

Press Release

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Mayor Nolan Higgins and Councilmember Ron Griffiths announced that the Borough of Freehold will include a Participatory Budgeting project in this year's town budget. Participatory Budgeting is a democratic process through which Freehold Borough residents will decide how to spend part of the town's capital budget

This will not increase the budget or taxes. It will simply substitute the public's decisions on how to spend a portion of this budget on capital projects that will be fully vetted by Borough professionals.

All projects must meet basic requirements. A capital project must be on public property, they must have a low maintenance cost, a life of more than five years and be within the budgetary requirements.

When the Mayor and Council develop the budget, it will include a recommendation for \$200,000 to be allocated through Participatory Budgeting. "Participatory budgeting will give the people of Freehold Borough a direct say in how the Mayor and Council allocate resources," said Higgins.

"Our residents will have an opportunity to decide how to invest the budget in our town."

Residents ages fourteen and older are invited to come together at the upcoming neighborhood assemblies to discuss local needs and brainstorm ways to address them.

Volunteers will develop these ideas into concrete proposals, professionals will vet the cost, and then a public vote will be held to determine which projects will be funded. For example, if community members identify recreation spaces as a priority, they may develop a proposal for installing benches and water fountains. Residents will then vote on this and other proposals, and if approved, the Borough will pay for the project.

"Freehold Borough will join other cities in using Participatory Budgeting," said Councilmember Griffiths, who introduced the concept to the Mayor

and Council last year. “Though each city implements the program differently, the basic premise is common across the 1,500 other cities: community members brainstorm spending ideas, a group of volunteers develop proposals based on these ideas, residents vote on proposals, and the government implements the winning projects.”

For more information on Participatory Budgeting, visit freeholdboroughnj.gov/participatorybudgeting