

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MAY 22, 2025 - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Norgalis 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 10, 2024, 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 (arrived at 7:49 pm)
Councilman Filipe Pedroso
Councilman Timothy Ring
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

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

Councilman Pedroso led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

MAY 8, 2025 - REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Council President Norgalis, the May 8, 2025, regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote. Councilman Ring abstained because he was absent from the meeting, and Councilman Kurdyla was not present for the vote.

MAY 8, 2025 – CLOSED SESSIONS

The May 8, 2025, closed session minutes were passed around for Council approval & signature.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh:

- On May 13, the Zoning Board convened to address two cases: a residential request concerning exterior alterations on Brown Road, and a commercial case on Finderne Avenue, which was a continuation from previous hearings.

Additionally, the board discussed amended site plans and variances for a gas station and a food mart.

- Councilman Kirsh and Councilman Kurdyla had the honor of representing the governing body at the Bridgewater Chinese School's 20th Anniversary Celebration on May 18. The event featured remarkable cultural performances and a graduation ceremony for seven students. Councilman Kirsh also highlighted that May is Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.
- Councilman Kirsh attended a Planning Board meeting to prepare for the Township's Fair Share Housing plan, expected to be finalized by the end of June. He noted that the Planning Board would hear the plan on June 25, before it goes before the council on June 26.
- Councilman Kirsh stated that over the past two and a half weeks, the budget committee and all members of the governing body have been meeting to discuss the budget.
- Extended gratitude to all the EMS volunteers.

Council President Norgalis: *(verbatim)*

- The 2025 Budget Introduction which was scheduled for tonight has been postponed by the Administration and has been rescheduled to a Special Council meeting which I have called for next Tuesday (May 27th) at 7:30pm here in this room. The public notice of that meeting was published by the Clerk this morning. I want to thank Zoning Board Chairman Jeff Foose, Zoning Board members and the applicants who were scheduled to use the courtroom that night for graciously accepting and understanding our need to use the courtroom at 7:30. In fact, they will be sitting in the back of the room awaiting the completion of a severely truncated Council agenda. The few days delay in INTRODUCTION until next Tuesday will not impact the scheduled ADOPTION on June 26th.
- Moving on in my report Attended the quarterly Township Emergency Management Planning Committee meeting. After many months of fruitless discussion with FEMA over some residual reimbursement for the last major flood incident it is now obvious that FEMA has no intention of providing about \$100,000 in federal aid. Rather than spend countless hours on what we are sure is a lost cause we will move our efforts to more productive issues.
- Last Saturday it was my pleasure to attend the graduation of my Grandson Johnathan Howard Travisano from Wake Forrest University in North Carolina. He received a Master of Science in Business Analytics Degree.

- Attended the monthly Municipal Alliance meeting.
- Continued to participate in numerous 2025 budget discussions.

Councilman Pedroso:

- Councilman Pedroso thanked the EMS volunteers in attendance for their dedicated service to Bridgewater Township. He acknowledged the significant time commitment involved in serving on rescue squads, emphasizing that they provide an essential service to the Township and its residents.
- Councilman Pedroso urged everyone to take time on Memorial Day to honor the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice protecting our freedom.
- Over the weekend, Councilman Pedroso visited McGuire Air Force Base for the air show, where he had the opportunity to thank many members of the armed services.
- He also attended the high school art show, expressing his appreciation for the talented students who exhibited their artwork.
- Councilman Pedroso attended the Somerset Regional Center Partnership meeting. He also joined the Somerset County Federation of Republican Women for their annual event, where he congratulated Tracy DeFrancesco, the Federation's Chair, on receiving the Melissa Fenwick Award.

Councilman Ring:

- Councilman Ring participated in numerous meetings concerning the 2025 budget. Additionally, he expressed gratitude to all members of the EMS community.

Mayor's Reports

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

- Township Administrator Pappas acknowledged the passing of Michael Montgomery, a longtime Bridgewater resident and dedicated volunteer firefighter for the Finderne Fire Department.
- Administrator Pappas also met with Will Kane, CEO of Avnos, a relatively new business headquartered in Bridgewater Township. An official ribbon-cutting ceremony for their expanded facility is scheduled for later this year.
- Finally, Administrator Pappas announced a special meeting will be held this coming Tuesday to introduce the 2025 budget. He expressed his gratitude for the council's patience as the document undergoes thorough examination and preparation to ensure accuracy.

Proclamation EMS WEEK

Councilman Ring shared that he joined the Martinsville Rescue Squad at age 18 and has since served with two different rescue squads. He stated that presenting this proclamation is a small token of appreciation for those who volunteer their time and efforts to the Township daily.

He then read the following proclamation, recognizing Emergency Medical Services Week and honoring Bridgewater's EMS agencies.

WHEREAS, Emergency Medical Services is a critical part of our community's public safety network, ensuring that timely and skilled care is available whenever and wherever it is needed; and

WHEREAS, Bridgewater Township is proud to be served by four outstanding volunteer EMS agencies:

- The **Bradley Gardens First Aid and Rescue Squad**
- The **Finderne First Aid and Rescue Squad**
- The **Green Knoll Rescue Squad**
- The **Martinsville Rescue Squad**

WHEREAS, the dedicated members of these agencies give their time, talents, and training in service to others—responding at all hours, in all conditions, with professionalism and compassion; and

WHEREAS, access to high-quality emergency medical care not only saves lives, but helps people recover more fully and more quickly from sudden illness or injury; and

WHEREAS, EMS providers serve an essential role beyond emergency response—bridging healthcare gaps through out-of-hospital care, community education, and preventive services; and

WHEREAS, those who serve with the four Bridgewater EMS agencies are part of a broader emergency care system that includes EMTs, paramedics, dispatchers, firefighters, police officers, nurses, physicians, and countless others who work together for the good of our residents; and

WHEREAS, we recognize and deeply appreciate the commitment, skill, and sacrifice required of the members of the Bridgewater Rescue Squads, whether they serve as volunteers or career professionals;

NOW, THEREFORE, the **Mayor and Council of the Township of Bridgewater**, led by **Mayor Matthew Moench**, do hereby proclaim the week of **May 18–24, 2025**, as

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK

We honor and thank the members of all four squads for their unwavering commitment to the health and safety of Bridgewater. The 2025 EMS Week theme, *"We Care. For Everyone."*, truly reflects the spirit of our community and the heart of our EMS volunteers.

We encourage all residents to express their appreciation and to take part in efforts that promote emergency preparedness, community health, and support for our first responders.

Presentation

NJ DOT – RT 202/206 & RT 22 INTERCHANGE, PETERS BROOK TO COMMONS

Township Administrator Pappas announced that the administration recently met virtually with New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) representatives. Due to the project's significance, he requested that the NJDOT present their plans directly to the council.

Patient Sangi, the NJDOT Regional Coordinator for the Office of Community and Government Relations, joined by her project and design team, then presented a plan for the Route 202/206 and Route 22 interchange. The project aims to improve safety and reduce congestion while minimizing environmental impact, right-of-way acquisition, and utility disruptions.

Bernie Borchers, head of the design team from Green Peterson Incorporates (GPI), stated that the NJDOT is currently in the concept development phase. He explained the project limits: along Route 22 from Peter's Brook to Grove Street, and from Route 202/206 to Commons Way to the acceleration lane for the Somerville Circle. Borchers emphasized that the project's necessity is driven by safety and congestion management scores.

He detailed that the safety score considers crash data elements to rank the roadway's crash rate against the statewide average for similar roads. The congestion management score uses traffic and roadway data for a similar comparative ranking. Borchers presented data obtained from their study, indicating collection locations, and then provided preliminary preferred plans for the project.

Following the presentation, NJDOT representatives fielded questions from the governing body.

Public Comment

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

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting was

opened to the public for comment.

- **Mr. Stickle: Papen Road – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Stickle expressed his concern regarding the brightness of lights throughout the township. He explained that in his specific situation, lights are illuminating residents' garages, which in turn causes light to shine into his home. Mr. Stickle also noted that some lights are so intense they shine directly across the street into neighbors' windows. He urged the development of an ordinance to address and rectify this issue.

- **Cathy Franco: 766 Weemac Road – Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Ms. Franco voiced her disappointment over the budget delay, questioning why the township would issue a preliminary tax bill without a finalized budget. While acknowledging the upcoming special meeting for the 2025 budget introduction next Tuesday, she asked if the public would have an opportunity to review the document beforehand.

Township Administrator Pappas clarified that the budget will be publicly available the day after its introduction. He added that the tax rate on the estimated tax bill is not the final rate for the year and therefore will not be reflected in the proposed budget.

- **Anda Cytroen: 654 Stangle Road – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Cytroen commented on the NJDOT presentation, stating her concern that the data presented was outdated, only covering the period from 2016 to 2020. She said that such a project would be highly disruptive to Bridgewater residents. Ms. Cytroen then asked the governing body if the project was indeed based on nearly ten-year-old data and inquired about the proposed target areas within the town.

Ms. Cytroen also voiced agreement with the previous speaker regarding the need for a light ordinance, emphasizing its importance as Bridgewater continues to develop. She then questioned the "unforeseen issues" mentioned in Resolution 12A. Township Administrator Pappas clarified that since the budget has not been formally adopted, it could potentially lead to such "unforeseen issues".

- **Dan Zelinski: 715 Chimney Rock Road – Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Mr. Zelinski raised several financial concerns, including the PILOT program, tax increases, affordable housing, Sanofi's departure, and the Township's

overall financial health. He also questioned why Bridgewater would permit warehouses and trucking terminals next to residential areas.

Council President Norgalis acknowledged Mr. Zelinski's recurring concerns and explained that Sanofi relocated because they received a more favorable offer elsewhere. Councilman Pedroso agreed with Mr. Zelinski's points regarding Sanofi, but clarified that the State was responsible for the unsuccessful negotiations, not Bridgewater Township.

When Mr. Zelinski asked about steps to reduce the Township's reliance on its budget surplus, Councilman Kirsh responded that the upcoming budget will demonstrate that the Township's surplus has remained remarkably consistent and within reasonable deviation for many years.

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

Resolutions

AUTHORIZING THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX COLLECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER TO PREPARE AND MAIL ESTIMATED TAX BILLS FOR 2025 CALENDAR YEAR IN ACCORDANCE WITH P.L. 1994, c. 72

Councilman Pedroso echoed residents' concerns, stating the budget is long overdue and should have been introduced to the governing body sooner. He expressed hope that the delay indicates the Administration is actively cutting Township expenses and reducing tax burdens. Councilman Pedroso urged the Administration to release the budget as soon as possible.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-05-22-138](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE AMENDMENT OF RESOLUTION 25-01-02-011 FOR THE AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES; MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR JOHN LANZA, ESQ. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$80,000.00 FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2025

Council President Norgalis stated that the original contract had a typographical error, and this is the amended version of the resolution.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-05-22-139](#) is appended to the official minutes

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Council President Norgalis, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President