

BOROUGH OF BRADLEY BEACH

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING & COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 AT 6:30 P.M.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, PUBLIC MEETINGS MAY BE HELD IN PERSON OR BY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT TO INCLUDE STREAMING SERVICES AND OTHER ONLINE MEETING PLATFORMS (N.J.S.A. 10:4-8b).

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN-PERSON AND THROUGH THE ZOOM MEETING PLATFORM, BEING BROADCAST FROM BOROUGH HALL, 701 MAIN STREET, BRADLEY BEACH, NJ 07720. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR THIS BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING AND COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 25 2024 WAS AVAILBLE IN PERSON OR THROUGH THE ZOOM LINK POSTED TO THE WEBSITE. THE COUNCIL MEETINGS (RESOLUTION 2023-289 ADOPTED DECEMBER 6, 2023) FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024 WAS ADVERTISED IN THE NEW COASTER, THE COAST STAR, AND THE ASBURY PARK PRESS ON DECEMBER 14, 2023.

WITH ADEQUATE NOTICE HAVING BEEN GIVEN, THE MUNICIPAL CLERK IS DIRECTED TO INCLUDE THIS STATEMENT IN THE MINUTES OF THIS MEETING.

A Council Business Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bradley Beach was held in the Meeting Room, 701 Main Street, Bradley Beach, New Jersey on the above date.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fox opened the meeting with a salute to the flag.

Sunshine Law was read.

The meeting has been noticed publicly according to the Open Public Meetings Act requirement for the “Annual Notice” and posted on the official bulletin board in the Borough Office.

ROLL CALL AT 6:30 P.M.

Present at the September 25, 2024 Budget Public Hearing and Council Business Meeting:

**Governing Body Members: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber (6:45 p.m.), Mayor Fox
Acting Business Administrator, Meredith DeMarco
Chief Financial Officer, Richard Gartz
Resident Volunteer, Gregory Fehrenbach
Municipal Clerk, Erica Kostyz
Borough Attorney, Gregory Cannon
Michele Whille, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Zoom Facilitator
Police Detective Lieutenant, Terry Browning, Police Sergeant Anthony Murray**

Public Hearing on the 2023 Introduced Municipal Budget:

ON MOTION by Fox/DeNoble to open the Public Hearing for the 2024 Introduced Municipal Budget.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

2024 Municipal Budget Public Hearing Commentary:

The Borough Chief Financial Officer, Richard Gartz, Acting Borough Administrator Meredith DeMarco, and former Interim Administrator and now Volunteer Resident Gregory Fehrenbach addressed resident inquiries.

In Person:

Herb Kenny, 216 Brinley Avenue, inquired about reserve items, revenue items, salary/wage items, Departmental items, over expenditures, and the Police and Fireman Retirement Fund.

Thomas J. Coan, 612 Third Avenue, inquired about the surplus, sewer re-lining, Fire Department Turn-Out Gear, roof repair, and under drains. Mr. Coan also inquired if there were any Zoom interactions with the Finance Team during the budget preparation to which Mr. Gartz answered there were not.

Beth Kepler, 504 Central Avenue, made several inquiries about the 2023 Audit and Annual Financial Statement.

Lengthy discussion ensued with Ms. Kepler to which it was explained by Mr. Gartz, Ms. DeMarco, and Mayor Fox that this is a hearing for the 2024 Municipal Budget only.

Brigitte McGuire, 610 Brinley Avenue, inquired about the surplus replenishment and the 2023 Audit.

Mary Backstrom, 218 Fourth Avenue, inquired about the verbiage on Budget Amendment Resolution.

Linda Duffy, 312 Brinley Avenue, inquired about the Local 152 retroactive pay.

ZOOM: None

ON MOTION by Fox/DeNoble to close the Public Hearing for the 2024 Municipal Budget Adoption Hearing.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Council Inquiries/Comments on the 2024 Municipal Budget:

The Chief Financial Officer Richard Gartz, Acting Borough Administrator Meredith DeMarco, and former Interim Administrator and now Resident Volunteer Gregory Fehrenbach addressed the Council's inquiries.

The budget inquiry topics/inquires discussed and addressed included but were not limited to:

- **2023 Audit**
- **Budget Amendment Resolution**
- **Accuracy of Edmunds data.**
- **Sewer Utility**
- **Beach Utility**
- **Retroactive pay**
- **Police and DPW Operational Expenses**
- **DPW staffing and salaries**
- **Reserves and Miscellaneous Revenues**
- **Code Enforcement Permit and Construction expenses**
- **Utility expenses**
- **Gasoline and fuel expenses**
- **Parking Meter Revenues**
- **Capital and Capital Outlay**
- **DPW and Police vehicles and equipment**
- **Trust Accounts**
- **Bond Ordinances**
- **Health Insurance expenses**
- **Police and Fire Department Retirement Fund**

Resolution 2024-181 Amendments to the 2024 Municipal Budget.

Councilwoman DeNoble stated she hopes for better budget collaboration with Council in 2025 and voted yes.

Councilman Gubitosi stated the following:

I am very pleased that the Council was finally allowed to meet with our CFO tonight and that we were allowed to ask questions. Per a recent conversation with the Director of Local Government Services at the Department of Community Affairs, I was told that she had never before heard of a situation where the Council of any New Jersey Municipality, was not allowed to meet with their Department Heads and their CFO, prior to approving an annual budget.

Here in Bradley Beach, anyone who has joined a Council meeting over the past six months, knows the story of why we are voting to adopt our 2024 Budget as we enter October of 2024. We should have adopted a budget during March, April, May or possibly as late as June. Unfortunately, there has been a total lack of collaboration with the Council and there has been no transparency offered to our residents. However, it is time to move on. Seventy-five percent of the year's budget has already been spent. If we vote 'No' tonight, we will not be able to vote on a revised 2024 Budget again until close to November. That would truly be the "definition of insanity."

At this point, it is simple, we must approve this budget adoption tonight. Whatever might be wrong with this 2024 budget, the new Council, with a new Mayor, will work hard to fix it in 2025. Next year, the

budget will be built with an open sharing of ideas and with professional collaboration. The Council will actively engage our residents. Our new, reconfigured Council will work together to serve the people. I want to repeat my concerns raised earlier, and my hope is that come November 1st, we might be able to accommodate any remaining concerns regarding the remaining Local 152 salaries, a large portion of that, of course, are DPW salaries and we still do not know where that is built into the budget. The police equipment we need for example, I do not know if we need two license plate readers or seven. I would like to engage with Chief Arnold to make sure we can acquire this needed equipment. We need to have this conversation on November 1st when budget dollars can be reallocated.

As for my vote tonight, I vote “Yes” to adopt this resolution for the 2024 Municipal Budget.

ON MOTION by Fox/Gubitosi to the adopt Resolution 2024-181 Budget Amendment.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

APPROVED

Resolution 2024-174 Adoption of the 2024 Municipal Budget.

Councilwoman Mahoney stated the following:

Not one of my council counterparts should have had to have spent the untold hours it has taken to get to this point. Hours and hours were expended asking questions, analyzing documents, requesting information and getting no closer to clarity as Current, Beach and Sewer Utility budgets changed from March 27th to April 19th, and then finally to July 23rd. The surplus we have in the Current Fund has been reduced from \$2.8M in 2022 to \$1.4 M in 2024. The beach utility over two years will go from a \$1M Surplus to \$662,000.00, the Sewer Utility will also be reduced by approximately \$500,000.00.

Our percentage tax increase over the past year with this Administration has been in the teens, outrageous numbers in and of themselves, but combined with the surplus this Administration has been reckless with, equates to a tax increase of over 21% in each of the last two years.

But again, here we are and as September wanes and we look to October, if we had to approve the Temporary Emergency Appropriation, our third, we would be just \$4M short of spending the 2024 budget that this Administration has requested.

If we request changes to this budget, including the time to reintroduce and approve, we will need to wait more than thirty days. This has been a sad process and a clear demonstration of inefficiency and obstacles.

The future Mayor and Administration of Bradley Beach will have a monumental task in front of them. The solvency and future of our Borough will be dependent upon the changes that need to be made in 2025, the buildup of reserves, the articulation and effectuation of an audit remediation plan for 18 items which is now six months overdue, the reduction of spend and ultimately, the cutting of our outrageous taxes. With three quarters of our fiscal year completed, we need to move forward. Having this budget approved before November will allow us to shift monies from one category to another, an opportunity we would not be afforded if we wait any longer. For this reason, I vote yes on approving this budget.

Councilman Weber thanked Mr. Gartz for his attendance and suggested having a Council Member on the Finance Committee in 2025 and voted yes.

Mayor Fox addressed the comments made about the surplus and hopes the Council can get reorganized for the November re-spend as there is a lot of administrative work to be done and voted yes.

ON MOTION by Fox/Gubitosi to the adopt Resolution 2024-174 Budget Adoption.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

APPROVED

WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS: None

PRESENTATIONS: None

Mayor Fox made a motion to move the Ordinance Introduction(s) up on the agenda order, seconded by Councilman Weber.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

ORDINANCES: INTRODUCTION(S):

REFUNDING BOND ORDINANCE 2024-9

REFUNDING BOND ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF BRADLEY BEACH, IN THE COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR THE REFUNDING OF ALL OR A PORTION OF THE BOROUGH'S GENERAL IMPROVEMENT REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2014, APPROPRIATING AN AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING \$1,900,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF NOT TO EXCEED \$1,900,000 GENERAL IMPROVEMENT REFUNDING BONDS OF THE BOROUGH OF BRADLEY BEACH FOR FINANCING THE COST THEREOF

Councilman Gubitosi asked if it would be beneficial delay this ordinance in hopes of obtaining lower interest rates to save additional funds.

Mr. Gartz explained this Refunding Bond opportunity is through the Monmouth County Improvement Authority (MCIA). The Borough would not be able to do this again if it were decided to drop out or delay this ordinance.

ON MOTION by Fox/Gubitosi to introduce Bond Ordinance 2024-9.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

INTRODUCED

ORDINANCE ADOPTION(S): None

MINUTES APPROVAL

ON MOTION by Fox/DeNoble to approve the Council Business Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2024.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

APPROVED

ON MOTION by Fox/DeNoble to approve the Executive Session Minutes of September 11, 2024.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

APPROVED

Public Comments on Agenda Items:

In Person:

Eileen Shissias, 112 Fourth Avenue, had multiple bill list inquiries pertaining to Tourism items and litigation items.

Ms. Shissias confirmed with Mr. Fehrenbach he has not been compensated monetarily for time spent in finance meetings and negotiations and has been assisting the Borough on a volunteer basis.

Thomas McGuire, 610 Brinley Avenue, inquired about Resolution for 2024-179 pertaining to the Spotted Lanternfly and stated his opinions about the budget process.

Nancy Meadow, 805 Beach Avenue, voiced multiple bill list complaints.

Beth Kepler, 504 Central Avenue, commented on the licensing status of the former CFO.

Thomas J. Coan, 612 Third Avenue, stated he is in favor of Resolution 2024-178.

Zoom: None

COMMUNICATIONS: None

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS:
2024-175 Bill List for September 25, 2024.

ON MOTION by Fox/Mahoney to adopt the Consent Agenda Resolutions.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ADOPTED

INDIVIUAL RESOLUTIONS:
2024-176 Approval of Appointment for Probationary Firefighter Christopher Schottinger.

ON MOTION by Fox/Gubitosi to adopt Resolution 2024-176.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ADOPTED

2024-177 Approving Certification of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Councilman Gubitosi and Councilman Weber confirmed the personnel policy is aligned with the State pertaining to hiring policies.

ON MOTION by Fox/Gubitosi to adopt Resolution 2024-177.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ADOPTED

2024-178 Authorizing a payout of accumulated sick time to Leonard Guida, retired Chief of the Bradley Beach Police Department in three separate and equal installments for calendar years 2024, 2025, and 2026.

ON MOTION by Fox/Gubitosi to adopt Resolution 2024-178.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: DeNoble

ADOPTED

2024-179 Authorizing an application to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for a 2024-2026 Spotted Lanternfly population reduction/chemical control treatment Grant.

ON MOTION by Fox/DeNoble to adopt Resolution 2024-179.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ADOPTED

2024-180 Authorizing Amendments to the Temporary Budget. *WITHDRAWN*

ON MOTION by Fox/to withdraw Resolution 2024-180.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

WITHDRAWN

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilman Weber:

- **Presented the Fire Department and First Aid Squad monthly activity reports.**
- **The Shade Tree Commission will conduct a tree planting this weekend at the park located between Second and Third Avenue.**

Councilwoman Mahoney:

There will be a beach sweep on Oct 5th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. You can sign up by going to CleanOceanAction.org and downloading the waver, or you can sign up the day of the sweep at 9:00 a.m. The next Environmental Commission meeting will be on October 7th they will make their Council presentation on October 23rd.

The Land Use Board met on September 19th. No new business was discussed. Their next meeting will be Oct 17th.

Councilman Gubitosi:

Police Liaison Report: We have had numerous bicycle thefts, but all are of unlocked bicycles left mostly on front porches or in plain view in yards. This is, and has always been, a shore town problem. The Police Department would like to remind residents to please lock your bicycle with a heavy duty chain if it is to be left outside, and do your best to hide it from view as these are crimes of opportunity and the criminals generally go for unlocked bikes they can see from the sidewalk or street as they walk by.

That being said, the only arrest we report since the last meeting is the same subject tied to two bicycle thefts earlier in the month was once again arrested for stealing a bicycle. As he fled, he ended up stealing another bicycle but was apprehended by police. He was additionally charged with two counts of criminal trespassing and one count of resisting arrest.

Sylvan Lake Commission: A meeting was held last Wednesday, September 18th. Commission members are still pushing their professionals to commence survey and measurement work, in an effort to understand the design needed for the dredging and the restoration of the lake. This information can then be used to design the bulkhead repair project on the Bradley Beach side of the lake, which is likely to commence next year. One of the restoration project leads, Marty McHugh, answered questions from the Commission and one of our residents with a strong engineering background, Paul Nowicki, has offered his guidance.

Councilwoman DeNoble:

- Tourism – the Viva Bradley Beach event was a success.
- Shade Tree Commission – conducting a tree planting event.
- Board of Education – met on September 17th and were awarded with a plaque from the New Jersey School Board Association.

Mayor Fox:

- Provided an update on the Sylvan Lake Outfall Pipe repair project.
- There was a Mayor's Wellness Walk last Friday in the evening.
- Working on the 319 LaReine Avenue Bid packet.
- Provided an update in infrastructure projects.

Public Comment

In Person:

Eileen Shissias, 112 Fourth Avenue, mentioned the parking meter on Fourth Avenue has been out of commission all summer and requested this be repaired.

Linda Duffy, 312 Brinley Avenue, mentioned the Senior Club meeting this afternoon was successful and expressed concerns pertaining to 319 LaReine Avenue demolition and Local 152 negotiations.

Thomas J. Coan, 612 Third Avenue, recommended approving a grade plan for 319 LaReine Avenue and expressed his opinions regarding the 2024 Municipal Budget process.

Nancy Meadow, 805 Beach Avenue, complained about Borough expenses and the website.

Paul Neshamkin, 411 ½ LaReine Avenue, announced the Bradley Beach Historical Society will be conducting a session on the at the Biase Center on Sunday, September 29th from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on how to conduct research on the history of the town.

Beth Kepler, 504 Central Avenue, gave a statement commending Councilman Gubitosi.

ZOOM: None

ADJOURNMENT:

ON MOTION by Fox/Gubitosi to adjourn at 9:55 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: DeNoble, Gubitosi, Mahoney, Weber, Mayor Fox

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

THE COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:55 P.M.


Erica Kostyz, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk