

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

A meeting of the Bridgeton City Council was held on Tuesday, December 4, 2007, 6:30 p.m., City Council Chambers, City Hall, 168 East Commerce Street, Bridgeton, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by Council President William D. Spence

The Statement of Meeting Notice was read by City Clerk, Darlene J. Richmond, "Adequate notice of this meeting pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 giving the time, date, location and agenda to the extent known has been given in the following manner:

1. By posting notice of said meeting on the bulletin board at City Hall, 168 East Commerce Street, Bridgeton, New Jersey on November 30, 2007 4:30 p.m.
2. By mailing such notice to the Bridgeton News and the Press on November 30, 2007 at 4:30 p.m." The invocation was delivered by Councilwoman Riley and flag salute was led by Councilman Salvatore.

The following answered to roll call:

Mr. Kelly
Ms. Riley
Mr. Salvatore
Mr. Thompson
Pres. Spence

The Clerk presented the minutes from the meeting of November 20, 2007 all members having received copies.

It was moved by Ms. Riley and second by Mr. Thompson that the minutes be approved and to dispense with the reading as all members have received copies, which motion was carried.

The Clerk announced this being the time and place set forth for second reading, public hearing, and final consideration of an ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 3-21 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON

It was moved by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Salvatore that this be considered the second reading of said ordinance and that the meeting be opened to the public for a hearing on the matter, which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence opened the meeting to the public for anyone desiring to be heard on this ordinance and this ordinance only.

No one desiring to be heard, it was moved by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Salvatore that the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence closed the public hearing on the Ordinance.

It was moved by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Salvatore that this be considered the third and final reading of said ordinance and that the ordinance be taken up for adoption or rejection by roll call vote, which motion was carried.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

YEAS	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
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Mr. Kelly			
Ms. Riley			
Mr. Salvatore			
Mr. Thompson			
Pres. Spence			

Pres. Spence declared the ordinance adopted becoming ORDINANCE NO. 07-18, the original ordinance may be found in the Ordinance Book.

The Clerk announced this being the time and place set forth for second reading, public hearing, and final consideration of an ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANCE 07-1 AMENDING CHAPTER 3-21 (A) (3) OF THE GENERAL CODE REGARDING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

It was moved by Ms. Riley and seconded by Mr. Salvatore that this be considered the second reading of said ordinance and that the meeting be opened to the public for a hearing on the matter, which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence opened the meeting to the public for anyone desiring to be heard on this ordinance and this ordinance only.

No one desiring to be heard, it was moved by Ms. Riley and seconded by Mr. Salvatore that the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence closed the public hearing on the Ordinance.

It was moved by Ms. Riley and seconded by Mr. Salvatore that this be considered the third and final reading of said ordinance and that the ordinance be taken up for adoption or rejection by roll call vote, which motion was carried.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

YEAS NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

Mr. Kelly
Ms. Riley
Mr. Salvatore
Mr. Thompson
Pres. Spence

Pres. Spence declared the ordinance adopted becoming
ORDINANCE NO. 07-19, the original ordinance may be found in the Ordinance Book.

The Clerk announced Item No. 9 “ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 203-14 AND CHAPTER 203-20 OF THE GENERAL CODE OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON” was removed from the agenda.

The Clerk announced this being the time and place set forth for second reading, public hearing, and final consideration of an ordinance entitled:

AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE SALARIES AND RATES OF CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

It was moved by Mr. Salvatore and seconded by Mr. Thompson that this be considered the second reading of said ordinance and that the meeting be opened to the public for a hearing on the matter, which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence opened the meeting to the public for anyone desiring to be heard on this ordinance and this ordinance only.

No one desiring to be heard, it was moved by Mr. Salvatore and seconded by Mr. Thompson that the public hearing be closed which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence closed the public hearing on the Ordinance.

It was moved by Mr. Salvatore and seconded by Mr. Thompson that this be considered the third and final reading of said ordinance and that the ordinance be taken up for adoption or rejection by roll call vote, which motion was carried.

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

YEAS NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

Mr. Kelly
Ms. Riley
Mr. Salvatore

Mr. Thompson
Pres. Spence

Pres. Spence declared the ordinance adopted becoming ORDINANCE NO. 07-20, the original ordinance may be found in the Ordinance Book.

The Clerk read an Ordinance entitled:

**ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 45
LOT 14 ON THE TAX MAP OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON**

It was moved by Mr. Salvatore and second by Mr. Thompson that said ordinance be adopted on first reading and that second reading, public hearing, and final consideration be held on December 18, 2007 which motion was carried by unanimous roll call vote.

The Clerk announced this being the time place set for public portion on the consent agenda or any other concerns.

It was moved by Ms. Riley and second by Mr. Salvatore that the meeting be opened to the public for anyone desiring to be heard, which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence opened the meeting to the public for anyone desiring to be heard.

Mr. Michael Zapolski, West Avenue, addressed Council and Administration related to proposal that he made in July of this year regarding the Water Rate Ordinance change and would like to understand the basis for the CFO concerns. Councilwoman Riley and he have requested a meeting with CFO to discuss this issue.

Mr. Zapolski elaborated:

“Due to a prior commitment, I was unable to attend the November 20th council meeting, at which, the CFO spoke in relation to my proposed water rate ordinance changes. While I still believe enacting my proposal, will realize the benefits I’ve already expressed, I would like to understand the basis for the CFO’s concern. To that end, Councilwoman Riley has requested that she and I meet with the CFO to discuss this issue.

Now to my central concern... To say that I am disappointed, and somewhat troubled, by the manner in which the administrative review of my water rate reduction proposal has been handled thus far is an understatement.

Please allow me to explain...

On May 22nd, the notion of increasing city water rates was first presented to Council, and on June 19th, that notion became law for Bridgeton water customers with virtually no discussion, except to say “our rates were too low, and we need the revenue”.

In an effort to be sensitive to the needs of our community, I offered Council suggestions that I felt would mitigate the effect of that 91¢ rate increase on Bridgeton residents. Although those suggestions were not implemented, I believed there might yet be some way to lessen the impact of this rate increase; and so I sought out alternatives to the new water rate fees.

On July 3rd, I presented Council with a detailed, factually-based, water rate plan that would save our residents money, while at the same time generate more revenue than the recently passed ordinance. One member of council voiced support for my proposal believing it may have merit, and should be reviewed by Mr. Wuzzardo & Ms. Delp.

Later, in that same meeting, Council President Spence suggested I meet with Councilwoman Riley to review my proposal and report her findings to Council. In preparation for that meeting, copies of the plan and a detailed explanation were emailed on July 3rd to Mr. Wuzzardo, Ms. Delp, & Councilwoman Riley noting why they were being sent.

Only Councilwoman Riley responded to that email. After our meeting, her report was made to council on August 7th recommending the implementation of my proposal. Following that discussion, Council President requested that the BA and other appropriate departments review my work.

On August 21st, I inquired about the status of that review during Council's work session. The end-product of Council's subsequent discussion was that "**Council agreed to re-draft the water ordinance**" [[recorded in the minutes](#)].

2½ months later, the re-drafted ordinance appeared on the Nov 7th Council agenda for a 1st reading, but it was removed at the last minute for some unknown reason without any explanation.

In less than 1 month, council enacted a 91¢ water rate increase with virtually no discussion other than the need for more revenue. Yet, when presented with a factually-based objective plan that would save our residents a few cents without losing revenue and council agreed to re-draft the ordinance; it disappears for almost 3 months only to be silently tabled at the last minute.

To be clear, I feel Council acted appropriately. They listened to the proposal, studied the issue, asked the administration to review it, and then acted. Conversely, the administration's handling of this issue was devoid of any meaningful dialogue during the past 5 months.

How does the record of these events demonstrate that the administration is interested in its people's welfare - involving and working with its residents in a meaningful and timely manner?

One interpretation might be that it shows a cautious government at work. Another interpretation is that rate & fee increases are fast-tracked, without factual public justification, and that a resident's idea is effectively stonewalled – at least that is my perception.

I believe that no one person has all the answers to our city's needs. It will take a team effort to move Bridgeton forward; and its residents should be an active part of that team.

Local government has asked for its resident's cooperation and help. When someone steps up to the plate in response to that request, they expect their effort to be given an honest assessment with a mindset that their idea just might have merit.

In my opinion, that characteristic is expressed by a degree of **common courtesy** and **mutual respect** for their initiative. Certainly, one indicator that demonstrates these behaviors is a **cooperative two-way communication** – something that has been absent from my experience of this issue - it makes one wonder why?"

Mr. Warren Robinson, Hampton Street, expressed concern over the lateness of starting the meeting as inexcusable.

Mr. Robinson also addressed the Ordinance 203-14 that the ordinance be rejected and be written with a better understanding and compassion for the residents.

Pres. Spence apologized for coming out late and stated that the Ordinance has been taken off this evening so that lawn issues can be addressed.

No one else desiring to be heard, it was moved by Mr. Thompson and second by Mr. Salvatore to close the public portion of the meeting which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence closed the public portion of the meeting.

The Clerk read the Consent Agenda Statement:

All matters listed under items 12-A, through items 12-I, are considered routine and will be enacted upon by one motion, if discussion is desired that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be acted upon separately. Items 12-J to 12-L were additions to the agenda.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly seconded by Ms. Thompson that the following Resolutions listed under the consent agenda be adopted, which motion was carried by unanimous roll call vote. The original resolutions may be found in the Resolution Book.

RESOLUTION NO. 156-07, authorizing suspension of enforcement of Ordinance 300-21.1(A) & (B) for holiday related waste

RESOLUTION NO. 157-07, to create the Plan Endorsement Citizen Advisory Committee

RESOLUTION NO. 158-07, approving commodity resale agreement with County (Rock Salt/Ice Control Sand)

RESOLUTION NO. 159-07, authorizing Tax Assessor to grant Veteran Tax Exemption

RESOLUTION NO.160-07, authorizing sale of Block 138 Lots 18 and 18.01 to Bridgeton Independent Club

RESOLUTION NO.161-07, authorizing sale of Block 185 Lots 4 and 5 to Mac Levitt

RESOLUTION NO. 162-07, appointing Risk Management Consultant and Authorizing agreement

RESOLUTION NO. 163-07, authorizing Main Street Association Program Application for UEZ Funding

RESOLUTION NO. 164-07, awarding bid to South State Inc. for overlay of West Lincoln Street

RESOLUTION NO. 165-07, authorizing interlocal service agreement with Hopewell Township

RESOLUTION NO. 166-07, authorizing interlocal service agreement with Stow Creek Township

RESOLUTION NO. 167-07, authorizing agreement with Court Appointed Special Advocate of Cumberland County to provide recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers pursuant to CDBG Funding

The Clerk presented the Schedule of Bills in the amount of \$425,963.67 all members having received copies.

It was moved by Ms. Riley and seconded by Mr. Thompson that the Schedule of Bills be approved 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 files under "S", Schedule of Bills.

The Clerk presented the following reports:

Vital Statistics
Municipal Clerk

It was moved by Mr. Salvatore and seconded by Ms. Riley that said reports be received and filed, which motion was carried.

The Clerk announced that is all the business she has to come before Council at this time.

Pres. Spence called upon the Mayor for comments.

Mayor Begley, thanked those involved in the House Tour and Festival of Lights.

Mayor further addressed the trash issue regarding the stickers as in the contract and the City to monitor the pick up of the material and the Administration is looking at it and may come back with a new figure.

He also stated in regards to the Water Rate issue that once the CFO sits down with you (Mr. Zapolski) and runs the figures you will have a better understanding as to where they are coming from.

Pres. Spence called upon Council for comments

Councilman Kelly commended Main Street for the Christmas tree down town and also the Bridgeton Parade Committee.

Councilwoman Riley thanked those that opened their homes for the tour and the Swedish Museum and Melissa Hemple, the Festival of Lights.

Ms. Riley continued to comment on the town meeting and came away with so much hope and so much to be thankful in the City of Bridgeton.

She further mentioned the people that are coming to the town think that our schools are excellent and we should be marketing that and we need to start to say more about our school system.

Councilman Salvatore no comments

Councilman Thompson no comments

Pres. Spence stated he thinks it is important to know that we have citizens out here that are watching what we do and hope they understand that we are human and mistakes are made and I hope they can be corrected by having discussion like we have. He would like to see some of these same people to come out to the affairs that we have.

Pres. Spence mentioned activities during the Festival of Lights and this being the first year it was good. The program for the Master Plan was great; those that turned out, these are the kind of things which will turn Bridgeton around.

He apologized for being late coming out they will work on that and he is sure, Terry Delp, CFO will get together with you and talk about those issues and thanked everyone for coming.

There being no further business to come before Council, it was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Thompson to adjourn the meeting, which motion was carried.

Pres. Spence adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene J. Richmond, RMC
City Clerk

APPROVED:

Council President William D. Spence
Date: