



**BOROUGH OF MENDHAM  
MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
April 15, 2026, 7:00 PM MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kelly called the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**2. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND FLAG SALUTE**

The mayor asked for a moment of silence and saluted the flag.

**3. MAYOR'S OPENING STATEMENT**

Adequate notice of this meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Mendham was published in the Daily Record and Star Ledger and was posted in the Phoenix House. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public, is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk, and is available under Public Notices at [www.mendhamnj.org](http://www.mendhamnj.org). Official action will be taken at this meeting.

**4. ROLL CALL**

Present:

Mayor, James Kelly  
Council President Marilyn Althoff  
Council Member Alexandra Henry Traut  
Council Member Chris Neff  
Council Member Neil Sullivan

Also, present were:

Jonathan Testa, Dorsey & Semrau, LLC  
Joyce Bushman, Administrator  
Lauren McBride, Borough Clerk

Not Present:

Council Member Matthew Bruin  
Council Member Will Russo

5. **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS** (*Items considered routine, Council will act on by a single motion and vote unless a member request that an item be removed and considered separately*)

Items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine and will be acted upon by the Borough Council by a single vote unless a member of the Governing Body requests that an item be removed and considered separately.

**A. Minutes**

1. March 4, 2026

**B. SPECIAL EVENT LICENSE**

1. PASTIME LABOR DAY CARNIVAL, 9/5/26-9/7/26
2. STOMP OUT STIGMA WALK, MAY 3, 2026

**C. BANNER APPLICATION**

1. MBA, 5/4/26-5/18/26
2. MENDHAM BASKETBALL, 9/23/26-10/7/26

Motion: Council Member Henry Traut *Approve minutes with typo correction*

Second: Council Member Neff

Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

6. **MAYOR PRESENTATION**

The Mayor presented a Recognition of Service Award to Patricia Studer.

7. **ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION AND PUBLIC HEARING**

**#05-2026 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2026 (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)**

**Public Hearing:** Mayor Kelly will open the public hearing; any interested person will be given an opportunity to be heard on this Ordinance. The Mayor will recognize the individual and ask them to clearly state their name and address for the record. **THE SPEAKER DOES NOT NEED TO PROVIDE THEIR ADDRESS IF THEY HAVE BEEN VERIFIED BY THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRIVACY AS A COVERED PERSON IN THE BOROUGH UNDER DANIEL'S LAW.**

**After the public hearing is closed, the Borough Council will consider Ordinance #05-2026 for final passage and adoption.**

Motion: Council Member Neff

Second: Council Member Sullivan

Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**8. CY2026 BUDGET PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING**

**Mr. Brian Gibbons, Mendham Borough Auditor, presented the 2026 Budget.**

Auditor Brian Gibbons presented the 2026 municipal budget, noting that it is balanced and compliant with both the tax-levy cap and appropriation-cap laws. The budget reflects a 2% tax-levy increase, consistent with prior years. He highlighted significant cost increases in health benefits and prior-year emergency appropriations, and noted that the borough is using additional fund balance as revenue, with projections showing it should be regenerated through 2026 operations. He also reviewed debt-service obligations and provided an update on the sewer utility budget, which is experiencing higher debt service due to the second phase of the NJ I-Bank loan. Gibbons concluded that the borough's financial position remains stable, while acknowledging uncertainties such as tax-collection rates, appeals, and interest-rate changes.

**9. CY2026 BUDGET ADOPTION**

**#077-2026 RESOLUTION FOR LOCAL EXAMINATION OF THE 2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET IN COMPLIANCE WITH N.J.A.C. 5:30-7.6**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#078-2026 RESOLUTION TO READ THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2026 BY TITLE**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#079-2026 RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**10. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION**

**#06-2026 ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, VACATING A SANITARY SEWER EASEMENT LOCATED AT 40 MOUNTAIN AVENUE**

**Ordinance #06-2026 is scheduled for public hearing and final adoption on May 6, 2026**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#07-2026 ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO IRONIA ROAD FOR PURPOSES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM, AND APPROPRIATING \$554,540 THEREFOR FROM VARIOUS FUNDS OF THE BOROUGH**

**Ordinance #07-2026 is scheduled for public hearing and final adoption on May 6, 2026**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**11. RESOLUTIONS**

**#080-2026 AUTHORIZING A PRIVATE FIREWORKS DISPLAY AT ROXITICUS GOLF CLUB**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#081-2026 APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR RESERVATION OF ALLOCATED SEWAGE CAPACITY OF MENDHAM BOROUGH REGARDING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 17 HALSTEAD RD., BLOCK 705, LOT 15**

Motion: Council President Althoff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#082-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION BY THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM TO THE NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST 2026 PRESERVE NEW JERSEY HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION GRANT FOR PHASE III IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CARY BARN OWNED BY THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Henry Traut  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#083-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION BY THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM TO THE NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST 2026 PRESERVE NEW JERSEY HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION GRANT FOR PHASE IV EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PHOENIX HOUSE OWNED BY THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM**

Motion: Council Member Henry Traut  
Second: Council President Althoff  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#084-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT TO APPRAISAL SYSTEMS, INC. TO PERFORM REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL SERVICES FOR THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM**

Motion: Council Member Neff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#085-2026 RESOLUTION AWARDED A CONTRACT TO JJJ SOLUTIONS LLC FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

Motion: Council President Althoff  
Second: Council Member Henry Traut  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#086-2026 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH TO REQUEST A FUNDING**

**AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF MORRIS FOR SHARED COSTS FOR THE THREE-YEAR EAST MAIN STREET, WEST MAIN STREET (CR 510), HILLTOP ROAD (CR 525), AND MOUNTAIN AVENUE TRAFFIC SIGNAL REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

Motion: Council President Althoff  
Second: Council Member Neff  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#087-2026 RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ENDORSING THE 2026 AMENDED HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN ADOPTED BY THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM JOINT LAND USE BOARD ON MARCH 3, 2026.**

Motion: Council President Althoff  
Second: Council Member Sullivan  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**#088-2026 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF MENDHAM IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, ADOPTING AND/OR REAFFIRMING THE BOROUGH'S, AFFORDABILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL.**

Motion: Council Member Henry Traut  
Second: Council Member Neff  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

**12. ADMINISTRATOR OPERATIONS REPORT**

Administrator Bushman announced that the Historic Preservation Commission will hold a hearing on April 20 to review the Black Horse Tavern rehabilitation plans, noting that the application materials were recently received and are under thorough review. She also reminded the public that the annual Arbor Day tree planting will take place on April 24, during which the Tree Commission will plant a heritage tree in recognition of the borough's 250th anniversary. She reported that the Mendham Business Association is sponsoring a 250th-anniversary banner program, allowing businesses and residents to sponsor commemorative banners along Main Street. Finally, she provided an update on several grant applications, including \$357,000 for the Phoenix House, \$420,900 for the Carey Barn, and a previously awarded grant for improvements to Patriots Path, with work expected to begin soon.

### **13. COUNCIL REPORTS**

Council Member Neff, Chair of the Public Works and Utilities Committee, reported that Duke's Root Control has begun manhole inspections in Basin Three near Mountain Valley Park, with completion expected in about two weeks. Flow monitoring will continue for 30 to 60 days depending on rainfall. He noted that Patriots Path improvements are scheduled to begin around May 1, and signs will be posted at trail entrances. He asked residents to avoid work areas and respect closures so crews can complete the project safely and efficiently. He also announced that the Department of Public Works is seeking two summer employees and one full-time hire, and continues to repair potholes following the winter season.

Council President Althoff, Chair of the Public Safety Committee, reported that committee officers completed defensive tactics training and that the pedestrian safety message board is now in place on West Main Street. She stressed that improving safety depends on changing behavior among drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, especially children. Permanent speed monitoring signs have been installed at Dean and Talmadge, and portable signs have been placed on Mountainside Road to address speeding. She and Officer McNichol have been meeting with residents about pedestrian safety concerns and noted that changes to speed limits on county roads require county approval and traffic studies. A new patrol vehicle is now in service, and a flashing pedestrian sign has been installed. Due to an increase in crashes, additional enforcement at crosswalks is planned. She also highlighted the borough's success in securing more than five million dollars in grants in recent years, including a new community development block grant to improve handicap access at municipal buildings.

Council Member Sullivan, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that it was a long budget process and happy with what was accomplished.

Council Member Henry Traut, Chair of the JLUB Committee, reported that the ECCOST Committee met on April 6 and noted upcoming environmental events, including the Raritan Headwaters stream cleanup on April 18 at Mountain Valley Pond and a planting at India Brook the weekend of April 25. She plans to meet with the ECCOST recycling liaison and Recycle Coach to explore ways to improve resident engagement with recycling tools. He also noted that the Historic Preservation Commission will meet on April 20 to review the Black Horse Tavern application and several others. The Joint Land Use Board meeting was canceled due to lack of new business. She requested that the previously tabled Caldwell & Associates proposal be added to the next meeting agenda, assuming full council attendance.

### **14. MAYOR'S ITEMS**

The Mayor reported attending the pre-construction meeting for the Patriots Path project and noted that the contractor appears prepared to begin work. He also shared that he

asked the borough attorney to arrange a meeting with the Sisters of Christian Charity to appeal to them to reconsider their proposed development and explore the possibility of a senior-only housing alternative. He described this outreach as a long-shot effort but one he felt was worth pursuing.

## **15. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The Mayor stated “This is an opportunity for the public to comment on any matter or concern. To ensure that every citizen has an opportunity to speak, the Mayor will recognize the individual and ask them to state their name and address for the record. **THE SPEAKER DOES NOT NEED TO PROVIDE THEIR ADDRESS IF THEY HAVE BEEN VERIFIED BY THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRIVACY AS A COVERED PERSON IN THE BOROUGH UNDER DANIEL’S LAW.** Speakers are asked to limit their comments to four minutes. Please note that Public Comments do not follow a question-and-answer format; however, a member of the Governing Body may offer a brief response when it is helpful to do so.

Laura Montenegro, speaking as a member of the Board of Health and the Stigma-Free Committee, thanked the mayor and council for their continued support of mental-health initiatives, including the annual Stigma-Free Walk. She noted the valuable assistance provided by local police and emphasized the increasing mental-health challenges faced by today’s youth. She expressed appreciation for the borough’s openness in supporting mental-health awareness and services. She also announced that she will be offering a QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide-prevention training session in September for Suicide Awareness Month.

Gail Wragg of 425 Bernardsville Road spoke on behalf of the Friends of Mendham community group. She thanked the council for its efforts regarding outreach to the Sisters of Christian Charity. She submitted a letter from the group’s attorney for the record and noted that two accompanying professional studies on planning and environmental issues would be provided electronically. She also asked for clarification on the extension of the ordinance deadline, noting that the original deadline was April 30 while council action is scheduled for May 6.

Gerald Gorman of 415 Bernardsville Road spoke on behalf of the Friends of Mendham and thanked the Mayor for reaching out to the Sisters of Christian Charity. He stated that the group has retained legal counsel, who submitted a letter outlining concerns about Ordinance 01-2026. He summarized their concerns as relating to process and timing, noting that zoning changes appear to be advancing before litigation, planning, environmental, and historic issues are resolved. He also raised planning and legal concerns, stating that the proposed zoning is inconsistent with the Master Plan and may not meet municipal land use requirements. He further expressed concern about the fiscal impact of large-scale development on infrastructure, schools, emergency services, and potential environmental remediation. He emphasized that the group is not opposed to development or affordable housing but urged the council to seek additional time from the court to complete a full and transparent evaluation before adopting zoning changes.

Loren Laguerre of 14 Balbrook Drive spoke on behalf of Friends of Mendham and reported that the group's independent planning analysis of Ordinance 01-2026, submitted through their attorney, identifies significant concerns with both the process and the substance of the proposed rezoning. She stated that the ordinance relies on a flawed planning framework, conflicts with state and local planning policies, and would allow major growth in an environmentally sensitive area. She also noted potential impacts on a historically significant structure. She asked the council to delay the vote until full planning, environmental, and historic reviews are completed and shared with the public.

Ron Weissman of 15 Tempe Wick Road spoke about the importance of understanding affordability standards in Mendham. He explained that he researched income eligibility levels for affordable housing and contacted the Housing Partnership, which manages Mendham's affordable units. He noted that only one unit is currently available and may be delayed due to a code issue. He asked the borough to publish clear information on local income eligibility levels, similar to what other towns provide. He also referenced statewide efforts to address housing affordability and encouraged the council to consider alternatives such as senior or veteran housing, as well as adaptive reuse of existing structures, rather than high-density development. He urged the council to balance community needs with development proposals rather than defaulting to developers' definitions of affordability.

Harry Riskin of 10 Cromwell Lane expressed concern about the scale and impact of the proposed development on the Sisters of Christian Charity property. He noted that the existing new motherhouse is already a large 164,910-square-foot building and emphasized that adding the proposed project on top of the existing structures would have a significant and potentially devastating effect on the borough. He urged the council to consider the practical impacts on the community and thanked them for their service and commitment to the borough.

### **APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

Bills List dated April 15, 2026.

Motion: Council President Althoff  
Second: Council Member Neff  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

### **16. ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, Mayor Kelly asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Motion: Council President Althoff  
Second: Council Member Neff  
Ayes: Althoff, Henry Traut, Neff, Sullivan

The next meeting of the Mendham Borough Mayor and Council will take place on, May 6, 2026, 7:00 PM, at the Garabrant Center Mendham, NJ 07945

Respectfully Submitted:

*Lauren McBride, R.MC*  
Borough Clerk  
The Borough of Mendham

