

**BRIDGETON CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 3, 2023**

A Reorganization Meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 5:30 p.m., at the City of Bridgeton Police and Municipal Court Complex, 330 Fayette Street, Bridgeton, New Jersey in Council Chambers.

The meeting was called to order by Municipal Clerk, Nichole Almanza.

The Statement of Meeting Notice was read by Municipal Clerk, Nichole Almanza;

Notice of this Reorganization Meeting of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton, as required by N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., the "Open Public Meetings Act", has been provided to the South Jersey Times, The Daily Journal on December 10, 2022 and on the City Website setting forth the date, time and place of this meeting of the Bridgeton City Council.

The Municipal Clerk asked Reverend Dozier to lead the Invocation and Flag Salute.

**OATHS OF OFFICE:**

The Municipal Clerk announced this being the time and place for the swearing in and administering of Oaths of Office of the newly elected officials and called upon Honorable Judge Jason D. Witcher to swear in the Councilmembers Elect.

Honorable Judge Jason D. Witcher provided the oaths for all elected officials with family members close by. Judge Witcher congratulated all and thanked them for the opportunity to swear them in.

Mayor Kelly presented the leaders that will represent the City for the next four years. He handed out information as to their past accomplishments in previously elected terms.

Mayor Kelly referred to a book called "Good Degree" and explained how he uses it in his daily life and personal career.

Mayor Kelly thanked his Council Colleagues for representing the population of the City of Bridgeton. He continued that they will continue to move the City in the right direction even with hills to climb. He added that they will not give up.

Mayor Kelly asked all to pray for Council and himself that they do what needs to be done for greatness in the City.

The Municipal Clerk then called the roll of the Bridgeton City Council:

**The following answered to roll call:**

Council President Edward Bethea  
Councilwoman Rosemary DeQuinzio  
Councilman J. Curtis Edwards  
Councilman David Gonzalez  
Councilwoman Marian King

**Also in attendance:**

Mayor Albert Kelly  
Solicitor Michele Gibson  
CFO Trisha McGahhey  
Administrator Kevin Rabago  
Municipal Clerk Nichole Almanza

**ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT 2023**

The Municipal Clerk announced nominations are now in order for the President of City Council.

Councilman Edwards nominated Councilman Bethea for President of the City Council for the Year 2023. There being no other nominations for President of City Council, the nominations were closed.

A roll call vote was taken for Edward Bethea for Council President for the Year 2023.

Betha   Y      DeQuinzio   Y      Edwards   Y      Gonzalez   Y      King   Y  

The Municipal Clerk announced the vote of 5-0, Councilman Bethea was elected as City Council President of the Year 2023.

**MINUTES:**

Council President Bethea presented the City Council Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2022. It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez and seconded by Councilman Edwards that said minutes be approved and to dispense with the reading of said minutes as all members have received copies. The motion carried unanimously.

**Council President Bethea referred to the Mayor, Business Administrator and Solicitor for their reports.**

**Mayor Kelly** – Discussed the Fire Station Project and presented the printed photo of what is being done at the location.

Mayor Kelly stated he is scheduling a meeting with the Governor’s Office to discuss the Culvert situation.

Mayor Kelly stated that this side of the County is in dire need of a shelter for the homeless. He explained the difficulties that Code Blue are facing with some with mental health issues and how they are not equipped to handle these situations.

Mayor Kelly stated that the City is looking for a Park and Recreation Director. He continued that the park has always been the jewel of the City. He added he would like to add on to what we have at the old landfill site and the Tin Can site.

Mayor Kelly stated that there has been a continuous downward trend in crime in the City. He stated that he would like to hire and recruit additional officers to continue to make the City a safer place to live.

Mayor Kelly thanked all voters that voted for him and his team of colleagues. He continued that he hopes to earn the trust of those that did not vote for them over the next four years.

**Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago** – Congratulated all officials and stated he is looking forward to their leadership.

**City Solicitor, Michele Gibson** – Congratulated all officials for being elected for another term.

**ORDINANCES ON 1<sup>ST</sup> READING:**

Council President Bethea announced there was one (1) Ordinance for First Reading. The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinances.

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY OF BRIDGETON**

It was moved by Councilwoman King and seconded by Councilman Gonzalez that the Ordinance be introduced on first reading and that the second reading, public hearing and final consideration be held on January 17, 2022.

**The Clerk called the roll as follows:**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Edwards	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Gonzalez	<b>X</b>			
Councilwoman King	<b>X</b>			
Council President Bethea	<b>X</b>			

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING ORDINANCE 22-34 FIXING THE SALARIES AND RATES OF CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES**

It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez and seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that the Ordinance be introduced on first reading and that the second reading, public hearing and final consideration be held on January 17, 2022.

**The Clerk called the roll as follows:**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Edwards	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Gonzalez	<b>X</b>			
Councilwoman King	<b>X</b>			
Council President Bethea	<b>X</b>			

**ORDINANCES ON 2<sup>ND</sup> READING:**

Council President Bethea announced there were no Ordinances for Second Reading.

**PUBLIC PORTION:**

Council President Bethea opened the meeting to the public for anyone desiring to be heard. It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez motioned and seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio the public portion be opened.

Alan Trzuskoski of 7 N. Industrial Blvd., thanked all Councilmembers that were able to come see the Commerce Street location. He stated he is hoping to bring more businesses in the area with the opening of a dispensary downtown. He stated that he will work with Mr. Rabago with getting information as to any changes that need to be completed to move forward. He stated it has been great working with Mr. Cheeks.

Mr. Trzuskoski discussed the upcoming RFP for the Cannabis Location and stated that he is aiding local residents with applying for same. He introduced Kaushal Thakkar and Akshay Patel to Council. Mr. Kaushal Thakkar of Vineland explained that his parent's owned Todd's News Agency in Vineland for multiple years. He congratulated Council on their new term. Mr. Akshay Patel of Vineland that his parents own two local delis in the area. He explained that he is interested in the CREAM Act and working with the City.

Damien Cheeks of Cedardell Avenue stated that he liked the Mayor's quote of "Do It Right". He stated that he has an open-door policy and would love to speak with Council should they have any concerns or questions.

Dean Dellaquila of Natalie Lane in Millville stated that he may now live in Millville but Bridgeton will forever be his home. He congratulated Council and Mayor for their reelection. He continued that with this leadership, there is no reason why the City won't continue to move forward. He wished them all best of luck.

With no one else desiring to be heard, it was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilman Gonzalez the public portion be closed, which motion was carried. Council President Bethea closed the public portion of the meeting.

## **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Council President Bethea announced all matters listed under the consent agenda; M-1 through M-16 will be enacted upon by one motion unless a council member desires to discuss an item, in which case the items will be removed from the consent agenda and acted upon separately.

Council President Bethea called upon the Municipal Clerk to read the Resolutions of the Consent Agenda.

**RESOLUTION NO. 01-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton designating the Date, Time, and Place of the Meetings of the City Council for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-23**, appointing the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the City of Bridgeton for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 03-23**, designating the Official Newspapers for the City of Bridgeton for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 04-23**, designating the Official Radio Stations for the City of Bridgeton for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 05-23**, authorizing the adoption of Robert's Rules of Order.

**RESOLUTION NO. 06-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the adoption of a Cash Management Plan.

**RESOLUTION NO. 07-23**, designating the Official Depositories and Investment Groups for the City of Bridgeton for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 08-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton designating Official Check Signers for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 09-23**, providing for a Temporary Budget for the City of Bridgeton for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 10-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton imposing liens on various properties for remediation of certain code violations impacting public safety, health or welfare November 2022.

**RESOLUTION NO. 11-23**, expressing support for Canna Method LLC for proposed operations at 5 S. Industrial Blvd. within the City of Bridgeton.

**RESOLUTION NO. 12-23**, authorizing Interlocal Services between the City of Bridgeton and the County of Cumberland with regard to the Meals on Wheels Program.

**RESOLUTION NO. 13-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton confirming Mayoral Appointment of Department Heads for various departments within the City of Bridgeton.

**RESOLUTION NO. 14-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton fixing the rate of interest and penalties charged on taxes for the year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 15-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the City of Bridgeton to adopt an updated Purchasing Policy and Manual.

**RESOLUTION NO. 16-23**, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to advertise for Water Main Improvements and Resurfacing for Parker Street and Marion Street from Walnut Street to Church Street in the City of Bridgeton.

Council President Bethea asked for a motion to accept the resolutions under the consent agenda.

It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that Resolutions M-1 through M-16 be adopted which motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. The original resolutions may be found in the Resolution Book.

**The Clerk called the roll as follows:**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Edwards	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Gonzalez	<b>X</b>			
Councilwoman King	<b>X</b>			
Council President Bethea	<b>X</b>			

**SCHEDULE OF BILLS:**

Council President Bethea asked Council for a motion to approve the Schedule of Bills dated December 29, 2022 in the amount of \$416,974.46. It was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilwoman King the Schedule of Bills be approved as read and warrants be drawn on their various accounts and appropriations, which motion was carried by unanimous roll call vote. The original schedule may be found in the minute books.

**APPLICATIONS:**

Council President Bethea announced there were no applications for approval.

**REPORTS:**

Council President Bethea announced there was one (1) report for approval.

1. Treasurer’s Monthly Report – November 2022

It was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio and seconded by Councilman Edwards that said applications be approved and filed, which motion carried unanimously.

**Council President Bethea called upon Mayor Kelly for comments:**

**Mayor Kelly** – None at this time.

**Council President Bethea called upon Council for comments:**

**Councilwoman DeQuinzio** – Spoke to Alan and Damien and stated that their vision is incredible. She stated that she is excited to hear all of their ideas.

Councilwoman DeQuinzio thanked Dean Dellaquila for his kind words.

**Councilwoman King** – Thanked all that voted for the team. She also wished everyone a Happy New Year.

**Councilman Gonzalez-** Wished everyone a Happy New Year for 2023.

Councilman Gonzalez stated that is a privilege to work with this team again and he is excited to see what they can do together.

Councilman Gonzalez stated that there were recent approvals from the Planning Board regarding a future Taco Bell. He also stated there was an approval for regarding industrial park for more businesses and progress.

Councilman Gonzalez thanked all 1<sup>st</sup> responders – Fire Department Police Department for their dedication to the City.

**Councilman Edwards** – Wished a Happy New Year to all. He thanked everyone for coming out to tonight's meeting. He explained this is his 12<sup>th</sup> year going forward and that Council has a lot of work to do. He congratulated his colleagues and Mayor for their re-election.

Councilman Edwards thanked all that voted for the team and hopes to win over those who didn't.

**Council President Bethea** – Wished all a Happy New Year.

Council President Bethea thanked all that voted. He explained that a lot of effort goes into being this team.

Council President Bethea thanked his colleagues for his nomination to be Council President for 2023.

Council President Bethea discussed the recent NFL game whereas a player was severely injured. He asked for continued prayers for his recovery.

Council President Bethea spoke of Economic Development for 2023. He explained that this is something that Council will be working on. He stated that the bank building is very nice and he hopes that Mr. Cheeks has great success.

Council President Bethea stated that he is discussing with Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago and Mayor Kelly regarding needing more businesses downtown. He continued that he hopes to recruit more in 2023.

Council President Bethea stated that discussions have been made with the college regarding a location within the City of Bridgeton.

Council President Bethea stated that as the County Seat, the City needs to show more Economic Development.

Council President Bethea stated he is proud to see the Fire Department project move forward. He stated that we want to make sure it is done right so it can be used for many years to come.

Council President Bethea thanked all 1<sup>st</sup> Responders and stated that he is proud and pleased with the work that they continue to do – Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works. He stated that they are the best in the State of New Jersey.

Council President Bethea thanked Judge Witcher for swearing in the officials tonight. He explained that Judge Witcher is getting heat for speaking up against what he feels is wrongdoing. He continued that the City Council supports Judge Witcher and having him here to swear them in is a clear signal that they support and will continue to support him.

Council President Bethea thanked Dean Dellaquila for his kind words and stated he hopes he is enjoying retirement.


Council President Bethea thanked all Civil Servants, Administration, CFO, Solicitor and Municipal Clerk.

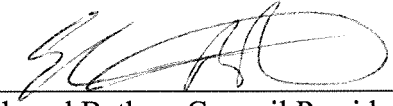
**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business before Council, it was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio and seconded by Councilman Gonzalez to adjourn the meeting which motion carried unanimously.

Council President Bethea adjourned the meeting which ended at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nichole Almanza, RMC, Municipal Clerk

APPROVED  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Edward Bethea, Council President

Date Approved: 1/17/23