

MAYOR ROBERT D. WHITE
QUARTERLY UPDATE
JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025

BUDGET

Budget Adoption

The 2025 municipal budget was presented to the Township Council and discussed at the June 19th council meeting. A budget hearing occurred at the July 17 council meeting, during which the council voted to approve and adopt the budget. Township Auditor Steve Wielkotsz attended both meetings, reviewed the budget, and answered questions from council members and the public.

General Information and Highlights

The approved municipal budget will increase by an average of \$232.00 based on an assessment of \$476,300 and a tax rate of 2.373 percent. There were further property tax increases for our local public schools and Bergen County. Property owners received estimated tax bills for the third quarter of 2025, and fourth-quarter bills were mailed at the end of September, with payment due November 1, 2025, and a ten-day grace period. Our finance team assures you that this budget reflects our dedication to maintaining services and continuing our infrastructure programs, such as road paving and park improvements. It also includes funding for hiring new personnel to replace those who are retiring. The increase is mainly due to inflation, solid waste, recycling costs, insurance premiums, pension contributions, statutory allocations for the library, and contractual salaries.

Water Rate Increase and Service Charge Ordinance #1784-25

Amends and supplements the ordinance entitled “an ordinance to fix water rates and service charges and penalties for the municipal water system of the Township of Saddle Brook,” as amended and supplemented.

Finance Ordinance #1785-25

Authorizes the Township to exceed the municipal budget appropriations limits and establish a cap bank for the calendar year 2025 in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.15.

Bond Ordinances

#1789-25

Authorizes the undertaking of the extension of water mains and related improvements at Maple, Spruce, Larch, and Pines Avenues and for the Township water, to appropriate the sum of \$360,000 to pay the cost thereof.

#1790-25

Authorizes the undertaking of various park and recreation improvements in the Township, to appropriate the sum of \$915,000 to pay the cost thereof.

#1791-25

Authorizes the making of various public improvements and major repairs to a fire engine and the acquisition of 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, to appropriate the sum of \$995,000 to pay the cost thereof.

GRANTS

Grant Applications – In Progress

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Resilient Communities Grant

This program offers grants for public infrastructure projects to meet recovery and mitigation needs in areas deemed "most impacted and distressed" (MID) by HUD due to flood-related hazards. Eligible applicants must implement, operate, and maintain the awarded projects.

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

The Clean Energy Program aims for a sustainable energy future. Through the Clean Fleet EV and EV Charging Program, municipalities can receive incentives to purchase battery-electric vehicles. It Pay\$ to Plug In offers grants to help with the costs of purchasing and maintaining EV charging stations, expanding New Jersey's electric vehicle infrastructure for residents, businesses, and government agencies.

FY22 Congressional Appropriations USEPA – Clean Water State Revolving Fund

The Township received \$1,393,682 for sewage rehabilitation and upgrades. The funds will be used for maintenance and repairs of sewage pumping stations and a gravity sewer interceptor system. Our grant writer will assist in applying for the EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund to access these funds.

NJ Dept. of Community Affairs Recreation Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

This grant supports recreation for individuals with disabilities through programs such as the ROID Grants, which help local governments create inclusive programs, and the Athletics for Individuals with Disabilities Grants, which fund organizations such as Special Olympics NJ. The DCA also provides resources and assistance for developing accessible recreation services.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Natural Climate Solutions

State officials are now accepting applications for \$30 million in grants for local governments, colleges, nonprofits, and other eligible groups to fund nature-based projects that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The Natural Climate Solutions Grant Program (NCS) supports initiatives that create, restore, or enhance New Jersey's natural carbon sinks, like salt marshes, seagrass beds, forests, and urban parks.

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

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

This program helps law enforcement adopt effective practices and prevent crime. The Accreditation Program provides financial support to agencies and accreditation bodies. Agencies must meet high standards to earn accreditation, fostering community confidence in policing. The Township has applied for \$43,470.00, with the expected award date in three months.

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 strengthens local heroes' lifesaving skills by providing equipment and educational resources to first responders. The Township applied for pagers for our volunteer fire department in January and April 2025.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

The grant aims to support fire departments and emergency medical services in fulfilling their firefighting and response needs. Since 2001, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) has provided vital gear, vehicles, training, and resources for first responders. Our grant writer applied for \$173,475 for portable radios, personal protective equipment, coats, pants, and gas meters for our volunteer fire department. The award date is expected in 4 to 5 months.

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

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding is designed to improve community resilience through municipal upgrades, such as repaving roads, enhancing parks, and making buildings accessible to individuals with disabilities. The Township has requested \$227,773 for South Street improvements and expects a decision in a few months.

New Jersey Office of the Attorney General Body Armor Replacement Fund

This grant program funds body armor for eligible law enforcement officers through the Body Armor Replacement Fund, which is supported by a \$1.00 fee on vehicle fines and bail forfeitures. It enables a five-year replacement cycle for participating agencies. Each agency gets a base grant of \$500 plus additional funds based on the number of eligible officers. The police department is set to receive \$1,350.00 soon.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

The MYG met on Saturday, July 19, and discussed ways to increase membership and prepare for the upcoming school year. The MYG members participated in the Town Picnic on Saturday, August 23. Members helped by serving food to senior citizens, which was greatly appreciated. Thank you to everyone who participated! Township youths entering grades 4-12 are welcome to join the MYG. Anyone interested in registering can call Christine Genuario at the Mayor's Office at 201-587-2903.

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The committee met on Thursday, July 24, and Thursday, September 25, during the third quarter of the year. We continued discussing ways to support community residents. We remain actively engaged with the Saddle Brook Food Pantry and other civic organizations to organize food collection drives in support of the pantry. If you need assistance or have questions, please visit saddlebrooknj.us or call our HELP phone line at 201-587-2912. Leave a message for the coordinator, and you will receive a prompt response.

Green Team and Flood Mitigation Committee

This committee focuses on implementing eco-friendly practices, reducing waste, and raising awareness about environmental issues. We have combined this new initiative with the Flood Mitigation Committee and met on Wednesday, July 2, August 6, and September 3. During this period, the committee set up a table at the Township Picnic and National Night Out to raise awareness about the committee and encourage new memberships. We are also planning a cleanup event and are currently exploring other activities.

EVENTS

Township Fireworks Display, Thursday, 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.

National Night Out, Tuesday, August 5

The Police Department hosted a National Night Out celebration in the Municipal Complex parking lot, bringing the community together to show appreciation for our first responders. Participants included the Volunteer Fire Department, Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Fire Prevention members, the Women's Club of Saddle Brook, Boy Scout Troop 213, the Community Partnership Committee, the Mayor's Youth Group, and the new Green Team, along with representatives from state and county law enforcement and social service organizations. The event concluded with a raffle for bicycles and other prizes.

Township Picnic, Saturday, August 23

It was wonderful to see everyone at the Town Picnic at Saddle River County Park this year! Thank you to our Project and Activities Committee, all Township employees, especially from our Police Department and Department of Public Works, and our civic organizations, including the Women's Club and Boy Scouts. A special thanks to our generous sponsors—your contributions made this picnic possible! The Annual Mayor's Walk took place in the morning before the Town Picnic. Thank you to everyone who participated and to Ferraro Spine and Rehabilitation for sponsoring the walk.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, Thursday, September 11

The Township held a remembrance ceremony to honor those lost on 9/11. Thank you to everyone who attended, especially Rev. Bruce Janiga, vocalist Lidya Diaz, Frank Ortega, the Saddle Brook High School Middle School Marching Band, and Boy Scout Troop 213. We paid tribute to our Police Department, Volunteer Fire Department, and Volunteer Ambulance Corps for their dedication to keeping us safe.

Mayor's Fishing Derby, Saturday, September 27

This event was rescheduled due to inclement weather on Saturday, June 14. This year's Fishing Derby at Otto Pehle Lake in Saddle River County Park was a great success. Thanks to all who helped organize the event, including Christine Genuario, the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Thomas Van Winkle, Walmart of Saddle Brook, Recreation Directors Andy Gallo and Diane Bonner, and our DPW employees. All participants received trophies; Derby winners received fishing poles and tackle boxes donated by Walmart. Thank you to all involved!

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Our engineer collaborated with the grant writer to secure approximately \$1.3 million from the EPA's Community Grant for improvements to the Mayhill and Midland Avenue Pump Stations and the force main. In July 2025, a proposal was submitted that includes bid document preparation, construction management, and grant management.

Parks

Kern Place Park

The Township has submitted a grant application to Bergen County Open Space for the replacement of play equipment and safety surfaces, and for the installation of sidewalks. The Town is moving forward with the project, and our engineer is currently preparing the plans. The engineer is collaborating with MRC Recreation, which represents Game Time products. MRC suggested budget-friendly structures for the Town to consider, and one has been selected. Our engineer is now finalizing plans for bidding and construction.

Fifth Street Park

The Township has received a grant from the New Jersey Division of Community Affairs to construct a basketball court. Additional funding has been secured, and we are moving forward with the project. Our engineer submitted a proposal for engineering services on September 25, 2025.

Spray Park

Our engineer has been approved to begin preparing plans for a Spray Pad located off Sampson Street, adjacent to Veterans Field. The town is collaborating with Commercial Recreation Specialists (CRS) to create a layout. Once the layout is provided, it will be reviewed, and approval will be granted to proceed with the project.

Mayhill Street Park Phase II

The project to resurface four tennis courts and two basketball courts was put out for bid on July 3, but the bids received on July 17 exceeded the Township's budget and were rejected. The project was revised to remove the basketball courts, converting one tennis court into two pickleball courts. The revised bid was awarded on August 21, and a preconstruction meeting occurred on September 16. Construction will begin in early November, with asphaltting planned for fall and color coating and line striping scheduled for early spring 2026.

Roadway Improvements

Third Street

This is a Community Development Block Grant-funded road. Our engineer has commenced work and has prepared construction plans. Work entails installing drainage basins and piping in front of Engine Company #2 firehouse and milling and paving the street from Outwater Lane to Capital Street.

Tree Streets Water Main Improvements

Our engineer has started preparing plans to extend the water main along Maple, Spruce, Larch, and Pine Avenues, connecting it to the water main on Schepis Avenue. This extension will enhance water quality for the residents on these streets. We intend for PSE&G to repave these streets in the spring of 2026.

Tree Streets Concrete Improvements

Our engineer has begun preparing plans to replace damaged or missing concrete curbs and to reconstruct the curb ramps at the crosswalks where the roads intersect with Schepis Avenue. The curb ramps at the Wilson Avenue end were completed previously. The goal is to have PSE&G pave these streets in the spring of 2026.

Floral Lane

The New Jersey Department of Transportation is funding Floral Lane through its Municipal Aid program for the 2025 and 2026 funding years. Our engineer has submitted construction plans for milling and paving the roadway, including the installation of concrete curbs and curb ramps at the crosswalks.

South Street

South Street will get funding from the Community Development Block Grant for the 2026 funding year. A proposal for engineering costs will be submitted soon.

Other Repairs and Projects

New Municipal Building Roof Replacement

Our engineer prepared bid documents to replace the leaking front roof of the new municipal building. The project was first advertised in early March, but all bids were rejected due to high prices. A rebid on May 13th also failed, leading to negotiations with Sky Construction, which was awarded the project on July 17th. A preconstruction meeting was held on September 8th, and construction is scheduled to begin in November 2025.

Blue Acres Demo Project

The Town received funding to acquire two properties through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Blue Acres program, which includes the demolition of the existing homes. Our engineer will prepare bid documents and oversee construction administration. The town is also consulting with Green Acres and the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office to determine if the buildings at 200 Saddle River Road, located in a mapped historic district, can be demolished. The second property is at 15 Riverview Place.

MISCELLANEOUS ENGINEERING

Tax Maps

The tax maps need updating and conversion to GIS format. Our engineer has been authorized to complete this work, which is currently in progress. The updates have been submitted to the Tax Assessor's Office for review. Once we receive their feedback, the engineering team will make the necessary adjustments and submit the revised maps to the State Division of Taxation.

Stormwater Mapping

Our engineer has proposed creating a GIS map of the town's stormwater facilities, as required by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). This project will use existing survey data and include field verification to gather additional information. The Township has received a \$25,000 grant for this work, which is nearing completion. Engineering is working with the Department of Public Works to address any missing data, and the mapping will be submitted to the State of New Jersey soon.

Public Service Gas & Electric (PSE&G) Gas Main Replacement Projects 2024 and 2025

In February of 2025, PSE&G met with the town to discuss roads planned for gas main replacement, including Ash and Elm, which are also part of the 2025 plans. Ongoing work is being monitored by our engineer, who has reviewed the paving lists for both projects and met with the town to discuss paving credits. The town will be scheduling a meeting with PSE&G to review the plan and timeline.

OTHER

Redevelopment of Old Town Hall, 93-95 Market Street

The Township is focused on redeveloping and encouraging reinvestment in the old Town Hall property located at 93-95 Market Street. A successful redevelopment of this area will enhance the Township's economic vitality. At the end of 2024, the Council and I passed a resolution designating the property as an "Area in Need of Rehabilitation." We are currently in negotiations with a developer who is proposing the construction of 60 residential apartment units, including underground parking with 40 designated spaces for the police department. The department currently utilizes 93 Market Street for parking Township vehicles and employees' personal vehicles. Presentations and discussions have occurred at several Township Council meetings, where residents have been informed and have had the chance to share their opinions during the public comment portion of these meetings.

Ordinances Adopted

#1781-25

Amending and supplementing Chapter 51 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled "Property, Abandoned".

1782-25

Amending and supplementing Chapter 75 of the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook entitled "Buildings, Unsafe".

#1783-25

Amending the Code of the Township of Saddle Brook to repeal chapter 95-Flood Prevention Ordinance; to adopt a new chapter 95-Floodplain Management Regulations; to adopt flood hazard maps; to designate a floodplain administrator; and providing for severability and an effective date.

#1787-25

An ordinance of the Township of Saddle Brook to fix the salary and wages of employees, servants, or professional staff for the year 2025-2026 (White Collar).

#1788-25

An ordinance of the Township of Saddle Brook authorizing a special emergency appropriation of \$30,000 for the preparation of a stormwater system map.

#1792-25

Amending and supplementing Chapter 206 of the Code of the Township, regulating the operation of specific classes of cannabis businesses within its geographical boundaries.

Special Events Attended

Wednesday evening, August 6: I presented a proclamation to Moose National President John Reiter at the Lodi Moose Lodge. Additionally, I attended a pizza party at the Saddle Brook Municipal Complex for the third and fourth-grade girls' softball championship team.

Friday evening, August 15: I attended the graduation ceremony for the Saddle Brook Police Department Junior Police Academy at Washington School.

Friday evening, September 5: I attended the Saddle Brook School District's ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new stadium turf field and lights at the High School and Middle School.

Saturday morning, September 6: I attended the Opening Day for the Saddle Brook Angels program at Avon Field.

Sunday afternoon, September 7: I participated in Soccer Picture Day at the Municipal Complex Recreation Center.

Saturday evening, September 13: I attended a sensory-friendly car show hosted by the Saddle Brook Angels in the Municipal Complex parking lot.

Saturday evening, September 18: I attended a fundraiser event called "Drums from Heaven" at VFW Post 3484 in Saddle Brook.

Sunday morning, September 21: I attended a Pancake Bingo event at the Senior Center.

Sunday afternoon, September 28: I attended the UNICO Street Fair on Market Street, located between Westminster Place and Mayhill Street.