

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL**  
**MAY 23, 2024 - COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Thursday, May 23, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Ring 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 21, 2023, 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 Howard V. Norgalis  
Councilman Filipe Pedroso  
Council President Timothy Ring

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

Councilman Kirsh led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

**APRIL 18, 2024 - REGULAR SESSION**

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the April 18, 2024 regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

**MAY 2, 2024 - REGULAR SESSION**

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the April 18, 2024 regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

**APRIL 18, 2024– CLOSED SESSIONS**

The April 18, 2024 closed session minutes were passed around for Council approval & signature.

## **Council Reports**

### Councilman Kirsh:

- The Planning Board met on May 7<sup>th</sup> to consider a minor subdivision and variance which was ultimately carried to the next meeting. The case was adjourned as it did not appear there was sufficient support for that application. At the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, the board heard a case for a major subdivision from Mountain Top Rd. with two properties being divided into three.
- On May 9<sup>th</sup>, Councilman Kirsh attended the launch of “United for Impact” whose focus is on mental health and mental health awareness.
- Attended the bulky trash drop off event on May 11<sup>th</sup> and met several Bridgewater residents who remain very appreciative of the opportunity to discard their bulky items.
- The Zoning Board did not meet on May 14<sup>th</sup> but carried the four cases to either the May 28<sup>th</sup> or June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Councilman Kirsh joined Council President Ring for his induction into the “Boy Scout Hall of Fame” where they were able to celebrate this important accomplishment.
- Attended Community Day in conjunction with the JCC, which was held at the Bridgewater Commons Mall. Many Bridgewater residents and neighboring towns were in attendance.
- On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, there was a very successful “Master Plan Workshop” held at the Municipal Building. The township is in a good position to move forward with its master plan.
- Councilman Kirsh attended the dedication of a plaque in honor of Prince Rodgers, which was a reminder of who he was and the importance of remembering his legacy.
- Attended a meeting called by Congressman Kean, combating antisemitism. Councilman Kirsh expressed that there are many members in this community who are considerably impacted by antisemitism. At the meeting, he acknowledged the importance of the First Amendment and the freedom of religion. While at the meeting, he received compliments from other Bridgewater affiliated groups who feel well-supported by Bridgewater Township, specifically Rabbi Selsberg from Temple Sholom and members of the JCC.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Councilman Kurdyla commented on his participation with the CDBG program for community service providers.

Councilman Norgalis: *(verbatim)*

- I was privileged, along with Councilman Kirsch, to attend the induction of our Council President Ring into the Eagle Scout Hall of Fame. Tim along with his brother Bob have been Eagle Scouts for over 25 years and involved in numerous community support activities. Congratulations Tim.
- We have had floods, flu, covid, earthquakes and the latest is the geomagnetic storm from the sun exploding out massive amounts of energy. Some of you may have even seen the Aurora Borealis, also known as the northern lights, as it moved south from the north pole.
- While I hope never to report on the arrival of the biblical plague of locusts, I do need to say that the Cicadas are coming. They are in the spotlight this year with the emergence of two BROODS which will be out at the same time (Brood XIII & Brood XIX) in the eastern US. Have your ear plugs ready.
- The Bridgewater Master Plan review was yesterday at the municipal building. It was very well presented and offered the opportunity for residents to tell their thoughts and concerns about the future township plans.
- The 200 Club of Somerset County, an organization dedicated to the support of our Fire, EMS and Police had their 2024 Annual Valor and Scholarship Awards Luncheon last week. \$2500 Scholarships awards went to:
  - Sabrina Abella from the Bradley Gardens First Aid and Rescue Squad
  - Navya Gobinathan also from the Bardley Gardens First aid and Rescue Squad
  - Evan Halperin Green Knoll Rescue Squad
  - Akhil Kalepall FINDERNE First Aid and Rescue Squad
  - The Police Academy \$5000 Scholarship given in memory of Rocque Dameo went to Jamie Chiang of the Martinsville Rescue Squad.

Councilman Pedroso:

- Councilman Pedroso completed the Wharton Public Policy Certificate Program which offers various classes regarding public policy.
- Thanked Somerset Patriots and Bridgewater Township for organizing a well-deserved ceremony at Prince Rodgers Ballpark, where a plaque was dedicated in remembrance of Prince Rodgers.
- Councilman Pedroso wished everyone a happy and healthy Memorial Day

weekend.

Council President Ring:

- Council President Ring stated that the Master Plan Workshop was very well attended and expressed his gratitude to Suzanne Maeder who organized the event.
- Extended his appreciation to all members of the EMS community who are celebrating EMS Week.
- Council President Ring thanked the members of the dais who attended his Eagle Scout ceremony.

**Mayor's Reports**

Mayor Matthew C. Moench

- Mayor Moench stated he was not able to attend the Eagle Scout ceremony for Council President Ring but wanted to publicly congratulate him on his achievement.
- Mayor Moench offered his appreciation to Suzanne Maeder, who coordinated the Master Plan Workshop, which gained a lot of positive feedback from residents.
- Thanked Councilman Kirsh for attending the Prince Rodgers event and for speaking on behalf of the township.
- Mayor Moench stated that the township is close to finalizing the budget and expressed his gratitude for the council's patience on this matter.

**Presentation DISORDERLY CONDUCT ORDINANCE**

Mayor Moench stated that he and Police Chief Mitzak have been working alongside other municipalities to discuss issues regarding many thefts in the areas that are located off Rt. 78. He offered that this proposed ordinance would help the township monitor this activity.

Captains Tennant and Savare were present at the meeting to answer questions from the council.

**Public Comment**

Members of the public wishing to address the Council on any matter will be allowed two minutes to speak unless there are unusual circumstances.

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

**Sandra Rhue – 373 Pond Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Rhue stated she is a frequent user of the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) to access township information and inquired about the resolution on tonight's agenda titled "CALLING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (OPRA) AND THE SWIFT PASSAGE OF S-2930/A-4045." She sought clarification on the need for modernization.

Mayor Moench responded by acknowledging OPRA's role in transparency since its 2002 enactment. However, he highlighted concerns that have emerged over the past two decades, including excessive burdens on staff and budgets, misuse by commercial entities, and privacy erosion. While Senate Bill S-2930/Assembly Bill A-4045, passed on May 15, 2024, it is currently awaiting Governor Murphy's signature. Tonight's Council vote underscores Bridgewater's commitment to open governance while advocating for further OPRA modernization.

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

**Proclamation EMS WEEK**

Mayor Moench thanked the EMS squads for all they do within the township and emphasized their importance to public safety.

Matthew C. Moench, Mayor read the following proclamation:

**WHEREAS**, the Bridgewater Volunteer Rescue Squads are the heartbeat of our community's emergency medical services, providing vital care with unwavering dedication; and

**WHEREAS**, Bridgewater residents are served by four Rescue Squads: the Bradley Gardens First Aid and Rescue Squad, the Finderne First Aid and Rescue Squad, the Green Knoll Rescue Squad, and the Martinsville Rescue Squad; and

**WHEREAS**, the members of the Bridgewater EMS teams stand ready, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need; and

**WHEREAS**, the exceptional quality of care provided by Bridgewater Rescue Squads significantly enhances the chances of survival and recovery for individuals facing sudden illness or injury; and

**WHEREAS**, the residents of Bridgewater depend on the expertise and commitment of EMS providers, who are often the first to arrive at emergency scenes, delivering immediate medical care and starting the crucial chain of survival that saves lives,

**WHEREAS**, the members of Bridgewater's EMS squads, both career professionals and volunteers alike, commit countless hours to specialized training and ongoing education, continuously honing their life-saving skills to better serve our community; and

**WHEREAS**, it is fitting to celebrate the invaluable contributions and remarkable achievements of Bridgewater's EMS Rescue Squads by officially designating Emergency Medical Services Week;

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, Matthew C. Moench, Mayor of Bridgewater, along with the Bridgewater Council, in honor of this occasion, do hereby proclaim the week of May 19 - 25, 2024, as

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK**

We urge all Bridgewater residents to join us in recognizing and celebrating the vital role played by our Emergency Medical Services Teams in protecting and preserving Bridgewater's health and welfare.

Some members of the rescue squads were present to receive the proclamation.

Public  
Hearing &  
Final Action  
Ordinances

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, CHAPTER 40 "SUBSTANCES, HAZARDOUS" TO ADD SECTIONS RELEVANT TO REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS TO THE TOWNSHIP AND VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES**

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

No one wished to be heard.

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

Councilman Pedroso expressed that his vote for the adoption of this ordinance will be consistent with the introduction. Although he agrees with the concept of this ordinance, he would not support it without some limitations as to what constituted a sufficient amount of gasoline from an automobile before triggering the costs to the residents.

Councilman Kirsh stated that although this may not be a perfect fix, it is a fix nonetheless. He would support any desire to revisit this later in the year, but he will

be voting in favor of the ordinance.

Mayor Moench opined that this ordinance is an added enforcement mechanism to the fee schedule that already exists in the Township Code.

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 Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Nay
Council President Ring	Aye

**ORDINANCE #24-06 WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-137](#) is appended to the official minutes

**Introduction  
of Ordinances**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 175 (SEWERS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL) IMPLEMENTING REVISED SEWER FEES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

Mayor Moench stated that the Ordinance will assist the township establish sewer fees based on the fee increases set by the SRVSA.

The Council discussed some changes to the Ordinance and agreed to adopt, as amended.

Councilman Pedroso raised concerns that since the governing body had not been presented with the yearly sewer budget from the Administration that he could not determine whether the sewer fees were proper.

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

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

**THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-138](#) 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 6th day of June, 2024, 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**

**CALLING FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (OPRA) AND THE SWIFT PASSAGE OF S-2930/A-4045**

Councilman Kurdyla offered that proposed changes would not hinder a resident from being able to submit a request and receive information but rather curb the abuse of OPRA.

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 Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Council President Ring	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-139](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX COLLECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER TO PREPARE AND MAIL ESTIMATED TAX BILLS FOR 2024 CALENDAR YEAR IN ACCORDANCE WITH P.L. 1994, c. 72**

This resolution permits the Tax Collector to prepare, and issue estimated tax bills for the third installment of 2024 taxes.

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 Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Council President Ring	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**



A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-140](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$781,120.53, ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITE IMPROVEMENTS, FOR THE SRI VENKATESWARA TEMPLE (HINDU TEMPLE & CULTURAL SOCIETY OF USA, INC.), BLOCK 483, LOTS 2 AND 12.02 – 1 BALAJI TEMPLE DRIVE**

Upon review of the construction status and associated paperwork, the Township Engineer, William H. Burr, IV, has found that on-site improvements have been completed in accordance with the approved plans and has recommended the release of the existing performance guarantee.

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 Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Council President Ring	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-141](#) is appended to the official minutes

**AWARD OF CONTRACT TO AUTHORIZE AN OPEN ORDER FOR STAVOLA ASPHALT COMPANIES INC., P.O. BOX 482, RED BANK, NJ 07701 TO PURCHASE HOT MIX ASPHALT AND ASSOCIATED MATERIALS FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR ROAD REPAIRS AS NEEDED IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$40,000.00 FOR THE YEAR OF 2024**

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

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

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-142](#) is appended to the official minutes

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

**APPOINTMENT TO THE BRIDGEWATER-RARITAN MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE APRIL MCGRATH-LUTZKY**

**APPOINTMENTS TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: TOM KOVACIC, NILESH BALANI, BRYAN IWICKI, MIKE YATES, ARIANA LOBO, JASON GOLDAN, SOPHIA GEORGES**

**APPOINTMENTS TO THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: WELLS WINEGAR, JAMES EDWARDS, ROBERT ALBANO, KATELYN SOWDEN, CHRISTOPHER IRELAND, MICHAEL JANNONE, ASHISH THAHUR, LAUREN ZARRO, DAVID WOLF, COUNCILMAN TIMOTHY RING**

**APPOINTMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION: NEIL CURRIE**

**APPOINTMENTS TO THE HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD: JARRETT HAHN, JESSICA PELLEGRINO TSOUKALAS**

**APPOINTMENTS TO THE HISTORY COMMITTEE: JANE GANDOLFE, REVEREND HOBBS, MAURIZIO VESCIO**

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

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

**THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.**

Copies of resolutions [#24-05-23-143 thru #24-05-23-148](#) are appended to the official minutes

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100.00 FOR THE SOMERSET COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (SCVTHS PTO), A NONPROFIT 501 (C) 3 ORGANIZATION LOCATED AT 14 VOGT DRIVE, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807, IN CONNECTION WITH A TRICKY TRAY EVENT ON SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2024**

Council President Ring stated that a copy of the school's tax exemption has been submitted.

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 Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Council President Ring	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-149](#) is appended to the official minutes

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PERSON-PERSON TRANSFER OF PLENARY RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE #1806-33-014-011 FROM (LICENSEE) MEGA LAND HOLDINGS, LLC, TO (APPLICANT), BWATER TAVERN, LLC 1288 ROUTE 22 EAST, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807**

Council President Ring stated that when the request for transfer of the liquor license originally came in, it was combined with a blanket approval for an outdoor bar to be built. Since it was filed jointly, the state said that the council either must approve both or deny both. Therefore, the original application was withdrawn and filed as two separate applications. This resolution is for the transfer of the liquor license only.

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 Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Pedroso	Aye
Council President Ring	Aye

**THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-150](#) is appended to the official minutes

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

**AUTHORIZATION TO RESCIND RESOLUTION NUMBER 23-06-08-190, ADOPTED BY THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL ON JUNE 8, 2023, WHICH AUTHORIZED RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION LIQUOR LICENSE NO. 1806-44-044-003, FOR WINE OUTLET BRIDGEWATER, LLC 120 EMILY PLACE, PARSIPPANY, NJ 07054 CURRENTLY HELD IN INACTIVE STATUS DUE TO N.J.S.A. 12:39 SPECIAL RULING REQUIRED**

**2023-2024 RENEWAL OF PLENARY RETAIL DISTRIBUTION LIQUOR LICENSE 1806-44-044-003 FOR WINE OUTLET BRIDGEWATER, LLC, 120 EMILY PLACE,**

**PARSIPPANY, NJ 07054 CURRENTLY HELD IN INACTIVE STATUS**

Council President Ring offered that the state issued a special ruling saying the township could not approve the liquor license until after they issued the ruling. Therefore, the township must rescind the approval to abide by the ruling.

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

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

**THE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED.**

Copies of resolutions [#24-05-23-151](#) and [#24-05-23-152](#) are appended to the official minutes

**Closed Session** **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Bridgewater Township Council that this body will now hold a closed meeting to discuss contract negotiations, acquisition of property, and SRO Agreement.

When and if the matters discussed become public record, this will be made known to the public at that time.

The public is excluded from said meeting and further notice thereof is dispensed with all in accordance with Sections 8 and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act.

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the Council convened in closed session at approximately 8:56 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#24-05-23-153](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Council President Ring, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 9:40 p.m.

**Adjournment** On the motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Council President Ring, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC

Municipal Clerk

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Timothy Ring  
Council President