

MAYOR ROBERT D. WHITE
QUARTERLY UPDATE
APRIL – JUNE, 2025

BUDGET

Budget Introduction

The 2024 municipal budget was presented to the township council and discussed at the June 19, 2025, council meeting. Township auditor Steve Wielkott was in attendance for the budget introduction. A budget hearing is scheduled for July 17, 2025, during which the council will vote on its approval and adoption. Mr. Wielkott will also be available to review the budget and respond to questions at this meeting.

General Information and Highlights

The proposed municipal budget introduced will increase by \$306.38 on an average assessment of \$476,319. The proposed tax rate is 2.41 percent. Property owners will receive estimated tax bills for the third quarter of 2025, due August 1st, with a 15-day grace period. Business Administrator Jimmy Homs, Chief Financial Officer Vince Buono, and I assure you that this budget represents our commitment to maintaining services and continuing our infrastructure programs, such as paving roads and improving our parks. It also provides funding for hiring personnel to replace those who are retiring. 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 and Stay NJ Programs

Township senior citizen homeowners who are 65 years and older may be eligible for the Senior Tax Freeze and/or Stay NJ programs initiated by the State of New Jersey. These programs are designed to provide financial security and peace of mind to our senior residents. Please call the state's regional information center at (201)791-0500 for eligibility requirements and additional information.

Finance Ordinances

Ordinance 1785-25 was introduced at the council meeting on June 19, 2025, to exceed the municipal budget appropriation limits and establish a cap bank in accordance with the Local Government Cap Law (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14).

GRANTS

Grant Applications – In Progress

Joseph DiBernardo Foundation: Fire Department Personal Safety Bailout Ropes

The Lt. Joseph P. DiBernardo Memorial Foundation offers \$25,000 grants to fire departments for personal safety systems. Applicants must submit a brief essay outlining their needs, the financial support required, the number of alarms responded to annually, the average personnel per apparatus, the total number of department members, and how they maintain proficiency with the systems.

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Resilient Communities Grant

This program provides grants for public infrastructure projects to address unmet recovery and mitigation needs in areas identified by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the state as "most impacted and distressed" (MID) due to flood-related natural hazards. Eligible applicants are responsible for implementing, operating, and maintaining the awarded projects.

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Clean Fleet & It Pay\$ to Plug In

The Clean Energy Program aims to achieve a clean energy future. Through the Clean Fleet EV and EV Charging Program, municipalities are eligible for incentives to purchase battery electric vehicles. It Pay\$ to Plug In provides grants to offset the cost of purchasing and maintaining electric vehicle charging stations. The program is designed to expand New Jersey's growing electric vehicle infrastructure network, allowing residents, businesses, and government agencies to purchase and drive electric vehicles.

FY22 Congressional Appropriations USEPA – Clean Water State Revolving Fund

The township has received \$1,393,682 for sewage rehabilitation and upgrades. The funds will be used for essential maintenance, repairs, and replacements of 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's Clean Water State Revolving Fund and will help draw down the allocated funds.

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

U.S. Department of Criminal Justice Community Policing Accreditation Grant

This program supports law enforcement agencies in implementing effective practices, achieving positive outcomes, and preventing crime. The Accreditation Program offers financial support to agencies seeking accreditation and to the accreditation bodies that assist them. To earn accreditation, agencies must meet the highest standards in policies and procedures. This process helps build community confidence in law enforcement, ensuring efficient, effective, and fair policing. The township submitted an application requesting \$43,470.00. The expected award date is three months away.

New Jersey Department of Transportation Municipal Aid Grant (Fiscal Year 2025/2026)

The grant aims to fund municipalities for public transportation projects, promoting safety and accessibility on New Jersey roads. The township has requested \$250,125 for phase 2 of the Floral Lane improvements. The anticipated award date is approximately three to four months away.

Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant

The Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation aims to strengthen the lifesaving skills of local heroes and improve the communities they serve. This mission is accomplished by providing lifesaving equipment and educational prevention resources to first responders and public safety organizations. The township initially applied for pagers for our volunteer fire department in January 2025 and again in April 2025.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

The primary objective of this grant is to assist fire departments and independent emergency medical services in meeting their firefighting and emergency response requirements. Since 2001, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) has provided first responders with essential gear, vehicles, training, and resources to protect the public from fire and related hazards. Our grant writer applied for \$173,475 to buy portable radios, personal protective equipment, coats and pants, and gas meters for our volunteer fire department. The expected award date is 4 to 5 months away.

FY25-26 Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding aims to enhance community resilience by upgrading municipal infrastructure. This includes repaving roads, improving sewer systems, enhancing parks, and making public buildings accessible for individuals with disabilities. The township has requested \$227,773 for improvements to South Street and expects a decision within the next few months.

New Jersey Office of Attorney General Body Armor Replacement Fund

This grant program funds the purchase of body armor for eligible law enforcement officers. The Body Armor Replacement Fund is a revolving fund supported by a \$1.00 fee on vehicle fines and bail forfeitures. It establishes a five-year replacement cycle for participating agencies. Each eligible agency receives a base grant of \$500, plus a share of the remaining funds based on the number of eligible officers. The police department is eligible for \$ 1,350.00 and should receive the funds soon.

Grants Awarded

New Jersey Department of Transportation Municipal Aid Grant

The grant aims to provide municipalities with funding to support the implementation of public transportation projects, ensuring the safety and accessibility of roads in New Jersey. The township applied for and was awarded \$190,000 to enhance Floral Lane.

U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) Bulletproof Vest Program - Fiscal Year 2024/2025

Created by the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998, the Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, reimburses local governments up to 50 percent of the cost of body armor vests purchased for law enforcement officers. Our police department applied for and received \$4,999.01 to purchase nine vests.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

The MYG held a meeting on Saturday, April 5. The MYG members participated in the Township's Spring/Easter Celebration on Saturday, April 19. We also assisted the Community Partnership Committee in collecting donations for a food drive benefiting the Saddle Brook Food Pantry. Additionally, the MYG participated in an Earth Day cleanup and planting event at Tri-Centennial Park on Saturday, May 3.

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The committee met on Thursday, April 24, May 22, and June 26 during the second quarter of the year to discuss ways to assist community residents. We continue to collaborate closely with the Saddle Brook Food Pantry, emergency services, and other civic organizations to identify community needs and support those who could benefit from our services. We have been collaborating with the Saddle Brook Police Department on the Blue Envelope Program. This initiative is a community policing effort aimed at enhancing communication and safety during interactions between law enforcement and individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or other conditions that may affect communication. On Monday, May 19, the CPC attended a Parent Partnership Night at Saddle Brook Middle/High School. The multicultural event was held in the main gym.

Green Team and Flood Mitigation Committee

The township has established a Green Team Committee to promote sustainability within the community. This committee focuses on implementing eco-friendly practices, reducing waste, and raising awareness about environmental issues. We are combining this new initiative with the Flood Mitigation Committee, and we have met three times during the second quarter. Together, we have developed a mission statement outlining our goals and objectives. We are also gathering information from other towns and are in the process of creating a logo and a Facebook page.

The chairman of the Green Team is resident Stephen Mariconda, and the vice chairperson is Councilwoman Sarah Sanchez. We will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the municipal complex. Our next meeting is scheduled for August 6.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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

Spring/Easter Celebration

I want to thank all the residents who attended our Spring/Easter Celebration and those who generously donated to our food drive for the Saddle Brook Food Pantry. This event is always a joy, especially for the children, and it helps strengthen our community bonds. We are grateful for the support of our Project and Activities Committee members, Mayor's Youth Group, the Saddle Brook Woman's Club for their tasty treats, and the Saddle Brook Library for hosting crafts with the kids. Additionally, Rafael Gonzalez of Enlacosa captured the event through photography and videography.

Little League Opening Day Parade - The event, scheduled for Saturday, April 12, was canceled due to inclement weather and was not rescheduled.

Andrew Bruce McFarlane Circle Dedication, Saturday, May 24

The township dedicated the Fairlawn Parkway and Skillman Terrace Island, home to our Korean War Monument, in honor of Andrew Bruce McFarlane, a cherished resident, war hero, and advocate for youth sports. Known as Captain Mac, he embodied the spirit of community through his service in the Marine Corps, law enforcement, and local sports leadership. His kindness and commitment strengthened our community, and I am grateful to have known him. This island will not only commemorate the sacrifices of the Korean War but also inspire us to uphold the values of Capt. Mac represented: service, generosity, and love for others. May his legacy continue to guide us as we move forward.

Memorial Day Parade, Sunday, May 25

The township celebrated Memorial Day with its annual parade, honoring the men and women who have served in the country's armed forces and in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We extend our gratitude to all who participated and assisted with the event. Congratulations to this year's Grand Marshal, Police Officer Sergeant Joseph Camilleri!

Mayor's Fishing Derby - The event, scheduled for Saturday, June 14, was canceled due to inclement weather. The township is considering rescheduling sometime in the fall.

Summer Concert, Friday, June 6

The township hosted an outdoor concert featuring the band Nerds in the parking lot of the municipal complex at 55 Mayhill Street. The event took place from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Recreation Director Andy Gallo and Assistant Director Diane Bonner planned and organized the concert. It was well attended, with about 500 people there.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

2024 Road Program

Orchard Lane, Elm Avenue, and Ash Avenue have been completed, with only the punch list items remaining.

Alberta Drive (NJDOT Municipal Aid Funded 2022)

The project was completed in April, with only punch list items remaining.

2025 Road Program

Maple, Spruce, Larch, and Pine Avenues are going to be milled and paved. These roads are among several where PSE&G recently replaced its existing gas main. PSE&G will complete milling and paving as part of its obligation to repave roads that have undergone gas replacement. This project is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2026. Improvements to these roads will also include the township repairing the water utility, installing ADA curb ramps, replacing concrete curbs and aprons as needed, and making storm sewer modifications.

Other Repairs Completed

Westminster Place Air Relief Valve Replacement

The sanitary sewer force main relief valve on Westminster Place required replacement. The project was put out to bid and awarded to Matina & Sons, located at 146 English Street, Hackensack, N.J., for a total amount of \$95,000. The work was completed on June 19 and 20, 2025.

Other Needed Repairs

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Our town engineer played a vital role in assisting our grant writer in securing funding for the Mayhill Pump Station, Midland Avenue Pump Station, and the force main improvement projects. Thanks to the Environmental Protection Agency's grant, the town received approximately \$ 1.3 million in funding. Last year, the town engineer submitted a proposal that detailed the preparation of bid documents, construction management, and grant management, all of which will be crucial for successfully executing the projects.

OTHER

Redevelopment of Old Town Hall, 93-95 Market Street

The township is focused on redeveloping and promoting reinvestment in the old town hall property located at 93-95 Market Street. A successful redevelopment of this area would enhance the economic vitality of the township. At the end of 2024, the Council and I passed a resolution declaring the property an "Area in Need of Rehabilitation." We are actively seeking a development partner and have issued a request for proposals for the redevelopment of the property. Council President Gierke, Councilman Cimiluca, and I are part of a committee that is reviewing the proposals. Three bidders have expressed interest in constructing apartments, and we are currently in the process of negotiating with them.

Public Service Gas and Electric Gas Main Replacement Program

Public Service Gas and Electric (PSE&G) is upgrading its aging gas pipes to create a safer and more reliable gas system for the future. The company is replacing several gas mains throughout the entire township. This work will continue into 2025 and is expected to be completed by the end of the year. The township must coordinate with PSE&G to ensure they complete milling and paving as part of their obligation to repave roads that have undergone gas replacement.

Ordinances Adopted (Passed) June 19, 2025

#1777-25: Amending and supplementing chapter 206 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled "Zoning". (Outdoor Lighting) (as amended)

#1778-25: Amending and supplementing Chapter 82 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled "Construction Codes, Uniform" (fee updates)

#1779-25: Amending and supplementing Chapter 161 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled "Sewers" (hook-up fees)

#1780-25: Amending and supplementing Chapter 206 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled “Zoning” (resale/new tenant certificate)

Ordinances Adopted (Passed) April 17, 2025

#1775-25: Amending and supplementing Chapter 159 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled “Security Service”. When the service is to be provided, the outside security service shall be for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for all establishments covered by this chapter.

#1776-25: Repealing and deleting chapter 133 entitled “Noise” of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook and amending and supplementing chapter 147 entitled “Peace and Good Order” of the Township of Saddle Brook.

Special Events Attended

Wednesday evening, April 16: Went to a pizza party for the 4th-grade championship travel basketball team at the Recreation Center.

Friday evening, April 18: Attended the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps Fish and Chips Diner at their building in the municipal complex.

Saturday morning, April 19: Attended the Saddle Brook Police Department's Coffee with a Cop event at Starbucks on Market Street.

Saturday evening, April 19: Attended the girls' softball Opening day at Veterans Field.

Tuesday afternoon, April 29: Participated in an Arbor Day tree planting event at Kern Street Park. Thank you, Columbia Bank, for donating and planting a Flowering Pear tree in the park.

Tuesday evening, April 29: I participated in a seminar where District 38 Assemblypersons, Lisa Swain and Chris Tully, discussed the Tax Freeze, Stay NJ, and Anchor Programs for senior citizens. The seminar took place at the all-purpose center of the municipal complex.

Saturday morning, May 10: Attended a Boy Scout Troop #213 Mother’s Day Breakfast at the Crowne Plaza, Kenny Place, Saddle Brook.

Saturday evening, May 10: Attended the installation dinner at VFW Post #3484, located at 44 Market Street, Saddle Brook.

Thursday afternoon, May 15: I attended the Saddle Brook Police Department police memorial service at the old Town Hall, 93 Market Street. Afterward, the police department hosted a lunch at the VFW Post #3484, 44 Market Street, Saddle Brook.

Saturday morning, May 17: I attended a Color-A-Thon fundraising event at Long Memorial School, located on Floral Lane in Saddle Brook.

Saturday morning, May 31: Attended a Roman Catholic Mass at the Veterans Home in Paramus for the facility's patients.

Sunday afternoon, June 5: Attended the VFW Post #3484 outdoor Freedom Festival at their location, 44 Market Street, Saddle Brook.

Tuesday afternoon, June 17: I attended the Senior Citizens' event, Senior Prom, at the municipal complex civic center.

Wednesday afternoon, June 18: Attended the graduation ceremony for Bergen County Police Academy at Felician College on Main Street in Lodi, New Jersey, where three recruits from Saddle Brook graduated.

Thursday evening, June 19: Presided over the promotion ceremony of five police officers. Robert Littlejohn and Christopher Verost were elevated to Lieutenant, while Marcos Torres, Joseph Scrafani, and Peter Romero were promoted to Sergeant.

Monday evening, June 23: I attended the graduation ceremony for Saddle Brook Middle School, held at Saddle Brook Middle/High School.

Tuesday evening, June 24: I attended the graduation ceremony for Saddle Brook High School, held at Saddle Brook Middle/High School.

Sunday afternoon, June 29: Attended a 100th birthday party for Lee Lepore at her home in Saddle Brook with family and friends.