

**Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County
Wednesday, May 21, 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
Nicolas Carra, Raritan Borough
Joseph Brosnan, Raritan Borough
Nick Zamora, Raritan Borough
Brian Gallagher, Somerville Borough
Rich Reitman, Somerville Borough
Lisa Werner, Somerville Borough
Rick St. Pierre, Somerville Borough
Chris Kelly, Somerset County Planning Board
Samantha De Andrea, Somerset County Planning Division
Chris Edwards, Somerset County Business Partnership

Non-voting Guests

Melissa Mazzaro, New Jersey Water Supply Authority
Kyle Clonan, New Jersey Water Supply Authority

The meeting commenced at 5:00 PM.

Business Items

Call to Order

Chair Troy Fischer called the meeting to order.

Attendance Roll Call

Somerset County Planning Director Samantha De Andrea performed the roll call and noted for the record that there were 11 voting members present. Michael Pappas entered the Meeting during the Treasurer's Report Presentation, making 12 present voting members.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Troy Fischer led the partnership in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair's Remarks

Chair Troy Fischer welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Action Items

Adoption of March Meeting Minutes

Chair Fischer presented the March 19, 2025 meeting minutes and 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 meeting minutes, Raritan Engineer/Planner Joseph Brosnan seconded the motion.

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

Ayes: 11

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Treasurer's Report for March/April 2025

Chair Fischer presented the March/April 2025 Treasurer's Report and asked if there were any questions or comments concerning the Treasurer's Report. Somerville Business owner Rick St. Pierre remarked that the money was growing, but the partnership needs to start utilizing the funds. Chair Fischer asked for a motion to approve the March/April 2025 Treasurer's Report. Mr. St. Pierre moved the motion, and Raritan Engineer/Planner Joseph Brosnan seconded the motion.

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

Ayes: 11

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

The motion was approved.

Report of Audit for Year Ended December 31, 2023

Director De Andrea presented the Report for Audit for Year Ending December 31, 2023. Director De Andrea discussed that a letter is being sent to the firm who completed the audit, Suplee Clooney, stating that the Regional Center Partnership provided all of the information needed to complete the audit and are content with the results. Chair Fischer asked if there were any major recommendations. Director De

Andrea explained that there are not, but the County Liaison will inquire about the 2024 audit being completed.

No vote was taken.

Information Items

NJWSA Rain Garden Maintenance and Training for Municipalities Update

Chair Fischer introduced the New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Rain Garden Maintenance and Training for Municipalities Update to the Partnership by reminding the Partnership of the March meeting that included a presentation from the NJWSA about the rain barrel rebate program. NJWSA Watershed Protection Specialist Kyle Clonan reintroduced himself to the Partnership and began discussion with the conversation from the March RCP meeting that led to the possibility of holding a Rain Garden Training. Mr. Clonan stated that NJWSA reached out to the Rutgers Cooperative Extension to begin organizing a half-day training for the Regional Center municipalities, Manville, and Parks system staff to go over maintenance of rain gardens as well as hands-on training in a rain garden. Mr. Clonan discussed that the NJWSA would sponsor the training, and they are looking for a location to hold the event in either late August or early September of this year. The Partnership directed Mr. Clonan to follow up with County Liaison Victoria Schulz and Director De Andrea of the Planning Division to facilitate the next steps.

NJTPA Planning for Emerging Centers Program

Director De Andrea introduced the NJTPA's current grant initiative "Planning for Emerging Centers Program." She explained that while the Regional Center as whole is not eligible for the program, the individual municipalities within the RCP are. Director De Andrea gave a brief overview of the program, its due date of Thursday, June 19, 2025, and referred the Partnership to an email County Liaison Schulz had previously sent out.

2025 Retreat / Event Discussion

Director De Andrea introduced the Retreat / Event Discussion by pointing to the budget allotment to hold a retreat, event, or symposium. Chair Fischer told the group he would like that money to go towards the current efforts with the rain garden training and program. Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher said that the last retreat did not lead to many action items. Somerville representative Rich Reitman explained that the 2024 Retreat provided creative ideas that could be implemented at meetings. Mayor Gallagher mentioned the previously discussed option of bringing up topics from the retreat to discuss at the meetings. Chair Fisher discussed the possibility of an update on NJDOT projects within and around the Regional Center from an NJDOT representative. Mayor Gallagher underscored the importance of such an update and suggested either the July or September RCP meeting as possible dates. Somerset County Business Partnership President Chris Edwards offered the SCBP office as the September meeting space if NJDOT were to present.

Municipal and Other Reports

Raritan: Raritan Mayor Nicolas Carra discussed the new shared service agreement with the County for transportation, mostly for Raritan seniors. Raritan's new budget was passed in April, and the new

municipal building is set for a late summer opening. New tennis and pickleball courts as well as a new splash pad are being completed. The Saint Ann's Festival is also coming up in Raritan. Two redevelopment projects are also in the works, Agway and the Former Rick's Café. Raritan has a new rehabilitation designation and is working to establish a business district. Finally, the borough is working with the NJTPA to utilize a grant awarded during COVID to add a bike lane on Orlando Drive, temporary signage along the greenway to connect Duke Farms to the train station and downtown businesses, and improvement of the jughandle on First Avenue to accommodate more traffic. Councilman Don Tozzi added that the apartment complex should be completed in June or July and the mall on Orlando drive should be in front of the Planning Board soon. Engineer/Planner Joseph Brosnan concluded with the need to update the Raritan masterplan and the possibility of discussing the update with the other RCP municipalities.

Somerville: Representative Rich Reitman started the Somerville municipal update by discussing the upcoming Tour de Somerville bicycle race. Mayor Brian Gallagher discussed the Somerville Memorial Day parade and service. Somerville is about to begin their master plan update process along with five redevelopment plans and updates to the zoning ordinance. The Granetz building was recently purchased and is proposed for redevelopment. On the opposite end of Main Street, there is a proposal for the old Pizza Hut building. Mayor Gallagher reached out to the RWJ operating officer for a replacement for Vicky Allen on the RCP Board.

Bridgewater: Bridgewater Councilman Filipe Pedroso did not have an update for the group.

Somerset County Business Partnership: Somerset County Business Partnership President Chris Edwards discussed the upcoming launch of Seeded in Somerset which pertains to agrotourism. There is a new historic Sip and See in the works which will launch either at the end of 2025 or beginning of 2026. There are also hopes of the creation of a fan zone in Somerset County for the World Cup next year.

Public Comment Period

No comments

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 5:41 pm