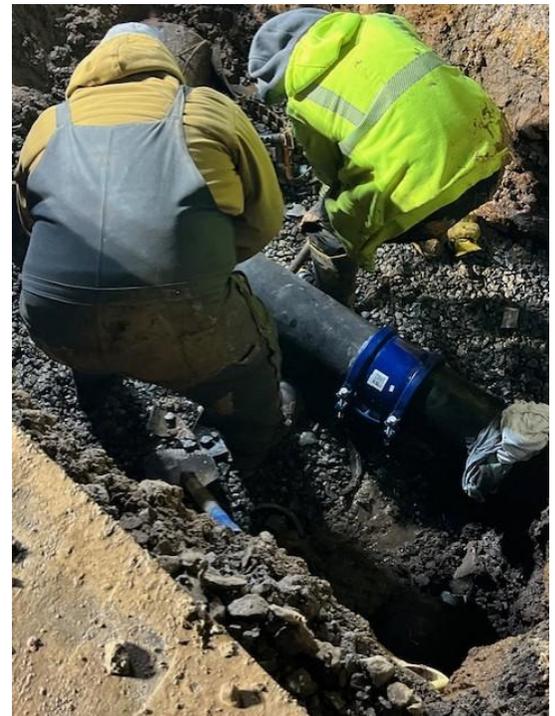


# MANAGER'S MONTHLY MEMO JANUARY 2026



## JANUARY 25 SNOWSTORM

- The Township averaged sixteen (16) inches of snow during this long, drawn-out storm, with areas in higher elevations seeing greater totals.
- DPW worked for over twenty-four (24) hours to keep our roads passable and clean, as well as our municipal properties. In conjunction with our snowplow contractor who relieved staff during the evening, the Township had eighteen (18) plow trucks on the road, five (5) of which were single-axle dump trucks. After resting, crews returned to clean intersections and sidewalks while some crew members remained plowing and salting overnight.
- OEM Coordinator Joseph Lipari briefed Township staff during a pre-storm meeting and had all departments well-coordinated and well informed during the event.
- The Cedar Grove Fire Department remained on standby and staffed all three (3) fire companies during the duration of the storm and Montclair Ambulance Unit and Cedar Grove Ambulance and Rescue Squad staffed their quarters as well. The Cedar Grove Police Department's regular squad assignments were also fully staffed during the duration of the event.
- Prior to the storm, the Cedar Grove Water Department was dispatched to a watermain break on Sweetwood Drive, which was repaired by 9:00 pm, well before any snow started to fall.



### DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Manager's Monthly Memo is to provide a highlight or recap of some of the major projects and happenings taking place in Cedar Grove. By no means is it an exhaustive list and all of the information contained herein is subject to change depending on a multitude of unpredictable factors including but not limited to funding and weather. If you seek further information about any of these items or anything else taking place in Cedar Grove, please email me at [zichelli@cedargrovenj.org](mailto:zichelli@cedargrovenj.org) or call (973) 239 – 1410 x 202 during normal business hours.

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY MEMO JANUARY 2026



## 2026 BUDGET PREPARATION

- At the February 2 Council Meeting, beginning at 5:00 PM, I will be presenting *draft* appropriations to the Township Council for the 2026 Municipal Budget. Typically, this goes along the following timeline:
  - **October:** I send initial budget memoranda to Department Heads for them to prepare draft appropriations for us to review in November/December. During this time, I also request they present any “Capital Requests.” A capital request is defined under N.J.A.C. 5:30-4.2 as a project with an expected **useful life of five years or more** and a **cumulative cost of \$25,000 or more** in any year.
  - **November/December:** I go through the draft budget requests with Department Heads, calculate salary and wage adjustments pursuant to any collective bargaining agreements or cost of living increases, and get a draft working budget document that comes together with all other department budgets to form a comprehensive draft. This includes our current fund, water utility, sewer utility, pool utility, and solid waste collection district.
  - **January:** During this month and until the budget is adopted by the Council, the Township operates on a **temporary budget**, which was typically 26.5% of the prior year’s adopted appropriations, however, this year the Governor increased it to 35%. Now, we calculate any statutory expenses, which include health insurance (36% increase this year), dental insurance, PERS/PFRS amounts (pension payments), general liability insurance, workers compensation insurance, social security, and disability, amongst others. Once these numbers are ascertained and distributed to the various budgets, a working draft is more complete for presentation to the Council. During this month, Rebecca Roth, our CFO, and auditors, Nisivoccia, **perform the annual debt statement**, a mandatory public document as required by N.J.S.A. 40A:2-40, filed by the CFO of every county and municipality, outlining, total outstanding debt—including bonds and notes—as of the last day of the preceding fiscal year. Additionally, the **annual financial statement** is prepared during January, which is a standardized, audited, or unaudited report prepared by the CFO or registered municipal accountant, covering trial balances, cash on hand, and debt, ensuring compliance with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-12.
  - **January/February:** presentation of draft budget to Council Members, finalizing appropriations within the cap restrictions, entering draft budget into FAST format as required by the State of New Jersey’s Division of Local Government Services.
  - **March/April/May:** Introduce budget and adopt budget for the remaining fiscal year.
- **Levy Cap and Appropriation Cap:** the municipal budget is subject to two (2) restrictive caps with respect to budgeting, one relating to finding, the other relating to spending:
  - **Appropriation Cap:** New Jersey's Appropriation Cap Laws limit how much municipal governments can increase spending, generally capping budget growth at 2.5% annually (or up to 3.5% with an ordinance), with specific exceptions for debt, pensions, and insurance.
  - **Levy Cap:** New Jersey’s permanent 2% property tax levy cap (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.44) restricts municipalities from raising their tax levy by more than 2% annually, with specific exceptions for health insurance, pension contributions, and debt

### DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Manager’s Monthly Memo is to provide a highlight or recap of some of the major projects and happenings taking place in Cedar Grove. By no means is it an exhaustive list and all of the information contained herein is subject to change depending on a multitude of unpredictable factors including but not limited to funding and weather. If you seek further information about any of these items or anything else taking place in Cedar Grove, please email me at [zichelli@cedargrovenj.org](mailto:zichelli@cedargrovenj.org) or call (973) 239 – 1410 x 202 during normal business hours.

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY MEMO JANUARY 2026



- **WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?** When working within the cap restrictions outlined above, the Township must not raise appropriations more than 2.5% (or 3.5% if an ordinance is adopted) than the prior year's appropriations. This means each draft appropriation starts from a base of zero and works its way up as opposed to beginning where the department left off last year. With respect to the levy cap, the Township cannot fund the budget by raising the tax levy by more than 2% of the prior year's amount. This means that the Township must use alternative funding methods, such as fund balance for debt service/capital expenses, grants, and other sources of revenue to aid in reducing the tax burden.
  - There is a calculated balance between striking the proper appropriations while carefully assessing the relation to the two restrictive caps.
- With respect to our three (3) utilities and solid waste district, **these all have their own budget that exists outside of the current fund**, thus, the utilities must be self-sustaining in that the revenue they generate must support the appropriations set forth in the budget. With bulk water rates increasing around 10%, that means revenue for the water utility will have to follow suit.
- Something the Township Council is adamant about is **aggressively paying down our debt**. The Township has debt structured in long-term financing (bonds) and short-term financing (notes). Notes must be paid off within ten (10) years of their issuance. This year, with an even more aggressive debt pay down than in last year's budget, it is anticipated that all notes prior to 2021 will be paid off in full five (5) years ahead of their mandatory paydown! This funding comes from additional revenue derived from PILOT payments.
- Once the budget is prepared for introduction and adoption, the CFO may perform a self-examination of the budget to certify it complies with all of the regulatory requirements and, once every three years, the State of New Jersey's Division of Local Government Services will perform its own review to ensure compliance with same.
- **Remember, only ~23% of your property taxes go to fund municipal operations, with ~53% going to the Board of Education, ~24% going to Essex County, and the rest and remaining funding the library.**

### CY 2026 Budget Deadline Extension and Enforcement

As authorized by N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5.1, the Local Finance Board approved at its December meeting the statutory budget deadline revisions set forth below. These changes modify the statutory dates for introduction, adoption, and Mayor/Council Faulkner Act and related budget transmissions. The revised dates (absent referendum dates) are shown below:

Introduction and Adoption of Budget – Non-Referendum	Statutory Date	Revised Date
Mayor/Council Faulkner Act (Executive) budget transmission to governing body	1/17	2/27*
Submission of the County and Municipal Annual Financial Statement (AFS)	1/26, 2/10	3/6
Municipal introduction and approval of budget	2/10	3/31*
County introduction and approval of budget	1/26	3/31*
Municipal adoption	3/20	4/30*
County adoption	2/28	4/30*

### DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Manager's Monthly Memo is to provide a highlight or recap of some of the major projects and happenings taking place in Cedar Grove. By no means is it an exhaustive list and all of the information contained herein is subject to change depending on a multitude of unpredictable factors including but not limited to funding and weather. If you seek further information about any of these items or anything else taking place in Cedar Grove, please email me at [zichelli@cedargrovenj.org](mailto:zichelli@cedargrovenj.org) or call (973) 239 – 1410 x 202 during normal business hours.

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY MEMO JANUARY 2026



## 2026 REVALUATION INFORMATION

- Residents will be receiving a letter from Professional Property Appraisers, Inc., the company that completed the Cedar Grove wide reassessment as ordered by the Essex County Board of Taxation. The purpose of the revaluation was to establish an equitable distribution of property taxes throughout our Township.
- The letter you will be receiving will have **your 2025 total assessed value and established tax rate** as well as your **2026 total assessed value and ESTIMATED tax rate** which will produce 2026 Estimated Annual Taxes, to take effect Q3 of 2026. The estimated tax rate was calculated using the 2025 tax levy and does not include any budgetary adjustments in 2026 that are yet to be determined.
- As a result of the revaluation's revenue neutrality, **the 2026 tax rate estimate has been reduced proportionate to the change in assessed values. This is because the Township is governed by the levy cap as described on page 2 of this memo.**
- Below, you will see historical trends in Cedar Grove's tax rates. **If you look at the time between 2009 and 2010, when the last revaluation occurred, you can see a drop in tax rates from 12.245 to 1.906.**



- If you have any questions regarding the revaluation, or would like to discuss your new property value, please call Professional Property Appraisers at 1-(800)-410-5815 between the hours of 9 am and 4 pm, Monday through Friday. Individuals may also attend an in-person meeting with PPA at Town Hall which will be scheduled and advertised at a later time.

Year	Tax Rate	Municipal Budget	Municipal Library	Municipal Open Space	Solid Waste	County	County Open Space	School
1983	3.900	0.540			0.060	1.070		2.230
1984	4.250	0.550			0.090	1.320		2.290
1985	4.540	0.570			0.090	1.640		2.240
1986	4.960	0.610			0.110	1.910		2.330
1987	5.660	0.690			0.110	2.270		2.590
1988	5.890	0.780			0.370	2.210		2.530
1989	6.040	0.870			0.370	2.120		2.680
1990	6.440	0.940			0.350	2.190		2.960
1991	6.030	0.520			0.300	2.090		3.120
1992	6.320	0.580			0.300	2.220		3.220
1993	6.740	0.680			0.280	2.340		3.440
1994	7.080	0.770			0.260	2.510		3.540
1995	7.530	1.020			0.260	2.550		3.700
1996	7.740	1.090			0.260	2.450		3.940
1997	8.050	1.120			0.310	2.590		4.030
1998	8.460	1.310			0.220	2.680		4.250
1999	8.720	1.360		0.02	0.220	2.720	0.040	4.360
2000	8.820	1.39		0.02	0.250	2.640	0.040	4.480
2001	8.960	1.43		0.02	0.270	2.580	0.040	4.620
2002	9.130	1.48		0.02	0.270	2.600	0.040	4.720
2003	9.990	1.63		0.02	0.270	2.680	0.050	5.340
2004	10.430	1.69		0.02	0.340	2.710	0.050	5.620
2005	10.840	1.74		0.02	0.340	2.700	0.060	5.980
2006	11.320	1.77		0.02	0.360	2.840	0.070	6.260

Year	Tax Rate	Municipal Budget	Municipal Library	Municipal Open Space	Solid Waste	County	County Open Space	School
2006	11.320	1.77		0.02	0.360	2.840	0.070	6.260
2007	11.250	1.86		0.02	0.390	2.660	0.070	6.250
2008	11.852	2.069		0.02	0.390	2.752	0.111	6.510
2009	12.245	2.116		0.02	0.400	2.827	0.112	6.770
2010	1.906	0.363			0.061	0.438	0.017	1.027
2011	1.957	0.338	0.036	0.002	0.063	0.450	0.016	1.052
2012	2.024	0.357	0.035	0.002	0.064	0.464	0.016	1.086
2013	2.105	0.381	0.034		0.067	0.476	0.015	1.132
2014	2.198	0.411	0.034		0.068	0.508	0.015	1.162
2015	2.244	0.422	0.034		0.070	0.511	0.015	1.192
2016	2.297	0.431	0.035		0.071	0.532	0.016	1.212
2017	2.370	0.450	0.034		0.072	0.522	0.016	1.276
2018	2.396	0.461	0.035		0.073	0.506	0.016	1.305
2019	2.438	0.472	0.035		0.073	0.492	0.016	1.350
2020	2.497	0.480	0.036		0.073	0.504	0.016	1.388
2021	2.533	0.490	0.036		0.073	0.508	0.017	1.409
2022	2.564	0.497	0.038		0.073	0.506	0.017	1.433
2023	2.610	0.509	0.039		0.080	0.496	0.018	1.468
2024	2.614	0.524	0.042		0.081	0.455	0.019	1.493
2025	2.687	0.539	0.044		0.084	0.453	0.02	1.547

### DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Manager's Monthly Memo is to provide a highlight or recap of some of the major projects and happenings taking place in Cedar Grove. By no means is it an exhaustive list and all of the information contained herein is subject to change depending on a multitude of unpredictable factors including but not limited to funding and weather. If you seek further information about any of these items or anything else taking place in Cedar Grove, please email me at [zichelli@cedargrovenj.org](mailto:zichelli@cedargrovenj.org) or call (973) 239 – 1410 x 202 during normal business hours.

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY MEMO JANUARY 2026



## 2026 POOL RATES

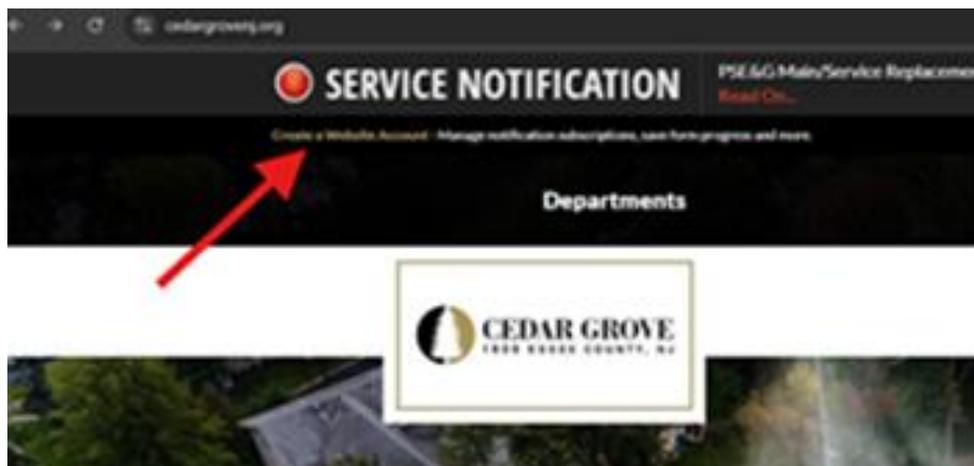
- At the December Council meeting, the Township established the pool rates for the 2026 season as follows:

GROUP	2026 RATE BEFORE 01/31/26	2026 RATE BETWEEN 01/31/26 AND 03/31/26	2026 RATE AFTER 03/31/26
<b>Resident Families</b>	\$630	\$645	\$670
<b>Resident Individual</b>	\$450	\$465	\$485
<b>Resident Couple or Parent/Child</b>	\$535	\$550	\$572
<b>Babysitter (Mon-Fri)</b>	\$165	\$170	\$180
<b>Resident Senior Citizen</b>	\$215	\$220	\$230
<b>Non-Resident Family</b>	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$1,750
<b>Non-Resident Individual</b>	\$800	\$875	\$910
<b>Non-Resident Senior Citizen</b>	\$575	\$600	\$625



## NEW WEBSITE AND RECREATION REGISTRATION SYSTEM!

- We are excited to announce that the Township will be transitioning to a new and improved online registration site in the coming months that has expanded registration capabilities and will allow for credit card processing for pool memberships starting in 2026!
- As part of this upgrade, we will be transitioning the email blasts previously sent out through Community Pass to a notification system hosted by the Township through our brand-new website! Through this new and improved website, you will be able to create an account and select the areas you would like to receive updates and notifications for. Please go to [www.cedargrovenj.org](http://www.cedargrovenj.org) and select “Create a Website Account” to proceed.



### DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Manager's Monthly Memo is to provide a highlight or recap of some of the major projects and happenings taking place in Cedar Grove. By no means is it an exhaustive list and all of the information contained herein is subject to change depending on a multitude of unpredictable factors including but not limited to funding and weather. If you seek further information about any of these items or anything else taking place in Cedar Grove, please email me at [zichelli@cedargrovenj.org](mailto:zichelli@cedargrovenj.org) or call (973) 239 – 1410 x 202 during normal business hours.

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY MEMO JANUARY 2026



## CEDAR GROVE HISTORY OF THE MONTH

- Here are some pictures of equipment our DPW had in the 1950s. Today, the Township still uses a backhoe, front end loader, and mini excavator to remove snow, perform water repairs, repair catch basins, and pave, in addition to performing other projects throughout the Township.
- The truck below is a late 1940s/early 1950s Chevrolet Advance Design truck that would have cost around \$8,000 (after outfitting) in the 1950s. Today, the Township uses single-axle dump trucks to perform much of what the Chevrolet Advance Design would do back in the 50s, with a new single axle costing over \$225,000!
- In 1958, as seen below, the Township's refuse collection contract was \$50,000—there were a lot less homes and roads to cover back then! In 2025, the Township spent \$779,700.00 just on the solid waste contract for refuse and recycling removal, this did not include the actual cost of disposal!

### ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The staff in this department performs many functions. One of the most important is the maintenance of the community's 30 miles of paved streets. In 1956, an extensive seal coating program was completed. This project will be placed on an annual basis. The many miles of storm drains require constant attention and sidewalk areas need daily care. Trees must be trimmed or removed, street signs installed, highways plowed and sanded, holes in streets patched. All



MODERN ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT IS USED BY ALFRED WEST AND JOSEPH DENICOLA.

these activities are carried on in this department with a crew of five men. Street lights in the community are maintained by the Public Service Electric and Gas Company. As new sub-divisions are added, the cost of the service charge mounts. The Police Department reported more than 400 defective street lights in 1956, all of which were replaced by Public Service maintenance men. State-aid funds are available to the community for highway maintenance. Special funds are also available for capital improvements such as the widening of Bowden Road, which was authorized by the Township Council in 1956.



ALFRED WEST, ASSISTANT TO TOWNSHIP ENGINEER, SUPERVISES STREET REPAIRS BY (L. to R.) ANGELO FREZZA, JOHN STACCOMORE, AND VINCENT PANDISE.

99



### REFUSE COLLECTION

The community has a three-year contract with a Lyndhurst scavenger firm at a basic cost of \$50,000, however, the contract price is increased as new homes are occupied. The average monthly cost is now about \$1,700. With scavenger costs climbing, it can be expected in 1958, when the present contract is terminated, that refuse collection costs will be substantially higher.



ANTHONY UCCI OPERATES PAYLOADER WHILE AMERY FREZZA IS AT CONTROLS OF BACKHOE.

### DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Manager's Monthly Memo is to provide a highlight or recap of some of the major projects and happenings taking place in Cedar Grove. By no means is it an exhaustive list and all of the information contained herein is subject to change depending on a multitude of unpredictable factors including but not limited to funding and weather. If you seek further information about any of these items or anything else taking place in Cedar Grove, please email me at [zichelli@cedargrovenj.org](mailto:zichelli@cedargrovenj.org) or call (973) 239 – 1410 x 202 during normal business hours.