

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
JUNE 12, 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, June 12, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. in the 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
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 Ring led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

MAY 22, 2025 - REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the May 22, 2025, regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

MAY 22, 2025 – CLOSED SESSIONS

The May 22, 2025, closed session minutes were passed around for Council approval and signature.

**Council
Reports**

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Nothing to report.

Councilman Kirsh:

- He shared that he had the privilege of attending the Memorial Day parade and ceremony hosted by American Legion Post 327 in Bradley Gardens. He noted

that participating in this event each year holds personal significance for him, and he was honored to represent the community.

- Councilman Kirsh also reported that the Zoning Board met on the evening of the Council's special meeting. During that session, the Board continued hearing testimony regarding a proposed senior townhouse development along Route 202/206, adjacent to the Jewish Community Center property. Additionally, the Board heard a residential case related to a side yard setback, also on Route 202/206 in the northern section of town.
- He acknowledged that the recent primary election had taken place and emphasized that such elections do not run smoothly by accident. In Bridgewater, they are made possible through the dedicated efforts of the Township Clerk, Grace, and her immediate team - Juliana, Ally, and Natalie. He also recognized support from various departments including Administration, Public Works, Engineering, Human Resources, and Health and Human Services.
- Councilman Kirsh noted that early voting was held in the Council Chambers, a decision made several years ago to promote greater voter access. While early voting does present some logistical challenges for meeting schedules, he affirmed that it remains an important public service. On Election Day itself, the Township successfully operated 36 voting districts across 12 polling locations, and the process ran very smoothly.

Council President Norgalis: *(verbatim)*

- As reported numerous times over the months, PSE&G will be curb to curb repaving on many of the street that they disturbed due to their gas main replacement.

The following is the list of streets scheduled for repaving this summer:

- ❖ **Country Club Road** – From 60' south of Van Holten Road to Roosevelt Street (East)
- ❖ **Van Holten Road** – From Country Club Road to Meadow Road
- ❖ **Meadow Road** – From 40' north of Deer Run Drive to Easton Turnpike
- ❖ **Cold Spring Lane** – From Meadow Road to the end of the street
- ❖ **Turnbull Place** – From Cold Spring Lane to Ten Eyck Road
- ❖ **Ten Eyck Road** – From 50' west of Turnbull Place to Meadow Road

- ❖ **Church Road** – From Meadow Road to State Route 28 (Easton Turnpike)
- ❖ **Stella Drive** – From Starview Drive to Glenwood Terrace
- ❖ **Glenwood Terrace** – From Stella Drive to Claire Drive
- ❖ **Grimm Drive** – From the Township border with Somerville to the cul-de-sac

- The Bridgewater Raritan Municipal held it last Spring meeting in June and will reconvene in Sept. Topics covered in the June meeting included Empower Somerset and Grief, Hope and Recovery, which involved practical paths for hope and healing.
- Attended the 125th Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Somerset Hospital in Somerville. The event was sponsored by the RWJ Barnabas Health Somerset Foundation. Featured speakers included the Honorable William Kelleher Jr, our very own retired Presiding Municipal Judge as well as Deirdre Blaus Chief Administrative Officer at Robert Wood. They journeyed thru the years from the 1899 founding as result of a 12 year accident victim who died because of inadequate medical treatment. At the time the nearest hospital was in Plainfield.
- Participated in the Administrator's Redevelopment meeting where various projects were discussed.
- Attended, along with Councilman Ring, the quarterly meeting of the Middle Brook Health Commission. There were several topics discussed including public health issues such as COVID, measles and the need to test well water.

Councilman Pedroso:

- He began by welcoming everyone and expressing appreciation for the strong turnout, noting that it was a pleasure to see so many members of the public in attendance, as large crowds are not common at Council meetings.
- Councilman Pedroso then congratulated the Bridgewater Panthers Rugby Team on their recent success. He acknowledged their presence at the meeting to receive a proclamation and expressed how proud he was of the team. He initially noted that this was their second championship win in eight years but was quickly corrected—it was their third title. He offered additional congratulations to the coaching staff for their outstanding achievement and commended the entire team for their dedication and performance.

Councilman Ring:

- He began by echoing Councilman Kirsh's appreciation for the Clerk's Office and their work during the recent election. He acknowledged that Election Day is a long one for staff and commended the team for doing an excellent job.
- Councilman Ring noted that he continues to work with the administration on questions related to the municipal budget. He reminded his fellow Council members to direct any budget-related questions or suggestions to Councilman Kirsh for consideration.
- Lastly, he addressed the presence of several members of the public attending the meeting to express concerns or interest regarding the Cafe Amélia expansion application. Councilman Ring clarified that the application will be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Adjustment—not the Township Council—and emphasized that the Council has no authority or vote on the matter.
- He provided details of the Zoning Board hearing, which is scheduled for Monday, July 22nd at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. He explained that the process is a formal public hearing where the applicant will present expert testimony in support of their request for a zoning variance. Members of the public are welcome to attend and will have the opportunity to ask questions, cross-examine witnesses, or even provide expert testimony of their own. He noted that the hearing may extend beyond one night depending on the proceedings.

**Mayor's
Reports**

Township Administrator Michael Pappas delivered a budget presentation on behalf of Mayor Moench, who prepared a detailed PowerPoint addressing questions raised about the 2025 municipal budget. The presentation is scheduled to be made public within 24 hours.

Key highlights from the presentation included:

2025 Budget Total: \$51,041,645.82, covering public safety, parks, senior services, and other essential operations.

Inflation Impact: Inflation affects the Township's purchasing power. The proposed budget increase is 82% less than one-third of the 2024 inflation rate (2.9%).

Fixed Costs: About 25% of the budget cannot be legally reduced due to obligations like pensions, healthcare, salaries, debt service, and insurance.

Flat Budget Misconception: Freezing the budget would reduce services due to rising costs.

Services at Risk: Without budget adjustments, services like police, roads, parks, recreation, and code enforcement would suffer.

Tax Assessments: The Township does not control home assessments; these are regulated by the NJ Division of Taxation.

Budget Timing: Though some criticized the timing, the administration prioritized due diligence and collaboration with the governing body.

Surplus Use: The Township maintains a healthy, annually replenished surplus; it is not exhausted.

Tax Impact on Homeowners: The average homeowner (assessed at \$576,495) will see a \$34 increase, of which \$28 is due to a 2% rise in assessed value, and only \$6 results from the budget.

Tax Rate Change: The municipal tax rate is increasing by just 0.001, from 0.243 to 0.244.

Comparative Tax Increases: Bridgewater's tax rate increase is among the lowest in the region, as shown on a bar graph in the presentation.

Tax Distribution: Only 11% of a resident's property tax bill goes to the Township. The rest is divided among schools (67%), Somerset County (20%), and fire districts (2%).

Past Tax Increase Claims: The administration could not verify claims of 5%, 6%, 13%, and 8% increases in recent years and found no supporting data for those figures.

Camp Cromwell Grant: The federal grant is not delayed for budgetary reasons; the Township is awaiting execution of the grant agreement from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Administrator Pappas closed by reiterating the administration's commitment to transparency and factual information through the presentation.

Proclamation BRIDGEWATER RECREATION'S HIGH SCHOOL BOYS RUGBY TEAM

Council President Norgalis made the following remarks before the presentation of a proclamation, acknowledging the large number of attendees and expressing his appreciation for the strong turnout. He humorously noted that Council meetings are often much quieter and suggested the Council may need to find creative ways to encourage such community participation more regularly. He then introduced a proclamation honoring the Bridgewater-Raritan High School Boys Recreation Rugby

Team and invited Councilman Allen Kurdyla to read it aloud. Highlighting the Kurdyla family's deep involvement in the local sports community, Council President Norgalis added with a smile that although rugby isn't currently one of the sports they participate in, it might be added to the list in the future.

Councilman Kurdyla, before reading the proclamation, began by congratulating the team and expressing that it was both a pleasure and an honor to deliver the recognition.

WHEREAS, Bridgewater Recreation's High School Boys Rugby Team has completed an extraordinary season by going undefeated and capturing the 2025 Rugby New Jersey Blue League State Championship; and

WHEREAS, this outstanding achievement is a testament to the team's unwavering commitment to excellence, tireless dedication to training, and exceptional performance on the field; and

WHEREAS, the players of Bridgewater Recreation's High School Boys Rugby Team have exemplified not only athletic prowess but also the highest standards of character, sportsmanship, and camaraderie throughout the season; and

WHEREAS, the strong leadership shown by team captains, coaches, and supporting staff has played an essential role in fostering a culture of unity, resilience, and respect that has propelled the team to the pinnacle of success; and

WHEREAS, the unwavering support, encouragement, and involvement of the players' parents and families have been a vital part of the team's success, providing the foundation for both the athletes' personal growth and the spirit of the entire program; and

WHEREAS, the team's historic undefeated season and championship victory have brought great pride and distinction to our entire community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Township of Bridgewater acknowledges the outstanding achievements of the Bridgewater Recreation High School Boys Rugby Team, and all residents are urged to join in recognition and celebration of the remarkable accomplishments of these outstanding student athletes and the positive example they set for our youth and our community.

Coach Chris, a former player and current coach of the Bridgewater-Raritan High School Rugby Team, thanked the mayor, township administration, and Council for supporting the program. He shared that he played from 2014 to 2017, including on the championship team, and returned after graduation to help coach. Describing rugby as a unique brotherhood, he expressed pride in the team and hope to one day

play alongside the current players at the men's level. He encouraged others to try the sport, noting it builds discipline and strong bonds. He concluded by thanking the town and expressing how proud they are of the team.

Presentation PSE&G GAS MAIN REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

Township Engineer William Burr provided an update on the PSE&G gas infrastructure project that has been ongoing in Bridgewater for several years. He thanked residents and the Council for their patience and explained that approximately 18 miles of roadway have had new gas mains installed—demonstrating PSE&G's investment in improving utility infrastructure and public safety.

Mr. Burr emphasized the Township's focus on ensuring proper roadway restoration, aiming for full-width milling and paving rather than partial repairs. He noted that earlier phases of this restoration were completed last summer and fall, including work on Foothill Road, neighborhoods off southern Vosseller Avenue, Shady Lane, Deerhead, and Crest Road.

With the latest phase of gas main work now complete or nearly so, Mr. Burr announced that the final round of milling and paving will begin in the coming weeks and take approximately two weeks. Roads scheduled for resurfacing include:

- **Country Club Road** (Van Holten to Roosevelt East)
- **Van Holten Road** (entire length)
- **Meadow Road** (Easton Turnpike to Deer Run)
- **Cold Spring Lane, Turnbull, and Tenni** (off Meadow Road)
- **Church Road** (entire length)
- Portions of **Stella Drive, Glenwood Terrace, Dun,** and **Grim Drive** (accessible via North Gaston through Somerville)

He assured residents that they will receive notice of the upcoming work via phone, email, door hangers, and social media. Mr. Burr acknowledged the inconvenience of detours but noted PSE&G's responsiveness and cooperation throughout the project. He concluded by inviting representatives from PSE&G to speak and answer any additional questions from the public or the Council.

Matthew Rose, Regional Public Affairs Manager for Somerset County, thanked the Township for the opportunity to present and expressed appreciation for the cooperation from the Engineering and Public Works departments throughout the upgrades.

Tyler Keefe, Project Manager for PSE&G's Mid-Central Gas Construction Group, introduced the team members present, including Senior Project Manager Kate Almeida, Construction Manager Mike Gallagher, and Outreach Specialist Cassim Gomez. He then outlined the scope of work completed since March 2023,

highlighting four projects totaling approximately 20.22 miles of gas main replacement and over 1,000 service replacements.

Key projects included:

- **PL 401:** 4.8 miles of gas main replacement and 263 services in the Vosseller Avenue area.
- **PL 403:** 6.7 miles and 315 services around Foothill and North Bridge Street.
- **PL 404:** 3.4 miles and 167 services near Stella Drive and Copper Hill Way.
- **PL 406 (most recent):** 5.4 miles and 265 services replaced between March 2024 and April 2025, covering streets such as Country Club Road (Van Holton to Arsley), Van Holton Road (Meadow to Country Club), Meadow Road (Church to Deer Run), and various side streets including Riverview Road, Cold Spring Lane, Turnbull Place, and others.

They emphasized the benefits of the work, including immediate reduction of gas leaks, decreased methane emissions, improved safety and reliability, and relocation of gas meters from inside to outside homes to enhance emergency access.

Mr. Rose and Mr. Keefe concluded by noting that final milling and paving restoration on the affected streets is scheduled to begin Monday, June 23rd.

Councilman Ring inquired about PSE&G's paving process, specifically whether the paving work is performed in-house or subcontracted. Mr. Rose responded that the paving is subcontracted to Rockborne, a contractor they use regularly. Councilman Ring then asked about performance standards, noting past challenges the Township faced with paving quality from local vendors that required rework. He inquired whether PSE&G holds similar quality requirements for their contractors.

Councilman Pedroso raised concerns about communication issues during previous PSE&G road projects. He noted that road closures caused significant disruptions, including delays for school buses, and residents were often unaware of ongoing work due to a lack of timely notifications. He emphasized the importance of real-time communication between PSE&G and the Township to ensure residents can plan accordingly and avoid frustration.

In response, Mr. Rose assured the Council that the notification process has already begun. He confirmed that signs have been posted on roads scheduled for paving and that PSE&G coordinated with the Township to schedule work after the school year ended to minimize bus traffic disruptions. He acknowledged the importance of maintaining effective communication and committed to working closely with the Township to keep residents informed in real time.

Council President Norgalis asked PSE&G to explain the process of relocating gas meters from inside the home to outside. He inquired whether this work also involves

replacing the gas line from the street to the house and how the overall process is carried out, including the installation of exterior shutoff valves.

In response, Mr. Rose explained the process for relocating gas meters from inside to outside the home. He stated that PSE&G first installs the new gas main beneath the street and activates it. Once operational, each individual service line is transferred from the old main to the new one. During this transfer, the customer's service line is typically replaced, often by inserting a new line through the existing one. As part of this process, the gas meter is relocated from inside the home to the exterior, primarily for safety reasons.

Council President Norgalis asked for clarification on who performs the meter relocation work, specifically whether it is done by certified PSE&G employees. Mr. Rose confirmed that all individuals entering residents' homes are certified PSE&G personnel.

Council President Norgalis then raised a concern he had heard from residents about the placement of new exterior meters—particularly whether there is any flexibility in location, as many gas lines enter through the center of the house and homeowners are concerned about meters being installed in prominent or undesirable locations, such as directly in front of windows.

In response, Mr. Rose explained that PSE&G follows strict guidelines set by the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), which include rules regarding how close a meter can be to windows or other features.

Council President Norgalis requested that a copy of those placement guidelines be shared with Administrator Pappas so the Township has a clear record of meter placement standards. He also confirmed his understanding that gas shutoff valves will now be located outside the home, rather than inside.

Councilman Ring asked for confirmation that all residential conversions from the old gas mains to the newly installed mains have been completed. He sought clarification on whether all planned homes have already been transferred to the new system, now that the gas main installation work is finished.

Council President Norgalis inquired about the level of surface restoration performed after PSE&G completes work near residential properties. He asked whether any area disturbed—such as pavement or other hard surfaces outside a home—is restored to its original condition. He also questioned whether vegetation that may be removed during the work is replaced or left unrestored.

Mr. Rose confirmed that PSE&G restores both public and private properties to their original condition after completing work. Any removed pavement, landscaping, or

vegetation is replaced so that the site looks as it did prior to the installation.

Councilman Ring shared his personal experience as one of the homeowners affected by the project. He noted that after the work was completed on his property, PSE&G restored the area by laying down soil and grass seed and reestablishing flower beds. While he acknowledged the restoration might not have been identical, he said it was very close to the original condition.

Councilman Kurdyla expressed appreciation for the professionalism of the PSE&G teams throughout the project. He noted that the crews on-site were responsive and addressed any questions or concerns from residents. While he acknowledged the challenges caused by road closures, he said he was glad to see the project nearing completion.

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

- **Mitch Catch:1462 Long Road -Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Mitch Catch, speaking on behalf of himself and several neighbors, raised serious concerns about illegal dumping activities in their neighborhood, particularly involving property associated with Adam Alb. He noted that this individual has previously appeared before the Council and expressed alarm that similar issues may be starting again at "Adam's Farm."

Catch explained that large quantities of wood chips are being illegally dumped on the Long Road Hills, an area that suffered a major fire approximately 18 months ago. He recounted a personal experience in which a police officer warned him to prepare for evacuation during that event.

Catch warned that continued dumping could escalate fire risk, endanger lives and property, and result in costly emergency responses funded by taxpayers. He emphasized that the community is seeking to prevent another dangerous incident before it happens and brought several neighbors, including Romeo Russo, to support and add to the concerns.

He concluded by asking whether this concern has already been raised to the Township, urging officials to act proactively.

- **Romeo Russo:1480 Long Road -Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Romeo Russo thanked the Mayor, Council, and Bridgewater's police and fire

departments for their ongoing attention to the neighborhood's concerns, especially regarding fire risks and illegal dumping activities near Long Road.

He described how tons of wood chips, leaves, and litter have been dumped in the area over the course of several years, creating significant environmental and safety hazards. These actions have already resulted in multiple fires, including a major blaze that required aerial firefighting support and led to firefighter injuries.

Mr. Russo reported that the dumping has killed trees, leading to falling hazards. Residents have spent thousands of dollars removing these dead trees, and they now routinely check for falling limbs before approaching their shared driveway. He also cited unsafe conditions such as deep potholes, which he said caused his son to fall from a bicycle and injure his wrist.

He detailed new developments involving the owners of 1490 and 1482 Long Road, stating that after being barred from open burning, the 1490 owner created mounds of wood debris near the easement—allegedly to retaliate against complaints. He added that the 1482 owner has now claimed the site is a "woodland farm", managed by the 1490 owner, and that dump trucks would soon begin entering. This activity reportedly included grading and disturbing more than 5,000 square feet of soil, without permits or the neighboring property owner's consent.

Mr. Russo expressed concern that these actions signal a resumption of illegal dumping under the guise of agricultural use. He urged the Township to enforce all applicable codes to prevent further hazards, compel the cleanup of debris, and require the removal of compromised trees that now pose a threat to both private and public property.

He concluded by drawing parallels to wildfire disasters in California and New Jersey, stressing the need to act before another emergency occurs.

Council President Norgalis invited members of the public who were present in support of the concerns raised by Mr. Catch and Mr. Russo to sign in with their name, address, and any additional comments they wished to share beyond those already presented.

He then directed Township Administrator Michael Pappas to evaluate whether the activities in question fall under the protections of New Jersey's Right to Farm Act, and to determine whether those rights are being appropriately exercised or potentially misused in this case.

Administrator Pappas confirmed that the matter is already under review by the township. He noted that the issue was previously raised at a council meeting a

month or two ago, and since then, he has held multiple meetings with township officials and relevant parties. He emphasized the complexity of the situation and assured the public that the township is conducting exhaustive research into the matter.

He invited residents to share any additional information or concerns, stating that their input would be helpful. Mr. Pappas offered his contact information via business cards, asking Mr. Russo to distribute them to those in attendance. Residents were encouraged to email him directly with any relevant details.

- **Julie Jay : Glenn Road-Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Julie Jay, a resident since 2019, addressed the Council to raise concerns about the deteriorating condition of the tennis court at Glenn Park. She noted that proximity to the park was a key reason her family chose their home, and that the park has played a significant role in her children's recreational development.

She highlighted that her older son, now turning 10, has taken a strong interest in tennis and requested a tennis racket for his birthday. Unfortunately, the court's current state—with large cracks, weeds growing through the surface, and irregular ball bounce—makes it difficult and unsafe to play.

Ms. Jay emphasized the importance of physical activity for youth and maintaining safe, usable park spaces for the community. She shared that Glenn Park is well-used and appreciated by neighborhood families but urged that the tennis court be prioritized for repair. She also provided photos to illustrate the current conditions.

- **Roy Wheeler : Charlotte Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Wheeler, a Bridgewater resident of over 36 years, addressed the Council to express his strong opposition to a proposed variance application for the expansion of Café Amelia, located at the intersection of Route 202 and Charlotte Drive, a quiet residential street.

He acknowledged that the Zoning Board of Adjustment is the proper body to review the variance request, but stated he wanted to go on record with his concerns before the Council.

Mr. Wheeler explained that the proposal would involve demolishing an adjacent church (Branch Point Church) to construct a 16,000 sq. ft., two-story addition including a 100-seat banquet hall, a 30-seat bar, and a courtyard. He argued this expansion constitutes overdevelopment in a residentially-zoned area where restaurants are not permitted without a variance.

He cited existing traffic and parking issues caused by the restaurant, including overflow and double parking on Charlotte Drive, which already make it difficult for residents to navigate the street. Mr. Wheeler emphasized that the proposal would further exacerbate public safety risks, especially by potentially blocking emergency vehicle access.

He urged continued resistance to overdevelopment and asked that elected officials remain committed to protecting the town's residential neighborhoods.

- **Atul Dargy : Charlotte Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Atul Dargy addressed the Council to emphasize that, while he understands the Zoning Board is responsible for variance applications, the Town Council represents the interests of the residents.

He urged the Council to hear the concerns of the community regarding the proposed expansion of Café Amelia and to consider the potential safety risks. Mr. Dargy stressed that his primary concern is the safety of Bridgewater's citizens and expressed hope that the Council shares that concern.

- **Barnes: Charlotte Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Barnes, a resident since 1973, reiterated the concerns previously raised about the Café Amelia expansion. She emphasized that the current establishment already lacks adequate parking and that the noise levels often extend late into the evening, which has prompted complaints that have not been addressed. She questioned how the business could be expected to manage a larger facility if they are not adhering to existing zoning and operational standards now, stating that such an expansion would make the neighborhood unlivable.

- **Agnesk Shimanovski :47 Charlotte Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Shimanovski stated she lives directly next door to Café Amelia. She and her neighbor, Atul, whose property also borders the restaurant, are directly impacted by the noise and disturbances caused by the establishment. She expressed support for the concerns previously raised by other residents and confirmed that she shares the same views and objections regarding the proposed expansion.

- **Akos Arjin: Charlotte Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Arjin, a resident of Charlotte Drive, voiced his concerns about the odor and safety risks associated with the proposed expansion of Café Amelia. He noted that the current smell from the restaurant's garbage is already "atrocious", particularly for neighbors across the street who are trying to enjoy their homes or outdoor activities. He emphasized that if a banquet hall were added, the

odor issue would worsen. Mr. Arjin also reiterated concerns about public safety and concluded by reminding attendees that the matter would ultimately go before the zoning board.

- **Brittany Wheeler: Former Charlotte Drive resident**

Mr. Wheeler, a former 24–25 year resident of Charlotte Drive and frequent visitor, expressed understanding that this council does not directly handle zoning applications but emphasized that the council represents the community's best interests. He highlighted that many residents, including his parents, view the proposed Café Amelia expansion as overdevelopment. He acknowledged concerns raised about public safety and asked, for the record, if the council appoints members to the zoning board. The response confirmed they do, but the council does not influence the board's decisions once members are appointed.

Councilman Kirsh explained that any decision by the Board of Adjustment can be appealed to the Township Council. Because of this, the council cannot and will not comment on any case currently before the zoning board to avoid influencing the process.

Township Attorney Corsini said the governing body is not dismissing the concerns. He acknowledged knowing some speakers for years and agreed with Councilman Kirsh's point that the zoning board is a quasi-judicial body. He cautioned that commenting now could prejudice the case. He assured everyone they are being heard and thanked them for their time.

- **Jesse Chang: 35 Charlotte Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Jesse Chang, representing 35 Charlotte Drive, expressed support for his neighbors and said they will attend the zoning board meeting.

- **Tim Kenny: 198 Short Hill Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Tim Kenny mentioned a dangerous intersection near Garrison Road, between Meadow and 28, where traffic from 22 to 28 converges. He suggested that installing a stop sign at Garrison Road would be a simple solution. Having lived in town since 1995, he expressed surprise that it hasn't been addressed yet and asked if there are any plans to improve safety at that intersection.

Councilman Ring responded that part of addressing the issue would involve figuring out exactly where Garrettson Road ends, since Garrettson Road and the ramp off Route 22 come together just before Route 28. He pointed out that the ramp is state jurisdiction, not the townships, so they need to clarify who is responsible before taking action.

Administrator Pappas acknowledged the concern, noting he also drives that route daily and understands the issue. He clarified that Route 28 is a state highway, and part of the ramp falls under state jurisdiction, not the townships. He said they will review police reports related to the area and consult with the township engineer to determine where state jurisdiction ends and township jurisdiction begins as a starting point for addressing the problem.

Mr. Kenny expressed concern about the changing landscape in Bridgewater, noting that big corporations used to provide significant ratables which helped keep taxes lower, but with companies like Santa Fe Aventus moving away, that revenue source is shrinking. He fears that the boarded-up Ethicon property might be converted into warehouses, leading to increased truck traffic on local roads like Country Club Road and Route 22, which residents do not want. He questioned if PSEG would pave local streets impacted by their work, like Short Hills Drive. Mr. Kenny urged the township to develop a better long-term plan to avoid overdevelopment and maintain the community's quality of life, emphasizing that many towns in New Jersey face similar issues and that Bridgewater needs a thoughtful strategy moving forward.

Administrator Pappas stated that the Planning Board will begin meeting on this issue over the summer, with a proposed public hearing scheduled for September or October. This will be part of the process to address the concerns raised.

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

Mrs. Franco raised several important concerns during the meeting. She expressed worry that the Master Plan, which was mentioned at a Planning Board meeting to be introduced by July, might not have public hearings until September or October. She emphasized that the community has been waiting for years, participating in surveys and providing input, and stressed the urgency of finalizing the Master Plan because it directly affects zoning and planning decisions.

Mrs. Franco also questioned several aspects of the budget. She noted that the sewer surplus shown on the budget sheets appears to be transferred to the general fund, which effectively raises residents' taxes, and asked why residents are being charged sewer fees while also being taxed on those amounts. Additionally, she was confused by the presence of two separate group health insurance line items with significantly different amounts and inquired about the differences between them and who is covered under each. Similar concerns were raised about liability insurance, which also appears twice in the budget with no clear explanation.

Regarding capital improvements, Mrs. Franco pointed out that over \$1.3 million is listed for Camp Cromwell, Adamsville, and Safe Roads, but the breakdown is unclear. She also noted that the \$4 million federal grant for Camp Cromwell is not reflected in the five-year capital plan projections, which seemed like an oversight. She further expressed concern about the lack of capital planning for critical projects such as the library's HVAC replacement, which causes the library to shut down during hot weather.

Lastly, Mrs. Franco mentioned ongoing issues with park maintenance, specifically the tennis and basketball courts at Glenn Park, highlighting that cracks and deterioration she had previously reported years ago remain unaddressed. Overall, she expressed frustration with budget transparency and delays in infrastructure maintenance and urged the council and administration to provide clearer information and prioritize these community needs.

Council President Norgalis responded to Mrs. Franco by suggesting that if she could provide a detailed list of her concerns, she should submit it to the clerk. This way, the council can ensure that every single item on her list is properly addressed.

Mrs. Franco expressed another concern regarding an OPRA request she made for detailed budget information. She was informed that the budget details would not be available to her until June 20th, the day after the upcoming council meeting. She took issue with this delay, stating that she believes the budget is derived from those details and questioned why it would take three weeks to make the information available, especially since that would be less than six calendar days before the council votes on the budget.

Council President Norgalis explained that when the budget was introduced, it was handed over to the current council by the previous administration. He noted that the main responsibility for reviewing the budget lies with the finance committee, which includes Councilmembers Ring and Kirsh, and that the entire council is actively involved in working on it. He emphasized that the interim period is necessary to allow the council to perform their due diligence.

- **Michelle Glicklich: 4 Sterling Drive- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Glicklich raised concerns regarding the cost of the township's sewer bills. She remarked that, in the past, sewer charges were based on individual water usage and questioned why that was no longer the case, especially given that her household consists of only two people, yet the bill remains significantly high.

Council President Norgalis responded by clarifying that Bridgewater Township has never used water usage as the basis for sewer billing. He noted that while other municipalities may follow that practice, approximately a quarter of Bridgewater residents rely on well water, making it impractical to track and charge based on usage. He explained that towns entirely serviced by a water utility can collect precise consumption data, but Bridgewater lacks that capability.

Councilman Ring expressed support for the idea of usage-based billing, stating that if the Township were to adopt such a model, he would be in favor of it — especially since he himself uses a well. However, he explained that under the current system, all residential properties are charged a flat fee. Commercial properties, on the other hand, are billed based on units, which involves a more complex calculation.

Township Attorney Corsini added that, while some residents may have their water metered by New Jersey American Water, the sewer bill remains a flat rate and is not tied to water consumption. He acknowledged that this may result in residents paying for more sewer usage than they actually generate.

Councilman Kurdyla raised a question to Council President Norgalis regarding the structure of the Township's sewer rates. He pointed out that Bridgewater Township is subject to the rates charged by the Raritan Valley Sewage Authority, which are substantial, and suggested that these costs directly impact what the Township must charge its residents.

Council President Norgalis confirmed this, explaining that the Township's sewer fees are determined by both the processing charges assessed by the Raritan Valley Sewage Authority and the expenses incurred by the Township in maintaining its own sewer infrastructure. He noted that when issues such as clogs occur, it is Township personnel who are dispatched to address and resolve the problem.

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

**Public
Hearing &
Final Action
Ordinances**

**CALENDAR YEAR 2025 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET
APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)**

Administrator Pappas explained that the administration had prepared a few slides to clarify questions from the public regarding what a cap bank ordinance accomplishes. He used the analogy of vacation days—how people often have the ability to carry unused days into the following year—to illustrate how the cap bank works. He stated that the graphic slides aim to help residents understand what the cap law permits

municipalities to do and noted that these materials would be posted publicly to further explain the process and the fiscal constraints the Township operates under.

Councilman Ring clarified that the cap bank ordinance simply allows the Township to roll over any unused portion of the allowable tax increase in case it is needed in the future.

Councilman Pedroso then commented on the ordinance, noting that although he had voted "no" during the introduction, he appreciated the Q&A document prepared by Mr. Pappas, calling it well-formatted and informative. Pedroso acknowledged that Pappas correctly identified a discrepancy in his earlier tax increase figures and proceeded to clarify the record using publicly available data:

In 2021, the amount to be raised by taxation was \$22,325,335

In 2022, it rose to \$23,220,842 (a 4% increase)

In 2023, it increased to \$24,398,196 (a 5% increase)

In 2024, it reached \$27,239,044 (a 12% increase)

He noted that while the administration provided an amended 2025 budget on the night of the introduction, which lowered the proposed increase—he felt the budget involved “smoke and mirrors,” including significant transfers from the sewer fund into general appropriations. Cumulatively, Pedroso stated that the municipal tax increase from 2021 to 2024 was 22%.

He concluded by stating he stood by his data, welcomed any further review or corrections, and affirmed that he would continue to vote no on the budget.

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

No one wished to be heard.

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

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 Pedroso	Nay

Councilman Ring Aye
Council President Norgalis Aye

ORDINANCE #25-06 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-06-12-144](#) is appended to the official minutes

Resolutions

AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$30,000.00 TO AIR SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE, LLC; 718 JEFFERSON AVENUE, KENILWORTH, NEW JERSY 07033 FOR HVAC REPAIRS TO VARIOUS TOWNSHIP LOCATIONS FOR THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2026, FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$64,900.00 TO BE FUNDED THROUGH BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS- PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTS ACCOUNT

Administrator Pappas informed the council that a memo had been distributed earlier that day from Mr. Genova, which provides additional details related to an issue raised by Councilman Ring. Administrator Pappas emphasized that this matter is something that "really needs to get done," highlighting its urgency.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, 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 [#25-06-12-145](#) is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF SECOND YEAR RENEWAL OPTION TO ATLANTIC TACTICAL INC; 722 CORPORATE CIRCLE, NEW CUMBERLAND, PA 17070; FOR THE PURCHASE OF POLICE UNIFORMS AND LEATHER GEAR IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$80,000.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026 TO BE FUNDED THROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT OE, BIDS/CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS ACCOUNT

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#25-06-12-146](#) is appended to the official minutes

RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING AUTOMATIC RENEWAL OF 2023-2025 COOPERATION AGREEMENTS REGARDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT AND HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#25-06-12-147](#) is appended to the official minutes

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$430.00 AND THE SPECIAL EVENT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100.00 FOR THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$530.00 AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FIREWORKS DISPLAY FOR THE SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION, 355 MILLTOWN ROAD, BRIDGEWATER, NJ ON FRIDAY, JULY 4, 2025

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#25-06-12-148](#) is appended to the official minutes

**2025-2026
Liquor
License
Renewals**

CONSENT VOTE

COUNCIL PRESIDENT NORGALIS READ THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS BY TITLE AND ALLOWED FOR DISCUSSIONS/QUESTIONS. HE THEN CALLED FOR A CONSENT MOTION.

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION LIQUOR LICENSES FOR THE FOLLOWING: SQUIRES CORNER LIQUORS, INC. T/A SPIRITS OF THE VALLEY, KRISHA BEVERAGE, INC. T/A BRIDGEWATER WINE & SPIRITS, WEGMANS FOOD MARKETS, INC., RAMARAM, INC. T/A BUY BEST WINE & LIQUORS, WINE OUTLET BRIDGEWATER, LLC T/A WINE OUTLET AND BRIDGEWATER WINES, LLC T/A LIQUOR CAVE

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER CLUB LIQUOR LICENSES FOR THE FOLLOWING: FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES SOMERSET AERIE #2137, SOMERVILLE LODGE OF ELKS POST #1068, AND RARITAN VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE HOTEL/MOTEL EXCEPTION FOR BRIDGEWATER HOTEL LLC T/A HILTON GARDEN INN, FSG BRIDGEWATER HOTEL, LLC T/A HAMPTON INN AND SUITES, AND BRIAD LODGING GROUP, LLC T/A AC MARRIOTT BRIDGEWATER

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE NUMBER 1806-33-021-009 FOR MISH-J.O. INVESTMENT CORP. T/A GREEN KNOLL GRILLE, 645 ROUTE 202/206 SOUTH, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807 RESOLUTION WITH CONDITIONS

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE 1806-33-027-006 CAFÉ EMILIA, INC. WITH SPECIAL CONDITION

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE 1806-36-040-002 HOTEL/MOTEL EXCEPTION MARRIOTT HOTEL SERVICES, INC. WITH CONDITIONS

RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE NO. 1806-33-019-004 FOR A. PEARL, INC. FOR THE 2025-2026 LICENSING TERM, PURSUANT TO P.L. 2023, C. 290 290 (THE "INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE REFORM ACT") WHICH AMENDS N.J.S.A. 33:1-12.39 AND MODIFIES REQUIREMENTS FOR INACTIVE RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSES, INCLUDING ESTABLISHING EXPIRATION DATES FOR QUARTILE LIST LICENSES

RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE NO. 1806-33-017-007 FOR CHIMNEY ROCK, LQR LLC FOR THE 2025-2026 LICENSING TERM, PURSUANT TO P.L. 2023, C. 290 (THE "INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE REFORM ACT") WHICH AMENDS N.J.S.A. 33:1-12.39 AND MODIFIES REQUIREMENTS FOR INACTIVE RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSES, INCLUDING ESTABLISHING EXPIRATION DATES FOR QUARTILE LIST LICENSES

RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE NO. 1806-33-026-007 FOR RED LOBSTER RESTAURANTS, LLC FOR THE 2025-2026 LICENSING TERM, PURSUANT TO P.L. 2023, C. 290 (THE "INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE REFORM ACT") WHICH AMENDS N.J.S.A. 33:1-12.39 AND MODIFIES REQUIREMENTS FOR INACTIVE RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSES, INCLUDING ESTABLISHING EXPIRATION DATES FOR QUARTILE LIST LICENSES

Councilman Ring stated that he had just consulted with Township Attorney Corsini regarding a potential conflict of interest, as he is a member of the Elks. Mr. Corsini confirmed that there is no conflict concerning the Elks' liquor license renewal. Based on that clarification, Councilman Ring proceeded to move item 13 under the consent agenda.

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

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

THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.

Copies of resolutions [#25-06-12-149 thru #25-06-12-158](#) are 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 litigation and contract negotiations.

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 Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, Council convened in closed session at approximately 9:20 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#25-06-12-159](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 9:34 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President