

**BRIDGETON CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 7, 2023**

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, February 7, 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 Council President Bethea.

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

Notice of this 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 January 7, 2023 and on the City Website setting forth the date, time and place of this meeting of the Bridgeton City Council.

Invocation and Flag Salute was led by Councilman Gonzalez.

**The following answered to roll call:**

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

**Also in attendance:**

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

**MINUTES:**

Council President Bethea presented the City Council Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2023. 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.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

***Police Chief Michael Gaimari – Promotions and New Hires – Swearing-In Ceremony***

Police Chief Michael Gaimari discussed the daily duties and risks in the day of the life of a Police Officer. He stated that he hopes to provide officers and staff that will continue greatness in the City.

Mr. Edwards welcomed the cannabis dispensary and explained that he would like to see the money stay here in the City.

Mr. Edwards expressed his feelings regarding the employee health benefits for the City. He stated that this should be shopped around every few years. He added that the City has not made any changes in about 12 years. He asked for Council to take action to get the claims and this looked into.

Laquanda Bradshaw and Cynthia Rainer of South Pine Street questioned whether landlords were able to put all of the household bills onto the tenants. Ms. Rainer explained that trash, water, and sewer bills are being put onto the tenant. She stated that landlords should be held responsible for paying something. Ms. Bradshaw provided an update on her situation and explained that she now has until April to find a new place.

Carl Seabrook of Baltimore Avenue discussed the transition of Grove Street into a temporary two-way street.

Mr. Seabrook discussed the elevators at the High Rise and explained that only one is in working condition. He expressed his concerns for safety of the residents. He stated that the new security is doing a great job.

Linda Shipman of Vine Street expressed her frustrations with getting in contact with individuals within the City. She explained that she is looking to open a Tax Office and needs information regarding signage and getting approval for mix use.

Esaul Martin of Eagle Street and member of the Housing Authority announced the new Executive Director, Ivy Melendez starting February 13, 2023. Mr. Martin stated that Ms. Melendez's main goal is to help the tenants. Mr. Martin stated that the elevator is being looked into but discussed budgeting issues.

Yvonne Young of Millville discussed being a volunteer all of her life in various ways. She stated that she has been trying to rectify an issue for about 4 years now regarding volunteering at the Cohanzick Zoo. She stated that she has sent in letters and emails and has not had a response from anyone.

John Fuqua of Willow Drive stated that he recently met with the Prosecutor's Office regarding the recent uptick in juvenile shootings. Mr. Fuqua discussed various issues in the school and using his program to try to speak with students. He continued that he would like to get Spanish speaking volunteers involved in his "Life Worth Living" program.

With no one else desiring to be heard, it was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilwoman King 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-21 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 asked that M-21 of the Consent Agenda be voted on separately.

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 31-23**, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award a Contract to Pioneer Pipe Co. for South Avenue Force Main Replacement Project in the amount of \$521,730.00.

**RESOLUTION NO. 32-23**, 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- December 2022.

**RESOLUTION NO. 33-23**, authorizing a Contract with new Jersey Emergency Vehicles (NJEV) for the purchase of 1 (one) 2022 Ford F-450 4x4, Diesel Ambulance in the amount not to exceed \$336,000.00.

**RESOLUTION NO. 34-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing submission of a UEZ Project to provide HSE/GED Classes and ESL Instruction for 30-40 individuals within Bridgeton's UEZ.

**RESOLUTION NO. 35-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton approving use of a portion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for purchase of a mobile command unit for the Police Department consistent with uses outlined in 31 CFR Part 35.

**RESOLUTION NO. 36-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton amending Resolution No. 09-23 and Resolution No. 21-23 providing for a Temporary Budget for the City of Bridgeton for the Year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 37-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing submission of a UEZ Project to create a revolving Loan Fund for UEZ-Certified Businesses.

**RESOLUTION NO. 38-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing submission of a UEZ Project to purchase up to thirty-six trash/recycling receptacles for the Downtown and Riverfront Plaza.

**RESOLUTION NO. 39-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing and directing a study with respect to the creation of a Redevelopment Plan within the Downtown Central Business District.

**RESOLUTION NO. 40-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the auction of certain property on the tax map of the City of Bridgeton.

**RESOLUTION NO. 41-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton confirming Mayoral Appointment for the Department of Recreation and Public Affairs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 42-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton designating Cannis Dispensary, LLC as the Redeveloper for Block 170 Lot 9 and authorizing Redevelopment and Purchase/Sale Agreements for Block 170 Lot 9.

**RESOLUTION NO. 43-23**, expressing support for Canna Method LLC to operate as a Class 2 Manufacturer at 5 S. Industrial Blvd. within the City of Bridgeton.

**RESOLUTION NO. 44-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton directing and authorizing the Bridgeton Planning Board to consider amending the Cumberland Dairy

Redevelopment Plan (including any amendments thereto) to provide for the acquisition and sale, lease, or conveyance of Block 9, 10.

**RESOLUTION NO. 45-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing certain utility account adjustments and taxes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 46-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton stating the City of Bridgeton will appropriate funding for the Annual Landfill Post Closure expenses in the 2023 Solid Waste Utility Operating Budget.

**RESOLUTION NO. 47-23**, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award a Renewal Contract to Marlee Contractors, LLC for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) maintenance and repairs service to City of Bridgeton Public Works/Public Buildings for the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) year.

**RESOLUTION NO. 48-23**, authorizing the purchase of thirty-five (35) Motorola V300 Bodyworn Cameras with options under New Jersey State Contract 17-FLEET-00793 pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-12 in an amount not to exceed \$61,495.00.

**RESOLUTION NO. 49-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton amending Resolution No. 01-23 setting forth the dates, time, and place of the meetings of the City Council for the year 2023.

**RESOLUTION NO. 50-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing submission of a UEZ Project for funding to acquire 14-16 E. Commerce Street and complete fit-outs to accommodate Rowan College Satellite Campus.

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

It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilman Edwards that Resolutions M-1 through M-20 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	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez	X			
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea	X			

Councilman Edwards made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-21** being **RESOLUTION NO. 51-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the Sale of Block 154 Lots 26, 27 & 29 and Block 191 Lot 26 to Gateway Community Action Partnership to facilitate the construction of affordable housing.

It was moved by Councilwoman King and second by Councilman Gonzalez that resolution M-21 be adopted which motion carried 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	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez	X			
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea			X	

**SCHEDULE OF BILLS:**

Council President Bethea asked Council for a motion to approve the Schedule of Bills dated February 7, 2023 in the amount of \$6,325,998.15. It was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilman Gonzalez 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 Report – December 2022**

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

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

**Mayor Kelly** – Stated that Code Blue has been issued for 42 nights so far. He discussed Code Blue receiving a lot of donations of food and clothing recently. He added that the program does not provide any type of mental health services to individuals.

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

**Councilwoman DeQuinzio** – None at this time.

**Councilwoman King** – Stated she is looking forward to the Superbowl and spoke highly of Isiah Pacheco.

Councilwoman King stated that she is happy to hear the update on Ms. Bradshaw. She stated that rental increases are happening everywhere. She continued that in regards to the tenants paying water and sewer bills, that this is just making its way into our County and has been utilized in most of New Jersey for some time now.

Councilwoman King addressed the correspondence received from Ms. Leone and stated that she did not understand what she was actually looking for.

Councilwoman King addressed Ms. Shipman and stated that she does not like the fact that she has not received any answers for her next move. Councilwoman King stated the City needs to work on streamlining these processes such as getting onto an electronic system.

Councilwoman King stated that the Council Meetings and the Board of Education Meetings are held on the same night and suggested that the City looks into changing the meeting dates in the future so residents can attend both meetings.

**Councilman Gonzalez-** Congratulated the new hires and promotions from the Police Department. He expressed his feelings regarding the need of the mobile station and stated that it will bring a much-needed presence in certain areas.

Councilman Gonzalez thanked all 1<sup>st</sup> Responders.

Councilman Gonzalez expressed his concerns with the recent shootings with young people involved. He praised John Fuqua and his program and stated that it is very much need in our County and it is making a difference.

Councilman Gonzalez thanked Mr. Seabrook for bringing the concerns regarding the High Rise elevator to Council.

Councilman Gonzalez thanked all of the residents that attended tonight's meeting.

**Councilman Edwards** – Discussed the health benefits issues that were mentioned earlier during Public Portion and asked Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago to look into this.

Councilman Edwards spoke about the new Recreation Director. Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago introduced John Medica to Council. Mr. Medica explained that he has worked the last 12 years with the Philadelphia Recreation Department. Mr. Medica discussed wanting to get some new programs up and running for the City.

Councilman Edwards stated there is a dire need for a homeless shelter on this side of the County.

Councilman Edwards stated that the City welcomes businesses but has heard that it is hard to get started with us.

Councilman Edwards stated that someone is interested in rebuilding the old Hillcrest Building.

Councilman Edwards stated that Council tried to stop the two-way on Grove Street but were not successful.

Councilman Edwards congratulated Monal Patel and Mike Patel.

**Council President Bethea** – stated that he supports all of Councils remarks.

Council President Bethea reminded residents to attend the March 28<sup>th</sup> joint meeting between Council and the Board of Education being held at the Municipal Court Building. He stated that we are a stressed City but we need to work together to turn the City around. He added that Council does not control the Board of Education or any of their decisions. Council President Bethea reminded residents that they have the biggest say with their votes.

Council President Bethea stated that he is not pleased at all with the County Commissioners and how the culvert has been handled. He discussed how a temporary fix could easily become a permanent situation. He continued that Council did everything that they had the power to do but were unsuccessful. Council President Bethea stated that if this culvert situation was anywhere else in the County, that it would have been fixed already. He added that Council will continue to fight for the culvert to be fixed.

Council President Bethea thanked Esaul Martin for working so hard. He stated that Council expects nothing but good work with the new Director.

Council President Bethea stated that he agrees with Councilwoman King and Councilman Edwards regarding Ms. Shipman's frustrations with obtaining answers for a new business. He asked Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago to look into this issue.

Council President Bethea discussed M-8 from the Consent Agenda. He stated that Council concentrates on litter and trash in the City and is happy to see more cans in the City.

Council President Bethea congratulated Mr. Patel and Ms. Patel and stated that he hopes local employees are hired.

Council President Bethea discussed M-19 from the Consent Agenda. He stated that this needed to be amended to add the Joint Meeting in March and to correct another date. He discussed the publishing requirements that the City must meet.

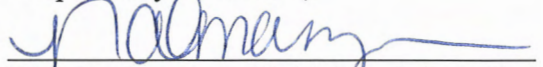
Council President Bethea thanked and saluted all 1<sup>st</sup> Responders – Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works and all Public Servants.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

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

Council President Bethea adjourned the meeting which ended at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Nichole Almanza, RMC, Municipal Clerk

APPROVED  
  
Edward Bethea, Council President

Date Approved: 2/21/23