

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MAY 27, 2025 COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a special session meeting on Tuesday, May 27, 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, THE ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS PROVIDED ON MAY 22, 2025, BY SENDING WRITTEN NOTICE AND ELECTRONIC NOTICE 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
 Alex Fisher, Deputy Township Attorney
 Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk

Councilman Timothy Ring led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**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.

- **Anda Cytroen, 654 Stangle Road, Martinsville, NJ 08836**
Ms. Anda Cytroen expressed significant concerns regarding the 2025 municipal budget process. While pleased the timeline was finally released, she questioned why Bridgewater failed to approve its budget timely

compared to neighboring townships.

Ms. Cytroen accused the Administration of stalling and the Council of "rubber-stamping" spending requests, leading to the budget being significantly spent before public presentation.

Ms. Cytroen urged the Council to leverage community engagement to identify initiatives that could enrich the township, such as expanding senior services, creating teen experiential learning opportunities, and engaging with university experts for stormwater management.

Councilman Pedroso stated for the record that he has not simply approved measures without consideration. He emphasized that he has voted "no" on several occasions when issues were presented to the governing body, specifically noting that he opposed every ordinance requesting authorization for the administration to exceed its budget appropriations.

- **Cathy Franco, 766 Weemac Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Franco began by expressing a few thoughts regarding the evening's agenda. She acknowledged that the budget would be introduced at the meeting and shared her mixed feelings, both disappointment and satisfaction, upon receiving a revised agenda around 6:13 or 6:15 PM, which included the budget amount and details on the sewer fund to be introduced that night. Additionally, Ms. Franco requested clarification on Resolution 6B, which pertains to authorizing the self-examination of the 2025 budget. She noted that, based on her reading of the resolution, it appeared to restrict public access in some way.

Council President Norgalis assured attendees that the entire budget would be accessible to the public, stating that it would be posted on the website first thing in the morning.

Ms. Franco clarified that the discussion had moved to Resolution 6B, which authorizes the self-examination of the 2025 budget. She noted the requirement for a 10-day period before the budget's adoption and requested assurance that the budget would be accessible to the public well in advance of this period.

Ms. Franco raised questions regarding the interim tax bills, referencing her calculations from the previous week, which indicated a 7.4% increase based on last year's municipal budget compared to this year's figures (\$51.4 million for 2025 versus \$50.5 million for 2024). She observed that

the increase now appears to be approximately 2% or less and questioned whether this reduction was due to budget cuts or other factors, such as alternative revenue sources like hotel taxes or PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) programs.

Ms. Franco mentioned that some PILOT programs may be expiring, specifically referencing Center Bridge One and parts of the mall, and asked how these changes might impact the municipal budget. She suggested that a detailed review may be necessary for residents to fully understand the reasons behind the increase in the municipal portion of the budget. Ms. Franco concluded by acknowledging that some questions may not be answerable immediately, but expressed hope that further analysis and the final budget presentation would provide clarity for taxpayers.

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

**2025
Municipal
Budget**

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)

Mayor Moench explained a Cap Bank is simply a municipal accounting measure. He explained that it relates to the existence of a budget cap, noting that some expenses fall above the cap while others are below it. This adjustment is standard practice in municipal accounting and does not indicate any unusual financial activity.

Councilman Pedroso stated that, consistent with his previous votes, he would be voting no on this matter. He explained that in the past, he often cited the lack of access to the budget as a reason for being unable to make a proper and reasonable decision. Now that he has reviewed the budget, he noted that his concerns have unfortunately been confirmed, and therefore, he will be voting no.

Mayor Moench addressed Councilman Pedroso regarding the cap bank ordinance, encouraging a deeper engagement with the details of the ordinance and the budget process. He invited Councilman Pedroso to share any specific suggestions or proposed budget cuts, noting that such input would be valuable to the governing body. Mayor Moench highlighted that the cap bank ordinance is a standard municipal finance measure and pointed out that the municipality is currently under the cap bank by over one million dollars. He expressed appreciation for open discussion and encouraged all council members to participate actively in the budget review and decision-making process.

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 12th day of June, 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.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, 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 [#25-05-27-140](#) is appended to the official minutes

INTRODUCTION OF THE 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET. CURRENT FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$51,401,645.82, SEWER FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$13,078,696.03. PUBLIC HEARING FOR ADOPTION IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 26, 2025

Mayor Moench provided a brief overview of the proposed budget, which is being introduced tonight. He noted that the administration's budget reflects a 2.48% increase on the tax levy and an overall spending increase of 0.82%. For the average resident, this translates to a \$34 tax increase. Mayor Moench highlighted the collaborative efforts over the past few months between the administration, the council budget subcommittee, and staff to identify both budget cuts and new sources of revenue. He explained that, since \$1.9 million in revenue from last year was non-recurring, the team worked to find alternative revenue sources and areas to cut costs without reducing services. He emphasized that no services have been cut, park maintenance funding has increased, and support for police, public safety, and affordable housing initiatives continues. Mayor Moench expressed

pride in the proposed budget, thanked the four council members who provided input, and looked forward to further discussion with the public and council prior to final adoption.

Councilman Ring emphasized the importance of the public understanding that this vote does not constitute approval of the budget. He clarified that the vote simply acknowledges receipt of the budget from the administration. Councilman Ring noted that over the next month, there may be changes, tweaks, or adjustments presented to the governing body, but this action is not the final adoption of the budget.

Councilman Pedroso offered that significant tweaks and adjustments are necessary in the proposed budget. He stated that the amount to be raised by taxation is excessive compared to last year and does not believe the budget is ready for introduction. Councilman Pedroso suggested that the administration should make further reductions and cuts, and therefore, he will not support the introduction of the budget.

Councilman Kirsh acknowledged the collaborative process undertaken in preparing the budget, noting that this approach is consistent with previous years. He explained that he and Councilman Ring represented the budget subcommittee, which, due to procedural rules, could only include two members. The subcommittee held meetings and phone conversations with other council members, sometimes multiple times, to gather input. Councilman Kirsh emphasized that there will be ample opportunity in the coming weeks to review the budget details. He clarified that the current action simply acknowledges that the mayor has presented a budget, and it is now the council's responsibility to review and consider it. He stated that any vote against introducing the budget misrepresents the procedural nature of this step, as it is merely a requirement to move the process forward. For these reasons, Councilman Kirsh supported the motion, affirming that the budget is now in the council's hands for further consideration.

Council President Norgalis expressed personal appreciation for the work that Councilman Ring and Councilman Kirsh contributed, acknowledging that they have dedicated significant time and effort to the budget process over the last several months.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the 2025 Municipal Budget was introduced. 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 [#25-05-27-141](#) is appended to the official minutes

Resolutions

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE 2025 BUDGET TO BE READ BY TITLE ONLY AS PERMITTED BY STATUTE N.J.S.A. 40A:4-8

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 [#25-05-27-142](#) is appended to the official minutes

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE SELF-EXAMINATION OF THE 2025 BUDGET

Administrator Pappas explained that the State of New Jersey requires the Department of Community Affairs to formally examine municipal budgets approximately every three years, and this is not one of those years. As a result, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is permitted to certify the budget through a self-examination process. Administrator Pappas noted, however, that the budget will still be sent to the Department of Community Affairs for review, though this review is different from the more intensive, formal examination conducted every three years. The annual review is standard, while the formal examination is a more lengthy and detailed process that occurs less frequently.

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 [#25-05-27-143](#) is appended to the official minutes

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Township Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President