

Maple Shade Township Council
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2026 – 6:30 PM
Maple Shade Municipal Building, Maple Shade, New Jersey

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Session Meeting of the Maple Shade Township Council was called to order on April 16, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by those present.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Public notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act was provided by notifying the Township Clerk on December 23, 2025, posting notice on the municipal website, and posting notice on the official Municipal Bulletin Board on December 23, 2025.

Members of the public wishing to speak were advised they would have one opportunity during the public portion and would be limited to five minutes.

A draft agenda was posted on the Township website and municipal bulletin board.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Councilman Kauffman
Councilwoman Nunes
Councilman Simonsick
Councilman Zahradnick
Mayor Heather Talarico

Also Present:

Township Manager Danson
Township Clerk McVeigh
Township Staff and Professionals

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Board of Health Report

Susan presented the Board of Health report, advising that the following matters had been addressed:

One animal dog bite case
One mold case
One insect-related case
One miscellaneous case
One lack of heat case

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All matters were reported as mediated through either the Township Code Enforcement Office or the County Board of Health.

Residents were reminded that with warmer weather approaching:

- Standing water should be removed from pool covers to prevent mosquito breeding.
- Grass clippings should not be blown into the street as it violates Township code and creates health and safety concerns.

Public Portion – Board of Health

Mayor Talarico opened the public portion for the Board of Health meeting.

Seeing no public comment, the public portion was closed.

Adjournment – Board of Health

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Board of Health meeting.

Motion carried by voice vote.

PRESENTATION AND DEDICATION

Joseph P. Dugan Community Center

Mayor Talarico presented a proclamation honoring former Mayor Joseph P. Dugan for more than fifty years of dedicated public service to the Township of Maple Shade.

The proclamation recognized Mr. Dugan’s leadership in establishing Maple Shade’s Council-Manager form of government in 1975 and acknowledged his role in numerous municipal improvements, including:

Construction of a new wastewater treatment plant
Road improvement initiatives
Development of the Council-Manager governmental system
Acquisition of the current municipal complex

The proclamation further recognized the service and support of the Dugan family throughout his decades of public service.

Township Council formally designated a portion of the municipal complex as the:

“Joseph P. Dugan Community Center”

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Mr. Dugan was also presented with a commemorative plaque recognizing his 50-plus years of service to the Township.

Remarks by Joseph P. Dugan

Mr. Dugan thanked Township officials, residents, friends, and family for attending the ceremony.

He reflected on:

- Being born and raised in Maple Shade
- His lifelong connection to the community
- The many dedicated public servants and volunteers he worked alongside throughout his career

Mr. Dugan offered special recognition and appreciation to Jackie McVeigh for her friendship, support, and dedication over the years.

Mr. Dugan additionally thanked:

- His wife, children, and grandchildren for their support and patience throughout his years of public service
- The Mayor and Township Council
- The Township Manager
- The Township Clerk
- All staff and individuals who helped organize the recognition ceremony

Mr. Dugan stated he was deeply grateful and thanked everyone from the bottom of his heart.

Community Center Signage

Township officials presented a mock-up rendering of the future “Joseph P. Dugan Community Center” signage, which will be installed at the entrance to the Senior Center and Recreation Center area of the municipal complex.

Officials also advised that the existing John Doherty signage would be updated to maintain consistency throughout the municipal complex.

Recess

Council recessed briefly to allow attendees and family members to gather for refreshments located near the Township Manager’s office.

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PROCLAMATION – ARBOR DAY 2026

Mayor Heather Talarico proclaimed Friday, April 24, 2026 as Arbor Day in the Township of Maple Shade.

The proclamation recognized the importance of trees in:

- Combating climate change
- Reducing erosion
- Improving air quality
- Producing oxygen
- Providing wildlife habitat
- Enhancing property values and beautification efforts

Residents were encouraged to celebrate Arbor Day and support efforts to protect trees and woodlands throughout the community.

2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET PRESENTATION

Township Manager Danson provided a detailed overview and presentation of the proposed 2026 Municipal Budget.

Budget Overview

The Township Manager explained that New Jersey municipalities are legally required to prepare and present annual budgets in accordance with state regulations to ensure transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility.

Under Maple Shade’s Faulkner Act Council-Manager form of government, the Township Manager works with the Chief Financial Officer and department heads to develop a balanced and responsible budget for Council consideration.

The proposed 2026 Municipal Budget totals approximately:

- **\$21,642,719**

The amount to be raised through taxation was reported as:

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- **\$13,208,024.05**

Revenue Sources

The budget includes revenues from:

Property taxes
Surplus funds
State aid
Shared service agreements
Construction and permit fees
Hotel and franchise fees
Court revenues
Interest on taxes and investments
Delinquent tax collections

Tax Distribution

Residents were advised that local property tax distributions are approximately:

62% to the School District
25% to the Municipality
13% to Burlington County, including open space and library services

Budget Expenditures

Major expenditures discussed included:

Employee salaries and benefits
Pension and Social Security obligations
Health insurance and liability insurance
Utilities and building operations
Solid waste and recycling services
Operating expenses
Debt service and capital improvements
Professional service contracts

Health Insurance Costs

The Township Manager advised that the State Health Benefits Program initially proposed a 36% increase in health insurance costs for 2026.

Through negotiations and participation in a health insurance consortium, the Township reduced the increase to approximately 18% with cooperation from municipal employees and union representatives.

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Solid Waste Costs

Council was advised that the Township experienced approximately a 26% increase in solid waste and recycling costs for 2026.

The Township Manager noted that many municipalities throughout New Jersey are experiencing significantly higher increases in waste disposal and collection contracts.

Surplus Discussion

The Township Manager reviewed the Township's historical surplus balances from 2014 through 2025 and explained the use of surplus funds to stabilize taxes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council was advised that:

- The Township previously maintained surplus balances between approximately \$8 million and \$9 million
- Approximately \$4.9 million in surplus is proposed to offset operational costs in the 2026 budget
- The Township expects to maintain an estimated healthy surplus balance of approximately \$3 million

The surplus was described as important for:

- Financial stability
- Emergency preparedness
- Maintaining the Township's AA-minus bond rating
- Securing favorable borrowing rates

Average Tax Bill Breakdown

Using an average Maple Shade residential tax bill of approximately \$6,618.33, the Township Manager explained:

- Approximately \$4,066 goes to the School District
- Approximately \$1,611 goes to the Municipality
- Approximately \$940 goes to Burlington County

The municipal share was further broken down into expenses including:

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Employee salaries
Pension obligations
Insurance costs
Debt service
Solid waste collection
Operations and utilities
Professional services

Budget Goals

The Township Manager stated the budget was developed to:

Maintain stable municipal services
Continue responsible financial management
Preserve a healthy surplus balance
Avoid emergency appropriations
Protect taxpayers while continuing essential services

Special recognition was given to the Township's Chief Financial Officer, department heads, and municipal staff for their cooperation during the budget preparation process.

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-07

Introduction and First Reading

Ordinance of the Township of Maple Shade Accepting a Deed of Dedication from PSE&G for Land and Improvements to be Utilized as Right-of-Way on Property Identified as Portions of Block 189.03, Lot 5 Located at the Intersection of Willow Road and Rotary Way

A motion was made by: Zahradnick and seconded by: Nunes to introduce Ordinance No,2026-07.

Roll Call Vote

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes
- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – Yes
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes

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- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Motion carried.

Publication date was set for April 20, 2026, with public hearing scheduled for May 14, 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-06

Second Reading and Public Hearing

2026 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and Establish a Cap Bank pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14

Mayor Talarico opened the public hearing on Ordinance 2026-06.

Seeing no public comment, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by: Zahradnick and seconded by: Nunes to adopt Ordinance 2026-06.

Roll Call Vote

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes
- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – Yes
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes
- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Ordinance adopted.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2026-R-75

Resolution to Read the Budget by Title Only

A motion was made by Kauffman and seconded by Nunes to approve Resolution 2026-R-75 authorizing the 2026 Municipal Budget to be read by title only pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-8.

Roll Call Vote

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes

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- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – Yes
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes
- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Resolution approved.

Resolution No. 2026-R-69

Approval of the 2026 Municipal Budget

Council opened the public hearing regarding the proposed 2026 Municipal Budget.

The summary of revenues and appropriations was read into the record, including:

Surplus anticipated revenue
Miscellaneous revenues
Delinquent tax collections
Amount to be raised by taxation
Operating expenses
Capital improvements
Debt service
Reserve for uncollected taxes

Seeing no public comment, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by: Kauffman and seconded by: Nunes to adopt Resolution No. 2026-R-69 approving the 2026 Municipal Budget.

Roll Call Vote

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes
- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – No
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes
- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Resolution approved.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Talarico opened the public portion regarding consent agenda items.

Seeing no public comment, the public portion was closed.

Council voted to table Resolution No. 2026-R-77.

Roll Call Vote – Motion to Table Resolution No. 2026-R-77

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes
- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – Yes
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes
- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Motion carried.

Council then approved Resolution No. 2026-R-76 and Resolutions No. 2026-R-78 through No. 2026-R-83. Motioned by: Zahradnick and seconded by: Nunes

Roll Call Vote

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes
- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – Yes
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes
- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Resolutions approved.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST

Township Manager Danson presented the bill lists as follows:

- Current Fund: \$3,019,022.08
- Utility Fund: \$367,205.20

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- Capital Fund: \$70,676.67
- Utility Capital Fund: \$41,369.51
- Trust Fund: \$70,463.42
- Grant Fund: \$24,115.64

The Township Manager advised she had reviewed the bills submitted and recommended payment when funds are available.

A motion was made by: Kauffman and seconded by: Zahradnick to approve the bill list.

Roll Call Vote

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes
- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – Yes
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes
- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council considered approval of the March 2026 meeting minutes.

A motion was made by: Zahradnick and seconded by: Kauffman to approve the minutes.

Roll Call Vote

- Councilman Kauffman – Yes
- Councilwoman Nunes – Yes
- Councilman Simonsick – Yes
- Councilman Zahradnick – Yes
- Mayor Talarico – Yes

Minutes approved.

PUBLIC PORTION

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Mike Stevens – 47 Cherry Avenue

Mr. Stevens congratulated Chief Fletcher and Chief Weiss, stating their recognitions were well deserved.

He also congratulated the Township Manager, Assistant Township Manager, and Council for their work on behalf of the community.

Mr. Stevens expressed hope that conflicts and disagreements within the community would diminish so residents could work together more positively.

Joanne Mortimer – 39 Lanci Road

Ms. Mortimer addressed concerns regarding the recent Land Use Board meeting.

She questioned why an individual identified as an engineer at the meeting was, according to her research, actually serving as a planner rather than a licensed engineer.

Ms. Mortimer stated she believed:

An engineer should be physically present during Land Use Board meetings
Meeting agendas and signage should accurately identify professional titles
Engineers and planners serve different professional functions
She urged Council to review and correct the matter.

Jeffrey Naas – 103 South Maple Avenue

Mr. Nice requested that the Township consider issuing a proclamation recognizing Memorial Day.

Council indicated they would consider the request and acknowledged the importance of Memorial Day recognition.

Mr. Nice also discussed the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and suggested a community signing display similar to a prior Constitution commemoration project.

Council noted the Township's annual parade and fireworks celebration and advised that a Constitution display remains in the municipal offices.

John and Sharon Sullivan – 478 West Front Street

Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan requested consideration for extending the municipal sewer line to their property, noting that their residence currently utilizes a septic system and is the only property in the immediate area without sewer access.

Council and administration discussed:

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- Costs associated with sewer extensions
- Existing septic infrastructure
- Potential impact on neighboring properties
- DEP and county requirements
- Possible future infrastructure planning
- Legal obligations related to sewer connection requirements

No formal action was taken, would require further review.

Motion to Close Public Portion: Approved unanimously.

Staff and Professional Comments

Council members and staff offered congratulations and appreciation to:

- Joe Dugan for years of service
- Chief Fletcher on his retirement
- Municipal staff and department heads for the budget

Condolences were extended to the Kaliamouris family.

Community announcements included:

- Library Spring Book Sale
- Youth Football Carnival
- Girls Softball Opening Day

Community Development and Housing Inspection Update

The Mayor provided an update regarding the Township's housing inspection ordinance implementation:

- 411 residential inspections conducted
- 335 Certificates of Continued Occupancy issued
- 76 failed or pending inspections
- No real estate closings delayed to date

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Common deficiencies included:

- Smoke detectors
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Railings
- Electrical hazards
- Unpermitted installations

Township Manager's Report

The Township Manager reported on:

- Lead service line replacement program
- Arbor Day tree planting event with Columbia Bank
- May 9th shredding event
- Buttonwood Park drainage project delays
- Thomas Avenue funding and engineering updates
- East Woodlawn Avenue drainage and roadway improvements
- Windsor Avenue infrastructure project
- Miscellaneous road resurfacing projects
- Additional capital road projects
- Receipt of a thank-you letter from The Mews organization

Police Department Report

Captain Weiss reported on:

- Upcoming retirements of Chief Fletcher, Corporal Bennett, and Sergeant Pacheco
- Recruitment efforts and police academy candidates
- Recent officer graduation and field training completion
- Proposed dedicated traffic enforcement unit

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- New Attorney General directives regarding active threat and barricaded subject response
- Continued active shooter training initiatives
- Upcoming reaccreditation review for the Police Department
- Recognition awarded by the Burlington County 200 Club relating to the Narra murder investigation

Council acknowledged the Police Department's training and public safety efforts.

Sustainable Maple Shade

Council announced the upcoming Green Fair and Community Cleanup scheduled for May 17, 2026.

Marketing and Social Media Consultant RFP

Council discussed a proposal received for marketing and social media consulting services on an as-needed basis.

Discussion included:

- Community outreach
- Social media engagement
- Communication strategies
- Costs associated with services

Consensus supported moving forward on an as-needed basis.

New Business

Request to Waive Local Fees – Maple Shade Youth Football Carnival

Council considered a request to waive local raffle fees totaling \$200 for carnival games and a 50/50 raffle.

Motion to Approve Fee Waiver: Councilman Kaufman

Second: Councilwoman Nunes

Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

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There being no further business, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea T. McVeigh, RMC
Township Clerk