

MAYOR ROBERT D. WHITE
QUARTERLY UPDATE
APRIL - JUNE 2023

BUDGET

Budget Hearing and Adoption

The 2023 municipal budget was introduced to the township council and discussed at the council work session on Thursday, May 4, 2023. There was a budget hearing during the council meeting on Thursday, June 15, 2023. Township auditor Steve Wielkotz was at the meeting and took questions concerning the budget and township finances. The budget was adopted afterward at that same meeting.

General Information and Highlights

Saddle Brook's municipal budget will increase by \$185 on an average assessment of \$434,583. The township council and I feel that this budget represents what is needed to maintain services and continue our infrastructure programs, such as paving roads and improving our parks. It also provides funding for hiring personnel due to retirements. The increase is primarily due to inflationary issues, solid waste and recycling, insurance premiums, pensions, statutory allocations for the library, and contractual salaries.

Senior Tax Freeze

Township senior citizen homeowners 65 years and older may be eligible for a tax freeze program initiated by the State of New Jersey. Please call the state's regional information center at (201)791-0500 for eligibility requirements and additional information.

Bond Ordinances

#1733-23: On May 4, 2023, a bond ordinance passed on second reading authorizing the improvement of Alberta Drive (from Saddle River Road to Hilda Terrace and including Marie Court) to appropriate the sum of \$490,000 to pay the cost thereof, to authorize the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation and utilize grant funds of \$225,680 from the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

#1734-23: A bond ordinance passed on second reading to authorize the 2023 road improvement program to appropriate the sum of \$1,120,000 to pay the cost thereof, to make a down payment, to allow the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation and utilize community development grant funds of \$136,976 for Congress Street.

GRANTS

Available Grant Applications in Progress

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 Community Affairs Resilient Communities Program (RCP)

The RCP is a competitive grant program designed to fund unmet recovery and mitigation needs for public infrastructure projects that will help the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and state-identified most impacted, and distressed areas become more resilient to current and future flood-related natural hazards. Funds are to be used to restore and strengthen storm-damaged communities. These grants are furnished by community development block grant disaster recovery funds from HUD. Applications are due by December 15, 2023.

New Jersey Attorney General’s Office “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” Labor Day Crackdown

Law enforcement officials in New Jersey are encouraged to crack down on drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs as part of the annual end-of-summer “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” statewide campaign. During the Labor Day holiday, local, county, and state law enforcement officials will conduct saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints, looking for intoxicated motorists. The New Jersey Attorney General’s Office provides funding for overtime enforcement capped at \$70 per hour. The application is due by July 26, 2023.

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) Bulletproof Vest Program

05/24/2023: The federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998 established the Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP). A USDOJ initiative, the BVP provides funding for reimbursement of allowable body armor purchases eligible jurisdictions make for law enforcement agencies. The grant requires a 50 percent match by the township, and the police department has requested 29 vests for \$30,450.

Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund 2023

05/12/2023: 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. Through our grant writer, the township has submitted an application for improvements to Kern Street Park for \$277,616.

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.

Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2023

12/13/2022: The town applied for CDBG funds of \$143,000 for resurfacing and pavement efforts at 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 met in April and recommended allocating the \$143,000, and the township is awaiting final approval from the federal government.

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.

Grants Awarded

New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Spotted Lanternfly Control Grant

The NJDA made available grant funding to counties and municipalities around the state to help limit the spread of the infamous spotted lanternfly. Operating on a first-come, first-served basis, municipalities were eligible to apply for up to \$15,000. The grants will serve as a reimbursement for the cost of chemical treatment activities. Our grant writer applied on behalf of the township, and we were approved for reimbursement.

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-efficient programs and incentives. Increasing energy efficiency for local businesses, residents, and government facilities provides economic, environmental, community, and health benefits. The township received a \$2,500 grant for a municipal facilities energy audit.

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. The township was awarded a grant for stormwater mapping in the amount of \$25,000.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

On Saturday, April 8th, the MYG helped out at the Annual Easter Celebration, which was held at the new municipal complex, 55 Mayhill Street. They also assisted in the planning and organizing of a food drive for the Saddle Brook Food Pantry at the Easter event. On Saturday, April 22nd, group members planted flowers and cleaned up Tri-Centennial Park to recognize and celebrate Earth Day. The MYG met on Saturday, May 20th, and discussed several items, including our participation in the Mayor's Fishing Derby Saturday, June 17. We also talked about having a group fun outing over the summer months to thank members for their volunteerism.

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The committee continues to meet monthly on the last Thursday at 6:30 pm at the municipal complex. During the second quarter, the committee continued discussing ways to reach out and help community residents. Also, in the second quarter, interest in Access for All has been rekindled, and the condition of township sidewalks and handicapped ramps has become a topic of conversation. Also, illegal parking on sidewalks and in handicapped spaces. This information has been turned over to our township police and property maintenance officials for enforcement. The governing body is considering amending ordinances to reduce sidewalk safety hazards.

On Monday, June 10th, the Bergen County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) Community Outreach Unit attended our local AARP meeting at the Senior Center to provide information about the BCSO Gold Star Identification Program. Monica Maniscalco of our CPC coordinated this event. The Gold Star identification card can be used as additional means of photo identification, complete with the Sheriff's Office logo and the phone number of the 24-hour Operations Unit in large bold print. Additionally, the card provides first responders with vital medical information in the event of an emergency or when an individual is not able to give that information themselves. For more information about how to join the program, please call the BCSO Community Outreach Unit at 201-336-3540.

The CPC assisted in collecting and delivering food for the Saddle Brook Food Pantry at the Annual Easter Celebration on Saturday, April 8th. The CPS recently 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, June 29th, at the Senior Center. The township's application to participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System has been filed. Also discussed are state and federal stormwater assistance grants for projects to reduce flooding and improve water quality. Along with the township engineer, we are taking a closer look at areas of town that are prone to flash flooding. Many storm pipes have been televised to determine the efficiency of drainage systems.

The committee also wants to focus on emergency responses to flooding incidents in coordination with our local emergency management and emergency responders from police, fire, and ambulance services. We also want to utilize volunteers from our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) for floods and other natural disasters and consider 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.

Easter Celebration – Saturday, April 8

The Easter Celebration was held at the municipal complex gym. It's always an excellent opportunity to bring families with young children together for a fun-filled afternoon. There were games, an Easter egg patch, a face painter, and photos with the Easter Bunny. Thank you, Councilman Todd Accomando, Shannon Accomando, and Christine Genuario of our Projects and Activities Committee, for organizing the event. Thanks also to the Mayor's Youth Group members for helping set up and work the games. Special thanks to our Easter Bunny, Thomas Van Winkle, Tyler Pozzi for taking photographs, and Rafael Gonzalez of Enlacosa for videotaping the celebration.

Little League Opening Day Parade - Saturday, April 15

We had excellent weather and a great time at our Little League Opening Day Parade and Ceremony. Many of us look forward to spring and the start of town baseball. I want to thank Little League President Keith Vermilyea, his executive board, along with all the managers, coaches, volunteers, parents, and sponsors for all they do to support the program. Thanks also to our police department and DPW for assisting with detouring traffic and the fire department and ambulance corps for participating in the parade.

Memorial Day Parade, Sunday, May 28

The township celebrated Memorial Day with our annual parade in honor of the men and women who served in our country's armed forces and in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice. The weather was perfect, and everyone enjoyed the festivities. Thank you to the following: Cmdr. Lou Verile and Romaine Sinniger VFW Post 3484 parade committee, Cmdr. Robert Paterson and Jamros-Baker-Schneider American Legion Post # 415, Parade Gold Sponsors, and Grand Marshal Lou D'Arminio. Special thanks to Police Chief Robert Kugler for being the parade master of ceremonies. Assemblywoman Lisa Swain, Assemblyman Chris Tully, and Bergen County Clerk John Hogan for their participation. Also, Thomas Van Winkle and Tyler Pozzi for joining the parade and taking photographs. Finally, we appreciated the efforts and assistance of the S.B. Volunteer Fire Department and Honor Guard, S.B. Volunteer Ambulance Corps, S.B. Police Department, and S.B. Department of Public Works.

Mayor's Fishing Derby, Saturday, June 17

The Annual Mayor's Fishing Derby was held at Otto Pehle Lake in Saddle River County Park from 9 am to 12 pm. The weather was beautiful, and the kids had a great day of fishing. Thank you, Christine Genuario, for supervising registration and helping organize the event. Also, the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps members for standing by in case anyone needed medical attention. Special thanks to Boy Scout Troop 213 for their assistance in identifying and measuring the fish caught. We also appreciate Thomas Van Winkle for taking photos and the attendance and efforts of Recreation Director Andy Gallo and our DPW employees assigned to the event. All participants received trophies, and Derby winners received special gifts (fishing poles and tackle boxes) donated by Walmart of Saddle Brook. Special thanks to Walmart for their kindness and generosity.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Municipal Complex – 55 Mayhill Street

The municipal building was completed and turned over to the township in March 2023. The Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Hook and Ladder Fire Company, and all municipal offices, other than police and DPW, have moved into the new facility. The recreation/civic center is now open, with over 500 registered members.

Road Resurfacing

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 this year before the end of the summer recess.

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 were completed in April. Only punch list items remain.

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 prepared plans and bid specifications. This road program will go out to bid in mid-July.

Alberta Drive

Alberta Drive from Saddle River Road to Hilda Terrace, including Marie Court, will be paved before winter this year. The township is bonding to appropriate the sum of \$490,000 to pay the cost of the resurfacing and will also utilize grant funds of \$225,680 from the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The town engineer has prepared plans and bid specifications. The town anticipates going out to bid in early August.

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 should arrive in 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 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 immediately 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 prepared plans and bid documents for the project. There is a September 2023 deadline to have this work completed.

OTHER

Township Ordinances

Ordinance # 1728-23: Amends Chapter 36-11, which required a resolution and council approval for expenditures over \$1000. The ordinance amends the dollar amount to \$6600. It was passed on the second reading on April 6, 2023.

Ordinance # 1729-23: Amends Chapter 206, Section 84F, about fees for lead, multi-family houses, and elevator inspections. It was passed on the second reading on April 6, 2023.

Ordinance # 1730-23: Amends Chapter 206, Zoning, now prohibiting parking on any unsurfaced grass or dirt areas by vehicles in the township. It was passed on the second reading on April 6, 2023.

Ordinance # 1732-23: Amends Chapter 58, Animals, which now requires all persons owning, keeping, or harboring any dog over the age of two months shall not permit said dog upon a public highway or outside of the premises occupied by said owner unless a leash securely fastens such dog at all times throughout the year. It was passed on the second reading on May 4, 2023.

Special Events Attended

Friday evening, April 7: Attended the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps Annual Fish and Chips Dinner at their headquarters, 55 Mayhill Street.

Saturday morning, April 15: Attended the grand opening of Brother's Pizzeria, 189 Route 46W.

Saturday morning, April 22: Participated in Earth Day planting and clean up with the Mayor's Youth Group members at Tri-Centennial Park, Platt Ave.

Wednesday afternoon, April 26: Officiated wedding of Keith Platvoet and Beth Iannaci at the municipal complex, 55 Mayhill Street.

Thursday morning, April 27: Participated in Career Day at the Saddle Brook High School Middle School Media Center.

Friday evening, April 28: Attended awards ceremony for fourth and sixth-grade recreation basketball championship teams held at the municipal complex in the all-purpose room. I presented each athlete with a certificate of accomplishment from the township.

Monday afternoon, May 1: Attended local AARP meeting at the Saddle Brook Senior Center where the Choraleers from Saddle Brook High School Middle School performed.

Friday evening, May 5: Attended a concert fundraiser at VFW Post 3484 to benefit the Boragine family, who were the victims of a terrible house fire in Saddle Brook

Saturday morning, May 6: Attended a park bench dedication ceremony at Saddle River County Park, where the Bergen County Veterans Services presented a bench in honor of the late Andrew Bruce McFarlane. Mr. McFarlane was a longtime, esteemed resident of Saddle Brook.

Sunday morning, May 13: Attended the grand opening of Ary's Bagels, 189 Route 46W.

Sunday afternoon, May 14: Attended the VFW Post 3484 for their installation of officers ceremony at post headquarters, 44 Market Street.

Sunday evening, May 14: Attended Saddle Brook Junior Softball Pitch, Hit, and Run competition at Veterans Field.

Monday afternoon, May 15: Attended the Saddle Brook Police Department memorial service to honor the deceased members of the department at the police monument, 93 Market Street. Afterward, there was a lunch at the municipal complex for the family and friends of the fallen officers.

Friday morning, May 19: Presided over a Saddle Brook Police Department promotional ceremony at the municipal complex, 55 Mayhill Street. Captain Thomas Kivari, Lieutenant Marc Buchak, and Sergeant Christopher Verost were sworn in.

Saturday morning, May 20: Attended awards ceremony recognizing high school soccer players who received college scholarships from Saddle Brook Junior Soccer Association.

Saturday morning, May 27: A Hometown Heroes Veterans Banner Unveiling ceremony was held at the municipal complex, 55 Market Street. All banners were displayed, and each veteran and sponsor was recognized with a proclamation and veteran pin.

Monday morning, May 29: Attended VFW Post 3484 Memorial Day service at the VFW monument at Mayhill Street Circle.

Saturday morning, June 3: Attended Saddle Brook Recreation Lacrosse Battle at the Brook tournament at Smith Field, Cambridge Ave.

Saturday afternoon, June 3: Attended 100th-year birthday party for resident Nancy Gara at Saint Philip's the Apostle Church auditorium.

Sunday afternoon, June 4: Attended Chicken Bingo event at the Saddle Brook Senior Center.

Thursday evening, June 8: Attended awards ceremony for Saddle Brook Junior Spirit Leaders and presented them with certificates for being global and grand champions.

Sunday afternoon, June 11: Attended American Cruisers car show in the parking lot of the municipal complex, 55 Mayhill Street.

Sunday afternoon, June 11: Attended Saddle Brook Junior Soccer Senior Day at Smith Field, recognizing the eighth-grade girls and boys moving up to high school next season.

Tuesday evening, June 13: Attended Law Enforcement Against Drugs (LEAD) party held by the Saddle Brook Police Department for sixth-grade LEAD graduates.

Tuesday afternoon, June 20: Attended an awards ceremony at United Parcel Service, 280 N. Midland Ave, for driver, Robert Cinque, who was inducted into the ring of honor for 50 years of safe driving and never being involved in an at-fault accident.

Wednesday evening, June 21: Attended the Saddle Brook Middle School graduation ceremony on the stadium field, 355 Mayhill Street.

Thursday afternoon, June 22: Attended the end-of-the-year school crossing guard lunch and retirement party for Randy Jameson at the Golden Pub, 335 Market Street. I presented Randy with a retirement plaque from the township and wished him and his family well.

Thursday evening, June 22: Attended the Saddle Brook High School graduation ceremony on the stadium field, 355 Mayhill Street.