

**BRIDGETON CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 1, 2022**

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, February 1, 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 Municipal Clerk, Nichole Almanza.

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.

Flag Salute was led by Mayor Kelly. Invocation was led by Pastor Duncan.

**The following answered to roll call:**

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

**ABSENT** –Councilwoman Rosemary DeQuinzio\*\*  
Councilman David Gonzalez\*\*  
(\*\* Entered late)

**Also in attendance:**

Mayor Albert Kelly  
Solicitor Michele Gibson

Administrator Kevin Rabago  
Municipal Clerk Nichole Almanza

**PRESENTATIONS:**

***ACUA – Trash update***

Mr. Rick Dovey of ACUA spoke to Council and the public regarding their challenges with staffing over the last year. He acknowledged that the level of service recently provided by the business is not what they want to give. He announced that they are having a recruiting event to help aid with staffing. He added that they are down in staff about 25%.

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

Mr. Dovey announced that ACUA will be holding in-house CDL Driving School to help eligible works obtain licenses.

Mr. Dovey explained that when a house or street is missed, they do try to get it by the next day.

Mr. Dovey explained that in his 30 years of experience he has never seen an issue like this before.

**\*\*\* Councilwoman DeQuinzio entered the meeting\*\*\***

Councilman Edwards thanked members of ACUA for coming out to speak tonight. He continued that as a businessman, he understands the difficulties that COVID has put on businesses. Councilman Edwards discussed paying for a service and not actually getting it done. He also asked if any Executives help with any additional work.

Mr. Dovey answered that yes many of the Executives have CDL licenses and aided with driving if needed. He added that about 84 employees have volunteered to help.

Council President Bethea expressed his concerns being there is a contract in place and the residents providing complaints of not getting the service provided to them. Council President Bethea stated that the City has been lenient with Code Enforcement regarding overflow of trash next to bins. He continued that on the other hand, the City does not want trash blowing around the City.

Mr. Stanley Witherspoon with ACUA stated that Bridgeton is fully staffed as of today with 3 trucks dedicated to the City. He explained that the recent snowfall put them behind again, however, should be back on schedule now. Mr. Witherspoon explained that there are 6 employees assigned to Bridgeton and if down by 2 employees then a Supervisor will fill in.

Council President Bethea explained the recent trash issues with apartment complexes within the City. Council President Bethea stated that he is not trying to pick on them and that he understands the troubles with COVID and staffing. He added that he hopes this does not happen again and reminded them that their business was selected for a reason.

Mr. Dovey stated that they are committed to fulfill the contract. He announced a recruiting event taking place on February 4<sup>th</sup>. He continued that the job provides \$15.00 an hour for laborers and \$20.00 an hour for CDL drivers.

### ***Royal Dynamics – Cannabis***

Brenda L. Hill-Riggins, Owner and CEO explained that her company is looking for a Letter of Support and a Resolution permitting them to do business in the City. Ms. Hill-Riggins stated that they have applied for A Class I Cannabis license in December to the State of NJ and awaiting approval of same. She added that this is for a Grower and Manufacturing License and they are looking to have a 10,000 square foot facility.

Ms. Hill-Riggins stated that the company is 100% minority, women and Black owned.

Ms. Hill-Riggins provided information regarding a Community Outreach Plan involving Shiloh Baptist Church and Pastor Duncan. She also discussed an Apprenticeship Program under another LLC for various trades such as farming and carpentry. She added that the Apprenticeship Program will help with building Tiny Homes as well.

Ms. Hill-Riggins stated that she will also have 5 greenhouses for help and other vegetables at a location in Lawrence Township.

Ms. Hill-Riggins stated that she is looking to have about 80 employees which would be Union and offer Fringe Benefits.

Ms. Hill-Riggins stated the property that she is interested in is 467 Bank Street for the facility.

Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago explained that the next step would be for Council to adopt a Resolution naming them Redeveloper of 467 Bank Street.

Council President Bethea asked for an estimate on the amount of jobs. Ms. Hill-Riggins stated that there will be 1 shift between the farm and the City location which would be about 58 jobs. She continued that as of the first day they will be registered in program (apprenticeship). She also stated that the pay would be above minimum wage around \$15.00 with Union wages and benefits. Ms. Hill-Riggins stated that employment will be mostly for re-entry citizens.

#### **MINUTES:**

Council President Bethea presented the City Council Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2022. 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** – Stated that she visited the Library to meeting the new Director, Laurie Ortiz. Ms. Ortiz approached the podium to introduce herself. She stated that she is from Puerto Rico. She continued that she is thankful for the opportunity to serve the community. She stated that she is excited for some new ideas.

**Councilwoman King** – Stated that she was able to speak with Main Street regarding the Christmas Parade. She announced that she has volunteered to Chair for the Committee. She stated that the City deserves a parade and something that she will be working on personally.

**Councilman Gonzalez** – None at this time.

**Councilman Edwards** – Spoke with Chief of Police regarding Mr. Jon Morris. He asked everyone to keep the Morris family in their prayers. He stated that the Police Department has 3 openings at the moment and explained that a test will be provided in the spring. He also explained that due to retirements, there will be a Lieutenant and Sergeant opening. Councilman Edwards stated that COVID is once again hitting the force with about 16 employees out.

Councilman Edwards stated that he spoke with Melissa in Recreation regarding activities such as Kids Fest and will update more at a later time.

**Council President Bethea** – Discussed the possibility of a joint School Board meeting in 2022.

Council President Bethea stated that the poster contest is for the March cleanup is moving forward.

Council President Bethea stated that he is working with the Business Administrator on Economic Development and that he hopes cannabis is the way to do so.

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

**Mayor Kelly** – Discussed a meeting with Atlantic City Electric regarding the need of greater output of energy. He stated that he will invite to local clergy to get program information out.

Mayor Kelly announced that Saturday at the Alms Center there will be the All Sports Family sign ups. He continued that this program is for income eligible families to receive funding for registration fees (up to \$600.00 per child).

Mayor Kelly commended Dean Dellaquila and Public Works on the clean-up of Piney Point area.

Mayor Kelly announced no cost testing for COVID at the Marino Center and provided flyers to all.

Mayor Kelly stated the City needs more Police Officers and stated that there is a flyer on the website with information how to join the force.

Mayor Kelly stated that the ribbon cutting for Golden Gate Childcare will be soon. He stated that they are located across from the new CompleteCare building.

Mayor Kelly stated that Code Blue was open for 28 days in January. He stated that they were able to get more staff offering \$15.00 an hour for overnights. He expressed the need of more male volunteers and workers. He thanked Dean Dellaquila and Police Department for various checkups. Mayor Kelly discussed recently issues with Inspiria such as them releasing people without items, correct clothes or in need of different mental aide. He added that there is no nurse or doctor at the Code Blue locations.

**Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago** – None at this time.

**City Solicitor, Michele Gibson** – None at this time.

**ORDINANCES ON 1<sup>ST</sup> 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 AMENDING SECTION 149-14 OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON CODE PERTAINING TO DOG AND CAT LICENSES AND RELATED FEES**

It was moved by Councilman Edwards 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 February 15, 2022.

**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			

**ORDINANCES ON 2<sup>ND</sup> READING:**

Council President Bethea announced there were four (4) Ordinances for Second Reading. He asked the Municipal Clerk to read the Ordinance.

**ORDINANCE 22-01**

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING THE HOPE VI REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ANY SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS TO MAKE EXPLICIT THE GOVERNING BODY RETAINS THE RIGHT TO SELL, LEASE, OR OTHERWISE CONVEY MUNICIPALLY-OWNED PROPERTY PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A 40A:12A-9 AND N.J.S.A 40A:12-13(C)**

It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez 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 Edwards and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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:**

<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			

**ORDINANCE 22-02**

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING THE PHOENIX REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ANY SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS TO MAKE EXPLICIT THE GOVERNING BODY RETAINS THE RIGHT TO SELL, LEASE, OR OTHERWISE CONVEY MUNICIPALLY-OWNED PROPERTY PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A 40A:12A-9 AND N.J.S.A 40A:12-13( C )**

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 Councilman Edwards the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

It was then moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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:**

<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	

**ORDINANCE 22-03**

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING THE SOUTHEAST GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN TO MAKE EXPLICIT THE GOVERNING BODY RETAINS THE RIGHT TO SELL, LEASE, OR OTHERWISE CONVEY MUNICIPALLY-OWNED PROPERTY PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A 40A:12A-9 AND N.J.S.A 40A:12-13( C )**

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 Councilman Edwards 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:**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Edwards	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Gonzalez	<b>X</b>			
Councilwoman King	<b>X</b>			
Council President Bethea			<b>X</b>	

**ORDINANCE 22-04**

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON AMENDING THE PORT DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ANY SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS TO MAKE EXPLICIT THE GOVERNING BODY RETAINS THE RIGHT TO SELL, LEASE, OR OTHERWISE CONVEY MUNICIPALLY-OWNED PROPERTY PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A 40A:12A-9 AND N.J.S.A 40A:12-13( C )**

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

It was then moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio 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:**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>YEA</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Councilwoman DeQuinzio	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Edwards	<b>X</b>			
Councilman Gonzalez	<b>X</b>			
Councilwoman King	<b>X</b>			
Council President Bethea	<b>X</b>			

**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.

Alan Trzuskoski welcomed Royal Dynamics and stated that if the location they have in mind does not workout he would like them to reach out to him to work together. Mr. Trzuskoski stated that there is a Resolution on tonight for the property to be named as non-condemnation area. He spoke to Councilwoman King that he would like to volunteer to help with the parade.

Carl Seabrook of Baltimore Avenue asked questions regarding CompleteCare. He also asked if there was an update on the old Hillcrest site. He praised Council for their hard work.

Esaul Martin discussed trash issues in the Southeast Gateway area. He is proposing that signs regarding littering and fines be place on Grove Street as a deterrent. He also proposed a City trash can be placed in the area of the small pocket park on Grove Street.

Police Chief Gaimari spoke of Jon Morris. He explained that the incident took place in Bridgeton, however, the vehicle was found in Hopewell which made it a State Police matter. He explained that that force did assist with going to several residences. He continued that unfortunately, last night Mr. Morris' body was found in Hopewell. Chief Gaimari stated that that investigation is not complete at this time.

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-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 called upon the Municipal Clerk to read the Resolutions of the Consent Agenda.



**RESOLUTION NO. 22-22**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton granting Disabled Tax Exemption (129 Walnut Street).

**RESOLUTION NO. 23-22**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton granting Senior Citizen Tax Exemption (22 Kirby Avenue).

**RESOLUTION NO. 24-22**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing and directing the Bridgeton Planning Board to investigate Block 189 Lots 3.03 and 3.04 to determine if parcels qualify as non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment in accordance with Local Housing and Redevelopment Law N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.

**RESOLUTION NO. 25-22**, authorizing a Contract Change Order No. 2 (Final) to South State, Inc. for installation of additional stormwater inlet, concrete and final asphalt and fuel adjustment allowances of the South Pine Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way Reconstruction for an increase of \$17,174.00 for a new Contract amount not to exceed \$376,078.17.

**RESOLUTION NO. 26-22**, stating City of Bridgeton will appropriate funding for the Annual Landfill Post Closure Expenses in the 2022 Solid Waste Utility Operating Budget.

**RESOLUTION NO. 27-22**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton granting Veteran or Widow of Veteran Tax Exemption (482 Coral Avenue).

**RESOLUTION NO. 28-22**, authorizing Contracts with certain approved State Contract vendors for contracting units pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-122, County Co-Op vendors approved by the County of Cumberland for the use by Municipalities pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:54-7.29, and National Co-Op vendors approved by the State for use by Municipalities pursuant to P.L. 2011, c.139.

**RESOLUTION NO. 29-22**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton amending Resolution 12-22 authorizing additional Emergency Temporary Appropriations pending final adoption of the Calendar Year 2022 Budget.

Council President Bethea asked Council for any comments. There were no comments from Council.

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

It was moved by Councilman Gonzalez and second by Councilwoman DeQuinzio that Resolutions M-1 through M-8 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			

## **SCHEDULE OF BILLS:**

Council President Bethea asked Council for a motion to approve the Schedule of Bills dated February 1, 2022 in the amount of \$1,977,834.42. It was moved by Councilwoman DeQuinzio and seconded by Councilman Edwards 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. Towing Application – Ed’s Body Shop 2022 Towing Permit.

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

2. Towing Application – Xtreme Towing and Auto Repair LLC 2022 Towing Permit.

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

## **REPORTS:**

Council President Bethea announced there were no reports.

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

**Mayor Kelly** – Announced that the State has recognized Gateway with aiding with Code Blue.

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

**Councilwoman DeQuinzio** – Stated she is happy to have the new Library Director here. She thanked Ms. Hill-Riggins for her great ideas. She also thanked Mr. Seabrook, Alan Trzuskoski and the Police Department.

**Councilwoman King**- Stated that the information provided by Mayor Kelly regarding Atlantic City Electric sounds positive.

Councilwoman King agreed that having a trash can at the pocket park might help with litter. Councilwoman King suggested South Avenue have speed bumps in place. She also suggested raising the littering fines and enforce the Ordinance that we have.

Councilwoman King stated that there are a lot of businesses looking to hire right now. She suggested some type of job fair could be created by the various businesses.

**Councilman Gonzalez** – Thanked Public Works Department with plowing the snow. He stated this is not an easy task and it does not go unnoticed.

Councilman Gonzalez stated that the Public Library is an easily accessible place to help people apply for a job.

**Councilman Edwards** – Welcomed the new Library Director.

Councilman Edwards thanked Public Works for snow plowing.

Councilman Edwards suggested that ACUA up their pay rate to obtain more employees.

Councilman Edwards spoke to Mr. Seabrook and explained he will speak with him after the meeting.

**Council President Bethea** – Stated that this has been a tough weekend and the snow storm made it very difficult. Council President Bethea discussed the State Police jurisdiction. He stated that as a parent he would move mountains to find a child. Council President Bethea stated that there is a GoFund Me page out to the Morris family to help with funeral expenses.

Council President Bethea stated that Public Works did an outstanding job and is very proud of the Department.

Council President Bethea wished Councilwoman King good luck with the parade.

Council President Bethea stated that the meeting with Atlantic City Electric is a great one. He continued that it is exciting for workforce development which is needed in our town. He explained that he wants to be able to recruit within the town to turn around the economy. He added that supplier diversity and inclusion is needed to level the playing field.

Council President Bethea agreed that maybe a permanent sign showing \$500.00 fine if caught littering. He added that maybe the fines need to be increased.

Council President Bethea thanked all 1<sup>st</sup> Responders, Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works and all Civil Servants for their outstanding jobs for the citizens.

#### **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. 30-22**; 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. **PRO Cap vs. City of Bridgeton**– *Litigation, Attorney/Client Privilege*
2. **CCIA** – *Contracts, Deliberations*

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 7:09 p.m. The original Resolution may be found in the Resolution Book. Council left the dais to convene into Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With a motion by Councilwoman DeQuinzio, seconded by Councilman Edwards, and all in favor, Council came out of Executive Session at 7:49 p.m. and reconvened the regular meeting.

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 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nichole Almanza, Municipal Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Edward Bethea, Council President

Date Approved: 2/15/2022