

**BRIDGETON CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
December 6, 2022**

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, December 6, 2022 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 8, 2022 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

Administrator Kevin Rabago
Municipal Clerk Nichole Almanza

PRESENTATIONS:

Fire Department – *Promotion/Swearing In Ceremony*

Fire Chief Todd Bowen discussed numerous changes within the Fire Department regarding ranks and structure to help handle things such as call volumes. He thanked Council for their continued support.

Chief Bowen provided employee history of Michael Hitchner and Jack Justice. He listed the various accomplishments of both men including the licenses they hold and awards won. Mayor Kelly provided an Oath of Office to both men.

**** Councilman Gonzalez entered the meeting****

Mayor Kelly thanked the leadership of the Fire Department.

Councilwoman DeQuinzio congratulated both men.

Councilwoman King congratulated both men.

Councilman Gonzalez congratulated both men. He stated that showing someone making rank can provide encouragement to other firemen. He thanked them for their service and sacrifices.

Councilman Edwards congratulated both men.

Council President Bethea congratulated both men. He stated that Council always salutes all 1st Responders and they continue to pray that they go home the way that they left.

Police Department – *Honoring of Sgt. Gary Denby, Sr.*

Police Chief Gaimari introduced the family of the late Gary Denby, Sr. Chief Gaimari shared how much of an impact Sgt. Denby, Sr. had on both his personal and professional life. Chief Gaimari stated that Sgt. Denby, Sr. worked over 30 years in law enforcement and he was the spearhead of the 911 system used for the school system.

Chief Gaimari presented the family with an encased flag in his honor.

Gary Denby, Jr. thanked the City for recognizing his father. He continued that his dad loved the City and everyone in it.

Councilman Edwards stated that Gary was his uncle and was the greatest guy. He stated that he is very missed.

Cumberland County Prosecutor Jennifer Webb-McRae stated that she worked closely with Mr. Denby in regards to the positive youth coalition work. She stated that he was a very dedicated and professional worker. She added that she needed to come and say thank you for all that he did.

Police Department – *“Arrive Together” Pilot Program*

Police Chief Gaimari gave Council details of this new Pilot Program. He explained that a plain clothes Officer would drive a Mental Health Screener to assist calls when needed. He provided information from other counties that are using the Pilot Program and added that no injuries have been made to date.

Councilman Gonzalez asked if the program works with Inspira Mental Health to which Chief Gaimari responded yes.

Chief Gaimari explained that State Police will also assist with taking the screeners to locations. He continued that the Bridgeton Police Department will take no Law Enforcement action. He added this is just a ride to a location once the scene is secured.

Councilwoman King asked if there was funding for the Officer doing the transfer. Chief Gaimari stated there is no funding. He continued that this would be an Officer from the Juvenile Division for now and if Cumberland County receives funding next year then it would open the possibility to hire someone.

Cumberland County Prosecutor, Jennifer McRae explained that they have funding to pay for the Mental Health Screeners and are looking for grants to pay for the Officers.

Councilwoman DeQuinzio stated that she is familiar with the program and thinks it is a great idea.

Ms. McRae stated that the City of Bridgeton was selected knowing that Chief Gaimari can make a system like this work.

Chief Gaimari spoke of the homeless population downtown and stated that this program can help some of these individuals with services.

Council President Bethea discussed an aggressive panhandler downtown and shared his concerns that he or someone else will get injured. He stated he hopes that this is part of the solution.

Chief Gaimari discussed the limitations of the Police Department as to what they can do with these individuals.

Ms. McRae compared the Recovery on Wheels program to this pilot, whereas, Police Officers tell drug users when the bus will be around and they are get some help. She is hoping that this can be used in the same way letting people know that the screener will be in on certain days.

MINUTES:

Council President Bethea presented the City Council Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2022. It was moved by Councilman Edwards and seconded by Councilman Gonzalez 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 monthly statistics of the Water and Sewer Department which included 3 main breaks.

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 – Thanked Council President Bethea and Councilman Edwards for recent discussions with Inspira and the college for possible future agreements.

Mayor Kelly stated that he and Councilwoman DeQuinzio are working with the library and are waiting for a proposal from the County Library for shared services.

Mayor Kelly stated that Administration informed the upcoming cost for Animal Sheltering which has an increase of \$32,000. He stated that we are trying to find out exactly why it is going up so much and stated that we need to come up with another strategy.

Mayor Kelly stated that there has been 9 nights of Code Blue so far. He continued that we need some more services for those who are on our streets as most nights they are at full capacity.

Mayor Kelly discussed the aggressive panhandler discussed earlier. He stated that he needs some help and there are many more just like him. He added that merchants and residents are having issues with these people. Mayor Kelly discussed an issue that arose at the Winterfest event. He stated that a homeless shelter needs to be built this side of the County and provided a couple of locations for it.

Mayor Kelly provided an update for the culvert stating that they are waiting for DEP permits to be approved. He added that he will continue to push completion of this project.

Mayor Kelly announced that he has decided not to reappoint the Park Director and that an ad is posted for the job. He added that the City needs someone to take it to the next level.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago – Council President Bethea asked Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago regarding a letter received by some residents from a vendor regarding lead paint.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago discussed the new mandate from the State of New Jersey where the City must provide directly a provider or have a vendor that can. He explained that rental owners can hire their own certified person to handle this. Mr. Rabago explained the individual providing these letters is a verified licensed professional. He added he will share the letter with Council.

City Solicitor, Michele Gibson – Reminded the public of the Property Auction scheduled for tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. for City owned properties.

Councilwoman King questioned how residents are made aware of the auction and stated she felt that nothing has been advertised.

Municipal Clerk, Nichole Almanza, explained her advertisement requirements for the newspapers, website and bulletin boards.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago explained that he has been contacted over time by residents interested in properties and maintains a list of same. He continued that he also reaches out to those individuals with the information.

ORDINANCES ON 1ST 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
RELEASING, VACATING, AND EXTINGUISHING THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC IN
A 10' X 144' RIGHT-OF-WAY SITUATED BETWEEN LOT 8 AND LOT 9 IN BLOCK
37 ON MANHEIM AVENUE**

It was moved by Councilwoman King 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 December 20, 2022.

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 three (3) Ordinances for Second Reading. Council President Bethea asked the Municipal Clerk to read the Ordinances.

**ORDINANCE 22-37
ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON
ESTABLISHING A FEE IN CONNECTION WITH PREPERATION AND ISSUANCE
OF A CERTIFICATE OF REDEMPTION**

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

It was then moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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 22-38
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 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 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 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 NO. 22-39
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF THE CITY OF
BRIDGETON FOR SALARY OF MAYOR, COUNCIL PRESIDENT, AND CITY
COUNCIL MEMBERS

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

It was then moved by Councilwoman King 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			

PUBLIC PORTION:

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

Alan Trzuskoski of 7 N. Industrial Blvd., shared his interest in the RFP on the Consent Agenda. He stated that is awaiting a Redevelopment Plan approval from the Planning Board which will eventually come before Council to approve.

Esaul Martin, President of the Housing Authority Board stated that they are in the 2nd interview stage for the new Executive Director. He continued he hopes to have a name by next month.

Markida Taylor of East Avenue discussed East Avenue needing crossing guards as kids are crossing that street themselves. Police Chief Gaimari explained that the intersection was looked into but it does not meet the criteria and indicated that we are also short on guards right now.

Ms. Taylor discussed a local young mother who died from complications during childbirth. She stated that the father of the baby was locked out of the unit with the baby and two young brothers. She explained that they did find housing but the conditions are horrible. Council President Bethea stated that he was also contacted regarding this situation and asked the Mayor to look into the housing that was provided as it was explained that it is in poor condition. Council President Bethea stated that help is coming for this man. He also suggested that the School Board and Council set up a couple joint meetings next year.

Mayor Kelly thanked Ms. Taylor for helping Mr. Russell. He explained that Mr. Russell was speaking with a social worker to help get temporary housing and many people are working on the case to help.

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

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. 269-22**; 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. Arrive Together Pilot Agreement- *Attorney/Client Privilege, Contract Negotiations*

Upon a motion by Councilman Edwards and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio the motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote to convene into Executive Session at 6:48 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 Councilwoman DeQuinzio, seconded by Councilman Edwards, and all in favor, Council came out of Executive Session at 6:56 p.m. and reconvened the regular meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Council President Bethea announced all matters listed under the consent agenda; M-1 through M-27 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-25, M-26 and M-27 be pulled from the Consent Agenda and voted on separately.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 270-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award a Contract to ALS Group USA Corporation dba ALS Environmental for Water Sample Services from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024.

RESOLUTION NO. 271-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Bond Counsel to McManimon, Scotland and Baumann and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 272-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of City Auditor to Bowman and Company and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 273-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of City Engineering to Fralinger Engineering and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 274-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of City Planner to Barbara J. Fegley, AICP, PP, LLC and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 275-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Municipal Prosecutor to Shanna McCann, Esquire of Chance & McCann, LLC and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 276-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Tax Appeal Attorney to Marmero Law and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 277-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to appoint John Dember, Esq. of Dember Law, LLC as Special Counsel for Complex Litigation from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023 as a Non-Fair and Open (NFAO) Contract not to exceed \$5,000.00

RESOLUTION NO. 278-22, requesting approval for the insertion of a Special Item of Revenue pertaining to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds received from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 279-22, requesting the approval for the insertion of Special Item of Revenue pertaining to UEZ Administrative Funds received from the State of New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority.

RESOLUTION NO. 280-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton designating Redeveloper for Block 171 Lots 13, 14 and 15 including vacant structure known as 157 S. East Ave. and authorizing Redevelopment Agreement and Purchase Sale Agreement.

RESOLUTION NO. 281-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Financial Advisory to Acacia Financial Group and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 282-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Independent Hearing Officer to Barker, Gelfand, James & Sarvas and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 283-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Labor Relations Attorney (Police) to Blaney, Donohue & Weinberg, P.C. and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 284-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Labor Relations Attorney (Non-Police) to Blaney, Donohue & Weinberg, P.C. and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 285-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Municipal Public Defender to Beth White, LLC and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 286-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award the Professional Service of Municipal Traffic Engineer to Fralinger Engineering and authorize the Professional Service Agreement for the CY 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. 287-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing a Memorandum of Agreement with Clearwater Environmental to provide required services of Licensed C3 Collections Operator pursuant to N.J.S.A. 7:10A for Bridgeton’s Sewer Utility.

RESOLUTION NO. 288-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award a Contract to Ambulance Billing Co., LLC for Emergency Medical Billing Services from January 1 – December 31, 2023 with optional renewals of January 1 – December 31, 2024 and January 1 – December 31, 2025.

RESOLUTION NO. 289-22, authorizing the City to advertise for South Avenue Force Main Replacement.

RESOLUTION NO. 290-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing Memorandum of Understanding in connection with the “Arrive Together” Pilot Program to enhance and support response to certain behavioral health crisis calls.

RESOLUTION NO. 291-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Development of a Retail Cannabis Operation at Block 170 Lot 9 aka 490 E. Broad Street.

RESOLUTION NO. 292-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing Agreement between the City of Bridgeton and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) involving the landfill in Bridgeton City Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 293-22, setting forth the date and time of the Reorganization Meeting of the Bridgeton City Council for January 3, 2023.

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-24 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			

Councilwoman DeQuinzio made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-25** being **RESOLUTION NO. 294-22, RESOLUTION**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the City of Bridgeton to enter into a Shared Services Agreement with the County of Cumberland to receive \$25,000 in funding to be utilized for certain Code Blue Activities.

It second by Councilman Edwards that resolution M-25 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			

Councilman Edwards made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-26** being **RESOLUTION NO. 295-22, RESOLUTION**, requesting approval for the insertion of a Special Item of Revenue pertaining to Shared Services Agreement with County of Cumberland.

It second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that resolution M-26 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	

Councilman Edwards made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-27** being **RESOLUTION NO. 296-22, RESOLUTION**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing a Grant in the amount of \$25,000 to Gateway Community Action Partnership for the provision of Code Blue Services to Bridgeton residents during the 2022-2023 Code Blue Season.

It second by Councilwoman King that resolution M-27 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	

Council President Bethea asked for a Motion to Reconsider M-25. Councilman Edwards made a motion to reconsider **RESOLUTION M-25** being **RESOLUTION NO. 294-22, RESOLUTION**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the City of Bridgeton

to enter into a Shared Services Agreement with the County of Cumberland to receive \$25,000 in funding to be utilized for certain Code Blue Activities.

It second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that resolution M-25 be reconsidered 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			

Councilman Gonzalez made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-25** being **RESOLUTION NO. 294-22, RESOLUTION**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing the City of Bridgeton to enter into a Shared Services Agreement with the County of Cumberland to receive \$25,000 in funding to be utilized for certain Code Blue Activities.

It second by Councilman Edwards that resolution M-25 be reconsidered 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 December 6, 2022 in the amount of \$656,989.17 It was moved by Councilwoman King 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 two (2) applications for approval being:

1. Raffle – VFW Mead-Woodward Post 1795, Inc. – Instant Raffle Tickets – January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023.

2. Block Off Street – Juan Carlos Martinez – Annual Virgen of Juquila Procession – December 8, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. – East & West Commerce Street, S. West Avenue, Central Avenue.

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

REPORTS:

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

1. Best Practices Inventory – 2022 Survey

It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez 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 – announced that on Monday he will be holding his Mayor Christmas Breakfast and asked all attending to bring unwrapped gifts for donations.

Mayor Kelly announced on Christmas Day there will be a free meal luncheon at the Marino Center. He provided contact information for the Pastor holding the event which is looking for volunteers.

Council President Bethea called upon Council for comments:

Councilwoman DeQuinzio – Congratulated Alan and Mr. Cheeks. She thanked the Police Department and Fire Department.

Councilwoman King – Expressed her agreement with Councilwoman DeQuinzio's comments.

Councilman Gonzalez- Stated he is glad to move forward with the Arrive Together Pilot Program.

Councilman Gonzalez congratulated Alan and Mr. Cheeks with their forward progress.

Councilman Edwards – stated he is looking forward with working closer with the School Board.

Councilman Edwards congratulated Alan and Mr. Cheeks for their hard work.

Councilman Edwards stated that the City website is hard to use and it is not user friendly. Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago explained that the City recently hired a fulltime IT personnel who will be able to provide the City with some more options.

Councilman Edwards stated that it may be time to have a hard conversation about if the City should keep the library or not.

Councilman Edwards stated he recently visited the Draft Bar and he has nothing but compliments. He continued that he felt very safe in the location.

Council President Bethea – Congratulated Mayor and Council on being reelected. He stated that they ran like they had opposition even though they didn't.

Council President Bethea congratulated Alan and Damian and expressed his appreciation and support.

Council President Bethea asked Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago if the hire for UEZ is on board yet to help with Economic Development. Mr. Rabago explained that the City is waiting for the approval from the State. He continued that we most likely will have an answer in January. Council President Bethea stated that he would like to us to continue to push cannabis, however, we need to push more as there are a lot of empty store fronts downtown.

Council President Bethea stated that we need to ease fears of residents regarding tax liens. He continued that we need to explain the obligation is to collect taxes and that they will not be losing their homes.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Council President Bethea adjourned the meeting which ended at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED



Nichole Almanza, RMC, Municipal Clerk



Edward Bethea, Council President

Date Approved: 12/20/22