

MAYOR ROBERT D. WHITE
QUARTERLY UPDATE
JULY – SEPTEMBER 2023

BUDGET

General Information and Highlights

Saddle Brook's municipal tax rate is 2.366 percent, with a budget increase of \$185 on an average assessment of \$434,583. The total increase, including the school district, will be \$286. 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.

Bond Ordinance #1741-23

In September 2023, the township council passed a bond ordinance to authorize making various public improvements and acquiring new additional or replacement equipment and machinery, new communication and signal systems equipment, new information technology equipment, and new automotive vehicles, including original apparatus and equipment. The ordinance appropriates \$2,890,000 to pay the cost and make a down payment, authorizes the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation, and provides for the issuance of bond anticipation notes in anticipation of the issuance of such bonds.

GRANTS

Available Grant Applications in Progress

NJDOT - Safe Routes to School FY 2024

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) advances projects that enhance safety, renew aging infrastructure, improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and support new and alternative transportation opportunities. The Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) provides state assistance to local governments to fund roads, bridges, and other transportation projects. The TTF annually provides state aid to municipalities and counties for local transportation improvements. In addition, several programs fund municipalities for transportation projects supported by federal funds. Our grant writer and engineer are working on an application for the township.

N.J. 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. Saddle Brook Police Department participated by conducting saturation and roving patrols, receiving partial reimbursement from this grant program.

Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) FY 2023

Eligible CDBG grants include municipal infrastructure upgrades such as road repaving, sewer and drainage improvements, playground and park upgrades, handicapped-accessible curb cuts, and public building access upgrades. Our grant writer and engineer applied for funding to install a basketball court at Fifth Street Park.

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.

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.

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) Bulletproof Vest Program

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 to eligible law enforcement agencies. The grant requires a 50 percent match by the township, and the Saddle Brook Police Department has requested 29 vests for \$30,450.

New Jersey Department of Transportation Municipal Aid FY 2024

The Municipal Aid program is a competitive program intended to provide municipalities with transportation-based grants to supplement their transportation programs. Annually, the Municipal Aid Program is funded at \$140 million from the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). A grant application was filed requesting \$231,000 to resurface Sampson Street.

New Jersey State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)

This federal grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security aims to improve cybersecurity in state and local governments. The SLCGP is administered by the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness through its NJ Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell. The overall goal of the SLCGP is to make state and local government organizations more resilient to cyber threats.

Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund FY 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.

FY 2023 Appropriation Requests and Congressionally Directed Spending

The U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations accepts requests from Senators on their funding priorities. This is an important way that Senators can advocate for programs critical to the nation, their constituents, and their states. Our grant writer and engineer worked together and applied for \$1,462,000 for Seventh and Eighth Street water main replacement and municipal infrastructure projects.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters

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

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

On Monday, July 31, the MYG had a fun outing at Humdingers in Paramus. This outing was a way to thank all our members for all they do to serve our community. The kids enjoyed bowling, laser tag, batting cages, and arcade games. Everyone also enjoyed pizza and ice cream. This was the last event for Tyler Pozzi as President of the Mayor's Youth Group. Tyler recently graduated from Saddle Brook High School and will leave for college. We wish him well in all his future endeavors and thank him for all his contributions and strong leadership.

During the summer, the MYG members participated in the Mayor's Walk, Township Picnic, and National Night Out. Thank you to all the members who attended and participated in these events. Township youth entering grades 4-12 are welcome to join the MYG. Anyone interested in registering can call Christine Genuario of the Mayor's Office at 201-587-2903.

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The committee meets monthly on the last Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at the municipal complex. During the third quarter of 2023, the committee continued discussing ways to reach out and help community residents. Since early 2023, the township's Access for All Committee members have coupled with Community Partnership to rekindle interest and increase their membership. Access for All issues being addressed is the condition of township sidewalks and handicapped ramps. 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. As a result, the governing body has amended a township ordinance to reduce sidewalk safety hazards.

The CPC assisted in collecting and delivering food for the Saddle Brook Food Pantry. They also attended the National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 1, at the municipal complex. In June 2023, the CPC started an Instagram page to better communicate its message to a larger audience, promote awareness, build membership, and inspire others to support the cause.

Flood Mitigation Committee Meetings

The committee met on Tuesday, September 26, at the municipal building. Present at the meeting was a resident reporting flash flooding at the Schepis and Spruce Ave intersection. This has been an ongoing problem during heavy rains that appears to have worsened. The township engineer is aware of the situation and is trying to determine the cause of the flooding. The drainage system will be televised soon to rule out any blockages that may impede stormwater flow.

Along with televising pipes to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of drainage systems, the committee focuses 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 broadcast 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.

Township Fireworks Display, Monday, July 3

The annual fireworks display is a favorite for residents, young and old. The fireworks are ignited at Saddle River County Park by Otto Pehle Pond. Thank you to our emergency services personnel from the Fire Department, Fire Prevention Bureau, Office of Emergency Management, Police Department, Ambulance Corps, and Department of Public Works.

Summer Concerts

The township held two summer outdoor concerts in the municipal complex's parking lot, 55 Mayhill Street. The band Mushmouth played on Wednesday evening, July 26, and Forever Young played on Tuesday night, August 3. Both concerts were well attended, and the crowd was entertained by good music and pleasant weather. Thank you to Recreation Director Andy Gallo and Assistant Director Diane Bonner for planning and organizing both concerts.

National Night Out, Tuesday, August 1

Our Police Department hosted a National Night Out celebration in the parking lot of the municipal complex. National Night is a great way to unite the community to meet and thank our first responders who keep us safe daily. Our Police Department was joined and assisted by our Volunteer Fire Department, Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and Fire Prevention members. Other local participants included the Woman's Club of Saddle Brook, Boy Scout Troop 213, the Community Partnership Committee, and the Mayor's Youth Group. We also had state and county law enforcement representatives and various social service organizations in attendance.

Township Picnic, Saturday, August 26, 12 – 4 p.m.

It was great meeting again this year for the Town Picnic! I want to thank everyone for attending, with a special thanks to our Project and Activities Committee. Thank you to all township employees for helping out, especially members of our Police Department, Department of Public Works, Volunteer Fire Department, and Ambulance Corps. We always appreciate the help from our civic organizations, including the Woman's Club, Boy Scouts, and Mayor's Youth Group. Finally, I can't thank our sponsors enough for their generous contributions and participation. We could not have had the picnic without their assistance.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, Monday, September 11

The township held a remembrance ceremony to honor the memory of those who lost their lives on 9/11. Thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy schedule to attend. Thanks to Fr. Bruce Janiga of Saint Philip's Church, vocalist Lidya Diaz, Frank Ortega and the Saddle Brook High School Middle School Marching Band, and Saddle Brook Boy Scout Troop 213. Also, resident Hank Vladyka for presenting two handmade 9/11 remembrance pieces. At the ceremony, we paid tribute to the members of our Police Department, Volunteer Fire Department, and Volunteer Ambulance Corps for the countless hours they spent keeping us safe.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Road Resurfacing

Cambridge Avenue Road Improvements

This project received funding from NJDOT's Municipal Aid Program for 2022. The project was awarded to Frank Macchione in early March for \$359,567.18. Concrete work started on March 20, 2023, from Woodcrest Place to Fairlawn Parkway. Concrete work from Fairlawn Parkway to Saddle River Road commenced on July 18, when school was closed for the summer, and the entire roadway was paved in mid-August 2023. The project is complete and in the close-out phase.

Congress Street Road Improvements (CDBG Funded 2022)

The project was awarded on June 15, 2023, for \$140,287.50. A preconstruction meeting took place on July 17, and construction commenced a few days later and was completed before the end of July 2023. The project is in the closeout phase.

2023 Road Program

The roads selected are Strathmore Terrace, Van Luyn Terrace, Kern Place, Hutter Street, and Avon Lane. The bid opening occurred on July 13, 2023, and was awarded to 4-Cleanup on July 20 for \$588,938.20. Work commenced on September 7 and is ongoing.

Alberta Drive (NJDOT Municipal Aid Funded 2022)

The project was advertised on or about July 19, 2023, and the bid opening took place on August 8. It was awarded to Frank Macchione for \$388,722.96 on August 17th. Concrete work began in late August and was completed in mid-September. Milling and Paving have yet to be scheduled.

Other Improvements and Repairs

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

The town engineer prepared construction documents to replace the rooftop unit that handles HVAC for the first floor. The new unit was ordered in the fall of 2022 and arrived in July 2023. The rooftop unit was installed shortly after and is functioning.

Hobson Avenue and Midland Ave Water Main Replacement

This water main project consists of replacing the main on Hobson, connecting services to a newly installed water main on Midland Ave as part of the first phase of the Grande Project on Van Bussom Ave, and extending that water main to connect additional services. These service connections currently connect to Garfield's water main. Plans will include resurfacing Hobson Ave after the water main installation. The project was awarded to Montana Construction for \$982,350.00 on August 17, 2023. A preconstruction meeting was held on September 12, 2023. Construction is scheduled to commence with work on Hobson Avenue on October 10, 2023.

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Our town engineer assisted our grant writer in finalizing funding for improvements to the Mayhill Pump Station, Midland Ave Pump Station, and the force main. The town received approximately 1.3 million dollars in funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's grant. Our town engineer provided a proposal on July 13, 2023, which includes the preparation of bid documents, construction management, and grant management.

Hutter Street Storm Sewer Rehabilitation

The township received approximately \$50,000 in Federal Emergency Management Agency (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 February 2023, the National Water Main Cleaning Company videotaped the line so that repairs could be determined. Issues were found, including a significant root intrusion, eroded pipe, and debris. There was a September 2023 grant deadline to complete this work, but the town received an extension from FEMA until April 30, 2024. The project went out to bid, and bids were opened on August 26, 2023. The bids were rejected on September 21, and the project is currently out for rebid.

Westminster Place Air Relief Valve Replacement

An air relief valve on Westminster Place is part of the sanitary sewer force main, critical to its operation, and requires replacement. To do so, the chamber and air relief assembly must be replaced. The town engineer provided a proposal and cost estimate for this work and awaits authorization.

Kern Place Park

The township submitted a grant application to Bergen County Open Space to replace the playground equipment and install a sidewalk. Once funding for the project is secured, the town engineer will prepare a proposal for engineering services.

Fifth Street Park

The township received a grant for constructing a basketball court from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA). Once the town secures additional funding, the engineer will prepare a proposal for engineering services.

OTHER

Saddle Brook Police Department Junior Police Academy Graduation, Friday, August 18

Congratulations to the 33 recruits who completed and graduated from Saddle Brook Police Department's First Junior Police Academy. The police department did a fabulous job presenting the program, combining physical training with life lessons. The program instills the valuable qualities of integrity, respect, and self-discipline in the recruits and encourages teamwork and good citizenship.

Township Ordinances

Ordinance #1739-23, September 7, 2023: Amending and supplementing Chapter 206 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook regulating the operation of specific classes of cannabis businesses within its geographical boundaries.

Ordinance #1740-23, August 17, 2023: Amending and supplementing Chapter 106, Handicapped Parking, of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook, to provide a handicapped parking space in front of 142 Seventh Street.

Ordinance #1738-23, July 20, 2023: Amending and supplementing Chapter 206 of the Township of Saddle Brook Code entitled "Zoning," requiring that all property maintenance violations be abated, including but not limited to the repair and replacement of sidewalks before the issuance of a certificate of occupancy or certificate of re-occupancy.

Ordinance #1737-23, July 20, 2023: Amending and supplementing Chapter 196 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled "Vehicles and Traffic," be amended and supplemented to prohibit a right turn on the red signal on Mayhill Street Extension East.

Ordinance #1736-23, July 20, 2023: Amending and supplementing Chapter 154 of the Township of Saddle Brook Code entitled "Property Maintenance," increasing the penalties for first, second, and third violations.

Special Events Attended

Monday evening, July 31: Mayor's Youth Group fun outing at Humdingers, Paramus, NJ.

Saturday morning, August 12: Grand reopening for Dollar General, 419 Market Street, Saddle Brook.

Friday evening, August 25: Saint Philip's Church Festival, 488 Saddle River Road, Saddle Brook.

Saturday evening, August 26: 50th Anniversary Dinner for firefighter George Miller of Engine Company 1 at the Brownstone, Paterson, NJ.

Friday evening, September 8: Pulaski Celebration Dinner to honor Halina Strzepek as 2023 Garfield Contingent Marshal at the Royal Manor Hall, Garfield, NJ.

Saturday morning, September 9: Saddle Brook Angel's Opening Day ceremony at Avon Park, 534 Avon Lane, Saddle Brook.

Sunday afternoon, September 17: Soccer Day celebration at Veterans Field, 20 Sampson Street, Saddle Brook.

Sunday afternoon, September 17: Mount Virgin Car Show, 55 Mayhill Street, Saddle Brook.

Monday evening, September 18: Dedication of classroom for the late Howard Weinberg at Saddle Brook Middle/High School, 355 Mayhill Street.

Saturday afternoon, September 23: Pancake Bingo at the Saddle Brook Senior Center, 8 Caldwell Ave.

Sunday afternoon, September 24: Saint Philip's Church 70th Anniversary celebration, 488 Saddle River Road, Saddle Brook.