

**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 6, 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, February 6, 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: Michael Pappas, Township Administrator
Scott Stephens, Deputy Township Administrator
Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney
Juliana Coelho, Deputy Township Clerk

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

Minutes

Minutes will be presented for Council action at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh:

- Councilman Kirsh addressed concerns regarding litigation matters involving Bridgewater. He emphasized that the township only resorts to litigation as a last measure and highlighted the importance of defending its rights to prevent potential legal vulnerabilities. He also reassured the public about the township's long-standing and competent legal counsel.

- Shifting focus to affordable housing, Councilman Kirsh, who was absent from the previous meeting due to business travel, shared his thoughts on the matter. He acknowledged Bridgewater's diversity—not just in culture and heritage, but also in its varied housing options across different economic

levels. However, he criticized the state's affordable housing mandates, arguing that they undermine local governance, impose financial burdens, and contain flaws, such as unrealistic site selections. Despite these concerns, he stated that he would have voted in favor of the resolution due to the lack of alternatives, while committing to mitigating the impact on the community.

- Councilman Kirsh also provided updates from municipal boards. The planning board reviewed a proposal concerning the former Baker & Taylor facility on Route 22, where the front office building is set to be demolished while the warehouse remains operational. Meanwhile, the zoning board heard plans for a new auto dealership at the former Courier News property, with half of the site already developed into a Honda dealership and the other half proposed for a Range Rover Defender Discovery dealership. A follow-up hearing is scheduled for April 8.
- In addition to these municipal matters, Councilman Kirsh attended the Bridgewater Chinese American Association's Lunar New Year celebration, commending organizers Henry Wang and Lucy Lee for their contributions. He also participated in the Lunar New Year event at Bridgewater Commons Mall the following day, expressing appreciation for the cultural festivities.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Councilman Kurdyla shared his appreciation for attending two Chinese Lunar New Year programs celebrating the Year of the Snake, extending his best wishes to the Chinese community for a year of health and prosperity.
- He also addressed a recent email he received from a resident regarding his comments on affordable housing. Emphasizing his responsibility as a councilman, he stated that forming opinions based on knowledge and belief, while also respecting differing perspectives, is essential for productive discussions and solutions that benefit the entire Bridgewater Township.

Kurdyla acknowledged that public discussions on affordable housing often stem from personal circumstances, such as loss of income or the need for specialized housing. He shared his own connection to the issue, revealing that he and his wife have a 45-year-old special needs daughter, Amanda, who has been on a housing waiting list for over two decades. He expressed empathy for those facing similar struggles and assured residents that he understands their concerns firsthand.

Looking ahead to the fourth round of affordable housing planning, Councilman Kurdyla recognized the efforts of the current and past administrations in meeting state mandates over the past 15 to 20 years. While he stated that his ideal outcome would be zero additional obligations, he

acknowledged that a compromise would be necessary. He emphasized the importance of making reasonable decisions based on available land and ensuring that future developments align with the community's needs.

Councilman Kurdyla concluded by encouraging open discussions and respectful disagreements, noting that differing viewpoints can often lead to better-informed solutions for everyone.

Council President Norgalis:(*verbatim*)

- I attended the Bridgewater Chinese American Association 2025 New Year Celebration held at our Senior Citizens Center. 2025 is the year of the Snake. Chinese New Year, often referred to as Lunar New Year, is a celebration steeped in rich traditions and vibrant customs. Among its most iconic elements are the Chinese New Year animals, representing the 12-year zodiac cycle. Each animal embodies distinct traits, myths, and cultural significance. In case you wondered about the other recurring characters besides the Snake here they are: Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Pig, Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, and Dragon.
- Thank you, Henry Wong, for organizing the celebration and especially the very warm welcome we received as elected officials.
- JCP&L sent out a memo asking that mylar metallic balloons not be used or released under power lines. Last year JCP&L had 22 outages caused by metallic balloons touching power lines.
- Tim Ring and I attended the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission meeting earlier this week, in Green Brook. Bridgewater is part of the Commission, and our Health Activities, including inspections, are directed by Commission Health Officer Kevin Sumner under the continuation of an agreement to be reauthorized tonight for 2025. Kevin reports to Bridgewater Health and Human Services Director Christine Madrid.
- The Health Department has arranged for a limited number of RADON Test kits to be available for free distribution to Bridgewater residents. They are available on a first come, first serve. I suggest you call the township health number before coming in to make sure they are still available. Radon is an odorless gas that is a known carcinogen.
- Yesterday I attended the monthly meeting of the Municipal Alliance chaired by Lynne Hurley. Lots of programs being worked on in support of our students in the Bridgewater Raritan school system. Much more to follow in the future.

- I have also attended several meetings with the administration and our Affordable Housing planner Darlene Green and feel compelled to tell our residents that we all continue to be fully engaged in meeting the state deadlines for Affordable Housing. By this time you already know my thought that the state directive of 474 additional affordable houses was poorly crafted. At this point we are working toward an objective of 417 units over the next ten years. The public will be kept apprised of our progress as we move toward the next state benchmark in June. Rest assured we will not be building affordable homes in the median of Route 22 as suggested in the state plan.

Councilman Ring:

- Councilman Ring extended a warm welcome to the family and friends present for the upcoming police promotion ceremony, expressing a sense of security with so many law enforcement personnel in the room.
- He also shared that he attended the Lunar New Year celebration at the Senior Center over the past weekend. Additionally, he participated in the reorganization meeting of the Middlebrook Regional Health Commission, of which Bridgewater is a member.

Mayor's Reports

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator reported on behalf of Mayor Moench

- Township Administrator Pappas, speaking on behalf of Mayor Moench reported that the resolution approved by the council last Thursday, along with the accompanying report from Topology, had been properly filed by Mr. Corsini's associate, Alex Fisher, ensuring compliance with the deadline.
- Additionally, Administrator Pappas conveyed the mayor's appreciation for Lieutenant Edwards, Lieutenant Zeichner, Sergeant Kennedy, and Sergeant Stetsko. He acknowledged their dedication to the police department, noting that Mayor Moench, as a husband and father of three young children, is personally grateful for their service in protecting not only his own family but all families in Bridgewater. He extended congratulations on the promotions to the officers on behalf of the mayor.

Swearing In

Council President Norgalis acknowledged, as previously stated by the administrator, that Mayor Moench regretted being unable to attend due to being out of town. He noted that the official swearing-in would be conducted shortly by the police chief but took a moment to recognize not only the four officers receiving promotions but also their family members who were present to support them.

He listed those accompanying the officers:

- Lieutenant Jamie Edwards was joined by his girlfriend, Ruthanne, and daughter, Jordan.

- Lieutenant Stephen Zeichner was accompanied by his wife, Melissa, and children, Tyler, Alexa, and Ryan.
- Sergeant John Kennedy attended with his wife, Marissa, and children, Jackson and Lexi.
- Sergeant Vincent Stetsko was joined by his wife, Sarah, and children, Theodore and Amelia.

Council President Norgalis then reflected on the significance of the occasion, emphasizing that the event was not a traditional swearing-in, as the officers had already taken their oaths multiple times over the years. Instead, it was a recognition of their dedication and service to the township.

He highlighted the rigorous selection process for promotions, which includes written submissions, examinations, interviews, and recommendations. He commended the department's high standards, noting that Bridgewater's police force is likely the envy of many communities in New Jersey. He reaffirmed the council's strong support for the police, emphasizing the importance of providing them with the necessary tools to protect themselves and the community.

Council President Norgalis concluded by expressing gratitude to the officers' families for their support and sacrifices, acknowledging their role in enabling the officers to serve. He closed with well wishes, saying, "God bless."

Chief Mitzak: *(verbatim)*

Before we start the promotion ceremony, I would like to acknowledge two Lieutenants who recently retired on February 1st, which will make these promotions possible tonight. Lt. Fred Brittain served the Bridgewater Community for 22 years and Lt Todd Mele served the Bridgewater Community for 26 years. Their Leadership and friendship will be truly missed, and I thank them both for their contributions to our police department and for always putting the Bridgewater Community first. Job well done by both Lieutenants.

Tonight, we come together to celebrate the exceptional achievements and well-deserved promotions of four remarkable individuals within our police force. It is both an honor and a privilege to recognize Officers Jack Kennedy and Vincent Stetsko, who are being promoted to Sergeant, as well as Sergeants Jamie Edwards and Steve Zeichner, who are advancing to the rank of Lieutenant. This occasion marks a pivotal moment in their careers, a testament to their dedication, commitment, and outstanding service to our community.

Sergeants Edwards and Sgt Zeichner, your promotion to Lieutenant reflects your exceptional attitudes, work ethics, and experience. As Lieutenants, your responsibilities will expand significantly. Here are some key aspects of your new role:

- **Command and Supervision:** Overseeing parts of the Operations Division and managing a patrol squad.
- **Leadership and Guidance:** Setting clear expectations, providing mentorship, and fostering a positive work environment.
- **Policy Development and Implementation:** Contributing to the creation and enforcement of departmental policies.
- **Strategic Planning:** Playing a role in the department's long-term planning.
- **Community Relations:** Serving as a liaison between the department and the community.
- **Decision-Making and Problem-Solving:** Making critical decisions that impact the safety and well-being of both your personnel and the community.

I have full confidence that you will continue to lead with integrity and inspire those around you in your new roles.

Sergeant Jamie Edwards, a lifelong resident of Bridgewater, earned his bachelor's degree from Villanova University. He graduated from the Somerset County Police Academy in 2001 and has been with the Bridgewater Police Department for 25 years. Jamie served in the patrol division. He then became a school resource officer, and as a detective before being promoted to Sergeant in 2017. He has also served as the Emergency Management Coordinator since 2020 and is an instructor in Incident Command, First Aid/CPR, and Defibrillator use. He holds certifications as an EMT and has earned numerous awards, including the Somerset County Police Academy Instructor Achievement Award, multiple Letters of Commendation, and the Exceptional Service Medal. As our most senior Sergeant, Jamie's promotion to Lieutenant is a well-deserved honor. I also must mention that Jamie is a lifelong Philadelphia Eagles fan, though I won't hold that against him tonight. I now invite Jamie's girlfriend Ruthanne and daughter Jordan to join him for his swearing-in as Lieutenant.

Sergeant Stephen Zeichner, a 20-year veteran of the department, earned his bachelor's degree from Monmouth University and graduated from the Union County Police Academy in 2004. He joined Bridgewater PD in 2005, serving in patrol and detective roles, as well as mentoring new officers as a Field Training Officer. Stephen is a certified Drug Recognition Expert and was promoted to Sergeant in April 2022. Since November 2022, he has served as the Detective Sergeant in charge of detectives, the ID officer, and Youth Services. Throughout his career, Stephen has earned multiple awards, including the Exceptional Service Award, several Letters of Commendation, and the Spirit of Courage Award from the Burn Prevention Network. I now invite Stephen and his wife, Melissa, and children Tyler, Alexa, and Ryan to join him for his swearing-in as Lieutenant.

Officers Kennedy and Stetsko, as you step into your new roles as Sergeants, you will take on increased responsibilities, providing leadership and mentorship to your

teams. Your new duties will include:

- **Leadership:** Guiding and managing your team of officers.
- **Supervision:** Overseeing the daily operations of your squad, ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently and effectively.
- **Training and Development:** Playing a key role in the growth and development of your officers.
- **Community Engagement:** Building positive relationships with the community and fostering trust.
- **Decision-Making:** Making crucial decisions that affect both the safety of your squad and the community you serve.

As Sergeants, your influence and authority will be significant. Leading by example, maintaining integrity, and prioritizing the well-being of both your team and the community will be essential to your success.

Officer Kennedy earned his associate's degree from Raritan Valley Community College, graduated from the Somerset County Police Academy in December 2007, and began his career with us in January 2008. Over the years, he has served in various patrol squads before transitioning to a Traffic Officer role in 2013. Jack has supervised the Crossing Guards, served as a radar instructor, and investigated numerous fatal crashes. He is also a member of the Somerset County Accident Reconstruction Team and an in-service training coordinator specializing in Ground Fighting and Combatives, OC Aerosol Projectors, and firearms. Jack is an assistant team leader on the County SWAT team, a member of the Honor Guard, and an instructor with the Citizen Police Academy. Jack's accomplishments include the Bridgewater PD Medal of Merit, Exceptional Service, and CPR/Defib save awards and three-time recipient of MADD's Distinguished Service Award. He was reassigned to patrol in 2023 to prepare for his promotion. I now invite Jack's wife, Marissa, and children, Jackson and Lexi, to join him for his swearing-in as Sergeant.

Officer Stetsko graduated from the Ocean County Police Academy in 2011 and attended Monmouth and Rowan Universities. He began his career with the Seaside Heights Police Department before transferring to Bridgewater in 2013. As a patrol officer, Vincent quickly demonstrated his skills which accelerated him to become a detective. In his detective role, he investigated serious crimes, testified in Superior Court, and played a key role in background investigations for officer candidates. Vincent is also a firearms instructor and has received two CPR save awards, two Unit Citations, and one Letter of Commendation. I am now inviting his wife Sarah, and children Theodore, and Amelia, to join Vincent for his swearing-in as Sergeant.

Please join me in congratulating each of these outstanding officers on their well-deserved promotions.

**Public
Comment**

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

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

- **Megan Dowden: 807 Porter Way- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Dowden attended the meeting to discuss two key topics. First, she addressed Councilman Kurdyla's comments on affordable housing. She acknowledged his previous statements regarding a preference for zero new affordable housing units and his comparisons to Paterson. However, she appreciated his remarks earlier in the meeting, as they seemed to respond directly to an email she had sent. She expressed gratitude for his willingness to consider different perspectives and for the council's engagement with the issue.

Dowden shared her personal experience living in affordable housing. Born and raised in Bridgewater, she is a single mother working two jobs while caring for a child with special needs. Affordable housing allowed her to remain in the town she loves and provide her children with access to the highly regarded Bridgewater School District. She emphasized the significant impact of affordable housing, not just for single parents but also for widows, recent graduates, and families facing financial hardship or medical crises.

Her second topic concerned parking issues at Sunrise Assisted Living. As a part-time employee at the facility, she highlighted ongoing complaints about the lack of parking, which affects employees, residents, and visitors. She stated that management had directed concerns to the township and sought guidance on where to address the issue.

Administrator Pappas advised Ms. Dowden to reach out directly to him but suggested that Township Planner Katherine Sarmed would be the most appropriate contact to explore potential options regarding the parking situation at Sunrise Assisted Living. Administrator Pappas mentioned that Planner Sarmed could assess factors such as site size and possible solutions. He provided his card along with his email address for further communication.

- **Robert Albano: 1149 Papen Road- Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Mr. Albano expressed his appreciation for the police force, emphasizing their invaluable role in supporting the work of rescue squads and ensuring public safety. He personally attested to the high standards of service and protection provided by the officers and extended his gratitude to them.

He also urged the council to keep the rescue squad in mind during their deliberations, highlighting its essential role in the community and its cost-effective approach to emergency response.

Lastly, he acknowledged the challenges faced by the council members, recognizing how difficult it is to serve in their positions while noting how easy it is for others to criticize. He commended them for their dedication and service to the community.

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

Mr. Patel acknowledged the recent promotions of officers, expressing gratitude for their service and the sacrifices made by their families. He assured them that the residents of Bridgewater appreciate their dedication and stand in support of them, just as they protect the community.

Shifting to another topic, he mentioned his interest in business development and his intention to follow up with Administrator Pappas, though other matters had temporarily taken his attention. Additionally, he noted his growing interest in the affordable housing issue, describing it as a problem-solving challenge. He framed the issue as a matter of finding a balanced solution between zero and 2,000 housing units.

Council President Norgalis clarified that the issue is not merely a debate between zero and 2,000 units, but rather a firm commitment of 417 units that must be addressed. He emphasized that the Township is actively working to resolve this matter before the June deadline, at which point a comprehensive plan will be submitted to the state.

Councilman Ring addressed a common misconception regarding affordable housing obligations. He explained that while the state has assigned a number and a process to address housing deficiencies, over 100 municipalities, including Bridgewater, have formally challenged the state's formula, arguing that it is inaccurate. He reiterated that Bridgewater has committed to a total of 417 units and passed a resolution affirming this commitment at the last council meeting. The township has until the end of June to determine how to meet this requirement and is actively working on a plan. He assured the public that Bridgewater has met its legal obligations, unlike some other municipalities that have failed to do so and now face potential lawsuits.

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

Ms. Franco congratulated the promoted police officers, thanked them for their service, and expressed confidence in their continued dedication to the community.

Ms. Franco addressed an agenda item introducing an ordinance to increase the judge's compensation by \$32,000. She noted that the difference between the previous ordinance on 1/25 and the current proposal is fully funded through a shared services agreement with Raritan Borough.

Councilman Ring explained that the salary increase is due to last year's merger of the Raritan Court. The increase is fully funded by Raritan, as its previous court salary is now transferred to Bridgewater. A prorated adjustment was made last year for a few months, and this ordinance ensures the full-year salary adjustment.

Council President Norgalis suggested that the ordinance should specify the portion of the judge's annual salary funded by Bridgewater and the amount covered by the other participating towns under the shared services agreement.

Administrator Pappas clarified that historically, Bridgewater has negotiated shared services agreements with Somerville and now Raritan for court functions without specifying a breakdown of funding in the ordinance. Instead, the township calculates expenditures, ensures staff salaries are covered, and adjusts budgets accordingly.

Ms. Franco raised concerns about a resolution for a one-time emergency temporary appropriation of \$1.2 million, bringing the 2025 year-to-date total to \$18 million. She pointed out that this represents approximately 37% or 28% of the budget, despite the year being only five weeks in.

Council President Norgalis explained that expenses are not linear and cannot simply be divided into twelfths. He noted that the township is statutorily required to create a temporary budget, with the state setting a percentage for it. Any additional appropriations ensure the township can meet its financial obligations.

Ms. Franco sought clarification on whether the affordable housing units include existing units. It was confirmed that these are new units in addition to the ones already on record from previous rounds. Ms. Franco suggested that the Council or Administration consider inviting the public to a town meeting or forming a task group to gather ideas and share perspectives on affordable housing. She emphasized the value of including individuals with firsthand experience living in affordable housing and noted that a response was not needed immediately.

Council members explained that prior unbuilt units under old COAH arrangements were discarded in this new round, meaning the township must

fulfill entirely new obligations. Projects like the 40 units from the Center of Excellence, now part of The Heights, have been completed and occupied. The discussion highlighted the significant challenge of meeting the state's housing requirements.

Ms. Franco expressed concern about the \$4 million for Camp Cromwell, questioning whether the funds had been received or if they would be affected by the freeze in Washington.

Administrator Pappas explained that the \$4 million for Camp Cromwell has not yet been received, as it is being administered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He assured that staff remains in regular contact with HUD representatives and Congressman Kean's office to navigate the bureaucratic process and is confident the funds will be secured.

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

Ms. Loughran noted that last week, the room reacted strongly when she mentioned a 10:1 ratio. After reviewing past discussions, she realized the number had come up in another business session related to affordable housing. She asked whether the 20% affordable housing allocation is a standard requirement for all municipalities or just a goal set by Bridgewater.

Council President Norgalis stated that they are unsure of what other towns commit to regarding affordable housing—some may allocate more, some less. He explained that while Bridgewater has a target, the final percentage is individually negotiated with each developer seeking to build in the township.

Councilman Ring pointed out that the Hyatt House development achieved a 40% affordable housing allocation, with 40 out of 100 apartments designated as affordable. He explained that the ratio varies by developer, with some projects exceeding the typical 10% minimum. The final percentage is determined through negotiation, depending on developer interest and other factors.

Ms. Loughran acknowledged the promotions of the officers and praised the police department's community policing program. She shared her experience from two ride-a-longs, one with now-Sergeant John Kennedy, noting that while nothing eventful occurred, the experience was valuable. She commended the program and expressed her hope for its continuation, pledging to help spread the word.

Chief Mitzak highlighted the upcoming Citizens Police Academy, a nine-week program covering various aspects of policing. Participants will learn about constitutional authority, motor vehicle stops, use of force, pursuits, and

emergency response, including CPR and first aid certification. They will also experience use-of-force scenarios and have the option to join officers for ride-a-longs. Applications are open to township residents until the end of February. The program begins on Thursday, March 6, and runs consecutively on Thursdays until May 1, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Interested individuals can apply via the township website and submit applications to Sergeant Jack Kennedy at JKennedy@BridgewaterNJ.gov.

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

**Introduction
of Ordinances**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 (MUNICIPAL COURT), SECTION 10-4 (JUDGE; TERM OF OFFICE) AND SECTION 10-6 (FUNCTIONS, POWERS, DUTIES AND JURISDICTION) OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER TO REMOVE OBSOLETE STATUTORY REFERENCES

This ordinance will clean out old statutory references with the current Municipal Court practices.

On motion of Councilman Ring, 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

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution [#25-02-06-071](#) 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 20th day of February, 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.

AN ORDINANCE SETTING THE COMPENSATION OF THE MAYOR, TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS, DEPARTMENT HEADS, AND CERTAIN OTHER MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 374 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1985; N.J.S.A. 2A:809; N.J.S.A. 2A:8-13; N.J.S.A. 40A:9-165; N.J.S.A.40A:9-135; N.J.S.A. 40A:9-146, AND CHAPTER 95 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1996 TO AMEND THE SALARIES OF THE MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE AND THE COURT CLERK/ADMINISTRATOR TO REFLECT THE TOWNSHIP’S SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR MUNICIPAL COURT SERVICES WITH THE BOROUGH OF RARITAN

Councilman Ring acknowledged that there was significant discussion about this during the open public comment. He noted that the ordinance itself, when carefully read, outlines the shared services. It specifically addresses the ordinance from December on a pro-rated basis and further details the need to implement adjustments for 2025.

Councilman Kirsh stated that this is an exceptionally simple situation that seems to have been made unnecessarily complex. He explained that these are the salaries for the two positions, and an adjustment was needed in 2024 because the individuals in these roles only served for three months. The payroll department needed to determine the correct payment, which is why the adjustment was made in late 2024. Now, he noted, this action ensures they will be properly paid in 2025.

Township Attorney Corsini explained that when comparing this ordinance to its predecessor and the typical one passed each year, one would find that the language in this ordinance is significantly more verbose due to its nature.

On motion of Councilman Ring, 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

THE ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED.

A copy of resolution [#25-02-06-072](#) 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 20th day of February, 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

AUTHORIZING THE CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES OF THE MIDDLE-BROOK REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR 2025 AT A TOTAL COST OF \$117,985.00 PURSUANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF N.J.S.A. 26:3-1, ET SEQ.TO BE FUNDED FROM THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 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	Absent
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-02-06-073](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF SOMERSET COUNTY FOR 2025 RECYCLING IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$467,958 BASED ON A FEE OF \$27.60, UP FROM \$27.00, FOR SERVICES FOR UP TO 16,955 HOUSEHOLDS TO BE FUNDED FROM THE 2023 RECYCLING GRANT, 2024 RECYCLING GRANT AND CURRENT RECYCLING FUND

Administrator Pappas stated that Mr. DiRado has been involved in the process. For the Council's benefit, he noted that the total additional cost to the 2025 budget amounts to \$10,173.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Council President Norgalis, 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 [#25-02-06-074](#) is appended to the official minutes

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT FUND \$1,200,464.00 WHICH BRINGS THE 2025 YEAR TO DATE TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS TO \$18,845,735.98

Administrator Pappas was asked if he had any further comments to offer. He offered that the vast majority of the additional cost is for the township's insurance coverage.

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	Absent
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-02-06-075](#) is appended to the official minutes

ESTABLISHES THE EMPLOYEE STANDARD MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR APPROVED TOWNSHIP BUSINESS AS SET BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Council President Norgalis stated that the employee standard mileage reimbursement rate for approved Township business is set according to the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service. He noted that anyone who had seen an earlier version might have noticed a specific rate mentioned for 2025. However, he clarified that the ordinance ensures the Township will follow the IRS rate, eliminating the need for annual Council action to reaffirm this policy.

On motion of Councilman Ring, 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 [#25-02-06-076](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$75,000.00 TO RJM LANDSCAPE AND DESIGN, LLC OF 821 PARSONAGE HILL DRIVE, BRANCHBURG, NJ 08876 FOR SNOW REMOVAL SERVICES IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$150,000.00 FOR THE 2024 – 2025 WINTER SEASON TO BE FUNDED FROM 2025 THE TEMPORARY MUNICIPAL BUDGET CURRENT ACCOUNT # 5-01-26-291-203 (SNOW REMOVAL)

Administrator Pappas stated that the Township aims not to request additional resources unless necessary. However, he emphasized that when needed, essential services must be provided. He clarified that while it is not a matter for the council to address directly, the Township is responsible for plowing the roads and salting them as necessary.

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 [#25-02-06-077](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZATION APPROVING FINAL LIST OF VOLUNTEER MEMBERS OF THE BRIDGEWATER FIRST AID AND RESCUE SQUADS WHO QUALIFY FOR CONTRIBUTIONS, \$1,507.63 FOR THE YEAR 2024, UNDER THE TOWNSHIP LOSAP LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, COUNTY OF SOMERSET TO BE FUNDED FROM THE 2024 LOSAP ACCOUNT.

Council President Norgalis expressed gratitude to the many volunteers who dedicate countless hours to training and responding to calls.

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 [#25-02-06-078](#) 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 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 Kirsh, Council convened in closed session at approximately 9:01 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#25-02-06-079](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 9:14 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President