

**Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County  
Wednesday, January 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was convened in person.

**Name/Organization**

**Voting Members in Attendance**

Troy Fischer, Bridgewater Commons  
Tony Tufaro, Johnson & Johnson  
Filipe Pedroso, Bridgewater Township Council  
Michael Pappas, Bridgewater Township  
Nicolas Carra, Raritan Borough  
Don Tozzi, Raritan Borough  
Joseph Brosnan, Raritan Borough  
Brian Gallagher, Somerville Borough Mayor  
Rich Reitman, Somerville Borough Council  
Rick St. Pierre, Somerville Borough  
Paul Drake, Somerset County Commissioners  
Daniel Hayes, Somerset County Park Commission

**Non-voting County Support Staff**

Victoria Schulz, Somerset County Planning Division

**Non-voting Guests**

Sarah Trent, Valley Wellness  
Eric Colvin, Raritan Borough

The meeting commenced at 5:00 PM.

**Business Items**

**Call to Order**

Chair Troy Fischer called the meeting to order.

**Attendance Roll Call**

Principal Community Planner Victoria Schulz performed the roll call and noted for the record that there were 10 voting members present. Paul Drake entered the Meeting during the Draft 2025 Budget Presentation, making 11 present voting members.

**Chair's Remarks**

Chair Troy Fischer wished those in attendance a Happy New Year and to stay warm.

## **Action Items**

### **Adoption of November Meeting Minutes**

Principal Community Planner Victoria Schulz presented the November 7, 2024 meeting minutes. Chair Fischer asked if there were any corrections, comments, or questions. There being none, Chair Fischer asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher made a motion to approve the November 7, 2024 meeting minutes, Raritan Planner Joesph Brosnan seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 9

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 1

The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

### **Treasurer's Report for November/December 2024**

Principal Planner Victoria Schulz presented the November/December 2024 Treasurer's Report. She gave an overview and explanation of expenditures and deposits. She asked if there were any questions or comments concerning the Treasurer's Report. There being no questions, comments, or corrections, Chair Fischer asked for a motion to approve the November/December 2024 Treasurer's Report. Somerville Representative Rich Reitman moved the motion, and Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 10

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

The motion was approved.

### **Draft 2025 Budget**

Principal Community Planner Victoria Schulz presented 2025 Draft 2025 Budget for a approval vote. She explained that the current draft has been altered since the November meeting for the correct End of Year account amounts. She asked if there were any questions or comments concerning the Draft 2025 Budget. There being no questions, comments, or corrections, Chair Troy Fischer asked for a motion to approve the Draft 2025 Budget. Somerville Business Owner Rick St. Pierre moved the motion, and Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 10

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 1

The motion was approved.

### **Information Items**

#### **Retreat Topic Discussion: Supportive efforts to improve traffic on Route 22 and address other regional transportation issues**

Principal Community Planner Victoria Schulz presented the Retreat Discussion Topic for the Partnership. Somerville Representative Rich Reitman asked what was planned on Route 202 along First Avenue. Raritan Mayor Nicolas Carra recently spoke to New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and shared that property acquisitions have been completed in the area and that work is in the design phase. Raritan Planner Joseph Brosnan discussed his office's recent discussion with NJDOT revealed their design process is not very far along, and he believes that there needs to be more discussion with NJDOT regarding the project. Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher suggested that NJDOT would be a valuable guest for a Regional Center Partnership meeting to give an update to three municipalities and the County. Raritan Planner Joseph Brosnan added that if NJDOT would not come to a meeting, a jointly requested update by the Municipalities would be helpful. Guest from Raritan Borough Administrator Eric Colvin told the group he would reach out to someone at NJDOT for the Partnership. Chair Troy Fischer and various members of the Partnership agreed with getting an update from NJDOT. Commissioner Paul Drake discussed pedestrian safety issues on Route 202 in Bridgewater near the Wegmans Plaza and near First Avenue in Raritan. Chair Fischer added that the jughandles at First Avenue and Route 202 are unsafe. Somerville Mayor Gallagher summarized that a discussion with NJDOT about Regional Center traffic issues in general would be ideal.

### **Municipal and Other Updates**

**Raritan:** Raritan Mayor Nicolas Carra presented that they recently met with the former Executive Director of the Somerville Downtown Alliance and are looking to do something similar in Raritan. Raritan Planning Board did a study on the Downtown rehabilitation designation. Municipal building is still on track for August or September opening. Planner Joseph Brosnan added discussing the State Plan with the Partnership would be good. Councilman Don Tozzi discussed the Raritan Mall being approved.

**Bridgewater:** Bridgewater Representative Michael Pappas discussed that the Chick Fil A was approved and in the Chimney Rock Shopping Center L.L. Bean will be moving in. Bridgewater is focused on the affordable housing requirements and stormwater management requirements.

Raritan Planner Joseph Brosnan discussed new stormwater management requirements, including the need for GIS data submission.

**SC Parks Commission:** Somerset County Park Commission Representative Daniel Hayes discussed the upcoming golf sale for the spring season.

**Somerville:** Mayor Brian Gallagher the group that the new emergency services facility will be up and running in the coming weeks and offered tours to anyone who would like one from the Partnership. The Somerville landfill solar farm will begin construction this Summer. Somerville is also discussing affordable housing requirements. Mayor Gallagher asked the group about shade tree ordinances in their respective municipalities.

**County Commissioners:** Commissioner Paul Drake discussed a grant opportunity from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation related to complete and safe streets. He asked the group about how often grants are pursued.

### **Group Discussions**

#### **Meeting Structure:**

Raritan Mayor Nicolas Carra shared ideas for structuring meetings going forward, such as subcommittees.

Principal Community Planner Victoria Schulz asked the group what types of subcommittees they would be interested in having, such as a general ideas group.

Somerville Representative Rich Reitman brought the November meeting discussion of the water main break to the table and how having someone from an organization related the that issue come to discuss with the Partnership would be beneficial.

Ms. Schulz asked the group clarifying questions to the group regarding when subcommittee meetings would be, who would be on them, and if the group would like more presenters.

Chair Fischer answered that subcommittees should be on a volunteer basis.

Mayor Gallagher suggested more presentations or discussions from outside governmental and nongovernmental agencies and discussing retreat topics.

Somerville Representative Rick St Pierre asked for future updates on marketing for the Regional Center Partnership.

#### **At Large Seat:**

Mayor Carra introduced Sarah Trent to the group, the Owner of Valley Wellness in Raritan.

Sarah Trent discussed her interest in the group and the possibility of being part of it as well as her background.

Mayor Gallagher made a motion to fill the open At Large position seat with Ms. Trent and Councilman Tozzi seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 9

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 1

The motion was approved pending clarification of nomination rules through the Regional Center Bylaws.

**Public Comment Period**

No comments

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm