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*Section 4*

*Sonia A. Alves-Viveiros*

*Sarasota City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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## Section 4

Sonia Alves-Viveiros, MPA, QPA  
197 W Springtown Road  
Long Valley, NJ 07853  
alves.sonia62@gmail.com – (908) 956-3792

ATTN: Scott Krim  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

RE: City Manager Position

Dear Mr. Krim:

I'm writing to express my interest in the City Manager position. My experience as a public servant has enabled me to provide both elected officials and residents with the highest level of customer service. I have extensive experience in human resources, labor negotiations, financial management, budget development and implementation. Additionally, my concentration as the executive officer of a municipality has been to examine and reorganize departments so as to effectively and efficiently lessen the burden to taxpayers while providing exceptional services.

My experience in government and current duties are crafted in a collaborative manner and at the direction of the governing body. I have direct communication with all of the governing body members to discuss key items in their respective subcommittees, such as the municipal budget, succession planning and shared services. I believe these three areas are vital to an organization to have a sound budget and to be a prime example of a forward-thinking community. These items, as I am currently experiencing in the pandemic, are telling for the municipality's overall financial health.

A goal of mine is to engage the community with honesty, integrity and dedication. Dealing with diverse communities is something I have deep connections with. Without that group of diverse members, our communities would not be what they are. Keeping that in mind, is how I measure my success as the executive officer in a municipality.

Sincerely,

Sonia Alves-Viveiros



**Sonia Alves-Viveiros, MPA**  
**City Manager/Administrator**

**Personal Information:**

908.956.3792  
alves.sonia62@gmail.com

**EDUCATION:**

**Seton Hall University**

Master of Public  
Administration 2010

**Seton Hall University**

Bachelor of Arts - Political  
Science 2008

**Rutgers University**

Certified Qualified  
Government Procurement  
Agent (QPA)

**SKILLS:**

**Language(s):**

Spanish & Portuguese - Fluent  
Reading & Writing

**BOARDS/ASSOCIATIONS:**

- NJ Municipal Managers  
Association - Board  
Treasurer and Executive  
Member
- International City  
Managers Association -  
Member

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Integration of Two Career  
Fire Services Departments
- Reorganization and  
Restructuring  
Departments
- Project Manage \$120m  
Infrastructure & Capital  
Improvement Projects

**SUMMARY**

More than ten years of local government experience with expertise in management operations, strategic planning, labor relations, organizational restructuring and analysis, financial operations and budgeting, project management, customer service and media relations.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**CITY MANAGER/BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR** *(Actual Title)*

**2022-Present**

Township of Edison, Edison, NJ / Apr 2022 - Present

The Township of Edison, NJ is located in central NJ with a population of approximately 107,000 residents and is the sixth largest municipality in the state. There are approximately 1,000 employees throughout the municipality. As the Chief Operating Officer, I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Township along with planning and creating a budget. I currently manage and oversee all of the Township's services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiating with ten bargaining unit contracts. Additional duties include the following:

- Recommending and setting policies for the organization; Implementation of performance evaluation reviews
- Develop and implement all procedural guidelines
- Work with elected officials to provide assistance with their constituent needs in their districts
- Oversight responsibility for the following functions: police, roads, stormwater drainage, water and sewer utility, parks, recreation, planning, zoning, finance, general services and personnel.

**CITY MANAGER**

**2020-2022**

City of Englewood, Englewood, NJ / Nov 2020 - April 2022

The City of Englewood is located in northern NJ and is considered a suburb of New York City. It is the home to many NYC commuters with a population of 30,000 residents. There are approximately 400 employees in the municipality. I served as the Chief Executive Officer responsible for day-to-day operations and creating municipal budget; Managed and oversaw City services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiated eight bargaining unit contracts and prepared the municipal budget.

- Created and implemented policies for the organization
- Developed and implemented all procedural guideline

### **CITY MANAGER**

#### **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR & ASSISTANT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR** *(Actual Title)*

**2016-2020**

Township of Maplewood, Maplewood, NJ / Jun 2018 - Nov 2020 / Asst BA Sep 2016 - May 2018

The Township of Maplewood is located in the northwestern part of NJ with a population size of approximately 27,000 residents. It is considered a suburb of NYC with a direct train line to NYC Penn Station. There are approximately 300 employees in the Township. I served as the Chief Executive Officer responsible for implementing Township policies along with planning and creating a budget; managed and oversaw all of the Township's services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiate eight bargaining unit contracts. As the Assistant Business Administrator, I was responsible for planning and creation of the Township budget, acting as a department head and performing all necessary duties in absence of the administrator.

- Prepared the Township's municipal budget
- Setting policies for the organization
- Developed and implemented all procedural guidelines
- Performed duties and acted as the Township's Qualified Purchasing Agent; oversight on all procurement procedures for the government entity
- Compiles and prepares the Township budget
- Performed all human resources duties which include FMLA processing, grievances,
- performance evaluations, union negotiations and attendance tracking
- Attended all Township Committee meetings including closed session and budget hearings
- Managed IT services for the Township, operated and oversaw the Township's website
- Performed purchasing duties which include creation of bid specifications, review bid packages and make recommendations to the Township Committee to award contracts
- Other roles in the Township are as follows: - Commissioner & Executive Member of the New Jersey Intergovernmental Insurance Fund; serving as an executive member and liaison to the Risk Management Committee; review and research liability factors, make risk assessments, and recommendations to members for overall safety guidance.

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### **OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

#### **PROFESSOR/INSTRUCTOR**

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ/ Apr 2023 - Present

Provide government procurement instruction to students

- Develop and deliver engaging lectures and tutorials, fostering critical thinking and analytical skills among students.
- Assist students with course material, provided feedback on assignments, and held regular office hours.
- Collaborate with colleagues to create innovative teaching materials and assessments.

#### **DEPUTY CITY CLERK**

City of Summit, Summit, NJ / Aug 2015 - Sep 2016 Manager responsible for developing the annual budget for the City Clerk's department. Lead administrator supervising staff training and supporting departmental actions.

- Administer financial reports for budget preparation; Summit's current budget is about 55 million and has been reduced by 11.25 percent from 2015. By researching and developing more efficient ways to use technology in which the budget has significantly been affected by those improvements.
- Prepared ordinances, resolutions and proclamations for execution, recording, archival and distribution.
- Performed administrative tasks, such as answering telephone calls, filing court
- documents and maintaining office supplies and equipment.
- Issued public notification of official activities or meetings.
- Recorded and edited minutes of meetings and distributed to appropriate officials or staff members.

### ***ASSISTANT TO THE TOWNSHIP CLERK/HR ASSISTANT***

Bernards Township, Basking Ridge, NJ / Feb 2012 - Sep 2015

- Maintained personnel files; monitor record retention
- Provided technical support to the QPA, compiled bid packages, contracts and resolutions for vendors; created purchasing orders for the entire Administration department
- Monitored tort claims involving the Township
- Assisted the Township Clerk with municipal duties such as, prepared resolutions, ordinances, agendas and minutes, Informed and provided citizens with current Township information including having knowledge on ordinances and resolutions that affect their daily lives. In addition, I organized materials and make all necessary arrangements during elections
- Provided assistance to Human Resources department with data entry and filing as well as developed and redo FMLA excel spreadsheets for Human Resources, compiled FMLA paperwork for employees; maintained confidentiality with employee and Township related issues, assisted employees during injuries and monitored and maintain up-to-date Federal and State labor postings on all employee bulletin Boards and processed Workers' Compensation claims for Human Resources





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*Candidate Introduction*

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**SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

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**EDUCATION**

- Masters in Public Administration with a concentration in Public Policy
- Bachelor Degree in Political Science and Minor in Applied Music
- Certified Qualified Procurement Agent

**EXPERIENCE**

Business Administrator, Township of Edison	2022 - Present
Instructor, Rutgers University	2023 - Present
City Manager, City of Englewood	2020 - 2022
Business Administrator/Asst. BA, Township of Maplewood	2016 - 2020
Deputy Town Clerk, Town of Summit	2015 - 2016
Asst. to the Municipal Clerk, Bernards Township	2012 - 2016

**BACKGROUND**

Edison Township is the 6th largest municipality in the State of New Jersey with a population of 107,000 residents. There are approximately 1,000 employees throughout the municipality. Edison As the Chief Operating Officer, I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Township along with planning and creating a budget. The Township operates under two separate budgets. The municipal budget is approximately \$176 million dollars with a Solid Waste budget of approximately \$11 million dollars. The Township currently maintains a surplus of \$12.5 million dollars.

I currently manage and oversee all of the Township's services by setting programs and organizational goals and objectives, establishing organizational structure and determining the need for and developing plans for organizational changes; negotiating with ten bargaining unit contracts. I directly supervise 25 employees under the Administration department which oversees Information Technology, Human Resources, Procurement, Edison TV and general administration for the municipality.

My greatest achievement in my career has been overcoming and rising through challenging moments as I worked my way from an internship to a Town Manager position. The process of working my way up has been a labor of love and I am truly appreciative of all of the challenges that have made me stronger as a Town Manager today. Each position whether it was through an internship in Millburn Township, being a Bernards Township support staff member, and the several supervisory positions, I was able to communicate, build relationships and develop teams that were able to get things done for all stakeholders. All of the roles I played were opportunities that I went above and beyond what was required. I hope that through my experience, I can inspire other public servants to be proud of the work we do on a daily basis in whatever role they

**SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

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serve. My ability to serve in various capacities while facing several challenges is my greatest achievement.

The three most significant issues facing the Township are:

- One of the most important issues the Township faces is poor water and sewer infrastructure. There is a mandated Department of Environmental Consent Order the Township is under which requires a full rehabilitation of all of the municipalities water and sewer infrastructure. As a result of the Township operating its own utility, it has become a \$100 million dollars worth of capital investments.
- The second issue is redevelopment. The Township is unique in its size and demographics. It has been struggling to create a cohesive identity given issues such as having a multitude of warehouses and being surrounded by three major State highways.
- The third issue is outdated and unsafe parks and recreation facilities. The Township in the last couple of years has begun making improvements to approximately 36 parks. This has become a major topic regarding quality of life issues as well as committing to large capital investments in the parks.

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

My management and leadership style would be described as communicative and collaborative. I do not believe it is efficient to micromanage staff but rather have a participatory type of environment where department heads and subordinates feel valued by the Township. This is done through management and individual department meetings. Having regular weekly interdepartmental meetings and biweekly department head meetings allows for a constant flow of communication. This avoids a majority of potential misunderstandings.

Employees and elected officials would say that I am open and efficient. I like to have a balance of new and participative ideas while having employees understand the value of structure when it comes to doing your work. My relationship with everyone including the elected official and taxpayer is professional. I understand that as an employee of the government entity that I am here to serve those two people. In addition, I entrust my department heads to run their departments independently. However, I make them aware that I am here to support them in any means possible. My best management skill is listening to all of those around me and allowing them to speak as to their ideas and concerns. My weakest management skill would be that while decisions have to be made, I should understand that pleasing isn't going to get the job done. I have made many strides to overcome this personal challenge.

Employment accountability and engagement is vital to the organization. I have created a performance evaluation form that covers a range of areas that help both the manager and

### SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS

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employee identify goals. Without this process, it would be difficult during situations where termination is a necessary action. This is perhaps one of the hardest tasks as the decision to terminate is not a light decision and must be well-thought out.

The balance of being both the Chief Executive Officer and working closely with the Mayor and Council is perhaps the most challenging of all as a Business Administrator. While it is your duty to serve the Mayor and the Council, it is also your duty to maintain a good working environment for employees. Both go hand-in-hand when it comes to being able to supply the public with the best customer service and having employees feel like their hard work is always appreciated. While I feel these are challenging, I also feel that the reward comes out as being a well-rounded Business Administrator who can administer his or her best knowledge of the laws of the municipality as well as labor laws.

The challenges I see facing the City of Sarasota:

- Economic Development and reviewing potential or further growth. Aside from being known as a destination, a year-round approach to making it a viable and growing City may be a potential challenge. This would also include addressing affordable housing.
- Resident involvement in their local government by providing volunteer opportunities. In addition, creating an internship program for high school students to understand and get involved in their local government.
- Collaborating with governing body and new stakeholders who contribute to the growth of the City.
- Storm recovery and resilience.

During the first six months my efforts will involve:

- Review and meet with finance staff to understand the City's viability and growth;
- Address emergency preparedness and recovery.
- Meet with local stakeholders, employees, elected officials and any other key community leaders. This would also be combined with holding a public forum to "meet and greet" the new City Manager.
- Review pertinent policies and procedures, manuals, etc..
- Review the City's social media coverage and develop a more civically engaged platform.

I work daily with the Township's very own TV station. This has allowed positive and important content to be transmitted to the public about important Township events and meetings. Holding public meetings is an essential part of my job and I hold myself accountable and responsible to be respectful to anyone who may have a negative response to actions taken by their local government. Therefore, I know that I would not have any issue with a future employer reviewing any media coverage that involved me. I also communicate regularly with media outlets to provide accurate information.

**SONIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

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During my leisure time, I enjoy the performing arts, outdoor family activities and traveling.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Integrity
- Effective
- Dependable
- Loyal
- Communicative
- Responsible

**REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION**

The City and State of Florida are under a renaissance. I find this an opportunity to improve the quality of life of the residents with my extensive knowledge and experience in diverse communities.

**CURRENT SALARY**

My current compensation at the Edison Township is \$237,000, including vehicle allowance and attending conferences for professional development.

## **Section 4**

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Morris County, NJ	No Records Found
Middlesex County, NJ	No Records Found
Bergen County, NJ	No Records Found
Essex County, NJ	No Records Found
Union County, NJ	No Records Found
Somerset County, NJ	No Records Found
State	
New Jersey	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Morris County, NJ	No Records Found
Middlesex County, NJ	No Records Found
Bergen County, NJ	<b>August 2021</b> – Civil Lawsuit filed by Pulice against the Maplewood Township including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her capacity as City Manager. <b>Disposition: Open</b>
	<b>November 2021</b> – Civil Lawsuit filed by Lester against the Maplewood Township including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her capacity as City Manager. <b>Disposition: Open</b>
	<i>*See pages 16 &amp; 18 for Candidate Explanation of Records Found</i>
Essex County, NJ	<b>November 2021</b> – Civil Lawsuit filed by Bell against the Maplewood Township including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her capacity as City Manager. <b>Disposition: Open</b>
	<i>*See pages 16 &amp; 18 for Candidate Explanation of Records Found</i>



**Background Check Summary for  
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

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Union County, NJ

**January 2017** – Civil lawsuit filed  
Against Ms. Alves-Viveiros  
**Disposition: January 2017**, closed

**July 2015** – Civil lawsuit filed  
Against Ms. Alves-Viveiros  
**Disposition: August 2015**, default by  
Clerk

*\*See page 16 for Candidate Explanation  
of Records Found*

Somerset County, NJ

No Records Found

Federal  
New Jersey

**March 2020** – Civil Lawsuit filed by  
Bell against the Maplewood Township  
including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her  
capacity as City Manager.  
**Disposition: July 2021**, Terminated

**May 2019** – Civil Lawsuit filed by  
Bell against the Maplewood Township  
including Ms. Alves-Viveiros in her  
capacity as City Manager.  
**Disposition: February 2022**, Terminated

*\*See pages 16 & 18 for Candidate  
Explanation of Records Found*

**Motor Vehicle**

New Jersey

No Records Found

**Credit**

Good

**Personal Bankruptcy**

No Records Found

**Sex Offender Registry**

Not Listed

**Education**

Confirmed

**Employment**

Confirmed

**Background Check Summary for  
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS**

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**Social Media**

Nothing of Concern Found

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Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

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**To:** Lynelle Klein <lynelle@cb-asso.com>

**Subject:** Re: Background Check Records that Require an Explanation

The ones in Essex and Bergen Counties are named parties to cases related to the City of Englewood and Township of Maplewood which names me automatically as a defendant when an employee sues the municipality. They are public records which can be found at the following site: njcourts.gov

The one in Essex County Bell vs. Maplewood, et als is for alleged wrongful termination/discrimination. The termination was of course substantiated for conduct unbecoming and several other performance issues.

One of the Bergen County cases is for alleged ageism/discrimination for not promoting someone to a captain's position. The employee was suspended for 20 days for major infractions therefore was not promoted.

The second Bergen County case is for alleged discrimination/harassment, there was no action taken by me for this employee rather this employee alleges that the City harassed him during his 2 year leave for allegedly having Covid and then told to come back to work when the City doctor said he was able to.

The others in NJ are related to a sale of a house where a buyer broke contract.

Should you have any other questions, please contact me.

**Background Check Summary for  
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

*Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.*

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?  
Yes                      No ☒
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?  
Yes                      No ☒
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?  
Yes                      No ☒
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes                      No ☒
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes                      No ☒
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, operating a vehicle impaired, or a similar offense?  
Yes                      No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?  
Yes                      No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.  
*Facebook, LinkedIn*
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?  
Yes                      No ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.  
*see attached.*

Attested to:

*Sonia Alves-Viveiros*  
Signature of Applicant

**Background Check Summary for  
SONIA ANDREIA ALVES-VIVEIROS  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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Sonia Alves-Viveiros, Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Lawsuits involved and represented by municipalities I have worked in as follows:

Lester Martin vs. City of Englewood, et. Als.

Fred Public vs. City of Englewood, et. Als.

Calvin Bell vs. Township of Maplewood, et. Als.

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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Reference Notes  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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**Robert Diehl – Council President / Councilman, Township of Edison , NJ 732-841-9000**

Mr. Diehl has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2022 when she was hired as the Business Administrator in the City. He was on the interviewing panel, and she was the top candidate by a large margin.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is effective at business administration. She deals with labor negotiations as well as all major contracts. She is involved with union issues and solves problems in a decent and fair way. Her ability to be equitable in negotiations is an asset to the city's administration.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros uses her knowledge well for the City's yearly budget of \$175.9 billion. She has strong financial skills, always double-checking the numbers. She is prepared and works hard, showing up at meetings and presentations with all reports in place. She is the best Business Administrator the township has had in Mr. Diehl's time of service, which spans over twenty years.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is heavily involved with the hiring process. She interviews everyone applying, and narrows down the field. Mr. Diehl works with her through this process, and is impressed with her approach. Based off their combined recommendations, the Mayor completes the final hiring signature.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros deals well with the stress of deadlines. She is present for every Business Administration meeting. Due to her thorough preparation, she can handle any questions or stressful situations. In addition, she is comfortable with ongoing communication to sort through issues. In the City, the six elected officials and hired officers work closely together. They meet every day throughout the day, and there is ongoing communication.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is pleasurable to work with. She has a nice disposition, good manners, and approaches others well. She gets along with others, and completes her job. The mayor has been extremely progressive, and she is part of a progressive team within the City. They have accomplished more in two years than in the previous ten. She adds a practical perspective on their forward measures, finding out how things will work. Her solid assessment of desired changes has helped implementation.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros attends city meetings, and is skilled good at handling the public. The City is known for being difficult to work in and manage as it is bordered by seven other towns, and has a town in the middle of their town. There are many pressing needs. In addition, it has a diverse population and is known as New Jersey tough. At council meetings, Ms. Alves-Viveiros must address questions without exacerbating it. It would be easy to escalate, and she never does. Her calm responses with these difficult interchanges increase trust between citizens and city staff.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is dependable. She shows up and puts in a good day's work. She focuses on the job at hand, and completes it. She is appreciated and respected. Her work ethic and

Reference Notes  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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commitment is unmatched. Mr. Diehl has worked over twenty years in local government, and she is one of the best.

There is nothing controversial in Ms. Alves-Viveiros' history. She will continue to do well in local government management. Her experience and knowledge make her a qualified candidate for a city manager position.

**Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Conscientious,
- Dependable,
- Hard-working,
- Detail-oriented,
- Good communicator, and
- Pleasant.

**Strengths:** A committed administrator, willing to communicate and collaborate with elected officials and department heads.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Frank Panucci – Business Administrator, Point Pleasant Borough and Bay Head Township, NJ 732-232-5111**

Mr. Panucci has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2019. They both serve on the Executive Board of the New Jersey Municipal Management Association (NJMMA).

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is skilled at networking within the board and with state leaders. She helps to craft policy, and represents the group well. She takes action, picking up the phone to get to the person she needs. She is not afraid to call around and ask questions to help policies move forward. She is known as an innovator within the board and the state.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved in training for NJMMA. She readily shares experiences with less-experienced municipal managers. She is an asset to the association and shares experiences with younger municipal managers.

New Jersey has some of the most stringent purchasing laws – so to survive there, one must understand financial guidelines. There is an immense amount of red tape to go through, and Ms. Alves-Viveiros keeps up with it. She accomplishes tasks well before the deadline. She sets the tone for others to be diligent with assignments, and is known for her dependability.

New Jersey is tough. The town Ms. Alves-Viveiros currently works in is known for being extremely tough. There is not an easy road: dealing with the public, with elected officials, with

## Reference Notes

### Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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the laws. Ms. Alves-Viveiros is a leader in the city, and known throughout the state. She knows how to read people and how to respond to the issue at hand without escalation. She carries an air of authority that contributes to positive interactions with individuals and groups.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros deals with stressful situations without becoming stressed herself. Within the board, she shares experiences and advice that helps others. She takes care of herself so that she approaches situations with a clear head and calm response. Individuals want to talk and work with her. They respect her and are drawn to her because of her experience and ability to positively impact her environment.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved with the association. She attends the meetings and helps others. When Mr. Panucci was dealing with staff being absent, he called her for advice. Over the next few months, she continued to check on him and offer support. She was not paid for it; she did not have to do it – she simply did it to help a colleague. She is the same person in all interactions: individual or group, public or private.

#### **Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Kind,
- Dependable,
- Consistent,
- Positive presence,
- Skilled at networking, and
- Uses authority well.

**Strengths:** Exceptional networker, excellent mentor and colleague, helpful to municipal leadership throughout the state.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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#### **Ken DeRoberts – CEO, SGR Firm, NJ 908-930-0232**

Mr. DeRoberts has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2022. His firm oversees all financial operations for the City of Edison.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has an excellent grasp on finances and budget. She applies good public policy and public management. When approaching the budget, she asks good questions and then passes along helpful directions to department managers.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is exceptional at meeting deadlines with financial reports. She is organized and manages multiple departments. When attending public council meetings, she is ready with



Reference Notes  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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the necessary reports and information. She understands that while she is responsible for managing departments, she also must answer to the governing body of the city.

A strength of Ms. Alves-Viveiros is that when she does not know the answer, she does not guess – she tells them honestly that she will get back to them with the information. She gathers the information by talking to respective departments as well as her own research and delivering the information in the time she promised.

In a town like Edison, it is constantly stressful. Ms. Alves-Viveiros maintains decorum and gives a fresh approach to dealing with issues. She never collapses under stress. She brings a great energy to the city leadership.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is experienced at dealing with professionals. When needed, she is not afraid to call and follow up to get responses. At council meetings, she maintains respect.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has been integral with labor negotiations on eight new contracts. She completed them with fairness and benefitting taxpayers. She has contributed to a better system, including the health benefits for workers. Both the city and the union were pleased with the results.

Ms. Sonia Alves-Viveiros would make an effective manager in any community, as she has already proved in Edison. She would be much missed.

**Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Responsible,
- Honest,
- Hard working,
- Talented,
- Good temperament, and
- Creative.

**Strengths:** An inquisitive and prepared individual, she seeks to improve conditions for citizens through diligent work and research.

**Weaknesses:** She is a bit overambitious. For the town of Edison, she needs a business deputy administrator, and it has been put in the budget because her office is so busy. She has resisted hiring someone because she does not want to cost the citizens more money, and simply works harder.

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Reference Notes  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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**Matthew Watkins – Former Mayor, Bloomfield, NJ 973-619-3954**

Mr. Watkins has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2017. They met through a mutual work connection, and have their work association since. They currently work together: she as the City Manager for Edison, New Jersey; Mr. Watkins as a consultant for the City.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is very thorough with her job, and has an outstanding record for completion of work on schedule. She takes charge and gives direction clearly. She meets with police and firefighters and holds her own. She exudes her authority without having to remind people of it. She commands a good presence.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros brings a great deal of experience and knowledge to her role as City Manager. She will engage in conversation to learn others' opinions and is willing to change her opinion. She is simultaneously a leader and team player.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros presents herself with authority. She is firm in a good way: standing in public meetings when insults are being thrown and maintaining a good presence. She does not engage in it or allow it to escalate. She is poised and diplomatic in all circumstances. She has control over her emotional response, and treats others with respect and dignity. She handles the public spotlight well.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved with hiring personnel and executes good decisions. She handles labor negotiations with firmness. She approaches business quickly and is professional at work: taking in information, and then clarifying. She takes exceptional notes for reference, gathering information and clarifying as needed. Her methodical approach yields results. In tense situations with firefighters and police officers, she handles herself well and remains calm. This approach has helped to create respectful bonds throughout the city departments.

Not afraid to work, Ms. Alves-Viveiros accomplishes a great amount of work. She is quick to process with a sharp and active mind. Her ability to balance work and family life is phenomenal. She attends community events with her family.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has a history of working in and navigating challenging circumstances. She understands the role of public servant and the appropriate unwritten rules and procedures that are expected. She is a rare talent among municipal leaders. She is valuable to the city and state.

**Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Calm,
- Deliberate,
- Kind,
- Advancing,
- Committed, and
- Trilingual.

Reference Notes  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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**Strengths:** A bright professional who is knowledgeable in the municipal leadership field; continually working to improve himself and the city.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Victor De Luca – Former Mayor, Maplewood, NJ 973-868-4611**

Mr. De Luca has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2016. He was the Mayor of Maplewood, and she was hired to be the Assistant Business Administrator.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is eager to learn. She is open to different ideas and explores alternative ways to approach problems. She will both make recommendations and listen to recommendations from others. She keeps awareness of different projects simultaneously. Due to her superb organization skills, she stays on top of tasks and directs the work. She understands when department heads can do their own work, and when to step in to help.

One example of this happened when different departments within the City had overlapping operations. The Department of Public Works oversees parks and fields while the Department of Recreation uses them. There was a great deal of tension. Ms. Alves-Viveiros scheduled and moderated meetings. She required shared communication, which helped solve the problem.

In her role, Ms. Alves-Viveiros oversaw mundane tasks to very serious issues. When some department heads were underperforming, she researched the issues to know how to proceed. Her recommendations about corrective action and who to renew or not renew was taken seriously. She was involved with hiring new personnel, and her recommendations and reporting to elected officials was superior.

Known as an innovator, Ms. Alves-Viveiros researched what other towns were doing and implemented best practices for the City. She constantly asked how others were approaching similar problems. Her strength was being willing to consider new ideas, and helping others in municipal leadership convert systems and structures. She helped to improve the technology to the extent they could. These changes have remained in place. She was willing to consider doing things differently – and to help others think differently.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros maintains a positive relationship with elected officials. She sought out the Mayor and met with him every Friday on a standing basis. They conversed about what could be done more efficiently and better for the community. They maintained an ongoing conversation. She also sustained positive relationships with other members of the governing body. She made sure they all had the same information in a timely manner to sustain the equal positions of the township committee.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros was present at committee meetings, held twice a month. She also kept them informed by a weekly bulletin. She had an open-door policy, and people were welcome to

**Reference Notes**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

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approach her throughout the day. If something was going to hit the press, she informed them immediately so they could be prepared. She recognized their responsibility to be informed, so that they could deal with the community.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros dealt proactively with a personnel situation at the local pool. In the summer, many college and high school students are employed. A manager was verbally harassing some of the young women. It had been occurring for some time before being reported to the Department Head, and then to Ms. Alves-Viveiros. She was proactive in responding and holding an investigation. Her quick response was appreciated by the community and those affected.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros worked hard within the City's protocols and procedures. The City required many checkoffs, and she was adept at cooperation and consensus. She needed the elected officials to be on board, and became skilled at working with them. Her flexibility and communication was an asset to progress.

Mr. De Luca gives full support to Ms. Alves-Viveiros as a manager in any community. He is still sad that she left Bloomfield, as she ran the day-to-day operation for the City efficiently and with innovation. He recognizes her movement through jobs as forward and upward. He does not know anything in her history that is controversial.

**Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Inquisitive,
- Complete,
- Committed,
- Fun,
- Connected, and
- Multicultural.

**Strengths:** A diligent worker with exceptional communication, cooperation and consensus.

**Weaknesses:** She was not an exceptional writer. She can convey messages much better when spoken. This skill has improved over time.

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**Catherine Melendez - Executive Assistant, City of Englewood, NJ 201-745-5675**

Ms. Melendez has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2020 when she was hired as the City Manager for Englewood. She brought a youthful energy to the city, which was needed and overdue.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is extremely knowledgeable. She is not afraid to execute what needs to be done. An excellent writer, she is fluent with technology and how to best use it for

**Reference Notes**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

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communication in real time. In addition, she is open to in person meetings with staff, elected officials, and citizens. Ms. Alves-Viveiros is a well-rounded city manager and brought innovation to the area.

When Hurricane Ida occurred, Ms. Alves-Viveiros mobilized to help affected residents. She ordered multiple sump pumps and mobilized the various departments to help residences. She was the sole leader with this endeavor: leading the efforts and physical labor to help citizens. She worked with all departments to complete this time-sensitive issue. She was a rallying point for the city, bringing energy for the work.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros has good financial skills. She handled the budget for the city. She was very involved with hiring personnel. She made good decisions of which individuals match the job requirements.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is present and prepared for public meetings. Englewood is considered a tough town with many generational citizens. The sentiment is generally if you were not raised here, you do not belong. She deals with it and handles it well.

Ms. Melendez is not aware of anything controversial in Ms. Alves-Viveiros' background. She considers Ms. Alves-Viveiros one of the best city managers she has had the opportunity to assist. She gives full support to Ms. Alves-Viveiros continued work as a municipal manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Tough cookie,
- Passionate about job,
- Honest,
- Smart,
- Positive, and
- Energy.

**Strengths:** A determined leader that works well under pressure. Brings change and energy to revitalize areas.

**Weaknesses:** She is very passionate about her job. When residents verbally attacked her at meetings, she took their comments to heart. Though not shown outwardly, it affected her.

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**Edroy Jenkins - Director of Public Works, City of Englewood, NJ 201-486-7141**

Mr. Jenkins has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2020 when she was hired by Englewood as the City Manager. Mr Jenkins was the Director of Public Works.

**Reference Notes**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

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Ms. Alves-Viveiros has an excellent job performance. She is a competent leader with strong communication skills. She gets along well with her subordinates.

As an innovator, Ms. Alves-Viveiros stands above the rest. When new problems are discussed, she surprises department heads with the scope and success she reaches quickly. She is customer service oriented and seeks to help the city. She represents city leadership well when attending community meetings.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros converses well with the public in group and individual settings. She takes time to listen to ideas and concerns. She understands that in public government, listening is essential to creating trust with the public. She also takes time with different departments to converse with employees. When questions arrive that she does not know the answer to, she will research and respond quickly after completing research.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros' ability to solve problems is above average. She categorizes problems by their impact, and then works first with those that have the most worth. She works on one project until it is completed, and then moves to the next. She works hard and smart, and the combination results in her accomplishment more than seems possible in a workday.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros knows how to work within a budget. When given a budget, she makes it work. Her financial skills are superior.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros worked overtime during Hurricane Ida. She is very capable during a crisis, stepping in to help residents' issues. She understood the issues in real time and solved problems quickly. She helped individuals and families who were displaced relocate to warming stations. She helped with managing the emergency response team, as well as showing up and personally helping with cleanup.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is already working as a city manager, and has enormous capability to work in other cities with the same level of success. Mr. Jenkins is not aware of any controversy involving Ms. Alves-Viveiros. Any city would be thrilled to have her as a hired official.

**Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Go-getter,
- Helpful,
- Punctual,
- Amiable,
- Teachable, and
- Present.

Reference Notes  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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**Strengths:** A competent leader that is pleasant to work with, capable during a crisis. Organized in her approach which yields immediate and long-lasting results.

**Weaknesses:** She works so hard on every task, that she will overachieve on tasks that are not as imperative.

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**Matthew Hale, Ph.D. - Professor, Seton Hall University, NJ 609-240-2171**

Mr. Hale has known Ms. Alves-Viveiros since 2010 when she was a student in the MPA program at Seton Hall University. Dr. Hale is a professor in the MPA program.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros and Mr. Hale have stayed in contact since her MPA. They set up a program where MPA students interned with Ms. Alves-Viveiros and others to gain municipal work experience. The experience has helped many MPA students be better qualified when they complete their studies. Her specific role in this program has been critical to the growth of individual students.

As a graduate student, Ms. Alves-Viveiros was incredibly diligent. A pragmatic individual, she sought to know how theories applied to practical work. She kept her professors on their toes by asking for connections between the theoretical and the concrete.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is involved with the League of Municipalities in New Jersey. Good at networking, she keeps up connections with previous colleagues and professors. She increases the success of those entering to work with local government.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros can speak truth to power. She is an effective communicator. She is direct and discusses facts without emotion. She can present reports to professors and elected officials with confidence, due to her preparation.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros shines as a mentor. She values the person and the experience, and works hard to help them succeed. When an intern is not hitting work objectives, Ms. Alves-Viveiros takes time to train and teach them. She never gives up on an intern, but instead commits to helping them learn through positive mentoring. Interns that have been with her are then hired to work in municipal government, a testament to her ability as a mentor.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros is an effective member of a team. Throughout the MPA program, there are many team projects. Her ability to work within a team is unparalleled. She capitalizes on everyone's strengths. She understood that each assignment and each group were different, and adjusted accordingly. She steps up and takes charge, or alternatively, steps back and completes the background work.

Ms. Alves-Viveiros never missed a deadline. She also took full opportunity to learn, rather than just hit the benchmarks. She met with Mr. Hale during office hours to ask for feedback on

Reference Notes  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros

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assignments to improve. The academic interchange provided learning greater than the finished product.

**Words or phrases used to describe Sonia Alves-Viveiros:**

- Direct,
- Honest,
- Thoughtful,
- Diligent,
- Organized, and
- Disciplined.

**Strengths:** A diligent learner and agreeable team player; vested in helping other elected officials find success to promote strong local governments in a large region.

**Weaknesses:** She likes to know the beginning to the end and works sequentially. If a problem requires creative thinking, she struggled. She could, however, come up with a structure to help those with creative thinking succeed.

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**Prepared by:** Brooke Krim  
Colin Baenziger & Associates



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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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MyCentralJersey.com  
February 12, 2025

**'I'm not happy:' Edison Sports Building cost balloons \$11.6 million, timeline extended**

Author: Suzanne Russell

The price to build the Edison Sports Building on Central Avenue just got higher – by \$500,000. That's due to a \$557,000 change order unanimously approved Monday by the Township Council that hiked the once envisioned \$5 million project to more than \$11.6 million. The change order, a modification of the original contract, is the third for this project with Epic Management of Piscataway. No council members were happy about the cost increase or the additional time for the project which was expected to be completed last month, but they believed the project needs to move forward.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said there were delays and conditions that have extended the timeline for completion to the end of this year. The resolution authorizing the change order cites unforeseen conditions such as weather, utility requirements and changes, leading to cost overruns in bonding, insurance and cost of labor increases. Much of the change stems from the redesign of the utilities, specifically the electrical and water service, from a 6-inch to 8-inch line, and the PSEG gas service, officials said.

**Alves-Viveiros** reminded the council members that the township had issues with the architect, which the township continues to work on. Officials said it is expected to take an additional seven months or less to complete the project. A Nov. 25 completion date has been set, which is at the end of the football season, which means the children in that program won't be able to use the facility this year, said Councilman Richard Brescher. Once completed, the building is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other youth activities year-round.

**Alves-Viveiros** said the cost for the change order was initially \$656,000 but it was negotiated over the past few months to \$557,000 for Epic to manage the project. Under the change order, the \$557,000 is not to be exceeded.

"I think this is very, very expensive for seven months of additional work," said Councilman Asaf Shmuel. Without approval of the change order the township might have needed to hire a claims attorney, an added cost, as a recourse, officials said. In addition the project would come to a stop and the township would have a construction shell, which would be a hazard, **Alves-Viveiros** said. "I'm not happy to see change orders," said Councilman Joe Coyle.

Council Vice President John Poyner agreed and Council President Margot Harris said residents aren't happy when they see this many change orders on a project.

Rich Brown, the construction manager, said more minor change orders of less than \$100,000 are possible because labor and material costs do rise.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Brescher, who has worked in construction, said he had called for the township to have a construction manager at the start of the project, at the design phase to push things forward. The township hired a construction manager last year following issues with a roofing change order. "This is the problem right here. This is what the change order is about. Because if we would have had a construction manager at the beginning during the design phase, this would not be here," Brescher said. "I spoke about this but nobody wanted to hear it."

Council members suggested the township should have a construction manager for every project more than \$5 million.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://edisonreporter.com/edison-approves-salary-increases-for-department-heads/>  
September 4, 2024

**Edison Approves Salary Increases for Department Heads**

By The Edison Reporter Staff

The Township Council has taken steps to ensure its top officials are fairly compensated amidst rising living costs. In a unanimous decision at their Wednesday August 28th meeting, the council approved an ordinance to increase the maximum salary range for three key department heads.

This move will see the maximum salary for the Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** rise from \$230,000 to \$236,900 plus a vehicle to take home to her residence in Morris County. The Directors of Water and Sewer and Public Works will also see their maximum salaries increase from \$195,000 to \$197,000 each.

The ordinance cites the need to adjust for the increasing cost of living as the primary reason for these salary bumps. This decision follows a similar ordinance passed earlier this year for other department officials, signaling the council's commitment to maintaining competitive compensation packages for its workforce.

While the salary adjustments demonstrate the Township's recognition of the challenges posed by inflation and its commitment to retaining experienced leaders, some residents have questioned the increases in light of the many ongoing problems in town. Concerns have been raised about infrastructure issues, public services, and the overall allocation of resources. Critics argue that addressing these pressing concerns should take priority over salary increases for top officials.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/07/26/edison-sports-building/74532214007/>  
July 26, 2024

**Is the new Edison Sports Building a 'money pit?' Here's the new cost**

By: Suzanne Russell

EDISON - The cost of the new Edison Sports Building has gone up again. The project, originally envisioned as a \$5 million investment, has more than doubled in price and is now up to more than \$11 million. That prompted one resident to say the project is "a money pit." The Township Council on Wednesday approved a \$96,814.05 change order for more stormwater piping and modification to the basement. The work includes additional drainage due to field conditions, installation of gas piping not originally included in the contract drawings, additional excavation and site work and additional steel support for decorative screens. Councilman John Poyner said there needed to be modifications to the foundation when adjustments were made to the roof. The change order amends the contract amount of \$11,071,247.45. In addition the council awarded a contract to Colliers Engineering & Design of Holmdel for engineering services such as construction management and architectural construction contract administration services for project at a cost not to exceed \$378,000.

The new firm was selected to address the larger scope of work, according to township officials. "Our intent is to engage with a new firm for the architectural services but at the same time engage in construction management due to the issues that have arisen out of the roofing change order," Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said at Monday's meeting.

"This is an increase in the cost of the project. However, we're hoping with the construction management oversight that it will be a lot more efficient in terms of the cost and any other potential issues that may arise. Having someone on site to see exactly between the contractor and subcontractors that everything is exactly the way it is supposed to be, including all of the architectural design work so that there is a much higher level of oversight and hands-on approach to this project given the pricing," she said. **Alves-Viveiros** said the township has "learned from our mistakes" which is why the administration came to the council to hire a construction manager. She said the funding will come out of capital and the township is hoping to recover some of the costs.

Earlier in the week a resident questioned why the town didn't hire a project manager at the onset. In May the Township Council authorized a \$187,433.40 change order to revise the metal roof panels on the pre-engineered Edison Sports Building. That change order amended the sports building contract with Epic Management of Piscataway to \$10.8 million, the resolution stated. Township officials said that to move forward with the building, Edison needed to make sure the roofing material was ordered and done correctly. "That roof shouldn't have created a problem if you had a project manager on the site looking at the plans," resident Mary Ann Hennessey said at Monday's meeting. "This is in my opinion, a disgrace. It keeps costing more money for stupid reasons." The project involves the removal of the existing buildings and trailers at the Edison

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jets Football Field, 370 Central Ave., and construction of a pre-engineered metal building with a surrounding one- or two-story podium structure framed of steel columns, steel beams and a composite metal deck slab. Both structures will be supported on concrete shallow foundations. Wet weather earlier this year delayed the construction schedule. The building is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other activities year-round.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://edisonreporter.com/edison-settles-discrimination-lawsuit-with-police-officer-council-left-in-the-dark/>  
July 8, 2024

**Edison Settles Discrimination Lawsuit with Police Officer, Council Left in the Dark**

By The Edison Reporter Staff

Edison Township has quietly settled a racial discrimination lawsuit filed by decorated and respected veteran police officer Nicole Fields for \$90,000, with the Township Council being kept unaware of the agreement. The settlement, approved by the Central Jersey Joint Insurance Fund (JIF), addresses Fields' claims of racial discrimination, hostile work environment, discriminatory failure to promote, and retaliation within the Edison Police Department. Fields, represented by Nancy Erika Smith of Smith Mullin, PC, alleged a pattern of discriminatory practices that hampered her career advancement and created a toxic work environment. Despite denying any wrongdoing, the Edison Township agreed to a comprehensive settlement that includes monetary compensation and significant policy changes without informing and without any public input from the Township Council.

**Key Points of the Settlement**

**Monetary Compensation:** Fields will receive \$90,000 as a full settlement of her claims.

**Revised Promotional Process:** Within 90 days of the current promotional list expiring, a new process will be implemented, emphasizing objective criteria like seniority, education, and disciplinary history.

**Diverse Interview Panel:** The interview panel for promotions will include at least one member from a racial or ethnic minority group.

**Non-Retaliation:** The township has committed to fair treatment of Fields, adhering to the same policies and practices as other officers.

Despite the significant financial and policy implications of the settlement, the Edison Township Council was not informed or involved in the approval process. This has raised concerns about transparency and accountability, particularly given that Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** sits on the board of commissioners for the JIF.

The lack of council involvement in the settlement raises questions about the JIF's decision-making process and the township's oversight of such matters. Critics argue that such settlements, especially those involving significant policy changes, should be subject to public scrutiny and council approval. The case highlights the challenges faced by minority employees in law enforcement and the ongoing efforts to address systemic discrimination within police departments. While the settlement represents a victory for Fields, it also underscores the need for greater transparency and accountability in resolving such disputes.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://edisonreporter.com/edison-council-meeting-erupts-in-chaos-over-transparency-concerns/>  
June 27, 2024

**Edison Council Meeting Erupts in Chaos Over Transparency Concerns**

By The Edison Reporter Staff

A recent Edison council meeting erupted into a heated debate over transparency concerns, following a complaint from resident Sue Malone regarding the consistent delay in posting meeting minutes online. Malone expressed frustration over the lack of transparency, stating, “It reinforces a lack of transparency... The administration is always being accused of a lack of transparency.” While acknowledging that the issue falls under the council’s purview, she emphasized the importance of adhering to the law and improving practices.

Councilman Brescher then questioned the Business Administrator **Sonia Alves- Viveiros** about the staffing situation in the clerk’s office, which has been understaffed for roughly a year. The BA admitted that a fully staffed office would likely resolve the delays in posting minutes. However, Councilman Coyle dismissed Councilman Brescher’s concerns, attributing the issue to the clerk’s workflow rather than understaffing. He further accused Councilman Brescher of unfairly targeting the administration, claiming, “I just don’t listen to anything Councilman Brescher says, it’s just wrong... he’s just beating up the administration.”

This ignited a fierce exchange between the two council members, with Councilman Brescher responding, “My council colleague seems to think it’s okay if you don’t get your meeting minutes, it’s okay if you don’t get your opra request, here’s the difference between me and my council colleague, I had a business for 30 years that was very successful, he ran his into the ground so who do you want to follow, do you want to follow my advice or Bankruptcy Boy.” Referencing Councilman Coyle’s to his past financial troubles.

The personal attacks and accusations quickly escalated into chaos, with the council president struggling to maintain order amidst shouting and interruptions. The meeting eventually adjourned, leaving the transparency concerns unresolved and highlighting deep divisions within the council.

The incident has sparked further criticism of the council’s lack of transparency and raised questions about its ability to effectively address important issues facing the community. Residents like Sue Malone are left wondering whether their concerns will ever be taken seriously in a council seemingly consumed by infighting and personal vendettas.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/06/12/edison-taxes/74057871007/>

June 12, 2024

**Not everyone happy with Edison mayor's budget address**

Suzanne Russell

MyCentralJersey.com

EDISON – Mayor Sam Joshi gave a 25-minute presentation of a \$175.9 million municipal budget for 2024 which will increase the municipal tax rate by 2.5% that left some council members longing for more time to question the mayor's spending plan. Joshi gave the budget presentation to the Township Council during a special meeting shortly after 5 p.m. Monday, before the governing body's scheduled 6 p.m. work session. Monday was selected after Joshi had a scheduling conflict on June 13, the original date for the budget presentation. Some residents also opposed the 5 p.m. time for the budget presentation because of the conflict with work schedules, while a council member said the budget presentation "felt very rushed."

Councilman Ajay Patil complained it's unfair that council members were only getting five minutes each to ask questions after the mayor's presentation. "If you don't have time, come back and answer all the questions," Patil said, adding the budget presentation could have been scheduled for another day to give council members enough time to ask questions. Patil also expressed concern about the amount of debt Edison has taken on. Joshi, however, reminded Patil, who has served on the council for several years, that the mayor's budget presentation began after former Mayor Thomas Lankey took office and previous mayors did not give budget presentations. Joshi added the township debt is paid back over years, not at one time.

Council President Nishith Patel said council members would get another chance to ask questions before voting on the budget in a few weeks. A public hearing and vote on the budget is scheduled for June 26.

Councilman Richard Brescher, who was also dissatisfied with the five minutes allotted to ask questions, got up and called the council president, the mayor and the meeting "a joke" and walked off the dais with his belongings.

But Councilman John Poyner said he felt the budget puts the township in a good financial position, adding the planned sale of a liquor license and state aid could add several tax points that could be put into reserve for next year's budget.

During his presentation, Joshi said the \$175.9 million budget includes \$109.6 million in local taxes. The non-property tax revenue appropriations include \$12.7 million in surplus, \$706,800 in American Rescue Plan funds, \$4.6 million in construction code fees and \$3.3 million in payments in lieu of taxes. He said the top three appropriations were for insurance at \$35.4 million, the police department at \$32.2 million and the fire department at \$22.4 million.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** explained insurance rates have increased, which is why that appropriation has gone up.

The mayor noted there has been an increase in staffing levels in nearly every township department from last year to this year. The biggest increases were in public works which increased from 130 to 139 employees, police which increased from 234 to 242 and administration which increased from 20 to 27 workers. The total number of township employees has increased from 668 to 703, he said. "We are simply getting more things done," the mayor said.

Under the budget, a property owner with a home assessed at \$183,400 would pay \$5,806.44 in school taxes, \$2,708.82 for township services, \$18.34 toward open space, \$1,806.49 for county services and \$166.69 for library services, the mayor said.

Joshi said that despite the record high inflation over the past few years, the township has achieved property tax stabilization while significantly improving the community. "Residents have said over and over they are happy with seeing the improvements in the community while knowing their tax dollars are not dramatically increasing. It's fair to say we have finally achieved property tax stabilization," the mayor said.

Councilman Joseph Coyle agreed a lot has gotten done, noting the township has 196 police officers, and plans to hire four more before the end of the year.

Township officials anticipate Edison will be in almost as good a position with surplus funds next year, as this year. Edison is using \$12.7 million in surplus this year with just under \$5 million remaining but expects to generate more through the year to end up with \$15 million to \$16 million. The township also has reserve funds to cover any potential exposure from tax appeals.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/05/28/edison-jets-toth-center/73816668007/>

May 28, 2024

**Edison council OKs more funding to advance two big development projects**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – Two big-ticket development projects, one involving a health center and the other a \$10 million sports building, appear to be moving forward, following nearly \$250,000 in change orders approved by the Township Council last week. On Wednesday council members unanimously approved a \$60,000 change order for additional site remediation and removal of soil contaminated by previously removing underground storage tanks at the Toth Health and Senior Center Renovation project.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** explained earlier in the week that in 2019 there was a permit that wasn't closed out correctly and this corrects that issue and the remediation work so the town can work on the building. The change order increases the total contract award to \$5.5 million according to the resolution. The resolution also marks the fourth change order to the township's contract with Shorelands Construction Inc. in Monmouth Beach. Last year the council awarded Shorelands Construction a \$5.29 million contract to renovate and expand the Dr. William Toth Health Center on Idlewild Road.

The building, which dates to the 1950s, is being expanded by nearly 3,000 square feet to provide programming similar to the activities at the Edison Senior Center on Woodbridge Avenue. The new space is expected to include a large meeting space for events and activities, reading room, full kitchen and a common lounge and will also allow Edison to expand its vaccinations, health screenings and other essential services to older residents.

More controversial was a \$187,433.40 change order to revise the type of metal roof panels on the pre-engineered Edison Sports Building from a Perlin Bear Rib system to a standing seam roof, which also was approved by the council. The change order amends the sports building contract with Epic Management of Piscataway to \$10.8 million, according to the resolution.

**Alves-Viveiros** said the town is having potential legal issues with one of the professionals and is getting another architect to look at the project. The change order is to move the project along, but the town will be looking to recoup the money. "In order for us to do any other part of the building, the anchors, the walls, everything else, we need to make sure the roofing material is ordered and is done correctly," she said last Monday.

Another town official said the inability to meet the roof's energy efficiency and 20-year water tightness warranty is among the reasons for the change order. Last year the council approved a \$10 million contract for the construction of a new sports recreation facility, more than twice the \$5 million originally earmarked for the project. The project involves the removal of the existing buildings and trailers at the Edison Jets Football Field, 370 Central Ave., and construction of a

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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pre-engineered metal building with a surrounding one- or two-story podium structure framed of steel columns, steel beams and a composite metal deck slab. Both structures will be supported on concrete shallow foundations, according to public documents. The building is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other activities year-round. The new Edison Sports Recreation Center will be located on Central Avenue near the Edison Jets youth football field.

On Monday, Stephanie Woomer, who serves on the Edison Jets executive board, said the building has already been plagued by weather delays and she's seen social media posts complaining about the building's cost. Woomer said the girls flag football program is looking to grow and add tournaments. "We are grateful the Town Council approved the building, however without the change order being approved, we would be at the mercy of waiting for insurance to continue construction which has already been plagued with weather issues. Every day we are stalled is another day the kids of Edison do not get access to the space," Woomer said. "While millions of dollars have been allocated for this building it would be shameful to make these kids continue to wait because of \$187,000. I implore you to please pass this change order."

Dan Boslet, who also serves in the Edison Jets executive board, said he understands the change order money is a bridge loan that the town pays to keep construction going, and hopefully the errors and omissions insurance from the engineer or architect, who ever made the plan, should be responsible for reimbursing it. He added insurance companies make you wait, which only delays construction of the building, and the construction company would charge the town for every day they are not allowed to work, which would result in higher costs for the project. "There are many children that are waiting for this with bated breath and any delay would hurt their chances of getting into it this coming winter. It's not that far away that we have time to burn," said Boslet, adding all the rain this spring has delayed days of work which makes it a long shot the building will be ready for the winter.

Another resident said there wouldn't be so many change orders if the township had a project manager.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.aol.com/edison-29-million-spending-plan-091554753.html>

May 22, 2024

**Edison \$29 million spending plan: what's in, what's out?**

Author: Suzanne Russell

The Township Council is again looking to introduce a \$28.8 million capital improvement bond ordinance, but this time the planned \$5 million purchase of an Amboy Avenue restaurant, that was being considered for conversion into a community center, is gone. And instead, \$1.8 million has been allocated toward streetscape work along Amboy Avenue in the Clara Barton section of town, as well as additional funding earmarked for street paving and resurfacing work and park improvements. The revised ordinance was scheduled to be introduced Wednesday.

On Monday resident Joel Bassoff asked if Edison is still planning to purchase the Jade Dynasty commercial restaurant property at 925 Amboy Ave. Council President Nishith Patel also asked what the administration's plans are regarding the Jade Dynasty site. "There is none," Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** responded.

Earlier this month a \$29.8 million proposed capital improvement bond ordinance included \$5 million to purchase the Jade Dynasty property even though listing sale price is \$2.2 million. The website The Real Estate Book lists Joseph Coyle, a township councilman, as the property's listing agent. That ordinance was removed from the agenda before the council's regular May 8 meeting, without any reason mentioned. Prior to the removal, **Alves-Viveiros** had said the restaurant building on a .65-acre site was being considered for conversion into a community center, at neighborhood residents request.

Clara Barton residents have repeatedly called for the town to ban four-story high-density developments along Amboy Avenue especially on sites like the Jade Dynasty and the former Stewart's restaurant properties near the New Jersey Turnpike. The residents are looking to preserve the existing character of their neighborhood.

Bassoff also mentioned the Planning Board has missed the 45-day deadline to come back with a report on repealing the existing four-story ordinance for Amboy Avenue and asked when the repeal of that ordinance will return to the agenda.

Hank Bignell, township director of planning and engineering, said the Planning Board received the council's request to look at changing the Amboy Avenue ordinance from four-stories to three stories and because the master plan is still ongoing, the board asked the master plan planner to look at the ordinance in detail, which he expects to come back in about 30 days.

During Monday's meeting, Coyle, who also serves as executive director of the Edison Chamber of Commerce, said the town needs to consider what business owners want, as well as the residents. "When people want to spend \$15 million in your community, you have to listen," Coyle said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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For the public safety department, the revised capital improvement bond ordinance includes \$1 million for the acquisition of a fire engine; \$530,000 for the design, procurement and installation of solar-powered feedback signs at Brotherhood, Ethel and McKinley streets and Old Post Boulevard; \$220,000 for various roadway striping projects; \$170,000 for the design, construction and installation of a pedestrian flashing beacon system at Old Post Road and Boulevard of the Eagles near Edison High School; and \$300,000 for the acquisition of vehicles and equipment. For the engineering department, the bond ordinance includes \$8.25 million for various road paving and resurfacing work; \$1.1 million for various drainage and stormwater projects; and \$1.8 million for Amboy Avenue improvement projects including streetscape, sidewalk, crosswalk, tree, landscaping and irrigation system improvements.

In the public works department, the ordinance includes \$4.3 million to acquire vehicles and equipment, including dump trucks, backhoes, paving units, salt spreading equipment, tree removal vehicles and equipment utility vehicles; \$1.7 million for various building improvements and renovations including construction and repairs, lighting, alarm systems, and HVAC systems; \$6.8 million for various park improvements; and \$1.65 million to acquire and install fuel tanks. The ordinance also includes \$85,000 for the acquisition of vehicles and equipment for the recreation department and \$425,000 to acquire and install network infrastructure component and switches in the information technology department and upgrade the telecommunication system.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/05/10/edison-amboy-avenue-jade-dynasty/73614122007/>

May 10, 2024

**Edison looks to purchase commercial property listed by township councilman**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – A \$29.8 million capital improvement bond ordinance, which included more than \$5 million to acquire the Jade Dynasty restaurant property on Amboy Avenue, which is \$3 million more than the current property sale price, was scrapped by the Township Council. No reason was announced for removing the ordinance from the agenda and it's unclear if the bond ordinance, which also includes funding for many other projects, will be introduced at a future meeting.

The council's decision on Wednesday not to introduce the ordinance comes two days after the planned acquisition sparked controversy because the commercial property at 925 Amboy Ave., in the Clara Barton section of town, is listed for sale at \$2.2 million. The website The Real Estate Book lists Joseph Coyle, a township councilman, as the property's listing agent.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the 3,500-square-foot building on a .65 acre site with about 50 parking spaces is being considered for conversion into a community center, at residents' request.

Clara Barton residents have repeatedly called for the town to ban four-story high-density developments along Amboy Avenue, especially on sites like the Jade Dynasty and the former Stewart's restaurant properties near the New Jersey Turnpike. The residents are looking to preserve the existing character of their neighborhood.

**Alves-Viveiros** said the \$5 million was for the acquisition, renovation, furniture and fixtures. "You're going to buy it for \$2 million and then you are going to build something for \$2 million. Can you tell me what you have built here in this township for \$2 million?" Councilman Richard Brescher asked. **Alves-Viveiros** said she understands there would be improvements to the existing building.

Brescher, who has dined at the restaurant, said you wouldn't be able to play basketball in the existing one-story building, but maybe badminton. "This is the silliest idea," Brescher said.

On Monday night **Alves-Viveiros** explained that besides the \$5 million for Jade Dynasty property, the \$29.8 million bond ordinance also included more than \$1 million for various police and public safety equipment and projects such as an addition to the police garage and \$1 million for the acquisition of a new fire engine to replace a more than 15-year-old vehicle.

Also included in the bond ordinance was \$6.5 million for the engineering department to cover all the township road paving and resurfacing work; \$250,000 for drainage and stormwater work as well as more than \$500,000 for design, procurement and installation of solar powered feedback

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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signs at Brotherhood, Ethel, Old Post Boulevard and McKinley streets; \$250,000 for various road striping projects throughout the township and \$150,000 for the design, construction and installation of pedestrian flashing beacon system at Old Post Road and the Boulevard of Eagles.

The bond also included \$4.3 million for the public works department to acquire vehicles and equipment such as dump trucks, backhoes, paving and salt spreading equipment, tree removal vehicles, trailers and other mobile equipment. **Alves-Viveiros** said a lot of the existing equipment is about 20 to 30 years old.

The bond ordinance also included \$1.5 million for various building improvements and renovations, construction, repairs, lighting alarm and HVAC systems for various buildings; \$5 million for various improvements to the town's 36 parks including renovations and improvements to park facilities and \$1.6 million for the installation of fuel tanks and related systems at one of the garages.

There was also \$355,000 for the purchase of recreation department vehicles and equipment; \$50,000 for the purchase of various equipment in the purchasing department including a new postage machine; \$300,000 for the technology department to acquire and install network infrastructure components, switches and upgrade telecommunications systems and \$2.1 million for professional services.

If approved the bond ordinance would have added \$28 million to the township's nearly \$200 million debt, township officials said

The council also removed from the agenda a \$1.4 million bond ordinance for improvements to the solid waste collection district.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/02/20/edison-internet-tv-municipal-broadband-xfinity-comcast-optimum/72599815007/>  
February 20, 2024

**Edison gets \$2M grant to kick-start municipal broadband but feasibility questions remain**  
By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township has received a \$2 million grant from the state Department of Community Affairs to expand municipal broadband services. The Township Council passed a resolution last week accepting the grant. Edison now has a 24-month period to build a portion of the infrastructure, part of which is a server, as well as a business plan which is expected to be completed soon, officials said. Previously officials have said the business plan would look at the strengths and weaknesses of municipal broadband and determine market competition. A consultant would then analyze the best approach for Edison.

The total cost for the broadband structure has not been disclosed. The \$2 million is considered a start, according to Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**.

The idea of high-speed municipal broadband in Edison has grown from the quest for faster, more reliable and more affordable internet service in town, where Optimum has been the major provider and residents with old lines have complained of service interruptions and other problems. Residents and officials have cited a need for more competition.

The grant comes just as Comcast Xfinity will hold two video conference public hearings on Feb. 27 to receive comments on its plan to provide TV service in Edison, as part of a Jan. 30 application filed with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, Office of Cable Television & Telecommunications, according to public documents.

Last year the Council approved an ordinance to allow Comcast Xfinity to wire Edison for the service. The plan calls for Comcast to construct its own fiber network. The company has said it plans to bring its Xfinity 10G Network to Edison providing residents with access to Comcast's full suite of Xfinity and Comcast Business services. Under the agreement with the township, Comcast would pay Edison an annual fee of 3.5 percent of gross revenues.

But both residents and officials remain uncertain about the township's broadband plans, especially since **Alves-Viveiros** said she's not aware of any other municipalities in the state that have started a broadband, so Edison would be the first.

Resident Joel Bassoff said there are questions about whether any municipality has been able to run a municipal broadband service profitably. "My research shows the only (town) arguably that has been able to do it profitably is Chattanooga, Tennessee, that is a service area with maybe three times the population of Edison, and there are studies that indicate that even their profit numbers are probably misstated because they don't appropriately account for the capital costs of establishing the system," Bassoff said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Another resident said these companies have huge infrastructures and he questioned how Edison would be able to set up a whole broadband internet cable company, with equipment, parts and technology, computers, a call center, technicians and insurance, when there are already other companies doing the job. "This whole thing is ridiculous," the resident said, adding Chattanooga is not showing a profit and municipal broadband has been a failure in other towns that have tried it. "We should try to work out better relationship, better alliances with Comcast."

Councilman Richard Brescher also isn't sold on the municipal broadband idea. "I don't see the feasibility in it. I haven't seen the business plan for it yet. There are people on this dais and in the administration that think that they are Thomas Edison or Elon Musk, and I think this is more like Tesla and it's not going anywhere, unless I see a business plan that makes sense and the numbers make sense. To me this seems like a scam," he said.

But Council President Nishith Patel said he hopes it works out. He recounted a story he read about a man frustrated with the service he was getting that built his own broadband for 30 homes and was successful, and he received money to cover 100 more houses. "It is possible to do it. It's not that complex. I think it's necessary if it's feasible, and I believe the state believes in us. And I hope that we can get this done for the residents and provide them another alternative beside the monopolies they have now," Patel said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2024/01/30/edison-stelton-community-center/72357161007/>

January 30, 2024

**Edison greenlights \$3.7 million makeover of Stelton Community Center**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The Stelton Community Center on Plainfield Avenue will be getting a much-needed makeover to make it usable again as part of a nearly \$8 million capital bond improvement package recently approved by the Township Council. The bond ordinance includes \$3.7 million for renovations, repairs and alterations to the Stelton Community Center, of which \$1.6 million is earmarked for roof repairs and other initial costs. The \$7.9 million bond ordinance also includes \$1.5 million for improvements, renovations and repairs to various municipal buildings; \$500,000 for furniture, fixtures and other equipment in various municipal buildings; \$1.4 million for a backup generator for the municipal building; \$300,000 for improvements, renovations and repairs to township firehouses; \$250,000 for road signs and \$175,000 for design work to improve and repair the Edison Animal Shelter, which could include building a second floor to house a medical examination room. But mostly the council and some residents focused on the community center, a former school building constructed in 1925 and expanded in 1949 that was closed in 2018 due to lack of attention to needed repairs and maintenance. The large building has roof, mold and asbestos issues, which require major repairs. Municipal services, including a sheltered workshop program, were relocated out of the structure. The building is on the state Department of Environmental Protection's Recreation and Open Space Inventory which prevents the township from expanding the building's footprint. Resident Walter Stochel, who serves on the township's Open Space Advisory Committee, said the building also has many beautiful architectural elements that he hoped will be preserved as part of the restoration. Stochel, who read a letter from the Open Space Advisory Committee supporting the building's restoration, said the township should also consider placing a display of historic photos of the building and the Stelton neighborhood inside the structure, building a rain garden and replacing the parking lot with pervious pavement to reduce stormwater runoff. Stochel said the township might also want to acquire the adjacent property to expand Stelton Park. With nearby Thomas Jefferson Middle School and the Edison Main Library, Stochel said the building is not just a community center but the center of the community.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the Health Department went in and looked at some of the rooms, which are fairly large. She said the township is looking to retrofit some of those spaces to accommodate senior services, Health Department and recreational activities, all of which are included in the \$3.7 million. She previously said the building would be used to provide programs for seniors as well as children with disabilities. "It will be a restored operable building," **Alves-Viveiros** said, adding the administration has been active in pursuing grant funding to provide more money for programs. "The goal is to make the space usable and operable." No timetable was announced for when the work is expected to begin. Council Vice President Margot Harris said she sees a lot of potential in the building's future. "It's a real diamond in the rough," she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/12/13/edison-animal-shelter/71890745007/>

December 13, 2023

**Edison to scale back animal control: 'We can't bring in any more'**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is ending its animal shared control service agreement with Piscataway this year to help address overcrowding at the Edison Animal Shelter. The township will continue its service with three other towns, Dunellen, Highland Park and Metuchen. The Highland Park agreement was renewed last year, and the Dunellen and Metuchen agreements expire at the end of 2024, according to Township Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**.

"We can't bring in any more animals," Township Council Vice President Margot Harris said at Monday's agenda meeting about the need to shed the shared services with other municipalities, as Edison works to get the animal shelter in better working order following an inspection report finding the facility overcrowded, too small and understaffed.

Piscataway has had a shared services agreement with Edison for several years, according to Gene Wilk, Piscataway's public information officer. "Although Piscataway has been negotiating since June with Edison regarding this shared services agreement, we were notified by Edison about two weeks ago that it plans to cease our contract at the end of December," Wilk said. "We are seeking a four-month extension of shared services with Edison as we consider what our long-term options may be so we can go out to bid for future services." Wilk said Piscataway has retained services for its annual free rabies clinics on Jan. 27 and Feb. 3.

**Alves-Viveiros** said there has been no discussion about discontinuing the shared services agreements with the other towns. She said Piscataway was a huge burden to Edison in terms of the intake of animals. "That was about a third of our issues and the overcrowding," **Alves-Viveiros** said, adding she notified the Piscataway business administrator about the termination of the shared services agreement.

Harris, who recently attended an Edison Animal Shelter Committee meeting with Councilman Richard Brescher; Ross Licitra, the Monmouth County SPCA executive director who has assumed oversight of the Edison shelter; the shelter veterinarian and the shelter manager, said there are many structural problems with the shelter. The building, located in a corner of the Municipal Complex parking lot, needs to be expanded and renovated, work which is expected to cost between \$2.5 and \$3 million.

The Edison Animal Shelter is about 2,000 square feet. Monmouth County has a 20,000-square-foot animal shelter which services the entire county. Proceeds from the Monmouth County SPCA shelter's thrift store benefit the shelter, Harris said. "While we can't look to completely replicate what the (Monmouth County SPCA) has we can certainly use them as a model on a smaller scale," Harris said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Edison shelter has not had a budget for 2022-23, and all the expenses were charged to a trust account which included donations, according to **Alves-Viveiros**. For 2024 all the costs associated with the day-to-day operations of the shelter will be part of the township budget. The shelter employees, who make about \$35,000 a year, are overextended, officials said. Over the summer the shelter was overcrowded with 23 dogs and 86 cats.

"I'm optimistic that we are on the same page and that we are going to be headed in a very positive direction," Harris said. Harris said there are two upcoming pet adoption days. On Dec. 17 from 1 to 4 p.m., a Barks and Brews event will be held at the South 40 Brewing Company, 110 Newfield Ave., Suite 2, Raritan Center, Edison; and on Jan. 13 from noon to 4 p.m. at Hailey's Harp and Pub, 400 Main St., Metuchen. "There are some lovely animals that are still in the shelter that would be great pets and great family members," Harris said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/09/30/edison-township-nj/70983212007/>  
September 30, 2023

**Edison punts shipping container purchase for township departments**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township doesn't want to be boxed in. Plans to buy 11 shipping containers for more than \$90,000 to be used by five township departments, are on hold, at least for the next two weeks. Township Council members on Wednesday unanimously voted to table a resolution to buy the shipping containers.

Plans called for four shipping containers for the Department of Public Works Division of Roads for \$33,320, two shipping containers for the Department of Recreation for \$16,660, two shipping containers for the Department of Public Works Municipal Garage for \$16,660, one shipping container for the Department of Health's Animal Shelter for \$8,330 and two shipping containers for the Department of Health's Senior Center for \$16,660 . "No one else on the planet is paying this much for a container," Councilman Richard Brescher said.

Four of the containers would be placed next to the garage for the Division of Roads to store utility items, said Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**. She added other containers would be stored in the parking lot behind the Municipal Building. She said the containers would be kept in a location that doesn't interfere with parking.

The containers would be used for storage while improvements are being made to buildings around town. In the future, if the containers are no longer needed, they could be auctioned, **Alves-Viveiros** said.

Brescher, who doesn't want to have containers on municipal property, also questioned whether the containers would be painted, and expressed concern they would attract graffiti. "We've lived all these years without these containers and now we're buying a bunch of them. I get needing one, but it just looks like we're trying to make it a cityscape," he said. "So are you going to paint them?"

**Alves-Viveiros** liked the suggestion of painting the containers, adding it could be an art initiative that she could present to the administration.

"It all looks like graffiti to me," Brescher said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/08/25/edison-school-crossing-guards/70667830007/>

August 25, 2023

**Edison council tables plan to outsource school crossing guards. Now what?**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The school year will start with a combination of police officers and residents as school crossing guards after the Township Council decided on Wednesday to table plans to privatize the service. Following a lengthy discussion and questions raised by residents, Township Council members unanimously voted to table plans to hire a Connecticut company to provide crossing guards. Police Capt. Jason Gerba said until the Township Council decides what to do, police officers and the crossing guards the department has retained will man the posts when classes begin Sept. 6.

Edison has been looking to privatize crossing guards due to long-standing staffing shortages that often required police officers to cover those assignments at a significant cost to taxpayers. The township has 40 crossing guards for 53 posts. There is one unfilled post and 12 guards performing a double post, according to township officials. Edison spends about \$600,000 a year for crossing guards' salaries and about \$200,000 for the police officers who fill in on posts. "I believe there are certain functions of government that government should do. I believe sewer and water and crossing guards should be in-house," said Councilman Richard Brescher. "That we can't get people is an unacceptable answer to outsource." He suggested splitting \$200,000 for police among the 53 crossing guard posts, which he believes would lead to more people signing up to become crossing guards.

Council members were planning to hire Crossing Guard Services of Stamford, Connecticut under a \$900,000 contract for the next three years. The preliminary plans called for crossing guards to work 180 days, two posts per day with a minimum of three hours per post at a pay rate of \$19 an hour. The contract called for all township crossing guards in good standing to be offered positions with the company.

Police Chief Thomas Bryan, who said officers on crossing guard posts can't leave if an emergency arises, said Thursday he's disappointed the privatization plan didn't go through and the township will have to pay more money. But he said he's hopeful the crossing guard contract will come up for a vote at a council meeting next month.

Councilman Ajay Patil, who said he believes most crossing guards take the job for the passion, not the paycheck, expressed concern about the company being based in Connecticut, not Edison or even New Jersey.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the company's ownership is based in Connecticut, but has operations in Wayne, Demarest, Montclair and Parsippany. The company uses a pool of employees, including alternates.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Patil questioned how the company would be able to attract more workers because it is not offering benefits and that they might transfer crossing guards to different posts. "To me there is no protection to our own residents, who are doing this thankless job. We should be looking to more out-of-the-box solutions," said Patil, who suggested possibly hiring retired police. He encouraged the administration to find other ways to hire more local residents who will be connected to the school children.

Residents questioned if the company would reimburse the town for the cost of having a police officer at a crossing guard post, at the hourly rate of \$65, if the guard doesn't show. Another resident asked if the company would be providing uniforms, stop signs, training and background checks for the crossing guards, while another questioned if current crossing guards could be guaranteed employment with the company.

**Alves-Viveiros** said she has been in contact with the crossing guards and their unions. She said the scope of work under the proposed contract includes offering all the current crossing guards their same positions. The company could also hire workers from out of town. **Alves-Viveiros** said the equipment provided by the company includes jackets, gloves, hats, stop sign, reflective vests, raincoats, whistles, badges and background checks. "We are hoping to not have any of our police officers make those crossings. This is all on the company to be able to do that," she said.

Another resident asked how the company would entice residents to become crossing guards, if the rate of pay remains unchanged and no other incentives, such as benefits, are offered. Township Attorney David Minchello said state law was changed in 2011 requiring employees to work a certain number of hours to be eligible for benefits and crossing guards don't qualify.

**Alves-Viveiros** said the company also was looking at offering higher pay rates.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/07/27/edison-animal-shelter/70461456007/>

July 27, 2023

**Edison Animal Shelter ‘absolutely overrun’ by pandemic pets being returned**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – Though it may be overcrowded, the Edison Animal Shelter is clean and stocked with supplies, despite what some social media posts have alleged, according to a Township Council member. The township is considering whether to build an addition at the back of the shelter and may also look to some of the communities where Edison provides animal control services to help fund the construction. During Monday's Township Council work session, both Councilman Richard Brescher and Council Vice President Margot Harris mentioned they had both seen social media chatter about conditions at the animal shelter at the municipal complex across the parking lot from the Edison Police Department. Harris, a dog owner for 44 years, said because the social media posts contained "very disturbing" reports of the shelter not being clean and lacking supplies, she made an unannounced visit on Monday and met the new manager who took her on a tour of the facility. Brescher said he's heard the new manager is not a licensed animal control officer, but Harris said the manager has an animal control license. "I was very impressed and relieved with the condition of the shelter. The shelter was clean. They are absolutely overrun with pets right now. They have 86 cats, 23 dogs and they got nine huskies from a hoarding situation in Piscataway and one was pregnant," Harris said. She said the puppies were adopted and there are still four huskies left, one female and three males. Harris said the adoption fee for dogs is about \$175, which is among the lowest in the state. "They (the shelter) are busting at the seams, there is no question about it," Harris said, adding the facility was clean. The isolation section where there were three dogs were recovering from Parvo, a contagious dog virus, was being cleaned during her visit.

Harris said everything looked like it was in place, the facility was clean and there was no shortage of supplies. She said the manager indicated there was talk of possibly getting a new building because of the large number of animals. "We're talking about a central design of adding onto the building, not just the outside space, but the inside space so that we're a more welcoming environment to those that are seeking adoptions and are seeking our services at the shelter. This administration is looking to expand on that," said Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, adding the township is looking to share that responsibility with the five towns that use the shelter as part of a shared services agreement. The Edison Animal Shelter/Animal Control serves Edison, Dunellen, Highland Park, Metuchen and Piscataway, according to the township's website. "We're looking to get some contribution from them to make larger capital improvements at the shelter," **Alves-Viveiros** said.

According to Harris, the shelter manager said the increase in the number of animals is mostly due to the end of the pandemic and people who formerly adopted pets and worked from home find they no longer have time to care for their pets because they've returned to their workplaces.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/07/26/edison-sports-recreation-center/70462816007/>

July 26, 2023

**Edison OK's the "Ferrari" of youth sports buildings, a \$10M structure**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The Township Council approved a \$10.8 million contract for the construction of a new sports recreation facility, more than twice the \$5 million originally earmarked for the project. This comes after the Council in April rejected bids of \$10.8 million and \$14.1 million for the project, in an effort to allow more proposal options to be considered, Mayor Sam Joshi said at the time. Councilman Richard Brescher, who abstained during Wednesday's vote, acknowledged the project's price tag is much higher than the governing body anticipated. He asked the council to cut back on some of the expensive architectural features which have no impact on the children. "I'm not in favor of a \$10 million building," Brescher said. "I don't think we need to have a Ferrari here, and I think that's what we're building. It's all about the look, the show, not about the use." He explained the price for the sports facility, where work will involve the removal of the existing buildings and trailers at the Edison Jets Football Field, 370 Central Ave., went as high as \$12 million before the plan was reduced.

Township Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the project's funding comes from 2022 capital improvements and other bond ordinances. Public documents indicate the new sports facility will be a pre-engineered metal building with a surrounding one- or two-story podium structure framed of steel columns, steel beams and a composite metal deck slab. Both structures will be supported on concrete shallow foundations.

The heating, ventilation and air conditioning system will be dedicated for a sports area with high occupancy, as well as providing traditional systems for office and storage areas, according to the documents. The heating will be provided with an air source heat pump and supplemental hot water heater and the electrical system will include a dedicated transformer and emergency generator, the documents say. The building also will be equipped with new connections to water and sewer utilities as well as a fire alarm and sprinkler system and is slated to be used for cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball, lacrosse and other activities year-round. The Township Council on Wednesday unanimously also approved a \$2.8 million contract to build a splash park at Papainni Park. The original proposal featured cultural artifacts reimagined as sprinklers, splash zones and tipping buckets of water, with a replica of the Edison Tower in the park's center. Councilwoman Joyce Ship-Freeman said that under a prior administration, the splash park was estimated to cost \$5 million and questioned if the size of this facility had been downsized. Brescher, however said he believes the \$5 million was for two splash parks, at opposite ends of the town. The township is hoping to break ground on some of the projects this fall, with work on the splash park expected to continue to the spring, while the sports facility is estimated to take about a year to complete.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/07/05/is-edisons-winter-street-park-park-a-jungle-or-one-of-the-nicer-ones/70373483007/>  
July 5, 2023

**Is Edison's Winter Street Park park a 'jungle' or 'one of the nicer ones'?**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON - Some residents in the area of the Winter Street Park say the park is so overgrown with weeds, and has been in such poor condition since Superstorm Sandy more than a decade ago, that it needs to be renovated. "This park is a jungle, it is not a park anymore," said a resident who presented photos and a petition for the renovation to the Township Council last week. But another resident who brought her grandchild to the park on Saturday had a different opinion. "We've been to a lot of the parks," she said, "and this is one of the nicer ones."

The township's website lists Winter Street Park off Winter Street and Anita, George and Oliver avenues as having two basketball courts and a playground. The park however appears to have two playgrounds and a tennis court. The park sign says Durand Cormaci Park, which a 40-year resident said was named for a husband and wife who formerly lived at the edge of the park.

After viewing the pictures with the petition, Council Vice President Margot Harris said it looks like it's in "pretty deplorable shape." The resident told the Council there are no basketball hoops and no nets, the grass needs reseeding and the walkway to the court has tripping hazards and needs to be repaved because children walk, ride their bicycles and run through there. "The park was never renovated after Sandy. There is debris, it needs a whole cleanup," said the resident, who asked that the work be done as soon as possible.

A Southfield Road resident added trees and bushes in the park become very overgrown during the summer and there is chipped paint on park apparatus. "We're going to look into this. I know we put in a new pickleball court there so we've made some improvements there," said Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**.

A visit to the park Saturday morning found a few water bottles on the ground and some dog feces, but otherwise a fairly well maintained park with two playgrounds, a tennis court without a net, and no basketball hoops or nets. A married couple who have lived in the neighborhood for 40 years brought their grandchild to the park Saturday. The wife said the court has very poor drainage and when it rains, the water ponds on the court for days. "They did repave it, but you can see there is no net. I think it would be better with a net," said the woman, adding there used to be basketball hoops on the court. Her recommendation for park improvements include moving some of the benches into the shade, because they get very hot in the summer. She also said some dead trees in the park have been removed and new mulch was installed around the playground equipment. She said the park is well maintained, with the grass cut and generally people clean up after using the park.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The couple said if basketball hoops were installed, maybe more of the older kids would use the park and the lines for the tennis court could be redrawn. "My kids came where when they were little and played every day and when (her daughter) was older she worked at the summer program in the park," she said. "It's a nice park. They put the picnic tables up and that was good too. We've been to a lot of the parks, and this is one of the nicer ones." The wife said the park was renovated several years ago, sometime after 2012.

Councilman Joseph Coyle said he believes the park is on the town's list for a full renovation this year and Councilman Ajay Patil said the condition of the park was brought to the mayor's attention during the spring and he knows renovation work is planned.

Council President John Poyner said the council has passed resolutions related to playground surface and playground equipment at the park and possibly fencing.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/06/30/heres-how-much-the-price-of-edison-turf-field-project-went-up/70362318007/>  
June 30, 2023

**Here's how much the price of Edison turf field project went up**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON - The cost of the synthetic turf field project at Papaiani Park has gone up. The Township Council on Wednesday authorized a change order for Picerno Giordano Construction to relocate the bleachers and fencing, as well as concrete and paver removal work at a cost of \$96,085. The resolution indicates funds are available in a township account.

In anticipation of the sports building construction, the current placement of the bleachers needed to be moved further from the location of the building for safety reasons, according to Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**. "It's a safer environment for all the spectators coming in," **Alves-Viveiros** said Monday. She explained that with any construction project, once you break ground and review all the aspects of the project there may be some changes and in this case, it was the bleachers that needed to be moved for safety reasons. The bleachers are located where the groundbreaking for the sports center building will occur and there will be construction debris in that area. **Alves-Viveiros** said an addendum will be issued to the sports building project to remove plans to demolish the bleachers, since that work has already been done under the turf field contract. She said the change may offset some costs related to the sports building.

Council President John Poyner said the initial scope of work on the turf field did not include the moving of the bleachers in the turf field part of the construction work, which is currently going on. But engineering officials determined that in reviewing the timelines of the contractor, it made sense to have that work done now instead of having the sports building contractor remove the bleachers during part of the sports season. He said this also allows for the opportunity of new bleachers to be installed on the home team side of the field, which is the side where the building will be constructed. He said the recommendation was to keep the bleachers on the home team side and move them to the away team side of the field and have a new set of bleachers installed on the home team side. He said the sports building contract had called for the existing bleachers to be deconstructed, put to the side and then reconstructed in their existing location.

Poyner added that once the sports team season is underway, and if construction was still underway on the second story of the sports building and the home team side bleachers were already back in place, that would create a safety concern. Councilman Ajay Patil on Monday said he supports the project but indicated things could have been planned better. Councilman Richard Brescher on Monday asked to see the original architectural drawings and renderings as well as engineering plans and new drawings because he had a lot of unanswered questions.

In March the council awarded a \$4.2 million contract to Picerno Giordano Construction LLC of Kenilworth for the artificial turf football and baseball fields at Papaiani Park for youth athletes. The football field is for the Edison Jets, a youth football program, on the opposite side of Lake

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Papaianni. Field improvements also will allow for soccer and lacrosse on the football field and soccer on the baseball field outfield. The project was bid twice and had four respondents each time. The first one had low bid of \$4.3 million and a high bid of \$6 million. The township project also includes lighting, curbing and drainage improvements, in addition to the field work. Funding will come from various township engineering projects, engineering improvements and recreational department accounts.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/05/26/edison-comcast-xfinity-optimum-cable-tv-internet/70252378007/>

June 5, 2023

**When will Comcast Xfinity internet and TV come to Edison?**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is moving forward with plans for municipal broadband by authorizing competitive bids for a consulting service to create a business plan, more than a year after several council members campaigned on the issue, and months after a study on the issue was completed. The Township Council on Wednesday approved a resolution for the bids. Councilman Richard Brescher, who had questions about the success rate of broadband in other communities as well as the maintenance, abstained from voting and Councilwoman Joyce Ship-Freeman, who wanted to table the issue until the council had more information, voted no.

The idea of high-speed municipal broadband in Edison has grown from the quest for faster, reliable and more affordable internet service in town, where Optimum has been the major provider. Comcast will now be constructing its own fiber network in town, and Brescher said internet service has improved for residents who have Optimum's newer fiber optic cable system. Councilman Nishith Patel, who was one of the most vocal advocates for broadband this week, said he thinks of it as a utility. "I think we need to own these lines. We need more competition. The majority of people are not happy with what they have," said Patel who estimates the town could be looking at millions of dollars in surplus in 10 years with broadband. "I think this is a great investment for the long term and for the future," Patel also believes the town would be eligible for grants and other funding from the state.

Council members this week had two lengthy discussions about broadband. On Monday, much of the discussion was centered on why a broadband study was completed in October but the results were released to the Council just in the last week, a decision by the administration that left Councilman Ajay Patil said he, too, expected the release of the results a while back and since the township started looking at broadband, the technology has evolved, and the town will have to determine if it is a viable project for the long term.

Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said at Mayor Sam Joshi's administration's direction, the township is on to the next steps of creating a business plan, which is why a request for proposals is out for the broadband and the 41-page study report was released.

Council President John Poyner said the business plan would look at the strengths and weaknesses of municipal broadband and determine market competition. He said the consultant would analyze the best approach for Edison. "I do believe municipal broadband is the way for the township to go. We have increases in technology and advancements in technology that are going to require additional bandwidth, not just from the sense of the capacity of upload and download speeds, but eventually we're going to have to look at our electrical infrastructure because the more computing that is done, the more energy that is used," Poyner said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Ship-Freeman questioned if the township is truly serious about municipal broadband because the issue only seems to come out at election time. "We've got to do better than what we are doing," she said. "Don't bring it out every time there is an election and tease people like we're getting something that we're not getting."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/05/24/edison-township-council/70247238007/>  
May 24, 2023

**'You have duped this council': Edison fireworks after corruption charge in \$1M contract**  
By Suzanne Russell

EDISON - An unsuccessful GOP mayoral candidate has called for an investigation after the Township Council awarded a nearly \$1 million no-bid contract to an engineering firm that had recently hired the township business administrator's husband, and the council was not notified of the connection before the vote. While the business administrator said she notified others in the administration that her husband was hired by the engineering company that got the contract, it's unclear if that notification was made before or after the contract was approved.

At Monday's Township Council agenda session, Keith Hahn, a retired township police officer who has twice run unsuccessfully as mayor, said the governing body last month awarded the contract to T&M Associates for the rehabilitation of the Westside Sanitary Pumping Station. The resolution states that before entering into a contract, T&M Associates will have completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which certifies that they have not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in Edison in the previous year, and that the contract will prohibit T&M Associates from making any reportable contributions through the term of the one-year contract. Hahn said the \$974,200 contract seems excessively high for the engineering work especially since only a few years ago the township was building pump stations for \$500,000 to \$1 million. He added that T&M Associates in the past has received smaller contracts, not \$1 million contracts. Hahn said he's also learned that Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros'** husband recently got a job with T&M Associates. He said he considered that highly inappropriate and questioned if there would be an investigation into the apparent conflict of interest.

**Alves-Viveiros** husband works as an inspector for T&M Associates. "I did disclose that to the administration, the township attorney as well as human resources, so that is disclosed," **Alves-Viveiros** said. Hahn also questioned whether that disclosure was before or after the contract was awarded. **Alves-Viveiros** responded by saying T&M Associates had done work in Edison before her husband's recent employment.

Township Attorney David Minchello said the business administrator's husband's employment with T&M Associates was properly disclosed to the administration and **Alves-Viveiros** recused herself from any contracts involving that engineering firm. "As determined by the Township Attorney, Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** properly followed all legal and ethical procedures related to this matter. Not only did she disclose her husband's employment appropriately, she also recused herself from all dealings with T&M Associates going forward," the township said in a statement Tuesday. "It should be noted that T&M Associates has been one of the contracted engineering firms for the township for decades dating back to the 1990s, well before this development. Additionally, **Mrs. Alves-Viveiros'** husband is not a partner, executive

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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or a decision maker at the firm and serves only as an inspector. Township officials have mandated that Mr. Viveiros will not perform any services related to township projects under any circumstances," the township's statement said. At the meeting Minchello and Hahn exchanged words about the cost of past contracts and Hahn said while the attorney may not be aware of some of the past contracts, council members should know.

"This is a farce, if I'm not even allowed to respond," Minchello said. "We're not going to make a mockery of this council," said Council President John Poyner, who later called for a five- minute recess to restore decorum. "That bid was a mockery to this council," Councilman Richard Brescher responded, indicating Poyner had been aware of the connection between the administrator's husband and the engineering firm. "We were not made aware. You voted for it and I think you knew about the no-bid contract and you knew about the employment and you didn't tell the rest of the council. You, my friend, are in the same boat as the administration. You have duped this council, sir," Brescher said. Hahn said if the administration hires the vendors for the no-bid contract and the council approves the expenditure, the council should have been aware of the conflict.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/05/01/edison-township-nj-school-crossing-guards/70151890007/>  
May 1, 2023

**Edison plans to outsource school crossing guards. Here's why**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is looking to privatize the school crossing guard service because of longtime staffing issues. The Township Council has approved putting out bids for a private company to provide crossing guards. Part of the bid requirement will be current crossing guards get first preference for jobs, especially since some crossing guards have performed their crosswalk duties for a long time. According to Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, the township's crossing guard staffing issues has resulted in police officers covering those assignments at a significant cost to the township.

Councilman Richard Brescher agreed police officers should not be serving as crossing guards but questioned how a company is able to find and hire crossing guards at a competitive wage, yet the township is unable to get crossing guards. "That tells me we're not managing properly because we should be able to get crossing guards, keep them, and maintain them. When government can't function within itself and has to subcontract out itself, I think there needs to be a change in government," Brescher said. "I don't feel positive about outsourcing. I'm not a big fan of outsourcing our public work that I feel should be done in-house." He added if the township is not able to get enough crossing guards, it's probably an issue of pay or benefits. "But some company has found employees that are willing to get out of bed for that amount of money, and what I'm saying to the administration is find those people," Brescher said.

The councilman said he's concerned that eventually every township function will be outsourced and all that will be left is a township administration. Edison currently has 40 crossing guards with 53 posts. There is one unfilled post and 12 guards performing a double post, according to township officials. Crossing guards receive \$19 an hour for three hours a day, when school is in session, township officials said. Edison has two high schools, four middle schools, one intermediate school, 10 elementary schools and a preschool program. **Alves-Viveiros** said there are companies that have the number of people who can provide the service.

Council President John Poyner said crossing guard positions are not full-time, or even full-year jobs, so outsourcing may make sense for the township. Councilwoman Joyce Ship-Freeman said crossing guard positions have been an issue for the past few years and she's glad some action is being taken. She does want to see any crossing guard posts uncovered for the children's safety. "This is the direction we are forced to go into," said Ship-Freeman who noted crossing guards only get a few hours of work, sometimes in very harsh weather, and there have been some recent retirements. **Alves-Viveiros** said the cost benefit of outsourcing would be based on benefits the township pays as well as administrative costs including the cost of coverage provided by police officers. "We'd be talking a huge difference just on the surface," she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2023/01/27/edison-senior-center-slated-to-reopen-next-week/69843771007/>

January 27, 2023

**Edison senior center set to reopen next week**

By Suzanne Russell

The senior center will be open by Tuesday, Nick Bond, township spokesman, said he was informed. Bond's announcement on Thursday came less than 24 hours after a Township Council meeting in which no date for the reopening was stated.

Township officials previously had indicated the Woodbridge Avenue building work would be finished in mid or late January, but during Wednesday's City Council meeting Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the senior center, where work is nearing completion, will be reopened but didn't specify when. "We are going to be cleaning up and and starting up programming so for those that attend the senior center, including the clubs if you could just hold on and wait to get the word from us with regards to the actual schedule we will provide you with that. We want to get it up and running. It will be opened but we just want to set up our programming," **Alves-Viveiros** said.

"I don't really understand that," said the president of one of the senior citizens clubs that uses the facility who had expected the center to open on Monday. She hoped to receive a telephone call announcing the reopening date so she could inform her club members, some of whom walk to the center. She said each club president plans to call their members to let them know when the center will reopen. **Alves-Viveiros** said the town will get in touch through the senior coordinator.

The senior center at 2963 Woodbridge Ave. was closed for all in-person activities on July 29 after a bathroom renovation project revealed that the connection to the fire suppression system had deteriorated to the point that it needed to be replaced. The building is Edison's only senior center. During the center's closure, the township has used other buildings, including the Clara Barton First Aid Squad on Amboy Avenue, to host senior citizen programs and events. A fire department inspection also found issues with emergency lights that were not working, problems with exit signs, missing components on the fire alarm panel and the sprinkler system turned off.

In August 2022, council members awarded a \$115,000 emergency contract to Allied Fire and Safety in Neptune to move the project along, but initially there were issues with the availability of supplies. Last month council members approved two resolutions related to the bathroom work at the senior center and reported work on the suppression system was nearly completed. One resolution was a change order with Goksu Construction in Sparta for restroom renovations, including a valve replacement and additional dumpster in the amount of \$14,517.16 for a total amended contract amount of \$213,467.16. The other was a \$20,500 change order with Allied Fire and Safety for dry valve assembly at a cost of \$10,500 and \$10,000 to perform a water flow test and to provide an installation plan with hydraulic calculations.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2022/10/31/edison-nj-dpw-garage-parks-rec/69596857007/>

October 31, 2022

**Edison officials state long-term goal for DPW**

By Suzanne Russell

EDISON – The township is taking an expensive, but necessary, step toward making improvements at the Department of Public Works garage on Truman Drive, aimed at consolidation while setting the stage for a future major overhaul at another township DPW garage. Township Council members last week unanimously approved a resolution awarding a state contract for a new floor at the DPW garage at 101 Truman Dr. at a cost of \$549,239.63. Township Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** said the cost is lower than the engineer expected, and the public works director said the purchase was made through a co-op so it is already pre-bid for the service.

Council President Joe Coyle, who serves on the DPW committee, said the floor on the Truman garage, which formerly stored tanks, has settled over the years creating a slope and safety issues. "It's like jacking a car up on a hill," he said. Creating a level floor will allow for more indoor repair of vehicles. Coyle said the goal is have all the department's vehicles undergo repairs and maintenance at one location, the Truman garage, where all the parts and supplies, like tires, also will be stored. Training also is expected to be housed at the Truman garage site. The new floor also will allow more vehicles to be brought into the garage at one time. "Township motor vehicle maintenance and repair is a huge responsibility. We need to get these trucks in and out and back on the road," Coyle said, adding the township does a lot of its own repairs.

The Edison DPW covers 35 square miles and 250 miles of roads, he said, adding the township already has the trucks and manpower ready to tackle any upcoming snowfalls. "People care about their streets being plowed, their streets being paved, and their garbage picked up," Coyle said. The floor is expected to take about five weeks of work, including curing the concrete.

The council also approved resolutions to purchase a new wheel alignment machine at a cost of \$30,746.20; purchase a new scissor lift for \$35,010.01; purchase two new and unused vehicle post lifts for \$100,788.72; and a contract for welding of the trench drain risers for \$21,624.75. Councilman John Poyner said the improvements are necessary to get through the proper level of efficiency in the department and the right improvements to make going forward.

A concept plan is being developed by the mayor and his administration for the DPW garage at 745 New Durham Road, which is currently used for some indoor, but mostly outdoor, storage, Coyle said. The township also has a parks and recreation garage off Nevsky Street. "The long-term goal is to have all of our vehicles out of the elements underneath an overhang or inside a garage during the months when the weather is challenging," Coyle said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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In January 2015, a four-alarm fire leveled the DPW maintenance garage on New Durham Road, destroying 11 salt spreaders with attached snowplows, three street sweepers, three repaving vehicles, a road maintenance truck and a fire engine that was awaiting repairs. The damage was estimated at about \$4 million.

Coyle said the end goal for the township is to provide every opportunity and services to residents in an efficient manner. By working on the Truman garage first, it positions the township to develop plans for the future restructuring of the Durham garage, he said. "We're shuffling our manpower and our vehicles and our services into one area so we can look at Durham as a blank canvas," Coyle said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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TAPinto Edison (NJ)  
March 10, 2022

**Mayor appoints new business administrator**

Author: Tapinto Staff Edison

Mayor Sam Joshi appointed **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** as Edison's next Business Administrator. **Alves-Viveiros** most recently served as the Business Administrator in Englewood and prior to that was the Business Administrator and Assistant Business Administrator in Maplewood. She served in municipal administrations in Summit and Bernards Township as well. She holds a B.A. in Public Administration and a Masters in Public Administration from Seton Hall University. She will begin her tenure in Edison on April 4, 2022.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Record (NJ)  
December 2, 2021

**Two more suits filed against Englewood police department**

Author: Katie Sobko

Two city officers have filed lawsuits alleging pervasive racial discrimination in a police department that has been fraught with tension for years. Sgt. Lester Martin Jr. and Sgt. Zellvon Lucas filed individual suits in Superior Court in Bergen County against the city and its Police Department. Martin also named City Manager **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, Director of Human Resources Daria Trumpet and Lt. Fred Pulice in his suit. Both complaints say the city and its police force "have long histories of conflict based upon a person's race, including claims, resulting lawsuits, and out-of-court settlements, arising from allegations involving unlawful racial discrimination (against employees and citizens)."

**Sgt. Lester Martin's lawsuit**

Martin was hired by the department in 2002. He was promoted to sergeant in 2016 and he registered to take the lieutenant's exam in February 2018. However, the test was pushed back to April of that year. He alleges that the change was made so that fellow Officer Gregory Martin would be eligible after having been temporarily barred from taking promotional exams for committing employment misconduct.

Martin, no relation to Gregory Martin, alleges the shift was "racially motivated" and done to hamper his efforts in securing the promotion. His complaint also says he "personally observed defendant Pulice sleeping on the job and became a witness of that incident in the Department's internal affairs investigation" in October 2018. But the department didn't take the misconduct seriously and the investigation was "compromised and otherwise lacked integrity," Martin claims. After learning that Pulice knew the particulars of the investigation, Martin reached out to the chief and deputy chief, pointing out that that was illegal, the suit says. Retaliation followed, Martin alleges, including a grievance filed against him that resulted in his removal from the patrol overtime list.

Martin claims he was not the only target. He alleges that after Pulice was suspended, he "mounted a horrific, racially motivated campaign" against then-Chief Lawrence Suffern and then-Deputy Chief Gregory Halsted, both persons of color, and "other persons of color who are department members." Pulice pursued a vote of no confidence against their leadership, was openly hostile to employees who are persons of color and forced people of color out of the union, Martin claims, and the city and the department have tolerated it. He alleges that complaints he brought up to **Alves-Viveiros** and Trumpet were not investigated appropriately.

Martin also alleges that the department failed to properly clean up black mold, and even opted to "ignore toxic mold in areas of the building where people of color were assigned to work, while cleaning and remediating the toxic mold in other areas where Caucasians were assigned to work." The mold remains, he said. Martin says Gregory Martin was unlawfully promoted to



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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lieutenant in June of this year and officials "intentionally disregarded Gregory Martin's personnel jacket to promote him in a racially motivated manner despite substantial information indicating that Gregory Martin was not as qualified." Lester Martin's attorney, Christopher Deininger, had no comment.

**Sgt. Zellvon Lucas' lawsuit**

Lucas was hired in June 2001 by the Fire Department and transferred to the Police Department the following year. She was promoted to sergeant in 2018. She alleges that because she has reported fellow officers for infractions, she has been retaliated against, overlooked for promotions and discriminated against based on her race and gender. She was also forced to work in an office full of black mold despite having "known respiratory conditions," she alleges.

Lucas claims that in February 2019 she reached out to her supervisor regarding air quality in her office, saying the "office itself was infested with mold, the carpets in the office were overridden with mold and there was rat feces all throughout the office," but that no substantive action was taken. Instead, Lucas paid out of pocket for some repairs and an air purifier.

A test taken in summer came back positive for black mold and while remediation has been done, she says, "air sample tests still show elevated levels of black mold in the records area," where Lucas worked. After the vote of no confidence was taken against the chief and deputy chief, Lucas alleges that there was an increase in "verbal attacks on African American PBA members." Lucas is Black. After she and seven other officers signed a letter in support of the chief and deputy chief, they were suspended from the union and lost benefits as a result.

When Halstead retired as deputy chief, Lucas was recommended for the role, she says. Instead the process was changed. The table of organization was updated to allow for three candidates to vie for the position instead of using the recommendation of the chief. Several promotions were made in June 2021, all to white officers. Lucas also says in her complaint that nepotism was prevalent in the department. Representation for the city and for Lucas did not respond to requests for comment.

**Other bias suits in Englewood**

Other lawsuits have been filed in recent years against the city citing racial discrimination from people of all backgrounds. In August, Pulice sued the city alleging that he was discriminated against and passed over for a promotion due to his age and for speaking out against what he calls unlawful practices. Two lawsuits filed last summer accused the department of threatening residents with false arrests and displaying racial bias when promoting officers.

In another suit, a Hispanic police lieutenant says he was passed over for promotion because the department prefers to advance Black officers. In addition, discrimination suits have been filed related to the city's Fire Department and Public Works Department. In September 2020, Public Works employee Gaby Nelson alleged discrimination and retaliation on the basis of national origin, as well as a hostile work environment. According to the complaint, Nelson's supervisor Raymond Romney asked her, "What did President Trump call your country?" referring, she said,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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to comments made by Trump in 2018, when he referred to Haiti and African nations as "s-hole countries."

A prospective city firefighter alleged racial discrimination in a lawsuit over a withdrawn job offer in April 2019. According to the suit, Charles Barnhart was offered the job but received a letter from then-City Manager Edward Hynes days later saying his offer had been contingent on the budget and was being rescinded. Meanwhile, other individuals who were offered employment at or about the same time had been hired, the complaint said. Barnhart said the Fire Department was made up predominantly of white firefighters from out of town. About a third of Englewood's 28,400 residents are non-Hispanic whites, according to census figures.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.Englewoodnjrotary.org/speakers/5b586b1b-547c-45e9-9755-29936487b739>  
Feb 16, 2021

**Englewood's New City Manager****Sonia Alves-Viveiros**  
Englewood's New City Manager

**Ms. Alves-Viveiros** brings extensive background and experience to Englewood. Since 2018, she has served as the Township Administrator for Maplewood, New Jersey, where she was responsible for an approximately \$47 million dollar budget and the supervision of 225 full time and 179 part time employees. Before that, she served as the Assistant and Acting Township Administrator of Maplewood and served in administrative capacities in the City of Summit and Bernards Township.

She graduated from Seton Hall University with her Bachelor's Degree, and earned a Master of Public Administration from Seton Hall University. She is a certified Qualified Purchase Agent (QPA) and is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the New Jersey Municipal Management Association (NJMMA), and Governmental Purchasing Officers Association of NJ (GPOANJ).

In her new position, **Ms. Alves-Viveiros** oversees the operations of 12 municipal departments and divisions and supervises 262 full time, 47 part-time employees plus seasonal employees. The City's 2020 general operating budget is \$68.3 million and its 2020 Capital Budget is \$ 7.3 million.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.nj.com/bergen/2020/12/bergen-county-prosecutor-taking-over-nj-police-departments-internal-affairs-unit.html>

Dec. 16, 2020

**Bergen County Prosecutor taking over N.J. police department's internal affairs unit**

By Rodrigo Torrejon | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

The Bergen County Prosecutor's Office is taking over Englewood Police Department's internal affairs unit for at least the next six months, citing a months-long investigation into the unit. Starting this week, the Prosecutor's Office will enter into a monitoring agreement with the Englewood Police department to take complete control over the department's internal affairs unit, Bergen County Prosecutor Mark Musella said in a statement. The agreement will temporarily override Police Chief Larry Suffern's authority over the unit for at least six months, with the potential to extend the time period for longer, according to the agreement. The agreement will install a full-time monitor who will be able to review and audit every aspect of the internal affairs unit, dating as far back as necessary, according to the agreement. The monitor will be granted complete access to any books, documents, records and personnel they need, according to the agreement. The monitor will also be able to review and audit other parts of the police department if they deem it necessary, according to the agreement.

The agreement comes after the Prosecutor's Office conducted a six-month long investigation into the Englewood Police's internal affairs unit, the statement said. After the investigation, the office provided City Manager **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** with their findings. The Prosecutor's Office statement and Englewood administration did not provide those findings or the reasons for the agreement. **Alves-Viveiros**, who signed the agreement along with Musella, declined to comment on the agreement, referring questions to the Prosecutor's Office. Police Chief Suffern did not immediately return calls requesting comment.

Englewood Mayor Michael Wildes alluded to conflict within the Englewood Police department but stopped short of explaining what the Prosecutor's Office investigation found and the specific reasons why the agreement was forged to install a monitor. "I had the privilege of being at the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office last week, where he announced this," said Wildes. "He has a stellar reputation and as in the past has stepped into other departments in similar fashion. It's not a secret that our department is fractured. And I welcome his team and know that they will - together with our department - establish our best practices."

The police department has been beset by in-fighting among police officers who support Suffern and those who don't, as reported by NorthJersey.com. In April, a majority of 67 members of the PBA on the police department voted "no confidence" in Suffern, NorthJersey reported. Later, eight of the officers who did not vote "no confidence" sent a letter in support of Suffern and were ultimately suspended from their union, NorthJersey.com reported. In response, the eight officers chose to create their own rival union. And last month, the local chapters of the PBA and the Superior Officers Association sued Suffern, claiming he got rid of extra-duty shifts as retaliation, NorthJersey reported.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/maplewood-township-administrator-sonia-Alves-Viveiros-leaving-for-new-job-in-englewood/>  
October 20, 2020

**Maplewood Township Administrator Sonia Alves-Viveiros Leaving for New Job in Englewood**

Maplewood Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** will be leaving for a new job as City Manager of Englewood, NJ. **Alves-Viveiros** is expected to continue working in Maplewood through late November before embarking on her new job. The news was announced October 20 at the Maplewood Township Committee meeting.

**Alves-Viveiros**, who graduated in 2010 from Seton Hall University, interned in Millburn before working in administration in both Summit and Bernards Township. She was hired as Maplewood Assistant Township Administrator in September 2016, and was selected from a pool of six candidates as Township Administrator in 2018, after the retirement of Joseph Manning. This story will be updated.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/maplewood-got-hammered-in-tropical-storm-isaias-with-downed-wires-trees-throughout-town/>  
August 4, 2020

**Maplewood ‘Got Hammered’ in Tropical Storm Isaias with Downed Wires, Trees Throughout Town**

By Colleen Falconer

Tropical storm Isaias barreled through New Jersey on Tuesday, leaving numerous trees and wires down in Maplewood and some residents without power.

Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** reported on the damage at Tuesday night’s remote Township Committee Meeting. The Department of Public Works and the Fire Department are coordinating the removal of trees and wires, which has already begun. **Viveiros** said “PSE&G is here in town at the moment” with an MPD sergeant.

Residents with downed wires should report them to [mpddesk@twp.maplewood.nj.us](mailto:mpddesk@twp.maplewood.nj.us) , according to Glenn Michalowski, Assistant Township Administrator.

Committee member Greg Lembrich asked how to best contact PSE&G, whose website has been down several times in the last few hours. **Viveiros** recommended emailing Township Engineer Paul Kittner at [pkittner@twp.maplewood.us](mailto:pkittner@twp.maplewood.us), as Kittner has direct contact with the regional PSE&G representative. Residents can also text 47734 to directly report to PSE&G if their account is already registered to PSE&G’s text update system.

The two kids’ camps out of the Woodland and Dehart Park both have generators and will be up and running as usual on Wednesday, said **Viveiros**. There will also be a “massive cleanup effort” tomorrow, according to Deputy Mayor Dean Dafis. “We’re gonna get to everyone as soon as we can,” said Dafis, who said there are over 70 locations in town with trees or wires down at this time.

Mayor Frank McGehee echoed Dafis’s statements, asking residents to be patient. “We got hammered,” he told the Committee and residents. The Departments of Public Works, fire, and police “were out everywhere, in all four corners of our township, securing streets, sidewalks, front lawns, whatever the case may be...It’s gonna take some time.” McGehee also informed listeners that the DPW will be coming around in the coming days to remove debris in all 6 zones.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/health/maplewood-board-of-health-telling-the-story-of-the-virus/>  
May 11, 2020

**Maplewood Board of Health: ‘Telling the Story of the Virus’**

At the May 5 Maplewood Township Committee virtual meeting, Board of Health Chair Dean Dafis and Township Health Officer Candice made a lengthy presentation in an effort to give the public a more holistic look at how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting their town of 25,000 residents. “This evening we thought it was time after seven weeks or so of data and social distancing ... to tell the story of the virus,” said Dafis. “How does this virus work and what does that look like nationally ... as well as right here in our community.”

“How is it that while infections may be slowing down deaths are rising,” said Dafis. “And what does the future look like? Science equals confidence. The data will inform the dates and how we open our society again,” he added. Flattening the curve isn’t the end, explained Dafis, who added, “The pandemic has a new shape: the plateau.”

“While social distancing does work ... the virus is still on the loose. The virus is not taking a summer break and we shouldn’t either. ... The number of affected persons could be even greater. ... Flattening the curve the first step, it’s not the end of the game and it’s not enough.” Davenport then made her way through a detailed presentation (scroll down or find it at [twp.maplewood.nj.us](http://twp.maplewood.nj.us)) that cited the State of New Jersey’s COVID-19 porthole. Davenport explained that she and her team have been entering local data into that porthole, as are municipalities throughout the state.

Maplewood is embedded in Essex County which has the highest death toll of the 21 counties in the state, reported Davenport, who then gave numbers for Maplewood’s positive cases (263), recovered cases (120) and negative tests (more than 400) as of May 5. She noted that the work of the health officials doesn’t end with those numbers. There is ongoing contact tracing and support and follow up for positive diagnoses as well as all family members of those diagnosed with the disease (otherwise known as “probable cases”). Dafis noted that “half of hospitalizations are in the ICU” and that the disease is “still very strong and spreading.” He said that New Jersey is “really in the hot zone.”

Regarding the demographics of the disease, Davenport said that, as of May 5, “deaths don’t have an impact until [age] 30-49 then increases rapidly and exponentially as you get older.” She said that age is one of the major risk factors. “The other major risk factor are underlying conditions,” said Davenport. Those include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, immuno-depressed diseases and more. Davenport said that Maplewood was a “microcosm” of New Jersey, tracking closely with the state overall in terms of age and ethnicity impacted by the virus. “The ones who are getting sick are the essential workers,” said Davenport. In addition, “We are seeing cases in the elderly in long-term care facilities and nursing facilities throughout the state.” Dafis asked how Maplewood compared to similar municipalities. “We fall right in the middle,” said Davenport. “What makes us different is we have a working class population who are the workers in health

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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care and essential personnel. ... We have multi-family housing units. COVID-19 tells a story about density; that's how it can spread unfortunately." She noted, "We have an uninsured population" and that "24% of our residents are ALICE [Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed] -qualified. With this economic crisis that number has probably increased significantly. As [TC member] Vic [DeLuca] mentioned, 25% of our population is renters. 18% is foreign born."

Davenport noted that Maplewood's first COVID-19 case was diagnosed on March 14, with those numbers going up exponentially over time. She cited a peak around April 4 then another peak on April 17. "This mimics to a 'T' the state peaks." "March 21 is when we had the social distancing mandate," said Davenport. "Unfortunately it takes almost a month to make a difference." She said cautioned that, "as we lift any new restriction in a month we will see more cases if people don't continue to follow social distancing."

"The decrease shows what social distancing has done. without it, these numbers would have gone higher," said Davenport. "The peak would have been later and this decline would not have been possible." Besides social distancing, "wearing that face mask is key," she added. Davenport said to look out for symptoms including cough, fever, shortness of breath increasing to chest tightness, head aches, body aches, chills, sore throat, diarrhea and vomiting. pneumonia, and blood clots. "This disease keeps morphing and changing," she said. "Blood clots can lead to other issues such as strokes, heart attacks and embolisms." Later in the presentation, Davenport gave more details about contact tracing and recovery: "We take the time to follow every patient and all their household contacts. You are not a recovered case until everyone in your household has recovered."

Mayor Frank McGehee noted, "That 's 263 cases. That's 263 phones calls and all the followups. The amount of work coming out of your office is unbelievable ... a mountain of work." "We love what we do. We love our community," said Davenport.

Later in the regular meeting of the Township Committee, Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** noted that the Township is looking to reconfigure the way it does business in preparation for an eventual reopening of physical Township offices. That included everything from hand sanitizers to physical barriers in the offices ("we're working with the Historic Commission," said **Viveiros**). The Township is investing in an intercom system and will be doing once a month deep cleaning.

**Viveiros** stressed that the opening of buildings would not happen "until the governor issues orders." She also added, "I recommend enhancing and promoting an online platform of doing business and processing permits online. ... We were ahead of the game here. Our courts are a great example with processing of pleas and even virtual sessions now." "That would be the responsible way to open up."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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TAPinto Edison (NJ)  
February 6, 2020

**Maplewood recycling vendor narrowly re-awarded contract**

Author: Alia C. Covell

After an impassioned promise from the vendor that this year will be different, a divided Township Committee has voted to continue using the current recycling collection provider. The move was unexpected, considering that the Township Committee meeting's agenda read "13. Report of receipt of bids — Recycling/SV 14. Hearing 15. Rejection of Recycling Bids."

The Maplewood Township Business Administrator, **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, indeed advised the Committee that two bids for the contract had been received, and that she recommended dismissing both and putting the contract out to bid again. The low bidder, current provider F. Basso Jr. Rubbish Removal Inc., should be rejected for "bad past experience" and "lack of performance," said **Alves-Viveiros**; the vendor has had multiple complaints against them during their six years as a vendor and specifically in 2019 concerning how they handle pickups, not collecting recycling at all on pick up days, and lack of responsive customer service from the office. She said the higher bidder should be dismissed as well because the bid came in well above Maplewood's budget.

Multiple committee members acknowledged that Maplewood residents have complained about the company to them. Mayor Frank McGehee then allowed Dave Basso, the company's operations manager, to speak on the company's behalf. Basso started by acknowledging the past bad experiences, saying he was "embarrassed" to be in front of a township committee for the first time in his career, and that he "hoped to ease the concerns that you have." He delineated what the company has done to rectify the situation and ensure excellent service in the future. He said after receiving fines in September 2019 for missed collections in August, he evaluated "all existing policies and procedures" and underwent "a modernization of administrative procedure, equipment, and on my fleet." As for the staff who served Maplewood, "several employees were disciplined for these missed collections and some were even let go." The remaining staff was retrained in what was expected of them, Basso said.

Technology within the company was also stepped up. "GPS was added to all trucks in the fleet. This allows for real time monitoring of the trucks in the field." Their office can now track not only where an individual truck is currently, but what time pick up occurred on each block in town. "This will ensure the recycling is collected promptly and efficiently," he said. Since the implementation of F. Basso's new policies and the addition of the GPS system, he said, "in the last four weeks we had zero missed collections," which contrasted with 10 missed collections in the 18 weeks prior. He said his pricing, roughly one third less than the higher bidder, is due to the advantage of his company being close by in Irvington, and delivering the recyclables to Newark. Since the short distance saves time and fuel costs, "This allows me to pass along the savings to the township."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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For close to half an hour after Basso's plea, the committee members discussed the pros and cons of giving the company another chance. The time constraints of putting out a new request for bids when F. Basso's contract will expire at the end of February was another consideration.

Committee Member Vic DeLuca had made a motion to reject both bids, but rescinded it during the discussion. In the end, the vote to accept the bid and award the contract was passed three to two, with DeLuca and Mayor Frank McGehee voting against the motion. The new contract is set to begin March 1.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/maplewood-terminates-department-of-public-works-director/>  
January 12, 2020

**UPDATED: Maplewood Terminates Department of Public Works Director**

By Colleen Falconer and Carolyn Parisi

Updated January 12, 2020 with information on a lawsuit that Calvin Bell filed against the Township of Maplewood on January 3, 2020. A copy of the filing is attached below.

The Maplewood Township Committee terminated Director of the Department of Public Works Calvin Bell on January 7, 2020, after the town’s Business Administrator delivered a detailed account of Bell’s alleged insubordination, abuse of time, failure to report employee incidents and neglecting to pay outstanding invoices — in one case reportedly leading to the brief suspension of recycling services to the town — among other issues. Township administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** told the Township Committee that Bell’s insubordination and neglect of duties “are at a point where operations have been and are compromised” and she suggested his immediate termination.

Bell has been DPW director since November 2014, following the retirement of Eric Burbank. **Alves-Viveiros** said Bell had been notified of the hearing regarding his employment — called a Rice notice. Bell was present at the meeting, along with his attorney Eldridge Hawkins. Laying out a timeline that stretched back to June of 2018 when she assumed the role of township administrator, **Alves-Viveiros** told the TC she had noticed issues within the Department of Public Works, including failure to report incidents, hiring of staff, and morale within the department. She said she brought her concerns to Bell in the beginning of 2019, and throughout the year they worked to initiate culture studies and employee trainings including anti-bias training. But she said the incidents persisted; DPW employees failed to report to work, and around 20 grievances were filed for improper distribution of overtime.

In a November 2019 incident involving an altercation between two employees, one of whom was a supervisor, Bell did not report the incident to the proper chain of command, **Alves-Viveiros** said. The township then suspended Bell for five days. Hawkins told a Village Green reporter in November that it was the supervisor, not Bell, who should have been responsible for reporting the incident. “[The supervisor] didn’t get censured,” Bell’s attorney Eldridge Hawkins said then, adding, “I find it very disturbing that Maplewood is still going through (this) but that’s why we’re litigating.” Bell also reportedly failed to appear at various meetings that required DPW representation, which **Alves-Viveiros** said she brought to his attention throughout 2019.

In the most recent incident leading to her recommendation to terminate Bell, **Alves-Viveiros** said she was copied on an email dated January 3, 2020 to Bell from Tiffany Giordano of Giordano Recycling that stated the vendor “would no longer be accepting our recycling” effective immediately, because the township owed “approximately \$57,000, and were past due 90 days.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Alves-Viveiros** said she immediately called the vendor to assure payment so that services were resumed. On January 7, she met with Bell and township CFO Joseph Kolodziej and asked Bell about the unpaid invoices. Bell reportedly said that he didn't know, with "no justification or explanation" despite the fact that the invoices were sent directly to him. Bell told her that "he did not recall" any communication regarding outstanding invoices. The Township Administrator noted two other incidents where Bell neglected to pay invoices, including to a landscaper and a vendor who provides fuel for the town jitneys — both of which she said Bell provided no explanation for.

Hawkins took to the podium with an impassioned defense of his client. He expressed grave concerns with information that **Alves-Viveiros** had presented at the meeting that he said she could not have known before sending notice of the hearing to Bell on January 3. "Clearly, she's talking about things that happened today," he said, suggesting the TC question **Alves-Viveiros** "because she didn't give specifics. She was very broad with what she said." At one point during Hawkins' speech, Township Committee member Nancy Adams interjected and admonished him for his repeated references to **Alves-Viveiros** as "young lady" and "lovely young lady."

"Her name is **Ms. Viveiros**," Adams said. "That's disrespectful, and works against her position in this township ... calling her a young lady over and over again." The attorney took the note, but continued with his critique. "Everything she's laid out is wrong. ... I couldn't quite say how my client was on suspension, and never got the communication — as your policy requires — to say 'final warning, the next time you could be terminated.'" He also expressed that he didn't "know how she would be able to get this matter brought before this board," following last week's reorganization meeting.

"You watch yourself," Hawkins told the committee. "'Cause you're going to take responsibility for **Ms. Viveiros**, and all of you are gonna go where she wants to go." As soon as Hawkins finished speaking, Township Committee member Greg Lembrich made a motion to vote on Bell's termination, effective immediately. All five members voted yes. The motion to advertise for a new candidate for the position was also decided on a unanimous vote.

Village Green reached out to the township's attorney, who declined to comment on the situation. UPDATE: Bell filed a suit against the Township on Jan. 3 alleging "trumped up" allegations, racial discrimination and retaliation for filing a suit (scroll down to see the full filing). Township Committee member Greg Lembrich commented on Facebook: "The lawsuit was decidedly not a factor in this outcome. If anything, this decision was made despite the lawsuit. I cannot comment any further or address the specifics because this is a personnel matter, but I would refer the public to the statement/memo from **Ms. Viveiros**, which speaks for itself." **Viveiros** read the memo aloud at the Jan. 7 meeting, but Village Green has requested a copy of the memo and will append it here when it is received.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/maplewood/2019-maplewood-state-of-the-township-address/>  
January 1, 2020

**2019 Maplewood State of the Township Address**

By Frank McGehee, Mayor of Maplewood NJ

The following State of the Township address was delivered by newly sworn-in Maplewood Mayor Frank McGehee at the Township Committee's annual Reorganization Meeting on January 1, 2020:

**STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP ADDRESS**

Happy New Year Maplewood and Thank you again for attending today.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues on the Maplewood Township Committee for electing me unanimously as your Mayor. Over the last three years, we've collaborated and worked diligently to achieve results which will only enhance our community.

I also want to recognize all the staff or as I like to say the Maplewood Township Team. These individuals are the heartbeat of our town's operations. From Public Works to Fire to Recreation and Human Services to Engineering and Health, 225 full-time and 179 part-time employees who are dedicated to The Township of Maplewood. Please join me in recognizing the team that is here today.

I also want to recognize our Town Clerk Liz Fritzen who could not be with us today due to a broken wrist. Liz has been a pillar for our township for 40 years. I know that she wishes that she could be here and is likely watching at home. Liz, we are praying for your speedy and healthy recovery.

Our township administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** and her team have made significant progress with reorganizing multiple departments, empowering department heads, and negotiating collective bargaining agreements with our fire, public works, library, and other labor unions. These are critical initiatives that will have a direct impact on operations and budgeting for years to come. Thank you, Ms. **Viveiros**, for your leadership.

Roger Desiderio, our town attorney: Thank you for your 26 years of dedication to your township. Your counsel has been invaluable. And thank you for stepping in today on Liz's behalf.

Three years ago when I was elected into office on the Maplewood Township Committee, it was the same night that our current president was elected into office. With a new administration in the White House, there was a lot of uncertainty both nationally and around the world about what was to become of the state of our union. There was and continues to be so much at stake .....women's rights, immigration rights, climate change, LGBTQ+ rights, Black lives, criminal justice reform, equity in education, common sense gun laws and affordable healthcare. We are

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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living in extremely challenging times. But here's what I know for sure...Maplewood is resilient and as a community, we continue to show the nation and the world who we are.

So who are we?

Maplewood is a welcoming community. In my first month in office, my colleagues and I on the Maplewood Township Committee passed Resolution 3-17 to express Maplewood's commitment to equal, respectful and dignified treatment of all people regardless of their immigration status. Since then, we have established "rainbow crosswalks." We have also raised the pride, transgender and Haitian flags. But this is not about what we on the Township Committee are doing, it's about what YOU are doing! Folks like Maplewood resident Alan Stephenson, who upon learning about the Women's March in Washington DC in January 2017, sprang into action and reserved two buses to transport fellow neighbors and friends from our community to and from Washington DC so that they could participate. Or what about the time that Natalie and Javier Farfan hosted a dinner at their home for Syrian refugees? We will continue to collaborate with local organizations dedicated to celebrate our differences and provide venues for open dialogue.

So who are we?

Maplewood is a community that is committed to sustainability. We continue to be recognized by Sustainable Jersey as one of the leading municipalities in the state and Maplewood was awarded again with Silver Certification. Only 53 out of 565 municipalities have earned this recognition, that puts Maplewood in the top 9% in the state. In 2019 we banned single use plastic bags. We joined 5 other municipalities to form the Sustainable Essex Alliance and launched Community Energy Aggregation and although we have experienced a minor bump in the rollout, the program will provide cleaner and cheaper energy for months to come. We also installed an Electric Charging Station at The Woodland, and held our first Electric Vehicle Car Show at the Maplewood Pool parking lot. In 2020, we will look to enhance our commitment to rid our environment of other plastics and materials such as straws, stirrers, and containers that are harmful to our planet. We will move forward with an Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) for Town Hall and explore other township buildings in the future. But when I think of sustainability and Maplewood, the person who immediately comes to mind is Tracey Woods. Tracey, a long-time resident, is the chair of the Maplewood Green Team. She also works for Sustainable Jersey. Tracey is committed to Maplewood and our environment. She has organized nearly every sustainability event in our town. From Green Day to Biketopia, she is the ultimate Maplewood ambassador and advocate for educating residents on reducing their environmental impact. She participates in marches and student led Climate Crisis teach ins acting with a sense of urgency. With her Husband Rich, she is raising two extraordinary children. Recently, Tracey and her sister Kelly, also a Maplewood resident and volunteer with MEND, lost their mom, Pamela, our prayers are with you and your family. Tracey, Thank you for making Maplewood strong on Sustainability.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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So who are we?

Maplewood is a thriving business community. In the last year alone, we've welcomed several new restaurants like Ani Ramen, Freetown Kitchen, Picketts and Luna Stella. I love hearing residents rave about new businesses on Springfield Avenue and in the Village like the General Store Cooperative, Maker + Muse and City Workshop. And we're just getting started. In 2020 we will continue to attract even more businesses with openings planned on Springfield Ave in locations that have been vacant for many years. Our town is blessed to have business owners who are committed not only to growing and enhancing their business, but also their community. Business owners like Julie and Thomas Pauly of the Able Baker. The Paulys have selflessly dedicated and contributed baked goods, money and an infinite amount of time to charitable events and causes. As my wife likes to say, the Able Baker is "one of the most woke bakeries around AND they make great coffee." And to Pete and Fifi Kikianis owners of the Park Wood Diner, thank you for always putting community first. Fred Shandler not only owns the thriving Arturo's in Maplewood Village but the equally amazing Bread Stand on Boyden Ave. Fred's Bread Stand has answered the call of investing in an area in our Maplewood community which has largely been ignored, but has great potential. Thank you, Fred, for your forward-thinking vision. Deborah Engel and Amy Howlett, founders of the General Store Cooperative, designed to enable local makers and indie businesses to collaborate and allow our residents to shop-local and invest in our community. Thank you Deborah and Amy for giving our local entrepreneurs an outlet where residents can interact and support their fellow neighbors.

So who are we?

Maplewood is a great place to live. Average median home list prices are up year-over-year and appreciation rates for our homes have been tracking above national average according to industry data and our town ranks in the top 30% nationwide. Also, the days that a home is on the market is down year-over-year. Year-to-date more than 480 homes have been sold over 7% of our residential housing stock. Still, we have not lost sight on ensuring that Maplewood remains home for our seniors and residents who span all socio economic demographics. And I look forward to working with my colleagues and with residents to identify viable affordable housing solutions. In the meantime, our Maplewood Housing Rehabilitation Program is available to assist eligible households with making repairs with \$20,000 in forgivable loans.

So who are we?

Maplewood demands commuter-friendly transportation. The Morris Essex and Gladstone NJ Transit lines must be reliable modes of transportation. Commuters should not need to have to take a train several hours earlier out of fear that their regular train will be canceled or delayed which causes a lot of stress particularly on our families who are balancing child care or caring for elderly parents. To mitigate this, we will continue to offer bus service to the city for our morning commuters. And we will continue to push NJ Transit to provide the customer experience that our residents and surrounding communities deserve!

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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So who are we?

We are a safe and healthy community. Through the first three quarters of 2019, major crimes in Maplewood are down or flat across all major categories. Assaults, motor vehicle thefts, burglaries are down 40%, 58% and 9% respectively and in 2019 robberies are flat from 2018 with a total of 10. And speaking of safety, let's not lose sight of the progress we've made when it comes to pedestrian safety. Our Traffic Bureau has written over 3,400 moving violations and 7,400 parking violations during that period. Thank you to our police department. Our Fire Department wears many hats as first responders from EMS to fire to conducting safety inspections. The department is well run from training to maintenance to execution. They are a family and consider the residents of Maplewood to be their extended family. Currently, with the help of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, we are negotiating with South Orange the consolidation of our two fire departments. This is an extremely complicated undertaking, where the focus is on creating an enhanced department serving our two towns. I want to thank our fire department for being constant professionals throughout this process, with unwavering dedication to the community. Our Board of Health promotes wellness in our community and The Municipal Alliance advocates for the mental, social and physical health of our youth and an environment that is free of the abuse of alcohol, vaping and other illicit drugs. In 2019, we held Drug Take Back Days to dispose of all expired or unused medication, we raised over \$2,700 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and participated in the Out of the Darkness Walk. In 2020 we will continue to support CHS Midnight Madness and educate our youth about tobacco, vaping and mental health. Thank you to Bob Roe who retired just yesterday as our Health Officer and spent 47 years in public health. We look forward to the leadership of Candice Davenport as our new Health Officer. We are a township that embraces change and innovation which will bring Maplewood into the 21st century. Building a 21st Century Library is still a focus for our township. The state issued regulations regarding the \$125 million bond and we submitted feedback regarding the draft rules and are asking that the state consider gut reconstruction projects be funded as new construction and to raise the per foot project cost from \$350 to \$550 to reflect the true cost of site preparation, construction, project overhead, sustainability features, technological upgrades, furniture and equipment and other factors. We remain committed and Thank you to Sarah Lester and her team, The library Board, Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library for their leadership. The redevelopment of Irvington Avenue will commence and will include two phases. Phase 1 will include lighting upgrades, decorative streetscape furniture, sidewalk reconstruction with enhancements between Prospect Street and Hillcrest Road and a crosswalk at Coolidge Road. Phase 2 will also include lighting upgrades, streetscape, sidewalk reconstruction, trees, signage, crosswalks and intersection enhancements between Hillcrest Road and Florence Avenue. We are also moving forward with a redevelopment study. To the residents of the Borden Park neighborhood, we hear you and look forward to making progress in 2020. The Pavers in Maplewood Village are complete and now we begin the process of assessing the Maplewood Village Visioning Plan provided by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. The township looks forward to collaborating with stakeholders on the feasibility and a phased implementation. In June of 2019, we approved a bond to pay for our school district's \$157.4 million capital improvement and integration plan to build additional classroom space, address long-standing maintenance issues, and achieve



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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integration across our community. We look forward to seeing the positive results of this investment under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Ronald Taylor, Mr. Paul Roth, and the Board of Ed.

So who are we?

We are a town where our youth not only have a voice, they have a seat at the table. Since we appointed the Youth Advisory Committee in 2018, they have been busy doing the work for our community and young people. In 2020 look for the rollout of MAPSO safe rides. The 2020 equivalent of a designated driver initiative, MAPSO safe rides is a peer-to-peer volunteer and leadership program designed and led by youth for the purposes of preventing underage exposure to drugs and alcohol and other unsafe or dangerous situations unexpectedly and unwillingly at after school gatherings or other social settings in the community.

So who are we?

We are a town that wants your ideas. Earlier this year we invited residents, community groups and non profit organizations all based in Maplewood to submit ideas that provide a community benefit. The winning project selected was a neighborhood Wifi pilot to help close the digital divide.

So who are we?

We are a community who is not only passionate about the arts, it's in our DNA. For the second consecutive year, the Springfield Avenue Partnership Public Art Initiative has brought art to Springfield Avenue. Please visit Firehouse two on the corner of Springfield Ave and Boyden Ave to see for yourself.. And this past fall The Maplewood Arts Council unveiled public works of art in the North tunnel of our Maplewood Train Station. And not only is Maplewood a community where Broadway goes to sleep, it's where Broadway gives back. Our Broadway stars under the leadership of the Vanessa Pollock Music Initiative are actively working to raise money for the Achieve Foundation so that more students throughout Maplewood and South Orange can get access to music education. And I hope you will all come out for the second annual SOMA Rocks event at the Woodland on Saturday, January 11, where the proceeds will benefit music programs at Columbia High School. We are a township that will count and be counted. The 2020 Census is here. From now until the end of July, we will work diligently with the Essex County Census Staff and the SOMA Complete Count Committee to count every single person with an emphasis on children and hard to reach populations. We will distribute leaflets in English, Spanish and Creole and The Maplewood Library will promote Census employment positions and provide computers to allow residents to complete Census questionnaires online; A complete Census count helps Maplewood get more federal and state funding. Everyone counts in Maplewood so remind all your neighbors to BE counted.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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So who are we?

We are a township where hate has no home. Where we stand up not only for ourselves but for each other. We are a community that comes together in celebration and in unspeakable grief. We are a community that is willing to have the tough conversations. We are a township where we have appointed women and people of color in top leadership positions. We are a Township that is resilient with a shared vision and purpose heading into 2020, whether it's enhancing our infrastructure, reducing our carbon footprint, streamlining our operations to be more efficient or investing in our business districts all while ensuring that Maplewood is a safe community to live, work and play. And we're just getting started!

Thank you, God bless Maplewood and God bless the United States of America.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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TAPinto Edison (NJ)  
July 15, 2019

**Westfield looks at Maplewood leaf blower law**

Author: Matt Kadosh

The leaves are long gone but the gas-powered blowers are still making noise. Jon Spitz, a Dorian Road resident, is lobbying the municipality to find a fix for loud gas-powered leaf blowers that he said contractors are using to blow grass clippings into the street. “This is a huge quality of life issue for 20 percent of the people who, like me, are over-the-top annoyed by it,” Spitz told the Town Council this week. “My wife, for instance, is not annoyed by it.” However, she is concerned about the pollution from the blowers, he said.

Town Attorney Tom Jardim said during a council workshop this week that the options for regulating such noise are limited. “Other than a complete ban on gas-powered equipment like this, it is very difficult to come up with a policy that actually works in some way that’s going to grant relief to the residents of Westfield,” Jardim said. “The committee is all ears to [hearing] what policy options are available,” he added.

On Thursday, Mayor Shelley Brindle said Spitz would be forwarding those suggestions to the town. “He is going to send us some proposed policy solutions on that for consideration,” Brindle said. “Once we review them, we’ll determine next steps, including the potential formation of a committee, if deemed necessary.” Westfield’s existing regulations may provide some relief. The town ordinance allows for up to 65 decibels of noise outdoors from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. Some leaf blowers can exceed that level.

**What have other municipalities done?**

Westfield is not the first municipality to wrestle with the regulation of noisy leaf blowers. In 2017, Maplewood made headlines with a ban prohibiting the use of gas-powered blowers from May 15 – Sept. 30. While the seasonal ban on gas-powered leaf blowers was widely popular, even receiving an endorsement from the Star Ledger’s Editorial Board, the regulation landed Maplewood in federal court when the New Jersey Landscaper Contractors Association sued on behalf of nine landscapers in that township.

The lawsuit takes that township to task for targeting with its ordinance commercial entities using gas-powered leaf blowers. Court records show that the parties have been working toward a settlement but have yet to reach one. **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, the business administrator in Maplewood, said that since the Township Committee approved the controversial regulation, her office has not received complaints about noise from leaf blowers. “I haven’t received any complaints about it. It’s been quiet. It has certainly been helpful in that sense,” **Alves-Viveiros** said. “Several people we know of work from home, and those are the people I would have heard from.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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In Westfield, Spitz admits a Maplewood-style blower ban is not the best option. “You don’t want have happen like what happened in Maplewood, where people were so ludicrous over the situation that they [nearly] came to blows,” he said. Like in Westfield, Summit is also looking at a potential ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, but city officials first want to see what happens in the Maplewood court case, said Amy Cairns, spokeswoman for the city. “Everyone acknowledges that not only do they emit harmful toxins into the environment, it’s bad for workers to use them all day — for their breathing for their hearing — but it’s also their livelihood,” Cairns said.

In Clark, the noise control regulations apply to gas-powered leaf blowers, but do not call out gas-powered blowers or commercial entities specifically. The law prohibits “the operation of any noise-creating blower or power fan or any internal-combustion engine, the operation of which causes noise due to the explosion of operation gases or fluids.” The regulation allows for an exception if the device is equipped with a muffler. Scotch Plains lumps the regulation of leaf blowers in with the use of other noisy lawn care equipment and reminds the public to limit the use of such equipment from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

**Taking it to the public**

In 1996, Montclair Township let voters decide on a seasonal gas-powered leaf blower ban. The anti-blower voters won the referendum by a thin margin: 2,815 to 2,093, according to the Montclair Times. And 26 years later, gas-powered leaf blowers may only be used March 1 – June 30 in that township, under the regulation in force. Spitz, for his part, simply hopes to put a damper on the noise in his neighborhood. He told the council he wants to educate homeowners on the issue so they ask their landscapers to cut back on the blowing. “The noise is very stressful and it really changes the dynamic of the town,” Spitz added. “You can’t go for a 15 minute period in the morning where you don’t hear these in the Tamaques area.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/government/a-change-in-accounting-causes-pain-in-maplewood-2019-budget/>  
March 31, 2019

**Maplewood to Introduce 2019 Budget With 6.8% Tax Levy Increase**

By Mary Mann

After years of passing municipal budgets at, below or near the 2% state-mandated cap, Maplewood Township will be introducing a proposed \$45.6M 2019 municipal budget on April 2 with a 6.8% tax levy increase. Why the change from recent years? According to Mayor Vic DeLuca, “The key drivers of this year’s increase are roughly \$450,000 in salary increases for all employees as per the employee contracts; an increase of \$1 million in long term debt repayment (which will save us money over the long term); and annual increases in our payments for employee health benefits and pension obligations.”

“To complicate matters,” continued the mayor, “we gave less surplus to carry over into 2019, generally because we have kept budgets and tax increases at a minimal the past few years. This practice, which in the past we did to keep tax increase low, has resulted in less surplus funds to carry over into 2019. Additionally, we are in agreement with the recommended (and more conservative) budgeting policies practices of the current CFO [Joseph Kolodziej]. This will help us stabilize Township finances and improve our bond ratings.”

At a preliminary budget hearing on March 20, Township Chief Financial Officer Joseph Kolodziej presented the TC with three scenarios, ranging from a projected tax levy increase of 3.2% to one of 13%. Kolodziej strenuously advised the TC to avoid the scenario that had the lowest tax impact due to his call for the Township to adopt ‘best practices’ in accounting and to bring Maplewood’s budget process in line with “most towns.” DeLuca stressed the need to find a balance between getting the Township on a path to best practices while being mindful of the pain the increase would place on the pocketbooks of residents. Ultimately, DeLuca and the TC members tasked Kolodziej with crafting a budget for introduction below a 7% tax levy increase. “We charged the Administrator and Chief Finance Officer with the task of reducing the average home 2019 tax increase to less than \$5 per week,” said DeLuca. “The budget we will introduce on Tuesday [April 2] uses these expense and revenue numbers and the tax increase will be less than \$5 per week on average.”

During a 2-1/2 hour budget hearing on March 20, DeLuca and the four other members of the Maplewood Township Committee — Deputy Mayor Frank McGehee, Nancy Adams, Greg Lembrich and Dean Dafis — grappled with the budget issues presented by Kolodziej and Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** and tried to make sense of the situation.

After spending the first hour of the meeting discussing how the town was accounting for projects that would be covered by grants and then running through a list of capital projects, the TC got down to talking about the overall 2019 budget about one hour into the meeting (see the 1:02 mark in the video below). DeLuca noted that the bond service was normally at \$4M in the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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budget, but that this year, “it’s up to \$5M.” Kolodziej explained that that was because the Township “wanted to lock in good interest rates.” He noted that one bond would retire in 2020 and another in 2021, so the town would see “a dip” then, but was “struggling along now.” Elected officials and administrators discussed increases in health care (Kolodziej said the Township might look at a less expensive private health care plan for future), increased costs in recycling (Kolodziej noted that towns across the globe were dealing with changes in this market), and more than \$400K in contractual salary increases.

Kolodziej told the TC that, although some factors couldn’t be controlled by the town — such as the global recycling market or the way the state “plays” the pension obligation — other items could be, such as the Township’s handling of its fund balance. “Things didn’t get broken in a year, they can’t get fixed in a year, but we cannot continue on this path,” said Kolodziej, who urged the Township Committee “to right the ship” by replenishing its fund balance and not using most of it to keep taxes lower. Kolodziej explained that, in the Township’s cash management plan, there is a policy encouraging the use of no more than 50% of fund balance to close a budget gap. “We’ve been utilizing quite a bit more than over 50%,” said Kolodziej. He noted that bond rating agencies look at that number, and said that the practice of using most of the fund balance “has pretty much caught up to us.” Kolodziej said that the town should have been raising taxes higher in previous years.

DeLuca expressed frustration that “this is the one year that we hit a home run on increasing valuations. ... All the big projects have come online [Avalon Bay, 1701 Springfield Avenue].” The mayor added that it was “very disappointing to see these kind of tax increases.” Although Kolodziej darkly joked that he was “like the harbinger of death,” he said; “While we shouldn’t be putting together a structurally imbalanced budget, we have enough lights on the horizon that we can survive this.” He talked about the Township setting up a sewer authority in the future to move that cost out of the budget. DeLuca said that taxpayers would then just be “paying a higher sewer fee.” Lembrich called it “robbing Peter to pay Paul.” But Kolodziej said that it would be better for taxpayers because they can no longer deduct more than \$10K in property taxes and “with a sewer utility, [that’s a] fee you can control” by flushing the toilet less or taking shorter showers.

Meanwhile in the present, DeLuca instructed Kolodziej to come back with a budget under a 7% increase — an option that would put the Township on the road to best practices but that would be more palatable as it amounted to a \$5/week increase for the average household. “Given what the school district is doing [referring to a \$140M capital project that will need to be bonded], we need to be aware. What we do here may wind up impacting them there,” agreed Kolodziej. “I understand but I also don’t want to be fiscally irresponsible,” said Dafis. “I want to be on the path to recovery so we’re not having this conversation next year.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/business/town-aiming-to-minimize-road-closures-for-maplewood-avenue-paving-in-village/>  
November 8, 2018

**Town Aiming to Minimize Road Closures for Maplewood Avenue Paving in Village**

By Mary Mann

Maplewood Township is working to quell the fears of Maplewood Village merchants — and customers — after its contractor sent out a notice that had many thinking Maplewood Avenue would be closed all this coming week for milling and paving.

No so, reports the Township Engineer Paul Kittner, Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** and Township Committee member Dean Dafis.

Kittner corrected the record by issuing a notice to merchants (see below) that all milling of the roadway would take place overnight Sunday, November 11, through Monday morning, November 12, in order to minimize impact on businesses. Kittner also reported that Maplewood Avenue paving was scheduled for Wednesday, November 14, beginning at 9 a.m. — weather permitting. Kittner said that paving needed to take place during the day due to temperature requirements.

Township Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** told Village Green that typically the paving should be able to be completed in one day: “It typically takes one day and again pending inclement weather and if the equipment doesn’t break down.” However, Dafis cautioned that the paving could run to a second day. Nonetheless, two days of road closures sounds a lot better than an entire week. Kittner also stressed in his notice that all sidewalks and pathways would be open, as well as parking lots.

Throughout it all, Maplewood police officers will be on hand to aid in directing traffic. Officials encouraged local residents to continue to patronize Maplewood Village businesses as they are all open and ready to serve customers.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Essex News Daily (NJ)  
September 24, 2018

**TC discusses importance of clear taxpaying guidelines**

Author: Yael Katzwer

At its Sept. 4 meeting, Maplewood Township Committee further discussed the town's reasons for no longer accepting partial property tax payments, a change in policy that came after South Orange voted in June to allow its tax collector, Aderonke Zaccheus, also to serve as Maplewood's tax collector. Payments may now only be made for each quarter in lump payments by Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov. 1.

"People were making payments in between the quarters and what our new tax collector said that her professional opinion was, is that we should not be taking those payments because payments are due on those four quarterly dates and you cannot make partial payments toward those quarterly dates," DeLuca said at the meeting. "Whether or not we accept partial payments, we can, there's no prohibition," he added, explaining that Zaccheus does this to avoid confusion.

According to DeLuca and Maplewood Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, the confusion came when people would pay, say, 50 percent of their taxes, then, when late on the other 50 percent, be charged interest in penalties on the full amount owed.

"I think the crux of the problem is, if the full amount is not paid on the due date, Nov. 1, or within whatever the grace period is, which is a 10-day grace period, I believe, statutorily, the person's going to be charged the full interest and penalty on the full amount, regardless of the partial payment they've made or not. So, if they owe \$3,000 and they pay \$2,000, and they owe \$1,000, on the due date they're going to pay interest in penalties on the \$3,000," township attorney Roger Desiderio said.

"And they come and argue that 'I've already paid \$2,000, so therefore, whatever you're charging me, should only be on the \$1,000' and we say, 'no, we have to charge you on the \$3,000. It gets to be an issue,' DeLuca said. "The state doesn't allow that partial payment to be in lieu of the full payment that was due on Nov. 1."

Deputy Mayor Frank McGehee questioned: "So a resident comes in and we reject their payment?" "We're not taking that, not unless that's the full amount," **Alves-Viveiros** said. McGehee asked if the township had been telling partial payers when accepting the partial payment that, interest-wise, they were still on the hook for the entirety of their property taxes, and Desiderio responded that the due date is listed on the tax bill with a notice that, if you are not paid by then, you will be charged interest on the amount.

"I don't think we're letting them know," McGehee said, suggesting that, if the town does go back to accepting partial payments, it should make that clear at the time of payment. "It's an extra document, but I think we need to over-communicate it until people understand this truth."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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But DeLuca pointed out that, in addition to the confusion accepting partial payments can cause, the practice also forces the department to do more bookkeeping and increases the cost of labor in the department.

Committeeman Dean Dafis expressed concern that partial payment may be the only viable method of payment for some residents. “I understand the state law, I understand the tax assessor’s position as well, but am I wrong in thinking that the folks who are making partial payments, even within the quarter, are some of our seniors who are waiting on that check to come in and do it when they can?” Dafis asked. **Alves-Viveiros** assured Dafis that the tax collector’s office will be proceeding on a case-by-case basis. “If there’s a situation where we could do the partial payment, we’ll do that,” **Alves-Viveiros** said. “She’s doing that now in South Orange, she’s not doing anything different than what she’s doing there.” But Desiderio argued against accepting partial payments at all. “If you start making exceptions to the rule, the exception can swallow the rule and someone can say, ‘you did it for me last time or you did it for my neighbor,’” Desiderio said.

DeLuca agreed, saying that he believes case-by-case acceptances of partial payments led to the more widespread practice in Maplewood. “We had a policy and then the policy was ignored and people started to pay, they were allowed to pay, and then more and more people started to pay,” DeLuca said. “The tax collector made a professional judgment now; if we don’t agree with that, we have the right as the governing body to overturn that.”

DeLuca added that he wants to know how many property owners were making partial payments so that he can properly gauge its impact. **Alves-Viveiros** told the News-Record via email that she did not have that figure. “This is not like anybody’s in jeopardy; people are just prepaying their taxes. And they can just put the money in the bank and then pay in November,” DeLuca said. “They’re using this as a bank.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Essex News Daily (NJ)  
August 25, 2018

**Maplewood no longer accepting partial property tax payments**

Author: Amanda Valentovic

Maplewood is no longer accepting partial property tax payments, a change in policy that comes after South Orange voted in June to allow its tax collector, Aderonke Zaccheus, also serve as Maplewood's tax collector. Payments may now only be paid for each quarter in lump payments by Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov. 1. "We have recently hired a new tax collector," **Sonia Alves-Viveiros**, Maplewood's business administrator, told the News-Record in an Aug. 16 email. "Given her professional advice regarding best practices for tax collection, partial payments should no longer be accepted, but rather in full."

Zaccheus, who now serves as the tax collector in both Maplewood and South Orange, will be doing so at least through 2019, according to South Orange Village President Sheena Collum at the June 11 South Orange Board of Trustees meeting. "The township of Maplewood has a temporary vacancy that they are intending to fill by a new CFO who is receiving their certification," Collum said at the meeting. "For the interim, they are asking for a shared services agreement which we are calling a contract for services."

Collum also said at the meeting that Maplewood may or may not hire its own tax collector in the future. Regardless, at the moment the township is not accepting partial payments, although it did so for many years. "I'm not sure why Maplewood would or would not accept partial payments," Morris Davis, a professor at the Rutgers University School of Business and the academic director of the Center for Real Estate, said in an email to the News-Record on Aug. 16. "Partial payments seems like financing to me."

Kevin Riordan, the executive director of the Rutgers Center for Real Estate, agreed that partial payments "finance a portion of the owner's tax liability." "The mortgage-servicing system for residential and commercial mortgages is predicated on a quarterly pay to the municipalities," Riordan said in an email to the News-Record on Aug. 16. "I think a simple reason may be it is just easier to account for four pays per year versus 12."

The payment schedule could potentially create problems for residents who have a limited income and are not able to pay taxes all at one time. "That has definitely been a problem in New Jersey," Riordan said about property taxes. "Given the increases in property taxes, they take up a bigger portion of lower incomes. As that happens, more homes are at risk of being lost by homeowners for delinquent taxes." Zaccheus did not return multiple requests for comment. Maplewood Mayor Vic DeLuca directed questions to **Alves-Viveiros**, who said residents who need to make partial payments could possibly make arrangements to do so with Zaccheus. "It's a case-by-case basis," she said in a phone interview with the News-Record on Aug. 20. "If necessary, they can make those arrangements with the tax collector."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Essex News Daily (NJ)  
May 5, 2018

**Maplewood chooses new BA**

Author: Amanda Valentovic

The township announced last week that current Assistant Business Administrator **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** will be taking over as the township's next business administrator. Appointed May 1, **Alves-Viveiros** will officially begin as business administrator June 1. She has been working in Maplewood for the last two years, and will be taking over for Joseph Manning, who will retire at the end of May. Manning has been Maplewood's business administrator since 2005. "It's been pretty seamless, I'm here already so a lot of what I've been doing I'm familiar with," **Alves-Viveiros** said in an April 30 phone interview with the News-Record. "It'll be easy to step into."

This was one of the reasons Mayor Vic DeLuca said **Alves-Viveiros** stood out from the other five candidates interviewed for the position. "She's familiar with the system, and the transition will be easier," DeLuca said in an interview with the News-Record on April 30. "She showed that she could take on some changes and we liked how she presented her ideas for the future."

One aspect of the job **Alves-Viveiros** wants to focus on is capital planning; she said an important part of building this year's budget was prioritizing road and infrastructure improvements. "One of the things I wanted to highlight is capital planning for the township," **Alves-Viveiros** said. "I think we need more work there. We certainly have high taxes, so we wanted to make sure our spending was prioritized. Roads were something we needed for this year."

Before arriving in Maplewood, **Alves-Viveiros** served as deputy city clerk in Summit, and then as assistant municipal clerk and human resources assistant in Bernards Township. While there are similarities between Maplewood and her previous posts, **Alves-Viveiros** said there are also big differences between those municipalities. "The culture and needs are different," she said. "Roads and parking and things like that are generally the same. But demographically they're all very different."

Maplewood is a much more diverse town than both Summit and Bernards, according to **Alves-Viveiros**. "They're very different," she said. "I've liked my experience in each, but it teaches you where you want to be. Maplewood is exactly the type of town I want to be around. People are open minded and educated and know how they want to raise their kids, which is definitely something I relate to."

DeLuca said the town also chose **Alves-Viveiros** to take over as business administrator for the ideas that she has brought to Maplewood. "**Sonia** was the person we wanted to work with," he said. "She talked about servicing the people of the town and brought a new vision to it." Going forward, **Alves-Viveiros** wants to bring her vision for Maplewood to life. "I certainly want to be here for the long haul and accomplish what I set out to do," she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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TAPinto Edison (NJ)  
October 21, 2016

**New assistant township administrator in Maplewood**

Author: TAPinto SOMA staff

**Sonia Alves-Viveiros** was appointed Assistant Township Administrator on Sept. 26, according to the fall edition of the Maplewood Leaflet. **Alves-Viveiros** has six years of prior experience working in the City of Summit and in Bernards Township, both in administration and in the Clerk's office, according to the Maplewood Leaflet.

A 2010 graduate of Seton Hall University with a Masters degree in Public Administration, **Alves-Viveiros** says, "working in local government has always been a passion and interest of mine." **Alves-Viveiros** continued, "I find working in Administration to be a key role in any municipality. You are responsible to make things work regardless of the challenges that may come and that's what I intend to do."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://villagegreennj.com/towns/meet-sonia-Alves-Viveiros-maplewoods-new-assistant-township-administrator/>  
October 11, 2016

**Meet Sonia Alves-Viveiros, Maplewood’s New Assistant Township Administrator**

**Sonia Alves-Viveiros**

A new Assistant Township Administrator has arrived in Maplewood. **Sonia Alves-Viveiros** has been appointed to the position as of September 26th. She comes with experience from two municipalities, the City of Summit and Bernards Township. Throughout her 6-year career she has worked in both Administration and the Clerk’s office. She also graduated in 2010 from Seton Hall University with a Master’s in Public Administration.

Her interest in the local public sector started during her studies as an undergraduate at Seton Hall University as a Political Science major. After graduation from the prestigious MPA program at Seton Hall, soon thereafter, an internship was being offered through Millburn Township to work with the Administrator’s office where she gained an abundance of knowledge about all of the components that go into managing a municipality. Later on she went to work in Bernards Township and looked up to the municipality as a great leader in the public sector.

She is eager about coming to Maplewood Township with the knowledge and education she has gained throughout the last six years. Delivering and maintaining great customer service will be key in her new journey. “Working in local government has always been a passion and interest of mine,” says **Alves-Viveiros**. “I find working in Administration to be a key role in any municipality. You are responsible to make things work regardless of the challenges that may come and that’s what I intend to do.” She looks forward to providing outstanding service to both the Township and its residents.

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Research Compiled by:      Amanda Dillabough  
   Colin Baenziger & Associates