Minutes

Mayor and Municipal Council Special Meeting
of the Township of Belleville at Council Chambers – Town Hall
152 Washington Avenue, Belleville, New Jersey,
Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members Present:
Council Members Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Rodriguez, Wells and Mayor Velez

Absent:
Council Member Cozzarelli

Also Present:
Assistant Township Attorney Steven Martino, Deputy Manager/Police Chief Mark Minichini, Chief Financial Officer, Frank DiMaria and Municipal Clerk Jacqueline Guaman

Pledge of Allegiance:
By Mayor Velez

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 July 7, 2026, NJ Legal Ads. A copy of the meeting notice has been posted on the Township website and Town Hall Bulletin Board.

Resolutions:
Consent Agenda:

RESOLUTION #229-2026 RESOLUTION CANCELLING EMERGENCY TEMPORARY APPROPRIATION
Motion by Councilman Graziano; Seconded by Councilwoman Guardabasco.
Ayes: Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Rodriguez, Wells and Mayor Velez.
Nays: None Absent: Cozzarelli Abstain: None Motion Carries

RESOLUTION #230-2026 RESOLUTION INTRODUCTION OF THE 2026 BUDGET MUNICIPAL BUDGET
Motion by Councilwoman Guardabasco; Seconded by Councilwoman Wells.
Ayes: Graziano, Guardabasco, Muldrow, Rodriguez, Wells and Mayor Velez.
Nays: None Absent: Cozzarelli Abstain: None Motion Carries

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

Michael Sheldon – 47 Floyd Street

- Resolution for zoning board that was adopted on 7/1/26 Christopher last name is spelled wrong, its Kossup not Casa.
- Compiled a booklet explaining the budget, bonds and notes process for the Council.
- Confirmed through research that Deputy OEM Coordinators serve at the Mayor's discretion and may be removed accordingly.
- Township website front page information about alleged hometown hero Paul A. "Chief" Cittarelli is not accurate and should be removed.

Vincent Frantantoni – 129 Mt. Prospect Ave.

- Encourage new Council members to review 2025 and 2026 budgets to better understand the Towns' finances and effectively answer public questions.
- Review capital budget expenditures to ensure funds are being used appropriately.

Jerry Delguercio – 8 Grove Street

- Who authorized the corner building to be demolished?
- Is there an engineering report?

CFO DiMaria:

- The construction official ordered the demolition of the entire perimeter of the block while the fire was still being suppressed.
- A bid is not required during an emergency.
- Caravella was the only company equipped to respond to the situation as quickly as possible.

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

Council Remarks/Discussion:
Councilman Graziano:

- Budget Committee has had several meetings and asked questions to gain a better understanding.

Councilwoman Wells:

- Council is reviewing proposals, asking questions and evaluating the short- and long-term financial impacts before adoption.

Mayor Velez:

- Insight into questions asked by the budget committee:

- When did the 2026 preparation of the budget begin?
- Explain the role of the Budget Committee, its members and how budget discussions typically proceed.
- What are the top 3 increases in this year's budget?
- The introduced budget is not final; discussions are ongoing to better understand spending priorities and how funds are allocated.
- This budget was inherited by the new Council as of July 1st from the previous Council and Budget Committee.

CFO DiMaria:

- November 2025
- The specifics are handled by the Manager and myself, who sit with the departments to discuss their needs, goals, and the Managers vision for the department.
- PBA, Fire, DPW - Salary, wages, OE, operating budget and then capital is reviewed by the Manager and takes the most time (November – May).
- Manager calls a Budget Committee meeting to review the budget, looking at the big picture overall.
- (1) Group insurance, (2) pensions/statutory charges and (3) public works department – the individual division, street vehicle maintenance, sewers and water.
- Material costs are increasing, and limited infrastructure investment has resulted in funds being spent on repairs that could have been avoided through proper construction, maintenance and code compliance.
- The Manager has temporarily suspended departmental discretionary capital requests.

Adjournment:

Motion to Adjourn at 6:31pm by Councilman Graziano; Seconded by Councilwoman Guardabasco. All-In-Favor

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacqueline E. Guaman
Township Clerk

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at 6:00pm.