

**BRIDGEPORT BOROUGH TO HIRE LAW FIRM TO
COLLECT DELINQUENT TRASH AND SEWER
ACCOUNTS**

In an effort to maximize the collection of its unpaid trash and sewer fees, the Borough of Bridgeport has hired the law firm of Portnoff Law Associates, Ltd. to collect its delinquent accounts. Representing over 150 municipalities across Pennsylvania, Portnoff utilizes state law that allows for the costs of collection to be imposed upon the delinquent property owner, creating immediate incentive to make payment and reducing the burden of administrative time and collection costs on the Borough.

For many years, Bridgeport Borough has experienced significant problems with delinquent trash and sewer accounts, to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars. Delinquent collections have historically been handled through in-house measures. However, the overall magnitude of the number of accounts and amount of monies owed has risen to the point where Borough Council and administration have determined that hiring a firm that specializes in collections makes sense at this time.

Each delinquent property owner will receive a notice setting forth the balance due. Attached to the notice will be a schedule of legal fees that Portnoff Law Associates will potentially assess against the property, if the property owner fails to respond to the notice. Recipients of the notice will be afforded a 30-day grace period within which to make payment arrangements. Property owners with large balances will be permitted to enter into payment arrangements of up to six months, and a hardship program allowing longer payment terms will be available to owner occupants experiencing financial difficulties.

After the grace period ends, Portnoff Law Associates will proceed with legal action on the unresolved accounts. Delinquent property owners who have failed to make payment arrangements or request hardship accommodations will be assessed the legal fees and costs associated with the collection of their accounts.

Bridgeport Borough would like residents to understand that this move is not a result of the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 shutdown. The borough has struggled with getting account holders to remit past due trash and sewer balances for quite some time. Bridgeport officials do not

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ACCOUNTS (CONT'D)**

think it is fair to the taxpayers of Bridgeport that dutifully pay their bills to have to experience rate increases that could be lower if all residents and businesses paid their representative balance; therefore this step is being taken in an effort to combat the rampant delinquency.

Bridgeport Borough urges property owners who have not yet paid their delinquent sewer fees to contact Portnoff Law Associates promptly upon receipt of the notice to avoid additional charges.

2020 BRIDGEPORT 5K CANCELED

Bridgeport Borough regrets to announce that the 2020 Bridgeport 5K has been canceled. The 2020 5K was originally scheduled to take place on Sunday, October 4. Given the nature of an event like this, borough officials felt there simply was no way that they could implement effective safeguards for attendees, volunteers, and participants that would mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19. The borough is sorry to have been forced to make this decision, but hopeful that we can reboot this great community event in 2021.

**FACE MASKS STILL AVAILABLE AT
BOROUGH OFFICES**

While Montgomery County appears to be reporting fewer new COVID cases, social distancing practices and other health protocols will remain in place for the foreseeable future. To that end, Bridgeport Borough wishes to remind residents that handmade COVID masks are still available and may be obtained at the Bridgeport Borough Offices, located at the corner of 4th and Mill Streets.

Masks can be picked up from 8am-4pm, Monday through Friday. If nobody is at the front desk, then please try to dial directly to either 610-272-1811, or 610-275-1222. There is a limit of two masks per household, and those requesting masks will be asked to provide proof of residency, such as photo ID or a utility bill. Thank you for your attention in this matter and thank you to the residents of Bridgeport who have come together to craft these masks. Stay safe and healthy out there.



**BOROUGH OF
BRIDGEPORT**

NEWSLETTER, FALL 2020

BOROUGH COUNCIL

PRESIDENT: Kyle Shenk, Ward 3

VICE-PRESIDENT: Tony Heyl, Ward 3

Howard "Randy" Bennett, Ward 1

James Fee, Ward 1

Diane Gundrum, Ward 2

Meghan Nolan, Ward 2

Cory Scott, At-Large

MAYOR: Mark Barbee

Keith S. Truman, Borough Manager

Todd J. Bereda, Chief of Police

Salvatore F. Bello, Jr., Borough Solicitor

Edward Woyden, Borough Engineer

Council meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 7:30pm, at Borough Hall, 63 West 4th Street. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

ADMINISTRATION: 610-272-1811

POLICE DEPARTMENT: 610-272-5660

BRIDGEPORT EXPERIENCING DELAYS IN TRASH COLLECTION

In recent months, you may have experienced some sort of delay in your weekly trash collection. Perhaps your recycling was collected, but not your trash. Or vice versa. Or, perhaps everything was collected except for the bulk item you put out curb side. In some extreme cases, your trash may have been missed for two weeks straight, which, during these hot temperatures, creates both sanitary and cosmetic concerns. You may have also read newspaper articles about larger municipalities like Philadelphia and Upper Darby going through the same issues. The fact that Bridgeport is not alone does not make it any better or excuse the problem. However, it does demonstrate that across the entire region, trash haulers are dealing with unprecedented collection problems, and residents are the ones unfortunately left holding the bag.

Bridgeport's contracted residential waste hauler, J.P. Mascaro & Sons, has been candid in telling municipal clients that they are struggling with their routine collection routes, often having trucks out well into the evening or being forced to return the following day to complete collection. Mascaro has stated that COVID-19 has tremendously impacted their operations; employees that are exposed to the virus must quarantine for extended periods of time and some employees never returned to work out of concern for their health. This has created a shortage of employees on their end, which has resulted at times in Mascaro lacking the workforce to effectively complete their collection routes.

All of this being said, Bridgeport residents are still well within their rights to expect that trash and recycling are collected routinely and promptly. Residents, by way of the borough, pay for a contracted service, and that service needs to be performed. Bridgeport Borough urges residents to contact borough offices at 610-272-1811 ex. 223 whenever they are experiencing problems with their trash collection, or see anything amiss with trash collection in town, such as trash and recycling being collected in the same truck. Complaining on social media will not get your trash collected. And while residents are free to contact Mascaro directly (800-432-1616), borough officials would prefer that you contact the borough so that we may log your complaint and work with Mascaro to address the problem. Thank you for your patience during these frustrating times, and do not hesitate to call the borough offices.

REMINDER: BULK PICKUP RULES

All residents may place one (1) bulk item curbside per month for collection on the last Tuesday of the month.

These items can include:

1. Furniture
2. Carpets (Carpets and padding must be cut into 3-foot widths, rolled, tied or taped. Only 10 rolls of carpet/ padding per pick up.)
3. Appliances (Appliances that do not use Freon)
4. Tree limbs or trunks larger than 3" in diameter (Cannot be longer than 36")
5. Windows, mirrors, glass panels in doors, etc. (Must be taped in a crisscross pattern to prevent breakage.)
6. Mattresses and box springs: Please note that a mattress + box spring is considered one (1) item, so both can be put out together.

All mattresses and box springs must be wrapped in plastic sheeting or bagged prior to putting them out for curbside collection. This is an attempt to protect collection employees from contact with bed bugs. Please understand that box springs and mattresses that are not wrapped/bagged and fully sealed will not be collected.)

Refrigerators, air conditioners, and humidifiers contain Freon, which is considered hazardous; you must call Mascaro to schedule a pickup 1-800-432-1616. An additional charge may apply.

"White" items such as washers and dryers require a call to J.P. Mascaro (610-272-2765) to schedule a pickup.

Please Note: Bulk pick up is not an opportunity to dispose of multiple items accumulated over a lifetime when you are moving. If you wish to dispose of more than one item, please call J.P. Mascaro at 610-272-2765 and they will arrange a special pick up for you. Multiple bulk items placed at the curb is prohibited without an agreement with Mascaro. This restriction will be strictly enforced.

BRIDGEPORT TO PURCHASE NEW STREET SWEEPER

At the September 8 meeting of Bridgeport Borough Council, Ordinance 2020-003 will be considered for adoption. This ordinance will authorize the incursion of a general obligation note, or loan, in the amount of \$266,000, for the purposes of purchasing a 2019 Ravo street sweeper.

Bridgeport retired their previous sweeper, a 1996 Ford, last year, by sending it to auction. The 1996 Ford had outlived its usefulness and would suffer some sort of breakdown nearly every time it was turned on. However, the borough is mandated by the Pennsylvania DEP to operate a street sweeper; and therefore, the purchase of a new sweeper was appropriated as part of the 2020 budget.

The borough delayed making the purchase of the sweeper until later in 2020, as a result of the economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 shutdown. In delaying the decision, the borough is now able to take advantage of incredibly low interest rates, having been quoted an estimated 0.842% rate on this borrowing.

Not only will this new street sweeper allow Bridgeport Borough to provide residents with cleaner and more sanitary streets, but routine sweeping also allows the borough to remove road grit and other debris, which clog up storm inlets and cause damage to the machinery at the wastewater treatment plant.

NEW SIGNAGE AT MEMORIAL PARK

In the coming weeks, Bridgeport Memorial Park will be receiving new signage! Chariot Graphics of Bridgeport will be creating two gorgeous new signs to replace the aging signs located at the main parking lot of the park, as well as the sign located along Grove Street at the foot of the park.

These signs are being funded by a gracious donation made by the Sons and Sisters of Bridgeport. Please join us in thanking the Sons and Sisters of Bridgeport for their generosity and keep an eye out for the newest additions to Memorial Park!

Thank you for reading the newsletter. If you have any questions, please call the borough offices at 610-272-1811.

We wish you all a safe and happy fall!