

**BRIDGETON CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
May 16, 2023**

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, May 16, 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 by an Amended Public Advertisement in the South Jersey Times, The Daily Journal on February 11, 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 Mayor Kelly.

The following answered to roll call:

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

Absent: Councilman David Gonzalez

Also in attendance:

Mayor Albert Kelly
Solicitor Michele Gibson
CFO Trisha McGahhey

Administrator Kevin Rabago
Municipal Clerk Nichole Almanza

PRESENTATIONS:

Budget Items:

Budget Public Hearing

Council President Bethea announced this is the time and place set forth for the Public Hearing of the CY2023 Municipal Budget.

It was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that the meeting be opened to the public for a hearing on the CY2023 Municipal Budget which motion was carried unanimously.

Council President Bethea opened the meeting to anyone desiring to be heard on the CY2023 Municipal Budget only.

With no one desiring to be heard it was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that the public hearing on the CY2023 Municipal Budget be closed, which carried unanimously.

Council President Bethea announced **RESOLUTION E-2** being **RESOLUTION NO. 103-23**, to amend the CY2023 Municipal Budget with the Public Hearing set for June 20, 2023.

Councilman Edwards made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION NO. 103-23** which was seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez				X
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea	X			

Council President Bethea announced **RESOLUTION E-3** being **RESOLUTION NO. 104-23**, amending Resolution 80-23 authorizing additional emergency temporary appropriations pending final adoption on the Calendar Year 2023 Budget.

Councilwoman DeQuinzio made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION NO. 104-23** which was seconded by Councilman Edwards.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez				X
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea	X			

MINUTES:

Council President Bethea presented the City Council Meeting Minutes of May 2, 2023. It was moved by Councilwoman King and seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that said minutes be approved and to dispense with the reading of said minutes as all members have received copies. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

Council President Bethea requested Council/Committee Liaison Reports:

Councilwoman DeQuinzio – None at this time.

Councilwoman King – None at this time.

Councilman Edwards – Discussed the Fire House Project and provided some updates on the project. He indicated that it will be going out to bid soon for construction. He discussed rumors of budget concerns due to inflated prices, etc.

Council President Bethea asked Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago, Mayor Kelly and CFO, Trisha McGahhey to stay on top of this project as we only have the money that we originally budgeted.

Council President Bethea – Discussed Economic Development within the City. He expressed his frustrations that the City does not have any cannabis licenses approved by the State.

Mayor Kelly stated that he met with the CRC regarding this issue and expressed to them all of the concerns the City and Council have. He continued that there are no applications being heard until June.

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

Mayor Kelly – Handed Council a letter received from the League of Municipal regarding the Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief Fund. He explained that they want a letter from him explaining that the City needs this money collected. He explained that this fund only released money to the City for about 2 years.

Mayor Kelly discussed an incident within the Hope 6 area and provided details of a meeting that took place. He stated that additional lighting and cameras will be added.

Mayor Kelly stated he would like to meet with the various housing complexes monthly to help stay on top of concerns.

Mayor Kelly stated he was searching for family members of Mr. Lester Williams, Jr. He explained that Mr. Williams died in Vietnam after throwing himself on top of a grenade to help shield fellow soldiers. He continued that he is working with Senator Booker to nominate Mr. Williams for a Congressional Medal of Honor.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago – Discussed the issues with the Hope 6 area. He stated that the cameras are going to be repaired. He continued that the Police Department will now have access to the system so they can pull video feed when needed. He added that the property managers will also have the trees trimmed and additional lights added to the area. Mr. Rabago stated that they are also interested in a dedicated police patrol, which they will pay for.

Mr. Rabago discussed the pedestrian crossing issue by the Wawa on Route 49. He stated that a young girl was recently hit while crossing the road. He continued that the Department of Transportation is currently investigating the area regarding traffic and safety for pedestrians.

City Solicitor, Michele Gibson – None at this time.

ORDINANCES ON 1ST READING:

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

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING SECTION 321-13 (E) (1) THRU (5) OF THE CITY CODE PERTAINING TO TAXI RATES

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 May 16, 2023.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez				X
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea	X			

ORDINANCES ON 2ND READING:

Council President Bethea announced there were two (2) Ordinances for Second Reading. Council President Bethea asked the Municipal Clerk to read the Ordinances.

ORDINANCE 23-13

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING CHAPTER 149, ARTICLE II, SECTION 149-27 OF THE CITY CODE CONCERNING CERTAIN POLICE DEPARTMENT-RELATED FEES

It was moved by Councilwoman King and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio this be considered the second reading of said ordinance and the meeting be opened to the public for a hearing on the matter which motion was carried unanimously.

Council President Bethea opened the meeting to the public for any one desiring to be heard on this ordinance and this ordinance only.

No one desiring to be heard, it was moved by Councilwoman King and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

It was then moved by Councilwoman King and second by Councilman Edwards this be considered the final reading of said ordinance and that it be taken up for adoption or rejection by roll call vote.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez				X
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea	X			

ORDINANCE 23-14

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING ARTICLE II TO ESTABLISH A REAL ESTATE CLOSING FEE RELATED TO THE SALE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES INCLUDING DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND RECORDING COSTS

It was moved by Councilman Edwards and second by Councilwoman King this be considered the second reading of said ordinance and the meeting be opened to the public for a hearing on the matter which motion was carried unanimously.

Council President Bethea opened the meeting to the public for any one desiring to be heard on this ordinance and this ordinance only.

No one desiring to be heard, it was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio and second by Councilwoman King the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

It was then moved by Councilman Edwards and second by Councilwoman King this be considered the final reading of said ordinance and that it be taken up for adoption or rejection by roll call vote.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez				X
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea	X			

PUBLIC PORTION:

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

Todd Edwards (Address provided) – Asked for an update regarding the Employee Health Benefits. He explained that Allen Associates provided information to the City which was then turned over to Hardenburgh Insurance. He asked why Allen Associates hasn't received information to put in a quote for this.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago answered that the information was sent out for cost savings. He explained that initially it was looked into to do this by way of RFP process. He continued that he was recommended Hardenburgh Insurance to provide this information. Mr. Rabago explained that they are still waiting for numbers regarding the Southern Coastal HIF Fund.

Mr. Edwards stated that Mr. Damien Cheeks should have a location now and hopefully will update Council at the next meeting.

Cassandra Aviles and Esaul Martin representing the SEG Coordinator and Bridgeton Housing Authority announced a meeting (online and in-person) on May 18, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. regarding sidewalks and bike trails in South Avenue area. Esaul Martin discussed funding of the project.

Ms. Aviles announced a Job and Resource Fair to be held on June 9, 2023 at the Alms Center with over 45 vendors so far. She also announced the Family Day of Service scheduled for this Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the pocket park area on South Avenue.

Alan Trzuskoski, Industrial Blvd., discussed the conversion of Cannabilities. He continued that he has heard back from the State but is still waiting for full approval. He also provided information regarding the difference of Adult Use and Medical Program which could be a main reason why Bridgeton applications are being held up by the State.

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-8 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-8 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. 105-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton granting Veteran or Widow of Veteran Tax Exemption (189 W. Broad Street).

RESOLUTION NO. 106-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the Release of Escrow Funds with respect to Wanda Coursey (Homeland Property Management, LLC).

RESOLUTION NO. 107-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the City of Bridgeton to submit a Grant Application to the New Jersey Department of Transportation for Existing Brick Sidewalks Phase III Reconstruction.

RESOLUTION NO. 108-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton consolidating City of Bridgeton Bank Accounts.

RESOLUTION NO. 109-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing Contract for Sale for Block 9, Lot 10 (40 DuBois Avenue) owned by the City of Bridgeton.

RESOLUTION NO. 110-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing an extension of time for closing on Block 93, Lot 35 and Block 94, Lot 13 sold at auction on March 10, 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 111-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the City of Bridgeton to enter into an Amended Shared Services Agreement with the County of Cumberland to receive \$16,666.67 in additional Code Blue funding to be utilized for Code Blue activities.

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

It was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio and second by Councilwoman King that Resolutions M-1 through M-7 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:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez				X
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea	X			

Councilman Gonzalez made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-8** being **RESOLUTION NO. 112-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing additional \$16,666.67 in Code Blue Grant Funds to be awarded to Gateway Community Action Partnership for the provision of Code Blue Services to Bridgeton residents during the 2022 – 2023 Code Blue Season.. It was seconded by Councilwoman King that resolution M-8 be adopted which was seconded by Councilman Edwards.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	X			
Councilman Edwards	X			
Councilman Gonzalez				X
Councilwoman King	X			
Council President Bethea			X	

The original resolution may be found in the Resolution book.

SCHEDULE OF BILLS:

Council President Bethea asked Council for a motion to approve the Schedule of Bills dated May 16, 2023 in the amount of \$3,402,671.60. It was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 six (6) applications for approval being:

1. **Block Off Street** – Ashley Delgado and Tony Height – Music Festival - May 20, 2023 - 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. – E. Broad Street and S. Laurel Street, Bridgeton, NJ 08302 (Boat Ramp).

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

2. **Raffle** – Inspira Health Foundation – On-Premises Merchandise Raffle and Breast Cancer Ticket Auction – October 18, 2023 – 2:30 p.m. - 333 Irving Avenue, Bridgeton, NJ.

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

3. **Catering Application** – Kalidas, LLC – Music Festival - May 20, 2023 - 3:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. – (*Rain Date – June 3, 2023) - E. Broad Street and S. Laurel Street, Bridgeton, NJ 08302 (Boat Ramp).

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

4. **Block Off Street** – Bridgeton Public Schools BOE – Parade of Champions - May 31, 2023 – 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. – Scholastic Drive, Babe Ruth Drive, Burt Street, Bridgeton, NJ 08302.

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

5. **Block Off Street** – Juan A. Santis – Religious Services –July 1, 2023, August 5, 2023, September 30, 2023 and October 7, 2023 – 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. –Walnut Street from Myrtle Street to Myrtle Avenue.

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

6. **Block Off Street** – Rev. Leonida Feliciano – Religious Services – May 27, 2023, June 10, 2023, July 15, 2023, and August 19, 2023 (***Rain Dates:** June 3, 2023, June 17, 2023, July 22, 2023, and August 26, 2023)– 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. –Walnut Street from Myrtle Street to E. Myrtle Street.

It was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio and seconded by Councilwoman King that said application be approved and filed, which motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS:

Council President Bethea announced there were four (4) reports for approval.

1. Treasurer's Monthly Report – March 2023
2. Tax Collector's Cash Receipts – April 2023
3. Vital Statistic's Monthly Report – April 2023
4. Clerk's Monthly Report – April 2023

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

Council President Bethea called upon Mayor Kelly for comments:

Mayor Kelly – Stated that Chief Gaimari provided him some information regarding Mr. Lester Williams.

Council President Bethea called upon Council for comments:

Councilwoman DeQuinzio – None at this time.

Councilwoman King – Stated that it is a shame that it took a small child to be hit by the Wawa for the State to actually look into the issues.

Councilwoman King stated that the car show had a great turnout.

Councilman Edwards- Provided some information he was able to find about Mr. Lester Williams.

Councilman Edwards suggested a speed bump of some sort by the Wawa. He stated that something needs to be done now and not later.

Councilman Edwards spoke of the Fire House Project. He stated that the City does not have any sort of extra funding to spend. He suggested getting a Construction Budget Firm to help review and keep on track.

Councilman Edwards discussed the employee health benefits and asked if he could see something as to when we entered the current policy and how we got where we are now.

Council President Bethea – Expressed his concerns regarding the Wawa & Route 49 crossing. He asked City Solicitor, Michele Gibson to look into the City’s options and how to express the urgency to the State. Council President Bethea asked Police Chief Gaimari for any information of the incident. Chief Gaimari stated that the suspect was arrested and that the victim is in critical but stable condition.

Council President Bethea thanked Council for approving the introduced budget. He thanked CFO McGahhey for a fabulous job.

Council President Bethea discussed the employee health benefits and the budget. He explained that payroll and benefits are a big way to help the budget (decreases when needed). He continued that we do need to be Fair and Open to all to participate and see if there are any savings available for the City.

Council President Bethea discussed the County tax rate coming in lower than expected this year which helped the City’s budget.

Council President Bethea shared his agreement with the comments of Councilman Edwards regarding the Fire House Project. He shared his concerns regarding budget and costs and stated that we need to make sure the project stays within the budget restraints.

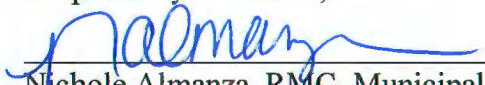
Council President Bethea thanked all 1st Responders – Police Department, Fire Department and all Public Servants.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Council President Bethea adjourned the meeting which ended at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Nichole Almanza, RMC, Municipal Clerk

APPROVED

Edward Bethea, Council President

Date Approved: 6/20/2023