

**TOWNSHIP OF BYRAM
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 4, 2025
TRAINING SESSION – 6:30 P.M.
REGULAR SESSION – 7:30 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER –Mayor Rubenstein called the meeting to order.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Both adequate and electronic notice of the meeting has been provided, specifying the time and place. In addition, a copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk, posted on the main door, the bulletin board of the Municipal Building, on the Township website at: https://www.byramtwp.org/index.php/town_hall/township_council, and has been forwarded to those persons requesting notice.

ROLL CALL OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL –Councilwoman Franco, here; Councilman Gallagher, here; Councilman Proctor, here; Councilman Roseff, here; Mayor Rubenstein. Also present was Township Manager Joseph Sabatini, Township Attorney Tom Collins, and Township Clerk, Cynthia Church

RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION – Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Gallagher, to go into executive session and adopt the below resolution.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, P. L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

- A. Attorney Client Privilege Communication
- General
- B. Contract Negotiations - DPW

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Byram, that the public shall be excluded from discussion of the following matters:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minutes will be kept on file in the Municipal Clerk’s office, and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then the minutes shall be made public.

BYRAM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

Certification: I certify that the Byram Township Council adopted the above resolution on March 4, 2025.

Cynthia Church, Municipal Clerk

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION - Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor to return to open session at 7:37 p.m. All members were in favor. Motion Carried.

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor to approve the agenda.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHIEF OF POLICE RETIREMENT – Dan DeWald

Mayor Rubenstein presented the Honorable Discharge Award to Retired Chief DeWald.
Chief DeWald received an Honorable Discharge award "for 23 and one-half years of honorable and faithful service to the police department and to the community of Byram township. Chief DeWald's professionalism and dedication to duty

reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Byram Township Police Department and of the law enforcement profession. Given on the 4th day of March 2025."

Mayor Rubenstein read aloud a proclamation in recognition of Chief DeWald's service to Byram Township.

SWEARING IN OF CHIEF OF POLICE – Guy Mariani

Mayor Rubenstein swore in Guy Mariani as the new Chief of Police with his wife and son holding the bible.

Mr. Sabatini read the following:

It is an honor to stand before you today as we officially welcome and congratulate Guy Mariani as the new Chief of Police of Byram Township.

One of the most important responsibilities of a local municipal manager is the selection and appointment of a Chief of Police.

The selection of the Chief of Police differs significantly from the selection of any other department head due to the fact that the Chief of Police has a prominence in the community that exceeds that of any public official.

Leadership in law enforcement requires integrity, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to serving and protecting our community.

As Chief, Guy will face new challenges, but I have every confidence that his vision, experience, and leadership will guide the police department to even greater heights.

Guy was hired in July of 2000 and graduated that December from the Morris County Police Academy.

Guy was promoted to sergeant in 2005, and attained the rank of Lieutenant in February of 2024. Through the years, he has received a number of recognitions.

General Douglas MacArthur said,

"A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.

He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the quality of his actions and the integrity of his intent."

I believe that Guy has the attributes and character to be a true leader.

I want to offer my personal congratulations and look forward to working with Guy to serve the residents of Byram Township.

2025 BUDGET INTRODUCTION / APPROVAL

Mr. Sabatini read the following message:

I would like to start by directing everyone to the Township's Website and under the 2025 Municipal Budget Information you will find all the documentation and details supporting the 2025 Budget Plan. Located under this link you will find my detailed 2025 Municipal Budget Message.

- 2025 Budget Information: https://www.byramtwp.org/index.php/town_hall/office_article/2025_municipal_budget_information
- Budget Message: <https://www.byramtwp.org/useruploads/files/02252025%20Municipal%20Budget%20Message%202025.pdf>
- Budget Details: <https://www.byramtwp.org/useruploads/files/02252025%202025%20Budget%20Workbook.pdf>

Before I start I would like to thank all my department heads for their hard work to hold the line on departmental expenses. Secondly, I would like to offer a special thank you to the Township's CFO, Ashleigh Frueholz. Her work has helped deliver a sound budget plan for 2025.

Tonight the Mayor and Council will be asked to approve the budget. Adoption of the budget is scheduled for Tuesday, April 1.

Through the adoption of the budget the Mayor & Council are establishing the municipal policy for 2025 and beyond. They must insure the adopted budget adequately satisfies the needs of the community and serves the best interests of the Township

The 2025 municipal budget including the Capital Improvement Program and Public and Private Programs Offset by Revenues totals \$13,465,387.

The budget is divided into several categories as follows: Anticipated Revenues, Appropriations, and the Capital Improvement Program. Also, the approval and adoption of the Municipal Budget includes the budget for the Open Space Tax and the Sewer Utility.

REVENUES

Municipal Operations and the Capital Improvement Program are supported by a variety of revenues. These sources include miscellaneous revenues generated by municipal operations, fund balance, and current property taxes.

Breakdown of Revenues:

	2025
Current Property Taxes	70.39%
Misc. Revenues	14.13%
Fund Balance	15.48%

Miscellaneous revenues are the revenues that are generated by fees & permits, municipal court, interest on investments, interest and costs on taxes, receipts from delinquent taxes, grants, and State Aid. The forecast of these revenues is based upon the performance of each category in the previous year. State statute prevents the Township from anticipating more than what was realized in the prior year.

- Fees and Permits – increased \$5,000
- Municipal Court – increased \$5,000.
- Interest on Costs on Taxes – reduced \$5,000.

State Aid (Energy Receipts Tax, Garden State Preservation Trust & Municipal Relief Fund Aid) - State Aid accounts for 4.78% of the Township’s revenues.

State Aid (Energy Receipts Tax) - \$582,337 - LFN 2024-20 - Aid amounts from 2024 may be utilized in the introduced 2025 budget for planning purposes.

State Aid (Garden State Preservation Trust) – This budget presents Garden State Preservation at \$61,324.00 which includes \$9,702 reserved from CY 2023.

As referenced in Local Finance Notice 2024-05, the proposed FY 2025 State budget removed the FY 2024 appropriation for Municipal Relief Fund Aid. This means for this year’s budget there was reduction of state aid totaling \$60,025.27.

This budget plan continues to anticipate Interest on Investments of \$500,000. There was a significant increase in 2024 and the anticipation of Interest on Investment was due to the increased interest rates and the temporary increased balances in various accounts. This increased anticipation of Interest on Investments is a risk to future budgets. As various account balances are spent down and interest rates decrease, the amount of actual Interest on Investments received will decrease.

Fund Balance is generated by several sources including cancellation of budget reserves from 2023, revenues in-excess of anticipated amounts from 2024, receipts from delinquent taxes from 2024 and added and omitted taxes collected for when construction improvements are deemed complete by the Tax Assessor. Since 2021, there has been an increased (\$219,500) dependency on the use of fund balance to support operations. This increased use of fund balance will need to be assessed for sustainability in future budget cycles. In the 2025 budget, there is a \$300,000 increase of fund balance to support one-time expenses which include, ash tree removal from Township properties (\$20,000), major repair to fire truck (\$20,000), property code enforcement abatement issue (\$20,000), public records scanning project (\$10,000), affordable housing compliance (\$15,000) and an increase to Capital Improvement Fund (\$200,000).

The total amount of Fund Balance committed to the 2025 budget is \$2,085,000.

- \$1,785,000: Support Operations
- \$300,000: Support One-time expenses

This budget plan has property taxes totaling \$9,477,421.00 or 70.39% of the revenues. This is a 3.19% or \$292,627.27 increase of the tax levy.

APPROPRIATIONS (EXPENDITURES)

Appropriations are the platform that allows local government to deliver services to its residents. The expenditure side of the budget is assigned by department and divided within each department into "Salary and Wages" and "Other Expenses." Also, there are categories of expenses that are not assigned to the departments. All appropriations are presented in a line-item budget format.

General Government, Public Safety, Public Works, and Community Programs include all the Salary & Wages and Operating Expenses for each of the Township's departments. Salary and Wages have been populated with contractual obligations (steps, longevity and salary increases), and all known and planned staff changes. There were minor changes to Operating Expenses with the main increases in the Department of Road Repair and Maintenance to support the removal of Ash Trees from Township owned properties and for new CDL training requirements.

Salary and Wages have been populated with contractual obligations (steps, longevity and salary increases), and all known and planned staff changes. Overall, Salary and Wages for all departments total \$3,999,050 which is an increase of \$47,300 or 1.20% from 2024.

Operational expenses for all departments total \$1,770,204 which is an increase \$115,531.00 is or 6.98%. This includes all the Township's municipal departments excluding the construction department which operates through the UCC Trust Account.

If the one-time expenses totaling \$100,000 are removed, the overall departmental budgets including Salary and Wages are only increasing \$62,831 or 1.12%.

Other Expenses of the Township that are not tracked by department include utilities, insurances, statutory expenses, pension expenses, garbage, debt service, deferred charges, capital improvements and the reserve for uncollected taxes.

The following categories of other expenses are driving the increase of the 2025 budget.

Workers Compensation/General Liability (pending final assessments):

- The 2025 assessments were a 3% increase from 2024 resulting in a combined increase of \$9,049.*

Pensions:

- Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) – actual assessment increased \$7,239 or 3.1% - \$15,600 of the PERS assessment is being covered by the Sewer Utility for shared resources.*
- Police & Fire Retirement System (PFRS) – increase of \$50,225 or 8.7%*

Group Insurance:

- Increase of \$131,000/9.57%*

CAPITAL BUDGET AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Capital Budget represents the current year of a three-year capital improvement program. The 2025 Capital Budget includes proposed projects totaling \$5,560,000. Following is summary by department:

The Capital Improvement Program is the vehicle that allows the Township to plan and prioritize large expenditures. The Capital Improvement Fund is used as a means of financing down payments for bond ordinance appropriations. Also, the Governing Body can decide to fund a capital ordinance partially or fully from the Capital Improvement Fund.

- The total appropriation to the Capital Improvement Fund for 2025 is \$841,423 which is an increase of \$202,200 which includes the one-time contribution of \$200,000 offset by fund balance.*
- Includes \$25,000 that is raised annually to fund the Capital Improvement Fund.*

As in recent years, this budget plan continues to support the shifting of funds between line items to increase the amount of spending for capital improvements. Please review the Capital Budget and three-year Capital Program to understand the varying capital projects that are being considered.

TAX RATE

The 2025 municipal budget results in an increase of the tax levy. This is an estimated increase of \$76.28 for the average assessed home of \$256,200.

OPEN SPACE

The approval and adoption of the municipal budget includes the budget for the Open Space Tax.

The Township’s Open Space Dedicated Trust Fund is funded through the dedication of an Open Space Tax that is not to exceed \$0.02 per \$100 of assessed valuation of each annual tax levy. For 2025, the Township again anticipates raising \$110,430 or approximately \$.011 for each \$100 of assessed valuation. This presents as not increase to the average assess home.

In summary, the proposed budget plan adequately satisfies the needs of the community and serves the best interests of the Township. This is a responsible budget plan and I very much appreciate the hard work of all the Township’s department heads and staff for holding the line on departmental operating expenses.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

TOWNSHIP MANAGER, MAYOR, AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Township Manager –The Adoption of the Budget will be on April 1st. Sent email that the state planning commission is embarking on a updated redevelopment plan. On the agenda is an appointment of municipal housing liaison, Joe Sabatini will temporarily step up until he can get someone else to take on this role.

Mayor Rubenstein – met with liaison from congressman Keans office to talk about the CDF grant.

Councilwoman Franco – Table Toppers/Spring Brochures are beginning to pay off, we are seeing an increase in registrations on Community Pass. Ski Club finished on February 19 and it was a great season. All that attended + the chaperones had a great time. Deb attended the annual New Jersey Recreation and Park Association Conference Feb 23-26. She went to many sessions and has gotten some ideas for programs and how she can market the programs we have now. She networked with her Colleagues and Venders and is excited to bring some new things to Byram Township. We took a bus load of 42 people to the 2025 Philadelphia Flower Show. All who attended had a great time, they spent 5 hours at the show touring the exhibits, garden talks, and vender shopping. Tomorrow we will begin a new Country Fusion Line Dance class. This is a line dance exercise class, we will also host just a Line Dancing Class too. Both classes will be at Firehouse. We have several very eager participants registered.

Councilman Gallagher – Board of Education meeting is scheduled for March 5th. The new Superintendent starts on March 14th.

Councilman Proctor – Planning Board will meet on Thursday, March 6th. One application for the construction of a three-story building on an unbuilt lot.

Councilman Roseff – Nothing to report.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION I

Motion by Councilwoman Franco second by Councilman Proctor to open to the public. All members were in favor.
No Comments.

Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor to close to the public. All members were in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 19, 2025, Special Closed Session Meeting Minutes - Motion by Councilwoman Franco, seconded by Councilman Proctor to approve minutes.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

February 18, 2025, Regular & Closed Session Meeting Minutes - Motion by Councilwoman Franco, seconded by Councilman Proctor to approve minutes.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					

Absent					
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CONSENT AGENDA – All are considered to be routine by the Members of the Township Council and will be enacted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a citizen or Council member requests in which event the item may be removed from the general order of business and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda. Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- A. Resolution No. 063-2025 – Resolution Granting 287 Lackawanna LLC aka Crown Vehicle Salvage a License for 2025 to Operate Facility Pursuant to Chapter 156 of the Byram Township Code
- B. Resolution No. 064-2025 – Resolution Authorizing the Refund of Redemption Monies to Outside Lien Holder – Block 330 Lot 2345 aka 11 Ranger Trail
- C. Resolution No. 065-2025 – Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Bat Caddy for Batting Area at Neil Gylling Fields 1&2 to be Removed at the End of Each Season
- D. Resolution No. 066-2025 – Governor’s Council on Substance Use Disorder – Fiscal Grant Cycle October 2020- June 2026
- E. Resolution No. 067-2025 – Resolution Authorizing Scope of Work for Colliers Engineering & Design to Prepare the Fourth Round of Affordable Housing Services for Byram Township – Not to exceed \$36,000.00
- F. Resolution No. 068-2025 – Resolution Authorizing 100% Disabled Veteran Exempt Status to Owner of Block 336 Lot 15.07 for Tax Year 2025 and the Cancellation of Taxes for First Half of 2025 and Refund of Taxes Paid for 4th Quarter 2024 and 1st Quarter 2025, Block 336 Lot 15.07, 27 Lee Hill Road
- G. Resolution No. 069-2025 – Resolution Authorizing 100% Disabled Veteran Exempt Status to Owner of Block 104 Lot 4 for Tax Year 2025 and the Cancellation of Taxes for First Half of 2025 and Refund of Taxes Paid for 1st Quarter in 2025 – Block 104 Lot 4, 2 Cranberry Ledge Road
- H. Resolution No. 070-2025 – Resolution Appointing a Municipal Housing Liaison
- I. Resolution No. 071-2025 – Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of an Amended Plan Conformance Grant, Highlands Council Grant Number: 09-033-011-1904, Task 1, Housing Element and Fair Share Plan
- J. Resolution No. 072-2025 – Resolution to Transfer 2024 Appropriation Reserves Current Fund
- K. Resolution No. 073-2025 – Resolution of Byram Township, Sussex County, New Jersey Authorizing the Support of Greater Middlesex and Morris Habitat for Humanity Inc.’s NJDCA Affordable Housing Trust Fund Program Application for 40 Ash Street Affordable Homeownership Project.

Councilman Roseff expressed concern for item E. on the consent agenda and would like to assure the process with Colliers goes as expected and is in order.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

BILL LIST – March 4, 2025 – Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor to approve the bill list.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

ORDINANCE – 1st Reading / Introduction
AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BYRAM AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP TO ADD A NEW CHAPTER 172 ENTITLED “NUISANCE, ARTICLE I NOISE”
Purpose Statement: The purpose of this ordinance is to add a new chapter to the Code to regulate and prohibit nuisances caused by noise.

	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

BE IT RESOLVED, that said Ordinance shall be further considered for final passage at the meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Byram on March 18, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at the Municipal Building, 10 Mansfield Drive, Byram Township, at which time and place all persons interested shall be given an opportunity to be heard.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- Meeting with BPU regarding ETG not doing work in Cranberry Lake. Mr. Sabatini, Mayor Rubenstein, and Councilman Roseff will attend this meeting tomorrow afternoon.
- CDF & CDS Grants – Mayor Rubenstein provided an update on the Grant related to the Police Department. They are still on track to receive the grant. He would like to get an estimator involved next. Looking for direction if they would like to apply to any of this years CDF & CDS grants to support the building of a food pantry or field house – this is due March 11th.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Emergency Operations Management

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION II

Motion by Councilwoman Franco, Second by Councilman Proctor to open to the public.

No Comments.

Motion by Councilwoman Franco, Second by Councilman Proctor to close to the public.

RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION – Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Gallagher, to go into executive session and adopt the below resolution.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, P. L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

A. Attorney Client Privilege Communication
- General

B. Contract Negotiations - DPW

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Byram, that the public shall be excluded from discussion of the following matters:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minutes will be kept on file in the Municipal Clerk’s office, and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then the minutes shall be made public.

BYRAM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

Certification: I certify that the Byram Township Council adopted the above resolution on March 4, 2025.

Cynthia Church, Municipal Clerk

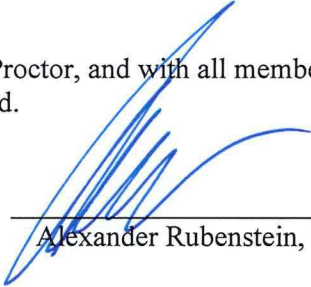
	Councilwoman Franco	Councilman Gallagher	Councilman Proctor	Councilman Roseff	Mayor Rubenstein
Motion	x				
2nd			x		
Yes	x	x	x	x	x
No					
Abstain					
Absent					

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION - Motion by Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor to return to open session at 9:15 p.m. All members were in favor. Motion Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Proctor, and with all members in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. All members were in favor. Motion carried.


Cynthia Church, RMC
Township Clerk


Alexander Rubenstein, Mayor