



## **STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Date: May 18, 2026 7:00 P.M.

Held through Zoom

---

Mayor Aaron Lipsen called the regular meeting of the Stockton Borough Council to order on May 18, 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:**

### **ROLL CALL**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Gilinger and seconded by Fisher to approve the following minutes: March 26, 2027

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Moving Veterans Memorial Monument: Mayor Lipsen reported that at the last Planning Board meeting, there was a change of use approved for a commercial enterprise at the former Stockton Fire Company building. The building will now be used as a wellness center for exercise, also as a shared office space, and then on weekends, a craft market. At that location is the Veterans Memorial. The fire company will be removing the Firepersons' Memorial, and they're going to move it up to the Delaware Township Fire Company.

The fire company will not be moving the Veterans Memorial. The new owner of the property has agreed to protect it, but not maintain it. So it's a council option to maintain it where it is, not maintain it, or possibly move the Veterans Memorial to the Stockton Playground Park, or whatever other location the Council would like, such as the Stockton School, or in front of Borough Hall.. Brown stated to consider moving it to the park where there is another memorial and it can be consolidated to one site. Brander stated she would be curious to know the cost of all the options so that we consider them and compare them fully. Gilinger added that he thinks it's good to look at the cost and supports relocating the memorial to the park. Fisher agreed with the park location. Mayor Lipsen responded that he will ask the public works advisor to get an estimate on the moving costs.

Mayor Lipsen at this time recused himself and turned meeting over to Brown.

- **Attorney Discussion: Updates to the animals/livestock ordinance:** Brown stated that this has been an issue that has been brought to council and they are dealing with a very outdated ordinance. Attorney Maddox explained the recent issue that was brought to the planning board with concerns over roosters. The most current ordinance is from 1953. Concerns raised also relate to noise from animals. Attorney Maddox stated this is something the borough can regulate and prohibit the keeping of roosters and it can allow them on certain types of properties, it can also regulate chickens and other livestock. The borough, however, cannot regulate commercial farms having livestock on their property. Brown commented on the close proximity of borough properties to one another and stated that it would be beneficial to impose regulations that are compatible to the close proximity. Gilinger inquired if there were a lot of chickens that this has become a recent issue. Lengthy discussions of roosters and their noise they create ensued.

Mayor Lipsen at this point re-took the chair

- **Stockton Borough Community Event:** Mayor Lipsen reported he spoke with the OEM Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator to help organize a community day at the Stockton Playground. They can raise the new flag and dedicate benches. Mayor Lipsen stated he purchased plaques for some of the notable people, one was a volunteer and the other one was the life partner of another volunteer. Mayor Lipsen stated that it's just a concept and requested council approval before he proceeds. Concepts included recreational activities, amplified music, and food. It was the consensus of council to go ahead with the planning for Community Day. Mayor Lipsen states that right now it is tentative, and no guarantees.

### **OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT – PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment

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

**ORDINANCE 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2026-09, all were in favor.

Discussion: Brown stated they had some discussion of this at the last meeting, where essentially this is kind of a placeholder until the new budget is adopted, and keeps us on the budgetary straight and narrow. Brown added that he doesn't have any objections to it.

Motion to close the public hearing made by Gilinger and seconded by Brown, all were in favor.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to adopt Ordinance 2026-09

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Borough of Stockton  
Ordinance No. 2026-09  
CALENDAR YEAR 2026 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED MUNICIPAL BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION  
LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.4)**

**WHEREAS**, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S. 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget up to 2% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton in the County of Hunterdon finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2026 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Council hereby determines that a 3.5% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$8,604.14 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

**WHEREAS** the Borough Council hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, in the County of Hunterdon, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively

concurring, that, in the CY 2026 budget year, the final appropriations of the Borough of Stockton shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$20,076.33, and that the CY 2026 municipal budget for the Borough of Stockton be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and,

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to approve Resolution 2026-61.

Discussions ensued regarding the Tax Assessor appointment, coming from Delaware Township and being an excellent pick.

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

### **RESOLUTION 2026-61**

#### **Authorizing Execution of Shared Services Agreement – Tax Assessor**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Stockton has a need for a Tax Assessor; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Delaware Tax Assessor is available to assist the Borough of Stockton with performance and provisions of the requirements of the Tax Assessor position per statutes and guidelines; and

**WHEREAS**, in enacting the “Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act,” N.J.S.A. §40A:65-1 et seq., the New Jersey Legislature has permitted municipalities to enter into agreements to provide or receive services to/from one another as a means to reduce municipal expenses; and

**WHEREAS**, accordingly, the Township of Delaware and Borough of Stockton desire to enter into this Interlocal Shared Services Agreement (“Agreement”) through which the Delaware Township Tax Assessor shall serve as Tax Assessor for the Borough of Stockton and the Township of Delaware.

**WHEREAS**, said agreement shall be effective for a period of two (2) years, commencing June 1, 2026 and terminating on May 31, 2028; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that the Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to execute an Interlocal Shared Services Agreement with the Township of Delaware for Tax Assessor services; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Interlocal Shared Services Agreement shall take effect upon the adoption of appropriate resolutions by all the parties thereto, and execution of agreements authorized thereunder as set forth in the agreement.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to approve Resolution 2026-62.

Discussions of the work history and historical knowledge Mr. Ent provided to the borough ensued and how Mr. Ent will remain on as an advisor for his knowledge of the water system and is not the primary contact anymore.

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

#### **RESOLUTION 2026-62**

#### **RESOLUTION HIRING ROBERT ENT TO PROVIDE AS-NEEDED, AS-DIRECTED SERVICES TO THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON IN CONNECTION WITH PUBLIC WORKS AND THE WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Stockton has a need to hire a person to provide as-needed, as-directed services to the Borough in connection with public works and the water and sewer systems, and wish to hire Robert Ent to this position based on his extensive experience working for the Borough for many years in these areas.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, that, Robert Ent is hereby hired to provide as-needed services to the Borough of Stockton in connection with public works and the water and sewer systems, and to the position of “Public Works Assistant Advisor” at the pay rate of \$55.00/per hour, on an as-needed, as-directed basis.

Mayor Lipsen brought forth Mr. Zimmerman, borough auditor, and CFO Diane McDaniel to speak on the 2026 budget.

Motion made by Gilinger and seconded by Brown to approve Resolution 2026-63.

Discussion:

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Borough of Stockton  
Resolution #2026-63  
Authorizing Budget To Be Read by Title Only at Public Hearing**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:4 8(1), the budget may be read at the public hearing by its title when a complete copy of the approved budget has been made available for public inspection and to each person upon request at least one week prior to the date of the hearing and at the hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, these conditions have been met.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Borough of Stockton Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that the budget shall be read by title only.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to open the public hearing for the 2026 Budget, all were in favor.

Comments:

CFO Diane McDaniel reviewed the budget and the one cent increase explaining the impact to a home in the borough assessed at \$475,000 would pay an increase of \$56 annually. Ms. McDaniel also reviewed the revenues and appropriations for the borough. Ms. McDaniel reported that the borough is fortunate to not have to pay the rising costs of health insurance for its employees, since all of the employees are part-time and added that they are a mighty team. Mr. Zimmerman added that the borough is well within their appropriation and levy caps and stated that the budget is well within those limits and this budget can be moved to adoption. Brown inquired about the two caps and stated that it's his understanding the conceptual checks and balances that overlay the budget. Mr. Zimmerman went into detail the explanations of the two caps.

Hearing no further comments from council or the public, motion made by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to close the public comment portion, all were in favor.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to approve Resolution 2026-64

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Borough of Stockton  
Resolution 2026-64  
Adopt 2026 Budget**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that the budget hereinbefore set forth is hereby adopted and shall constitute an appropriation

for the purposes stated of the sums therein set forth as appropriations, and authorization of the amount of:

- (a) \$587,662.83 (item 2 below) for municipal purposes
- (d) \$ 11,876.00 (sheet 43) Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Levy

RECORDED VOTE:	Ayes	Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger	Nays	None
	Abstained	None	Absent	Mann, Meltzer

**SUMMARY OF REVENUES**

1. General Revenues	
Surplus Anticipated	\$223,000.00
Miscellaneous Revenues Anticipated	\$567,930.36
Receipts from Delinquent Taxes	\$1,705.91
2. Amount to be raised by taxation for Municipal Purposes	\$587,662.83
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$1,380,299.10</b>

**SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS**

5. General Appropriations	
Within "CAPS"	
(a&b) Operations Including Contingent	\$596,379.56
(e) Deferred Charges and Statutory Expenditures - Municipal	\$13,721.00
Excluded from "CAPS"	
(a) Operations – Total Operations Excluded from "CAPS"	\$112,597.20
(c) Capital Improvements	\$150,000.00
(d) Municipal Debt Service	\$94,431.09
(e) Deferred Charges -Municipal	278,170.25
(m) Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	\$135,000.00
<b>TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>	<b>\$1,380,299.10</b>

It is hereby certified that the within budget is a true copy of the budget finally adopted by resolution of the Governing Body on the 18th day of May 2026. It is further certified that each item of revenue and appropriation is set forth in the same amount and by the same title as appeared in the 2026 approved budget and all amendments thereto, if any, which have been previously approved by the Director of Local Government Services.

Mayor Lipsen gave thanks to Mr. Zimmerman and CFO Diane McDaniel on the great work they do for the borough and asked for a standing ovation for Ms. McDaniel.

Motion made by Gilinger and seconded by Brander to approve Resolution 2026-65

Discussion: CFO McDaniel explained what a self-exam is with regards to the budget, which is the borough reviewing itself. The state reviews the budget every third year.

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Borough of Stockton  
Resolution 2026-65  
Local Budget Examination**

**WHEREAS**, NJSA 40A:4-78b has authorized the Local Finance Board to adopt rules that permit municipalities in sound fiscal condition to assume the responsibility, normally granted to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, of conducting the annual budget examination: and

**WHEREAS**, NJAC 5:30-7 was adopted by the Local Finance Board on February 11, 1997; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to NJAC 5:30-7.2 thru 7.5 the Borough of Stockton has been declared eligible to participate in the program by the Division of Local Government Services, and the Chief Financial Officer has determined that the Township meets the necessary conditions to participate in the program for the 2026 budget year.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Borough of Stockton, Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that the in accordance with NJAC 5:307.6a & b and based upon the Chief Financial Officer's certification, the governing body has found the budget has met the following requirements:

1. That with reference to the following items, the amounts have been calculated pursuant to law and appropriated as such in the budget:
  - a. Payment of interest and debt redemption charges
  - b. Deferred charges and statutory expenditures
  - c. Cash deficit of preceding year
  - d. Reserve for uncollected taxes
  - e. Other reserves and non-disbursement items
  - f. Any inclusions of amounts required for school purposes
2. That the provisions relating to limitation on increases of appropriations pursuant to NJSA 40A:4-45.2 and appropriations for exceptions to limits on appropriations found at 40A:445.3 et seq. are fully met (Complies with the "CAP" law).

3. That the budget is in such form, arrangement, and content as required by the Local Budget Law and NJAC 5:30-4 and 5:30-5.
4. That pursuant to the Local Budget Law:
  - a. All estimates of revenue are reasonable, accurate, and correctly stated
  - b. Items of appropriation are properly set forth
  - c. In itemization, form, arrangement, and content the budget will permit the exercise of the comptroller function within the municipality
5. The budget and associated amendments have been introduced, publicly advertised, and adopted in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Budget Law, except that failure to meet the deadlines of NJSA 40A:4-5 shall not prevent such certification.
6. That all other applicable statutory requirements have been fulfilled.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

**CERTIFICATION OF APPROVED BUDGET**

It is hereby certified that the Approved Budget complies with the requirements of law and approval is given pursuant to NJSA 40A:4-78b and NJAC 5:30-7.

It is further certified that the municipality has met the eligibility requirements of NJAC 5:30-7.4 and 7.5, and that I, as Chief Financial Officer, have completed the local examination in compliance with NJAC 5:307.6.

---

Diane McDaniel  
CFO

**PAYMENT OF BILLS AND VOUCHERS**

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Brander to approve Resolution 2026-62

Roll call: Brander, Brown, Fisher, Gilinger.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Resolution 2026-66  
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 \$171,656.64

**MAYOR'S REPORT, BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Buildings Committee:** Gilinger stated nothing new to report. Mayor Lipsen stated he installed the air conditioner at borough hall and would like permission to purchase a new one. Council supported the request.

**Infrastructure Committee:** Brown gave the following report: we're buying 50 new water meters, Steve and Mike and Harry and sometimes Justin are going around. They have their vests, they have their t-shirts, they have their county-issued IDs. They're marked on their vests as Stockton Water Department, so they're quite recognizable. They're checking meters, they're checking service lines, and where they can, they are replacing existing water meters. If you see them walking around the side of your house, that's the Stockton Water Department, and the feedback we've had from folks whose places they've gone to has been very good. Mayor Lipsen added the following: We are in place to move forward with a couple of other projects for the next couple of months that we've been discussing for a while. The sewer infiltration study should be ready soon. We're talking to the contractor on that one. The valve project should be done within the month. It's going to be a bigger, more expensive one, and we're doing our best to keep it as low as possible. They are also looking forward to putting together some new water policies for the water system, for people that need meter replacements and other different situations.

**Roads:** Mayor Lipsen reported the DOT did accept our ordinance to lower the weight limit on Bridge Street. All we need are signs now to begin enforcing that, so that's a whole other discussion that we

can work on this summer to look at how we want the signs to look, where we want to put them, but that'll be handled by the Infrastructure Committee and public works advisor. We received a DOT grant to re-surface Bridge Street and both Railroad Avenues. When we had talked to the engineer, we were thinking that we could explore the right-of-way with the D&R Canal Commission to improve parking on the Railroad Avenues, either by angled parking or some other permutation to increase parking. That's something that's going to take some time and some exploration. Mayor Lipsen stated the engineer suggests that in the first phase of the project, we complete the resurfacing of Bridge Street entirely. It would be improving the curbs, fixing some sidewalk areas, making the crosswalks more visible. One option would be to have the crosswalks a different color of pavement, rather than just painted lines on the streets. All those details would be forthcoming, but the idea would be to start with Bridge Street to use an extra year to explore the different options for adding parking on the two Railroad Avenues. Mayor Lipsen requested the approval of Council to have the engineer prepare a resolution for the next meeting. Brown added that he thinks it is worth the delay to explore more parking spaces on Railroad Avenue. There were no objections heard by the council.

**Personnel, Finance, & Operations Committee:** Mayor Lipsen gave an update on the following: They are bringing in the new zoning officer with Lambertville, Paul Hartifer. He also has an assistant. The mayor and staff have held meetings and are working out the details of how to roll that out and how to put that on the website. Mayor Lipsen apologized for the delay of the town mailer and stated the he wanted the town mailer to reflect the new information such as the new Deputy Clerk, Ms. Franklin, and the new zoning officer. The staff is also working on the website updates. Ms. Franklin is moving forward with the organizing of the office, disposing of obsolete documents that are no longer used, and having the office operate a lot more efficiently.

**Public Safety Committee:** Mayor Lipsen stated that they're still looking for a second place for a shelter in the case of a crisis; at this time they have borough hall. They will continue looking into other options.

**Stockton School Committee:** Mayor Lipsen reported that they have good news. The New Jersey Historic Trust did accept our application and our Preservation Plan. That doesn't mean they're definitely going to give us additional funding, but it is a good sign

**Community Outreach:** Mayor Lipsen reported that on Memorial Day, the Delaware Township Fire Company will be doing one last celebration at the former Stockton Firehouse. The Memorial Day ceremony will begin at 11:30 a.m. They'll have food, and it's a very nice, maybe one hour long ceremony, so if council members and members of the public can attend, this will be fairly historic, because it's probably going to be the last one there.

And also, the Community group has the blood drive at the Delaware Township School on Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 12pm until 5pm.

### **OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment.

Eileen Foley, 11 Bridge St., stated it was a good idea to look into doing an ordinance about regulating foul. Inquired about the zoning officer sharing with Lambertville and asked if Stockton will be well represented. Mayor Lipsen stated that the borough looked at a lot of options and they chose to use the Lambertville zoning officer because he is experienced and well qualified. He also does Frenchtown,

and he came with a good recommendations. They interviewed him and the big benefit is that he is nearby in the office four days a week. Stated that Stockton residents will need to make an appointment to go there, due to him being out of the office at times. Mayor Lipsen also mentioned the street sweeping shared service with Lambertville.

Mayor Lipsen stated that the wood pile on Bridge Street would hopefully be removed soon.. Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Lipsen closed the floor to public comment.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion by Brown, seconded by Gilinger to approve a resolution to go into executive session at 8:23 PM, all were in favor.

#### **RESOLUTION 2026-67**

#### **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:
  - Anticipated/pending contract negotiations with water engineering firm(s), N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(7)
  - 
  -
3. The matters discussed will be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

A motion by Brown and seconded by Gilinger to return to regular session at 8:52 PM 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 June 15, 2026.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.

*Laurie A. Courter*

---

Laurie A. Courter, Borough Clerk