

MAYOR ROBERT D. WHITE
QUARTERLY UPDATE
APRIL - JUNE 2026

BUDGET

Budget Adoption

The 2026 municipal budget was presented to the Township Council and discussed at the May 7 work session. A budget hearing occurred at the council meeting on Thursday, June 18, during which the council voted to approve and adopt the budget. Township Auditor Steve Wielkottz 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 \$187.00 based on an assessment of \$500,700 and a tax rate of 2.377 percent. There were further property tax increases for our local public schools, town library, and Bergen County. Property owners will receive estimated tax bills for the third quarter of 2026 by the second week of July, with payment due August 1, 2026, 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 to hire new personnel to replace those who retired. The increase is mainly due to inflation, solid waste, recycling costs, insurance premiums, pension contributions, statutory allocations for the library, and contractual salaries.

Senior Tax Freeze, Stay NJ, and Anchor Programs

Township senior citizen homeowners who are 65 years and older may be eligible for the Senior Tax Freeze, Stay NJ, and Anchor 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 or visit the state's website at nj.gov for eligibility requirements and additional information.

Finance Ordinances

Ordinance 1803-26 was introduced at the council meeting on June 18, 2026, 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). This allows the town to create a cap bank, which is the difference between the allowed 2.0% increase and 3.5%, and is saved for future use. It covers rising costs, allowing towns to avoid uncontrollable expenses in future budgets without emergency funding. It also preserves flexibility without requiring the full 3.5%.

GRANTS

Applications – In Progress

United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) 2026 COPS Hiring Program

The COPS Hiring Program provides funding to law enforcement agencies to hire or rehire officers to improve community policing and crime prevention. Anticipated outcomes include fostering community partnerships, evaluating local issues, enhancing personnel management, and increasing the agency's capacity to engage in community policing initiatives. This application is due July 2026.

Leary Firefighters Foundation

The Leary Firefighters Foundation offers grants through the Jeremiah Lucey Grant Program to support paid and volunteer fire departments across the United States. The foundation provides funding for training, equipment, and technology. The Saddle Brook Volunteer Fire Department plans to submit a \$40,000 grant application due in August 2026.

HTS Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Fund & United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Safe Streets (SS4A) Program.

The HTS Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Fund is part of the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program, established under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries. SS4A funds support comprehensive safety action plans focused on pedestrian safety and other roadway users, including bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and commercial vehicle operators. This grant application will be reviewed by the police department and the township engineer, and it is due in 2027.

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Fiscal Year 26-27

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 funding for improvements to Miller Street.

Bergen County Open Space Grant 2026

The Bergen County Department of Parks has announced the 2026 Open Space Trust Fund Grant Program. Applicants can seek funding in three categories: Land Acquisition, Historic Preservation, and Municipal Park Improvements. All Bergen County municipalities and qualified nonprofits are invited to apply.

Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant

The Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation enhances the lifesaving capabilities of local heroes by providing essential equipment and educational resources to first responders. The township applied for pagers for our volunteer fire department. The anticipated award date is May 2026.

State Farm & National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program

The State Farm Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program, in partnership with the NVFC, provides grants to help resource-constrained volunteer fire departments purchase essential equipment to improve firefighter safety, effectiveness, and operational readiness. The award amount is \$10,000 per department, and the grant application was submitted in May 2026.

New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) FY27 Municipal Aid Grant

The NJDOT accepts applications for fiscal year 2027 under its Municipal Aid, Transit Village, Bikeway, and Safe Streets to Transit programs. Our township engineer collaborated with our grant writer to apply for \$373,000 in funding to improve Miller Street. Award announcements are expected in November 2026.

FEMA FY26 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG)

The AFG program provides funding to support fire departments and emergency medical services by offering assistance for equipment, training, and health initiatives. This program aims to help fire departments acquire essential resources for protecting both the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. For the 2026 funding cycle, three main grant programs are available: Equipment, Staffing, and Education. Our fire chief collaborated with our grant writer to apply for portable radios and turnout gear totaling \$495,000.

Grant Applications Rejected

N.J. Department of Community Affairs Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) – Fiscal Year 2026

N.J. Office of Attorney General Wellness Grant (LEWG)

Grant Applications Awarded

Sustainable Jersey and Public Service Gas and Electric (PSE&G) Sustainability Grants

Received \$2,000 to support our Green Team Adopt-a-Tree program and outreach rain garden at the Saddle Brook Free Public Library.

U.S. Dept. of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance Bulletproof Vest Program FY25

Our police department received funding to cover 50% of the costs of body armor and vests purchased after April 1, 2025. The total award amount was \$3,691.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

The MYG held monthly meetings on Saturday mornings from April to June 2026, promoting collaboration and community engagement. On April 5, we participated in the Township's Spring/Easter Celebration and collaborated with the Community Partnership Committee for a food drive benefiting the Saddle Brook Food Pantry. Additionally, on May 2, we took part in an Earth Day cleanup and planting event at Tri Centennial Park to enhance the local environment.

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The CPC experienced a productive second quarter of 2026. We continue to focus on promoting civic engagement and organizing inclusive community events. Our meetings occur on the 4th Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Municipal Complex, where we have been actively involved in various township activities.

On April 27, our members participated in the Arbor Day celebration at Tri-Centennial Park, where Columbia Bank donated and planted a Dogwood Tree, highlighting our commitment to environmental stewardship. We also represented our community at the Marriott Hotel's 60th anniversary ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 20, recognizing a long-standing local business that contributes to Saddle Brook. Additionally, we launched the first edition of the Saddle Brook Community Newsletter. This communication tool aims to keep residents informed about community updates and events.

Towards the end of the quarter, we hosted a Sensory-Friendly Craft Night on May 27 at the Municipal Complex. This event provided an opportunity for residents of various ages and abilities to engage in creative activities. These initiatives have helped us enhance partnerships with local businesses, create accessible programming, and improve communication in Saddle Brook. We anticipate further developments and events moving forward.

Green Team / Flood Mitigation Committee

The Green Team Committee had an exciting second quarter in 2026, filled with community engagement and environmental education! We kicked off the quarter on April 18 with a Light Pollution Awareness Day presentation at the Saddle Brook Library. In the evening, we hosted our Astronomy Night Star Party at Smith School Field, where families enjoyed telescopes, guided sky viewing, and hands-on learning activities led by local astronomy volunteers. These fun events helped raise awareness about dark-sky preservation and brought our community closer together!

Then, on June 15, we celebrated a significant achievement at a statewide grant ceremony hosted by Sustainable New Jersey and Public Service Gas and Electric. We were thrilled to receive \$2,000 to support our future sustainability programs! This generous funding will allow us to

expand our upcoming Green Team initiatives, which include an outreach rain garden at the town library and an Adopt-a-Tree program. We look forward to making an even greater impact together!

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.

Spring/Easter Celebration – Saturday, April 4

Thank you to all residents who attended our Spring/Easter Celebration and donated to the Saddle Brook Food Pantry. This joyful event strengthens our community, especially for our children. We appreciate the Project and Activities Committee, the Mayor's Youth Group, the Saddle Brook Woman's Club for providing treats, and the Saddle Brook Library for hosting crafts. Special thanks to Rafael Gonzalez of Enlacosa for photographing and recording the event.

Little League Opening Day Parade - Saturday, April 11

We had a fantastic time at our Little League Opening Day Parade and Ceremony. Many of us eagerly anticipate the start of town baseball each spring. Thank you to everyone involved in making the event a success, including Little League President Keith Vermilyea, the executive board, managers, coaches, volunteers, parents, sponsors, and our local police department, DPW, fire department, and ambulance corps for their assistance and participation.

Memorial Day Parade and Services, Sunday, May 24

The township celebrated Memorial Day with our annual parade to honor the men and women who served in our country's armed forces and in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice. We extend our gratitude to all who participated and assisted with the event. Congratulations to this year's Grand Marshal, Rick Easson. We also attended the monument services before the parade and the VFW's Memorial Day service at the Mayhill Street Circle on Monday, May 25.

Summer Concert, Friday, June 5

The township hosted an outdoor concert featuring the band Benjamins 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 350 people there.

Mayor's Fishing Derby, Saturday, June 20

The Mayor's Fishing Derby at Otto Pehle Lake in Saddle River County Park was a success thanks to organizers like Christine Genuario, the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Walmart of Saddle Brook, and Duncan Donuts, Pehle Ave. All participants received trophies, while winners got fishing poles and tackle boxes. Thank you to everyone involved!

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Parks

Kern Place Park

The new playground is complete.

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 provided, and we are moving forward with the project. Our engineer has completed the site survey and base mapping and is preparing the bid documents. The bid is planned to go shortly for fall construction.

Spray Park

The engineer worked with the vendor, Commercial Recreation Specialists (CRS), to develop a layout for a spray pad off Sampson Street next to Veterans' Field. The equipment was purchased under a co-op and delivered to the site in mid-February. The project was bid, and the award was given to Adamo Construction on March 19. The house on the property was demolished, and construction began at the end of May and continued into June. The park is nearly complete and expected to be completed in mid-July.

Mayhill Street Park Phase II

The resurfacing of the tennis courts and the addition of two new pickleball courts are complete.

Roadway Improvements

Third Street

Milling and paving are complete.

Tree Streets Water Main Improvements, Concrete Improvements, and Paving

The water main improvements, concrete improvements, and milling and paving of Maple, Spruce, Larch, and Pine Avenues have been completed.

Floral Lane

NJDOT funds Floral Lane for the years 2025 and 2026. The engineering proposal was submitted and approved on September 25, 2025. Surveying and base mapping have been completed, and bid documents were sent to NJDOT in January 2026. The engineer is currently addressing NJDOT's comments. The paving project needs to be awarded by early November, but construction is anticipated to start next year to avoid interfering with PSE&G's gas main replacement work scheduled for this year.

South Street

South Street is funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the 2026 funding year. Our engineer prepared the bid documents on February 19, 2026, and bidding is anticipated to begin shortly for construction in the fall.

New Municipal Building Roof Replacement

The roof replacement project has been completed.

Blue Acres Demo Project

The Town received funding from New Jersey's Blue Acres program to acquire and demolish two properties. The engineer will oversee the construction process. After consulting with Green Acres and the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, it was confirmed that the buildings at 200 Saddle River Road, in a historic district, can be demolished. The Town can now proceed with demolishing the structures at both 200 Saddle River Road and 15 Riverview Place.

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Our engineer helped the grant writer secure about \$1.3 million from the EPA's Community Grant for improvements to the Mayhill and Midland Ave Pump Stations and the force main. The Town is currently finalizing paperwork with grant administrators and will need to resubmit a proposal once the project scope is defined.

Miscellaneous Engineering

Tax Maps

The tax maps are being updated and converted to GIS format by our authorized engineer. The updates have been sent to the Tax Assessor's Office for review. After receiving their feedback, the engineering team will make adjustments and submit the revised maps to the State Division of Taxation.

Stormwater Mapping

The town engineer proposed GIS mapping of stormwater facilities to address flooding, supported by a \$25,000 grant and a \$54,950 budget. The engineer worked with the Department of Public Works to complete the mapping. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection requested a Watershed Inventory Plan, and our engineer submitted a draft in January 2026.

PSE&G Gas Main Replacement Projects 2024 and 2025

The gas replacement projects for 2024 and 2025 and the repaving of affected streets are now complete.

PSE&G Gas Main Replacement Project 2026

PSE&G plans to start a gas main replacement project in 2026, covering the area from Floral Lane to Alberta Drive and from Fairlawn Parkway to North Midland Avenue.

OTHER

Redevelopment of Old Town Hall, 93-95 Market Street

The township has sold a property to a developer who plans to build 60 new apartment units, including 9 affordable housing units, to fulfill the township's state-mandated obligations. The development will feature a two-and-a-half-story building with a maximum height of 41 feet, and there will be no vehicle access from Harrison Avenue to reduce traffic impact. It will also include underground parking with over 200 spaces, of which 40 are reserved for the police department and visitors. The parking spaces designated for the police department will be reserved indefinitely. The old buildings on the site were demolished in the spring of this year, and the project is expected to be completed within 12 to 16 months.

Township Ordinances Adopted

(Adopted April 16, 2026)

#1802-26: Chapter 203 entitled "Water", Section 203-1 "Schedule of Rates and Charges" of the Saddle Brook Code was amended to add a new Subsection "E" for the required fees associated with water meters. The fees for larger industrial-sized meters were increased to match the rise in their costs to the township.

Special Events Attended

Friday evening, April 3: I attended the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps Annual Fish and Chips Dinner at the Municipal Complex.

Tuesday afternoon, April 7: I conducted a police promotion ceremony at the Municipal Complex. Police Officer Anthony Davanzo was promoted to Sergeant, and Sergeant Joseph Camilleri III was promoted to Lieutenant.

Saturday afternoon, April 11: I attended the Saddle Brook Boy Scout Troop #213 Chili Cook-Off at the VFW Lower Hall, 44 Market Street.

Friday afternoon, April 17: I participated in the lunch program at the Saddle Brook Senior Center, 8 Caldwell Ave.

Saturday morning, April 18: I attended the Opening Day event for Saddle Brook Recreation Softball at Veterans Field on Sampson Street.

Friday evening, April 24: I attended the Saddle Brook Woman's Club Comedy Night at the VFW Upper Hall, located at 44 Market Street.

Saturday evening, May 9: I attended the installation dinner for officers at VFW Post #3484, located at 44 Market Street.

Friday afternoon, May 15: I attended the 2026 Saddle Brook Police Department's Memorial Service in front of police headquarters at 63 Market Street.

Saturday afternoon, May 16: I participated in the Saddle Brook High School Softball Home Run Derby at Smith School Field on Cambridge Avenue.

Sunday afternoon, May 17: I attended the Saddle Brook UNICO Pasta Dinner at the VFW Upper Hall located at 44 Market Street.

Sunday afternoon, May 31: I attended the 80th Anniversary celebration of Mazzer Plumbing held in the parking lot of their building at 200 Floral Lane, Saddle Brook.

Monday afternoon, June 1: I administered the oaths of office to the local AARP officers for the term 2026 to 2027 at the Saddle Brook Senior Center, located at 8 Caldwell Ave.

Friday morning, June 5: I participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run with members of the Saddle Brook Police Department at the starting location, TD Bank, 600 Market Street, Elmwood Park.

Saturday afternoon, June 6: I attended the Blue and Gold Ceremony for Cub Scout Troop #222 at Saint Philip's Church auditorium, 488 Saddle River Road.

Sunday afternoon, June 7: I attended the Saddle Brook VFW Post #3484 Freedom Festival, 44 Market Street.

Sunday afternoon, June 14: I participated in a Special Needs Over 19 Baseball League game at Liberty Field, 639 Saddle River Road, Saddle Brook.