

TOWNSHIP OF MAPLE SHADE

REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES

March 5, 2026 -6:30 PM
Maple Shade Municipal Building

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Maple Shade Township Council was called to order at approximately 6:30 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice of this meeting, pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, was provided as follows:

Notice was given to the Township Clerk on **December 23, 2025**.

Notice was posted on the **municipal website** at: mapleshade.com/publicnotices/

Notice was posted on the **official municipal bulletin board** on **December 23, 2025**.

The draft agenda was also posted on the Township website and the bulletin board in the Municipal Building.

Members of the public wishing to speak were advised they would be permitted to address Council during the designated public comment portion and would be limited to five minutes, after stating their name and address for the record.

3. Roll Call

Official	Status
Councilman Kauffman	Present
Councilwoman Nunes	Present
Councilman Simonsick	Absent
Councilman Zahradnick	Present
Mayor Talarico	Present

4. Board of Health Meeting

The Council convened as the **Board of Health**.

A report was presented indicating that during the reporting period the Board of Health addressed five complaints, consisting of:

- 1 Sanitary condition complaint
 - 1 Cat bite complaint
 - 3 Multi-unit dwelling complaints (originating August 2025)
- All complaints have since been resolved and closed.

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Public Portion – Board of Health

No members of the public came forward.

Motion

A motion was made and seconded to close the public portion and adjourn the Board of Health meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. 2026 Municipal Budget Discussion

Township Administration presented the proposed 2026 Municipal Budget.

The proposed budget reflects a 1.9-cent increase in the municipal tax rate, bringing the estimated rate to 0.986, compared to 0.967 in 2025.

Officials explained that under New Jersey law, all appropriations must be supported by revenue, including:

Property taxes
Fees and permits
Surplus funds
State aid and other revenues

Key Budget Factors

Decreased revenues in certain areas
Increased operational costs, including:
Insurance
Utilities
Debt service
Trash collection

- Slight decrease in taxable valuation

Each one-cent tax increase generates approximately \$133,000 in municipal revenue.

The proposed budget was described as extremely lean, leaving little flexibility for unexpected expenses.

Revenue Overview

Revenues include:

Municipal surplus
Licensing fees (alcohol, raffles, bingo, businesses)
Land use and permit fees
Police department fees
Municipal court fees
Interest and delinquent tax collections
State aid (Energy Receipts Tax)

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Shared services with the school district

Revenues for 2026 are projected at approximately \$3.43 million, compared to approximately \$3.6 million in 2025, representing a decrease of approximately \$300,000.

Property Tax Levy

- 2026 Levy: \$13,128,123.05
- Increase from 2025: approximately \$230,000

School Tax Deferral

Council discussed utilizing a school tax deferral option, which allows municipalities to defer up to 50% of the school tax levy.

The current proposal includes an additional \$600,000 deferral, leaving approximately \$1 million still available for future deferral.

Major Expense Increases

Significant cost increases impacting the budget include:

Insurance

Utilities

Debt service (up approximately 10%)

Trash collection

Trash costs have increased:

\$68,000 from 2024 to 2025

Projected \$134,000 increase from 2025 to 2026

Health Insurance

Health insurance costs increased significantly; however, switching plans reduced the projected increase from 36% to approximately 18%.

Staffing

The proposed budget includes:

Funding for one additional police officer

No new hires in the Department of Public Works

Fire Department

Fire department expenses were reduced by approximately \$100,000 from initial departmental requests after administrative review and adjustments.

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Uniform Fire Safety

The budget includes funding for:

A full-time Fire Marshal
A part-time fire inspector

6. Tax Rate Discussion

Council discussed potential tax rate options.

Estimated Impact on Average Home

Average assessed home value: **\$162,000**

Tax Increase	Approx. Impact
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1.9 cents	\$31 increase
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2.5 cents	\$41 increase
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2.9 cents	\$49 increase
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Council expressed concern about balancing:
fiscal responsibility
taxpayer burden
maintaining adequate financial reserves.

Budget Direction

After discussion, Council indicated support for a 2.5-cent tax rate increase, which would provide approximately \$60,000 additional budget flexibility.

Administration will revise the budget accordingly and present updated documents prior to formal introduction.

7. Water and Sewer Utility Budget

The water and sewer utility budget was also reviewed.

Primary cost drivers include:

Increased debt service
Increased contractual services
Utility operating costs
Settlement funds related to PFAS contamination will help offset some expenses.

Officials noted that a future water rate increase discussion is anticipated later in the year.

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8. Ordinances – Second Reading and Public Hearing

Ordinance No. 2026-02 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SALARIES AND WAGES OF CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MAPLE SHADE, COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026

Public portion opened, no participation, and closed; Ordinance adopted by: Kauffman Second: Nunes; Simonsick opposed

Ordinance adopted.

Ordinance No. 2026-03 BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE NUMBER 2024-14 (WHICH PROVIDES FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS) HERETOFORE FINALLY ADOPTED BY THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MAPLE SHADE, IN THE COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2024, TO AMEND THE DESCRIPTION SET FORTH THEREIN

Public portion opened, no participation, and closed, Ordinance adopted by: Kauffman Second: Zahradnick; Simonsick opposed

Ordinance adopted.

9. Resolution

Resolution 2026-R-64 AWARD OF CONTRACT TO THINK PAVERS HARDSCAPING, LLC FOR THE PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS TO BUTTONWOOD PARK

Motion to Approve: Nunes, Second: Zahradnick; Simonsick, opposed

Roll Call Vote – Resolution approved.

10. Public Comment

Several members of the public addressed Council, including:

Budget Questions

A resident inquired about the cost and benefits of conducting a commercial property reassessment, estimated to cost \$500,000–\$600,000, and whether increased revenue would offset the cost.

Administration confirmed a reassessment would ultimately strengthen the tax base and that the Township anticipates initiating the process in the near future.

Environmental Concerns

A resident encouraged the Township to reconsider the leaf collection program, citing environmental benefits of leaving leaves to support ecosystems such as fireflies and insects.

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Student Environmental Initiative

A Maple Shade High School student representing the Environmental Club announced a community initiative to collect 3,000 plastic bottles to repurpose into planters and mini-greenhouses. Collection boxes are located at:

Maple Shade High School Main Office
Firehouse
Municipal Building Recycling Station

Veteran Tax Exemption

A resident requested clarification regarding tax exemptions for totally disabled veterans, which was explained by Council.

11. Staff and Professional Comments

The Mayor addressed concerns raised at a previous meeting regarding the Main Street development project, clarifying that:

- The building meets Uniform Construction Code requirements
- The residential units were properly inspected prior to issuance of a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy
- The building is fully sprinklered and alarmed

The Township's Construction Official provided additional explanation regarding:

building safety
inspection procedures
ADA compliance issues related to commercial units
upcoming Land Use Board review of modifications.

12. Announcements

Council members made several announcements:

- Residents were reminded to buy local for St. Patrick's Day.
- Seniors were reminded to apply for available programs
- Residents were encouraged not to drink and drive during holiday celebrations.
- Upcoming lead service line inspections and test pits will occur throughout town streets.

13. Old Business

None.

14. New Business

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None.

15. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately **7:35 PM**.

Certification

Respectfully Submitted,

Municipal Clerk