

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 19, 2026 - COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on **Thursday, February 19, 2026**, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Geiger 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 5, 2025, 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 Andrew Bucko
Councilwoman Ridwana Isla
Councilman Michael Kirsh
Councilman Timothy Ring
Council President Joan Geiger

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

Council President Geiger led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

FEBRUARY 5, 2026 - REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Bucko, the February 5, 2026 regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

Council Reports

Councilman Bucko:

- Attended the RWJ Barnabas Somerset Hospital Healthy Heart Fashion Show at the Bridgewater Commons Mall, which featured models showcasing fashions sourced from various stores within the mall. Councilman Bucko noted that all of the models had a personal connection to heart health.

- Councilman Bucko attended ICS 402 training at the Somerset County Emergency Services Training Academy. He stated that, in addition to elected officials, several Bridgewater fire officials were also in attendance.

- National School Resource Officer Appreciation Day was celebrated on February 15th. Councilman Bucko recognized the two resource officers in the Bridgewater School District, Officer Arthur Atkins Jr. and Officer Mike Thompson, who provide security and support services to the student body.
- Attended the grand opening of Patidar Supermarket.
- Regarding snow removal in apartment complexes, Councilman Bucko advised that there will soon be movement on proposed ordinance changes.

Council President Geiger

- Stated that January 27th was International Holocaust Remembrance Day and emphasized the importance of acknowledging and remembering the victims of the Holocaust.
- Council President Geiger stated that February is Black History Month and advised that a historian from Hobbstown would be speaking during public comment to share the history of that section of town.
- Thanked the Bradley Gardens Fire Department and EMS, Martinsville Fire Department, and Green Knoll Fire Department for providing mutual aid assistance during a large fire in Bernardsville on February 8th.
- Council President Geiger advised that she is aware of concerns expressed regarding the time it has taken for certain Council appointments. She noted that more than 53 appointments of staff, professionals, and committee members have been made thus far, with 11 appointments still open.
- Addressed concerns regarding specific appointments within the municipal court, particularly the public defender and prosecutor positions. Council President Geiger stated that she spoke with the Presiding Judge of Somerset County, Judge Gerard Shabby, to confirm whether there were any concerns regarding holdover appointments. Judge Shabby advised that there is no issue at this time but noted that a vacancy could become a concern if it extends beyond six months.
- Announced that the Middlebrook 5 Generals Tour will take place this weekend, February 22, 2026. Tickets are available on the Heritage Trail website for \$40 each.
- Stated that the Elks will be hosting its annual luncheon at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday for the Washington Camp Ground.
- Shared that she spoke with the Somerset County Director of Parks regarding

the avian flu. It has been confirmed that the birds tested positive for avian flu; however, it is not considered a human health hazard at this time. Residents seeking additional information may contact the Board of Health.

- Attended the grand opening of the new grocery store, Patidar, noted as the largest Indian grocery store in the tri-state area.
- Offered condolences to the families and community members in Canada who lost loved ones in the recent school shooting at Tumbler Ridge School, where five children and three adults were killed and twenty-five others were injured.
- Noted that the Vosseller Avenue house on Foothill Road was built in 1754 and that George Washington and his troops passed by the home on their way to Morristown. The distance from the house to Morristown is approximately 16½ miles.

Councilwoman Isla:

- Shared that she continues to engage with residents, honor service, and strengthen connections both locally and internationally. Canadian Consul General Tom Clark invited Councilwoman Isla and her family to attend opening night of Come From Away at the Paper Mill Playhouse. She expressed her hope that more people have the opportunity to see the powerful production, as it serves as a reminder of compassion and solidarity in the aftermath of September 11th. Councilwoman Isla noted that the evening was a meaningful reflection of the special bond shared between the United States and Canada.
- Advised that the Regional Health Commission received notice regarding a measles outbreak at RWJ Hospital in New Brunswick. Councilwoman Isla also shared that she was contacted regarding a potential avian flu outbreak and noted that the data must be verified before it can be shared publicly.
- Attended the Ramadan crescent moon lighting event in Franklin. Councilwoman Isla shared that the hosting organization expressed interest in bringing similar celebrations to Bridgewater in the future.
- Stated that the Somerset County Sheriff's Office invited her to speak at its Black History Month event, where brave police officers, many of them women from across the county, were recognized with service awards for their dedication to the community. She noted that the event coincided with the passing of Reverend Jesse Jackson, which served as a solemn reminder of his lifelong commitment to justice and equality. Councilwoman Isla shared his quote: "So, we must not measure progress by how far we have come, but how far we have yet to go."

- Attended the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday and thanked all Board members for their service, as well as the residents who participated and offered public comment.
- On Wednesday, Councilwoman Isla was invited by Somerset Leadership to participate in a panel discussion alongside Council President Geiger. She noted that it was rewarding to speak with residents who are interested in pursuing leadership roles within the county.
- Attended an emergency services training session designed for newly elected officials.
- Councilwoman Isla also attended the grand opening of the new local grocery store, Patidar, and stated that it is a welcome addition to Bridgewater.

Councilman Kirsh:

- Shared that he had a productive meeting with Senator Doug Steinhardt, during which they reviewed a number of significant issues. Councilman Kirsh advised that progress is being made toward a decision regarding the Prince Rogers Avenue bridge over Route 287 and noted that the Senator and his staff are prepared to step in if necessary.
- They also discussed the high energy costs in New Jersey. Councilman Kirsh expressed concern that a lack of forward-thinking policies has created financial challenges not only for individual residents, but also for the Township, school districts, and other taxing authorities. He asked whether any funding may be available to help offset these rising costs, and Senator Steinhardt responded that he would take the request under advisement.
- Additionally, they spoke about potential future updates to the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), particularly as it relates to notice requirements for residential properties that abut commercial properties. Councilman Kirsh noted that Bridgewater utilizes a specialized newsletter as a unique local solution to help address notification concerns.
- Visited the new Patidar supermarket, which recently opened its fifth store in New Jersey. He shared that approximately forty-five (45) employees will be working at that location. Councilman Kirsh noted that the store has been positively overwhelmed with new customers and is currently working through some parking lot challenges due to its popularity.
- Announced that on February 28th, the Township will host a coordinated Chinese Lunar New Year celebration at the Senior Center at 3:00 p.m. An additional celebration will take place on February 21st at 3:00 p.m. at the

mall, highlighting the Year of the Fire Horse.

Councilman Ring:

- Stated that Bridgewater is served by four separate fire districts, each operating as its own independent government entity. He explained that, annually, on the third Saturday in February, each district holds its fire election, with polls open from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Councilman Ring encouraged all residents to participate in the upcoming election.
- He also clarified that any Vote-by-Mail ballots for the fire district election may **not** be placed in the drop box outside of the municipal building. The policies regarding the opening and closing of ballot drop boxes are established and administered by the County Clerk's Office.

**Mayor's
Reports**

Mayor Matthew C. Moench

- Mayor Moench advised that the Township sewer bill consists of two components: one portion funds sewer employees and equipment within the Division of Public Works, and the other covers the invoice the Township receives from the Somerset-Raritan Valley Sewerage Authority (SRVSA), which processes the wastewater. He explained that any increase in the sewer bill reflects an increase in the SRVSA invoice. The Township remains committed to maintaining a healthy and sustainable sewer system to avoid the need to sell it to a private entity.
- Attended the Heart Healthy Fashion Show at the mall and shared that his daughters participated as models.
- Stated that he attended the quarterly meeting of the Republican Mayors Association, where he serves as Chair of the Advisory Board. Mayor Moench remarked that it is always valuable to exchange perspectives with mayors from across the country, as some of the challenges faced in Bridgewater are shared by other municipalities, while others are unique.
- Commented that the opening of Patidar was a wonderful and exciting event for Bridgewater and expressed that the new store will be a positive enhancement to the community.
- Acknowledged that while social media offers many benefits, there were two instances in the past week where inaccurate information was posted, either intentionally or unintentionally, causing significant concern among residents. Mayor Moench encouraged residents to rely on the official social media pages of the Township and Police Department for accurate and verified information.

- Announced that Rob Field has been hired as Deputy Township Administrator. Mr. Field is a lifelong Bridgewater resident who previously served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Phil Murphy, where he oversaw interactions between the Governor’s Office and elected officials, legislators, and state departments. Christine Madrid, Director of Human Services, will also serve as a second Deputy Township Administrator. Mr. Field will focus on OCR and external initiatives, while Ms. Madrid will oversee internal project management and operations.
- Mayor Moench further announced that Dan Ahern has been named the new Director of Constituent Relations, as Scott Maraldo has returned to full-time military service.
- Mayor Moench further announced that Suzanne Maeder has expanded her responsibilities and will now serve as Director of Public Information and Information Technology.
- Sarah Housman will be appointed Acting Chief Financial Officer, following the departure of the Township’s prior CFO, who accepted a position in another municipality.

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

- **David Hobbs: 39 Monmouth Avenue – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Hobbs thanked God for the opportunity to speak and expressed his appreciation to the Council for inviting him to address the governing body. He shared that the Township has always been gracious to him, and he has strived to reciprocate that same spirit. Mr. Hobbs also invited the governing body to attend Family and Friends Day, which is held annually on the fourth Sunday in August.

He noted that in 2020, a commemorative sign was installed in Hobbstown bearing the following inscription: “Hobbstown was founded in 1920 by Reverend Amos Hobbs, General Hobbs, and Robert Hobbs as a haven from racism. The Hobbs brothers purchased land in Bridgewater seeking freedom of self-expression and economic opportunity. They built homesteads, businesses, a ball field, and established Macedonia Baptist Church. The Hobbs brothers, with family and friends, created a vibrant, supportive

community for generations.” He then invited Nan Bennett to give a history of Hobbstown.

- **Nan Bennett Hobbs: 39 Monmouth Avenue – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Bennett Hobbs shared that whenever she visits the municipal complex, she makes it a point to stop and look at the commemorative wall once more.

In recognition of the 100th anniversary of Black History Month celebrations, Ms. Bennett stated that she is privileged to serve as a voice acknowledging the ingenuity, brilliance, and resilience of Bridgewater’s local African-American community, Hobbstown.

She described how residents and visitors entering Bridgewater on North Bridge Street are welcomed by the Hobbstown sign. Turning left onto Monmouth Avenue, they approach Philip and David Miller Park, which honors two men born and raised in Hobbstown who profoundly influenced local youth and Bridgewater athletes, and those who were later inducted as Hall of Famers. Further along stands the original home built by Reverend Amos Hobbs in 1920, which remains owned and occupied by his descendants.

At the intersection of Monmouth Avenue and Mercer Street stands Macedonia Baptist Church, founded by Reverend Amos Hobbs and constructed in 1922. She noted that Macedonia continues to serve as the spiritual and communal center of Hobbstown. Ms. Bennett Hobbs also explained that the church once housed the original Somerville Manor Civic Association, formed in the early 1960s when the proposed Route 287 would have run directly through Hobbstown and displaced the entire community. Through the advocacy of that association, and with the assistance of local, state, and federal representatives, Route 287 was successfully rerouted, preserving Hobbstown.

She reflected that in the early 1960s, Hobbstown was a quiet community, and by 1969, Bridgewater had grown significantly into a distinguished suburban area. As early as 1927, family and friends gathered to celebrate the history and unity of Hobbstown, a tradition that continues today.

Just outside the Hobbstown neighborhood lies the Prince Rodgers Cemetery, the final resting place of formerly enslaved individuals, including Prince Rodgers himself. She shared that Prince Rodgers’ grandfather was born near Bridgewater in 1756, and that in the early 1990s, Prince Rodgers’ fifth granddaughter, Victoria Rodgers Hobbs, learned more about this history. Research conducted by Dr. Edith Block helped identify and confirm the burial sites at the cemetery.

Ms. Bennett Hobbs expressed that this history reinforces their strong sense of identity and deep roots within the local community. She referenced President Ronald Reagan and his 1986 Black History Month proclamation, noting his words that understanding the history of Black Americans is key to understanding the strength of the nation, and that Black History Month reminds us to emulate those who recognized the immense promise of America.

In closing, she reiterated her gratitude for the opportunity to share the rich history of Bridgewater and Hobbstown and acknowledged that descendants of the original Hobbstown families were present at the meeting, including members of the Hobbs, Hicks, Bryant, Miller, Murdock, Proctor, McCrae, Tukes, and Sermon families.

Councilman Kirsh remarked that one of the qualities he admires most about Hobbstown is that it represents living history. Though he comes from a different race and practices a different religion, he said he has always felt welcomed by the community and expressed his hope that more residents will follow the positive example they continue to set.

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

Introduction of Ordinances

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORDINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT FEE ORDINANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FAIR HOUSING ACT, UNIFORM HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CONTROLS, AND N.J.A.C. 5:99-1, ET SEQ.

Township Administrator Pappas stated that these provisions update the ordinance pursuant to state legislature that is required by all municipalities.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution **#26-02-19-055** is appended to the official minutes

Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk read the following report:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the said pending ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised as required by statute fixing the 5th day of March, 2026, at 7:00 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 AMENDING SECTION 126-309.3.1 OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP CODE, RMDU-26 MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONE, ALLOWING FOR A MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 400, LOT 7.06 ON THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX MAP AND LOCATED AT 520 ROUTE 22 EAST, INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT AND THE UNIFORM HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CONTROLS

Council President Geiger advised that this is to meet the Township's fair housing requirements.

Mayor Moench stated that, under state law, these ordinances must be acted upon by March 15th. While Bridgewater Township is not a party to any of the pending lawsuits filed by other municipalities challenging the law, he recommended that, prior to the final adoption scheduled for March 5th, the Township have further discussions to confirm whether there have been any updates to the law requirements or its associated timelines.

Council President Geiger added that Bridgewater Township is one of the best in the state for compliance in terms of affordable housing.

Councilman Kirsh stated that Bridgewater's compliance is a strength of the community and reflects the work of prior mayors and council members who have served the Township. He further noted that it is a significant accomplishment of the current administration and Council to have developed a comprehensive plan that addresses the needs of the community, regardless of differing views on certain aspects of the law.

Councilman Ring advised that the ordinances being introduced tonight are only one small portion of their overall obligation to meet the requirements. Township Attorney Corsini and Attorney Bill Savo have been instrumental in assisting the council year to year regarding affordable housing.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-056 is appended to the official minutes

Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk read the following report:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the said pending ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised as required by statute fixing the 5th day of March, 2026, at 7:00 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 AMENDING SECTION 126 OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP CODE TO ADD SECTION 126-321.9, ENTITLED "AH-2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING ZONE," ALLOWING FOR A MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 711, LOT 7 ON THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX MAP AND LOCATED AT 1400 FRONTIER ROAD, INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT AND THE UNIFORM HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CONTROLS

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-057 is appended to the official minutes

Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk read the following report:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the said pending ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised as required by statute fixing the 5th day of March, 2026, at 7:00 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 AMENDING SECTION 126 OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP CODE TO ADD SECTION 126-321.8, ENTITLED "AH-1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING ZONE," ALLOWING FOR A MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 170, LOT 4.02 ON THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX MAP AND LOCATED AT 250 ROUTE 28, INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT AND THE UNIFORM HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CONTROLS

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-058 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 5th day of March, 2026, at 7:00 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 APPOINTING DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND QPA SARAH HOUSMAN AS ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CFO)

Mayor Moench stated that Sarah Housman is an excellent candidate and that he is grateful to have her step into this role.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-059 is appended to the official minutes

CONSENT VOTE

Council president Geiger read the following resolutions by title and allowed for discussions/questions. She then called for a consent motion:

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL SULLIVAN OF THE FIRM OF CLARK CATON HINTZ PC AS REDEVELOPMENT PLANNER AND AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$20,000.00 FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES FOR THE LAW FIRM OF SAVO, SCHALK, GILLESPIE, O'GRODNICK & FISHER, P.A., IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$460,000.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING LEGAL SERVICES FOR THE LAW FIRM OF SAVO, SCHALK, CORSINI, WARNER, GILLESPIE, O'GRODNICK & FISHER, P.A., IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000 FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2026 DECEMBER 31, 2026

Council President Geiger stated we do not expect the fees to be at \$100,000.00 this year, because much of the work was done last year.

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR TAX APPEAL LEGAL SERVICES FOR THE LAW FIRM OF SAVO, SCHALK, CORSINI, WARNER, GILLESPIE, O’GRODNICK & FISHER, P.A., IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$40,000.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.

Copies of resolutions #26-02-19-060 thru #26-02-19-063 are appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF MATTHEW GIACOBBE, ESQ., OF THE LAW FIRM OF CLEARY, GIACOBBE, ALFIERI & JACOBS, LLC, AS LABOR COUNSEL FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$120,000.00

Council President Geiger stated that she worked directly with Mayor Moench on this matter noting she had suggested that several additional labor counsel firms be considered; however, those firms did not submit Requests for Proposals (RFPs). She expressed her appreciation for the Mayor’s cooperation and collaboration throughout the discussions.

Mayor Moench, in turn, thanked Council President Geiger for working with him on the appointment and for her partnership in reaching a resolution.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-064 is appended to the official minutes

CONSENT VOTE

Council president Geiger read the following resolutions by title and allowed for discussions/questions. She then called for a consent motion:

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES: MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR JOHN LANZA, ESQ. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$80,000.00 FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES: ALTERNATE MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR TO MICHAEL O’ GRODNICK, ESQ. AND CHRISTOPHER SOBIESKI., FROM THE LAW FIRM OF SAVO, SCHALK, CORSINI, GILLESPIE, O’GRODNICK & FISCHER FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$8,100.00

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES: MUNICIPAL PUBLIC DEFENDER TO SCOTT MITZNER, ESQ. FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$40,000.00

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES: ALTERNATE MUNICIPAL PUBLIC DEFENDER TO DANIEL FRASCELA, ESQ. FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$3,600

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.

Copies of resolutions #26-02-19-065 thru #26-02-19-068 are appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF JORDAN R. VOLK, P.E., P.M.P. OF COLLIERS ENGINEERING & DESIGN TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL SEWER ENGINEERING SERVICES, CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT, INSPECTION, AND NEW JERSEY WATER BANK LOAN ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR THE TERM OF THE PROJECT COMMENCING

ON FEBRUARY 5, 2026, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$327,225.00.

The Township of Bridgewater has determined there is a need for the services of a Professional Engineer to assist the Township in the administration, inspection, and oversight, for the construction of the Middlebrook Sanitary Sewer Pumping Station Phase 2 Improvement Project.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-069 is appended to the official minutes

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF FEDERAL AID HIGHWAY PROJECTS

Township Administrator Pappas advised that this grant was awarded to the Township and represents the first step in a series of resolutions the Council will consider for the installation of additional sidewalks along Garretson Road, west of Country Club Road. He explained that the next resolution will involve the selection of an engineering firm to prepare the project design. The total grant award is \$768,000.00.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-070 is appended to the official minutes

AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 26-01-22-037 APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE FOR STAGGERED TERMS - COUNCILMAN TIMOTHY RING, LIEUTENANT JAMES EDWARDS, ALLEN KURDYLA, ROBERT E. ALBANO, KATELYN SOWDEN &

CHRISTOPHER IRELAND

Councilman Ring moved to table the resolution above until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Kirsh and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF SOMERSET COUNTY FOR 2026 RECYCLING IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$477,537.28 BASED ON A FEE OF \$28.16 FOR SERVICES FOR UP TO 16,958 HOUSEHOLDS FUNDED FROM VARIOUS ACCOUNTS FROM 2023, 2024, 2025, AND 2026

Sarah Housman, Chief Financial Officer, stated that during a recent audit, the Township identified multiple recycling tonnage grants that still had remaining balances. As a result, the Township will utilize those remaining funds to help offset costs for the current year.

Councilman Kirsh advised that the Township has audited its total number of households, currently 16,958, to ensure the accuracy of its reporting. Township Administrator Pappas noted that Tax Assessor, Tony DiRado and Director of Human Services, Christine Madrid work diligently to verify and maintain accurate household figures.

Councilman Bucko inquired whether the Township had explored the comparative costs of utilizing a private recycling service instead of Somerset County. Township Administrator Pappas explained that several years ago, Council members raised the same question, and he spent considerable time contacting various private entities. Ultimately, no financially viable alternatives were identified at that time. Mayor Moench added that he would support reevaluating potential options in the future.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-071 is appended to the official minutes

APPROVING PARTICIPATION WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY IN A SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY, FOR A GRANT AMOUNT UP TO \$45,150 AND A MATCHING EXPENSE OF UP TO \$331,741.73

Mayor Moench offered that this grant assists offset salaries for traffic safety officers.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-072 is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO AIR SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE, INC, 718 JEFFERSON AVENUE, KENILWORTH, NJ 07033 FOR HVAC QUARTERLY MAINTENANCE SERVICES TO VARIOUS TOWNSHIP LOCATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$31,310.00 FOR QUARTERLY MAINTENANCE AND \$20,000.00 FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS IF NEEDED FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$51,310.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF MARCH 1, 2026 - FEBRUARY 28, 2027

Council President Geiger offered that this HVAC company was the lowest bidder, therefore awarded the contract. Mayor Moench added that this is the township's current vendor for these services.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-073 is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH CARLIN, WARD, ASH & HEIART, LLC FOR SPECIAL TAX COUNSEL SERVICES AND APPOINTING CARLIN, WARD, ASH & HEIART, LLC SPECIAL TAX COUNSEL TO BE PAID ON A

CONTINGENT BASIS AT NO COST TO THE TOWNSHIP

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Geiger	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-074 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: Special Tax Counsel.

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 Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, Council convened in closed session at approximately 8:41 p.m.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-075 is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 10:09 p.m.

Resolution

Councilman Ring made a motion to modify 12q to read as follows: AUTHORIZING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH CARLIN, WARD, ASH & HEIART, LLC FOR SPECIAL TAX COUNSEL SERVICES FOR THE 2025 TAX YEAR AND APPOINTING CARLIN, WARD, ASH & HEIART, LLC SPECIAL TAX COUNSEL TO BE PAID ON A CONTINGENT BASIS AT NO COST TO THE TOWNSHIP.

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

Councilman Bucko	Aye
Councilwoman Isla	Aye
Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye

Council President Geiger Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #26-02-19-074 is appended to the official minutes

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Council President Geiger, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Joan Geiger
Council President