

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
JANUARY 16, 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, January 16, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Norgalis read the following announcement:

Notice of Meeting

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT OF NEW JERSEY, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS PROVIDED ON DECEMBER 10, 2024, WITH WRITTEN NOTICE AND ELECTRONIC NOTICE PROVIDED TO THE COURIER NEWS AND THE BREEZE POSTING ON THE WEBSITE AND THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND FILING WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

On call of the roll, the following Council members were present:

Councilman Michael Kirsh
Councilman Allen Kurdyla
Councilman Filipe Pedroso
Councilman Timothy Ring
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

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

Councilman Ring led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

DECEMBER 19, 2024 - REGULAR SESSION

On motion of Councilman Kirsh seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the December 19, 2024 regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

DECEMBER 19, 2024 – CLOSED SESSIONS

The December 19, 2024 closed session minutes were passed around for Council approval & signature.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh:

- On January 7th, the Planning Board met and reorganized, with Mauricio Vescio continuing as Chair. The Board heard about two cases. The first case was for the Chick-fil-A application, which was completed and approved with restrictions on traffic impact. The second case regarded compliance matters

related to Avnos, which were ultimately approved. Avnos is located on Milltown Road and provides cutting-edge technology design to improve air quality.

- Attended the swearing-in of the elected Board of Education members: Jennifer Loughran, AJ Joshi, and Jeremy Lee. Steve Singer will serve as President and Emily Calistri as Vice President.
- On January 15th, the Zoning Board reorganized with Jeff Foose remaining as Chair. Two residential cases were heard at the meeting. The first case regarded the addition of a home on Middle Road. The second case involved a fire-damaged home on Coriell Drive. Councilman Kirsh noted that the courtroom was filled with residents from the Sunset Lake community supporting the family's efforts to rebuild their home.
- On January 28th, an application for a Starbucks will be heard, with concerns about traffic in and out of the proposed drive-thru.
- Councilman Kirsh encouraged residents to license their dogs and cats by the January 31st deadline.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Councilman Kurdyla had nothing new to report. He wished Township Attorney Corsini a very happy birthday!

Councilman Pedroso:

- Attended the first Somerset Regional Center Partnership meeting, along with Township Administrator Pappas.
- Councilman Pedroso asked if there were any updates on the drone situation in town. Township Administrator Pappas stated that the FAA issued a thirty (30) day moratorium which will end on January 17, 2025.
- Councilman Pedroso asked if there were any updates from NJ American Water Company on the issues residents faced with the odor and cleanliness of the water. Township Administrator Pappas stated that NJ American Water Company believes that the water is back to normal and that the township has not received any new complaints from residents.

Councilman Ring:

- Attended the township's EMS advisory committee meeting regarding the future of EMS in Bridgewater.
- Councilman Ring wished Township Attorney, Chris Corsini, a happy birthday.

Council President Norgalis: *(verbatim)*

- Welcome to the first regular meeting of the council for 2025. There are only 24 Council meetings until Christmas.
- Jersey Central Power continues to install Smart Electric meters in their service area. I have been advised that they are using a subcontractor by the name of WELLINGTON exclusively for their smart meter implementation. So, the person who shows up at your house will probably be in a white van with Wellington on the side. There should be no reason for Wellington employees to enter your home.
- I continue to receive very negative verbal road condition feedback from residents using Country Club Rd. , Meadow Rd. and Van Holten especially for school access. The issue is the PSE&G gas line replacement project. The trenches, in many cases, have settled, causing ruts. In other cases, patches were raised in anticipation of settling that did not happen. I have been reminded that the town has invested millions of dollars in road work. Tom Genova and Engineer Bill Burr continue to work with PSE&G to confirm the dates in the Spring when the effected roads will be repaved, curb to curb, at PSE&G expense.
- At the request of SJP management, owner of the office park next to the former Ethicon property on Route 22, Mayor Moench, Administrator Pappas, Deputy Administrator Stevens and I had a tour of several SJP buildings. It is no secret that SJP opposes redevelopment of the Ethicon site, and it is confirmed, as of yesterday, that they will intervene in the township redevelopment effort for the former Ethicon property. More to follow on that issue.
- But speaking of the former Ethicon property the public will recall that back in Nov of last year this Council identified it as “in need of redevelopment”. The State of NJ gets to opine on these issues and on Dec. 26 Mayor Moench received a letter from the Commissioner of the Dept of Community Affairs that they agreed that the property in question is consistent with the state objective for redevelopment.
- The Municipal Alliance Committee meeting in January was cancelled as the Council Reorganization date prevented the seating of membership. The Committee will resume meetings on Feb. 5th.
- I have been discussing the stop sign at the Talamini and County Club with Director of Municipal Services Tom Genova. This location has had several accidents over the last couple of years including one fatality. Mr. Genova asked the Road Project Committee to evaluate the issue. At their weekly

meeting earlier this week the group decided on a dual approach. The first is to replace the Talamini stop sign with a larger one as is often seen in Somerville. The sign has been ordered. The second part will take a little longer and will involve a street light installation as the TEE intersection has been deemed very dark.

Mayor's Reports

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator reported on behalf of Mayor Moench

- Township Administrator Pappas addressed concerns about affordable housing. Bridgewater has municipally owned parcels in the township, one of them being on Route 202/206, which was purchased years ago through affordable housing trust funds. He offered that a draft ordinance and memo were given to the council and recommended that the council consider an introduction of the ordinance that will permit the construction of affordable housing on this property

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

- **Manish Patel: 41 Shaffer Road - Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Patel stated that he and his family were possibly relocating to Boston, Massachusetts, a few years back. He expressed that if the move happened, ultimately, they wanted to end up back in Bridgewater because of his admiration for the township.

Mr. Patel offered that the son of a friend, who lives in Hillsborough, lost his wallet at the mall. Luckily, the wallet was brought to the Bridgewater Police Department, who in turn brought it to the Hillsborough Police Department for them to return. He stated that these are the types of stories that make him want to stay in Bridgewater. He ended by asking the council if they have a community or citizens' group that could help Bridgewater bring in new businesses. Council President Norgalis stated that there is an Economic Development Committee that he may be interested in.

- **Joan Geiger: 154 Hillside Ave – Bridgewater, NJ 08807 - *verbatim***

My name is Joan G. Geiger.

Good evening members of the council and members of the audience and those watching on video:

It is my understanding you will be addressing some important issues regarding Affordable Housing at the January 30, 2025 meeting in 2 weeks. and I want to set forth some questions regarding this before that meeting.

So, as it relates to the state's requirement that Bridgewater add 474 affordable housing units over the next 10 years, by 2035, Bridgewater has 2 weeks left to provide the state with its own calculation of how the state's formula should be fairly and correctly applied to Bridgewater.

1. Who is in charge of providing the state with Bridgewater's own calculation to determining the number of units the town should add by 2035?
2. What progress have they made?
3. How prepared is the town to submit its calculation to the state by January 31 - 2 weeks from now?
4. Do we have an estimate of how many units the town, believes the number should be?
5. In the past Bridgewater has successfully challenged the states formula based on criteria that was wrongfully included in the state formula, such as considering roads and green acres as land available for the required units. Are there any similar problems with the state's current calculation?
6. If so, what are they?

Thank you.

Council President Norgalis read a statement that he had sent to Ms. Geiger. He expressed that he, as a resident and councilman, is very concerned about the affordable housing requirement being forced on the town by the courts. Council President Norgalis asked for patience until the meeting on January 30th when the council will formally reply by resolution. He stated that this matter has the full attention of the council, the administration, and the affordable housing consultant.

- **Curtis Kraut: 199 Adamsville Road – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Kraut expressed hope that the council could set some clearer ground rules for the development on the adjoining property of the Greymark Tract along Route 22. There is a current application submitted to the Zoning Board to possibly install a one hundred and eighty-seven thousand square foot warehouse. He expressed concerns regarding the application, stating that it's hard to follow the changes, and the public is unaware of the full process. He hopes that the township will ask for public input and discussions on this matter.

Township Administrator Pappas explained that Mr. Sullivan is drafting a report which has not been completed. Once it is, the application will be presented in front of the Planning Board in a public hearing. The report will be visible to the

public and will also be on the Planning Board's agenda when the hearing occurs. Council President Norgalis assured that the public will not be left out of the process

- **Carolyn Gioia: 1402 Palley Court – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Gioia thanked the council for allowing the previous speaker to express his concerns until he was satisfied with the response. She also thanked the township for live-streaming the meeting. Ms. Gioia expressed her concerns about obtaining information and updates from the township, especially regarding the recent water issues in town.

She questioned Mayor Moench's comments from the re-organization meeting involving the township possibly needing thousands of affordable houses and was curious as to where he was referencing that number. Councilman Kirsh and Councilman Ring explained the formula that is used for affordable housing.

- **John Arcoleo: 1110 Washington Valey Road – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Arcoleo questioned the two-minute time limit for public comment this year, as it was three minutes last year under Councilman Ring's presidency. Council President Norgalis expressed that he would allow residents to speak longer than two minutes if they were focused on their concerns.

Mr. Arcoleo expressed that he was disheartened that the Environmental Commission didn't meet in 2024. He urged the township to hold these meetings and turn their attention to sustainability.

Mr. Arcoleo stated that the township donated \$75,000 to first responders up until 2009. In 2010, that donation was cut to \$40,000 and then increased to \$50,000 from 2011 to present. He encouraged the township to increase the donation moving forward.

- **Jennifer Loughran: 716 Falcon Court – Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Loughran expressed her gratitude for the new, larger stop sign that will be installed on Talamini Road. She congratulated Council President Norgalis and Council Vice President Pedroso on their new roles on the council. Ms. Loughran asked that the township consider recreational activities, such as skateboarding and bike riding, when looking to redevelop

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

Resolutions

ACKNOWLEDGING TOWNSHIP COUNCIL’S REVIEW OF SALARIES FOR THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1, NO. 2, NO. 3, AND NO. 4 FOR THE YEAR 2025

Councilman Pedroso thanked all the fire commissioners for their service to the town, as well as all those who volunteer on the fire departments and first aid services. He added that their service is invaluable.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-048](#) is appended to the official minutes

AMENDING RESOLUTION 25-01-02-040 AND MODIFYING JOAN FLYNN AS A REPRESENTATIVE AND ROBERT DEVNANI AS ALTERNATE FOR THE SOMERSET REGIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-049](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN AWARD OF CONTRACT TO ROUND HILL RISK PARTNERS, LLC OF 788 MORRIS TURNPIKE, SUITE 101, SHORT HILLS, NJ 07078 TO SERVE AS THE TOWNSHIP’S RISK MANAGER FOR HEALTH INSURANCE SERVICES FOR A TERM OF ONE YEAR COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2025 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS AS DEFINED BY N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.7 AT NO COST TO THE TOWNSHIP

Round Hill Risk Partners, LLC will act as an agent for the Township and will be responsible for the management of all aspect of Bridgewater Township’s health insurance program.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-050](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN AWARD OF CONTRACT TO NORTH AMERICAN INSURANCE MANAGEMENT (NAIM) d/b/a ACRISURE NJ PARTNERS INSURANCE SERVICES, LLC OF 1460 ROUTE 9 NORTH, SUITE 310, WOODBRIDGE, NEW JERSEY 07095 TO SERVE AS THE TOWNSHIP’S RISK MANAGER FOR PROPERTY AND CASUALTY INSURANCE SERVICES FOR A TERM OF ONE YEAR COMMENCING ON JANUARY 1, 2025, PURSUANT TO THE FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS AS DEFINED BY N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.7. AT NO COST TO THE TOWNSHIP

North American Insurance Management will act as an agent for the Township and will be responsible for the management of all aspect of Bridgewater Township’s property and casualty insurance program.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-051](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOCCER CENTERS LOCATED AT 300 MEMORIAL DRIVE SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND TOWNSHIP RECREATION DEPARTMENT FOR THE SPRING AND FALL TRAVEL, IN-TOWN, JUNIOR PANTHERS, HIGH SCHOOL, ADULT, SUMMER AND FIELD HOCKEY

PROGRAMS. SOCCER CENTERS WILL PROVIDE THE USE OF TURF FIELDS, REFEREES AND TRAINERS AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$153,350.00 THE AFOREMENTIONED EXPENSE WILL BE PAID THROUGH THE REGISTRATION FEES IN THE SOCCER RECREATION TRUST FUND RESULTING IN NO OPERATING COST TO BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP FOR THE YEAR OF 2025

The Bridgewater Township Recreation Superintendent, Rachel Barrett, has recommended that the Township enter into an agreement with the Soccer Centers for the use of the indoor turf fields together with services including referees for each game as well as trainers.

Councilman Ring asked why the township would be paying fees for the BRHS high school soccer teams. Township Administrator Pappas stated that when referencing the high school in the resolution, it pertains to the recreation high school soccer program, not the BRHS program.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-052](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$80,000.00 TO THE SOMERSET COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE DIVISION FOR ROAD SALT FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$150,000.00 FOR THE 2024-2025 WINTER SEASON TO BE FUNDED FROM THE SNOW REMOVAL ACCOUNT

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-053](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$10,000.00 TO MICHAEL SULLIVAN OF THE FIRM CLARK CATON HINTZ PC, REDEVELOPMENT PLANNER FOR THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT FOR THE YEAR OF 2024 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$20,000.00 TO BE FUNDED FROM THE LEGAL SERVICES FUND ACCOUNT

The township had adopted by Resolution #24-01-04-019 which authorized the appointment of Michael Sullivan as Redevelopment Planner for the one-year term commencing on January 1, 2024 for an amount not to exceed \$10,000.00 but it has been determined that an additional appropriation of \$10,000.00 is necessary.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-054](#) is appended to the official minutes

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF AN OPEN FLAME FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60.00, OPEN FIRE PITS PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60.00, AND A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100.00 FOR THE SOMERVILLE ELKS, 375 UNION AVENUE, BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY 08807, FOR “JACK’S KIDS” TAILGATE FUNDRAISER EVENT ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2025

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-055](#) 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 Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, Council convened in closed session at approximately 8:41pm.

A copy of resolution [#25-01-16-056](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 8:53pm and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:54pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President