials dinner where he was sworn in as Vice President.
- Councilman Pedroso shared he was admitted to the Wharton Public Policy Certificate Program, a six (6)-session program that spans over several months. The program provides an overview of public policy, including how

policy is made, analyzed, and evaluated.

- Councilman Pedroso wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

#### Councilman Ring:

- There has been some news regarding a trial related to the Somerville Lumber property. Earlier this year, the Council made some ordinance changes which resulted in an application being filed for interpretation of use. The Township's Zoning Officer denied the facility as being a warehouse facility but rather stated it was primarily retail with storage secondary. This decision was appealed and brought before the Board of Adjustment through a trial. The Zoning Board ultimately voted to approve the facility as a warehouse facility for warehousing lumber and associated materials.
- There will be a Board of Adjustment meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> to hear an application for a variance for a new drive-thru coffee chain on Route 22 near Morgan Lane.
- Councilman Ring announced that tonight's meeting would mark his final update on the Land Use Board. Going forward, Councilman Kirsh will be giving future reports.
- Later tonight we will be appointing the new Township Clerk, Grace Njuguna, who has worked for the township for many years. Grace immigrated to the United States from Kenya when she was 21 years old. Councilman Ring expressed that he has the utmost confidence in her ability to perform this function.
- Councilman Ring stated that he hoped everyone takes the time to enjoy the holidays and spend time with friends and family.

#### Council President Kirsh

- Attended the Annual Hanukkah Celebration which was very well attended and a great success. President Kirsh added our partnership with the Jewish Community Center and Temple Shalom is thriving and acknowledged township staff who worked tirelessly to coordinate the event.
- Attended a combined holiday party and appreciation event for Scarlett Doyle on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

- On December 13th, Council President Kirsh attended the Somerset County Governing Officials Association meeting where he expressed his support for Councilman Pedroso to be the organization's vice president.
- Attended the Menorah Car Parade between Basking Ridge, Warren, and Bridgewater on December 13th. Council President Kirsh acknowledged the efforts of our Police Department and the Office of Emergency Management for keeping the parade participants safe during this event.
- Attended the staff holiday party on December 20<sup>th</sup>.
- He shared that the next council meeting will be the Reorganization Meeting on January 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.
- President Kirsh thanked Councilman Norgalis for his support and kind comments and offered that he appreciated the time he had as Council president.
- Council President Kirsh wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year.

## Mayor's Reports

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

During the last Council meeting, the corrective action plan regarding our 2022 audit was presented. Administrator Pappas explained the action plan presented is proceeding as outlined:

1. Our contracted Chief Financial Officer at the time has restated that they will bring the general ledgers current for 2022 in the time frame outlined in the corrective action plan.
2. William Pandos, Chief Financial Officer will have all inter-fund balances liquidated by the end of this month.
3. Regarding the over expenditures from 2022, the corrective action plan indicated that the Administration and Chief Financial Officer will present a monthly report to the Township Council detailing our expenditures which are being monitored appropriately.

## Presentation **STAVOLA QUARRY OPERATING LICENSE**

Thomas Branch conducted the presentation noting it concerns Stavola Quarry's relicensing for 2024. He stated he is the Vice President and Director of Engineering and Development for Stavola Construction Materials who are the owners/operators of the Stavola Quarry located along Route 22 on Chimney Rock Rd. Per Township Ordinances regarding Quarry mining, Stavola is required to submit a renewal application every year in order to continue their business and

as such, an application was filed with William H. Burr IV, PE of the Engineering Department and found to be complete.

Mr. Branch discussed in detail the 2024 mine and reclamation plan noting they are not seeking any expansion of limits other than what has been previously approved and asked for approval of their 2024 operating license. He also discussed how they have modified the blasting process to minimize the impact of the blasts.

As part of the presentation, the 2023 Stavola Quarry Activity synopsis was provided as well as the 2024 reclamation plan and 2024 mine license plan.

Mr. Branch informed residents about a hotline they can call to ask questions or voice their concerns about the Quarry or its activities. Residents were advised the number to reach Helen Stokes is 732-356-5700 option 3.

**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.

**George Bateman, 94 Catherine Lane- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Thanked the council and township employees for all their hard work this year.

**Deanna Nye, 671 Country Club Road- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Nye explained she witnessed a horrific car accident on her street earlier today. She urged the Council to investigate options that would ensure the safety of residents on her street.

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

**Resolutions**

**2024 STAVOLA QUARRY OPERATING LICENSE - BLOCK 711, LOTS 3, 4 AND 6.01 CHIMNEY ROCK ROAD, BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY, 08807, SOMERSET COUNTY**

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

Councilman Kurdyla	Absent
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye

Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Kirsh	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-295](#) is appended to the official minutes

**RESOLUTION TO CANCEL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION BALANCES FOR COMPLETED PROJECTS IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$142,277.29**

Township Administrator Pappas acknowledged the efforts of William Pandos, Chief Financial Officer, who worked with a number of staff members including Township Engineer Burr to cancel capital appropriation balances for completed projects. Those funds will be marked as unanticipated revenue for the 2024 budget.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-296](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING BUDGET TRANSFERS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$782,401.00 IN THE CURRENT FUND**

Township Administrator Pappas provided a summary of the resolution describing the budget transfers.

Chief Financial Officer, William Pandos, fielded questions from the dais regarding the transfers of funds to the Salaries and Wages of the Police Department, as well as various Utility expenses.

Council President Kirsh recommended that the 2024 Budget Committee meet on a monthly basis with Administrator Pappas and Mr. Pandos to review the accounting and locate where the funds are being allocated. By doing this, he hopes that there will be minimal transfers at the end of 2024.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-297](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A VENDING MACHINE CONCESSION TO THE BRIDGEWATER POLICEMAN’S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION NO. 174 FOR TWO (2) BREAKROOM VENDING MACHINES**

There presently resides a vending machine in the Township’s general employee breakroom and in the police department’s breakroom. The Bridgewater Township Policeman’s Benevolent Association (PBA) has expressed to the Administration a desire to service said vending machines. This resolution will give the PBA the authority to do that.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-298](#) is appended to the official minutes

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONSENT TO ASSIGNMENT, ASSUMPTION AND ADMISSION AGREEMENTS BETWEEN BRIDGEWATER COMMONS MALL, LLC, BRIDGEWATER COMMONS MALL II, LLC AND BRIDGEWATER PACIFIC, LLC**

Township Administrator Pappas stated that there was some additional description added to this resolution as opposed to the one previously reviewed and approved by the Council.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-299](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AND AR BRIDGEWATER II, LLC REGARDING BLOCK 483, LOT 17 ON ROUTE 202/206**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A DEVELOPER'S AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AND AR BRIDGEWATER II, LLC REGARDING BLOCK 483, LOT 17 ON ROUTE 202/206**

The Redevelopment Agreement is as stipulated in the settlement agreement between the Township and Advance following site plan approval by the Planning Board. It was confirmed Township Attorney Corsini has reviewed the Developer's Agreement and recommends its approval.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.**

Copies of resolutions [#23-12-21-300 thru #23-12-21-301](#) are appended to the official minutes

**WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60.00 FOR SOMERVILLE ELKS LODGE #1068 LOCATED AT 375 UNION AVENUE IN BRIDGEWATER IN CONNECTION WITH THE ELKS' 2023 CHRISTMAS TREE SALE**

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

Councilman Kurdyla	Absent
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye



Councilman Ring  
Council President Kirsh

Abstain  
Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-302](#) is appended to the official minutes

**REIMBURSEMENT OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION PERMIT FEES PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 94, SECTION 94-3 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$746.00 FOR CYNTHIA WHITESELL, THE SURVIVING SPOUSE OF DAVID P. WHITESELL OF 271 OLD YORK ROAD, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807 FORMERLY KNOWN AS BLOCK 102, LOT 21.01, ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DECK**

Township Administrator Pappas stated that Ms. Whitesell applied for the construction fee to be waived by the Council since her spouse, who has passed away, was a volunteer emergency responder. Based on an existing ordinance, the Council determined she qualifies for this waiver request.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-303](#) is appended to the official minutes

**APPOINTING GRACE NJUGUNA AS MUNICIPAL CLERK PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:9-133 FOR A THREE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2024**

The Council and Administration expressed their support of the appointment of Ms. Njuguna and offered that they are confident she will excel as the Municipal Clerk.

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

Councilman Kurdyla	Absent
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye

Council President Kirsh                      Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-304](#) is appended to the official minutes

**NEW JERSEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL INSURANCE FUND INITIATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

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

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#23-12-21-305](#) is appended to the official minutes

**Adjournment**

On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

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Michael Kirsh  
Council President