

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL**  
**AUGUST 21, 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, August 21, 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 (**Absent**)  
Councilman Timothy Ring  
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

Also Present:           Matthew C. Moench, Mayor  
                              Michael Pappas, Township Administrator  
                              Alex Fisher, Deputy Township Attorney  
                              Juliana Coelho, Deputy Township Clerk

Councilman Kurdyla led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

**JULY 24, 2025 - REGULAR SESSION**

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the July 24, 2025, regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

**Council Reports**

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Nothing to report.

Council President Norgalis: (*Verbatim*)

- I am in receipt of detailed correspondence from Kevin Coakley, Partner in the Connell Foley Law firm requesting an “Area in Need of Redevelopment” study for two properties located on US 202/206. Specifically, these are residential properties in the R40 zone at 1154 and 1162 US 202/206 on the west side of the street in the vicinity of the Sanofi USA Campus. These are non-contiguous

properties with a combined size of 3.2 acres. Copies of the documentation were also provided to Township Attorneys Corsini and Savo. I am turning my copy over to Administrator Pappas for further township study.

- Also received a copy of a letter from Senator Doug Steinhart to Mayor Moench conveying the Senator's concerns for a long-term issue about the NJ Transit maintenance and operations in the Boro of Raritan adjacent to our Bradley Gardens section. Idling locomotives and other transit activities are contributing to noise and pollution. To quote the senator, "the State's failure and refusal to respond timely or not at all to the legitimate and persistent health, safety and welfare of your residents is appalling and unsurprising". This is an issue that goes back well over a decade to a time when I attended Raritan Valley Rail Coalition meetings chaired by Peter Palmer.
- I was at the Patriot Stadium last night as guest of the RWJ Somerset Hospital Foundation for a scheduled game against the Harford Yard Goats. The game was cancelled due to rain around 7:30 with the players never leaving their dugouts. But while awaiting the game to be called a Bridgewater resident approached me and said, "it looks like North Bridge street is open to traffic, did the water company complete their work?" His second question was, "are they going to repave?". I did go home that way and North Bridge was indeed open but I have asked our Engineer Bill Burr to give me an update on the two questions. He reported that North Bridge is routinely closed every workday from 8am to 4pm and that repaving at no cost to the township may be delayed until next year.

Councilman Kirsh:

- On August 12, the Zoning Board continued its review of the application for age-restricted townhomes at 20220/206, a property bordering the JCC. The current proposal includes 64 units, 13 of which would be designated affordable housing, all restricted to senior residents. The case is expected to be heard again in October, though the date has not been confirmed.
- On Friday, Councilman Kirsh attended the annual senior citizen luncheon in recognition of National Senior Citizen Day. Representing the Mayor and Council, he delivered remarks acknowledging volunteers, staff, and the continued contributions of senior residents to the Bridgewater community.
- The Planning Board met on Tuesday and considered two cases. Approval was granted for a second-floor addition to Roman Jewelers near the mall. Additionally, Thor Technologies, part of the Center of Excellence, received an extension on a prior approval. The Board also addressed matters connected to the upcoming public hearings on Ordinances 10A and 10B, concerning master plan consistency reviews.

Councilman Ring:

- Councilman Ring provided a brief report regarding current emergency conditions. He informed the Council that the Governor had declared a state of emergency earlier in the day in response to Hurricane Erin. Although the hurricane is expected to remain well offshore, Councilman Ring emphasized that ocean conditions will be extremely dangerous over the next several days. He advised that residents and visitors traveling to the beach or shore areas should exercise caution and avoid entering the water. He concluded by urging individuals planning weekend trips to the shore to remain alert and follow safety recommendations.

## Mayor's Reports

Mayor Matthew C. Moench had nothing to report.

## Presentation

### **NJDOT PRINCE RODGERS BRIDGE OVER RT 287**

Patience Sengbey, representing NJDOT's Office of Government and Community Relations, introduced the department's team and outlined the purpose of the presentation regarding the Prince Rogers Avenue bridges over Route 287. She requested that questions be held until the conclusion of the presentation and noted her contact information would be available for follow-up.

### **Project Overview**

Project Manager Pruti Patel, supported by Assistant Project Manager Jay Yun and a team of NJDOT engineers and designers, provided a detailed presentation on the planned bridge deck replacements at Prince Rogers Avenue.

Key points included:

- **Background & Goals:**
  - The two bridges, built in 1963, are structurally deficient and require deck replacement and superstructure/substructure repairs.
  - Improvements will extend the bridges' service life, enhance safety, and minimize environmental and community impacts.
  - The project also includes removal of an existing sign structure and installation of two new overhead sign structures along Route 287 northbound.
- **Staging Options:**
  - **Preferred Option:** Full closure of both bridges with a single-stage replacement. This approach would require a **13-month vehicular and pedestrian detour**, but offers benefits such as improved long-term performance, fewer construction joints, and enhanced pedestrian safety by routing them away from the work zone.
  - **Alternate Option:** Two-stage construction, maintaining pedestrian access but extending the total project duration to **18 months**. Vehicular detours would still be required.

- **Detour Routes:**
  - Vehicular detours would utilize North Bridge Street and Woodland Avenue.
  - Pedestrian detours under the one-stage plan would lengthen average walking times by several minutes, depending on origin and destination.
- **Utilities:**
  - A PSENG gas main and an electric pole will need to be relocated.
  - Bridgewater Township sewer utilities are also located within the project limits.
- **Schedule:**
  - Final design is underway with anticipated plan reviews by early Fall 2026.
  - Construction award is expected in Winter 2026–2027.
  - Project completion would depend on chosen staging: approximately 13 months for full closure or 18 months for phased construction.

**Next Steps:**

- NJDOT will circulate meeting minutes.
- A letter of support from Bridgewater Township will be required for the detour plans.
- An in-person Public Information Center (PIC) meeting will be scheduled.

The presentation concluded with an invitation for questions from the Council.

Councilman Kurdyla inquired about the project timeline, noting that the presentation referenced discussions beginning in 2018. He asked whether it typically takes seven years for such a project to progress, and why this particular project has taken so long to reach the current stage.

Ms. Patel explained that the concept development phase began in 2018, which is consistent with NJDOT's capital program delivery process. Typically, concept development takes about two years, followed by the final design phase. Project progression also depends on securing funding and prioritization relative to other projects statewide. The final design phase for this bridge replacement commenced in 2024.

Councilman Kurdyla further asked whether the 2018 discussions were prompted by an inspection identifying a bridge failure.

Ms. Patel clarified that there was no failure. The bridges were identified as structurally deficient due to deck conditions but were not deemed in poor or critical condition. Inspections since 2018 have not shown major deterioration, allowing the project to advance in sequence with the standard NJDOT process.

Councilman Ring referred to the pedestrian detour diagram, noting that it appeared

to direct pedestrians diagonally across a busy intersection near Route 22 and North Bridge Street. He emphasized that this location sees vehicles exiting the highway at high speeds and suggested that, if this detour is to be implemented, there must be a clearly defined crosswalk with appropriate signage to ensure pedestrian safety.

Representatives from the NJDOT project team clarified that the diagram shown was a conceptual sketch, not an exact depiction of crosswalk locations. They confirmed that both sides of North Bridge Street are side-walked, and the final design would ensure pedestrians are directed along defined sidewalks and crossings, not across uncontrolled areas.

Councilman Ring noted that a 13-month closure would inevitably include the holiday shopping season, when traffic to Bridgewater Commons Mall is especially heavy. He expressed concern about how drivers from outside the area would be made aware of the detours, particularly those traveling via Route 287 or Routes 202/206, who may not be familiar with local roadways.

Members of the NJDOT team acknowledged the concern and indicated that detour signage would be placed in the area, directing drivers to Commons Way and Woodlawn Avenue rather than forcing U-turns at Prince Rogers Avenue. However, Councilman Ring stressed the need for advance signage on major highways such as Route 22 and Route 287, so that motorists are alerted early and can adjust their routes before reaching the closure.

Administrator Papas noted that following the virtual meeting with NJDOT in April, he had spoken with Troy Fischer, General Manager of Bridgewater Commons Mall, to inform him of the planned project. Mr. Fischer had been invited to attend the present meeting, but was unable to confirm his availability.

Administrator Papas emphasized that both the Township and the mall management are concerned about the potential impact of the bridge closure on mall traffic, particularly during the holiday shopping season. He echoed Councilman Ring's earlier point, stressing the need for advance signage on highways such as Route 22 and Interstate 287. He recommended the use of variable message boards to alert drivers unfamiliar with the area to the detours in place, ensuring they can plan their routes accordingly.

Councilman Ring asked whether NJDOT had considered using temporary traffic lights to maintain alternating two-way traffic during construction, as is commonly done in other states such as New York. He described projects where one half of the bridge is rebuilt at a time while portable signals control alternating northbound and southbound traffic, allowing the road to remain open 24/7.

The NJDOT representative explained that while this method is technically possible,

its feasibility depends on traffic volumes and construction timelines. Prince Rogers Avenue carries approximately 5,000 vehicles daily, and if alternating one-way traffic were implemented, construction would need to be staged in halves. This would significantly extend the duration of the project compared to a full closure. The representative acknowledged that the approach is common in more rural areas but stressed that the trade-off is a much longer construction schedule in exchange for keeping traffic flowing.

Councilman Kirsh asked whether NJDOT had estimated pedestrian usage on Prince Rogers Avenue, noting that the surrounding residential neighborhoods may generate foot traffic to nearby destinations such as the Bridgewater Commons Mall and the post office. He expressed concern about the impact of the proposed pedestrian detour, which appears longer though not substantially so.

Ms. Patel stated that NJDOT does not have specific pedestrian count data for this location. However, since there are existing sidewalks along Prince Rogers Avenue, it is assumed that pedestrian activity occurs, particularly for trips to Bridgewater Commons. For this reason, the proposed detour routes pedestrians via North Bridge Street, which has sidewalks.

Councilman Kirsh followed up to confirm his understanding of the two staging options. He asked whether Option 2 would maintain pedestrian access throughout construction.

Ms. Patel clarified that under Option 2, pedestrian access would remain open at all times during construction—both during the day and overnight. However, this option would extend the overall construction timeline from 13 months to 18 months.

Councilman Kirsh acknowledged the trade-off and raised an additional concern. He noted that the proposed pedestrian detour appears to direct walkers across private property, including office buildings and the Marriott hotel site. He asked whether NJDOT would require permission from those property owners to implement such a detour.

Councilman Ring raised concerns regarding the proposed pedestrian detour along Panon, noting that while Panon has a sidewalk on one side, the detour leads into an office complex, which is private property. He questioned whether NJDOT had obtained an easement for pedestrian access.

Ms. Patel clarified that the current detour plan is preliminary. NJDOT will review property ownership along the proposed route and design accordingly. She confirmed that the department would investigate and report back to the Council regarding easement requirements.

Councilman Ring emphasized that the Township cannot approve a pedestrian walkway across private property without an easement.

Ms. Patel responded that NJDOT would pursue that review and also noted that if access is denied, an alternative staging plan exists that maintains pedestrian access via Prince Rogers Avenue during construction.

Councilman Kirsh confirmed concerns similar to Councilman Ring's, highlighting potential risks to pedestrians if access is granted through private property, including liability for slips and falls and winter maintenance responsibilities. NJDOT acknowledged these points and stated they would be noted.

Councilman Kirsh then inquired about sewer utility infrastructure, noting that prior slides highlighted gas and electrical utilities but did not provide details regarding sewer lines.

The NJDOT representative clarified that storm sewer inlets exist along Prince Rogers Avenue, particularly near the intersection with Commons Way. However, there is no sanitary sewer infrastructure located along the bridge itself.

Councilman Kirsh sought clarification regarding the storm sewer infrastructure discussed previously, noting that it is for stormwater only and not part of the typical sanitary sewer system.

The NJDOT representative confirmed that the storm sewer does not alter existing runoff patterns; it is limited to stormwater and does not involve any sanitary sewer transmission.

Councilman Kirsh then referenced earlier conversations with Township officials dating back to 2018, highlighting that multiple police chiefs and command structures have changed since that time. He asked whether the current Police Chief and command staff had been briefed on the project and its traffic implications.

Administrator Pappas Response:

Administrator Pappas confirmed that the current Police Chief has been involved. He noted that representatives from traffic safety, including Sergeant Kevin Flores, participated in the April project meeting, ensuring the current command structure is informed.

Councilman Ring asked whether the orange-shaded area on the slide represented the limits where barricades would close the road during construction. He sought clarification on how far drivers would be able to travel along Prince Rogers Avenue, particularly when approaching from North Bridge Street.

The NJDOT representative confirmed that the orange area indicates the barricade limits. Councilman Ring specifically asked about access to Federal Drive, which leads to parking for the local baseball fields. The representative confirmed that Federal Drive would remain accessible throughout the 11-month construction period, ensuring continued access to the upper fields and associated parking.

Councilman Kirsh highlighted that Federal Drive provides access to a parking lot managed by Bridgewater Baseball & Softball, serving Fields 4 and 5. He noted that this lot is also used by Bridgewater Commons Mall employees during the holiday season, emphasizing the need for coordination with both the Township and the baseball organization to ensure continued access.

Council President Norgalis added that the mall rents these parking lots for employee use, with employees typically walking across the bridge to reach their workplace.

Councilman Ring and Councilman Kirsh noted that, due to the bridge closure, employees would no longer be able to walk across. They suggested that a shuttle service would be necessary to maintain reasonable access; otherwise, commuting times could be significantly extended.

Councilman Kirsh suggested that, prior to the project start, NJDOT should hold a meeting with Bridgewater Commons Mall management as well as shop owners in the small strip mall along Prince Rogers Avenue, as they will be significantly impacted by the closure. He then asked whether long-term closures (13–18 months) tend to change natural driving and pedestrian behavior in the community. Specifically, he questioned whether people might alter their routines—such as splitting trips to the mall and post office or visiting alternate locations—due to detours and restricted access.

Ms. Patel acknowledged that all construction projects have some impact on the community, noting that this project, situated near a major mall complex, would be no exception. She emphasized that maintaining a safe construction site is a primary goal, and that minor adjustments to local travel behavior are an expected consequence of long-term construction in residential or commercial areas.

Councilman Kirsh asked about the bridge's age, noting it was built in 1963, and whether the roughly 50-year lifespan was typical and represented good value for taxpayers. He asked if the bridge's deterioration was inevitable and whether 50 years is an acceptable service life for a bridge of this type.

Ms. Patel handed the question over to the structural engineers, who explained the following:

- The standard life cycle for a bridge is generally 70–75 years, though components such as the bridge deck typically have a design life of around 30



years.

- The current deck has lasted over 50 years, which exceeds its typical design life, though it has required multiple patches over time.
- The bridge is still safe to drive until the planned reconstruction at the end of 2026.
- Following the deck replacement, the new deck's design life is approximately 30 years, with the possibility of slightly longer actual performance.
- Future assessments will determine whether additional major work is necessary, such as replacing the superstructure or the entire bridge, depending on conditions at that time.

Councilman Kirsh noted that while the current project is appropriate, future interventions may be larger in scope depending on structural needs.

Ms. Patel stated that NJDOT's preferred option is a full bridge closure with vehicular and pedestrian detours. She noted a second option exists if the Township does not approve a pedestrian detour.

Councilman Ring asked for clarification on the Township's role, questioning whether the request was for the governing body, engineers, or the Police Chief. Ms. Patel clarified that NJDOT is seeking Township support for the vehicle detour plans.

Councilman Ring emphasized that the Township cannot make an informed decision without knowing the duration of the closure (11 months vs. 18 months) and the start date, as these factors affect impacts on the mall and surrounding areas.

Councilman Kirsh added that the winter 2026–2027 start date requires careful planning to avoid impacting two holiday seasons. He noted that the start month could determine whether one or two holiday seasons are affected, highlighting the importance of minimizing economic and pedestrian impacts. He also questioned whether winter construction is feasible.

Ms. Patel responded that demolition work can proceed during winter, weather permitting, but concrete work and other construction activities are dependent on suitable conditions. She confirmed that work can continue through winter, where possible.

Councilman Kirsh suggested that a January start, rather than mid-December, would be preferable to further minimize impacts.

Council President Norgalis expressed uncertainty about the type of feedback being sought from Bridgewater Township in response to the presentation. He suggested that the Department of Transportation should clearly outline specific options—such as multiple scenarios or approaches—and then identify the likely reactions from the Township based on residential, commercial, or other community concerns. Council President Norgalis emphasized that while a significant amount of information had been shared, more clarity was needed on the exact decisions under consideration.

Council President Norgalis then raised a series of technical questions. He referenced his familiarity with projects involving the removal of surface structures down to the main supports, noting that in some cases these projects reveal that the supports themselves require replacement. He asked whether inspections to date indicated that this project could be limited to replacing the bridge decking, with the substructure remaining sound aside from necessary adjustments for water management and other factors.

Drawing on a comparison to the long-standing Bailey bridges on Route 78 in Bedminster, Council President Norgalis questioned whether the current project fell into the category of a relatively straightforward job—something routinely managed—or whether it should be viewed as a larger, more complex undertaking, requiring replacement of entire structures.

A structural engineer from NJDOT responded to Council President Norgalis's question by explaining that the project involves removing the bridge deck down to the main supports. He noted that this consideration is part of the concept development phase and is factored into the overall life cycle analysis of the structure.

According to the engineer, the bridge's superstructure is currently in good condition. Minor repairs will be made to the beam ends, where some deterioration has been observed, in order to extend the overall service life of the bridge. He added that inspections of the beams have been completed and, at this time, there is no indication that full replacement is necessary.

Council President Norgalis asked whether funding had already been appropriated to carry out the bridge project. He emphasized his concern about a scenario in which work begins, the substructure is exposed, and then progress stalls due to a lack of available funding. He asked directly if the necessary funds were secured to ensure the project could be completed once it starts.

In response, Ms. Patel explained that construction would not begin until funding was fully in place. She noted that while design work could be completed beforehand, the start of construction would be contingent on the allocation of funds.

Council President Norgalis indicated that the Council needed clarification on the

type of input DOT was seeking in the decision-making process. He noted that one approach would be for DOT to simply make the decision and expect the Township to accept it, but suggested that it appeared DOT was aiming for a more participatory process and wanted feedback from the Council. He asked specifically what kind of guidance or response DOT was looking for from them.

Ms. Patel responded that the primary users of the bridge are Bridgewater Township residents. She explained that DOT was seeking the Township's support for the preferred alternative, which would involve a full closure of the bridge, including both vehicular and pedestrian detours.

Council President Norgalis asked whether DOT planned to seek public input at some point, suggesting the possibility of holding a session where the public could view the presentation, ask questions, and provide feedback. He emphasized the importance of community engagement, explaining that residents should be informed and educated about the project to avoid situations where they feel blindsided by construction decisions.

Ms. Patel responded that, prior to the start of construction, DOT establishes a public information center. She noted that, following the Council's recommendation, an in-person session could be set up in Bridgewater to present the construction schedule, review detour plans, and welcome members of the public to attend and ask questions.

Councilman Kirsh emphasized that any session should provide residents—and potentially local business owners—the information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the project. He described it as a critical “fork in the road” where input is needed before moving forward. Councilman Kirsh then asked about timing, inquiring when a decision would need to be made to avoid delaying the project—whether the determination should occur next week, within three months, or at some other point.

Ms. Patel stated that an earlier decision would be preferable because the project is already in the final design phase. She explained that the technical team is actively developing the final design plans. She added that if Bridgewater Township provides support for the preferred approach—a full closure of the bridge during construction—DOT can move forward with finalizing all plans based on that scenario.

Administrator Pappas followed up with a couple of questions. He asked about the possibility of briefing the owners and management of the Prince Rogers strip mall, as well as other business owners in the area. He also inquired whether Councilman Ring's earlier example from another project could serve as an alternative “Option Three,” and asked for clarification on how that approach would work.

Councilman Ring explained that in New York State, a temporary traffic light system has been used to keep roads open during construction. In this method, half of the bridge deck is completed while traffic is managed in one direction, then traffic is shifted to the other half once that section is finished, with temporary traffic lights controlling flow. This approach extends the project timeline—potentially 13 to 24 months—but allows both vehicular and pedestrian traffic to continue in some capacity throughout the construction period. He clarified that the traffic lights would alternate direction at set intervals, maintaining partial functionality while work is completed.

Council President Norgalis noted that some members of the public were present and, since NJDOT representatives were on site, he offered the opportunity for anyone with specific questions to raise them at that time. He clarified that this was separate from the formal public comment period, which would occur later, but emphasized that having DOT representatives present made it a good opportunity to address questions immediately.

Ms. Cytroen raised a question, noting that the River Road project in Piscataway had been handled in the same manner as Councilman Ring had described, with traffic maintained throughout construction. She shared her experience commuting through that project and said it had worked well, though it did take longer to complete. She asked how much additional time “Option Three” would require if implemented, acknowledging that the difference could be significant.

Ms. Cytroen also referenced the presentation, pointing out that DOT was seeking a formal letter of support from the Township. She suggested that this requirement provided the Council with leverage to ensure that all questions were addressed and all issues fully discussed before such a letter was issued.

Council President Norgalis thanked the NJDOT representatives and members of the public for attending and sharing their time and insights. He requested that copies of the presentation be left with the Township Clerk and asked that the presentation also be posted on the Township’s website to ensure broader public access.

Council President Norgalis announced a change to the evening’s agenda before moving to the public comment portion of the meeting. He explained that the police chief had requested his contract be discussed in a public session and had signed the necessary Rice notice to allow that discussion to occur with legal support. Norgalis stated that following item 12D, a new item of business would be added to address the chief’s contract. Although the contract was not included in the current meeting package, he clarified that it would become a public document after discussion and would be available for review through the Clerk’s office.

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

- **Dan Mastroanni: 941 Spring Run Lane-Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Mr. Mastroanni addressed the Council to express his frustration over ongoing stormwater drainage issues affecting his property. He explained that while new street and drainage improvements were being installed in surrounding areas, the water problem at his home remained unresolved. He described how stormwater from nearby streets, roofs, and the mountain above funneled into his property through outdated easements and undersized storm drains, creating repeated flooding hazards.

He recounted how, just days before Hurricane Ida, he discovered—through an accident involving a backhoe hitting a water main—the exact path water was taking toward his house. Despite bringing this to the Township’s attention in advance, no corrective measures were implemented. During Ida, his home was severely flooded, with several feet of water entering the basement and creating what he described as a life-safety situation.

Mr. Mastroanni stressed that the problem stemmed from poor planning and incomplete easements dating back decades. He argued that the Township had acknowledged the issue but repeatedly dismissed solutions as too expensive without providing clear cost estimates. He expressed frustration that other neighborhoods were receiving new storm drains while his street had none, despite being directly burdened with runoff.

He noted that both he and his neighbor had even offered easements to facilitate improvements, and he urged the Township to take action rather than defer responsibility. While emphasizing his deep ties to the community and appreciation for the town, he said he felt let down and asked the Council for meaningful assistance to address what he described as a serious, longstanding, and dangerous problem.

Administrator Pappas responded, stating that he is very familiar with Mr. Mastrolanni and described him as polite and articulate. He noted that both he and Mr. Burr have visited the property multiple times and acknowledged that the drainage problem is significant. Pappas explained that addressing the issue would require substantial resources, both in terms of design and field work.

He recalled that during previous discussions with Mr. Mastrolanni and his neighbors, the Township had explained that this year’s road program would

focus on reconstructing and paving sections of the neighborhood that do not have the drainage issue, because—as Mr. Burr has pointed out—paving roads in the affected area without first resolving the drainage problem would be ineffective and ultimately a waste of resources.

Administrator Pappas stated that it remains the administration’s hope to conduct a full analysis and develop a plan to address the drainage concerns in 2025, and he offered to provide a more formal report to help the Council fully understand the scope and implications of the issue.

- **Christine Rose: 1725 Woodfield Road – Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Ms. Rose began by reminding the Council not to omit the Board of Education from discussions about potential road closures. She then addressed what she described as her “favorite subject,” the ongoing safety concerns at the Cromwell arts building.

She reported that emergency services responded to the building twice over the past weekend, and said there appears to be a recurring problem with a sensor in the kiln area that continues to trigger alarms. She stressed that the issue must be properly fixed rather than simply disabling the alarm system, as doing so would endanger public safety.

Ms. Rose warned that repeated emergency responses to the site put first responders and other drivers on the road at risk. She expressed concern for the safety of residents and her own family members who use the arts center frequently, and noted that the building’s condition poses an avoidable hazard.

She added that she had heard reports—though unconfirmed—that the Township’s fire official has already issued multiple summonses due to the number of emergency responses at the site. If true, she said, this only underscores the urgency for the Council to address the issue.

Ms. Rose urged the Township to prioritize repairing or mothballing the building to make it safe, emphasizing that while recreational projects like pickleball courts are valued, protecting public safety and preserving existing Township buildings should take precedence. She concluded by expressing her hope that this would be her last time needing to raise the issue.

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

Ms. Franco inquired about the Township’s part-time municipal judge, noting that Judge Simon previously served and asking if he was still in the role. Administrator Pappas clarified that Judge House currently serves as municipal judge, while Judges Lenart and Martin fill in on a per diem basis as needed. Formal resolutions are not required for these temporary assignments.

Ms. Franco asked for clarification on agenda items 11A and 11B, noting she opposed the PILOT and was unsure of the difference. Council President Norgalis explained that 11A memorializes the property plot plan with no financial impact, while 11B involves the developer's commitment to fund necessary infrastructure. Ms. Franco confirmed that the financial agreement referenced in 11B is on file and available for public inspection, and Administrator Pappas confirmed it can be reviewed in person without an OPRA request.

Ms. Franco also asked about properties 1154 and 1164 U.S. Highway 202/206. Council President Norgalis explained that the letter from Kevin Kley requests the Township consider these two non-contiguous, residential parcels as areas in need of redevelopment. Ms. Franco questioned whether the owners had attempted to sell the properties before seeking redevelopment designation.

Finally, Ms. Franco suggested reviewing the health benefits program for elected officials. She noted that as part-time officials, the current level of benefits—covering family members for a minimal contribution—differs significantly from that of other Township employees. She encouraged the Council to consider adjustments to ensure fairness in next year's budget.

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

**Public  
Hearing &  
Final Action  
Ordinances**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AMENDING THE R-10A SINGLE-FAMILY ZONE, SECTION 126-308.1 OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE TO PERMIT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

Council President Norgalis explained that agenda item 10A, up for final action, had been introduced two weeks earlier. After the introduction, a defect was identified in the wording regarding unit or lot size. The correction was significant enough that changing it before final approval would have violated procedural rules, requiring the ordinance to be reintroduced.

He noted that the ordinance is important for supporting the Township's fair housing program. Therefore, the Council was being asked to approve 10A as currently written. A corrected version of the ordinance will be reintroduced at a future meeting, at which point it will be considered for approval. Norgalis emphasized that handling the matter in two separate steps was clearer and less confusing for the public than attempting to adopt and immediately revise the ordinance in the same meeting.

Councilman Ring noted that he had previously expressed concerns about the ordinance at the last meeting. He acknowledged the requirements the project

developer must meet with the state and stated that, with the assurance that the identified deficiencies will be corrected at the next meeting, he will support the ordinance. He emphasized that his main concern was ensuring the issue does not “go into a black hole.”

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

No one wished to be heard.

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

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

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

**ORDINANCE #25- 12 WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-221](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AMENDING SECTION 126 OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP CODE, ADDING SECTION 126-321.10 TITLED “AH-3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING ZONE” ALLOWING FOR 100% AFFORDABLE MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DISABLED VETERANS HOUSING PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT AND ANY UNIFORM HOUSING AND AFFORDABILITY CONTROLS**

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

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

Ms. Franco spoke regarding a property being rezoned to a new AH3 affordable housing zone. She noted that the property had previously been zoned commercial and that a few years ago there had been an attempt to build a billboard with a fountain near the Time to Eat Diner on Route 202/206.

She asked whether adjoining property owners would be notified about the rezoning. Deputy Attorney Fisher explained that under the Municipal Land Use law, because this is part of a master plan re-examination and amendment,



neighboring property owners are not legally required to be notified. Fisher clarified that notification would occur when an application is submitted, which would include a 200-foot notice list, and that any proposed development would then be subject to land use board review.

Ms. Franco expressed concern that future development permitted under the new zoning—such as multiple affordable housing units or housing for disabled veterans—could impact neighboring single-family homes. She emphasized the importance of transparency and timely information, noting her ongoing interest in the Township’s master plan and her concern about how zoning changes may affect existing residents.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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	Absent
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

**ORDINANCE #25-15 WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-222](#) is appended to the official minutes

**BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$975,000 FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS AT CAMP CROMWELL IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$926,250 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION**

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

- **Anda Cytroen: 654 Stangle Road- Martinsville, NJ 08836**

Ms. Cytroen focused her remarks on the Camp Cromwell initiative, particularly regarding proposed financing and project management decisions. She thanked Councilman Kurdyla and Council President Norgalis for visiting the property, noting that the condition of the site had changed over time.

She questioned the need to issue bonds to start the project, noting that HUD has a defined reimbursement timeline and suggesting that the schedule is

predictable enough that borrowing may not be necessary. She also raised concerns about the Township's budget structure, wondering why a sub-budget under the capital improvements plan wasn't considered to fund the project while awaiting reimbursements.

Ms. Cytroen highlighted that the HUD line-item budget prohibits use of funds for interest payments and asked how interest on potential borrowing would be covered. She emphasized that any changes to the approved project scope, such as adding pickleball courts, would require HUD approval before proceeding. She also questioned why smaller line items were prioritized over major building renovations, expressing concern that opening trails to the public before the buildings were renovated could increase vandalism, weather damage, and renovation costs.

She noted that the ADA-accessible playground is the largest budget item, but that its placement and schedule were unclear. She clarified that the project period is eight years, with seven remaining to use the funds. Finally, she expressed disappointment that there was no community oversight or advisory committee and that interested groups were not included in project planning.

She concluded that more detailed information on financing, the use of federal funds, and project sequencing is needed for all stakeholders to be fully informed. She emphasized that she would not be voting but wanted the Council to have sufficient information to make an informed decision.

Mayor Moench addressed questions regarding the Township budget and project financing. He clarified that the Township cannot use a cash-based budget and must anticipate revenues in accordance with state statutes. He explained that entering into contracts, such as with an engineering firm for project planning, requires having sufficient funds available upfront. Without those funds, the Township cannot legally enter into contracts, which is why bonding may be necessary.

He noted that theoretically, the Township could have increased the budget to cover these costs directly, but doing so would require either raising taxes or cutting funds from other areas. He contrasted this with snow removal, where costs can be estimated and adjusted within the budget or through a dedicated trust fund.

Mayor Moench also explained that capital improvement projects have budget line items, including for debt and interest, which allow expenditures within those categories. However, the Township does not have the full amount needed on hand to pay for all project costs upfront without bonding, since individual expenses are not budgeted down to the exact dollar.

- **John Arcoleo: 1110 Washington Valley Rd- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Arcoleo asked whether the ordinance specifies the use of a bond or a note and whether a determination had been made regarding the financing term.

Mayor Moench responded that it will likely be a note, as notes are typically used for short-term financing. He explained that sometimes notes are extended into a second year, depending on interest rates and recommendations from bond counsel. If the project proceeds as expected with federal reimbursement, permanent financing would not be necessary.

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

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

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

#### **ORDINANCE #25-14 WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-223](#) is appended to the official minutes

#### **Introduction of Ordinances**

#### **ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY APPROVING AN APPLICATION FOR A LONG TERM TAX EXEMPTION AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A FINANCIAL AGREEMENT, ALSO KNOWN AS A PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILOT), WITH AR BRIDGEWATER URBAN RENEWAL, LLC**

Mayor Moench provided an update on the Bridgewater Urban Renewal (formerly Center of Excellence) PILOT. He explained that, as discussed in a prior presentation with bond counsel, the PILOT will ultimately provide a financial benefit to the Township. He noted that there is a period between now and when PILOT payments begin, during which the Township negotiated additional compensation beyond what was initially presented, further benefiting the Township. Mayor Moench also clarified that items 11A and 11B are related and should be considered together.

Council President Norgalis noted that the agreement is comprehensive and covers many aspects. He acknowledged the complexity of the process, which is expected to continue over the next couple of years. He emphasized that this is an introduction and encouraged Council members to review the agreement, raise any questions with

the Administrator, and provide feedback before a decision is made on whether to move forward or make clarifications.

Councilman Ring noted that his concerns were not with the PILOT itself, but with potential impacts on other taxing authorities and their budgets. He acknowledged that the administration has begun reviewing these effects and expressed his support for the introduction, while hoping for further clarity.

Council President Norgalis added that the final decision on how funds from the PILOT will be used will come as a recommendation from the administration.

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

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

**THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-224](#) is appended to the official minutes

Juliana Coelho, Deputy 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 4<sup>th</sup> day of September, 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.

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE COST OF CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS ON BLOCK 483, LOT 17 (C001.1, C001.2, C001.3, C005.1, C005.2, C006 AND C007) ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAPS OF THE TOWNSHIP AND AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT AGREEMENT IN CONNECTION THEREWITH**

Council President Norgalis explained that the agreement has been carefully negotiated over several months. The developer will be providing funds to support necessary township projects related to this initiative—not necessarily on the specific properties themselves—but to support the broader activities associated with it, ensuring long-term financial backing.

Mayor Moench added that items A and B are linked: A involves accepting the application for the PILOT, while B is the actual agreement that A authorizes. It functions as a two-part process.

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	Absent
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

**THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-225](#) is appended to the official minutes

Juliana Coelho, Deputy 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 4<sup>th</sup> day of September, 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**

**CONSENT VOTE**

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

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF ITEMS OF REVENUE AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$39,317.64 AS PER NJS 40A:4:87 – BUDGET CHAPTER 159 FOR DRUNK DRIVING ENFORCEMENT**

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF ITEMS OF REVENUE AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,968.43 AS PER NJS 40A:4:87 – BUDGET CHAPTER 159 FOR OPIOID SETTLEMENTS**

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	Absent
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

**THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.**

Copies of resolutions [#25-08-21-226 thru #25-08-21-227](#) are appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF AN EASEMENT FROM THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET TO RELOCATE A PORTION OF A SEWER LINE ONTO COUNTY PROPERTY AS PART OF THE HEADGATES DAM REMOVAL PROJECT AT NO COST TO THE TOWNSHIP**

Council President Norgalis stated that the relocation of the sewer main requires extensive engineering work, which will be completed at no cost to the township. An access road is being created in Hillsboro to facilitate work. He emphasized that this involves an easement and poses no expense to the township and then moved to advance the resolution unless there were specific questions.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-228](#) is appended to the official minutes

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WAIVER OF A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100.00 FOR THE GREEN KNOLL FIRE COMPANY FALL FESTIVAL ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2025, AT THE SOMERSET CORPORATE BOULEVARD BALLFIELD**

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	Absent
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-229](#) is appended to the official minutes

**EXTENDING THE CONTRACT OF JOHN MITZAK FOR CHIEF OF POLICE FOR AN ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2026, AND CONTINUING THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026**

Mayor Moench explained that the Police Chief is a statutory position with its term set by contract. Chief Mitzak's current contract expires at the end of the year, and the administration recommends extending it for one year to maintain stability, particularly with anticipated changes among senior staff. The Mayor praised Chief Mitzak's leadership, noting his calm and effective management, dedication to public safety, and exemplary example to the department.

The Mayor emphasized that the proposed contract continues existing terms with updated salary provisions, providing fair and competitive compensation compared to similar municipalities. Retaining Chief Mitzak is critical for departmental operations over the next year, and he recommended that the Council approve the contract, which was listed on the agenda for open discussion.

Council President Norgalis questioned the daily rate calculation, noting it appeared based on a 10-hour day, while the Chief's administrative hours are 8:00 to 5:00 or 8:00 to 4:30. Mayor Moench explained that the 10-hour rate aligns with the current contract and SOA contract standards and compensates for responsibilities outside normal hours, such as evening meetings.

Council President Norgalis observed that the calculation is technically flawed but acknowledged the contract permits it. Mayor Moench clarified it is not flawed, as it was negotiated in prior contracts. Councilman Ring noted that some calculations reflect banked time accumulated under previous schedules when pay was based on a 10-hour day. Norgalis stressed that retirement calculations should be based on the day of retirement and expressed concern about embedded raises totaling an effective 5%, which could prompt similar requests from other Township employees. He questioned whether to vote tonight or defer to the next agenda.

Mayor Moench recommended voting tonight if a majority supported the contract, citing the need for stability as other personnel decisions are forthcoming. He noted that the resolution simply accepts the contract and does not require a written document.

Councilman Ring moved to approve the contract based on prior discussions. Councilman Kirsh seconded, emphasizing Chief Mitzak's outstanding leadership and the benefit of extending his contract for an additional year. He acknowledged that Council discussions had begun only two weeks ago but felt sufficient information had been provided.

Councilman Ring noted his motion constituted a verbal resolution. Council President Norgalis offered to read the resolution for the record. Councilman Kirsh asked if the contract would be a public document appended to the meeting record, and Norgalis confirmed it would be included in the minutes. Councilman Kirsh emphasized the importance of transparency and following best practices.

Councilman Ring then withdrew his original motion and made a new motion to approve the resolution as read, which he seconded. Councilman Kurdyla voiced full support for the extension, noting the Chief's leadership outweighs concerns about the pay increase and publicly thanked Chief Mitzak for agreeing to stay another year during a period of significant departmental change.

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	Absent
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Nay

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-230](#) is appended to the official minutes

**Closed  
Session**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Bridgewater Township Council that this body will now hold a closed meeting to discuss 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 Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Ring, Council convened in closed session at approximately 9:53 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#25-08-21-231](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 10:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

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Howard Norgalis  
Council President