

TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2026— 6:00 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER 6:00 pm** **By CP Kennedy**
2. **OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT STATEMENT** **Read by CVP Clark**
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** **All**
4. **INVOCATION** **CVP Clark**
5. **ROLL CALL – Council Members Present – Kennedy, Clark, Fey, Saultz, Wanisko**

-Also in attendance: Mayor Piazza, Attorney Wenner, Acting Municipal Clerk Turner

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting Minutes June 9, 2026**

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 4-0-1-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey		X	X			
Councilman Saultz					X	
Councilman Wanisko	X		X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

7. **BILLS LIST**

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey	X		X			
Councilman Saultz			X			
Councilman Wanisko		X	X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT –**

As we move further into the summer season, I am pleased to report continued progress across several areas of Town operations, community events, and public services.

Our newly hired Fire Official and Animal Control Officer have both officially started their duties with the Town. These additions strengthen our ability to provide more responsive and consistent service to residents while allowing Phillipsburg greater local control over inspections, enforcement, and public safety-related functions. We are excited to have both individuals on board and look forward to the positive impact they will have on our community.

Last weekend, Vicki Mendes and Brchmandicheveam kicked off a successful series of Juneteenth events throughout Phillipsburg rooted in the history of the day. These celebrations were made possible through the efforts of countless volunteers, organizations, agencies, sponsors, and community partners. There are simply too many contributors to name individually, but each played an important role in making the events meaningful, educational, and enjoyable for all who attended. On behalf of the Town, thank you to everyone who helped make the celebration a success.

Following closely behind was the revitalized Olde Towne Festival, which enjoyed a very successful weekend. Throughout the event there were continuous lines at many of the attractions and activities, vendors reported strong sales and positive experiences, and there was a steady flow of visitors moving throughout the festival grounds. Perhaps most encouraging was the strong turnout despite the ongoing closure of the Orphan Bridge. The community and visitors alike demonstrated that Phillipsburg remains a destination for great events where people can have a good time in our community.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who planned, organized, volunteered, worked, sponsored, or contributed to bringing the Olde Towne Festival back in such a successful way. Your efforts helped showcase the energy, resilience, and spirit of Phillipsburg.

As summer programming continues, Music in the Park returns this Thursday, June 25, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Shappell Park. The concert series will kick off with Time Why's and is another great opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy live entertainment, support our parks, and spend an evening together as a community. We encourage everyone to come out and enjoy the start of another great season of Music in the Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Mayor Randy S. Piazza Jr.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:05 pm

Attorney Wenner stated that the topic to be discussed is the redevelopment project on South Main Street, Resolution 2026-100. No action will be taken. Council VP Clark moved to enter Executive Session. Seconded by Councilman Fey. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0. Motion carries.

RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION – Reconvene Public Session – 6:33 P.M.

Attorney Wenner stated that the topic discussed was the redevelopment project on South Main Street, Resolution 2026-100. No action was taken. Councilman Fey moved to reconvene Public Session. Seconded by Councilman Wanisko. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0. Motion carries

10. PRESENTATION – MRK PARTNERS – Redevelopment Project on South Main St. “Birchwood at South Main” - Geoff Long with MRK Partners provided background on the company and similar housing projects in the area. He explained the 4th round affordable housing requirements and that Birchwood meets the town’s Senior housing requirement. This project is paid by the state, not the town. The state drafted a PILOT agreement: in years 1 to 15 6.28% of rents collected (approx. \$42,000 annually) goes to the municipality. In years 16 to 22 it increases to 7.28% and in years 23 to 30 it increases to 8.28% (approx. \$132,000 annually). Every year a third party audit will be done to “true up” the account. All of the PILOT proceeds go to the town, none are for the county or school district. Currently, the property pays \$7,000 to \$8,000 annually in taxes, of which about \$3,000 goes to the town. This is a long term financially safe project. There will be 41 one bedroom units and 4 two bedroom units. Rent for the one bedroom ranges from \$1,075 to \$1,300 with a maximum income range of \$51,000 to \$61,000. The two bedroom units rent for \$1,270 to \$1,500 and have a maximum income range of \$57,000 to \$69,000. The typical tenancy in senior housing is 10 years. The building is age restricted and all tenants must be over 25 and listed on the lease. Applicants will go through criminal and credit checks. A full time manager will be on site to handle inspections and maintenance.

11. ORDINANCES – 2nd Read and Public Hearing

Council President Kennedy moved the Ordinance reading within the agenda to allow public comments and questions following Mr. Long’s presentation.

O2026-17 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, ADOPTING REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE PROPERTY REFERRED TO AS THE “SOUTH MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT ZONE” CONSISTING OF BLOCK 2806, LOTS 2, 3, 4, 5, AND 7 AS IDENTIFIED ON THE TAX MAP OF THE TOWN

Public comments – Joe Meyner, resident – the size of the units is about one quarter the capacity in the state requirements. The \$1,200 rent is about equivalent to the Housing Authority rent. He stated that the PILOT agreement was very generous. \$42,000 annually in tax payments is only 10 times what he pays on one property. Mr. Meyner stated the town’s taxes will go up to service the bond debt. Attorney Wenner stated that the PILOT was created by and approved by the state, not the town. The town cannot negotiate this agreement.

-Joan Pierce, resident – asked how many Phillipsburg residents would be eligible. Mr. Long stated any that qualify. He noted that the Town Council could enact a preferred class in the future for Veterans. Ms. Pierce asked if the building will be 4 stories as shown. Mr. Long stated yes and that the Land Use Board had approved it as it is compliant with the overlay district. Ms. Pierce asked about parking. Mr. Long stated that each one bedroom unit will have 1 registered parking space, each 2 bedroom unit will have 2 registered parking spaces. Ms. Pierce asked how it would be handled if both residents of a 1 bedroom unit have cars. Mr. Long reiterated 1 registered parking space.

-Jennifer, resident- asked about the fire aisle. Mr. Long stated the Land Use Board met with Fire Chief Hay to get approval. MRK heard his concerns and integrated them into the plans. All windows can be reached by the fire truck ladders and there are sprinklers in all units and unused spaces. She asked how the age restriction is applied. Mr. Long stated that is applied to the head of the household. The state law is 18 years old but they set it to 25 years old.

-Vicki Mendez-Branch, resident – asked if a disabled person under 25 could reside there. Mr. Long stated that the 25 year old age restriction is applied to all.

Council comments – None

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey			X			
Councilman Saultz			X			
Councilman Wanisko	X		X			
Council VP Clark		X	X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

12. PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS – None

13. ORDINANCE – 1st Read- Introduction

** 2nd Reading and public hearing will occur at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at which time any interested persons may speak for or against the ordinance **

O2026-18 ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING SECTION 105-17 – RATES OF COMPENSATION – CHAPTER 105 ENTITLED “POLICE DEPARTMENT” TO

IMPOSE A TWENTY-FIVE DOLLAR (\$25) PER HOUR ADMINISTRATIVE FEE, AS
OPPOSED TO THE PRESENTLY PRESCRIBED TEN PERCENT (10%) FEE

Council Comments - Councilman Wanisko asked the reason for this ordinance. CFO Shannon Quick (audience) stated it puts our rate in line with the neighboring districts.

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey		X	X			
Councilman Saultz	X		X			
Councilman Wanisko			X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

O2026-19 BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE NUMBER 2024-15
FINALLY ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, IN
THE COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ON JULY 10, 2024, TO AMEND
THE DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPROVEMENT REFERRED TO IN SECTION 3(a)(viii)
THEREIN

Council Comments - None

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey			X			
Councilman Saultz	X		X			
Councilman Wanisko			X			
Council VP Clark		X	X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

O2026-20 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS
AND IMPROVEMENTS, BY AND IN THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, IN THE COUNTY
OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY; REAPPROPRIATING \$343,101.34 IN EXCESS
BOND AND NOTE PROCEEDS FROM VARIOUS BOND ORDINANCES OF THE TOWN,
NOT NEEDED FOR THEIR ORIGINAL PURPOSES, TO FINANCE THE COSTS THEREOF

Council Comments – Councilman Wanisko asked if this is a routine "housekeeping". CFO Shannon Quick (audience) stated yes, it is reallocating leftover capital from previous ordinances.

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey			X			

Councilman Saultz		X	X			
Councilman Wanisko	X		X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

O2026-21 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS 2026 CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS, BY AND FOR THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY; APPROPRIATING \$2,425,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$2,303,750 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWN TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF

Council comments - None

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey			X			
Councilman Saultz	X		X			
Councilman Wanisko			X			
Council VP Clark		X	X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

O2026-22 BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE NUMBER 2025-10 FINALLY ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ON MAY 28, 2025, TO AMEND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPROVEMENT REFERRED TO IN SECTION 3(a)(vii) THEREIN

Council comments – Councilman Wanisko stated that though Section 3(a)(vii) of O2025-10 is cited it is not shown in this ordinance. Attorney Wenner and CFO Quick stated this was written by Bond Counsel.

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey			X			
Councilman Saultz		X	X			
Councilman Wanisko	X		X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

14. RESOLUTIONS ** CONSENT AGENDA **

Matters listed on the Consent Agenda Resolutions 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 to be removed for consideration.

R2026-92 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OVERPAYMENT OF RENTAL REGISTRATION FEES

R2026-93 RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE ENTRY INTO A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE RESOLVING LITIGATION

R2026-94 A RESOLUTION APPROVING 2026-2027 LIQUOR LICENSE RENEWALS WITHIN THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG

R2026-95 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF BUILDING PERMIT FEE

R2026-98 APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION AND EXECUTE A GRANT CONTRACT WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE GREEN STREET PHASE 1 PROJECT

R2026-99 APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION AND EXECUTE A GRANT CONTRACT WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE MEYNER ROAD SHARE USE PATH PHASE 1 PROJECT

R2026-100 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT FOR PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 55:14K-1 ET SEQ. WITH SOUTH MAIN LIHTC, LLC CONCERNING PROPERTY LOCATED ON SOUTH MAIN STREET AND DESIGNATED AS BLOCK 2806 LOTS 2, 3, 4, 5 & 7 ON THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG TAX MAPS

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey		X	X			
Councilman Saultz			X			
Councilman Wanisko			X			
Council VP Clark	X		X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

R2026-97 pulled from the Consent Agenda by Councilman Wanisko. Councilman Wanisko asked if the work has been performed yet and why the contract was dated early May but Council was reviewing a resolution now. Mayor Piazza stated that the funding was approved last year and the grant is reimbursement for the environmental work.

R2026-97 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH WOODARD & CURRAN FOR HDSRF GRANT-FUND ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION PHASE 2 FOR DELAWARE RIVER PARK

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey			X			
Councilman Saultz		X	X			
Councilman Wanisko			X			
Council VP Clark	X		X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

R2026-96 pulled from the Consent Agenda by Council President Kennedy. CP Kennedy wished to read this resolution title for the public. Once read, he commented that this was sponsored by Senator Steinhardt and has bipartisan support. This addresses an immediate need. Council President Kennedy stated he will defend anyone's right to disagree but some people cross the line and become violent. Councilman Saultz agreed stating that all have a right to their say but not a right to commit violence.

R2026-96 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, SUPPORTING SENATE BILL NO. 4934 (S-4934) THAT SEEKS TO CREATE THE NEW CRIME OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE, ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW BOARD TO INSURE THAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE IS INVESTIGATED, PROSECUTED AND PUNISHED IN A FAIR AND UNBIASED MANNER, AND ESTABLISH A TRAINING MANDATE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Fey			X			
Councilman Saultz			X			
Councilman Wanisko		X	X			
Council VP Clark	X		X			
Council President Kennedy			X			

15. **OLD BUSINESS** – Council VP Clark asked for an update on the sinkhole properties and testing done at the sites. Mayor Piazza stated he has nothing new at this time but he is meeting with the testing company at the end of the week. He and Craig Brotons, Business Administrator (audience) stated that the company will not release any information before they have finalized all of their results. Council VP Clark asked if fundraising or assistance was still being conducted for the affected families. Mayor Piazza stated that he is meeting with NORWESCAP and other community groups. NORWESCAP has been taking the lead on helping the families.
16. **NEW BUSINESS** – None
17. **MOTIONS** – None
18. **PUBLIC PETITIONS** – Joe Meyner, resident – Regarding the redevelopment project on South Main – 25% of the land goes to the state to relieve the town's obligation and it's principal permitted use is

single family attached homes. But they can do what they want on the other 75%. Mr. Meyner stated he is against PILOT agreements. The town gives income to allow developers to get started. As it is a Payment in lieu of local taxes the local government has a say in it. He strongly suggests the town work for a better deal.

-Warren Smith, resident – stated he is having issues with the Code Enforcement Officer. He has made several complaints, cc'd all of council, has reached out to the Mayor, Business Administrator, the Construction Official, and DCA and no one has done anything. The new Code Enforcement Officer is targeting, stalking, and harassing him. He has been charged with stalking the Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Smith distributed paperwork to council with pictures showing trash on properties all over town. These properties don't get a summons but properties he owns or manages do get a summons. Are only certain people or minorities being targeted?

-Lisa DeGerolamo, resident – the sidewalk improvements are nice but on Hudson Street, on the even numbered side, there are tons of cracks in the new sidewalks. Mayor Piazza stated he is aware of that and had the Town Engineer inspect them. The contractor will be redoing the sidewalks. Ms. DeGerolamo asked what will be done with the Corliss Avenue building. Mayor Piazza stated there several options and he is open to suggestions. Ms. DeGerolamo asked if there are grants to improve the sewer facility. Mayor Piazza stated that the facility is in great condition, it is the collection system that is in bad shape. The town is looking at I Bank funding and grants. Ms. DeGerolamo suggested the town use the next newsletter to remind residents and business owners that they are responsible for clearing weeds from the sidewalk and curbing adjacent to their buildings. Ms. DeGerolamo said that the change to the timing of the traffic light at Bates and Rt 22 has resulted in a backup of traffic on Rt 22 and vehicles running red lights. She asked Council to petition the NJDOT to reopen one of the cross overs. Mayor Piazza stated that has reached out to NJDOT several times. They came out once to set the timing of the traffic lights and stated they will be monitored and adjusted as needed.

-Richard Elliot, resident – The property at the dead end of Bartlett Street, owned by the town, is overgrown with weeds and cut trees. The weeds, Japanese knotweed, are growing into neighboring properties. The town has done nothing to clean up the property. The previous owner had cut down approximately 12 trees but never removed them. They remain laying on the ground with new trees growing. Councilman Fey stated he lives very close to this property and confirmed it is a small site that is overgrown and has not been maintained. Mr. Elliot stated an email was recently sent to Inspections who sent an inspector out. Mayor Piazza stated that DPW will remediate the property.

-Dan Boyce, resident – The Union Square property owner has been given multiple notices to make improvements. It is time the town do something such as seize the property.

-Joan Pierce, resident – The Olde Towne Festival was great but there are improvements that have to be made.

-Ms. Oliver, resident – felt she had to speak up about the stalking charge. She has heard Mr. Smith say he was looking for the Code Enforcement Officer or going to a place where he thinks he will be. She knows of occasions when the Officer stayed away from Mr. Smith. The officer does not play favorites. He has informed her of code violations at her own property.

-resident – 18 weeks ago residents were forced to evacuate due to the sinkhole. The testing was completed 5 weeks ago and drilling was completed 2 weeks ago. The residents need to know the outcome of the tests. If there are no voids the power must be turned on and residents granted access in order to make repairs. These residents are paying taxes but cannot live in their homes. Mayor Piazza stated that the Administration has not been given any information by the testing company. They refuse to provide any information until their reports are finalized. Attorney Wenner stated there is a meeting with them on Thursday and they hope to receive a report then.

-Jennifer, resident – Pedestrian crossing signs are on Hudson St except at Schultz.

-resident – Why are people bickering? Get together and resolve the situation. It is important for the town and residents to work together in order to prosper. He asked what the town's policy on workplace sexual harassment is. Attorney Wenner stated it would be reported to Human Resources.

-Martin James, resident – stated he has lived here for 8 months the first 4 of which were fine. In the last 4 months he has been accused of things he hasn't done and spoken to badly. Others he worked with have left because of this. He feels he is under a microscope.

- Elijah, resident – unintelligible

-resident, owner of 140 Summit Ave – thanked Council.

19. COUNCIL OPEN TIME –

-Councilman Saultz – It was a festive weekend beginning on Friday with Vicki Mendez-Branch's brilliant organizing of Juneteenth activities including the dedication at the Phillipsburg Cemetery, followed by a ceremony at the old Eagle Hotel, a documented stop on the Underground Railroad, and then the flag raising at Shappell Park. The Olde Towne Festival was held along South Main St with a steady stream of people and great music. Councilman Saultz thanked Ms. Mendez-Branch, the UEZ, volunteers, Police, EMS and Fire Departments for all the work they did. These types of events really help build the community. This weekend the Town Wide Yard Sale will be held. HR Director Tara Gomez set up a link on the website to a Google Map showing where participating households are.

-Councilman Wanisko – Vicki Mendez-Branch did outstanding work for the Juneteenth celebrations. The Olde Towne Festival was outstanding with lots of people attending.

- Councilman Fey – Enjoyed celebrating the Olde Towne Festival in Shappell Park with Main Street open. He enjoyed the atmosphere and thanked everyone involved.

- Council VP Clark – regarding the complaint summons received by Mr. Smith, Council VP Clark stated that as a legislative body Council cannot intervene. However, there is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed. He encouraged people to sit down together and talk it out. This past Friday was Phillipsburg's 3rd annual Juneteenth celebration and they knocked it out of the park. There is hard history behind the day and it is a holiday of reflection. He thanked everyone involved. Council VP Clark reminded residents that there will be lots of fireworks on the 4th of July and please be considerate of people who suffer PTSD or have anxiety, as well as pets. With warmer weather people have gone swimming in the river. There are very strong currents which have resulted in 2 deaths already in one week. Stay out of the river.

- Council President Kennedy – Thanked the UEZ for their hard work on the Olde Town Festival. It was held at a new location and went well. We can take stock on what went well and what did not. Council President Kennedy thanked the UEZ and Vicki Mendez-Branch for the Juneteenth events. The visit to 350 Chambers Street was special. The Thursday night concert series starts this week at Shappell Park.

20. ADJOURNMENT – 8:06 PM

Council VP Clark moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilman Saultz.

Ayes:, Nays: 0, Absent: Motion carries.

Susan Turner, Acting Municipal Clerk