

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
JUNE 26, 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 26, 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
Councilman Filipe Pedroso
Councilman Timothy Ring
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

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

Councilman Kurdyla led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

JUNE 12, 2025 - REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the June 12, 2025, regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

Council Reports

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Councilman Kurdyla had nothing new to report.

Councilman Kirsh:

- The Zoning Board met and concluded the Starbucks case on Route 22. After sixteen months, the matter was resolved in the applicant's favor following significant revisions to the original plan.
- The Planning Board met and adopted the Fair Share Housing Plan, meeting the

required deadline of June 30th.

Council President Norgalis: *(verbatim)*

- Summer is here and we have now passed the longest sunshine day of the year
- PSE&G, using its selected paving company, has begun the widespread repaving of numerous streets disturbed by its gas main replacement project. All work on the effected street is expected to be completed before our school's resume operation in Sept. Based upon the agreement with our administration, we can expect curb to curb work.
- For me personally this is another year of grandchildren graduating from High School.
- My Grandson Lucas Travisano graduated from Bridgewater Raritan High School last Thursday. The school used the Jersey Mikes Arena at the Rutgers Athletic Center for an indoor graduation. Lucas will attend High Point University in North Carolina to major in Economics and Business Analytics.
- My Granddaughter Grace Norgalis graduated from Somerville High School last Friday in an outdoor graduation at the Somerville athletic field. She is bound for the University of Georgia to be a veterinarian.

Councilman Pedroso: *(verbatim)*

- The Council will be voting on the 2025 municipal and sewer budgets tonight. I prepared a proposed Budget Amendment for the Council's consideration tonight. I asked the Council President and Clerk for it to be added to the agenda, so the public could review it and offer feedback. I believe strongly in public participation—whether it's support or criticism, it matters in the decisions I make on your behalf.

Although I had already emailed the proposal to the Mayor and Council members, I wanted it on the agenda for full transparency.

At 3:48 PM, the Clerk sent out a revised agenda that included my proposed budget amendment. But shortly after, the Council President—without my consent—directed the Clerk to remove it. At 4:27 PM, the Clerk issued another agenda with the item removed.

It is unfortunate the public wasn't given the opportunity to review and weigh in on these proposed changes. That decision was not mine.

I've brought printed copies and placed them at the back of the room. If you're watching from home, you can view the proposal at BWTNJ.com or on my

Council Facebook page by searching “Pedroso Council”.

Councilman Ring:

- Participated in an event with Plan NJ, an organization that supports individuals with special needs throughout the area.

Mayor’s Reports

Mayor Matthew C. Moench

- Mayor Moench had nothing new to report.

Presentation

2025 ROAD PROGRAM

Township Engineer William Burr provided an update on the township’s road improvement efforts.

He began by stating his intention to keep the presentation brief while offering an overview of progress made since the start of the comprehensive road improvement plan in 2020–2021. Engineer Burr noted that the 2024 road program was effectively complete and offered a preview of the 2025 program.

The five-year plan, originally funded at \$8 million annually, has now completed its fourth year. Since its inception, the township has improved by over 260 of its more than 600 roads—nearly half. Engineer Burr emphasized that the average rate of improvement has been about 50–60 roads per year, a pace he called “impressive” and “gratifying,” acknowledging the considerable effort involved.

Engineer Burr explained that the township has maintained a regional approach, dividing the municipality into six regions. Each year, a cluster of roads from each region is engineered, bid out, and awarded in a grouped format. This strategy, according to Engineer Burr, has attracted strong contractor interest and favorable bid pricing, yielding estimated savings of at least 20%. He credited this model for allowing the township to complete more roadwork than would have otherwise been possible.

Regarding the 2024 program, Engineer Burr confirmed that all roads—except one neighborhood (Pine, Davis, Biddle, and Weaver near Washington Valley)—were completed by the end of last year. That final cluster was finished about a month prior to his remarks, with only minor punch list items remaining.

Turning to the current year, Engineer Burr highlighted the \$6.1 million bond ordinance listed on the agenda, which represents a slightly different funding structure. The ordinance reflects the township’s success in securing grant funding. Engineer Burr explained that while the total is less than the typical \$8 million, the township is leveraging nearly \$2 million in reimbursable grant funds to supplement roadwork—effectively maintaining the same level of investment and output.

He then outlined the 2025 plan, noting that it is consistent in the number of roads and mileage covered. The difference this year lies in the inclusion of more alternate bid items, giving the township greater flexibility to maximize the value of the ordinance. Engineer Burr stated that alternate bidding had been effective in past years and is expected to stretch the 2025 funds further.

Ten roads are listed in the ordinance as definite projects, but when factoring in alternate bids and grants, the township hopes to complete work on approximately 20–22 roads, with 50 proposed overall.

Engineer Burr then detailed several key grants:

1. **\$750,000 NJDOT Local Transportation Projects Fund** – for improvements to Van Holten and South A off Finderne Avenue.
2. **\$337,000 Safe Routes to Schools Grant** – for engineering improvements in the Adamsville School area, including Morgan Lane and nearby streets. This amount covers the engineering phase and is fully reimbursed.
3. **\$356,000 NJDOT Grant** – for improvements to the northern portion of Country Club Road, including Ardsley Lane and Goldfinch Drive.
4. **\$400,000+ NJDOT Municipal Aid Grant** – for improvements to Plymouth, Jeffrey, and Ryan, near Crim School and Washington Valley.

Councilman Ring inquired whether the sidewalk project along Route 28 near Adamsville School fell under the state's responsibility. Engineer Burr clarified that although Route 28 is a state highway, the state does not typically install sidewalks. Municipalities may seek the state's consent and secure grants to perform such work themselves.

In closing, Engineer Burr updated the council on PSE&G's roadwork. The utility company had recently completed milling on Country Club Road and Van Holten and was scheduled to continue working down Meadow and into adjoining neighborhoods. Paving was set to begin the following Tuesday, weather permitting, with the aim of finishing before the holiday. At worst, work would be completed by Monday, July 7th.

Councilman Ring commented on the recent weather, noting that it had been almost too hot to pave over the last few days. He remarked that the extreme heat would likely prevent the asphalt from curing properly.

Township Engineer William Burr agreed, stating that high temperatures would indeed prolong the curing process. He added that if vehicles were allowed on freshly paved roads too soon, the asphalt could become rutted and damaged. Engineer Burr

acknowledged that the delay caused by the heat had worked in the township's favor, as it helped minimize the need for extended detours and road closures. He explained that if asphalt is laid down in 100-degree weather, the road would need to remain closed longer than usual to allow proper curing.

Councilman Kurdyla asked whether a prolonged heat wave, such as three consecutive days of 100-degree temperatures, would prevent residents from accessing their homes.

Township Engineer William Burr clarified that access would not be blocked for an extended period. He explained that even in high heat, evening temperatures typically drop enough to allow the asphalt to set properly. While the curing process might take a few additional hours, and a road that would normally reopen by 4:00 p.m. might instead need to remain closed until 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., the road would be fully cured overnight once temperatures dropped. He assured the council that there would be no long-term access issues due to heat-related paving delays.

Mayor Moench offered brief comments, beginning with a note of appreciation to the Township Council for their continued commitment to the \$8 million per year road improvement program. He noted that 2025 marks the fifth and final year of the original five-year plan. After this year, the township will reassess the road program with input from Township Engineer William Burr and the Council to determine how to proceed in the future.

Mayor Moench clarified that the conclusion of the five-year plan does not mean an end to road work. Instead, the township will evaluate whether to maintain the current approach or modify it—possibly moving to a new multi-year plan or adjusting the annual funding levels. He emphasized that the original goal of the plan was to target roads in the worst condition, which are significantly more expensive to repair if left to deteriorate further. By addressing the most damaged roads early on, the township was able to stretch its budget further and perform more resurfacing projects rather than full reconstructions.

Mayor Moench stated that while the township may ultimately propose spending less than \$8 million per year going forward, the goal remains to maintain an aggressive and proactive road program.

Mayor Moench also extended his gratitude to Engineer Burr, his team, and the finance department for their successful efforts in securing grant funding. He noted the importance of leveraging reimbursable grants to reduce the burden on local taxpayers. Although such grants require the township to front the costs before receiving reimbursement, the administration approached this year's program creatively to ensure the full \$8 million in roadwork could still be delivered with less direct taxpayer cost.

Mayor Moench then addressed the importance of coordination with utility companies. He acknowledged that while utility work isn't always perfectly timed, the township works closely with companies like PSE&G and the water utility to avoid unnecessary overlap. When residents call to report deteriorated roads, the township often knows that utility work is scheduled in the near future, and it chooses to delay paving to avoid having newly paved roads torn up again.

Mayor Moench further discussed his personal frustration with roads that are only partially paved, for example, where one side of a street is newly resurfaced and the other is not. He noted that this kind of inconsistency is something the township is actively working to prevent. Engineer Burr and other township staff have been negotiating with utility companies to ensure that, when possible, full-width paving is done rather than just partial repairs. In cases where a company is only required to pave a certain distance, the township may adjust its plans the following year to complete the remaining segments in order to maintain uniform quality and appearance.

Mayor Moench concluded by thanking Engineer Burr and his entire team for their significant contributions to the road improvement program, calling it a major accomplishment in terms of the number of roads completed.

Council President Norgalis thanked Township Engineer William Burr for his leadership, noting that he had likely received more calls from him than from anyone else in the township. He commended Mr. Burr for his responsiveness and dedication, stating that he always returned calls and consistently did an excellent job.

Councilman Ring made a brief comment, referencing an issue he had raised the previous year regarding road work coordination. He pointed out that, according to county postings, PSE&G would begin work on North Bridge Street starting July 9. While he acknowledged that the section being worked on was not in poor condition, he expressed frustration over the lack of coordination between agencies, noting the difficulties residents face when multiple roads are closed in the same area at once.

Township Engineer William Burr responded, explaining that the water company had recently approached the township after identifying multiple issues with the water main on North Bridge Street. He noted that water main problems are a regular occurrence along the stretch between the firehouse at Green Knoll and Boat Drive. Engineer Burr stated that the water company had been working collaboratively with the township's engineering department and police department to develop a traffic control plan. However, he acknowledged the irony that the county had just repaved part of the same road, highlighting the ongoing communication challenges among agencies.

He clarified that the county had only paved the northern portion of the road up to

Woodlawn, not the entire stretch. The section from Prince Rodgers Avenue to Route 22 still requires repaving. Engineer Burr noted that the township is awaiting final updates and plans to post notices on its website to keep residents informed. He assured the council that the situation would continue to be monitored closely.

2025 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Lieutenant Jamie Edwards, representing the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), addressed the Township Council regarding a resolution on the agenda to adopt the Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan and to affirm Bridgewater Township's participation in it. He provided a brief overview of the purpose and importance of the plan.

Lieutenant Edwards explained that much of emergency management work involves preparation and mitigation, rather than simply responding to disasters. The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) identifies the township's vulnerabilities, such as flooding, severe storms, and power outages, and analyzes both strengths and areas in need of improvement. It is a proactive, ongoing planning tool intended to help communities prepare before disasters strike.

The plan is updated approximately every five years; the last full adoption was in 2019. Each municipality, including Bridgewater, maintains its own section within the countywide plan. These local plans identify specific problem areas and list mitigation projects in order of priority. Lieutenant Edwards noted that many of the projects listed in the 2019 update were not completed due to funding and staffing limitations, though they remain priorities.

He gave the example of the Blossom Drive drainage project, which was recently removed from the list after the engineering department secured funding from another source to complete it. For the current update, the township worked with Engineering, Public Works, and Municipal Services to identify and include drainage problem areas, particularly those impacted during and after Hurricane Ida.

Lieutenant Edwards emphasized that inclusion on the project list does not guarantee the project will be completed, but it does indicate that the township recognizes the issue and has placed it on the long-term planning horizon. He reiterated that funding and personnel remain the primary challenges to implementation.

He also highlighted the legal importance of adopting the plan: under the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, municipalities must have an adopted hazard mitigation plan in place in order to be eligible for federal mitigation funding. This includes programs such as:

- **Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)**

- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**
- **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)** — though Edwards noted this program may be phased out

Additionally, he explained that grant funding often requires municipalities to pay project costs up front, with reimbursement coming later. After major disasters, there are sometimes supplemental federal funds available to assist with mitigation in affected areas, making participation in the HMP especially valuable.

He concluded by noting that the draft plan is publicly available and encouraged residents to review it by searching online for the Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

In response to a clarifying question, Lieutenant Edwards confirmed that Bridgewater Township has contributed its own plan to the countywide document. He explained that each municipality in Somerset County participates in the process and that this regional collaboration allows communities to understand each other's vulnerabilities. For example, flooding in Bridgewater often originates from northern neighbors like Bernards Township, highlighting the importance of regional awareness and solutions.

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

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

Ms. Nye expressed her appreciation for the recent installation of a street lamp, noting that nighttime conditions have significantly improved. She remarked that the area is now quieter, with fewer car horns blaring late at night due to drivers not seeing others at the stop sign.

Ms. Nye recounted seeing a driver speed over a manhole and damage the undercarriage of their vehicle, emphasizing that reckless driving continues to be an issue.

She acknowledged that she had frequently come to meetings to voice concerns after each crash in the area but sincerely hoped that the recent improvements would make a lasting difference. She concluded by once again thanking Mr. Burr and the township for addressing the issue.

- **John Arcoleo: 1110 Washington Valley Road – Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Mr. Arcoleo addressed the council with two primary concerns. First, he commented on the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and noted that he had read about a new data center planned for the Greymark building. He expressed concern about the significant energy consumption associated with such facilities, citing that data centers can require tens of megawatts of electricity. Arcoleo pointed out that this level of power usage is a major factor in the rising cost of utility bills—more so, in his view, than renewable energy infrastructure like solar panels or wind turbines.

He offered a personal anecdote, explaining how he recently used an AI tool to translate a page from a book he purchased, which had mistakenly been sent in Italian rather than English. He acknowledged the usefulness and power of AI, but emphasized that its growing use—particularly in the form of large-scale computing and data centers—has implications for higher electricity costs and environmental impact, particularly if powered by natural gas or coal rather than renewable sources.

Arcoleo asked whether the township could implement restrictions or requirements for data centers to limit their energy usage, expressing concern that without such measures, utility rates and carbon emissions could continue to rise dramatically.

Secondly, Mr. Arcoleo reflected on a previous interaction from 2021 with the Mayor. Mr. Arcoleo asked Council President Norgalis whether there are ways he could promote collaborative communication. Council President Norgalis responded that in his capacity, he neither desires nor intends to restrict the speech of anyone seated on the dais, including the Mayor, the attorney, or any council member.

Councilman Pedroso acknowledged Mr. Arcoleo's concerns and offered additional context regarding the factors influencing energy costs. He highlighted that energy policy plays a significant role and noted opportunities for improvement at the state level. Councilman Pedroso pointed out that evolving energy strategies, such as balancing traditional sources like coal and nuclear with the growing emphasis on electric vehicles and renewable energy, are complex but essential to managing costs and sustainability.

He emphasized that understanding these various factors can help the community engage in more informed discussions about energy use and future planning, beyond just the impacts of AI and data centers.

**2025
Municipal
Budget**

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

PUBLIC HEARING 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Members of the public wishing to address the Council on the 2025 Municipal Budget will be allowed three minutes to speak unless there are unusual circumstances.

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

- No one wished to be heard.

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

AMENDMENT TO THE 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Moench explained that the budget amendment before the council involves only a few minor adjustments. He noted that miscellaneous revenue was updated to include funds received from FEMA, as previously mentioned. Additionally, the township received a Clean Communities grant, which has been added to the revenue. The county challenge grant figures were also updated. Overall, these changes result in a decrease of \$6,717.34 in the amount to be raised through taxation.

Councilman Kirsh asked whether the budget changes reflected were consistent with standard practices for introducing a budget.

Mayor Moench replied affirmatively, explaining that throughout the year, the township receives various grants, and when these come in outside the usual budget cycle, special resolutions are necessary to account for them. He clarified that the current changes reflect adjustments made since the original budget introduction due to newly awarded grants.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [**#25-06-26-161**](#) is appended to the official minutes

ADOPTION OF THE 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Moench shared several key points regarding the township's budget. He began by reminding both the council and the public that the 2024 municipal budget totals \$51.4 million, reflecting an overall increase of 1.077%, which is significantly below the current inflation rate of 2.9%.

He addressed a question raised at a prior meeting regarding the tax impact on residents. The increase in the municipal tax rate amounts to 0.001, which translates to a \$6 increase for a home with unchanged assessed value. However, as property values have generally increased, the average household is expected to see a total tax increase of approximately \$34, with \$6 attributed to the tax rate increase and the remaining \$28 due to changes in property assessments. Mayor Moench noted that actual impact will vary depending on each property's individual valuation.

He also reminded the public that only 11% of the total property tax bill is retained by the municipality, with the remainder allocated to other entities such as the school district and the county. While tax payments are made to the township, the majority of those funds are passed on to other agencies.

In response to recent inquiries, he clarified that the tax assessor and the firm assisting with assessments are not under the direct control of the township administration, as assessors report to the county tax board. Therefore, municipal officials do not influence property valuations.

Mayor Moench expressed pride in the budget, particularly in the ability to limit the spending increase to just over 1% without reducing services, especially given rising costs and inflationary pressures seen nationally and regionally.

He also highlighted that the budget is supported not only by property taxes but also by diverse revenue sources—including grants, mall revenue, hotel occupancy taxes, and one-time sources such as liquor license sales. These revenue streams can fluctuate, and changes in these areas must be balanced with expenditures to maintain a responsible and sustainable budget.

In closing, Mayor Moench expressed his appreciation to the Council for their ongoing collaboration and engagement throughout the budget process. He acknowledged receiving additional budget suggestions from Councilman Pedroso the evening prior to the meeting and noted that while they reflected different priorities, they raised important conversations about funding and services.

The Mayor reaffirmed the importance of maintaining critical community programs such as recreation, sewer infrastructure, and public safety services, and emphasized the value of thoughtful, long-term planning when making budgetary decisions.

He concluded by thanking the Council for their collective efforts over the past several months and highlighted the positive spirit of teamwork that contributed to delivering a responsible and service-focused municipal budget.

Councilman Filipe Pedroso made the following statement:

"Real estate taxes in Bridgewater have gone up too much. In fact, in the past four years, your municipal taxes have gone up 22%. It's time to give relief to the taxpayers who shoulder this burden.

Tonight, I'm proposing a budget amendment that keeps municipal taxes flat—and by flat, I mean truly flat. I don't mean keeping the tax rate flat, because when property values rise, that still results in a higher tax bill. What I'm proposing is that residents pay the same amount in 2025 as they did in 2024.

Let me be clear: If your home is assessed at the average Bridgewater value of \$576,459, you likely paid \$1,372 in municipal taxes last year. Under this budget amendment, you'll still pay exactly the same—\$1,372 this year. And I don't have to go through some smoke and mirror calculation about fooling you about a \$6 tax increase. To accomplish that, we need to lower the tax rate from 0.290 to 0.238.

This budget amendment makes thoughtful, targeted reductions, mostly in the "Other Expenses" lines across departments. But it does not touch our police budget, it does not cut funding for senior services, and it protects essential services. I have always supported our police, and I will continue to ensure they have what they need to keep us safe.

This proposal also respects and protects the hardworking men and women who serve this Township. With one exception, no jobs are eliminated. The only proposed staffing reduction is in the Office of Constituent Relations—a department that, frankly, has become top-heavy. Many residents have voiced concerns about this office, and I agree with them. Every other department keeps its staff and leadership. And I thank all of them for their service.

Making budget changes at this stage is not unusual. In 2019, then-Councilman Matthew Moench and I—both on the Budget & Finance Committee at the time—introduced a modified budget at adoption. We also made substantial cuts. Mayor Hayes warned of 'disaster'—but the Township did just fine, and taxpayers benefited.

So tonight, I'm asking this Council to do what's right. This amendment protects core services, trims excess, and reflects the sound fiscal responsibility our residents expect.

Let me briefly address the sewer budget, which—by the way—has gone up 33% in four years. The Township is clearly collecting more than needed, proven by the plan to shift \$730,000 from sewer surplus into the municipal budget.

Let's give some of that back. I propose a \$21.63 refund per household this year and a lower sewer rate going forward. It's fair, it's responsible, and it's the right thing to do.

This proposed amendment is good for our taxpayers. It provides for no tax increase and simultaneously refunds \$21.63 from the sewer bill back to our residents. I hope you will join me in supporting it."

Council discussion:

Councilman Kirsh began by stating that he would keep his comments brief, noting that this discussion reflects a familiar situation. He emphasized that the Township has followed an established and exceptionally successful, collaborative budget process. Over the past few years, the Budget and Finance Committee, comprising himself and Councilman Ring, has worked closely with the administration and key Township staff, dedicating substantial time to thoroughly understand departmental needs.

He noted that the committee held multiple meetings and provided ample opportunities for input, which ultimately shaped the proposed budget. In light of that, Councilman Kirsh expressed concern over the timing of last-minute proposed cuts totaling \$1 million, stating that while new and creative ideas are always welcome, such proposals presented at the eleventh hour are highly irregular and disruptive to the orderly, established process.

He also addressed comments made earlier regarding the sewer utility, particularly a suggestion that the Township was "ripping off residents." Councilman Kirsh firmly rejected that characterization. He commended Council President Norgalis for his deep commitment to understanding the sewer system, noting that in anticipation of Council President Norgalis's departure, he had taken it upon himself to learn more about the infrastructure, including visiting the Township's pumping stations to better grasp the system's operations.

Councilman Kirsh stressed the importance of investing in critical infrastructure, explaining that the Township must ensure the system continues to function reliably for residents. He underscored that there is no misuse of funds, only a commitment to maintaining a system essential to public health and quality of life.

In conclusion, Councilman Kirsh expressed his strong support for the budget, calling it a collaborative and forward-looking investment in both the current and future well-being of the community.

Councilman Kurdyla acknowledged that the evening's discussion included a range of perspectives, some of which were critical, and others which were notably constructive. He emphasized the importance of recognizing the immense effort and collaboration that went into developing the budget.

He assured Councilman Kirsh that he, too, had visited key infrastructure sites such as the Gilbride Pumping Station, highlighting his own commitment to understanding the Township's operations. He reflected on the challenging and iterative nature of the budget process, describing how it undergoes several revisions before reaching its final form. He noted that each version requires significant thought, analysis, and adjustment, underscoring that it is far from an easy task.

Councilman Kurdyla expressed his appreciation for the work done by Councilmen Kirsh, Ring, and Council President Norgalis, as well as the administration, particularly Township Administrator Mike Pappas and Mayor Moench, for their transparency and willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue throughout the process. He concluded by stating his intent to support the budget out of respect for the diligent work and dedication demonstrated by all involved.

Councilman Ring began by acknowledging that budgets are never perfect, describing the process as one that requires collaboration, compromise, and balance. He emphasized that each participant in the process brings their own priorities, values, and perspectives, which must be carefully weighed to create a responsible and effective financial plan for the Township.

He noted that considerable time and effort had gone into developing the current budget, with meaningful contributions from both council members and the administration. Councilman Ring shared that he had received a proposed amendment a little more than 24 hours prior to the meeting and had begun reviewing it. While the amendment claimed to avoid cutting salaries, with the exception of the Office of Constituent Relations, he explained that many of the proposed reductions would bring department budgets below their actual 2024 costs, effectively resulting in cuts to services and programs for residents.

He provided specific examples, such as potential impacts to recreation programs and snow removal, and pointed to a tax assessment contract listed on the evening's agenda for \$89,000 that, under the proposed amendment, would be underfunded by \$25,000.

Councilman Ring urged the Council to focus on the extensive and thoughtful work that had been put into the proposed budget. Echoing Councilman Kurdyla's sentiment, he commended the collective effort and expressed his support for moving forward with a budget that reflects responsible planning and service to the community.

Councilman Kurdyla requested a moment to speak, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the contributions of the CFO, Bill Pandos, and his staff, who were present that evening. He noted that during budget discussions, both the council and administration had been actively involved. Councilman Kurdyla expressed appreciation for the significant effort and shared workload undertaken by Mr. Pandos and his team and formally thanked them for their hard work.

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	Nay
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [**#25-06-26-162**](#) is appended to the official minutes

**Introduction
of Ordinances**

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$6,100,000 FOR VARIOUS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO MONROE STREET, JACKSON STREET, VILLA DRIVE, CABOT HILL ROAD, SUNSET DRIVE, MEINERS DRIVE, RIDGE ROAD, MIDDLE ROAD, BOLMER FARM ROAD AND BLAZIER ROAD, INCLUDING CURBING, MILLING, PAVING, DRAINAGE, SEWER AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS IMPROVEMENTS, VARIOUS ROAD OVERLAYS AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$5,795,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION.

Mayor Moench offered a brief clarification regarding the road program ordinance. He reminded both the Council and residents that the list of roads included in the ordinance represents the core roads for the 2025 program, but it is not the complete list of roads that may be addressed.

As Township Engineer William Burr previously noted, when the Township goes out to bid, it includes add-ons and alternate options in the bid packages. This approach is

designed to ensure the Township can secure the most competitive pricing and maximize the number of roads improved within the allocated budget.

Mayor Moench emphasized that while the ordinance reflects the primary roads around which the program is built, additional roads may be added as bid results come in and funding allows.

Councilman Pedroso stated that while he fully supports the need for road repairs and is generally comfortable with the proposed \$6.1 million allocation for that purpose, he could not support the overall bond ordinance as it is tied to the broader budget package, which he believes is excessive.

He also highlighted concerns regarding the sewer budget, noting that from 2020 to 2024, the Township's sewer expenses have increased by just 3.4%, yet residents have experienced a 33% increase in their sewer bills during that same period. He emphasized the importance of examining that disparity and ensuring fairness for taxpayers.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, 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

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution [#25-06-26-163](#) 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 10th day of July, 2025, 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

RESOLUTION APPROVING A SHARED MUNICIPAL COURT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AND THE BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE FOR A TERM OF THREE (3) YEARS COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2025, AND ENDING ON DECEMBER 31, 2027

Council President Norgalis offered that this has been a successful program over the past years and is something the township wants to continue.

Mayor Moench added that the program has benefited both communities.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, 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 [#25-06-26-164](#) is appended to the official minutes

TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE SOMERSET COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Councilman Ring proposed a revision to the resolution, stating: “Based on tonight’s presentation, it is my understanding that Bridgewater Township has contributed to the Somerset County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, rather than prepared it in its entirety. Therefore, I would like to revise the second 'Whereas' clause to replace the word 'prepared' with 'contributed to', as the current language may suggest that we authored the full county plan, which we did not.” He then moved to adopt the resolution as amended.

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 [#25-06-26-165](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING AN AWARD OF CONTRACT TO APPRAISAL SYSTEMS, INC.
TO PERFORM PROFESSIONAL APPRAISAL INSPECTIONS AND RELATED
SERVICES IN CONNECTION WITH THE TOWNSHIP REASSESSMENT PROGRAM IN
AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$89,400.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF JUNE 27, 2025 –
DECEMBER 31, 2025**

Township Administrator Pappas stated that this has been an annual process to assist the assessor in fulfilling his responsibilities. He noted that the same service provider has been used for years and that the process has been successful.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-06-26-166](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROJECT FOR THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT
AMOUNT OF \$237,500.00, RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE BOND, ACCEPTANCE
OF THE MAINTENANCE BOND, AND FINAL PAYMENT TO HM COMPANY LLC 3
ORLANDO DRIVE, FAIRFIELD, NJ 07004 FOR THE SENIOR CENTER
IMPROVEMENTS FUNDED THROUGH THE CDBG-COVID-19 RESILIENCY
PROGRAM AND 2024 CAPITAL FUND**

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-06-26-167](#) is appended to the official minutes

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$240 FOR THE
BRIDGEWATER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 651 COUNTRY CLUB ROAD,
BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY 08807, IN CONNECTION WITH USE OF FIRE PIT FOR**

OUTDOOR CHURCH SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY AS FOLLOWS: JULY 9, 16, 23, AND 30 FROM 7-8 PM

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Council President Norgalis, 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 [#25-06-26-168](#) is appended to the official minutes

**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 1806-33-011-009 FOR FOGO DE CHAO CHURRASCARIA, 400 COMMONS WAY SUITE 279, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE 1806-33-014-012 FOR BWATER TAVERN, LLC, 1288 ROUTE 22 EAST, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807

2025-2026 RENEWAL OF CLUB LIQUOR LICENSE 1806-31-035-002 FOR GERALD ABREGO POST #327 AMERICAN LEGION, 77 OLD YORK ROAD, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807

RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION INACTIVE LIQUOR LICENSE NO. 1806-32-003-006 FOR SOLO BRIDGEWATER, 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

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, 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 [#25-06-26-169 thru #25-06-26-172](#) 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 Ring, Council convened in closed session at approximately 8:36 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#25-06-26-173](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 8:40 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President