

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MARCH 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, March 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
Councilman Timothy Ring
Council President Howard V. Norgalis

Also Present: Matthew C. Moench, Mayor
Michael Pappas, Township Administrator
Scott Stephens, Deputy Township Administrator
Scott Maraldo, Director of Constituent Relations
Suzanne Maeder, Public Information and Outreach Officer
Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney
Grace Njuguna, Township Clerk

Councilman Kurdyla led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

FEBRUARY 20, 2025 - REGULAR SESSION

On the motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the February 20, 2025, regular session minutes were moved for approval and passed unanimously on a voice call vote.

FEBRUARY 20, 2024 – CLOSED SESSIONS

February 20, 2025, closed session minutes were passed around for Council approval & signature.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh:

- Councilman Kirsh began his report by briefly echoing the sentiments

expressed by others regarding the dedication of police, fire, EMS, and road workers. He emphasized how fortunate Bridgewater is to have so many committed public servants who protect the community in various ways. He urged everyone, whether on the dais or in the community, to take a moment to appreciate their hard work and dedication.

- Councilman Kirsh mentioned that the Zoning Board met on February 25th and approved an expansion of the mausoleum at St. Bernard's Church Cemetery. He humorously noted that it might be interesting to know how many deceased residents Bridgewater has, joking that some towns have more deceased than living residents, though he doesn't believe Bridgewater is quite there yet.
- Councilman Kirsh stated that the Planning Board meeting scheduled for March 4th was canceled due to a lack of agenda items.
- Councilman Kirsh concluded by acknowledging the contributions of all those serving the community and the importance of recognizing their efforts.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Councilman Kurdyla began his report by discussing a drone presentation explored as a tool for Bridgewater Township's emergency services. Despite the cold weather, the presentation highlighted several potential benefits, with further evaluations to follow.
- Councilman Kurdyla commended Police Officer Noah Allatt for his heroic actions in rescuing an unconscious driver from the burning vehicle, despite the risk of fire. He called Officer Allatt a "true hero" and praised his quick thinking. He also emphasized the value of body cameras, which provided clear evidence of the officer's actions and supported transparency and accountability. He acknowledged the Martinsville and Green Knoll Fire Departments and EMT teams, all of whom responded without hesitation to contain the fire and protect public safety. He reminded the community that these departments are volunteer-based and expressed gratitude for their dedication.
- Lastly, Councilman Kurdyla addressed safety concerns on Route 22, commending the Planning Board for their efforts to ensure car dealerships load and unload vehicles on their properties instead of public roads to reduce hazards. He concluded by thanking all emergency responders and planning officials for their ongoing efforts and encouraged residents to support the volunteers who keep Bridgewater safe.

Council President Norgalis: *(verbatim)*

- Bridgewater police officer Noah Allatt made the news in a dramatic rescue of

a driver whose car was on fire due to an accident with a tanker on Route 22 by Chimney Rock Rd. At our Mar. 20th Council meeting, we will honor Officer Allatt with a formal proclamation. Good work officer.

- Mar. 1 was an important day for our Muslim friends. It was the start of Ramadan which is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community. It is also the month in which the Quran is believed to have been revealed to the Islamic prophet Muhammad. The annual observance of Ramadan is regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam and lasts twenty-nine to thirty days, from one sighting of the crescent moon to the next.
- Ash Wednesday, occurring on March 5, 2025, marks the beginning of Lent, a significant period of reflection and repentance in the Christian faith. This day is traditionally observed with the imposition of ashes, symbolizing mortality and the call to repentance, as well as the start of a 40-day journey leading to Easter. Many Christians participate in fasting and abstaining from certain foods during Lent which emphasizes spiritual growth and renewal.
- I attended the monthly meeting of the Municipal Alliance. Police Chief Mitzak also attended as well as Board of Education President Steven Singer. The Alliance continues to support our high school students through multiple programs including drug awareness and a more recent effort to support mental health.
- NJ American Water continues to flush hydrants in various parts of our town as part of their annual maintenance program. This process removes sediment that may have settled in their water main. There is a possibility that some residents might see a minor discoloration for a short period of time. If that happens just run the water for a few minutes.
- PSE&G sent notices to residents entitled “Upcoming Gas Meter Inspection”. Their letter states “ We remind you to always ask for identification when a utility worker comes to your door. Our employees carry a PSE&G photo identification badge, wear PSE&G logo apparel, and drive PSE&G cars and trucks”. If a resident, especially a senior citizen, does not feel comfortable admitting the worker deny them access and call the PSE&G Customer Service number 800-436-7734 to verify the visit.

Councilman Pedroso:

- Councilman Pedroso began by thanking everyone for attending the council meeting and sharing a few updates. He mentioned attending a drone presentation earlier at Town Hall, where drones were discussed as a potential tool for the Police Department to enhance public safety. He found the

technology interesting and looks forward to further exploration of its potential benefits.

- Councilman Pedroso also attended a town hall on February 24th with Senator Doug Steinhardt, Assembly Minority Leader John DiMaio, and Eric Peterson in Raritan Borough. While Assemblyman DiMaio could not attend due to illness, the focus of the town hall was on the community's concerns regarding the noise, pollution, and vibrations caused by the trains in Raritan. Many residents voiced their concerns about the toxic effects of pollution, which are worsened by the trains idling throughout the night.
- Councilman Pedroso expressed frustration with what he opined was hypocrisy from the Governor, who advocates for electric vehicles and the banning of gasoline cars and gas stoves but remains silent on the issue of pollution from trains, which have a much greater impact on the environment and the health of residents.
- Additionally, Councilman Pedroso shared that he attended several Lincoln Day dinners hosted by Republican parties across the state. He reflected on the legacy of President Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president, and how the Republican Party has been at the forefront of civil rights in America. He highlighted the party's role in abolishing slavery, advocating for the right to vote for Black citizens and women, and supporting the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He noted that the Republican Party played a crucial role in the passing of the Civil Rights Act, with a significantly higher percentage of Republican lawmakers voting in favor compared to their Democratic counterparts.
- Councilman Pedroso concluded by expressing pride in the Republican Party's historic support for civil rights and equality in America.

Councilman Ring:

- Councilman Ring began by echoing praise for Officer Noah Allatt and the Bridgewater Police Department, calling Officer Allatt a true hero. He commended the department for releasing the body cam footage, despite some social media groups blocking its sharing. He encouraged everyone to watch the video on the Bridgewater Police Department's Facebook page. The footage shows Officer Allatt confirming the danger of a fully engulfed engine compartment before bravely pulling an unconscious driver from the burning vehicle and dragging him to safety. Councilman Ring emphasized that without Officer Allatt's swift actions, the outcome could have been much different and expressed his gratitude to the officer, noting that he is a local hero from Somerville.
- Councilman Ring also reported on the police department's exploration of

unmanned aircraft systems (drones) for potential use in law enforcement, Fire, EMS, and search-and-rescue operations. He attended a demonstration earlier in the day, which he found impressive, and anticipates more developments on this initiative in the coming months.

- Lastly, Councilman Ring provided an update on the budget committee, which continues to work with the administration to finalize the timeline and budget necessary for taking action. They are still awaiting further details before proceeding.
- Councilman Ring concluded his report by expressing appreciation for the community's ongoing support and the efforts of all local service providers.

Mayor's Reports

Mayor Matthew C. Moench:

- Mayor Moench began by echoing the sentiments shared about Officer Noah Allatt and his heroic actions, thanking him for his bravery. He also mentioned that the Civilian Police Academy was taking place down the hallway at Town Hall, which has been a great success in building stronger relationships between the police department and the public. He thanked Chief Mitzak and all officers for their commitment to this program.
- The Mayor also highlighted his participation in several recent events. He served as a host for the New Jersey Conference of Mayors Winter Summit in Florham Park, where discussions on municipal government and local issues took place. Additionally, he attended the Walk to Washington Neighbor of Commerce event with the Congressional Delegation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Fashion Show, which promotes heart health. The Mayor praised the hospital for being a great partner in various community events and programs, such as the Spring Carnival and efforts to address health gaps in Somerset County. He shared discussions with the hospital focused on improving access to healthcare, particularly for lower-income individuals who face barriers like taking time off work for medical appointments.
- Mayor Moench provided an update on the road program, now in its fifth year. He mentioned that the town is finalizing the list of roads for this year, which will be divided into six regions. Efforts are being made to ensure a fair distribution of roadwork across the town. He noted that Pine Street in Martinsville, which was delayed due to winter conditions, came in \$100,000 under budget, and he hopes to continue securing good pricing for future projects.
- The Mayor reminded residents that the BW Roads website has been updated with the latest information on road conditions and ratings, which helps determine where roadwork is needed most.

- On a personal note, the Mayor announced that he will be attending a St. Patrick's Day event at the White House next Wednesday with other Mayors from around the country, marking his first visit to the White House. He promised to take photos and report back.
- Finally, the Mayor addressed the budget. He mentioned that the town is in the final stages of the budget process and that recent state aid numbers and tax base information have been received. The budget will likely be ready for public presentation in early April, although he emphasized that he will not present it until he is comfortable with it.
- Mayor Moench concluded by thanking everyone for their ongoing support and patience as the town continues to move forward with these important initiatives.

Michael Pappas, the Township Administrator, reported the following:

- The administration has been working on properties designated as areas in need of redevelopment, particularly a site on Route 22. A draft plan, prepared by Mr. Michael Sullivan, will be released to the public and the Planning Board. The Township Council is requested to allow Mr. Sullivan to present at the Council meeting and consider introducing a draft ordinance related to the redevelopment.
- Administrator Pappas addressed a public comment from the previous meeting regarding a comparison between the current and prior years' budgets, specifically the number of supervisors and employees (both union and non-union) listed in the user-friendly budget. In the current budget, there are supervisors, union employees, and non-union employees. Administrator Pappas reviewed the information and will respond to the individual who raised the question, providing further clarification and additional details to ensure full understanding of the comparison.

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

- **Anda Cytroen: Martinsville section, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**
Ms. Cytroen thanked Administrator Pappas for discussing the budget tonight following her inquiry at the previous meeting. She mentioned that she had looked up the state statute she believed applied to this situation. While she wasn't sure she was interpreting it correctly, she wanted to confirm if,

according to the statute, municipalities like Bridgewater, which follows a calendar year for the budget, are required to submit an approved budget to the county as the first step by February 10th. She asked if, based on the comments made so far, it was true that this had not yet been done.

Mayor Moench acknowledged that Cytroen's point was accurate. He explained that the February 10th deadline for submitting the approved budget to the county is typically extended yearly by either an executive order or a local finance board. He confirmed that while the deadline for this year was around that date, they would not meet it. He pointed out that the deadline is effectively extended to March because the state numbers, which are needed for the budget, do not come out until February. He noted that no town can meet the statutory deadline because the state typically provides those numbers in mid-January or February.

Ms. Cytroen raised a larger concern regarding the temporary emergency authorizations on the agenda, which cumulatively funded a significant portion of last year's budget. She pointed out that these authorizations could potentially extend into March, April, or even May. According to her understanding of the statute, the intent behind these temporary authorizations is to ensure the budget approval process, adoption, and public hearing proceed on time. However, she expressed concern that relying on these authorizations could be a way for the township to conduct business without public input. She provided an example of this issue, citing the additional \$101,000 authorization for RJM Landscape for snow removal services in 2024-2025. The initial contract for snow removal, set at \$75,000, was signed in September, followed by an increase to \$150,000 last month. Now, an additional \$100,000 is being requested, bringing the total to over a quarter of a million dollars. She highlighted that the paperwork showed a rate of \$229.50 per hour for snow removal, which, based on her calculations, equates to over 1,000 hours of work for snow removal.

Council President Norgalis explained that the snow removal funding being discussed tonight is part of a block fund specifically for snow removal. The authorization allows the use of a vendor if needed for the 2024-2025 season. He clarified that if no more snow falls for the remainder of the season, the funds will not be fully used, but the money is there in case crews are needed. Currently, there is only \$35,000 remaining in the snow fund. Each time there is snowfall, the township must deploy crews for salting and snow removal, which is a costly process. He emphasized that the township does an excellent job managing snow removal.

- **Jane Gandolfe: 2000 Washington Valley Rd, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Ms. Gandolfe spoke on behalf of the Friends of Bridgewater History and expressed gratitude for the township's support in joining the newly formed Bridgewater History Alliance. She thanked the council for their support and mentioned looking forward to hosting events celebrating the 250th anniversary of the country. She also inquired about the possibility of including historic preservation funds in the budget, to which the response was that the budget has not yet been finalized. However, she requested the council to consider allocating funds for historic preservation, possibly through open space or another method.

Mayor Moench responded that the township is currently working on an open space master plan, which is separate from the overall master plan. As part of this, the township is considering the preservation of various properties, including both undeveloped and developed ones. He also mentioned that with the upcoming 250th anniversary of America, there may be opportunities for grants and funding, although some of these may require matching funds or partial contributions. He assured that the township is actively exploring these opportunities from both a budgetary and grant-funding perspective.

- **Dan Mastroianno: 941 Spring Run Lane, Martinsville, NJ**

Mr. Mastroianno expressed his appreciation for seeing the Mayor and noted his ongoing efforts to meet with him. He mentioned multiple meetings with Administrator Pappas and emails sent regarding the Spring Run water drainage and road issues, asking if these concerns are being seriously considered in the next budget.

Mayor Moench confirmed that Spring Run is intended to be included in the next budget. While the final road plan is not yet complete, the plan is to begin work, starting with the lower right corner of the roads. He emphasized that the project would address both paving and drainage to prevent future issues. Though not finalized, Spring Run is on the tentative list.

- **Andrew Bucko: 543 Berrywood Lane, Bridgewater, NJ 08807**

Thanked Administrator Pappas for following up on personnel count discrepancies in the budget. He reiterated that from 2023 to 2024, the union employee headcount decreased from 70 to 55 (a reduction of 15 full-time positions), while the non-union employee headcount dropped from 49 to 27 (a reduction of 22 full-time positions). In total, there was a reduction of 37 full-time employees, along with additional part-time reductions.

Mayor Moench stated that while the budget documents might reflect those numbers, they are not accurate, and the administration will investigate any discrepancies.

Mr. Bucko questioned why tax assessments influence the town's spending decisions, arguing that an increase in assessments does not necessarily correlate with higher operating costs. Additionally, he inquired about the resolution on professional services, specifically whether there is an upper spending limit or if expenditures are open-ended.

Mayor Moench clarified that Resolution 12H is not an award of contracts but a pre-qualification of vendors meeting professional standards. If a project arises, such as Spring Run, the township can select from this pool and award a contract with a specific dollar amount for the project.

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

Ms. Franco sought clarification on item 12A regarding emergency funding, questioning whether the \$345,000 increase is over last year's budget, last quarter's spending, or the anticipated quarter. Ms. Franco also questioned why group health insurance has been approved twice—once on February 6th for \$813,000 and now again for \$888,000—seeking clarification on how this aligns with last year's total cost of approximately \$6.6 million.

Mayor Moench explained that the temporary budget is determined by statute, using a percentage of last year's budget for the given quarter rather than a discretionary figure set by the township.

Mr. Pappas clarified that the discussed amounts include medical insurance, a \$345,000 payment for the Joint Insurance Fund covering property and casualty losses, and debt service. He noted that pension payments and other obligations are not made in 12 equal payments but are due at different times throughout the year. The CFO is ensuring sufficient funds are available to meet these obligations as they arise.

Ms. Franco addressed concerns about the recent sewer rate increase, referencing a previous ordinance that allowed for a \$12 increase last year and this year, plus additional costs passed along from the Somerset Raritan Valley Sewer Authority (SRVSA). She noted that SRVSA budgeted a 10.3% increase for residential use, which should equate to a \$24 increase in her bill, yet she was charged \$34 more. She also expressed frustration over not receiving the requested expense and flow data from Administrator Pappas before the meeting, despite assurances that it would be provided.

Mayor Moench took responsibility for the delay, explaining that he had directed Administrator Pappas to focus on working on the budget first. He assured Ms. Franco that the requested information would be provided as soon as the budget process was completed.

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

Ms. Loughran took a moment to acknowledge the bravery of local first responders, particularly Officer Allatt and the Martinsville Fire Department, commenting on her experience during the Citizens Police Academy. She shared a humorous but intense story about a training drill where she almost shot the chief of police, which gave her a new appreciation for the bravery involved in law enforcement. She also raised a question about a resolution for Bridgewater to become an official "Revolution New Jersey" community, asking how this designation would benefit the township, especially as the town approaches its 250th anniversary.

Mayor Moench explained that the resolution to become an official "Revolution New Jersey" community would make the township eligible for grant funding. He noted that there would be a presentation on this topic later in the meeting.

Ms. Loughran expressed her support for Jean's comments, particularly regarding the importance of preserving local history and parks. She emphasized that Bridgewater has a significant historical background that extends beyond well-known events like where Washington slept and the first flag being flown. She supported efforts to give recognition to these historical aspects and preserve them.

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

Presentation

AMERICA250

Mayor Moench provided a brief introduction, noting that next year marks the 250th anniversary of the country's founding. He mentioned that many events are being planned at the national and state levels, including in municipalities like Bridgewater. He acknowledged the efforts of enthusiastic groups focusing on local history for some time, even before the 250th anniversary became a widespread topic.

In a video presentation, Mayor Moench explained the significance of the 250th anniversary of the United States' founding, emphasizing that the celebration goes beyond just Revolutionary War history. He highlighted Bridgewater's involvement in promoting local culture and preserving history, mentioning contributions from organizations such as the Middlebrook Encampment and Washington Encampment.

He discussed the plans for various events, including a time capsule, and explained how families and organizations could contribute. Mayor Moench also showed the Bridgewater America 250 logo, which will be used for events throughout the year. He stressed that the celebration would also honor the township's full history, from the

Revolutionary War to the present day. He concluded by inviting members of the Historical Alliance to introduce themselves and their organizations.

Jane Gandolf and the Historical Alliance introduced several organizations working together to preserve Bridgewater's history. These included the Friends of Bridgewater History, Somerset County Historical Society, Washington Campground Association, Middlebrook Symposium Group, and Heritage Trail Organization.

She highlighted that while some of these groups, like the Heritage Trail, are based at historic homes such as the Van Horn House, others, like Friends of Bridgewater History, meet at the Martinsville Community Center. She also shared personal connections to the Washington Campground Association, including family history with the annual reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Kevin Storms, representing the Washington Campground Association, spoke about the long history of the organization, dating back to 1894. He mentioned the important role of Bridgewater in the Revolutionary War and talked about future plans for the 250th anniversary in 2026 and 2027.

Bob Barr from the Middlebrook Symposium introduced the significance of the Middlebrook Encampment, where George Washington and his generals stayed during the winter of 1777-1779. Bar emphasized that while Valley Forge is often recognized, the Middlebrook Encampment was just as important to the Revolutionary War effort. He encouraged people to attend the upcoming symposium and future events to learn more about the region's history.

**Public
Hearing &
Final Action
Ordinances**

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF PROPERTY KNOWN AS LOT 15 IN BLOCK 477 ON THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP TAX MAP AND LOCATED AT 901 ROUTE 202/206 TO NOUVELLE MAIN STREET URBAN RENEWAL, LLC OF 610 ANDERSON AVE CLIFFSIDE PARK, NJ 07010 (BUYER), FOR A NOMINAL CONSIDERATION OF \$100.00 PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A: 12-21(l) TO CONSTRUCT AFFORDABLE HOUSING. IF THE DEVELOPER IS UNABLE TO MEET CONSTRUCTION COST THROUGH OTHER SOURCES, THE TOWNSHIP MAY CONTRIBUTE UP TO \$150,000 FROM THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

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

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

Ms. Franco asked for the current balance of the affordable housing trust fund in Bridgewater and inquired about how a member of the public could quickly access that information without going through an OPRA (Open Public Records Act) request. She asked who they should contact to obtain this information.

Mr. Pappas responded that he would get the information from Mr. Pando and provide it by the next day.

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

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

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

ORDINANCE #25-01 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-087](#) is appended to the official minutes

Resolutions

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT FUND \$7,637,072.98, WHICH BRINGS THE 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS TO \$30,848,074.96

Councilman Pedroso inquired about the budget calculations, noting that the total General Appropriations for 2024 was listed as \$50.5 million. He questioned how the figure of \$61.7 million was reached, stating that if the reported \$30.8 million was multiplied by two, the numbers did not align.

Administrator Pappas explained that there is a maximum amount a governing body can approve for the initial temporary budget. He clarified that during the reorganization, a temporary budget is approved, and there is a statutory limitation on what percentage of the budget can be allocated for that first temporary budget.

Councilman Ring clarified that Councilman Pedroso appeared to assume that because \$30.8 million was spent over six months, an equivalent amount would be spent in the second half of the year. He explained that, as previously discussed, certain bills are paid in the first six months as one-time annual payments. Therefore, the spending is not necessarily a direct dollar-for-dollar match for each half of the year but is instead based on the timing of expenses.

Councilman Kirsh emphasized that expenditures are not distributed evenly month to month. He noted that some expenses are front-loaded toward the beginning of the year.

On the 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	Nay
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-088](#) is appended to the official minutes

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS IN CURRENT FUND \$4,054,976.50 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25) LOCAL EMPLOYER BILLING FOR THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM (PERS) AND THE POLICE AND FIREMAN'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM (PFRS), WHICH BRINGS THE 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS TO \$22,900,712.48

Councilman Pedroso stated that without a budget, he would not be able to support the resolution.

Councilman Kirsh commented that public employees deserve to have their pensions properly funded, which is why he would be voting yes on the resolution.

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

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

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-089](#) is appended to the official minutes

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR SEWER FUND \$2,015,578.26, WHICH BRINGS THE 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS TO \$5,496,771.72

Councilman Pedroso stated that without a budget, he would not be able to support the resolution.

Councilman Kirsh explained he will be supporting this resolution because the sewer bills needs to be paid.

On the 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	Nay
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-090](#) is appended to the official minutes

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, TO BECOME AN OFFICIAL REVOLUTION NJ COMMUNITY

On the 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 [#25-03-06-091](#) is appended to the official minutes

RESOLUTION FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER ENDORSING THE EFFORTS OF NOUVELLE & ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES, INC TO SECURE AN APPLICATION WITH SOMERSET COUNTY HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS FOR BRIDGEWATER SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROJECT TO CONSTRUCT AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT ON BLOCK 477, LOT 15, ALSO KNOWN AS 901 ROUTE 202/206

Councilman Norgalis stated that the documentation provided supports the development of the home. He clarified that the council is not providing any money; they are simply approving the project to move forward.

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#25-03-06-092](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING DISBURSAL OF \$6,000 FROM THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND FOR ADDITIONAL RENOVATIONS AND REPAIRS FOR ONE (1) COMPLETED PROPERTY AT BLOCK 520/LOT 14 AKA 509 MERCER STREET THROUGH THE BRIDGEWATER HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Administrator Pappas explained that Rehabco manages the program for the town. They have an inspector who assesses the property, oversees the bidding process, and works with pre-qualified vendors. Rehabco is also responsible for supervising the actual work being done.

On the 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 [#25-03-06-093](#) is appended to the official minutes

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2025 SOMERSET COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT BY THE FOLLOWING 501(c)(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WITH INTENDED PROJECTS WITHIN BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP: CASA SHAW, HOMESHARING, INC., THE SHIMON AND SARA BIRNBAUM JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, VISIONS AND PATHWAYS, AND YOUTH CONSULTATION SERVICES

Councilman Kirsh acknowledged his role on the Board of Trustees of Home Sharing but stated that since no money was changing hands, he did not feel conflicted and would proceed with voting.

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

Councilman Kirsh Aye
Councilman Kurdyla Aye

Councilman Pedroso	Abstain
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-094](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING QUALIFIED VENDORS FOR VARIOUS OPEN-ENDED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING, PLANNING, SURVEYING, AND CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR 2025

Administrator Pappas mentioned that this year, they made a change to the resolution. Each of the entities submitted for specific expertise, and the resolution now reflects that, rather than grouping the entire list.

On the 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	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-095](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$101,000.00 TO RJM LANDSCAPE AND DESIGN, LLC OF 821 PARSONAGE HILL DRIVE, BRANCHBURG, NJ 08876 FOR SNOW REMOVAL SERVICES IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$251,000.00 FOR THE 2024 – 2025 WINTER SEASON TO BE FUNDED FROM THE SNOW REMOVAL ACCOUNT

Councilman Kurdyla pointed out that the documentation in front of them is an accounting of the hours spent with the vendor for snow removal services. He emphasized that they are not just voting to approve additional funding, but that there is a document outlining the hours and the logic behind those numbers.

Councilman Ring added that he wanted to clarify the question regarding the number of hours. He explained that it varies by storm, with hours ranging from 85.5 hours on the low end to almost 400 hours, as seen on New Year's Day. He emphasized that the number of hours is not a random figure but is based on the severity and scope of each storm.

Councilman Kirsh added that this is part of the comprehensive snow removal plan. Some snow removal is done by municipal employees using town equipment, while other work is handled through a flexible arrangement with contractors.

On the 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 [#25-03-06-096](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF THE SAFETY & STABILIZATION BOND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000.00, ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITE IMPROVEMENTS, AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE MAINTENANCE GUARANTEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$24,630.00 FOR PSE&G, BLOCK 552 LOT 3 AT 961 ROUTE 22

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#25-03-06-097](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER #1/FINAL CHANGE ORDER DECREASING THE CONTRACT PRICE FROM \$786,243.20 TO \$682,759.94 A DECREASE OF 13.16% OR \$103,483.26, AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROJECT, RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE BOND, ACCEPTANCE OF THE MAINTENANCE BOND, AND FINAL PAYMENT TO TOP LINE CONSTRUCTION CORP. (22 FIFTH STREET, SOMERVILLE, NJ 08876) FOR THE 2024-2 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE BASE BID FOR THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF ANDOVER AVENUE, BERWICK DRIVE, MORRIS STREET (OFF NORTH AVENUE), NORTH AVENUE AND ROANOKE ROAD AND ALTERNATE BID FOR ERIN COURT, ETHEL COURT AND MOORHOUSE COURT, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2024 CAPITAL ROAD FUND

On the 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	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Norgalis	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-098](#) is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER #1/FINAL CHANGE ORDER INCREASING THE CONTRACT PRICE FROM \$768,347.16 TO \$921,786.40 AN INCREASE OF 19.97% OR \$153,439.24, AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROJECT, RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE BOND, ACCEPTANCE OF THE MAINTENANCE BOND, AND FINAL PAYMENT TO TOP LINE CONSTRUCTION CORP. (22 FIFTH STREET, SOMERVILLE, NJ 08876) FOR THE BRANCH ROAD AND EDGEWOOD DRIVE ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE LENGTHS OF BRANCH ROAD AND EDGEWOOD DRIVE, FUNDED THROUGH THE 2023 CAPITAL ROAD FUND

Council President Norgalis explained that he had pushed the engineering department hard on this issue and found that the cost increase was due to two significant factors: the installation of 500 feet of 12-inch reinforced pipe and the need for additional topsoil. He referenced the added "whereas" clause, which clarified that the cost increase stemmed from unforeseen work, including additional stormwater drainage and other improvements that weren't identified during the detailed design phase. The work was necessary due to concerns raised by residents about pre-existing issues, especially safety improvements. This area, lacking curbs and having eroded pipes under driveways, required additional work to address these drainage problems.

Administrator Pappas confirmed that Mr. Burr had prepared detailed documentation outlining every instance of additional piping, curbing, or drainage installed, giving a sense of the extent of the additions. Council President Norgalis emphasized that the 19% increase in costs got his attention, but after extensive discussion, particularly concerning the drainage issues, it was clear this work needed to be done to avoid future problems.

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, 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 [#25-03-06-099](#) is appended to the official minutes

WAIVER OF FIRE PERMIT FEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$300 FOR ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX PARISH IN CONNECTION WITH HOSTING “HOME” HOMELESS FAMILIES AT THEIR LOCATION, 500 ROUTE 22, BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807 ON THE FOLLOWING DATES: JANUARY 19 THRU JANUARY 26, APRIL 6 THRU APRIL 13, MAY 25 THRU JUNE 1, SEPTEMBER 21 THRU SEPTEMBER 28, AND OCTOBER 26 THRU NOVEMBER 1

Councilman Ring stated that he would be more than happy to move the resolution, expressing that he thinks it's wonderful that the organization can provide temporary housing to the homeless. He noted that the Fire Official has capped the number of people at no more than 14 per occasion.

On the 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 [#25-03-06-100](#) 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 and litigations.

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

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

On the motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the Council convened in closed session at approximately 9:37 p.m.

A copy of resolution [#25-03-06-101](#) is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 10:04 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Adjournment

On the motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Njuguna, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Howard Norgalis
Council President