

**CITY OF CLIFTON
CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 26, 2025**

A Special Meeting of the Municipal Council of the City of Clifton was held in the Courtroom of Clifton City Hall, 900 Clifton Avenue, Clifton, New Jersey.

6:30 PM CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Raymond Grabowski presiding, and it was announced that adequate notice of the meeting has been provided by the Special Meeting Notice which was published as a legal advertisement in the Herald News on June 25, 2025 and by posting of said notice on the bulletin board at City Hall which notice stated that formal action may or may not be taken on the matters to come before the Municipal Council.

Upon roll call, the following were noted present:

Councilman Gibson	(BG) via ZOOM
Councilman D’Amato	(CD)
Councilman Kolodziej	(JK) Absent
Councilman Latona	(AL)
Councilwoman Pino	(RP) Absent
Councilwoman Sadrakula	(MS)
Mayor Grabowski	(RG)

Also present were City Manager, Gary DeMarzo; CFO, Joseph Kunz; City Clerk, Kathleen Tolosi and Deputy City Clerk, Megan Krusznis.

PUBLIC HEARING

The mayor opened the public hearing, seeing no one, Councilwoman Sadrakula motioned, and Councilman D’Amato seconded to close the public hearing.

ACTION ITEMS

A-1 Authorization to Approve a Procession Request for Kehillas Beis Sholom on September 1, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

Approved: CD/AL

COUNCIL MAIL

CM-1 Memo from J. Kunz, CFO – Amending 2025 Introduced Municipal Budget

Councilwoman Sadrakula questioned where the amended budget, line-by-line, was. Mr. Kunz responded that he did not have a line-by-line document to distribute that evening. He stated the introduced budget needed to be amended before re-introduction. Nothing had been removed from the introduced budget. The discussion this evening meeting was to discuss what the Mayor and Council want to amend. City Manager, Gary DeMarzo, advised the council that the numbers introduced at 9.4% have been revised and reduced to 6.6%, which will be about a 4% tax increase and the breakdown was included in the presentation that evening. Councilman Latona requested some information regarding the proposed cuts and where the funds were being cut from, that the reduction was coming from roughly \$2 million in the August 19th report showing a combination of a 5% reduction in expenses and anticipated revenues. Councilman Gibson asked through Mayor Grabowski to Councilwoman Sadrakula if the information she was requesting was a line item by line item break down of the amendments, to which she responded yes. Councilman Latona reiterated that the council already received the list of where the cuts were coming from in the August 19th report titled “Proposed Amendment”. Councilwoman Sadrakula read out for the record the list of information on the August 19th report. She asked if capital improvement funds would be decreased by \$500,000. The City Manager confirmed that it had been reduced to \$350,000, not \$500,000, in the proposal he was about to show the council. City

Auditor, Robert Haag, confirmed there was a difference between what was presented at the August 19th meeting and the presentation that would be seen that evening.

CM-2 Memo from J. Kunz, CFO – Trust Accounts

Councilwoman Sadrakula questioned the names and funds available in the trust accounts and the ability to cancel funds from a dedicated rider. Mr. Kunz explained that all trust funds have a dedication by rider. The Auditor explained the process of cancelling a dedication by rider. The resolution to cancel funds was on a previous meeting this year and the council voted that resolution down. Councilman Latona asked if the council wanted to use the \$500,000 to offset fund balance, do they have the ability to vote on that. Mr. Haag responded with the need to send the amendment to the state for approval prior to the council having the ability to pass the budget. It would not directly affect the 2025 budget; it would be put into surplus. Councilwoman Sadrakula and Councilman Latona asked how many open positions there are in Police and Fire. City Manager DeMarzo advised the council that he can get them a line-item by line-item breakdown.

Councilman Gibson added that if the council increased the sewer fees, he wanted to make sure if anything came up in the future it would be noted.

Councilman Gibson motioned to reconsider the sewer fee increase ordinance, seconded by Councilwoman Sadrakula and passed on roll call vote.

(5-0-0-2) Councilman D'Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, Councilwoman Sadrakula, and Mayor Grabowski voted Aye. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

Councilman Latona motioned adding \$1 more per yard than what was introduced for the landscaping ordinance and asked for a resolution to increase the fees each time the rates increase. City Manager DeMarzo clarified the city is not making money, the fees for vegetative waste are being covered and the cost of the operation is covered. Councilwoman Sadrakula asked for a quarterly or monthly update on the revenue received. Councilman D'Amato seconded the motion.

(4-0-1-2) Councilman D'Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, and Councilwoman Sadrakula voted Aye, Mayor Grabowski abstained. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

DISCUSSION

D-1 2025 Municipal Budget– Auditor, Robert Haag, was in attendance.

City Manager Gary DeMarzo presented another PowerPoint for the Council, attached hereto, describing the amended budget the City can present to the State for approval. The presentation included a 6.6-point tax increase, being a 4% tax rate increase. Councilman Latona motioned for several changes he proposed to be incorporated into his approval of the amended budget, a standard overtime policy across the board; no out of state training is allowed without council approval; an update to Chapter 99 to increase minimum number of hours needed to receive medical and fringe benefits; a change in Chapter 99 from 10 years of service to 20 years of service for retirement medical benefits; no medical benefits for part-time employees or elected officials; and for the utilization of biometric scanners for city employees; all effective January 2026. He asked if any council members would like a separate vote on any of those items.

City Manager DeMarzo recommended these items be put on for discussion at the next meeting. Councilman Latona appreciated the input but still requested for these items to be put on for action at the next meeting. Councilman Gibson noted for the record three positions in the court this will affect and also made council aware that all three employees work at least 30 hours a week, and he wants to make sure this will not affect them.

A point was made by City Attorney Egan, this item was previously voted down and a motion for benefits will need to come from someone from the prevailing side.

Councilman Latona motioned for biometric scanners to come back to city hall for employees to punch in and out, Councilwoman Sadrakula seconded. There were no objections. Councilman Latona asked for a report of employees punching in from outside of the City's internet from 2024 to present.

Councilman Latona revised his motion to say city hall employees must punch in and punch out from desktops at city hall. Councilwoman Sadrakula seconded.

(4-1-0-2) Councilman D'Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, and Councilwoman Sadrakula voted Aye, Mayor Grabowski voted Nay. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

Councilman Latona motioned for no out of state travel for training or seminars until the City Manager develops an SOP, a justification of need for travel, and council approval. Councilwoman Sadrakula seconded.

(5-0-0-2) Councilman D'Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, Councilwoman Sadrakula, and Mayor Grabowski voted Aye. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

Councilman Latona motioned to eliminate medical benefits for elected officials and part-time employees not subject to a bargaining unit beginning January 1, 2026. Councilwoman Sadrakula seconded.

City Attorney Egan advised the council this item was previously voted down and a motion for this will need to come from someone from the prevailing side. Councilwoman Sadrakula asked for clarification on how the current ordinance reads. City Attorney Tom Egan responded with the clarification that the ordinance is currently written to allow an elected official and their spouse to collect medical benefits. It does not refer to family plans or individual plans.

City Manager DeMarzo advised the council it is legally required to give notice the affected employees. Councilwoman Sadrakula stated that it's not legally required, and the council was told it was for precautionary measures. City Attorney advised it is legally required.

Councilman Gibson motioned to reconsider to eliminate medical benefits for elected officials and part-time employees not subject to a bargaining unit beginning January 1, 2026, and Councilwoman Sadrakula seconded the motion.

(4-1-0-2) Councilman D'Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, and Councilwoman Sadrakula voted Aye. Mayor Grabowski voted Nay. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

Councilman Latona motioned, and Councilman D'Amato seconded give notices for all affected employees and elimination of health benefits for elected officials beginning January 1, 2026.

(4-1-0-2) Councilman D'Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, and Mayor Grabowski voted Aye. Councilwoman Sadrakula voted Nay. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

Councilman Latona motioned for the City Manager to develop a city-wide overtime policy by rank and seniority that rotates from top to bottom, Councilman D'Amato seconded.

(5-0-0-2) Councilman D'Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, Councilwoman Sadrakula, and Mayor Grabowski voted Aye. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

Councilman Latona motioned to update the Chapter 99 Ordinance to change the eligibility to receive retirement medical benefits from 10 years to 20 years of employment service beginning January 1, 2026, Councilwoman Sadrakula seconded.

(4-1-0-2) Councilman D’Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, and Councilwoman Sadrakula voted Aye. Mayor Grabowski voted Nay. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

City Manager DeMarzo requested guidance and asked if the motion was for a hard-stop effective January 1, 2026 or are current employees grandfathered in retroactively. Councilman Latona responded it will be effective after January 1, 2026 towards retirements after that date.

City Attorney Tom Egan requested clarification on the benefits of the part-time employees regarding the number of hours working. 30 hours are required to match federal law to provide health benefits. Councilman Latona advised the City Attorney and the City Manager to correct the requirement of 25 hours to 30 hours.

Councilman Latona motioned, and Councilman D’Amato seconded introduction of the amended budget.

(4-1-0-2) Councilman D’Amato, Councilman Gibson, Councilman Latona, and Mayor Grabowski voted Aye. Councilwoman Sadrakula voted Nay. Councilman Kolodziej and Councilwoman Pino absent.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Sadrakula, seconded by Councilman Kolodziej, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Tolosi, City Clerk

Raymond Grabowski, Mayor