

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 5, 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, September 5, 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 (absent)
Council President Timothy Ring

Also Present: Matthew C. Moench, Mayor
Michael Pappas, Township Administrator
Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney
Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk

Councilman Norgalis led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

The August 5, 2024 meeting minutes will be presented for Council action at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh:

- Councilman Kirsh expressed his support for Councilman Norgalis' efforts to challenge state mandates. When we are told what and how to do things without knowing the cost, it presents a great challenge, so we are pursuing that.
- On August 20th the Planning Board met to memorialize some previous work.
- On August 27th, the Zoning Board met briefly to discuss the proposed Starbucks on Route 22 East near Morgan Lane. The discussion came to a rapid halt when they encountered a roadblock related to the plan for the drive thru.

As a result, the applicant is now revisiting their proposal.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Attended a session on pilots with Councilman Norgalis at which time stormwater management mandates were reviewed. Councilman Kurdyla stated it's frustrating that the state mandate doesn't go far enough - we're not allowed to clean the brooks and streams without violating certain provisions.
- Councilman Kurdyla stated he was looking forward to the swearing in of Officer Fisher later on in the meeting.

Councilman Norgalis: (*verbatim*)

- Labor Day has come and gone so passes the unofficial transition from summer to fall. School is back in session so please be mindful as the daytime hours shorten that in a few weeks our older kids will head out to the school buses while it is still dark. Typing about the winter months reminds me of the need to get your cars prepped for the colder times including frost on your windshield. Keep your scraper handy.
- Earlier today Allen Kurdyla and I sat through a refresher course on Payment in lieu of Taxes commonly known as PILOT. You will hear more about PILOT in the coming months as the Council works through a number of redevelopment issues.
- I have been doing research on unfunded state mandates, a topic I raised at a previous council meeting. One of our agenda items for tonight is the Ordinance on Storm Water. It is unclear as of this time whether the Storm Water Ordinance requirement has been presented to the Council of Local Mandates abbreviated as the NJCOLM. NJCOLM is independent of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches although its nine members are directly appointed by the governor, president of the senate, senate minority leader, the assembly speaker, the assembly minority leader, and the chief justice of the state superior court. Their job, when requested, is to review state-mandated issues and requirements to determine if they are “unfunded mandates” meaning the state is telling us to do something but not providing funding to support the expense of that directive. The Council has the constitutional authority to negate any requirements that meet the test for “unfunded”. More later on this one.
- I received a letter from Senator Tom Kean telling me I have been nominated and selected as a “Senior Of Distinction”. I will hear more about that honor at a meeting Sen Kean will host next week.

Council President Ring:

- Council President Ring extended his best wishes to all the students and faculty for a successful school year.

**Mayor's
Reports**

Mayor Matthew C. Moench

- Mayor Moench wished all the teachers, students, coaches, faculty, janitors, and everyone else who contributes to the functioning of our school system a fantastic school year.

Swearing In

OFFICER JUSTIN FISHER

Chief Mitzak (*verbatim*)

Welcome everyone to the swearing-in of Officer Justin Fischer. I'd like to thank the mayor along with council members for supporting the police department and always being here for us. They really do support us, and it makes it easy for me to be the chief here. Officer Justin Fisher comes to us as a fully sworn police officer he's worked for the Camden County police department for the past year. I'm sure his experience in Camden County has prepared him for his new position as a Bridgewater police officer.

A little background about Justin - He was born in Vorhees New Jersey and currently resides in Burlington County. You better move closer it's going to be a long commute for you, my friend. He attended Lenape Regional High School. After High School he attended Florida Southern College, he completed one year there, before transferring to Rowan College where he earned his bachelor's degree. After college and before he started his career in law enforcement, Justin worked for Live casino and hotel in Philadelphia, and also at Harrah's Casino and racetrack. He attended the Canon County Police Academy and became a certified police officer in 2023.

For fun, he likes to work out, play golf, hang out with his dog, and his girlfriend but that's not in any particular order. He also likes to travel. Recently, he took a trip to Italy, Turkey, and Greece - he did this because he knew when we hired him, he wasn't getting any time off for at least a year. Due to his appearance tonight, he's obviously into fashion. I told him to look presentable so he must have rented that tuxedo. I hope it's not due back tonight.

In closing Justin, I thank you for becoming part of the Bridgewater PD family. We will provide you with the equipment and training to have a safe and effective career. Your goals working here are to do your best every day for the Bridgewater community and with your fellow police officers and to go home safe to your loved ones every night. I always say this but remember you are the answer to someone's prayers. I wish you all health, success, and safety in your next 25 to 30 years as a Bridgewater Township police officer.

Mayor Matthew C. Moench made a statement before swearing in police officer Justin Fisher.

I had the opportunity to speak very briefly with Officer Justin Fisher earlier. It's incredibly important to me to reiterate to our new officers, as they are sworn in, and to their families, how much we value what they will do for us in our community.

As my kids are starting school this week, when you hear about what goes on around the country, the value that I have as a father and as a mayor here in town for what you will all do for our families is not lost for a second on me. You will have my support, the administration's support, and the entire Council's support in your career. We will make sure we give you the tools to succeed.

As the chief mentioned, we will make sure that we have your back at every step along the way. Thank you for coming to our town. Thank you for serving our community. And to your family, thank you for lending him to us. We promise we will take good care of him and send him home at some point.

To all present officers, we extend our gratitude for your ongoing service and dedication. We wish to express appreciation for the introduction of a new officer to our town. To those affiliated with the PBA, efforts are underway to address the contract. Your presence in Bridgewater is valued.

Proclamation Ovarian Cancer Awareness

Matthew C. Moench, Mayor read the following proclamation

WHEREAS, ovarian cancer remains the leading cause of death from gynecological cancers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, ovarian cancer is often referred to as the “silent disease” because its symptoms are subtle and can easily be mistaken for those of other illnesses; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no screening test for early detection of ovarian cancer, making it crucial to recognize its warning signs for timely diagnosis and effective treatment; and

WHEREAS, symptoms of ovarian cancer may include abdominal and pelvic pain, difficulty eating, and frequent urination; and

WHEREAS, because the early signs of ovarian cancer are frequently overlooked, increasing public awareness and understanding of the disease, its risk factors, and its subtle symptoms is vital to saving women’s lives and ensuring timely diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS, September has been designated as National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, the Bridgewater Turn the Towns Teal campaign is committed to proactively raising awareness about ovarian cancer and its symptoms; and

WHEREAS, the Turn the Towns Teal campaign was inspired by the vision of Renee Edwards, who initiated it in the Township of Bridgewater in 2014 during her own battle with ovarian cancer; and

WHEREAS, teal ribbons will be prominently displayed at the Township Municipal Complex to raise awareness about ovarian cancer and its early symptoms; and

WHEREAS, Bridgewater Township strongly encourages all residents to educate themselves about ovarian cancer and to share knowledge and resources with their families, friends, and neighbors to combat this disease; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Matthew C. Moench, Mayor of Bridgewater Township, along with the Township Council, do hereby proclaim the month of September as

National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and urge all residents of the Township to recognize the significant impact of the Turn the Towns Teal Campaign, to support those whose lives have been touched by ovarian cancer, and to participate meaningfully in this important awareness initiative.

Sergeant Jamie Edwards of the Bridgewater Police Department was present to receive the proclamation.

Presentation **Community Recovery Champion Program - Ken Musgrove, CPRS Girl Scouts**
Presenter: Ken Musgrove, Director of Recovery Support, Community and Crisis

Ken Musgrove presented a proposal for funding a part-time Community Recovery Champion position to support individuals in recovery within Somerset County. The champion would be integrated into the local community, providing guidance and resources to individuals on their recovery journey.

Purpose: To provide support and resources to individuals in recovery, focusing on acute and sustained recovery.

Role of the Champion: The champion would act as a liaison between the community and recovery services, promoting awareness of available resources and providing personalized support.

Funding Request: \$20,000 to support the part-time position, approximately 40 hours per month.

Benefits: Studies have shown that for every dollar spent on recovery support services, the community saves \$7 in other services.

Experience: Ken Musgrove shared his personal recovery journey and emphasized the importance of community support for sustained recovery.

Action Items:

- Review the budget and proposal submitted by Ken Musgrove.
- Consider funding the Community Recovery Champion position.
- Discuss potential collaboration with the Community Police Alliance Coordinator, Mr. Dameon Stackhouse.

Mayor Moench stated that the township was one of several municipalities that received funds from an opioid litigation settlement. We are seeking partnerships with organizations to utilize some of these funds to serve our local population through various programs that address the needs of our community. Today's presentation is from the Community Recovery Champion program, which discusses their work and how they can benefit Bridgewater and the broader community.

**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 Kirsh, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

- **Linda Barth -214 N Bridge St, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**
Mrs. Barth mentioned that she is a member of the Middlebrook Symposium planning committee and left some flyers for the upcoming March 15th event at the college.
- **Michael Deloreto- 118 Oak St, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**
Mr. Deloreto requested improvements to sidewalks, roads, and parks in the Bradley Gardens section of Bridgewater. He suggested seeking grant funding through the bipartisan infrastructure law.
- **Jennifer Loughran- 716 Falcon CT, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**
Mrs. Loughran shared a positive experience one of her neighbors had with a police officer.

- **Joan Geiger- 154 Hillside Ave, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**
Mrs. Greiger thanked the public works department for cleaning the Hillside Avenue and Highland drain and urged the township to strengthen gun laws and promote gun safety.
- **Dan Zolinski- 715 Chimney Rock Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**
Mr. Zolinski expressed concerns about the proposed tax increase and the overall financial health of the township. He believes that the council has not been providing adequate financial oversight and requested answers to several budget-related questions.
- **Dennis Yi- 28 Shields Lane, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**
Mr. Yi thanked Mayor Moench for the ovarian cancer awareness campaign and inquired about Bridgewater's energy efficiency audit. He emphasized the importance of updating buildings to save money, energy, and the environment.

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

**Public
Hearing &
Final Action
Ordinances**

AN ORDINANCE TO SET THE COMPENSATION OF THE MAYOR, TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS, DEPARTMENT HEADS AND CERTAIN OTHER MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 374 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1985; N.J.S.A. 2A:809; N.J.S.A. 2A:8-13; N.J.S.A. 40A:9-165; N.J.S.A.40A:9-135; N.J.S.A. 40A:9-146, AND CHAPTER 95 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1996

Council President Ring noted that during the budget process, there was a discussion regarding the compensation of the township Council and Mayor. Specifically, the topic of how those costs are allocated within the budget was addressed. It's important to emphasize that there was no increase in the compensation for either the township Council or the Mayor.

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

No one wished to be heard.

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

Councilman Norgalis raised this issue during the last Council meeting. He argued that listing compensation by position can be misleading because it doesn't reflect the specific salaries of individual employees. He suggested that we should name the individuals involved, as this provides a clearer understanding of their compensation.

He explained that if an employee leaves and a new one takes their place, the new employee might mistakenly assume they are entitled to the same salary. By naming individuals, we can avoid this confusion and ensure transparency. Councilman Norgalis stated that while it may be too late to modify the current ordinance, he would like to propose that in the future, salary ordinances should be specific to individuals rather than positions.

Mayor Moench noted that while it might not be feasible for this year, we should examine how we currently handle this process. The law requires us to identify positions, but we could also include names or a combination of both. Additionally, we should consider adding language to the ordinance that specifies what should be done if a position becomes vacant during the year. The current practice is that if an employee retires or leaves, we negotiate a new salary with their replacement. This new salary would then need to be approved by the Council through an amendment to the salary ordinance. This process is generally easier when hiring external candidates compared to internal promotions.

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

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

ORDINANCE #24-12 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-229](#) is appended to the official minutes

**Introduction
of Ordinances**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 126, PART 11, ARTICLE XXXVIIB OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER ENTITLED “STORMWATER CONTROL” TO REFLECT AMENDMENTS TO THE NEW JERSEY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RULES AT N.J.A.C. 7:8, ADOPTED JULY 17, 2023

Mayor Moench noted that this ordinance is a mandatory requirement under New Jersey law and that it has been discussed at previous meetings. We continue to explore strategies, both within and beyond state regulations, to address stormwater issues in Bridgewater. This includes developing township-wide plans and addressing specific site concerns.

Mayor Moench and Councilman Norgalis have jointly signed a letter to the New Jersey Council on Local Mandates, expressing our concerns. Councilman Norgalis has been leading this effort, and the letter is currently being drafted.

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

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

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-230](#) is appended to the official minutes

Grace Njuguna, 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 September 2024, 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.

Resolutions

AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 24-03-07-087, AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$20,000 TO DARLENE GREEN, P.P., A.I.C.P, OF COLLIERS ENGINEERING AND DESIGN, AS AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLANNER FOR THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$20,000 FOR THE PERIOD OF MARCH 8, 2024 – DECEMBER 31, 2024, TO BE FUNDED FROM THE COAH TRUST FUND-MOUNT LAUREL EXPENSES ACCOUNT

Mayor Moench reminded everyone that we are currently facing the new round of Consolidated Official Assessment (COA) mandates. These mandates require municipalities to conduct extensive work to determine how to meet the new assessment numbers, which are not yet known. The process involves the state calculating its numbers, us calculating our own, comparing the two, and potentially going through a proceeding if there are discrepancies.

To address this, we will continue the work of our planner to calculate our COAs, identify additional credits that may be available, and ensure that we have met or exceeded our obligations or have a plan to meet the new ones.

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	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-231](#) is appended to the official minutes

AMENDING AN AWARD OF CONTRACT RESOLUTION NO. 24-03-07-086 FOR KATHERINE SARMAD, P.P., A.I.C.P OF HARBOR CONSULTANTS, INC.; TOWNSHIP PLANNER TO INCLUDE AN ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF FUNDING

Mayor Moench explained that this process will help us identify township-owned properties that may be suitable for affordable housing or private properties that could potentially be acquired for this purpose. Additionally, engineering assessments will need to be conducted on some of these properties, in collaboration with our planner, to address any related issues.

Councilman Norgalis reminded everyone that this is not an increase in expenses but rather a reallocation of funds among different accounts.

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	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-232](#) is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO ONE TOTAL CLEANING SERVICES, 130 GARFIELD AVE, PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07062 FOR JANITORIAL SERVICES IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$65,950.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 – SEPTEMBER 5, 2025

Mayor Moench explained that this is a bid for our janitorial services. This is a new vendor, and we are excited to have them join our team.

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	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-233](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING PROJECT RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING/ SURVEYING/ INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE 2024-6 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF BITTLE COURT, DAVIS COURT, PERRINE ROAD, AND WEAVER DRIVE TO MATRIX NEW WORLD ENGINEERING, LAND SURVEYING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, PC (26 COLUMBIA TURNPIKE, FLORHAM PARK, NJ 07932), IN THE AMOUNT OF \$71,270.00, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2024 CAPITAL FUND

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	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-234](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF THE 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 FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON AUGUST 1, 2024

Mayor Moench stated that this is an annual agreement we have with the Board of Education to ensure that we have school resource officers in our schools. We are renewing this agreement with minor modifications based on the recommendations of the Chief of Police. We are looking forward to supporting this agreement and continuing our partnership with the Board of Education.

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	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-235](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF JENNI PETERSON AS MUNICIPAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Council President Ring noted that Jenny has previously served as our interim Municipal Court Administrator while she was completing her certification. She is one of only a few individuals in the state to have earned this certification this year. This appointment is now being made permanent, without the interim title.

Mayor Moench praised her excellent work and noted that her responsibilities will increase. He expressed his honor at being able to officially appoint her.

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	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-236](#) is appended to the official minutes

WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60 FOR PIONEER FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER IN CONNECTION WITH A FAMILY CAMPFIRE EVENT TO BE HELD AT THE BRIDGEWATER YMCA, 601 GARRETSON ROAD, BRIDGEWATER ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19, 2024 (RAIN DATE SEPTEMBER 26, 2024)

Councilman Norgalis stated that the organization referenced above should standardize their paperwork for better clarity.

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	Absent
Council President Ring	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-237](#) 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 litigation.

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 Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the Council convened in closed session at approximately 8:31 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#24-09-05-238](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 9:30 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Timothy Ring
Council President