

MINUTES
BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING
March 26, 2025
7:00 PM
MAYOR BARSA

COUNCILMAN ASCOLESE	COUNCILMAN BRIZZOLARA
COUNCILMAN CONDOLEO	COUNCILMAN PRESIDENT FOSCHINO
COUNCILWOMAN HAUSMANN	COUNCILMAN KIM

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Norwood was held at Borough Hall on the above date.

Mayor Barsa called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and led those in attendance in a salute to the American Flag and asked for a moment of silence.

Mayor Barsa stated:

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, setting forth the time, date, place and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in the Record and Star Ledger, filing a copy in the Borough Clerk’s office, and posting on the bulletin board.”

ROLL CALL OF THE COUNCIL

Roll Call:	Mayor Barsa	Present
	Councilman Ascolese	Present
	Councilman Brizzolara	Present
	Councilman Condoleo	Present
	Councilman President Foschino	Present
	Councilwoman Hausmann	Present
	Councilman Kim	Present

CORRESPONDENCE

Engineer’s March Report

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

1. Ordinance 2025:03 Establishing Jones Court Road Dedication

Public Hearing for Ordinance 2025:03 will be on April 9, 2025

The mayor read the ordinance by title. Motion by Councilman Ascolese, second by Councilman Condoleo, that Ordinance 2025:03 be introduced on first reading, with a public hearing on April 9, 2025.

There being six (6) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2025:03 was approved

PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCES:

Ordinance 2025:02 - Ordinance Authorizing an Special Emergency Appropriation for Borough Reassessment

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Ascolese to open the meeting to the public for comments concerning this ordinance. All Council Members present voted for the motion.

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Condoleo to close the meeting to the public. It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Condoleo to approve Ordinance 2025:02

On the roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Ascolese, Brizzolara, Condoleo, Foschino, Hausmann, Kim

Absent: None

Nays: None

There being six (6) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2025:02 was approved

CONSENT AGENDA

Matters listed below are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion of the Council and one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests an item be removed.

Approval of the Following Minutes:

March 12, 2025 Mayor & Council Meeting

Approval of the following Resolutions:

2025-71 Resolution Authorizing Redemption of Tax Title Lien

2025:72 Resolution Certifying Members of The Norwood Fire Department No. 1
Who Successfully Qualified for The L.O.S.A.P. Incentive Program
2025:73 Resolution Authorizing 2025 Appropriation Reserve Transfers
2025:74 Resolution for Special Emergency and Financing of Same
(N.J.S.A.40a:4-53)
2025:75 Payment of Vouchers
2025:76 Resolution of The Borough of Norwood, Bergen County, New Jersey
Supporting RevolutionNJ
2025:77 Grantee Authorizing Resolution for Kennedy Field 2020
2025:78 Grantee Authorizing Resolution for Kennedy Field 2022
2025:79 Grantee Authorizing Resolution for Kennedy Field 2023
2025:80 Grantee Authorizing Resolution for Kennedy Field 2024
2025:81 Resolution Appointing Appraisal Systems, Inc. for Reassessment Services
2025:82 Resolution of The Borough of Norwood Extending The 2025 Budget -
Introduction and Adoption Dates

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Condoleo to approve the amended Consent Agenda and that March 12, 2025 Mayor & Council Meeting minutes be approved for content and release. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2025 Budget

Councilman Condoleo gave a brief description of the documents that were left for the governing body on the dais. At this time there is a 4.9% increase. This includes using money from the surplus. He suggests building a contingency reserve to maintain the surplus. There are few items outstanding with the library. The library committee needs confirmation that they can increase the rent. All departments were asked to hold to no more than a 2% increase. The finance committee is also looking to reduce the capital. The plan is to go into the year with \$150,000 to \$180,000 in reserves. A resolution was passed tonight to ask for an extension to introduce the budget on April 9th.

Councilman Kim asked if the municipal tax rate proposed number would be increase by 13%-15%. Councilman Condoleo said yes, for the municipal rate.

Council President Foschino asked why there was a large increase to be apart of BCCLS. Councilman Condoleo said our library is an association and to stay in BCCLS we have to fund the library based on the formula, 1/3 of a million. The Borough is considering changing to a municipal library, research is ongoing. Mayor Barsa said the assessment has to do with real estate values. As the real estate

values increase the Borough's assessment increases. Council President asked what the Borough pays to BCCLS. Mayor Barsa said it is about \$40,000.00. Councilman Ascolese asked why the correlation is based on home values. The cost of operating the library does not go up because home values go up. Councilwoman Hausmann asked if the Borough could pay for BCCLS directly instead of giving the library the funds. Councilman Brizzolara asked who decides to join BCCLS. Mayor Barsa said the Library Board makes that decision.

Councilman Brizzolara asked what needs to be done to get to a 3.9% increase. Councilman Condoleo said about \$98,000.00 is a percent. Council President asked what is the right number for a town the size of Norwood to have. Mr. Battaglia said about 13% of the budget should be in surplus. Mr. Battaglia said the Borough will use \$190,000 this year from surplus.

Councilman Condoleo thanked Mr. Loverich for finding about \$200,000.00 in unused capital to be reappropriated for new capital purchases.

Councilman Brizzolara said the police budget is \$300,000 over actual in salaries compared to last year. Mayor Barsa said there is the 4% increase of the base and promotions. There are also steps for each officer. Also, the new Chief was only budgeted for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year. Mr. Battaglia agreed with Mayor Barsa that it is the 4% increase as well as the officers going up in steps and promotions and the new hirer. Mr. Battaglia said this number also includes the crossing guards and projected overtime. Mayor Barsa said there will be additional money coming in due to the increase being charged for police overtime. Mayor Barsa said there was no harm to take the \$98,000 needed to lower the increase to 3.9% from the surplus. Mr. Battaglia said every year that amount would then be needed to stay where we are. The surplus will decrease and taxes will need to be raised. It could take four or five years before that happens.

Councilman Brizzolara said the DPW salary and wages had a large increase, about \$100,000 over. Mr. Battaglia said he budgeted for what was spent last year, including the 4% increase. Council President said there will be two members out this year for six weeks for paternity leave but he does not see where there would be a need to have another \$100,000 in wages. Mr. Battaglia said he had \$64,000 in wages for the senior van driver and two part time employees. Council President said they were down three men during leaf season last year and only had to work one Saturday. He does not feel more help is needed.

Councilman Brizzolara asked if the gas natural/propane can be brought down further. Mr. Battaglia said he look at the five year sheets and it has been decreasing

each year. Councilman Condoleo asked to see how much has been spent on gas so far this year.

Councilman Brizzolara asked why unemployment insurance went up. Mr. Battaglia said the state stopped subsidizing.

Councilwoman Hausmann asked if the Environmental Commission budget would go back up to \$10,000. The Environmental Commission has plan to improve the garden and they need the funds. They also pay historians to conduct hikes. Mayor Barsa said we need to see all the numbers before making a final decision. Council President Foschino said the schools will also have an increase. He also believes that if there is left over capital funds no department can be asking for new capital. The use from prior capital requests can be changed.

Councilwoman Hausmann asked what the Livingston Street beautification change is for, possible the flowers. Why its ok to spend \$50,000 on flowers. Councilman Brizzolara said last year \$18,000 was spent, why such a large increase. Mayor Barsa said the \$50,000 is not just for flowers, its for all of Livingston Street.

Mayor Barsa said we need to know what the increase will be for the schools. Councilman Kim suggests taking the items discussed tonight and have a separate meeting to discuss them in detail.

Councilman Condoleo asked to an idea of what the total capital will be. Council President Foschino asked for a list from all department heads for their capital requests.

Bench Applications

Mayor Barsa said there are three applications for the bench engraving. Mr. Padovano said there was one from the Fire Company, Samantha Fruhling, and Richard Sposa.

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann to approve the three bench applications. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Police Department Touch A Truck

Councilman Ascolese said the Police Department would like to host a Touch a Truck event for the families to attend. There would be local, county, and private industry trucks and other equipment and vendors. It would take place in the Borough Hall lot. Councilman Brizzolara suggested calling Sarah Jones from PSE&G. Mr. Padovano said the date would be May 4th.

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Ascolese to approve the approve the Touch a Truck event hosted by the Norwood Police Department on May 4th. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

4 Way Stop Signs

Mr. Padovano said he received an email from the Chief Federici that advises that the officers canvases the area asking residents where they would like to see 4 way stop signs. There are three locations that warranted 4 way stop signs;

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Council President Foschino to approve the approve the installation of the 4 Way stop signs at the recommended intersections. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Background Checks

Mr. Corrison said there will be a combined baseball team with Closter. Closter does not have the same requirements for their coaches that Norwood has. It is his recommendation to amend the Norwood ordinance to allow the coaches from the other municipalities to use Norwood facilities. This will be the solution to having combined teams with other towns. Councilman Ascolese asked if something should occur with one of their coaches and it goes to court will it matter if it goes to court. Mr. Corrison said there is no legal issue as Closter approved the coach. It is not required by law to do background checks. Councilman Ascolese asked about pedophiles. Mr. Corrison said pedophiles would be on Megans Lists. Council President Foschino asked if the parents of the Norwood children playing on Closter's team be notified.

Borough Engineer Report

Mr. Loverich said the schedule for paving should be out in mid April. These are roads from last years road program. Councilwoman Hausmann asked when the crosswalk will be painted. Mr. Loverich said the county will come to paint the crosswalk. Council President asked if new curbs will be installed on Burlington. Mr. Loverich said there will be no new curbs.

Borough Administrator/Clerk Report

Mr. Padovano said the deadline for the open space grant is this Friday. Open space is a matching grant. Mr. Lovrich said the only potential project is improvements to the Hudson Avenue entrance to Kennedy Field.

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Ascolese to not move forward on applying for the open space grant for this year. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Borough Attorney Report

Mr. Corrison said the affordable housing lawsuit is going to be filing an amended complaint. There are two parts, the state and federal. The argument for the federal case is due process. Why should towns be subjected to it when urban areas are not. The attorney for the lawsuit is asking for each municipality to be a named plaintiff. Mayor Barsa will be the plaintiff for Norwood. The state issue involving the Borough's number, lowering the DCA number from 161 to 130, has been opposed. The NJ Builders Association and Fair Share have opposed the request to lower the number. The next step will be a settlement conference. If you cannot settle you go to a session and the Judge on recall makes a recommendation to the fair share housing judges. Fair share has not opposed Norwood's numbers. They have been settling close to the number the towns have offered. Mr. Corrison has taken the legal position that by not opposing our number they are agreeing with it. The Builders took 4% of 161 making it 154. The settlement conference was held last week. There is a special adjudicator in the conference. His position said the original number of 161 is the right number. Norwood did not accept the settlement offer. The Judge wanted to move directly into the session. Mr. Corrison objected to moving right into session because Mayor Barsa cannot make the final decision, it needs to go to the Council. The Judge did not agree and they went directly into the session. The Judge reserved decision and will issue a written report. Mr. Corrison told the Judge it was a violation of the Borough's due process rights. Mr. Corrison believes the Judge will recommend to the Mt Laurel Judge the original number. Mr. Corrison believes that after that happens the Borough will be able to have a full hearing. Mayor Barsa said we have to fight to reduce it.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

2. Ordinance 2025:04 – Amending Article III Chapter 168-18 of the Borough Code
Detailing Background Checks

Public Hearing for Ordinance 2025:04 will be on April 9, 2025

The mayor read the ordinance by title. Motion by Councilman Brizzolara, second by Councilman Ascolese, that Ordinance 2025:04 be introduced on first reading, with a public hearing on April 9, 2025.

There being six (6) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2025:04 was approved

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilwoman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann. All council members present approved the motion.

Sarah Lucero, 310 Kensington Ave. Ms. Lucero thanked the governing body for supporting the PTO.

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Condoleo. All council members present approved the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was forwarded Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Condoleo. All council members present approved the motion. Meeting was adjourned the meeting at 8:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Padovano
Borough Clerk