

BRIDGETON CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
October 3, 2023

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, October 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 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 were 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 and Executive Session Minutes of September 19, 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.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

Council President Bethea requested Council/Committee Liaison Reports:

Councilwoman DeQuinzio – None at this time.

Councilman Edwards – None at this time.

Councilman Gonzalez – Provided statistics of the Public Works Department for September which included information regarding trash pickup.

Councilwoman King – None at this time.

Council President Bethea – None at this time.

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

Mayor Kelly – Stated that he met with Ms. Elizabeth Trinidad regarding some of her concerns that she brought forward to Council at the September 19, 2023 Council Meeting. He stated that he also met with Police Chief Gaimari to review the location she suggested a stop light and it was not recommended to try to move forward with this suggestion. Mayor Kelly stated that Mayor Aitken Drive should be reopening very shortly which should help with some of the increased traffic on Commerce Street.

Mayor Kelly stated that the Firehouse Project is back out to bid with a due date of October 13, 2023. He continued that updates will be provided to Council once available.

Mayor Kelly stated that it is exciting to see walls of the new Taco Bell going up.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago – None at this time.

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 ORDINANCE 22-34 FIXING THE SALARIES AND RATES OF CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

It was moved by Councilman Edwards 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 October 3, 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 six (6) Ordinances for Second Reading. Council President Bethea asked the Municipal Clerk to read the Ordinances.

**ORDINANCE 23-31
ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON
AMENDING SECTION 149-27 OF THE CITY CODE CONCERNING
CERTAIN POLICE-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 Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilwoman King the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

It was then moved by Councilwoman King and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 23-32
ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING
SECTION 247-3 (G) OF THE CITY CODE PERTAINING TO GENERAL CONDUCT
OF PERSONS WITH REGARD TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN PARK FACILITIES
IN THE CITY**

It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilman Edwards 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 Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilwoman King 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 23-33

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON
AMENDING SECTION 251-4 OF THE CITY CODE PERTAINING TO ALCOHOLIC
BEVERAGES IN PUBLIC SPACES**

It was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 Gonzalez 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 23-34
ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING
ORDINANCE 19-11 WITH RESPECT TO SEWER RATES AND CHARGES

It was moved by Councilwoman King and second by Councilman Gonzalez 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 Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilman Edwards the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

It was then moved by Councilman Edwards and second by Councilman Gonzalez 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 23-35
ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING
THE CITY CODE WITH RESPECT TO CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY
AND CERTIFICATES OF INSPECTION

It was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilman Edwards the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

It was then moved by Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 23-36

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING SECTION 173-5 OF THE CITY CODE PERTAINING TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY TO ISSUE BINGO AND RAFFLE LICENSES

It was moved by Councilman Edwards 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 Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 Councilman Gonzalez motioned and seconded by Councilman Edwards the public portion be opened.

Yvonne R. Custis, President of the Friends of the Library stated that there is a need of accommodations regarding parking to be used for the library. She continued that there are multiple programs that are held on the weekends and the streets are often filled up. She added that the handicap ramp is also often blocked or hard to get to. Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago stated that he will speak with the Public Works Department to see if they can coordinate something for parking.

Kevin Hart (address provided) stated that he was attending tonight's meeting to see how things are ran and done within the City. He continued that he will be joining more meetings in the future and bring some concerns and suggestions to Council.

Domingo Cartagena (address provided) expressed his frustrations with loud music playing from houses and vehicles. He stated that the City Code states that there is a noise limit up to 30 feet which is not being enforced. He explained that he can often here music inside his house from another home that is located down the street. He asked that the Codes that are in place be enforced.

Mr. Cartagena stated that there is an issue on Cedar Street every night whereas vehicles are being parked and they are blocking the sidewalks. He again asked that the laws that the City have be enforced by our Police Department.

Alan Trzuskoski of Industrial Blvd. provided an update regarding his Cannabis Incubator. He stated that right now he is focused on working with the Planning Board to get further approvals.

Mr. Trzuskoski provided Council with some information regarding an NJEDA Grant for Broadcast Media Infrastructure.

With no one else desiring to be heard, it was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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-2 will be enacted upon by one motion unless a Councilmember 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. 198-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton confirming appointment of David A. Peterson as interim Director of Public Works and Principal Public Works Manager for the City of Bridgeton.

RESOLUTION NO. 199-23, authorizing the Request for Proposals for Professional Services for the 2024 Calendar Year.

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

It was moved by Councilman Edwards and second by Councilwoman King that Resolutions M-1 through M-2 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			

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago asked David Peterson to step forward before Council. Mr. Rabago spoke highly of Mr. Peterson’s work ethic and explained that he will shortly be sitting for his exam.

Mr. David Peterson expressed how truly grateful he is and how he has dreamed of this moment for a long time. He discussed the hard work that he has put in to get to this point and thanked everyone for this opportunity.

SCHEDULE OF BILLS:

Council President Bethea asked Council for a motion to approve the Schedule of Bills dated October 3, 2023 in the amount of \$2,113,442.86. It was moved by Councilwoman King 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 no applications for approval.

REPORTS:

Council President Bethea announced there were two (2) reports for approval.

1. Vital Statistics Monthly Report – August 2023
2. Clerk’s Monthly Report – July and August 2023

It was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 – Explained that the City is still looking for a couple per diem Judges to help with a back log of cases.

Council President Bethea called upon Council for comments:

Councilwoman DeQuinzio – Shared that she agreed with Mr. Cartagena’s frustrations regarding loud music and stated that she often has the same issues in her own neighborhood.

Councilwoman DeQuinzio thanked Mr. Hart for coming to the meeting tonight and encouraged him to continue to do so.

Councilwoman DeQuinzio agreed with Ms. Custis’ concerns regarding parking at the library and stated that this has been an issue for quite some time.

Councilwoman DeQuinzio thanked Mr. David Peterson for his outstanding work and congratulated him on his new position.

Councilwoman King – Agreed with all of the comments made by Councilwoman DeQuinzio.

Councilwoman King shared her concerns regarding vehicles parking too close to the corners. She continued that this causes safety concerns with pedestrians trying to cross the road. She asked that Chief Gaimari look into having these codes that are in place enforced.

Councilwoman King stated that loud music and the nightly use of fireworks are a big issue in the City.

Councilwoman King congratulated Mr. David Peterson on his new position and expressed how proud she was of him.

Councilman Gonzalez – Stated that he is excited to see the bid come back for the Firehouse Project. He continued that he is ready for this project to move forward.

Councilman Gonzalez congratulated Mr. David Peterson on his new position and stated that he knows that he will do great things for the City.

Councilman Gonzalez welcomed Mr. Kevin Hart for attending tonight’s meeting and stated that it is always nice to see new faces.

Councilman Gonzalez agreed with the concerns that Mr. Cartagena brought forward and stated that the code needs to be enforced.

Councilman Edwards- Congratulated Mr. David Peterson on his new position.

Councilman Edwards thanks Police Chief Michael Gaimari for speaking at the last Rotary meeting. He stated that Chief Gaimari spoke very well and was able to answer all the tough questions.

Councilman Edwards agreed that the Code needs to be enforced for noise, fireworks, etc.

Councilman Edwards thanked Mr. Kevin Hart for attending tonight's meeting. He encouraged him to continue to do so and learn how things are ran.

Councilman Edwards stated that it is flu season and encouraged everyone to get flu shots and COVID vaccines.

Councilman Edwards stated that he heard there is a grant in the works for the library for them to obtain an elevator so that residents can enjoy the downstairs of the building as well.

Councilman Edwards discussed a few new businesses coming in the area, as well as, some change of hands of another.

Councilman Edwards announced it was Elizet Martinez's birthday and wished her Happy Birthday.

Council President Bethea – Apologized for his tardiness to the meeting.

Council President Bethea discussed quality of life issues that affect everyone. He continued that trash is the biggest issue within the City. He added that a semi-annual clean-up has been created. Council President Bethea stated it is not right for residents to have to clean-up after others, however, it has to be done. Council President Bethea asked Mr. Esaul Martin to stand so he can be recognized for all of his efforts in making sure that the clean-ups continue each year. He continued that the last two scheduled clean-ups had to be reschedule a few times due to the weather and Mr. Martin stayed on top of it to make sure people were aware and still were able to volunteer. He announced that the last clean-up was about 4 hours long and they were able to pick up 85 bags of trash (equaled out to about 1.25 tons).

Council President Bethea stated that a complaint that is constantly heard is that there is nothing to do within the City. Council President Bethea stated that just last Saturday there was the clean-up, a 5k which raised money for the zoo and the Mexican Consulate was at the Marino Center for licensing. He continued there is always something to do within the City.

Council President Bethea stated there is a time and place for noise within the City. He agreed that an Ordinance was passed by Council and needs to be enforced for our residents. He stated that he would like to speak to Administration to see how to move forward with this issue.

Council President Bethea stated that overnight parking and overly large vehicles at the corners are a big issue. He suggested that maybe the Code needs to be looked at and possibly amended. He stated he would like to speak with Administration and the Police Chief regarding this issue. Council President Bethea expressed his concerns of vehicles parking at the corners which then create a safety issue for pedestrians and other vehicles trying to cross the streets.

Council President Bethea congratulated Mr. David Peterson on his new position. He continued that Mr. Peterson earned his way to this spot and that Council fully supports him. He asked Mr. Peterson to try to coordinate with the County and/or State regarding roads that they will be working on to replace pipes, etc. He explained that often the City has a road paved and then the State or County comes right after and has it torn up to replace something. He provided the example of Vine Street.

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

Mayor Kelly reminded everyone that tomorrow at 2:20 p.m. there will be a National alert on phone, TV and radio.

Mayor Kelly stated that the County informed him that they are now waiting for the State to be able to move forward with the culvert on South Avenue.

Mayor Kelly announced that a speaker was removed at the House today and now they are considering appointing a temporary speaker. He added this is the first time this has ever happened.

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 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nichole Almanza, RMC, Municipal Clerk

Date Approved: 10/17/2003

APPROVED



Edward Bethea, Council President

