

**BRIDGETON CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
April 4, 2023**

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, April 4, 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 Councilman Gonzalez.

The following answered to roll call:

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

Absent: Councilwoman Rosemary DeQuinzio

Also in attendance:

Mayor Albert Kelly
Solicitor Michele Gibson
CFO Trisha McGahhey

Administrator Kevin Rabago
Municipal Clerk Nichole Almanza

MINUTES:

Council President Bethea presented the City Council Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2023 and the Joint Meeting with Board of Education of March 28, 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:

Councilman Edwards – None at this time.

Councilman Gonzalez – Provided March statistics of the Public Works Department which included trash tonnage.

Councilwoman King – Discussed the new leadership transition of the Bridgeton Housing Authority.

Council President Bethea – Discussed the Joint Meeting held with the Board of Education on March 28, 2023. He stated that the Board of Education did not have a quorum present. He expressed his disappointment and explained that this was a great opportunity to have much needed and honest discussions. Council President Bethea stated he hopes another can be held in the fall and have a much better attendance by their board.

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

Mayor Kelly – Provided Council with a Code Blue summary report which showed the statistics of the recent season. He discussed some issues that they had such as people who really had shelter coming out to the Code Blue to take advantage of the services. Mayor Kelly also provided a list of local vendors that have donated items and food.

Mayor Kelly stated that he will be having discussions with the County regarding the old juvenile detention center to be used as a possible homeless shelter for this side of the county.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago – Announced that the project for the South Avenue Force Main Replacement will begin on April 12, 2023.

Mr. Rabago stated that the City has been approved for \$168,000 in grant funds to move forward with the project at the Tin Can site.

City Solicitor, Michele Gibson – None at this time.

ORDINANCES ON 1ST READING:

Council President Bethea announced there were four (4) Ordinances for First Reading. The Municipal Clerk read the Ordinances.

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING SECTION 149-25 (H) (5) (A) OF THE CITY CODE PERTAINING TO ZOO CAMP FEES

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 April 18, 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			

**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 King that the Ordinance be introduced on first reading and that the second reading, public hearing and final consideration be held on April 18, 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			

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING
THE CUMBERLAND DAIRY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN TO ALLOW FOR THE
PRIVATE ACQUISITION OF BLOCK 9, LOT 10 AND TO MAKE EXPLICIT THE
AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY TO SELL BLOCK 9, LOT 10 PURSUANT
TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-8 AND N.J.S.A. 40A:12-13(C)**

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 April 18, 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			

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING
ORDINANCE 23-06 REVISING AMOUNTS TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET
APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND ESTABLISH A CAP BANK PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A.
40A: 4-45.14 FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2023**

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 April 18, 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 was one (1) Ordinance for Second Reading. Council President Bethea asked the Municipal Clerk to read the Ordinances.

**ORDINANCE 23-07
ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON RENEWING
AND REAUTHORIZING THE WATER UTILITY REVITALIZATION
FUND SURCHARGE**

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 Edwards and second by Councilman Gonzalez 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			

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 Gonzalez the public portion be opened.

Damon Dunns, Landlord of property located on Bank Street, stated that he spoke at the last meeting regarding illegal dumping happening in the City and has not heard anything back from the City.

Mr. Dunns stated that there was a misuse of database and municipal funds as flyers he put out were mailed back to him.

Chevella Green (Bridgeton address provided) stated that the City needs to look at some roadways regarding safety especially with summer coming up and kids being out of school. She explained her concerns regarding the crossing of Route 49 to get to the Wawa. She suggested more signage or lights for the pedestrians crossing.

Patricia Singh and Pastor Jairo Chalarca (Bridgeton address provided) discussed flooding issues on Morris Avenue. Ms. Singh provided flyers with pictures showing water up to ankles on the streets and in numerous yards.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago stated that he is currently working with Esaul Martin regarding rain gardens and other natural measures to give aide.

Lee Fox, Department Head of Streets and Roads explained that this is actually a County road and suggested sending the information over to them as well.

Esaul Martin and Cassandra Avila representing Bridgeton Housing Authority and SEG Coordinator discussed possible grant funding available for residents on Morris Avenue. He added that residents of Cone Street have a similar issue.

Cassandra Avila provided flyers regarding community day.

Alan Trzuskoski, Industrial Blvd. provided updates on his Cannabis Incubator project. He stated that the agreement has been finalized and site plans are being prepared. He continued that he has about 8 companies that are interested in the project.

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-10 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-10 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. 73-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing Fourth of July Fireworks display in the Bridgeton City Park for 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 74-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton granting Senior Citizen Tax Exemption (400 Bank Street).

RESOLUTION NO. 75-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton granting Veteran or Widow of Veteran Tax Exemption (12 Westwood Avenue).

RESOLUTION NO. 76-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing execution of a Purchase/Sale Agreement and Land Lease with Raymond Roman for dining car located on Block 116 Lot 36.01 (Former Angie's Diner).

RESOLUTION NO. 77-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing Senior Citizen Deduction Addbacks.

RESOLUTION NO. 78-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing certain utility account adjustments and taxes.

RESOLUTION NO. 79-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing refund of tax overpayment (32 Twin Oaks Drive).

RESOLUTION NO. 80-23, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton amending Resolution 36-23 authorizing additional emergency temporary appropriations pending final adoption of the Calendar Year 2023 Budget.

RESOLUTION NO. 81-23, from the City council of the City of Bridgeton appointing Elizet Martinez to serve as Acting Deputy Municipal Clerk on an "as needed" basis in the absence of the Deputy Municipal Clerk.

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-9 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 Edwards made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-10** being **RESOLUTION NO. 82-23**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing CHDO Agreement with Gateway CAP and use of CHDO funding for affordable housing projects in the City of Bridgeton.

It was moved by Councilman Edwards and second by Councilwoman King that resolution M-10 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:

COUNCIL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
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 April 4, 2023 in the amount of \$779,170.47. It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez 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 were no reports for approval.

Council President Bethea called upon Mayor Kelly for comments:

Mayor Kelly – Stated that he was recently in the hospital and thanked all of Council for reaching out and the support they provided.

Council President Bethea called upon Council for comments:

Councilwoman King – Acknowledged a 12-year-old that was recently killed in Salem area. She stated that reasons like this are why the joint meeting with the Board of Education was so needed. She asked everyone to keep the family in prayers.

Councilwoman King stated that the Joint Board of Education meeting was the best meeting as concrete solutions and discussions were held.

Councilman Gonzalez- Thanked Ms. Green for bringing forward her concerns regarding pedestrian safety on Route 49. He stated that he agreed with all of her concerns.

Councilman Gonzalez commended Council for their 100% attendance at the Joint Meeting held with the Board of Education. He continued that he hopes the ideas shared that night are provided to the members that did not attend.

Councilman Gonzalez discussed the need of bringing a trade school into the area other than the CC Tech.

Councilman Edwards – Stated that the Joint Meeting with the Board of Education was great and stated that they need to work together for the City. He added he hopes to see action out of the ideas brought forth that night.

Councilman Edwards discussed vacant businesses in the downtown area. He shared his frustrations regarding getting in contact with the owners.

Councilman Edwards discussed a proposed music festival that will be held in the City. He stated that the new Recreation Director has been very helpful but feels that the individual running the show has been thrown around.

Councilman Edwards discussed trash cans downtown. He stated that some businesses still do not have any located outside their establishments and asked if they could be brought back.

Councilman Edwards stated that the funding regarding the Tin Can site is great news.

Councilman Edwards stated he agreed with the safety concerns regarding pedestrians crossing Route 49.

Councilman Edwards stated that he is happy to hear some progress from Alan Trzuskoski.

Council President Bethea – Stated that weather has hindered the City-wide Clean-up for two weeks in a row. He asked Mr. Esaul Martin to provide the next date that it will be held.

Council President Bethea thanked Mayor for his sacrifice and all he does for Code Blue. He stated that Council salutes and applauds him.

Council President Bethea asked Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago to provide some information regarding the South Avenue Main Replacement project. Mark Lavenberg, Director of Public Works discussed a pump station used in the area and how work has previously been done to patch up the force main. He continued that the main is in dire need of replacement as it has already had one main break in the last year. Mr. Lavenberg stated that the project will take about four to six weeks for completion. He added that this work done on the road will help move this road up on the County's paving list.

Council President Bethea asked Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago, Mr. Lee Fox and Engineers to look into the pedestrian crossing issues on Route 49. He stated that maybe a blinking light or crossing information can be placed in that area. He also questioned why the Planning Board would not have required such when the Wawa project was first being approved.

Council President Bethea asked Cannabis Committee to report back to Council where the City is at with these licenses.

Mayor Kelly indicated that he has emailed the CRC regarding the pending submitted applications and asking for updates as other towns have had their approvals much faster.

Council President Bethea stated that next month will start the introduction of the budget adoption. He explained that additional revenue is needed for the City and would like to see these cannabis businesses up and running to help.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council President Bethea announced that Council will convene into Executive Session after which the Council Meeting will resume in public to continue the regular portion of the meeting.

Council President Bethea read **RESOLUTION NO. 83-23**; the City Council has determined that it is necessary to go into an Executive Session to discuss certain matters relating to the items below as permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b.

1. **Rotimi Owoh, Esq. v. Bridgeton Police Department- *Litigation, Attorney/Client Privilege***

Upon a motion by Councilman Edwards and second by Councilman Gonzalez the motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote to convene into Executive Session at 6:29 p.m. The original Resolution may be found in the Resolution Book. Council left the dais to convene into Executive Session.


With a motion by Councilman Gonzalez, seconded by Councilman Edwards, and all in favor, Council came out of Executive Session at 6:44 p.m. and reconvened the regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Council President Bethea adjourned the meeting which ended at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nichole Almanza, RMC, Municipal Clerk

APPROVED


Edward Bethea, Council President

Date Approved: 4/18/2023