

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

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, March 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 Council President Bethea. Council President Bethea stated that Council will be short on members at tonight's meeting. Council President Bethea asked for a moment of silence for his colleagues.

The following answered to roll call:

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

ABSENT – Councilwoman Rosemary DeQuinzio
Councilman David Gonzalez

Also in attendance:

Acting Mayor and Administrator Kevin Rabago
Solicitor Michele Gibson

Municipal Clerk Nichole Almanza

PRESENTATIONS:

RULYN'S GARAGE – 2022 Towing Denial Appeal

Robert Casella, Esquire representing Rulyn's Garage explained that the company was denied for expired certificates of insurance and registrations. He explained that this was a mistake and they provided the incorrect paperwork when applying. He continued that they have proof of all up to date documents. Mr. Casella explained that they were also denied due to the City Code stating that they must have a response time of 10 minutes Mr. Casella explained that most employees live in or adjacent to City and would be able to respond in this timeframe.

David Nichols, Shop Manager of Rulyn's Garage, was sworn in by City Solicitor, Michele Gibson. Mr. Nichols stated that he is the one that dispatches employees to accidents and various tow calls. Mr. Nichols stated that the three employees to be dispatched live at the following areas: one lives on Cornwell Drive in Upper Deerfield, one on Commerce Street in Bridgeton and lastly, Centerton Road in Bridgeton. He stated that these employees take their towing vehicles home at night. Mr. Nichols and Mr. Rudy Danna submitted employee documents to show their home locations and distance of same to the City.

Mr. Casella stated that the applicants were also denied for having their tow yard located more than 2 miles from the City limits per the City Code. Mr. Casella indicated that this is true, however, the fact that these employees take their vehicles home would make it so they can provide adequate service to the City.

David Nichols stated that Rulyn's currently provides service to Millville (18 years), Vineland (over 10 years) and State Police (over 30 years).

Mr. Casella stated that the applicant have the equipment available to perform the duties needed. He continued that the City should want to enlarge the pool of applicants.

Council President Bethea asked Mr. Nichols how the requirements of Bridgeton's Code compared to other municipalities. Mr. Nichols answered that they are all different, however, they each have longer response times and distance requirements.

Councilwoman King asked if this appeal was to just obtain approval to do business within the City or if it was to be included on the Police Department's rotation list. Mr. Casella answered to be included on the rotation. He continued that there is even a procedure written in the City's Code to remove a business from the list should for some reason they do not perform as required.

Business Administrator and Acting Mayor, Kevin Rabago explained that this list rotates with each call. He continued that whomever is next in line, gets the phone call.

Council President Bethea thanked all for coming.

MINUTES:

Council President Bethea presented the City Council Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2022 and Executive Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2022. It was moved by Councilwoman King 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.

Councilwoman King – Stated that the date of November 27th has been set for the Christmas Parade.

Council President Bethea – None at this time.

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

Business Administrator and Acting Mayor, Kevin Rabago – Stated that he is staying in touch with the Mayor at this time. He acknowledged City Solicitor, Michele Gibson for her hard work on Redevelopment Agreements. He stated that more up dates will be coming.

City Solicitor, Michele Gibson – None at this time.

ORDINANCES ON 1ST READING:

Council President Bethea announced there was one (1) Ordinance for First Reading. Council President Bethea asked the Municipal Clerk if this Ordinance could move forward. The Municipal Clerk, Nichole Almanza, explained that this Bond Ordinance is in need of 4 members voting and will need to be moved for 1st Reading to the next meeting scheduled for March 15, 2022.

ORDINANCES ON 2ND READING:

Council President Bethea announced there were one (1) Ordinance for Second Reading. He asked the Municipal Clerk to read the Ordinance.

ORDINANCE 22-06

ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

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

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

No one desiring to be heard, it was moved by Councilwoman King and second by Councilman Edwards 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			

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 King the public portion be opened.

Alan Trzuskoski discussed various applications going to the State for his cannabis incubator business. Mr. Trzuskoski discussed hearing discontent of another jail going on Buckshutem Road. He stated that he has an idea to help businesses continue long term once done the incubator cycle. He stated that this could be a location to provide taxes. He stated that he has also been speaking with the owner of Royal Dynastics and the possibly of working together.

Curt Morgan of the Water Department and Business Administrator, Kevin Rabago spoke regarding the recent guidelines from the State to replace all lead pipe lines within the City. Mr. Morgan provided a timeline for replacing these lines. He discussed the various notifications to residents and the upcoming deadlines. He explained that if the City is unable to verify the type of lines that are in a specific location then they must be treated as if they are lead and be replaced. Mr. Morgan stated that progress reports are due to the State by December 22, 2022.

Mr. Morgan explained that Infrastructure Fund monies can be used to pay to fix these items. He continued that from the street to the curb is the City's responsibility and curb to house is the homeowner's responsibility. He added that he is awaiting answers from the State as to funding for homeowners or if they do not do the replacements that they would be required to do.

Kevin Rabago stated that CDBG funds may be available for income eligible residents to help ease the burden of paying for the replacements.

Council President Bethea asked what funds were being used for these replacements in places such as Flint, Michigan or Newark, New Jersey. He stated he would like to see how other communities are dealing beyond the curb.

Mr. Morgan explained that South State was providing services for \$1,000 in the first round, however, it ended up not being enough funds to cover the work that was needed. He continued that another town has decided to tax the cost over a 5 year period. He explained that hopefully he will have more answers from the State in March.

Mr. Morgan and Mr. Rabago explained that the Bond Ordinance was supposed to be on 1st reading tonight. They continued that these funds would allow the City to start buying the parts needed to replace what has been identified.

Alan Trzuskoski spoke of the lead replacements and suggested that residents could speak with their homeowner's insurance with the possibility of getting coverage for the costs.

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

Council President Bethea announced all matters listed under the consent agenda; M-1 through M-16 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 and indicated that M-15 and M-16 will be pulled from the Consent Agenda and voted on separately.

RESOLUTION NO. 40-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing certain utility account adjustments and taxes.

RESOLUTION NO. 41-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award a Non-Fair and Open Contract to Edmunds and Associates, Inc. (Edmunds Govtech) for 2022 software usage and maintenance in the amount not to exceed \$23,265.64 from January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022.

RESOLUTION NO. 42-22, establishing 2022 Temporary Water and Sewer Capital Budget for the City of Bridgeton.

RESOLUTION NO. 43-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing and approving Employment Agreement between the City of Bridgeton and Police Captain.

RESOLUTION NO. 44-22, of the City of Council of the City of Bridgeton directing and authorizing the Bridgeton Planning Board to consider amending the Redevelopment Plan created to facilitate the Cumberland Dairy Expansion to include Block 10, Lots 16 and 17.

RESOLUTION NO. 45-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing and approving Employment Agreement between the City of Bridgeton and Police Chief.

RESOLUTION NO. 46-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing submission of the Strategic Plan, Grant Year 2023 Municipal Alliance to Prevent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

RESOLUTION NO. 47-22, authorizing and approving Amended Provisional Employment Agreement between the City of Bridgeton and Deputy Fire Chief.

RESOLUTION NO. 48-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to enter into a Cooperative Pricing Agreement with Hunterdon County Education Services Commission.

RESOLUTION NO. 49-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to enter into the New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Alliance with the lead agency – County of Bergen, New Jersey.

RESOLUTION NO. 50-22, authorizing the City of Bridgeton to award a Contract to JEM Print for Printing Services for one (1) year, with an option to renew for an additional two (2), one (1) year services.

RESOLUTION NO. 51-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton authorizing budget appropriations transfers for CY 2021.

RESOLUTION NO. 52-22, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton amending Resolution 29-22 authorizing additional emergency temporary appropriations pending final adoption of the Calendar Year 2022 Budget.

RESOLUTION NO. 53-22, authorizing the Discharge of a Reverter Clause in Deed for 7 N. Industrial Blvd. designated as Block 189, Lot 3.03 on the tax map of the City of Bridgeton.

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 Edwards and second by Councilwoman King that Resolutions M-1 through M-14 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 King made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-15** being **RESOLUTION NO. 54-22**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton amending Resolution 317-21 authorizing the City of Bridgeton to enter into a Shared Services Agreement with the County of Cumberland to receive additional funding for Code Blue Activities. The motion was seconded by Councilman Edwards.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

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

Councilwoman King made a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION M-16** being **RESOLUTION NO. 55-22**, of the City Council of the City of Bridgeton amending Resolution 318-21 to include an additional \$16,667.67 in Code Blue Grant Funds to be awarded to Gateway Community Action Partnership for the provision of Code Blue Services to Bridgeton residents during the 2021-2022 Code Blue Season. The motion was seconded by Councilman Edwards.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

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

SCHEDULE OF BILLS:

Council President Bethea asked Council for a motion to approve the Schedule of Bills dated March 1, 2022 in the amount of \$227,159.08. It was moved by Councilwoman King 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.

City Solicitor, Michele Gibson:

Ms.Gibson asked Council President Bethea if Council will be making a decision tonight regarding the Towing Appeal for Ruly'n's.

Council President Bethea stated he would like to caucus and discuss. He continued that he would like to offer the entire Council to be able to review. He added that he would like to discuss the process of the possibility of amending the ordinance if it benefits the City.

Councilman Edwards and Councilwoman King both agreed that they have enough information tonight to make a decision.

Ms. Gibson stated that nothing warrants the addition to speak of this item in Executive Session. She explained that it could be placed on the next meeting agenda if needed.

Council President Bethea stated that because of the lack of full members he would prefer to be respectful and allow them time to review as well.

Councilwoman King stated that with a decision being made tonight would set a precedence that maybe waiting to the next meeting would be best.

Council President Bethea stated that this will be included in the next agenda scheduled for March 15th.

Council President Bethea called upon Council for comments:

Councilwoman King- asked residents to pray for Ukraine and Russia. Councilwoman King shared her hopes that Covid is finally over. She added that it has been a long battle.

Councilman Edwards – None at this time.

Council President Bethea – Stated that it feels like the world is upside down. He continued that it is one thing after another lately.

Council President Bethea asked for prayers for Mayor Kelly and Council colleagues. He added he prays for speedy recoveries for all.

Council President Bethea stated that he appreciated the presentation tonight. He continued that he wants the residents of the City to have the most available of services. He added that the Ordinance can be reviewed if needed.

Council President Bethea stated that the next Citywide Clean-up is scheduled for March 26th. He continued that he is hoping for more participation.

Council President Bethea thanked all 1st 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. 56-22**; 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. **Hayes vs. City of Bridgeton**– *Litigation, Attorney/Client Privilege*
2. **Riverfront Cafe** – *Contracts,*

Upon a motion by Councilwoman King and second by Councilman Edwards the motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote to convene into Executive Session at 6:33 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 King, seconded by Councilman Edwards, and all in favor, Council came out of Executive Session at 7:17 p.m. and reconvened the regular meeting.

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

Council President Bethea adjourned the meeting which ended at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED



Nichole Almanza, Municipal Clerk



J. Curtis Edwards, Acting Council President

Date Approved: 3/15/2022

