

QUARTERLY UPDATE
JANUARY – MARCH 2023

BUDGET

Preparation for the 2023 Municipal Budget

Interim Township Business Administrator Maureen Ruane and I have been meeting with all department heads to review their annual budget requests. A temporary budget was adopted by the township council, which was 26.25 percent of our yearly 2022 municipal budget. Ms. Ruane and I have been working with our professionals to prepare a proposed permanent budget for the township council members to review.

GRANTS

Available Grant Applications in Progress

Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund 2023

The 2023 grant cycle welcomes applicants seeking aid in four categories: Land Acquisition, Historic Preservation, Floodplain Protection, and Municipal Park Improvements. All Bergen County municipalities and qualified non-profit organizations are invited to apply.

Sustainable Jersey and Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G) Partnership Program

The Sustainable Jersey-PSE&G Partnership Program empowers municipalities, residents, and businesses to manage energy use better and leverage PSE&G's high-impact, cost-effective-energy-efficiency programs, and incentives. Increasing energy efficiency for local businesses, residents, and government facilities provides economic, environmental, community, and health benefits.

U.S. Environment Protection Agency – Clean Water State Revolving Fund

This revolving fund provides loans and other authorized assistance to water systems for eligible infrastructure projects. As water systems repay their loans, the repayments and interest flow back into the dedicated revolving fund. These funds may be used to make additional loans.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection – Stormwater Grant

This rolling grant is available to municipalities to help with the new municipal stormwater permitting requirements. The state is committed to assisting municipalities in implementing the new requirements to address our water pollution, flooding problems, and failing stormwater infrastructure.

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

FY23 Congressional Appropriations – Community Project Funding (CPF)

Through (CPF), Congressman Bill Pascrell's Office has awarded the Township of Saddle Brook \$1,393,682 for sewage rehabilitation and improvements. Funding will be used to provide required maintenance, repairs, and replacements for sewage pumping stations and a gravity sewer interceptor system owned and operated by the township. Our grant writer will assist with applying to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and draw down allocated funds.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters

02/08/2023: Our grant writer successfully submitted this application on behalf of the Saddle Brook Fire Department (SBFD) for \$23,120 for mobile radios.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Park Development

03/01/2023: Green Acres provides grants and loans to municipal and county governments to acquire open space and develop outdoor recreation facilities. Green Acres works with local governments from the time of application through project completion. The township applied for \$267,500 in improvements to Victor Street Park.

Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2023

12/13/2022: The township applied for CDBG funds of \$143,000 for resurfacing and pavement efforts to Sterling Place and Orchard Lane. Project details include roadway resurfacing, replacement of curbing, new drainage grates, and ensuring that sidewalks are ADA-compliant. The CDBG committee will meet in April to allocate available funds.

Grants Awarded

N.J. Department of Consumer Affairs – FY 2023 Local Recreation Improvement Grant

March 2023: Received \$60,000 to install a basketball court at Fifth Street Park.

Bergen County Community Development Block Grant 2022 Un-programmed Funding

The township applied for and received \$137,000 to resurface and pave Washington Street and Blanche Street. This CDBG-funded project must be spent down by Friday, April 21, 2023, or will be closed out by the county.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

The MYG met on Saturday, January 14th, and again on Saturday, February 25th. Several items were discussed, including our participation in the Township Easter Celebration on Saturday, April 8th, and other events and activities. We also discussed working with the school district to bring back student government day. This is a program where students take on government roles, such as mayor, municipal clerk, etc., and spend a day at town hall fulfilling the responsibilities of their assigned roles. The students also participate in a mock town council meeting and learn self-governance mechanics. Lastly, some MYG members created green paper Saint Patrick's Day shamrocks with inspirational quotes as gifts for our senior citizens.

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The committee met monthly during the first quarter and continued discussing ways to help community residents. On March 6th, Pastor Christopher Wolf and I attended our local American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) meeting. We spoke to the seniors about the goals of the CPC and reaching people in need.

The CPC continues to help collect food, clothing, and personal hygiene products for the Saddle Brook Food Pantry located at the First Reformed Church and plans to have a food drive at the Township Easter Celebration. The CPC started an Instagram page to better share and communicate our message to a larger audience, promote awareness, build our membership, and inspire others to support our cause.

Flood Mitigation Committee

The committee met on Thursday, March 30th, and discussed our township's application with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System. Also discussed was utilizing the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) for floods and other natural disasters, nonstructural measures that DPW can take to reduce the impact or consequences of flooding, and the feasibility of purchasing a high-water rescue vehicle for flooding incidents. We continue to search for ways to actively address the ongoing flooding problems along the Saddle River and other areas of concern.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

NOTE: Most events are photographed and recorded. The recordings are broadcasted on Our Town (Public Access) TV (Ch. 77 – Cablevision, Ch. 38 – Verizon FiOS). The photos and recordings are also posted on the township website and Facebook page.

Fire Department Installation Dinner – Saturday, January 7th

Swearing in Fire Chief Jason Sibani and Assistant Fire Chief David Mielnicki for the final year of a two-year term was an honor. Congratulations, and thank you to them for doing an outstanding job. New firefighters and officers were also installed and welcomed into the department. Thank you to all our volunteer firefighters for their exceptional service to our community. The township council members also attended the dinner to show their appreciation and support for the members of the fire department and their families.

Ambulance Corps Installation Dinner – Saturday, February 25th

The Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps had its annual installation dinner at the Graycliff in Moonachie. I was honored to swear in corps officers and congratulate members who received certificates and awards for their service. Corps members deserve tremendous praise for the remarkable job they do for the township. They exemplify what it means to be volunteers because they give so much of themselves to help others in need.

Women in History Month – Thursday, March 16th

Every year the township council and I celebrate by recognizing women from town who have made significant contributions to the community. Each woman has played an essential role in serving the public and giving back to the residents of Saddle Brook. The women were honored as part of National Women in History Month for specific achievement categories, including Community Service, Education Leader, Outstanding Citizen, Public Safety, and Business Leader. The selected women were Ann Synder – Community Service, Saddle Brook Library Director Katherine Hybertsen – Education, Kathleen Shanahan – Outstanding Citizen, Police Officer Kimberly Diaz – Public Safety; and Maria Scaduto – Business Leader. Congratulations to all the recipients and their families

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Municipal Complex – 55 Mayhill Street

The construction phase of retrofitting/renovating 55 Mayhill Street into a municipal complex with township offices, a civic/recreation center, and headquarters for the Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Hook and Ladder Fire Company is complete. The building has been turned over to the township, and we have begun moving into our new facility. The Recreation Department, Municipal Court, Fire Prevention, Building Department, Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and Hook and Ladder Fire Company have moved in. The remaining offices will follow in the first weeks of April 2023.

Road Resurfacing

Mayhill Street Phase II

The township was awarded \$200,000 from the FY 2021 N.J. Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Municipal Aid Program to resurface Mayhill Street from the Route 80 Bridge to Market Street. The project was awarded to Frank Macchione Construction for \$573,810. This project also included paving the new municipal complex parking lot. Work began in September 2022, with milling and paving occurring in December 2022. Some work items remain, including guide rail replacement and punch list work.

Completion of 2022 Road Program – Schepis Avenue

Phase 1 of the 2022 Road Program was awarded to 4-Cleanup, including Skillman Terrace, Spindler Terrace, Graham Terrace, and Schepis Avenue. All work is complete minus punch list work for all the roads except Schepis Avenue, which had been postponed until April 2023. The delay was caused by Public Service Gas and Electric unexpectedly scheduling the replacement of underground gas mains in November and December 2022.

Cambridge Avenue Road Improvements

This project received \$200,000 in funding from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Municipal Aid Program for 2022. The project went out to bid and was awarded to Frank Macchione in early March 2023. Concrete work has commenced, and milling and paving will be done after the school year in late June 2023.

Washington and Blanche Road Improvements

The township engineer prepared bid documents for this Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded project. The project, which received \$136,000 in CDBG funding, went out for bid in December 2022 and was awarded to American Asphalt and Trucking. Construction commenced with concrete work on February 14th, and milling and paving are anticipated to be complete before the middle of April, weather permitting.

2023 Road Program

The township engineer provided a list of roads for consideration for the 2023 road program. Alberta Drive received \$225,000 in funding from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) for 2023. Congress Street has received \$137,000 in funding from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for 2021. Strathmore Terrace, Van Luyn Terrace, Kern Place, Hutter Street, and Avon Lane are the remaining roads selected. The township engineer is preparing a proposal for engineering services.

Other Improvements and Repairs

Police Building Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Improvements

Our township engineer has prepared construction documents to replace the rooftop unit that handles HVAC for the first floors. Plans were completed, and the rooftop unit and materials were ordered under the Omnia Co-op. The new unit was ordered in the fall of 2022 and will not arrive until early July 2023.

Hobson Avenue and Midland Avenue Water Main Replacement

Our township engineer has prepared plans for this water main project, which consists of the replacement of the main on Hobson and the connection of services to a newly installed water main on Midland Avenue as part of the first phase of the Grande Project on Van Bussom Avenue, and extension of that water main to connect additional services. These service connections currently connect to Garfield's water main. Plans will include resurfacing Hobson Avenue after the water main installation is complete. The preparation of bid documents is ongoing.

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Our township engineer has submitted a proposal to assist the township in obtaining funding for this project, along with improvements to the Midland and Mayhill pump stations. Efforts will include the preliminary design necessary as part of the funding request.

There is also an air relief valve on Westminster Place that is part of the sanitary sewer force main, which is critical to its operation and needs replacement. To do so, the chamber and air relief assembly must be replaced. Our township engineer is finalizing a proposal and cost estimate for this work.

Hutter Street Storm Sewer Rehabilitation

The township received approximately \$50,000 in FEMA money to rehab the storm sewer that runs from Floral Lane to Graham Terrace, behind the houses on the eastern side of Hutter Street. This storm sewer was the subject of sinkholes that were repaired on an emergency basis last year. In early February this year, National Water Main Cleaning Company was hired to video the line so that repairs could be determined. Issues were found, including a significant root intrusion, eroded pipe, and debris. The township engineer is preparing a proposal for engineering services to assess the repairs needed and prepare bid documents. There is a September 2023 deadline to have this work completed.

OTHER

Sine Die and Township Governing Body Reorganization Meeting – January 2nd

Councilman Todd Accomando, Councilwoman Sarah Sanchez, and I were sworn to our elected offices at the township reorganization meeting. Also, Councilman David Gieriek was appointed Council President for 2023. Outgoing Council President Florence Mazzer and Councilwoman Karen D'Arminio (ret.) were recognized for serving the township. Congratulations to all the elected officials sworn in and others appointed to various township boards and other professional/official positions.

Reading at Schools

On Wednesday, February 1st, I enjoyed reading to Long Memorial, Helen I. Smith, and Franklin Elementary School students to celebrate World Read Aloud Day. I thanked the principals, teachers, and students for inviting me and making it a fun experience. World Read Aloud Day is celebrated worldwide to encourage reading and sharing stories to expand the scope of global literacy.

On March 3rd, I visited Long, Smith, and Franklin Schools for Read Across America. I thanked all the excellent teachers, administrators, and support staff for their hard work in the classroom day in and day out. Thank you, Bergen County Prosecutor Mark Musella, for reading to the children at Helen I. Smith School. Read Across America is an annual event to encourage young children to read and to acknowledge the work of children's book author Dr. Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss.

Police Department Retirements

Congratulations and best of luck to Captain William "Billy" Havison and Lieutenant David DeGennaro on their retirements from the Saddle Brook Police Department. Both officers did their final walkouts and radio sign-offs from police headquarters with their families, friends, and fellow officers present. The township thanks Billy and Dave for their dedicated service and wish them long, happy, and healthy retirements.

Special Recognition to Ryan Roy – Thursday, February 16th

At the township council meeting, council members and I awarded Ryan Roy a certificate of achievement for being a tireless advocate for individuals with disabilities. Assemblywoman Lisa Swain presented Ryan with a New Jersey Senate and General Assembly resolution. He also received a commendation on behalf of County Executive Jim Tedesco from Anika Davis, Bergen County Director of Disability Services.

Special Events Attended

Wednesday evening, January 4: Attended the Saddle Brook School District Board of Education sine die and reorganization meeting at the High/Middle School.

Tuesday evening, January 17: Administered the oath of office for library board trustees at the Saddle Brook Free Public Library.

Saturday morning, January 21: Participated in a drive-by celebration for WWII Veteran Walter Geer's birthday.

Sunday afternoon, January 22: Attended the Skip Bailey Junior Wrestling tournament at the Saddle Brook High gymnasium.

Thursday, February 9: I attended a fitness class, Armchair Aerobics, at the Saddle Brook Senior Center in the morning. That evening I participated in a seminar, "One Pill Can Kill," at the Saddle Brook High/Middle School given by the United States Drug Enforcement Agency.

Saturday evening, February 11: Attended a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) benefit concert at Post 3484 of Saddle Brook to raise funds for a World War II monument.

Thursday afternoon, February 23: Attended a mobile office with representatives from New Jersey Legislative District 38 set up at the Saddle Brook Senior Center.

Sunday afternoon, February 26: Attended Chicken Bingo at the Saddle Brook Senior Center.

Monday morning, March 6: Officiated the swearing-in ceremony of new Saddle Brook police officer Christopher Reece.

Friday morning, March 10: Saddle Brook school district administrators and I spoke to residents about the district's bond referendum vote on Tuesday, March 14.

Wednesday morning, March 22: Attended the grand opening of ECLC New Jersey Pride Center at 250 Market Street.

Saturday afternoon, March 25: I attended "A Kidney for Mommom" fundraiser and awareness event at Saddle Brook Veterinary Center, 390 Market Street, in the morning. That afternoon I attended Saddle Brook Cub Scout Pack 222 Blue and Gold Banquet at Saint Philip's the Apostle Church auditorium.

Sunday afternoon, March 26: Attended the grand opening of Method Tactical, 505 Saddle River Road.