Minutes

Mayor and Municipal Council Regular Meeting
of the Township of Belleville at Council Chambers – Town Hall
152 Washington Avenue, Belleville, New Jersey,
Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order:
By Mayor Melham at 6:00pm

Members Present:
Council Members Vincent Cozzarelli, Naomy DePeña, Thomas Graziano, Diana Guardabasco, Tracey J. Muldrow, Frank Velez III, and Mayor Melham

Also Present:
Township Attorney Steven Martino, Township Manager Brian Banda, Police Chief Mark Minichini, Public Works Director Robert Welter, Chief Financial Officer, Frank DiMaria and Municipal Clerk Jacqueline Guaman

Pledge of Allegiance:
By Mayor Melham

Sunshine Law:
By Clerk Jacqueline Guaman

Pursuant to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975) known as the Sunshine Law, notice of this meeting was published in the January 9, 2026, Star Ledger. An annual meeting notice resolution was adopted, forwarded to the press, posted, and filed with the Municipal Clerk, establishing the date, time, and place of all meetings. A copy of the annual meeting notice has been posted on the Township website and Town Hall Bulletin Board.

Proclamations/Presentations:
Presented by Mayor Melham

A. National Public Works Week

DPW Director, Robert Welter – thank you for the recognition. Our crew works hard every day without complaint, often behind the scenes, so it means a lot to be acknowledged. If anyone has questions for Public Works, please feel free to reach out.

Presented by Councilwoman DePeña

B. Honoring Belleville Crew Team Members Amanda Besterci and Camila Sotomayor

- Belleville High School car wash happening Saturday, May 30, 2026, at Belleville High School, please support the Crew Team.

Work Session/Council Discussion:
Township Manager – Brian Banda

A. Discuss Mr. Gregory's request for access to his yard through township property

- Mr. Gregory -172 Washington Ave. for years accessed the rear of his property through the township parking lot behind Agave Maria.
- The township recently installed a new fence and Mr. Gregory asked if the township could leave an opening in the fence for his access.
- Mr. Gregory request if Council can leave the opening of the fence to allow continued access from the rear of his property since there is no parking and he has no other access to his property.
- It's more so what we can guarantee and what we can't, this is not something that I alone can decide; Attorney Martino can shed more light on the situation.
- That's not a driveway; they just access our lot and are parking in their backyard.
- These can be insurance or future risks, but there's a proper way to go about these things.
- You can't get it through the alley? I was told you can get it through alley.
- We can help him get it out that's not a problem.
- He can get back there, it's a backyard
- What's going through our parking lot?
- I don't think there's harm to giving him access now, just a matter of protecting the township in an insurance liability way and future property rights if there's ever a change to what the township does in the future to the parking lot.
- That's why I don't have the authority to make this decision which is why I'm asking the Council.
- Next step would be writing up an agreement.

Gregory Hargrave – 172 Washington Avenue:

- Owned this property for over 5 years and have always had and used the municipal parking lot to access the rear of my property.
- Records show that this home has always had access to the municipal parking lot and this is going back 30 years
- Requesting reprieve to allow me to continue to have access to park in the rear of my home.
- The municipal parking lot is the only parking available for my home. I often have to wait up to an hour for a space to open
- 2001 and it was open when I bought it.
- No, there's no way I can get it through the alley.
- Thank you very much and I appreciate your time. Thank you Brian.

Mayor Melham:

- Historically there was a fence with an opening, then there was no opening, did the previous council restricted it at that time?
- So, if it didn't take the act of the Council to block it, why does it need Council approval to unblock it? These should be things worked out at the administration level.
- Is there another property like Mr. Gregory's that we give access to through our parking lot?
- What year did you buy the property? And was it open when you bought it?
- He currently has a vehicle trap, doesn't he?
- He has an alleyway, a walkway.
- I don't think any council person wouldn't want to help so what's the next steps?
- Okay, thank you.

Police Chief Minichini:

- In the lower lot there's a driveway that utilizes our municipal parking lot.

Attorney Martino:

- The township can't give a permanent easement without jumping through a bunch of hoops.
- Whether council allows it, there will have to be a written agreement that establishes hold harmless agreement, no liability, no property rights, no easement and terminable at will. That's the only way to do it.
- We'd have to negotiate an agreement that makes sense. The key is to not give any property rights away.
- The problem is everybody's situation is different, so you couldn't do it in a blanket. And we don't know about most properties using township property for their homes.
- In Mr. Gregorys case, he's not using township property, just crossing over the line to access his property, so again its different.
- I can work with Brian and Mr. Gregory to sort this out and put it on approval for resolution at the next meeting.

Councilman Cozzarelli:

- How does he plan on maintaining it if he can't get the motorcycle out?
- How does he plan on maintaining it if he can't go back there?

Councilman Graziano:

- How many properties in Belleville are utilizing access through the township municipal parking lot, do we know? And should we address that all at once so we're not approving one property at a time?

B. Discuss garbage collection current and new contract

- Council is being asked to exercise a one-year renewal through May 31, 2027, option with Affordable Cartage LLC, which is our garbage collection company.
- The one-year extension is recommended to give us time to go through a proper and formal bidding process for a new garbage contract.

Councilman Cozzarelli

- Last time the garbage consultant did work without talking to DPW Director Robert, so can we make sure he's included in the conversation.

Code Enforcement – Nick DeAngelis

A. Discuss creating an ordinance for all billboards within the Township

- We have a lot of billboards in town and other townships have ordinances for regulating them
- Proposing yearly registration on billboards.
- No, it would be like a permit.
- Were looking for an annual fee plus the option to regulate what they advertise.

Mayor Melham

- So, if I want to buy a billboard I have to wait until the council approves it?
- That doesn't sound reasonable. Billboard companies have their own guidelines and standards.
- How does this solution of saying yes/no for ads solve the problem of maintenance?

- Don't we already hold them accountable?

Manager Brian

- There are giant sign structures and property maintenance that goes along with that and some of these properties are just standalone billboards
- It's really the maintenance of the property.
- I don't think it was really ads, I think you're looking at an annual inspection.
- We should really be inspecting these things on an annual basis to ensure they are being kept up to community standards.
- There's no ordinance in place right now, that's part of what this will be.

B. Discuss rent roster ordinance

- We've been requesting a yearly rent roster for properties in town.
- Code enforcement noticed that several households have not been compliant.
- We have no ordinance demanding or requiring.
- Recommend we update/amend ordinance 2672 that three family properties and above is required to a submit to the township a yearly rent roster.
- No, I'm referring to how many tenants there are in said property.

Councilman Cozzarelli

- What about commercial properties?

Attorney Martino

- A rent roster meaning how much the rent is?
- Oh, the tenant list.

Manager Brian

- So, we require it every year, especially the larger buildings. We're checking to see if they do their rental inspections and if we see the people moving in and out.
- We ask for it every year, but sometimes we get pushbacks.
- There's nothing in our ordinance currently that allows us to require it, hence the recommendation.

Councilwoman Guardabasco

A. Discuss parking meters

- I'm just confirming that the on-street parking is suspended on Sundays stops at 6:00pm.
- All of them except the municipal parking lots.
- 6:00pm Sundays and holidays suspended.
- Lighting across the street in the municipal parking lot is terrible. It's way too dark.

Police Chief Minichini

- Washington Ave?
- Councilwoman lots are still 24 hours.
- Streets are the same, they stop at 6:00pm.

Manager Brian

- You mean anywhere that we have meters on the street?
- Monday – Saturday after 6:00pm they are not enforced, and Sundays all day they are not enforced.

Mayor Melham

- Street parking on Washington Avenue meters is not enforced on Sundays.

Councilwoman DePeña

A. Frank Acuna and the United American Veterans League – Request for reduced or free use of Municipal Stadium turf field for a season's worth of games (unknown dates and times)

- Were you able to identify what that breakeven amount would be?
- The important piece of information for the council to understand is that this is a veteran's organization.
- We have a discount for nonprofit organizations, but this organization is not so that's the challenge.
- We want to be fair to veterans, everyday families and local sports are taking precedent.
- If it's a local league, do we establish a percentage of how many people, in this case, are veterans and if it's a Belleville league how many people must be residents.
- Everyone is a veteran, correct?
- Thank you for your time, we want to support our veterans but the challenge here is the fact that you are not a nonprofit which automatically places you in a for-profit organization.
- We also want to set clear standards to make sure no one can use this process to charge people and then make money when they're asking us to waive.
- How many dates are you asking for?
- To clarify in terms of the waiver, we discussed there might be a cost associated with the maintenance fee at least for the organization to cover, so that's what we are discussing.

Manager Brian

- Many organizations use our fields for pickup games throughout the entire season
- We do have a rental fee, but they would like to discuss with us reduced fees or no fees in certain scenarios.
- If we do grant something, are we at least meeting the minimum costs for maintenance of the fields and damages.
- So, we need the exact days, discussion with Recreation Director Lenny, and he will give me that final number.
- I'll work with Mr. Acuna regarding the scheduling and costs, send it over to Attorney Martino and then we'll make a resolution.

Councilman Cozzarelli

- We talked about prior the possibility of taking the total fees and breaking it into maintenance and usage fees and waiving the usage fee.
- Mr. Acuna also played Taps at our ceremony.
- A team full of veterans corresponds in my book to a special circumstance so if council decides to waive it I'm all for it.

Frank Acuna – 338 Little Street

- The main team are veterans, but we opened the team up to Belleville residents 3 years ago.
- We can keep it as a veteran's team by keeping all the Belleville residents out, but we didn't want to do that.
- The team is not a nonprofit and it's not for profit either.
- Our request is for the waiver clause regarding field rental fees and under that extraordinary circumstances for disabled veterans; costs adds up and not everyone can

afford what the town charges since we split the costs amongst ourselves to fund this program.

- We request if Belleville can waive the fees for the United American Veterans League.
- We play 10 games a year roughly.

Councilman Velez

- I agree and I'm thankful Mr. Acuna for your service and Councilwoman DePeña for setting this up.

Report of the Manager:

- Several paving jobs which include Greenwich Street, Berkeley Ave, Lloyd Place, Sycamore Drive to Penn Ave, Essex Street, Wilbur Street, Crescent Terrace, Beverly Court as well as various sidewalk repairs.
- Plans for the Main Street project are complete and will go out to bid once they are approved.
- Main Street project expected to begin late summer and the street paving will begin in the fall.
- Both projects depending on weather are expected to carry over into the 2027 calendar year.
- Recreation informed us summer camp registrations will be closing June 1st.
- Thank you to all our first responders, DPW, OEM, the Mayor, for his work with the state as well as health and code departments who handled the large warehouse fire earlier this month
- The teams worked efficiently, professionally and together to take the buildings down, put the fire out and get the surrounding residents back in their homes safely.
- The loss of these buildings will hit out tax ratable base by about $6 million or a total loss of about $300,000 in tax dollars annually.

Report of the Mayor:

- Manager Brian, when will the food truck park be open? It's been more than 3 weeks, and we had discussions this past September.
- 5/27/26 is the town's mobile DMV; all real ID slots are taken but if you need other services done, they are available.
- We will host another mobile DMV soon at the Senior Center building for Real IDs.
- 5/30/26 is the sixth annual community bike ride at 1:00pm
- 6/2/26 is Primary Election Day
- 6/6/26 is the food truck festival for our Father's Day Event; not to be mistaken for the annual food truck festival that takes place in October

Past Events:

- The town held a Memorial Service Day on 5/25/26 in 3 different locations
- Senior prom was successful
- Mother's Day event – bouquets for moms was well attended & Green team rock painting event at the pocket park
- Appealed to the Governor regarding the fire for $3 million dollars and was informed the State doesn't have the funds for Belleville

- I've coordinated with our legislative team from LD 34 for a one-time budget appropriation to cover costs
- Federal resources are not available since the damages or costs are below $18 million
- America's 250 home decorating contest being hosted by the recreation department
- May is Lupus and ALS awareness month

Manager Brian

- The contractor who we gave this job to is no longer with the township for several reasons hence the delay.
- We have a state co-op local contractor we've used in the past
- Plans will be ready in one month along with a quote, then he can hit the ground running.

Approval of Minutes:

Clerk Jacqueline Guaman

- December - Pending (David Arce)
- January 14, 2026 (David Arce)
- January 27, 2026 (David Arce)
- April 28, 2026

Motion to Adopt January 14th, 27th and April 28th minutes by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Cozzarelli.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Communications:

A. Letter sent to Governor Miki Sherill from Mayor Melham "Request for State Emergency Declaration and Assistance for the Township of Belleville".
B. Letter from St. Anthony's church requesting permission to have a Police Sound car escort.
C. Letter from St. Anthony's church requesting to wave all vendor fees for their Annual St. Anthony's festival.
D. Email received from Jonafer Press to host a block party to celebrate Juneteenth on June 20, 2026.

Manager Brian

- We have to do a resolution to waive them.

Police Chief Minichini

- I don't think they ever paid in the past

Ordinances for Introduction:

ORDINANCE #26-26 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 3 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, ENTITLED "POLICE REGULATIONS," TO MODIFY HOURS OF OPERATION FOR CERTAIN BUSINESSES AND TO ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR OPERATION OF FULL-SERVICE HEALTH CLUBS AND GYMS

Motioned by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #27-26 ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF $1,500,000 FOR THE PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF A COMPLETE PROGRAM OF REVALUATION OF REAL PROPERTY IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY

Motioned by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #28-26 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE II, S 2-13 ET SEQ. OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE TO ESTABLISH A LAW DEPARTMENT

Motioned by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #29-26 ORDINANCE AMENDING HOURS OF SALE AND SERVICE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Motioned by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow and Velez.
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: Mayor Melham Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #30-26 AN ORDINANCE FIXING PERSONNEL POSITIONS, SALARIES, WAGES AND COMPENSATION AMOUNTS AND RATES-REPEALING ORDINANCE #49-25

Motioned by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Ordinances for Public Hearing and Second and Final Reading:

ORDINANCE #18-26 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF VARIOUS WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS IN, BY AND FOR THE WATER UTILITY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF $250,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS

Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.

Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

- Public Comments: None

Motion to Close Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #18-26 by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #19-26 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF THE WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM IN, BY AND FOR THE WATER UTILITY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF $500,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS
Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

- Public Comments: None

Motion to Close Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #19-26 by Councilman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #20-26 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF THE LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT (PHASE II) IN, BY AND FOR THE ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF $5,000,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS
Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Public Comments:
Vincent Frantantoni – 129 Mt. Prospect Ave.

- What are colliers engineering doing that requires $617,000 for the lead line replacement program?
- Is it necessary when most of these lead lines can just get a permit and a plumber to do the job?
- What plans are there to replace a water line? It's simple, can't the town engineer oversee this?
- That answer is not efficient; can we get the actual engineering plans to view of the 20-25% that was complete?
- When this program started 4-5 years ago, I got a letter in the mail. I haven't received one so what's happening?
- They came and replaced the water meters, why didn't they do the evaluation then?

Mayor Melham

- Colliers are most likely drawing the plans so the contractor can spend the $5 million to replace the lead service lines.
- The town engineer is Colliers.
- Frank, in short, the state mandates that an engineer must develop the plans so the contractor can spec it out?
- They go by the age of the house and everyone homes that was built before 1950 received a letter by default.

CFO DiMaria

- All lead lines must be replaced within the boundaries of your municipality over a 6-year period.
- WISE Act in 2018 under Governor Christie – any environmental infrastructure improvement that a municipality does must go through the WISE calculator.
- IBank is utilized for financing – municipality cannot finance itself.
- Correct and it's paid in increments which requires establishing a plan and hiring an engineer with DEP.
- Yes, you must have a certified engineer if the project is in excess of $1million through iBank since this is a $30 million project.
- No, these are 5,000 connections.
- Out of $3 million, 50% is an interest free loan and 50% is a low-interest loan through the iBank.

Manager Brian

- This the $5 million frank?
- Does the iBank fund the cost of the engineer?

Councilman Cozzarelli

- Aside from running a plumbing line, the plans include outside factors that may obstruct the water lines themselves.

Attorney Martino

- Frank, aren't you required to have an engineer when you get the financing?
- iBank won't give you the money unless you have an engineer?
- As the Council said the letter was sent to you because of the age of your home, not because they checked your house.
- In the event they do check, if a copper wire is there, they will simply not touch it.
- The water meters have nothing to do with this ordinance.

Motion to Close Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #20-26 by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman Guardabasco.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #21-26 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO MUNICIPAL FACILITIES IN, BY AND FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF $500,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS
Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Public Comments:
Andrea Maldonado – 25 Hill Street

- What is the process the Council's going to take to understand which type of improvements are needed and why?
- Where can we find that information? On which type of improvements has been pushed forward.
- So, are these emergencies basically? Something that's not planned but unexpected.
- Does this also include grounds? Like parks?

Mayor Melham

- All items that come to us are already approved in advance by the town administration and it gets allocated in a budget with the department head's name on it saying they need x amount of money.
- It's a round number in case we have an issue; we have money to pull from.

CFO DiMaria

- The only ordinances this year that have been brought to the council are that 5-7 that we generally don't know about, these are improvements the town didn't anticipate.
- These cover the buildings, the grounds, things that are not scheduled.
- These are the fail-safe ones – the things we are going to spend no matter what.
- Yes, facilities include real property and personal property.

Motion to Close Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #21-26 by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #22-26 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN, BY AND FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW

JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF $250,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS

Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

- Public Comments: None

Motion to Close Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #22-26 by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #23-26 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION OF NEW ADDITIONAL OR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY FOR THE USE OF VARIOUS TOWNSHIP DEPARTMENTS, OFFICES AND AGENCIES IN, BY AND FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF $500,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS

Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

- Public Comments: None

Motion to Open Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #23-26 by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #24-26 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF THE 2026 ROAD RECONSTRUCTION AND CURB AND SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT PROGRAM (LOCAL) IN, BY AND FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF $500,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS

Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.

Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Public Comments:
Nancy Blauvelt – 200 Beech Street

- Is this for paving our roads? Municipal roads or County roads?
- Have you spoken with PSE&G? When they come and tear up our roads, they should pave the whole road and not half of the road.
- Why don't they pave the whole road?

Mayor Melham

- We don't pave County roads. Frank?
- 8 years ago, they use to rip up the roads and never repair them.
- With the ordinance in place 6 years ago it forces PSE&G to pave our roads when they do damage, but PSE&G will only pave half the road. That's better than not paving the road at all.
- The township has no say, pse&g will not cooperate with us.

CFO DiMaria

- This is a local ordinance so its all-taxpayer money, no state or federal aid.
- You can do roads, curbs, sidewalks, streetscaping, lighting, street signs, handicap ramps.

Councilman Cozzarelli

- PSE&G is approved by the Board of Public Utilities.

Motion to Close Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #24-26 by Councilman Velez;
Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

ORDINANCE #25-26 CALENDAR YEAR 2026 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

- Public Comments: None

Motion to Close Public Comments and Adopt Ordinance #25-26 by Councilman Velez;
Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Public Comments:

Motion to Open Public Comments by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Philomina Frantantoni – 129 Mount Prospect Avenue

- What was done with the old chairs that were in the Senior building?
- Congratulations Mr. Velez on this election.

Manager Brian

- I believe we got rid of them. They were stained and broken.

Mario Drodz – 98 Bell Street

- Is it possible to have the July 1st reorganization meeting in a larger location?
- The bike ride event is coming up, many participants adhere to not wearing helmets, so don't let them join in, they can ride bikes on their own.
- The $3 million dollars mentioned to cover the cost of the huge fire, is it possible to use the $4 million dollars from the developers fund to cover this cost temporally?
- R-172-2026 can you explain it? Are you saying they shouldn't escalate beyond the amount of taxation? Every year the gas goes up, is this saying to put a freeze on it?

Clerk Guaman:

- It's just a letter of support that was given by the State for the council to adopt
- They want to regulate the gas tax, so prices don't inflate overnight

Gary Hinton – 307 Fairway Avenue

- The revaluations happening soon, will it be the same company as last time?

Mayor Melham:

- Yes, it is Hendricks.

Councilman Cozzarelli:

- Gary, didn't you come to a meeting and requested DPW to cut down a tree for you which cost us about $5,000?

Carmela Fleishman – 33 Main Street

- Congratulations Councilman Velez and his team
- I want to see the plans for Main Street once they're finalized.
- I put in an OPRA request about healthcare and didn't receive a satisfied response.
- With the new administration coming in, will the part-time employees that are getting full-time benefits continue to get them?

Manager Brian:

- The plans are in the approval process with DOT.

CFO DiMaria

- The state is in the process of sending changes back and forth, once they're finalized, we'll have the plans available for the public.

- It's impossible to answer because the township is self-insured. Most likely no, everyone taps out at $175,000 and we have secondary insurance that kicks in. We pay actual claims

Mayor Melham:

- Was the challenge for you to OPRA a document or to come to a meeting and ask a question?
- The question that night was whether seven council members that are entitled to health benefits, if the next administration coming July 1st remove them altogether, does that equate to a $350,000 savings now that seven elected officials are removed from the benefits plan?
- Everyone here should know this by now, we are self-insured.
- You cannot make the claim that by eliminating seven people you are going to shave $350,000 off the budget.

Vincent Frantantoni:

- What did you do about the light that's out by the parking lot?
- The issue is not with the light is out but rather an underground wire by the pole they have to repair, so they will send a crew out to fix it within the next couple of weeks.
- State law says municipal budget must be introduced by February 20th. When is the budget going to be introduced?

Manager Brian:

- We were told the light was out, so we reported it to PSE&G and they repaired it.
- It's still dark so that means we have to add more lighting, not just repair the one that is there.

CFO DiMaria:

- The budget committee has to look at it come July 1st, once they do that it will be decided.
- The Director has been notified throughout the whole process and knows it will be decided once the new budget committee reviews it.

Nancy Blauvelt – 200 Beech Street

- Town attorney should get in touch with surrounding towns attorney to speak with PSE&G about purchasing a foam fire truck and place near a substation for all surrounding towns to access.

Rich Finnegan – 279 Fairway Avenue

- Are they going to fence off the river as the final part of the park's construction?
- Can someone check out the new sump pump system on Fairway?

Manager Brian:

- There will be a fence around the facility itself, not by the river.

Andrea Maldonado – 25 Hill Street

- How will unused funds be reappropriated for the town?
- Is that information shared usually at Council meetings?
- R-163-2026, what benchmarks were met to release Starbucks performance bond?
- Do we have any type of requirements to support Belleville residents where we're benefiting from these improvements?
- Can you explain R-167-2026 AND 169-2026?
- So, are these funds getting approved now and will be brought up again at the next meeting before the budget gets adopted?

Mayor Melham:

- If money is left over it will go towards another project.
- The bond was released because the work was finished in its entirety. A performance bond is put up in case the project doesn't get done, like an insurance policy, that says if you don't finish the work the township will finish it for you using that bond.
- In this case, Starbucks finished the job therefore the bond is released back to them.
- Some projects in redevelopment allow us to negotiate redevelopment fees we charge depending on how big the project is and that money sits in an account where we can then use for other community benefit projects in town.

Manager Brian:

- When we negotiate redevelopment projects we factor in things that will benefit Belleville like the Master Plan which incorporated the widening of the street, the plaza and amphitheater where the township can host events and the rev next to the Shoprite.

CFO DiMaria:

- R-167-2026 is a temporary appropriation the town needs to continue operating daily since the budget has not been adopted yet.

Lady Amparo – 57 Fairway Avenue

- Congratulations to Mayor Elect Velez and Councilwoman Elect Danyelle Wells and Michele Rodriguez.
- The people who put you in this position will be watching and holding you accountable.

Motion to Close Public Comments by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Resolutions:

Motion to Approve and Adopt Consent Agenda except R-175-2026 by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

RESOLUTION #161-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER TO ISSUE CHECK IN PAYMENT OF BILLS FROM VARIOUS ACCOUNTS

RESOLUTION #162-2026 RESOLUTION AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR THE 2025 WATERMAIN AND LEAD SERVICE REPLACEMENT, CHARLES AND CENTER STREETS, FY 2024 AND FY 2025 CDBG PROJECTS

RESOLUTION #163-2026 RESOLUTION RELEASING THE PERFORMANCE BOND OF STARBUCKS

RESOLUTION #164-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF OVERPAID WATER CHARGES – RISING PROPERTIES, LLC – 129 WASHINGTON AVENUE

RESOLUTION #165-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OF 2026 SECOND QUARTER PROPERTY TAX OVERPAYMENTS TO CORELOGIC TAX FOR VARIOUS PROPERTIES IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE

RESOLUTION #166-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE TAX COLLECTOR TO PREPARE AND MAIL ESTIMATED TAX BILLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH P.L. 1994 C.72.

RESOLUTION #167-2026 RESOLUTION PROVIDING EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE 2026 TEMPORARY MUNICIPAL BUDGET

RESOLUTION #168-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR THE TOWNSHIP-WIDE PROPERTY TAX REVALUATION SERVICES TO PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY APPRAISERS, INC. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL PUBLIC CONTRACTS LAWS

RESOLUTION #169-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION FOR THE PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF A COMPLETE PROGRAM OF REVALUATION OF REAL PROPERTY IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION #170-2026 AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY TO ADVISE AFFORDABLE CARTAGE, LLC THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE IS EXERCISING THE FIRST ONE-YEAR OPTION TO RENEW THE SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICE AGREEMENT

RESOLUTION #171-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OF A 2026, 2ND QUARTER PROPERTY TAX OVERPAYMENT TO LERETA FOR BLOCK 1306 LOT 10 – 188 HECKEL STREET, BELLEVILLE, NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION #172-2026 A RESOLUTION URGING THE NEW JERSEY STATE LEGISLATURE AND GOVERNOR TO REPEAL THE GAS TAX ESCALATOR AND RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY TO FUEL TAX INCREASES

RESOLUTION #173-2026 PROCLAMATION -RECOGNITION OF ALS AWARENESS MONTH IN HONOR OF BANITA SMITH

RESOLUTION #174-2026 PROCLAMATION – NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK MAY 17-23-2026 "ROOTED IN SERVICE, POWERED BY COMMUNITY"

RESOLUTION #176-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TAX EXEMPTION AND REFUNDING ON A DWELLING HOUSE OF AN APPROVED DISABLED VETERAN YOBANY FLORES RIVAS

RESOLUTION #177-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TAX EXEMPTION AND REFUNDING ON A DWELLING HOUSE OF AN APPROVED DISABLED VETERAN FREDDY A. BELTRAN

RESOLUTION #178-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TAX EXEMPTION AND REFUNDING ON A DWELLING HOUSE OF AN APPROVED DISABLED VETERAN NICHOLAS J. FABBRICATORE

RESOLUTION #179-2026 A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER TO EXECUTE A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE EZ RIDE SILVER LAKE SHUTTLE PROPOSAL

RESOLUTION #180-2026 RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A TOWNSHIP INITIATIVE COMMEMORATING THE SEMI QUINCENTENNIAL 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

RESOLUTION #181-2026 RESOLUTION APPOINTING MELISSA AUSTIN TO SERVE AS A CLASS IV MEMBER ON THE BELLEVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

RESOLUTION #182-2026 PROCLAMATION – HONORING BELLEVILLE CREW TEAM MEMBERS AMANDA BESTERCI AND CAMILA SOTOMAYOR

RESOLUTION #175-2026 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE SUPPORTING COMPANION LEGISLATION, ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 1950 (1R) AND SENATE BILL NO. 2884, TO ADVANCE THE POLICY OBJECTIVE OF IMPROVING HOSPITAL SEPSIS RECOGNITION, TREATMENT, AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Motion by Councilwoman DePeña; Seconded by Councilman Velez.
Ayes: Cozzarelli, DePeña, Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Velez, and Mayor Melham
Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None Motion Carries

Mayor Melham:

- This resolution was sent to the entire LD 34 delegation and Senator Timberlake responded that she would be a co-sponsor of this bill.

Attorney Martino

- Two bills are pending before the Assembly and the Senate to force hospitals to have stricter protocols regarding sepsis.
- The Sepsis Alliance is a nonprofit agency that advocates for laws to improve hospitals in detecting and treating sepsis.
- This bill is stuck at the Senate and Assembly phase, I've inquired with Assembly Morales and Venezia and Senator Timberlake to be co-sponsors of this bill.

Executive Session: None

Adjournment:

Motion to Adjourn at 7:55pm by Councilman Velez; Seconded by Councilwoman DePeña.
All-In-Favor

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacqueline E.Guaman, R.M.C.
Township Clerk

The next Work Session Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 12:30pm.