



STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 26, 2026 7:00 P.M.

Held through Zoom

Mayor Aaron Lipsen called the regular meeting of the Stockton Borough Council to order on January 26, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. Mayor Lipsen announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was transmitted to the Star Ledger and the Trenton Times, was posted on the Borough Website, posted on the door at the Municipal Building, and filed with the Borough Clerk.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lipsen led those in attendance in the pledge to the nation's flag.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Mayor Lipsen asked for a moment of silence for the following:

Former NJ Governor, Richard Codey

Richard Zimmer, who was a former State Assemblyman, State Senator, Congressman, and a 50-year resident of Delaware Township.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilperson Brander, Councilperson Brown, Councilperson Fisher, Councilperson Gilinger, Councilperson Meltzer, Council President Mann, Mayor Aaron Lipsen, Borough Attorney Lisa Maddox, and Borough Clerk Laurie A. Courter.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Brown to approve the following minutes:

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

- November 17, 2025, Regular Meeting
- December 4, 2025, Special Meeting
- December 4, 2025, Executive Session
- December 15, 2025, Regular Meeting

CORRESPONDENCE

Mayor Lipsen noted the following correspondence that was received:

Michael Odenwald Email titled: Official Correspondence: January 27, 1986 Zoning Ordinance: Offer to sell barn at 25 Risler Street

NEW BUSINESS**Delaware Fire Safety Tips**

Mayor Lipsen stated he spoke with the Fire Chief who provided him with a fire safety tips guide, which has been posted on the website.

OEM Report

Mayor Lipsen gave the OEM report:

The Coordinator and Deputy participated in The National Warning System (NAWAS) drill on December 17, 2025. They also monitored the weather event on December 26 and 27, 2025, during the declared state of emergency. The Coordinator and Deputy participated in The National Warning System (NAWAS) drill on January 13, 2026. Also participated in the County OEM meeting on January 23, 2026 about January 24th - 26th Winter Storm. The Deputy participated in a County Mayor's call on January 24, 2026, about January 24th - 26th Winter Storm. The Coordinator and Deputy monitored the weather event on January 24 through January 26, 2026, during the declared state of emergency. They continue to review the Borough Emergency Operation Plan, with each Annex Coordinator, and will update as necessary.

Mayor Lipsen reported on the fire at the Shell Gas station, a private property, which also occurred during the Verizon outage. Emergency calls were difficult going through. State Police and the Fire Marshall were called. They have spoken to several residents about what happened and some members of the public will be sharing their thoughts on this tonight.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT – PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment

Mayor Lipsen went into more detail about the fire that occurred before Ms. Walsh spoke, in order to not take away time allotted to her. Mayor Lipsen explained that there was a Verizon outage which made it difficult for people's calls to go through. The call came in at the lowest level; Mayor Lipsen explained what each level is. Stated that the call with the 911 operator took 3.5-4 minutes, the Delaware Township Fire Department left the firehouse within six minutes of being dispatched, and the drive time was approximately five minutes. A resident was able to get the fire under control, and Mayor Lipsen thanked that resident. Total response time from initiation of first call to arrival was approximately 15 minutes. Mayor Lipsen explained that since this was a lower-level call only Delaware Township Fire Department was dispatched. The fire, being that it was outside of the building, was deemed a lower-level call by the dispatcher.

Adrienne Walsh-16 Bridge Street, owner of Canal Music Studios and a resident gave her account of the event on January 14th, and actions taken and is requesting information and possible action. Stated that the fire grew quickly with 20-foot flames. Ms. Walsh explained that she called 911 a couple of times. She stated that she ran out in front of building and saw a neighbor trying to control the fire with a fire extinguisher. The fire truck showed up from Sergeantsville about fifteen minutes later,

which seems like a long time for a fire at a gas station. Stated that she felt this was a relatively slow response for a serious incident and only one fire truck showed up. Stated that she wondered why calls didn't escalate and that the situation could have been very bad if neighbor wasn't here to put out the fire. She stated that the next day after speaking with many people and owners of the property a maintenance worker dumped gas behind the gas station. She has called the DEP and they are still investigating. Stated that going forward she doesn't want to blame and point fingers at people but wants to get more information about how the borough can make that time shrink. Especially when it is a gas station. After speaking with the Lambertville fire chief, who stated that there are many options and that she should reach out to the mayor, Ms. Walsh asked how much it would cost for Lambertville to be first responder here as well.

Mayor Lipsen responded to Ms. Walsh and stated that the borough did have a public safety meeting about this fire and they did discuss it with the Stockton Office of Emergency Management. Mayor Lipsen stated that the borough pays the Delaware Township Fire Company \$17,500 per year for fire protection, and if any calls go above level 1, other companies like Lambertville would be coming. Asking them to come to all our calls, even the Level 1 calls, would probably be a significant cost to the town. Mayor Lipsen stated that they will discuss and investigate. Mayor Lipsen suggested they discuss this at our public safety meeting and with our Office of Emergency Management, and talk to the Delaware Township Fire Company.

Mann stated to Ms. Walsh that he is glad that she acted as she did and brought it to the attention of the fire company quickly. Stated that it was unfortunate in the delay in response. The system is not perfect, but they can work together to make it better.

Fisher stated to Ms. Walsh that they will be looking into all options like Lambertville and things like that and do our due diligence and see what makes sense.

Brown added if it would be possible to provide the gas station and restaurants with a chart indicating what level a call would be to be able to better assess the risk.

Micheal Odenwald, 25 Risler, stated that he was hoping to see the participants in tonight's meeting like he can with the planning board meetings. Stated that he wanted to make sure the people who are on tonight wait around after the executive session because he thinks it's very important for people to understand how municipal government works and how information is brought forward in transparency back to the public. Mr. Odenwald asked if Mr. Fisher could update him on his employment status, being that he recuses himself from everything cannabis related in the past. Mayor Lipsen addressed Odenwald advising him that this is a personal matter and asks that no personal comments be made during public comment. Odenwald reworded his question and asked about Fisher's recusals from matters with respect to cannabis discussions. Mayor Lipsen asked Attorney Maddox about Mr. Odenwald's inquiry into the employment status of council members and if this is allowable. Attorney Maddox stated that he can ask questions and make comments, but the question of whether he or any other member of the public is entitled to specific information about the employment of any member of council is a different matter. Attorney Maddox stated that she agrees that that it's not public information, except to the extent that it is part of the annual filings then it is public. Attorney Maddox added that she doesn't have an issue with him asking his questions and making his comments.

Mayor Lipsen restored time to Mr. Odenwald's time to speak.

Odenwald stated that this is all in good faith, it is to understand where Mr. Fisher's very capable brain is on the matter of what's good for the town. Stated that sites like LinkedIn and other resources will be able to dictate or understand where he works, and added he thinks it's a much different conversation with respect to whether he needs to be recused or not when considering who he works for. If he works for Union Chill, well, Union Chill is no longer a company here in Lambertville. But if he works for TerraSend, then that's a different story. That is a direct competitor to something that may want to and that should be in Stockton and stated he is looking for clarity. Odenwald stated that he thinks it's fair, and to allow Mr. Fisher to answer that question publicly as to who his employer is and added that he doesn't think that this should be suppressed in any way.

Mayor Lipsen asked Attorney Maddox for clarification. Attorney Maddox responded by stating that the mayor can move forward and doesn't think Mr. Fisher has to specifically answer that question. Odenwald proceeded to direct a question to Mr. Fisher and Mayor Lipsen to answer his question of who Mr. Fisher works for. Mayor Lipsen addressed Fisher and stated that he can, if he wanted to, feel free to share or not share as you see fit.

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Lipsen closed the floor to public comment.

ORDINANCES-1st Reading

Attorney Maddox explained the need for the ordinances and added that this ordinance will need to be sent to Land Use Board. Brown commended the professionals and thanked them for the work

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Mann to approve on first reading for Ordinance 2026-01
Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

ORDINANCE 2026-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, ADDRESSING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT AND THE UNIFORM HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CONTROLS AND REGULATING DEVELOPMENT FEES

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stockton (the "Borough") filed a Declaratory Judgment Action in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Hunterdon County, captioned IMO Borough of Stockton, Docket No HUN-L-58-25 (the "Declaratory Judgment Action"), in furtherance of the "Municipality"), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.2, -304.3, and -304.1(f)(1)(c) of the New Jersey Fair Housing Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D- 301, et seq. (collectively, the "FHA"), and in accordance with Section II.A of Administrative Directive #14-24 ("Directive #14-24") of the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program (the "Program"), seeking a certification of compliance with the FHA; and

WHEREAS, the Stockton Borough Planning Board adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan on June 3, 2025 by way of resolution, which was endorsed by the Borough of Stockton

Council on June 19, 2025 by way of Resolution No. 2025-51, in compliance with the Fair Housing Act and Administrative Directive #14-24 and pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, et seq.; and

WHEREAS, Fair Share Housing Center (“FSHC”) filed a challenge pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(f)(2)(b) to the Borough’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan on August 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Borough and FSHC entered into a Settlement Agreement dated December 17, 2025, as authorized by Borough Council Resolution No. 2025-92, arising out of the Declaratory Judgment, which determines the Borough’s affordable housing obligation and the mechanisms for how the obligation will be addressed (“Settlement Agreement”); and

WHEREAS, the Settlement Agreement was approved by the Superior Court of New Jersey, Hunterdon County Law Division on _____ at a duly noticed Fairness Hearing; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to and consistent with the terms of the Settlement Agreement and Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan, the Borough is required to adopt one or more ordinances to address compliance issues on or before March 15, 2026; and

WHEREAS, at this time, the Mayor and Council seek to adopt this ordinance to be known as the “Development Fee Ordinance.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, as follows:

Section 1. The following regulations are hereby enacted to ensure the Borough of Stockton’s compliance with its Fourth Round Affordable Housing obligations and more specifically to set forth requirements for development fees:

DEVELOPMENT FEES

§1. PREAMBLE; PURPOSE.

- (a) In Holmdel Builder’s Association v. Holmdel Township, 121 N.J. 550 (1990), the New Jersey Supreme Court determined that mandatory development fees are authorized by the Fair Housing Act of 1985 (the “Act”), N.J.S.A. 52:27d-301 et seq., and the State Constitution, subject to the Council on Affordable Housing’s (“COAH”) adoption of rules.
- (b) Pursuant to P.L. 2008, c.46, § 8 (C. 52:27D-329.2) and the Statewide Non-Residential Development Fee Act (C. 40:55D-8.1 through 8.7), the Division of Local Planning Services in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs is authorized to adopt and promulgate regulations necessary for the establishment, implementation, review, monitoring and enforcement of municipal affordable housing trust funds and corresponding spending plans. Municipalities that are under the jurisdiction of COAH or court of competent jurisdiction and have an approved spending plan may retain fees

collected from non-residential development.

- (c) Where applicable, references to approvals or compliance certification are those issued through the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program (the “Program”) or a court of competent jurisdiction, and/or approvals issued by the Division, as provided in N.J.A.C. 5:99.
- (d) This ordinance establishes standards for the collection, maintenance, and expenditure of development fees and other affordable housing trust fund revenues pursuant to P.L. 2008, c.46, the Act, and the regulations implementing the Act at N.J.A.C. 5:99. Fees collected pursuant to this ordinance shall be used solely for the purpose of providing low- and moderate-income housing in accordance with an approved spending plan and the requirements of N.J.A.C. 5:99.

§2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS.

- (a) Stockton Borough shall not spend, or commit to spend, any affordable housing trust fund revenues unless the expenditure is approved as part of its compliance certification or otherwise approved as permitted by N.J.A.C. 5:99 and N.J.S.A. 52:27D-329.2.a(4). A municipality within the jurisdiction of the Program or a court of competent jurisdiction shall not spend trust fund revenues unless the Program or court has approved a plan for spending such funds, or unless the Division has approved spending plan expenditures for emergent opportunities as provided in N.J.A.C. 5:99.
- (b) In the event any of the conditions described at N.J.A.C. 5:99-5.6 occur, the Division shall be authorized, on behalf of Stockton, to direct the manner in which all funds in the affordable housing trust fund shall be expended, and the three-party escrow agreement shall be maintained at all times.

§3. DEFINITIONS.

The following terms, as used in this ordinance, shall have the following meanings:

“Affordable housing development” means a development included in the Borough’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and includes, but is not limited to, an inclusionary development, a municipal construction project or a 100 percent affordable development.

“AHMS” means the Affordable Housing Management System used for annual municipal monitoring submissions.

“COAH” or the **“Council”** means the former New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing established under the Fair Housing Act which previously had primary jurisdiction for the administration of housing obligations in accordance with sound regional planning consideration in the State. Pursuant to the Executive Reorganization Act of 1969, P.L. 1969, c. 203 (C. 52:14C-1 et seq.), the Governor abolished the Council and transferred all functions, powers, and duties to the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, effective August 29, 2011.

“Department” means the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

“Compliant municipality” means a municipality maintaining compliant status for purposes of development fee retention and trust fund maintenance as provided in N.J.A.C. 5:99.

“Development fee” means money paid by a developer for the improvement of property as permitted in N.J.A.C. 5:99.

“Developer” means the legal or beneficial owner or owners of a lot or of any land proposed to be included in a proposed development, including the holder of an option or contract to purchase, or other person having an enforceable proprietary interest in such land.

“Division” means the Division of Local Planning Services within the Department of Community Affairs.

“Equalized assessed value” means the assessed value of a property divided by the current average ratio of assessed to true value for the municipality in which the property is situated, as determined in accordance with sections 1, 5, and 6 of P.L.1973, c.123 (C.54:1-35a through C.54:1-35c).

“Green building strategies” means those strategies that minimize the impact of development on the environment, and enhance the health, safety and well-being of residents by producing durable, low-maintenance, resource-efficient housing while making optimum use of existing infrastructure and community services.

“Municipality” shall mean the Borough of Stockton in Hunterdon County, also referred to herein as “Stockton” or the “Borough.”

“Program” means the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program, where applicable.

§4. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FEES.

(a) Imposed fees

(1) Within the Borough, residential developers, except for developers of the types of development specifically exempted below, shall pay a fee of one and a half percent (1.5%) of the equalized assessed value for residential development provided no increased density is permitted.

(2) When an increase in residential density pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d(5) (known as a “d” variance) has been permitted, developers may be required to pay a development fee of six percent (6%) of the equalized assessed value for each additional unit that may be realized. However, if the zoning on a site has changed during the two-year period preceding the filing of such a variance application, the base density for the purposes of calculating the bonus development fee shall be the highest density permitted by right during the two-year period preceding the filing of the variance application.

- (b) Eligible exactions, ineligible exactions and exemptions for residential development
 - (1) Affordable housing developments, developments where the developer is providing for the construction of affordable units elsewhere in Stockton, and developments where the developer has made a payment in lieu of on-site construction of affordable units shall be exempt from development fees.
 - (2) Developments that have received preliminary or final site plan approval prior to the adoption of a municipal development fee ordinance shall be exempt from development fees, unless the developer seeks a substantial change in the approval. Where a site plan approval does not apply, a zoning and/or building permit shall be synonymous with preliminary or final site plan approval for this purpose. The fee percentage shall be vested on the date that the building permit is issued.
 - (3) Owner-occupied residential structures demolished and replaced as a result of a fire, flood, or natural disaster shall be exempt from paying a development fee.
 - (4) Development fees shall be imposed and collected when an existing structure undergoes a change to a more intense use, is demolished and replaced, or is expanded, if the expansion is not otherwise exempt from the development fee requirement. The development fee shall be calculated on the increase in the equalized assessed value of the improved structure.

§5. NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FEES.

- (a) Imposed fees
 - (1) Within all zoning districts, non-residential developers, except for developers of the types of development specifically exempted, shall pay a fee equal to two and a half (2.5%) percent of the equalized assessed value of the land and improvements, for all new non-residential construction on an unimproved lot or lots.
 - (2) Non-residential developers, except for developers of the types of development specifically exempted, shall also pay a fee equal to two and a half (2.5%) percent of the increase in equalized assessed value resulting from any additions to existing structures to be used for non-residential purposes.
 - (3) Development fees shall be imposed and collected when an existing structure is demolished and replaced. The development fee of two and a half percent (2.5%) shall be calculated on the difference between the equalized assessed value of the pre-existing land and improvement and the equalized assessed value of the newly improved structure, i.e. land and improvement, at the time final certificate of occupancy is issued. If the calculation required under this section results in a negative number, the non-residential development fee shall be zero.
- (b) Eligible exactions, ineligible exactions and exemptions for non-residential development

- (1) The non-residential portion of a mixed-use inclusionary or market rate development shall be subject to the two and a half (2.5%) percent development fee, unless otherwise exempted below.
- (2) The two and a half (2.5%) percent fee shall not apply to an increase in equalized assessed value resulting from alterations, change in use within existing footprint, reconstruction, renovations and repairs.
- (3) Non-residential developments shall be exempt from the payment of non-residential development fees in accordance with the exemptions required pursuant to P.L.2008, c.46, as specified in the Form N-RDF "State of New Jersey Non-Residential Development Certification/Exemption" Form. Any exemption claimed by a developer shall be substantiated by that developer.
- (4) A developer of a non-residential development exempted from the non-residential development fee pursuant to P.L. 2008, c.46 shall be subject to it at such time the basis for the exemption no longer applies, and shall make the payment of the non-residential development fee, in that event, within three years after that event or after the issuance of the final certificate of occupancy of the non-residential development, whichever is later.
- (5) If a property which was exempted from the collection of a non-residential development fee thereafter ceases to be exempt from property taxation, the owner of the property shall remit the fees required pursuant to this section within 45 days of the termination of the property tax exemption. Unpaid non-residential development fees under these circumstances may be enforceable by Stockton Borough as a lien against the real property of the owner.

§6. COLLECTION PROCEDURES.

- (a) Upon the granting of a preliminary, final or other applicable approval, for a development, the applicable approving authority shall direct its staff to notify the construction official responsible for the issuance of a building permit.
- (b) For non-residential developments only, the developer shall also be provided with a copy of Form N-RDF "State of New Jersey Non-Residential Development Certification/Exemption" to be completed as per the instructions provided. The developer of a non-residential development shall complete Form N-RDF as per the instructions provided. The construction official shall verify the information submitted by the non-residential developer as per the instructions provided in the Form N-RDF. The tax assessor shall verify exemptions and prepare estimated and final assessments as per the instructions provided in Form N-RDF.
- (c) The construction official responsible for the issuance of a building permit shall notify the local tax assessor of the issuance of the first building permit for a development which is subject to a development fee.

- (d) Within 90 days of receipt of that notice, the municipal tax assessor, based on the plans filed, shall provide an estimate of the equalized assessed value of non-residential development.
- (e) The construction official responsible for the issuance of a final certificate of occupancy notifies the local assessor of any and all requests for the scheduling of a final inspection on property which is subject to a development fee.
- (f) Within 10 business days of a request for the scheduling of a final inspection, the municipal assessor shall confirm or modify the previously estimated equalized assessed value of the improvements of the development; calculate the development fee; and thereafter notify the developer of the amount of the fee.
- (g) Should Stockton Borough fail to determine or notify the developer of the amount of the development fee within 10 business days of the request for final inspection, the developer may estimate the amount due and pay that estimated amount consistent with the dispute process set forth in subsection b. of section 37 of P.L.2008, c.46 (C.40:55D-8.6).
- (h) Fifty percent of the development fee shall be collected at the time of issuance of the building permit. The remaining portion shall be collected at the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The developer shall be responsible for paying the difference between the fee calculated at building permit and that determined at issuance of certificate of occupancy.
- (i) Appeal of development fees

- (1) For residential developments, imposed and collected residential development fees that are contested shall be deposited under protest in an interest-bearing escrow account by Stockton. The local code enforcement official shall thereafter issue the certificate of occupancy provided that the construction is otherwise eligible for a certificate of occupancy. If all or a portion of the contested fees are returned to the developer, the accrued interest on the returned amount shall also be returned.

A developer may challenge non-residential development fees by filing a challenge with the Director of the Division of Taxation. Collected fees shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account by Stockton if Stockton is authorized to retain the fees, or by the State if Stockton is not authorized to retain the fees. The local code enforcement official shall thereafter issue the certificate of occupancy provided that the construction is otherwise eligible for a certificate of occupancy. Appeals from a determination of the Director may be made to the Tax Court in accordance with N.J.S.A. 54:48-1 et seq., within 90 days after the date of such determination. Interest earned on amounts escrowed shall be credited to the prevailing party.

§7. AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND.

- (a) There is hereby created a separate, interest-bearing housing trust fund to be maintained by the chief financial officer for the purpose of depositing development fees collected from residential and non-residential developers and proceeds from the sale of units with extinguished controls (“Affordable Housing Trust Fund”).
- (b) The following additional funds shall be deposited in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and shall at all times be identifiable by source and amount:
 - (1) Payments in lieu of on-site construction of affordable units;
 - (2) Developer contributed funds to make ten percent (10%) of the adaptable entrances in a townhouse or other multistory attached development accessible;
 - (3) Rental income from municipally operated units;
 - (4) Repayments from affordable housing program loans;
 - (5) Recapture funds;
 - (6) Proceeds from the sale of affordable units; and
 - (7) Any other funds collected in connection with Stockton’s affordable housing program.
- (c) Within 21 days from the opening of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund account, and within 21 days of any change in the bank or other financial institution in which trust funds are deposited, Stockton shall provide the Division with written authorization, in the form of a three-party escrow agreement between Stockton, the bank or other financial institution, and the Division, to permit the Division to direct the disbursement of the funds as provided for in N.J.A.C. 5:99-5.6. This escrow agreement shall be maintained at all times.
- (d) All interest accrued in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund shall only be used on eligible affordable housing activities included in an approved spending plan or an emergent opportunity authorized by the Division.

§8. Use of funds

- (a) The expenditure of all funds shall conform to a spending plan approved by the Program or a court of competent jurisdiction, or as approved by the Division for an emergent opportunity to create affordable housing, as permitted by N.J.A.C. 5:99 and N.J.S.A. 52:27D-329.2.a(4). Such activities include, but are not limited to: preservation or purchase of housing for the purpose of maintaining or implementing affordability controls, rehabilitation, new construction of affordable housing units and related costs, accessory apartment, market to affordable, or regional housing partnership programs, conversion of existing non-residential buildings to create new affordable units, green building strategies designed to be cost saving and in accordance with accepted national or state standards, purchase of land for affordable housing, improvement of land to be used for affordable housing, extensions or improvements of roads and infrastructure to affordable housing sites, financial assistance designed to increase affordability, administration necessary for implementation of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, or any other activity as permitted and specified in the approved spending plan.
- (b) Funds shall not be expended to reimburse Stockton for past housing activities.

(c) Stockton shall set aside a portion of all development fees collected and interest earned for the purpose of providing affordability assistance to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households in affordable units included in the municipality's fair share plan. Affordability assistance for very-low-income households may include offering a subsidy to developers of inclusionary or 100 percent affordable developments or buying down the cost of low- or moderate-income units to make them affordable to very-low-income households, including special needs and supportive housing opportunities.

Payments in lieu of constructing affordable units shall be deposited into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and accounted for separately, identified in annual monitoring submissions, and included in the municipal spending plan. Whenever a payment-in-lieu fee is assessed for a development, a development fee shall not be charged in connection with the same development.

(d) Stockton may contract with a private or public entity to administer any part of its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, including the requirement for affordability assistance, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:99-7.

(e) No more than 20 percent of all revenues collected from development fees, may be expended on administration, including, but not limited to, salaries and benefits for municipal employees or consultant fees necessary to develop or implement a new construction program, a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and/or an affirmative marketing program. In the case of a rehabilitation program, no more than 20 percent of the revenues collected from development fees shall be expended for such administrative expenses. Administrative funds may be used for income qualification of households, monitoring the turnover of sale and rental units, and compliance with the Department's monitoring requirements. Municipal affordable housing trust funds shall not be expended on attorney fees or court costs to obtain a judgment of compliance or order of repose (including associated administration costs), on any costs in connection with a challenge to the municipality's fair share obligation, or on any costs in connection with a challenge to the municipality's obligation, housing element, or fair share plan, as provided in N.J.A.C. 5:99.

§9. MONITORING.

Stockton shall submit all required monitoring information through the online AHMS in the time and form required by the Division. Monitoring information for each calendar year shall be submitted in the form of a certification by the municipal housing liaison, or their designee (who shall be a municipal employee), and shall be accompanied by a year-end bank or other financial institution statement used to reconcile municipal reporting. Municipal monitoring information certifications shall be submitted through AHMS by February 15 of each year for trust fund activity through December 31 of the previous year.

§10. ONGOING COLLECTION OF FEES.

(a) The ability for Stockton to impose and collect and retain residential development fees, retain non-residential development fees, and maintain an affordable housing trust fund is subject to maintaining its status as a compliant municipality, except as otherwise provided by law for Qualified Urban Aid Municipalities. If a court of competent jurisdiction finds that Stockton has failed to maintain its status as a compliant municipality, Stockton may be subject to forfeiture of any or all funds remaining within the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and any funds so forfeited shall be deposited into the New Jersey Affordable Housing Trust Fund established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-320.

§11. REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this ordinance are repealed as to such inconsistencies.

(b) If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

(c) This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication as provided by law.

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Brown to approve on first reading for Ordinance 2026-02
Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger, Mann and Meltzer

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

ORDINANCE 2026-02

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON,
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY,
ADDRESSING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FAIR
HOUSING ACT AND THE UNIFORM HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY CONTROLS AND ENSURING THE
BOROUGH'S COMPLIANCE WITH ITS AFFORDABLE
HOUSING OBLIGATIONS, AND TO BE KNOWN AS THE
“STOCKTON BOROUGH FOURTH ROUND
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORDINANCE”**

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stockton (the “Borough” or “Stockton”) filed a Declaratory Judgment Action in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Hunterdon County, captioned IMO Borough of Stockton, Docket No HUN-L-58-25 (the “Declaratory Judgment Action”), in furtherance of the “Municipality”), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.2, -304.3, and -304.1(f)(1)(c) of the New Jersey Fair Housing Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D- 301, et seq. (collectively, the “FHA”), and in accordance with Section II.A of Administrative Directive #14-24 (“Directive #14-24”) of the

Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program (the "Program"), seeking a certification of compliance with the FHA; and

WHEREAS, the Stockton Borough Planning Board adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan on June 3, 2025 by way of resolution, which was endorsed by the Borough of Stockton Council on June 19, 2025 by way of Resolution No. 2025-51, in compliance with the Fair Housing Act and Administrative Directive #14-24 and pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, et seq.; and

WHEREAS, Fair Share Housing Center ("FSHC") filed a challenge pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(f)(2)(b) to the Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan on August 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Borough and FSHC entered into a Settlement Agreement dated December 17, 2025, as authorized by Borough Council Resolution No. 2025-92, arising out of the Declaratory Judgment that determines the Borough's affordable housing obligation and the mechanisms for how the obligation will be addressed ("Settlement Agreement"); and

WHEREAS, the Settlement Agreement was approved by the Superior Court of New Jersey, Hunterdon County Law Division on _____ at a duly noticed Fairness Hearing; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to and consistent with the terms of the Settlement Agreement and Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan, the Borough is required to adopt one or more ordinances to address compliance issues on or before March 15, 2026; and

WHEREAS, at this time, the Mayor and Council seek to adopt this ordinance which shall be known as the "Stockton Borough Fourth Round Affordable Housing Ordinance."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, as follows:

Section 1. The following regulations are hereby enacted for purposes of compliance with the Borough of Stockton's Fourth Round Affordable Housing obligations:

STOCKTON BOROUGH FOURTH ROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORDINANCE

§1. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.

- (a) This ordinance is intended to ensure that low- and moderate-income units, referred to as affordable units, are created with controls on affordability over time and that low and moderate income households shall occupy these units.
- (b) The provisions of this ordinance shall apply to all affordable housing development and procedures in the Borough of Stockton ("Stockton" or "Borough").

- (c) This ordinance shall apply except where inconsistent with applicable law. Where any provision of this ordinance may be inconsistent or conflict with the provisions of the New Jersey Fair Housing Act (C.52:27D-301, et seq.), as amended, Chapter 99 Fair Housing Act Regulations (N.J.A.C. 5:99-1, et seq.), as amended, and/or the New Jersey Uniform Housing and Affordability Controls (N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1, et seq.), as amended, the provisions of the amended statute and/or regulation shall control. The Stockton Planning Board has adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, et seq. The Housing Element and Fair Share Plan has been endorsed by the governing body. The Housing Element and Fair Share Plan describes the ways Stockton shall address its fair share of low- and moderate-income housing as determined by the Fair Housing Act, any applicable settlement agreements, judgments or orders of the Superior Court, the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program, and other applicable State law and are documented in the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.
- (d) This ordinance implements and incorporates the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and addresses the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, as may be amended and supplemented. This ordinance is to be construed consistently with, and in accordance with, the Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.
- (e) Stockton shall file such monitoring and evaluation reports as may be required by the Fair Housing Act, the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls at N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1, et seq., any applicable settlement agreements, and any orders of the Superior Court or the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program. Any such plan evaluation reports shall be available to the public at the Stockton Municipal Building, Municipal Clerk's Office, and on the municipality's website, if available.

§2. DEFINITIONS.

The following terms when used in this ordinance shall have the meanings given in this section:

“Accessory apartment” means a self-contained residential dwelling unit with a kitchen, sanitary facilities, sleeping quarters and a private entrance, which is created within an existing home, or through the conversion of an existing accessory structure on the same site, or by an addition to an existing home or accessory building, or by the construction of a new accessory structure on the same site.

“Act” means the Fair Housing Act of 1985, P.L. 1985, c. 222 (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301, et seq.), as amended.

“Adaptable” means constructed in compliance with the technical design standards of the Barrier Free Subcode, N.J.A.C. 5:23-7.

“Administrative Agent” means the entity responsible for the administration of affordable units in accordance with this Ordinance and the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls, N.J.A.C. 5:80-

26.1, et seq., as may be amended and supplemented, including any successor rules adopted by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

“Affirmative marketing” means a regional marketing strategy designed to attract buyers and/or renters of affordable units in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.16, as may be amended and supplemented.

“Affordability average” means the average percentage of regional median income at which restricted units in an affordable housing development are affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

“Affordable” means a sales price or rent within the means of a low or moderate income household; in the case of an ownership unit, that the sales price for the unit conforms to the standards set forth at N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.7, as may be amended and supplemented, and in the case of a rental unit, that the rent for the unit conforms to the standards set forth at N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.13, as may be amended and supplemented.

“Affordable development” means a housing development all or a portion of which consists of restricted units.

“Affordable housing development” means a development included in the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and includes, but is not limited to, an inclusionary development, a municipal construction project, or a one hundred percent affordable development.

“Affordable housing program(s)” means any mechanism in the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan prepared or implemented to address the municipality’s fair share obligation.

“Affordable Housing Trust Fund” or “AHTF” means the non-lapsing, revolving trust fund established in the Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-320 and N.J.A.C. 5:43 to be the repository of all State funds appropriated for affordable housing purposes. All references to the “Neighborhood Preservation Non-lapsing Revolving Fund” and “Balanced Housing” mean the AHTF.

“Affordable unit” or “restricted unit” means a dwelling unit, whether a rental unit or ownership unit, that is subject to the affordability controls of N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1, et seq., as may be amended and supplemented, but does not include a market rate unit financed under UHORP, MONI, CHOICE, or similar programs.

“Agency” means the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency established by P.L. 1983, c. 530 (N.J.S.A. 55:14K-1, et seq.) in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”).

“Age-restricted unit” means a housing unit designed to meet the needs of, and intended exclusively for, the residents of an age-restricted segment of the population where the adult member of the family who is the head of the household for the purposes of determining income eligibility and rent is a minimum age of either 62 years or 55 years, and meets the provisions of 42 U.S.C. §§

3601 through 3619, except that due to death, a surviving spouse of less than 55 years of age is permitted to continue to reside in the unit.

“Assisted living residence” means a facility licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health to provide apartment-style housing and congregate dining and to assure that assisted living services are available when needed for four or more adult persons unrelated to the proprietor. Apartment units must offer, at a minimum, one unfurnished room, a private bathroom, a kitchenette, and a lockable door on the unit entrance.

“Certified household” means a household that has been certified by an administrative agent as a very low-income, a low-income, or a moderate-income household, as applicable.

“Deficient housing unit” means a housing unit with health and safety code violations that require the repair or replacement of a major system. A major system includes weatherization, roofing, plumbing (including wells), heating, electricity, sanitary plumbing (including septic systems), lead paint abatement, and load bearing structural systems.

“Developer” means any person, partnership, association, company or corporation that is the legal or beneficial owner or owners of a lot or any land proposed to be included in a proposed development, including the holder of an option to contract or purchase, or other person having an enforceable proprietary interest in such property.

“Development” means the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation, or enlargement of any use or change in the use of any building or other structure; or any mining, excavation, landfill, and any use or change in the use of any building or other structure or land, for which permission may be required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, et seq.

“Household income” means a household’s gross annual income calculated in a manner consistent with the determination of annual income pursuant to section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (“Section 8”), not in accordance with the determination of gross income for Federal income tax liability.

“Inclusionary development” means a development containing both affordable units and market rate units. This term includes, but is not limited to, new construction, the conversion of a non-residential structure to residential use, and the creation of new affordable units through the reconstruction of a vacant residential structure.

“Low-income household” means a household with a total gross annual household income equal to 50 percent or less of regional median income.

“Low-income unit” means a restricted unit that is affordable to a low-income household.

“Major system” means the primary structural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, fire protection, or occupant service components of a building, including weatherization, roofing, plumbing

(including wells), heating, electricity, sanitary plumbing (including septic systems), lead paint abatement and load bearing structural systems.

“Market rate units” means housing not restricted to low- and moderate-income households that may sell or rent at any price.

“Median income” means the median income by household size for the applicable housing region or county, as adopted annually by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency or the DCA, as applicable.

“Moderate-income household” means a household with a total gross annual household income in excess of 50 percent but less than or equal to 80 percent of regional median income.

“Moderate income unit” means a restricted unit that is affordable to a moderate-income household.

“Non-exempt sale” means any sale or transfer of ownership of a restricted unit to one’s self or to another individual other than the transfer of ownership between spouses or civil union partners; the transfer of ownership between former spouses or civil union partners ordered as a result of a judicial decree of divorce or judicial separation, but not including sales to third parties; the transfer of ownership between family members as a result of inheritance; the transfer of ownership through an executor’s deed to a class A beneficiary; and the transfer of ownership by court order.

“Random selection process” means a lottery process by which currently income-eligible applicant-households are selected, at random, for placement in affordable housing units such that no preference is given to one applicant over another, except in the case of a veterans’ preference where such an agreement exists; for purposes of matching household income and size with an appropriately priced and sized affordable unit; or another purpose allowed pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.17(k)(3).

“Rehabilitation” means the repair, renovation, alteration, or reconstruction of any building or structure, pursuant to the Rehabilitation Subcode, N.J.A.C. 5:23-6.

“Rent” means the gross monthly cost of a rental unit to the tenant, including the rent paid to the landlord, as well as an allowance for tenant-paid utilities computed in accordance with allowances published by DCA for its Section 8 program. With respect to units in assisted living residences, rent does not include charges for food and services.

“UHAC” means the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls set forth in N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1, et seq., as may be amended and supplemented.

“Very low-income household” means a household with a total gross annual household income equal to 30 percent or less of regional median income.

“Very low-income unit” means a restricted unit that is affordable to a very low-income household.

“Veteran” means a veteran as defined at N.J.S.A. 54:4-8.10.

“Veterans’ preference” means the agreement between a municipality and a developer or residential development owner that allows for low- to moderate-income veterans to be given preference for up to 50 percent of units in relevant projects, as provided for at N.J.S.A. 52:27D-311j.

“Weatherization” means building insulation (for attic, exterior walls and crawl space), siding to improve energy efficiency, replacement storm windows, replacement storm doors, replacement windows and replacement doors, and is considered a major system for rehabilitation.

§3. MANDATORY SET-ASIDE ORDINANCE.

- (a) Any future development of five (5) or more residential units, at six (6) dwelling units per acre or greater, in the Borough developed through planning board approval, zoning board approval, redevelopment or a rehabilitation plan requires an affordable housing set aside of at least 20% of all units, with at least 50% of the restricted units in each development being affordable to low-income households, including 13% to very low-income households. All such affordable units, including the required bedroom distribution, shall be governed by controls on affordability and affirmatively marketed in conformance with UHAC, N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1, et seq. or any successor regulation, and all other applicable law.
- (b) Developers shall not subdivide a project for the purpose of avoiding compliance with this requirement.
- (c) This requirement does not give any developer the right to any such rezoning, variance or other relief, or establish any obligation on the part of Stockton to grant such rezoning, variance or other relief. No subdivision shall be permitted or approved for the purpose of avoiding compliance with this requirement.

§4. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS.

Stockton shall use the following mechanisms to satisfy its affordable housing obligations, in accordance with and as set forth in its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan:

- (a) An Accessory Apartment program
 - (1) All accessory apartments shall meet the following conditions:
 - (i) Accessory apartments shall be permitted by the zoning ordinance for various zoning districts, provided the units are affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Accessory apartments may be developed as low-income or moderate-income units, consistent with the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

- (ii) Accessory apartments shall comply with all applicable statutes and regulations of the State of New Jersey, in addition to all applicable building codes.
- (iii) At the time of initial occupancy of the unit and for at least ten years thereafter, the accessory apartment shall be rented only to a low- or moderate-income household.
- (iv) Every rental of accessory apartments shall be affordable to low- or moderate-income households in accordance with UHAC.
- (v) There shall be a recorded deed or declaration of covenants and restrictions applied to the property upon which the accessory apartment is located, running with the land and limiting the subsequent rental or sale of the unit and the accessory apartment.
- (vi) The appropriate utility authority must certify that there is water and sewer infrastructure with sufficient capacity to serve the proposed accessory apartment. Where the proposed location is served by an individual well and/or septic system, the additional capacity necessitated by the new unit must meet applicable New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection standards.
- (vii) The Stockton accessory apartment program shall not restrict the number of bedrooms in any accessory apartment.
- (viii) No accessory apartment created under this section shall exceed the gross floor area of the existing principal dwelling on the lot.
- (ix) The governing body may waive municipal building permit fees in cases involving affordable accessory apartment development under this section and may establish an annual license and inspection fee, if required.

(2) The maximum number of creditable accessory apartments shall be equal to no more than ten units or an amount equal to ten percent of the Stockton fair share obligation, whichever is greater, unless a greater number is approved by the court or applicable State agency.

(3) In the event there are accessory apartments under this program, Stockton shall designate an administrative entity to administer the accessory apartment program with responsibilities including advertising, income qualifying prospective renters, setting rents and annual rent increases, maintaining a waiting list, distributing any subsidy, securing certificates of occupancy, qualifying properties, handling application forms, filing deed restrictions and monitoring reports, and affirmatively marketing the accessory apartment program in accordance with UHAC.

(d) Other affordable housing programs

Stockton may also rely on other mechanisms identified in its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, including but not limited to municipally-sponsored new construction, inclusionary zoning, supportive and alternative housing, group homes, age restricted housing within statutory caps, and any other mechanisms approved through the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, settlement agreement or court order.

§5. Inclusionary Zoning

(a) Presumptive densities and set asides

To ensure the efficient use of land through compact forms of development and to create realistic opportunities for the construction of affordable housing, any inclusionary zoning in Stockton shall be designed to provide a realistic opportunity for the construction of affordable units at densities and set asides consistent with Stockton's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, any applicable settlement agreements, and applicable law.

(b) Phasing

In inclusionary developments, the following phasing schedule shall be followed:

Maximum Percentage of Market-Rate Units Completed	Minimum Percentage of Low- and Moderate-Income Units Completed
No more than 10 percent	1 affordable unit
No more than 25 percent of market units plus 1	25 percent of affordable units
No more than 50 percent of market units	50 percent of affordable units
No more than 75 percent of market units	75 percent of affordable units
No more than 90 percent of market units	100 percent of affordable units

(c) Design

In inclusionary developments, to the extent possible and practical, low- and moderate-income units shall be integrated with the market rate units.

(d) Payments in lieu and off site construction

Standards for the collection of payments in lieu of constructing affordable units or standards for constructing affordable units off site shall be in accordance with applicable law, including the Fair Housing Act and any requirements of the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program. Payment in Lieu deposited into the affordable housing trust fund must be accounted separately, and, if assessed, a development fee cannot be charged for the same development.

(e) Utilities.

Affordable units shall utilize the same type of heating source and generally the same utility systems as market rate units within the affordable development, except where otherwise approved for energy efficiency or affordability.

§6. NEW CONSTRUCTION.

The following general guidelines apply to all newly constructed developments that contain low- and moderate-income housing units, including any currently unanticipated future developments that will provide low- and moderate-income housing units.

- (a) For purposes of determining affordability averages and bedroom distributions, all restricted units within any single-family development in Stockton shall be treated as one scattered-site affordable development. This treatment affects only the calculations of affordability and bedroom counts for single-family developments, is not to be construed to require that the restricted units be developed or administered as one scattered-site affordable development, and does not affect multifamily developments.
- (b) For purposes of determining affordability averages and bedroom distributions, unless stated otherwise, non-integer values calculated pursuant to this subsection are to be rounded up to the nearest whole number. However, non-integer values calculated pursuant to (d)(3), (d)(4), (d)(5), (f)(2), (f)(3), or (f)(5) below may be rounded down or up to the nearest whole number in either direction. For example, 33.1901 will typically be rounded up to 34, but may be rounded down to 33 or up to 34 if calculated pursuant to (d)(3), (d)(4), (d)(5), (f)(2), (f)(3), or (f)(5) below.
- (c) The average rent for all restricted units within each affordable development is affordable to households earning no more than 52 percent of median income.
- (d) Unless otherwise approved pursuant to (l) below, in each affordable development, restricted units that are not age-restricted or supportive housing must be structured in conjunction with realistic market demands such that:
 - (1) At a minimum, the number of bedrooms within the restricted units equals twice the number of restricted units;
 - (2) Two-bedroom and/or three-bedroom units compose at least 50 percent of all restricted units;
 - (3) No more than 20 percent of all restricted units, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number in either direction, are efficiency or one-bedroom units;
 - (4) At least 30 percent of all restricted units, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number in either direction, are two-bedroom units;
 - (5) At least 20 percent of all restricted units, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number in either direction, are three-bedroom units; and
 - (6) The remainder of the restricted units, if any, are allocated at the discretion of the developer in accordance with Stockton's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

- (e) Unless otherwise approved pursuant to (k) below, in each affordable development, restricted units that are age-restricted or supportive housing must be structured such that, at a minimum, the number of bedrooms within the restricted units equals the number of restricted units. For example, the standard may be met by creating a two-bedroom unit for each efficiency unit. In affordable developments with 20 or more restricted units that are age-restricted or supportive housing, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units must compose at least five percent of those restricted units.
- (f) Unless otherwise approved pursuant to (k) below, in each affordable development, the following income distribution requirements must be satisfied by all of the restricted units in the development as well as by, considered in isolation, the restricted units that are age-restricted, the restricted units that are supportive housing, and the restricted units that are neither age-restricted nor supportive housing:
 - (1) At least 50 percent of all restricted units are low-income or very-low-income units;
 - (2) At least 50 percent of all restricted efficiency or one-bedroom units, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number in either direction, are low-income units or very-low-income units;
 - (3) At least 50 percent of all restricted two-bedroom units, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number in either direction, are low-income units or very-low-income units;
 - (4) At least 50 percent of all restricted three-bedroom units are low-income units or very-low-income units;
 - (5) At least 50 percent of all restricted units with four or more bedrooms, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number in either direction, are low-income units or very-low-income units; and
 - (6) Any very-low-income units are distributed between each bedroom count as proportionally as possible, to the nearest whole unit, to the total number of restricted units within each bedroom count. For example, if half of the restricted units are two-bedroom units, then half of the very-low-income units should be two-bedroom units.
- (g) For the purposes of determining bonus credits pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-311(k)(5), the minimum number of three-bedroom units required pursuant to subsections (d), (e) and (f) of this section is determined by taking 20 percent of the total number of family housing units in Stockton's Fair Share Plan and Housing Element, not by summing up the three-bedroom-unit requirements calculated for each affordable development.
- (h) In determining the initial rents and initial sale prices for compliance with the affordability average requirements for restricted units other than age-restricted units and assisted living facilities, the following standards apply:

- (1) An efficiency unit is affordable to a one-person household;
- (2) A one-bedroom unit is affordable to a one-and-one-half-person household;
- (3) A two-bedroom unit is affordable to a three-person household;
- (4) A three-bedroom unit is affordable to a four-and-one-half-person household; and
- (5) A four-bedroom unit is affordable to a six-person household.

- (i) For age-restricted units and assisted living facilities, the following standards apply:
 - (1) An efficiency unit is affordable to a one-person household;
 - (2) A one-bedroom unit is affordable to a one-and-one-half-person household;
 - (3) A two-bedroom unit is affordable to a two-person household or to two one-person households; and
 - (4) A three-bedroom unit is affordable to a two-and-one-half-person household.

- (j) The provisions of this section do not apply to affordable developments financed pursuant to UHORP, MONI, or CHOICE or to assisted living residences, each of which must comply with applicable Agency regulations.

- (k) The requirements of subsections (d), (e), and (f) above must be satisfied by all restricted units in Stockton, considered in the aggregate. The individual requirements of subsections (d), (e), and (f) above may be waived or altered for a specific affordable development with written approval from the Dispute Resolution Program if such waiver or alteration would not result in a material deviation from the municipal housing element and fair share plan. Any waiver or alteration that would result in a material deviation from the municipal housing element and fair share plan must receive written approval from the Dispute Resolution Program or, if the municipality does not participate in the Dispute Resolution Program, from a county-level housing judge.

- (l) Accessibility requirements
 - (1) The first floor of all restricted townhouse dwelling units and all restricted units in all other multistory buildings shall be subject to the technical design standards of the Barrier Free Subcode, N.J.A.C. 5:23-7, and all applicable accessibility requirements.
 - (2) All restricted townhouse dwelling units and all restricted units in other multistory buildings in which a restricted dwelling unit is attached to at least one other dwelling unit shall have:
 - (i) An adaptable toilet and bathing facility on the first floor;
 - (ii) An adaptable kitchen on the first floor;
 - (iii) An interior accessible route of travel on the first floor;

- (iv) An adaptable room that can be used as a bedroom, with a door or the casing for the installation of a door, on the first floor; and
- (v) An accessible entranceway as set forth at P.L. 2005, c. 350 (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-311a, et seq.) and the Barrier Free Subcode, N.J.A.C. 5:23-7.

(3) Where a unit has been constructed with an adaptable entrance, upon the request of a disabled person who is purchasing or will reside in the dwelling unit, an accessible entrance shall be installed, using funds deposited by the developer in the affordable housing trust fund for this purpose, consistent with applicable law.

(4) Full compliance with these provisions shall not be required where an entity demonstrates that it is site impracticable to meet the requirements, as determined in accordance with the Barrier Free Subcode.

(m) Maximum rents and sales prices

- (1) In establishing rents and sales prices of affordable housing units, the administrative agent shall follow the procedures set forth in UHAC, N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.4, -26.6, -26.7, and -26.13, as may be amended and supplemented, utilizing the regional income limits established by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency or applicable State agency.
- (2) The average rent for all restricted rental units within each affordable development shall be affordable to households earning no more than 52 percent of regional median income. The maximum rent for all restricted rental units within each affordable development shall be affordable to households earning no more than 60 percent of regional median income, except as permitted where an enhanced very low income set aside is provided in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.4.
- (3) The developers and municipal sponsors of restricted rental units shall establish at least one rent for each bedroom count for very low income, low income, and moderate-income units, provided that at least 13 percent of all restricted units within Stockton are affordable to very low-income households.
- (4) At least 50 percent of the restricted rental units in each affordable development shall be affordable to low-income households, and at least 13 percent of all restricted rental units shall be affordable to very low-income households, consistent with N.J.S.A. 52:27D-329.1 and N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.4.
- (5) The maximum sale price of restricted ownership units within each affordable development shall be affordable to households earning no more than 70 percent of regional median income, and each affordable development must achieve an affordability average of no more than 55 percent of regional median income for restricted ownership units.

- (6) At least 50 percent of the restricted ownership units in each affordable development shall be affordable to low-income households, and at least 13 percent of all restricted ownership units shall be affordable to very low-income households.
- (7) The initial purchase price for all restricted ownership units shall be calculated so that the monthly carrying cost of the unit, including principal and interest based on a mortgage loan equal to 95 percent of the purchase price and an interest rate consistent with the Federal Reserve H.15 rate, together with taxes, homeowner and private mortgage insurance, and condominium or homeowner association fees, does not exceed 28 percent of the eligible monthly income of the appropriate size household, subject to the affordability average requirements of UHAC.
- (8) The initial rent for a restricted rental unit shall be calculated so as not to exceed 30 percent of the eligible monthly income of the appropriate size household, subject to the affordability average requirements of UHAC.
- (9) The resale price of restricted ownership units and increases in rents of restricted rental units shall be determined in accordance with UHAC.
- (10) Tenant paid utilities that are included in the utility allowance shall be so stated in the lease and shall be consistent with the utility allowance approved by the DCA for its Section 8 program or other applicable guidance.

§7. Affirmative Marketing Requirements.

- (a) At such time as affordable housing units are created, Stockton shall adopt by resolution an affirmative marketing plan, subject to approval of the Division of Housing and Community Resources or its successor, compliant with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.16, as may be amended and supplemented.
- (b) The affirmative marketing plan shall be a regional marketing strategy designed to attract buyers and renters of affordable units in the housing region in which Stockton is located. The plan shall attract persons of all majority and minority groups, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, gender identity or expression, affectional or sexual orientation, disability, age (except for housing for older persons as permitted by law), number of children, source of lawful income, or any other characteristic protected by the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, N.J.S.A. 10:5-1, et seq., and shall be intended to reach potentially eligible households that are least likely to apply for the units.
- (c) At such time as an administrative agent is appointed, said agent shall ensure the affirmative marketing of affordable units. Stockton may designate a qualified municipal staff person approved by the State to serve as administrative agent for this purpose, or it may contract with one or more experienced administrative agents approved by the State.
- (d) The affirmative marketing plan shall, at a minimum:

- (1) Describe the random selection method that will be used to select occupants of affordable housing units and identify any occupancy preferences permitted by N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.17(k);
- (2) Identify the media to be used in advertising and publicizing the availability of affordable units, including newspapers and other publications, online housing search websites, municipal and county websites, social media platforms, and non-digital means such as flyers or postings at public buildings and transportation locations;
- (3) Identify specific community and regional organizations that will assist in the outreach to low- and moderate-income households, including but not limited to Fair Share Housing Center, the New Jersey State Conference of the NAACP, the Latino Action Network, local branches of the NAACP serving the housing region, senior citizen advocacy organizations, and supportive housing advocacy organizations;
- (4) Describe how the plan will provide language access, including outreach and materials in languages commonly spoken in the municipality and region; and
- (5) Set forth application procedures and requirements, including any application fees, consistent with UHAC.

(e) In implementing the affirmative marketing program, the administrative agent shall:

- (1) Post a listing of available affordable housing units on the New Jersey Housing Resource Center at least sixty (60) days before the random selection process or lottery for such units, in accordance with applicable statutes and UHAC;
- (2) Within one business day of listing rental units that are reserved for individuals with special needs who are homeless, or that constitute permanent supportive housing, notify the local Continuum of Care of the availability of such units;
- (3) Publish at least one (1) advertisement in a regional newspaper serving the housing region;
- (4) Advertise the units on at least one (1) widely-used housing search website; and
- (5) Undertake at least two additional regional marketing strategies, one (1) digital and one (1) non-digital, using the sources identified in the affirmative marketing plan, and continue advertising and outreach until all units being brought to market at that time have been sold or rented or until sufficient applications have been received to fill the units plus anticipated turnover.

(f) In carrying out the affirmative marketing process, the administrative agent shall comply with the Fair Chance in Housing Act, N.J.S.A. 46:8-52 through -64, and all applicable provisions of Federal and State fair housing law.

(g) The municipal housing liaison shall monitor the implementation of the affirmative marketing plan by each administrative agent and developer and shall report on affirmative marketing activities in any required municipal monitoring reports.

§8. RANDOM SELECTION AND OCCUPANCY PREFERENCES.

(a) The administrative agent shall use a random selection process to select income eligible households for referral to restricted units, consistent with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.17(k), as may be amended and supplemented. The random selection process may occur before or after household income certification and may divide the applicant pool into groups based on bedroom count, income category, or other factors expressly permitted by UHAC.

(b) Occupancy preferences shall be limited to those expressly permitted by N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.17(k), which may include:

- (1) A preference for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households who live or work within the housing region;
- (2) A subordinate preference, subject to the regional preference, for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households who live or work in New Jersey;
- (3) For preservation or replacement projects, a preference for income eligible households displaced by rehabilitation or demolition of restricted units; and

(4) A veterans' preference for up to fifty percent of the restricted units in a particular project, if permitted by State law and UHAC.

(c) No residency preference limited solely to Stockton shall be used unless expressly permitted by statute, UHAC, and any applicable court order or mediation agreement.

(d) Any occupancy preferences shall be described in the affirmative marketing plan and in the administrative agent's operating manual.

§9. OCCUPANCY STANDARDS.

(a) Any unit that, prior to the effective date of the amendments to the regulations as promulgated pursuant to P.L. 2024, c.2 (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1), received substantive certification from the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), was part of a judgment of compliance from a court of competent jurisdiction, or became subject to a grant agreement or other contract with either the State or a political subdivision thereof, shall be subject to the UHAC regulations (N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1 et seq.) that were in effect prior to the effective date of the amendments promulgated pursuant to P.L. 2024, c.2.

(b) Developments approved as part of a compliance certification or that otherwise contain restricted units subject to the UHAC regulations shall satisfy the following occupancy standards:

(1) For any 100-percent affordable development comprising one or more restricted units:

- (i) Restricted units must meet the minimum square footage required for the number of inhabitants for which the unit is marketed and the minimum square footage required for each bedroom, as set forth in the applicable municipal code or the Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing eligibility requirements at N.J.A.C. 5:43-2.4, whichever is greater;
- (ii) Each bedroom in each restricted unit must have at least one window; and
- (iii) Restricted units must include adequate air conditioning and heating;

(2) For developments comprising market-rate rental units and restricted rental units:

- (i) Restricted units must use the same building standards (for example, plumbing, insulation, siding) as market-rate units of the same unit type (for example, flat, townhome) within the same development, except that restricted units and market-rate units may use different interior finishes;
- (ii) Restricted units and market-rate units within the same affordable development must be sited such that restricted units are not concentrated in less desirable locations;
- (iii) Restricted units may not be physically clustered so as to segregate restricted and market-rate units within the same development or within the same building, but must be interspersed throughout the development, except that age-restricted and supportive housing units may be physically clustered if the clustering facilitates the provision of on-site medical services or on-site social services;
- (iv) Residents of restricted units must be offered the same access to communal amenities as residents of market-rate units within the same affordable development. Examples of communal amenities include, but are not limited to, community pools, fitness and recreation centers, playgrounds, common rooms and outdoor spaces, and building entrances and exits;
- (v) Restricted units must include adequate air conditioning and heating and, if market-rate units provide cooling and heating, restricted units must use the same type of cooling and heating sources as market-rate units of the same unit type;
- (vi) Each bedroom in each restricted unit must have at least one window;

- (vii) Restricted units must be of the same unit type (for example, flat, townhome) as market-rate units within the same building; and
- (viii) Restricted units must be of at least the same size as the most common market-rate unit(s) of the same type and bedroom count within the same development, but under no circumstances shall any restricted unit or bedroom be less than 90 percent of the minimum size prescribed by the applicable municipal code or Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing eligibility requirements at N.J.A.C. 5:43-2.4, whichever prescribes the greater minimum size;

(3) For developments containing for-sale units, including those with a mix of rental and for-sale units, subsection (b)2 above shall govern the rental units, while for-sale units shall adhere to the following:

- (i) Restricted units must use the same building standards as market-rate units of the same unit type (for example, flat, townhome, single-family home), except that restricted units and market-rate units may use different interior finishes;
- (ii) Restricted units may be clustered, provided that the buildings or housing product types containing the restricted units are integrated throughout the development and are not concentrated in an undesirable location or in undesirable locations;
- (iii) Restricted units may be of different housing product types than market-rate units, provided that developments containing market-rate townhomes or single-family homes offer restricted housing options that also include townhomes or single-family homes;
- (iv) Restricted units must meet the minimum square footage required for the number of inhabitants for which the unit is marketed and the minimum square footage required for each bedroom, as set forth in the applicable municipal code or the Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing eligibility requirements at N.J.A.C. 5:43-2.4, whichever provides the greater minimum square footages;
- (v) Penthouse and end units may be reserved for market-rate sale, provided that the overall number, value, and distribution of affordable units across the development is not negatively impacted by such reservation(s);
- (vi) Residents of restricted units must be offered the same access to communal amenities as residents of market-rate units within the same affordable development. Examples of communal amenities include, but are not limited to, community pools, fitness and recreation centers, playgrounds, common rooms and outdoor spaces, and building entrances and exits;
- (vii) Each bedroom in each restricted unit must have at least one window; and

(viii) Restricted units must include adequate air conditioning and heating.

§10. CONTROL PERIODS FOR RESTRICTED OWNERSHIP UNITS AND ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS.

- (a) Control periods for restricted ownership units shall be in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.5 and -26.6, as may be amended and supplemented. Each restricted ownership unit shall remain subject to the requirements of this ordinance until the municipal obligation to maintain controls under UHAC has expired.
- (b) The deed restriction and mortgage lien securing the affordability controls for restricted ownership units shall be in the form required by UHAC and shall be recorded as a first or second lien on the property, as required by UHAC.
- (c) The administrative agent shall have the responsibility to ensure that deed restrictions, mortgage liens, and all other affordability controls required by UHAC and this ordinance are properly executed and recorded and shall monitor compliance.
- (d) Enforcement mechanisms, including but not limited to restrictions on refinancing, capital improvements, resale, and transfer, shall be in accordance with UHAC.

§11. RESTRICTIONS FOR RESTRICTED OWNERSHIP UNITS, HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION FEES AND RESALE PRICES.

- (a) Price restrictions and resale prices for restricted ownership units shall be governed by N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.6 and -26.7, as may be amended and supplemented.
- (b) Homeowner association fees for restricted ownership units shall be treated in accordance with UHAC, and the administrative agent shall approve homeowner association fee schedules to ensure that affordability is maintained.
- (c) The administrative agent shall establish resale prices for restricted ownership units based upon the formula required by UHAC and this ordinance.

§12. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO RESTRICTED OWNERSHIP UNITS.

- (a) The administrative agent shall review and approve requests for capital improvements by owners of restricted ownership units prior to the commencement of the improvements, consistent with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.9.
- (b) Eligible capital improvements and treatment of capital improvement costs in calculating resale prices shall be as set forth in UHAC and this ordinance.

§13. CONTROL PERIODS FOR RESTRICTED RENTAL UNITS.

- (a) Control periods for restricted rental units shall be in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.11 and -26.12, as may be amended and supplemented.
- (b) Each restricted rental unit shall remain subject to the requirements of this ordinance until the municipal obligation to maintain controls under UHAC has expired.

§14. RENT RESTRICTIONS FOR RENTAL UNITS.

- (a) Rent restrictions for restricted rental units shall be governed by N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.13, as may be amended and supplemented.
- (b) Annual increases in rents shall be consistent with UHAC and any applicable settlement agreements or court orders.
- (c) The administrative agent shall annually review and approve proposed rent increases for restricted rental units.

§15. TENANT INCOME ELIGIBILITY.

- (a) Tenant income eligibility shall be in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.14, as may be amended and supplemented, and shall be determined as follows:
 - (1) Very low-income rental units shall be reserved for households with a gross household income less than or equal to 30 percent of regional median income.
 - (2) Low-income rental units shall be reserved for households with a gross household income less than or equal to 50 percent of regional median income.
 - (3) Moderate-income rental units shall be reserved for households with a gross household income less than or equal to 80 percent of regional median income.
- (b) The administrative agent shall certify a household as eligible for a restricted rental unit when the household satisfies UHAC income eligibility requirements, and the proposed rent does not exceed applicable affordability standards.

§16. ADMINISTRATION.

- (a) The position of municipal housing liaison (“MHL”) for Stockton shall be established at the time affordable housing units are proposed, and shall be appointed by resolution or other appropriate action.
- (b) The MHL must be either a full-time or part-time employee of Stockton and shall meet all qualification and training requirements imposed by the State.
- (c) The MHL shall be responsible for oversight and administration of the affordable housing program for Stockton, including but not limited to:

- (1) Serving as the Borough's primary point of contact for all inquiries from the State, affordable housing providers, administrative agents, and interested households;
- (2) Coordinating the implementation of the affirmative marketing plan and affordability controls;
- (3) Supervising any contracted administrative agent;
- (4) Monitoring the status of all restricted units in Stockton's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan;

(5) Preparing monitoring and reporting forms as required by the State or the court. AHMS access may be authorized only by the MHL (or designee who must be a municipal employee); and

(6) Where applicable, providing the administrative agent with the municipal operating manual(s), Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and ordinances.

(d) Stockton shall, as may be required, appoint one or more administrative agents for ownership units and one or more administrative agents for rental units, which may or may not be the individual(s) or entity(ies), to carry out the responsibilities of an administrative agent as set forth in UHAC and this ordinance.

§17. ENFORCEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING REGULATIONS.

- (a) The provisions of this ordinance shall be enforceable by Stockton, the State, or any other party entitled by law to enforce affordable housing controls, in accordance with UHAC, the Fair Housing Act, and applicable case law.
- (b) A violation of the requirements of this ordinance, including but not limited to failure to file required reports, failure to comply with affirmative marketing requirements, or unauthorized transfer or rental of a restricted unit, shall be subject to enforcement action, which may include legal or equitable relief, fines, or other remedies as authorized by law.
- (c) Stockton may, to the extent permitted by law, pursue any remedies available at law or in equity to enforce the provisions of this ordinance, UHAC regulations, and any deed restriction or mortgage instrument used to secure affordability controls.

§18. APPEALS.

Appeals from all decisions of an administrative agent designated pursuant to this ordinance shall be filed in writing to the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program or with the Superior Court of New Jersey or such other body or agency as may be authorized by law.

§19. REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

- (a) All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this ordinance are repealed as to such inconsistencies.
- (b) If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.
- (c) This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication as provided by law.

RESOLUTIONS

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Meltzer to approve Resolution 2026-29
Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Stockton Borough Council Resolution 2026-29

Authoring the Borough of Stockton to Participate in the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Fiscal Grant Cycle FY 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026)

WHEREAS, the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse in communities throughout New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey recognizes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages; and therefore, has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent such abuses in our community; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has applied for funding to the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the County of Hunterdon.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey hereby recognizes the following:

1. The Borough Council does hereby authorize execution of a Letter of Agreement for the South Hunterdon Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2026 in the amount of:

DEDR	\$ <u>3,980.00</u>
Cash Match	\$ <u>995.00</u>
In-Kind	\$ <u>2,985.00</u>

2. The Borough Council acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Gilinger to approve Resolution 2026-30

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2026-30

WHEREAS, various 2025 bills have been presented for payment this year, which bills were not covered by order number and/or recorded at the time of transfers between the 2025 Budget Appropriation Reserve in the last two months of 2025; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-59 provides that all unexpended balances carried forward after the close of the year are available, until lapsed at the close of the succeeding year, to meet specific claims, commitments or contracts incurred during the preceding fiscal year, and allow transfers to be made from unexpended balances which are expected to be insufficient during the first three months of the succeeding year; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:4-59, that the Chief Financial Officer is hereby authorized to make the transfers listed below:

From	Amount	To	Amount
Engineering (2025)	17,600.00	Governing Body O/E (2025)	4,000.00
		Legal Services (2025)	9,500.00
		Contracted Services –Storm (2025)	1,400.00
		Affordable Housing (2025)	2,700.00
Total	17,600.00	Total	17,600.00

PAYMENT OF BILLS AND VOUCHERS

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Brown to approve Resolution 2026-31

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger, Mann and Meltzer

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Stockton Borough Council
Resolution 2026-31
Authorizing Payment of Municipal Obligations

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton find and declare that certain municipal obligations have come due and are now payable; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton further find and declare that said obligations have been itemized on the annexed schedules, which are hereby attached and deemed part of this Resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey does hereby authorize payment of said municipal obligations, in accordance with the recommendations of the Chief Financial Officer and the Treasurer in the amount of \$90,301.92

MAYOR'S REPORT, BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings Committee: Jacob Gilinger (Chair), reported on the Borough Hall and the school. They are mostly assessing what needs to be tackled and maintenance. They are working those things out along with accessible improvements and upkeep to buildings.

Community Outreach Committee: Nina Brander (Chair) stated that there is not much to report. She spoke with Mayor Lipsen and Mann and looks forward to finalizing plans for the Red Cross blood drive and the Fourth of July plans. She will dive into this more in the next month or so.

Grounds Committee: Kate Meltzer (Chair) stated that this past December she was working with Colliers Engineer with revisiting the (park/playground) master plan and updating the designs from 2021. They are taking in any feedback and will have another draft in the next month. Reported that they did receive the 2025 grant.

Infrastructure Committee (Water & Sewer/Stormwater/Streets): William Brown stated that they are continuing to make progress. They are in discussions about renovations to the well number 4 tank and hope to move forward with those. They do have a repair that they are going to make up there that will happen as soon as the weather permits. They are also continuing to deal with some of the leaks in town. Over the summer, last year, spring and summer and into the fall, they did quite a bit of leak detection, a lot of which was free. They have identified leaks on private properties and on one, the borough has cut the water off to a house that no one is residing in yet, and, once somebody takes up residence again, we'll be able to turn on the water once that leak is fixed. There's another leak where the property owner, again, is waiting for warmer weather. Brown explained that they are making plans to do a system-wide leak detection with a prominent firm in the Northeast. Brown reported on the latest leak and stated that it was on the corner of Routes 523 and 29.

Mayor Lipsen reported that they did have a long infrastructure meeting. They are making great strides with new staff and are building a more efficient operational structure. They also completed some more sign upgrades on Bridge Street; there are now speed limit signs and there are new pedestrian crosswalk signs. The in-road signs are positioned to be less likely to be knocked over by trucks. Mayor Lipsen also thanked the New Jersey Department of Transportation in replacing the ADA crosswalk pad, right on the corner of Bridge Street and Main Street, in front of the Starving Artist Cafe.

Mayor Lipsen reported on the snow clearing and stated that there is a salt shortage, so a lot of municipalities in Hunterdon County are coming up short on salt. Mayor Lipsen added that they are lucky that the borough's contractor did have plenty of salt for this storm. There's a possible storm coming out next week, so things might become a little bit tight, so we're already looking for sources of salt. Also today, due to the amount of snow, we had our Public Works Advisor direct the contractor to use a skid steer, which is like a small, front loader to clear snow out of the downtown, to clear out the downtown parking. Mayor Lipsen stated that he went down there for several hours today to coordinate and oversee the progress. They knocked on doors and had residents move their cars so that it could be more effective, in order to get the downtown back up and running again. Mayor Lipsen stated that an idea for future storms would be to direct residents to park in one area so that Bridge Street and Railroad Avenue could be more easily and effectively cleared. It could be done as a suggestion or an ordinance could be created to require people to park in certain areas when big storms are coming. Mann stated that he likes the idea of communication ideas and giving people a chance to do the right thing.

Personnel, Finance, & Operations Committee: Matthew Fisher (Chair) stated that they applied for the Hunterdon County Economic Development Grant to digitize the borough's land use ordinances and will have updates soon.

Public Safety Committee: (Police, Fire, OEM): Aaron Lipsen (Chair) stated that as he mentioned earlier in the meeting, they did have a committee meeting, and we're going to be working on finalizing the Emergency Operation Plan. They are also going to be looking from many different angles at what we can do to maximize public safety related to fires. Stated that he talked to the Delaware Township fire chief several times, and many other firefighters. He also spoke with the state police and multiple residents related to the fire incident. Mayor Lipsen stated that hopefully they can use it as a learning opportunity to make sure that they are doing the best job that they can do.

Stockton School Committee: Michael Mann (Chair) stated that the committee met with the architect on Saturday and reviewed some of the plans and studies on the school. Stated that it looks like it will take a while to process everything. He is hoping to move on it. The architect's work is largely through a grant with the State of New Jersey and the committee will be looking for building grants once they figure out where to go.

Mayor's Report and Council Comments:

Brown thanked the Eckards on the volunteer work they are doing with OEM. He appreciates it and it's an important role and important to give them every thanks due to them.

Mayor Lipsen thanked members of council who have had multiple meetings and lots of people working hard, and the new council members are being brought up to speed and working hard.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment.

Michael Odenwald stated kudos to Mayor Lipsen for stewarding the snow removal and stated there are times your civic leadership just stands above everything else, and when it comes to natural disasters, or problems, or scenarios that requires someone jumping in, you always do, so I do want to recognize that and stated thank you. Inquired about the amount the borough pays for fire protection and asked what it would cost for Lambertville. Mr. Odenwald went on to discuss costs and solutions and suggested having an email string for a communication perspective. Stated that things need to be put forward to the public with regard to the school and grants. Mr. Odenwald discussed the borough's opt-in for a cannabis dispensary and his economic development plan. Mr. Odenwald brought up the two applications that were denied for not meeting the minimum score and the assistance of outside consultants. Mr. Odenwald went on to bring up his property at 25 Risler and how it is properly zoned and commercially zoned offering off street parking and EV Charging. Stated that his generous offer to the town will be discussed in executive session.

Adrienne Walsh thanked Brown for his comment about educating business owners and their employees on how to respond to some of these fires. Ms. Walsh stated that for this instance, the Shell station was unattended at the time and wants to make sure that there is someone there that is responsible. The mechanic who deals with emergency type situations was not there. Added that unless the whole town gets educated on how to respond to something that's happening in the commercial district and stated that she thinks that more should be done. Ms. Walsh asked what options the borough is going to consider and when would be a good time to follow up with the committee.

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Lipsen closed the floor to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 8:04 PM

A motion by Brown, seconded by Mann to approve a resolution to go into executive session, all were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2026-32**AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOORUGH OF STOCKTON
TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION UNDER THE OPEN PUBLIC
MEETINGS ACT (N.J.S.A. 10:4-13)**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Mayor and Council will now convene into an executive (closed) session that will be limited only to consideration of an item or items with respect to which the public may be excluded pursuant to section 7b. of the Open Public Meetings Act.
2. The general nature of the subject or subjects to be discussed in said session are as follows:

- Cannabis Applications – Potential litigation, contract negotiations and matters falling within the attorney-client privilege
- Matters involving the purchase, lease or acquisition of real property
- Contract negotiations – shared services for zoning officer

3. The matters discussed will be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Mayor Lipsen intermittently informed the public about extending executive session for more time for discussions.

A motion by Mann and seconded by Brown to return to regular session was unanimously approved by voice vote.

ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action is being taken.

NEXT MEETING

Mayor Lipsen announced the next regular meeting is February 9, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mann and seconded by Gilinger to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM.

Laurie A. Courter

Laurie A. Courter, Borough Clerk