

The Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hackensack was held at City Hall, 65 Central Avenue, Hackensack, New Jersey, on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 5:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ORDER OF BUSINESS:

Mayor Gaines called the meeting to order and the Acting City Clerk Timothy Hoffman announced, “This meeting is being held in accordance with the “Open Public Meeting Act,” N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice having been published according to law, with a copy on file in the City Clerk’s Office, and a copy posted on the Bulletin Board in City Hall.”

Mr. Hoffman called the roll: Mayor Gaines, Deputy Mayor Toomey, and Councilman Carroll. Councilman Diaz arrived at 5:21 P.M. Councilwoman Clark Collins was absent. City Manager Thomas Freeman was present. City Attorney Richard Malagiere was present. Acting Clerk Timothy Hoffman was present. Deputy City Clerk Allison Saabye was present.

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

II. RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council Member	Intro	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recused
Deputy Mayor Toomey		X	X				
Clark-Collins						X	
Carroll	X		X				
Diaz						X	
Mayor Gaines			X				

CITY OF HACKENSACK

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN EXECUTIVE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the City of Hackensack deem it necessary to discuss certain actions under Section 7b7 & 7b8 of the Open Public Meetings Act which pertains to matters falling within attorney-client privilege, on-going litigation and personnel matters concerning the employment of a current or prospective public employee(s).

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the City of Hackensack is of the opinion that such circumstances may presently exist; and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to discuss the following issues:

- 1. On-going Litigation
- 2. Matters involving attorney/client privilege: Affordable Housing
- 3. Matters involving the purchase, lease or acquisition of real property
- 4. Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiations

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the City of Hackensack deem it necessary to exclude the public from this discussion. The outcome of the discussion will be disclosed within 90 days or at such time as the interests of the City do not require confidentiality.

III. PROCLAMATIONS & PRESENTATION:

a. Proclamations – None

IV. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS FROM PROFESSIONALS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Public Hearing – 2026 City of Hackensack Budget Amendment:

A motion to open the meeting to the public was offered by Councilman Carroll seconded by Councilman Diaz.

No one wished to speak.

A motion to close the meeting to the public was offered by Councilman Carroll and seconded by Deputy Mayor Toomey.

City Managers Report: I don't have much to report. I will hold off on the two follow ups for our next regular meeting when the people that bought up those things are present.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT (ON AGENDA ITEMS):

A motion to open the meeting to the public was offered by Councilman Carroll seconded by Councilman Diaz.

Sam – I am not a Hackensack resident. I am a resident of Teaneck. I came to learn about local government and how that proceeds. I guess I should have spoken at the public hearing, I am curious what the budget amendment is? That was my only thing.

Rev. Carolyn Davis – I don't have an agenda in front of me. Does this have anything to do with the buildings being built?

No one else wished to speak.

A motion to close the meeting to the public was offered by Councilman Carroll and seconded by Dep May

Mayor Gaines – I am going to ask for our CFO to just give a quick overview as to the nature of the amendment.

CFO Jim Mangin responded – When we sent the budget to the State for approval, they asked for two corrections to be made. One had to do with debt service because the debt service wasn't matching what was in the audit. We had to shift that around. Nothing changed as far as the amount to be raised by taxation, but we did have to increase the principal and interest on the wastewater loan and decrease the deferred charges on future taxation. That was a wash. Then there was also an issue with inside cap and outside cap so we had to shift money from outside cap to inside and inside to outside cap to satisfy the State again. It had nothing to do with the amount to be raised by taxation. This was to satisfy the State.

Mayor Gaines – I want to ask one quick follow up because I had some people ask me this as well, and can you explain for Sam and anyone else who may be watching, can you explain what are some things that the State allows as outside cap? Folks are familiar with the fact that we have a cap, but what are some things the State allows to be outside cap?

CFO Jim Mangin responded – There are two caps. There is a cap on taxes, you can't raise taxes more than 2% with certain exceptions and then there is a spending cap. You can't raise spending more than 3.5% and there are certain exceptions. The exceptions for both of them is debt service, capital, grants, and deferred charges. Those are the standard exceptions and then there are the year-to-year exceptions.

Health benefits are an issue for every municipality so for the last few years they have been making health benefits as an exception to both. This year, they made the costs of the January blizzard an exception to the spending cap.

Mayor Gaines – I just wanted to give an example of a couple things, but that satisfies.

VI. NEW BUSINESS (ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS):

Council Member	Intro	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recused
Deputy Mayor Toomey			X				
Clark-Collins						X	
Carroll		X	X				
Diaz	X		X				
Mayor Gaines			X				

**CITY OF HACKENSACK
RESOLUTION NO. 135-26**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING 2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET ADOPTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the City of Hackensack, County of Bergen that the budget hereinbefore set forth is hereby adopted and shall constitute an appropriation for the purposes stated of the sums therein set forth as appropriations and authorizations of the amount of:

\$101,543,456.13 (Item 2 below) for municipal purposes, and
\$642,723.38 (Budget Sheet 43) for Open Space Trust Fund Levy, and
\$2,923,266.00 (Item 5 below) Minimum Library Tax

SUMMARY OF REVENUES

1. General Revenues	
Surplus Anticipated	\$13,270,000.00
Miscellaneous Revenue Anticipated	\$28,714,496.53
Receipts from Delinquent Taxes	\$ 0.00
2. Amount to be Raised by Taxation for Municipal Purposes	
(Item 6(a), Sheet 11)	\$101,543,456.13
5. Amount to be Raised by Taxation – Minimum Library Levy	
	<u>\$ 2,923,266.00</u>
Total Revenues:	\$146,451,218.66

SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS

GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS	
Within “CAPS”	
(a&b) Operations including Contingent	\$98,822,206.00
(e) Deferred Charges and Statutory	\$14,338,653.60
Excluded From “CAPS”	
(a) Operations – excluded from “CAPS”	\$16,927,359.06
(c) Capital Improvements	\$ 350,000.00

(d)	Municipal Debt Service	\$ 6,791,938.00
(e)	Deferred Charges – Municipal	\$ 1,221,062.00
(m)	Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	<u>\$ 1,500,000.00</u>
	Total Appropriations:	\$146,451,218.66

It is hereby certified that the within budget is a true copy of the budget finally adopted by resolution of the Governing Body on the 12th day of May 2026. It is further certified that each item of revenue and appropriation is set forth in the same amount and by the same title as appeared in the 2026 approved budget and all amendments thereto, if any, which have been previously approved by the Director of Local Government Services.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES):

A motion to open the meeting to the public was offered by Councilman Carroll and seconded by Deputy Mayor Toomey.

Rev. Carolyn Davis – I just have a question. The proposed project for Anderson Street and Passaic Street, is that still going forward as far as we know? Where Walgreens was and Rite Aid, all of that.

Mayor Gaines responded – Yes, that is a project that was approved prior to this administration, as I know you know. That is the project that is moving forward, they have their site approval and their PILOT, and they have raised that area. I think they have stopped working.

Rev. Carolyn Davis – They did stop working so I was wondering if it was still going ahead because I haven't seen anything going on.

Mayor Gaines responded – I assume they will be back. Thank you.

No one else wished to speak.

A motion to close the meeting to the public was offered by Councilman Carroll and seconded by Councilman Diaz.

VIII. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Deputy Mayor Toomey – Good evening. I don't have much to say except thank you for coming out and if anyone is watching us, thank you for listening to us and hearing us out. As far as the budget is concerned, we are still learning. We are still absorbing and we did the best that we could. We tried dotting all the i's and crossing all the t's and making sure. We are not the financial experts on this, but we trust that the people that are here doing that have explained everything to the best and we understood it. Going forward, we hope to do better and that is all I can say about that. Thank you. Have a good night.

Councilman Carroll – I just want to express the same thoughts that the Deputy Mayor said. We had a budget that we had to go through. Some of us never have went through a budget before but while we are going through this, we learned a lot. One thing that I think I took was the PILOT programs and although years ago with the old administration, they loved the idea of these programs, it is now affecting us right now because now taxes are due and some of these buildings don't have to pay. That means that the increase in the tax budget, we, the regular folk, out here, we have to pay for it. The buildings are paying a minimum, but not at full price, so we had to raise our tax levy, and we are going to get an increase in our taxes. We, I believe, don't want this to happen anymore so we are going to go through every PILOT program to make sure all the dots, everything was done, so that if there is any leeway, we are going to

go after these people for taxes. There are different routes that we are going to take and I hope that us, and our rest of the Council, and our inside people, can go through this and hopefully try and find something that will save us money. But anyway, it is what it is. We will try and do our best to make it better. I wish you a good night.

Councilman Diaz – Good evening. Tonight marks the final approval of the amended 2026 budget. I think it is important to recognize the amount of time, work, discussion, and difficult decisions that went into getting us here. As a Council, our responsibility is to protect the financial future of Hackensack while continuing to provide the services our residents count on every single day. That balance is never easy, but it matters. Like I said last week, we inherited financial challenges that could not be ignored and instead of pushing them down the road, we choose to address them responsibly and transparently. I am proud of the direction we are moving in, and I truly believe we are building a stronger and more fiscally responsible future for our City. Thank you.

Mayor Gaines – I want to just take a moment and reflect on this time last year. We were a little jittery this time last year. May 12th and May 13th of last year was the election. And so, it is a good time to think about our time sitting here and one of the things we did immediately was start to look at the fiscal health of the City of Hackensack. One of the first actions we took was rescinding three PILOTs. I believe it was our first meeting that we introduced that. I believe it was our first or second meeting where we took action in Johnson Park and tried to save folks money. That doesn't mean that nothing will happen in Johnson Park, but what was happening there was expensive and unnecessarily expensive and we said let's look at this and try and figure out if there is a better way of doing it. We have pursued grants, lots of grants. In fact, the Shade Tree Committee told me that something like 85 percent of the total grant money that was brought in by the Shade Tree Committee since 2018 or something like that, was after July. I say that with some level of pride, with some level of gratitude to our employees and our vendors and to folks who work with us because they are the ones out there pursuing on a vision that we are trying to execute for the people of Hackensack. I also say that to renew an ask that I made on behalf of all of us when we were sworn in, which was for a couple things and one of those things was patience. I appreciate that we have been here for about 10 months and folks believe that in 10 months we would have solved all the issues in Hackensack by now. I appreciate that level of confidence that people have in us, but the truth of it is, our predecessors were here for 12 years. The former Mayor was here for 16 years. That is a long time to move a ship in a different direction. It is not going to be overnight. As the Councilman said, this budget is a budget of necessity. It is one because there was some stunt budgeting certainly last year. There were some practices regarding PILOTs that were overused. It is a tool. It doesn't mean you can't ever use it but it can't be the only tool you ever use. As the Deputy Mayor said, we are looking everyday to find where we can continue to improve upon the fiscal health of the City and also the quality of life issues that are important. Everyone in Hackensack wants the same thing. They want the greatest amount of resources at the lowest cost. We want that as well. We will continue to try and make that happen. For those of you that are still trying to figure us out, that is where we are coming from. We have three more years and a bit to make a good impression on everyone and we will, because we are hard workers and we do our homework and we ask questions and we ask questions to our satisfaction. Work with us, we are working for you.

IX. ADJOURN:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM.

Approved by Mayor and Council on May 26, 2026.

Mayor Caseen Gaines

Deputy Mayor Agatha Toomey

ABSENT

Councilwoman Sonya Clark-Collins

Councilman Phillip Carroll

Councilman Roberto Diaz

Deputy City Clerk Allison Saabye, RMC