

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 20, 2025
8:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Council President Ora Kornbluth, and Council members Buddy Deauna, Hernando Rivera, and Marc Pascual

ABSENT: Council members Thomas Lodato and Domingo Almonte

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Administrator Corey Gallo
Borough Attorney John Schettino
Borough Clerk Marie Quiñones-Wilson

Mayor Amatorio called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act Statement, "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates for the year are confirmed at the Annual Meeting. The Annual Notice is sent to the Record, Star Ledger, and Cablevision, placed on a Municipal Bulletin Board and is on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Deauna.

A moment of silence was held in remembrance of departed teacher and coach Mr. Rob Violante and borough volunteer Mr. John Gallagher.

Mayor Amatorio stated this week is DPW week and thanked the dedicated Department of Public Works team. Their tireless efforts keep the town clean, safe, and help the borough run smoothly every day by maintaining roads, parks, and responding to emergencies. He stated their work is essential in keeping the town great.

AGENDA CHANGES

Motion by Council President Kornbluth to add Hannibal's request to Reserve Edwin Grube Park on June 14, 2025 to Correspondence and Ordinance 25-2648 - An Ordinance by the Mayor and Council Amending the Borough of Bergenfield Code of Ordinances to Repeal Chapter 161 - Flood Damage Prevention; To Adopt a New Chapter 161 - To Adopt Flood Hazard Maps; To Designate a Floodplain Administrator; And Providing for Severability and an Effective Date to Introduction of Ordinance. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilperson Pascual to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2025 Regular Public Meeting, May 6, 2025 Work Session Meeting, and the May 6, 2025 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released). Council President Kornbluth seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS I

Mayor Amatorio opened the meeting and invited the public for comments on agenda items only, limited to five minutes per speaker.

No one came forward.

There being no one else who wishes to be heard, Mayor Amatorio closed Verbal Communications I.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation in Honor of National Public Works Week

Mayor Amatorio stated this is the moment everyone has been waiting for, the declaration of National Public Works week in Bergenfield. Mayor Amatorio read the following proclamation into the record:

Proclamation In Honor of

Bergenfield Department of Public Works National Public Works Week — May 18–24, 2025

WHEREAS, the health, safety, comfort, and quality of life of the residents of Bergenfield depend greatly upon the vital services provided by our dedicated Department of Public Works; and

WHEREAS, National Public Works Week is an opportunity to recognize the essential role that public works professionals play in maintaining our infrastructure, enhancing public safety, protecting the environment, and ensuring our community operates smoothly each and every day; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme — "People, Purpose, Presence" — reflects the driving principles behind the unwavering commitment of public works personnel:

- People, who are at the heart of everything public works does;
- Purpose, which gives meaning to their service and dedication; and
- Presence, the constant and quiet force that supports Bergenfield's daily life, even when few notice; and

WHEREAS, the men and women of the Bergenfield Department of Public Works work tirelessly—often behind the scenes and in all conditions—to maintain our roads, parks, sanitation systems, public buildings, and more, ensuring the reliable, safe, and efficient functioning of our community; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper for the Borough of Bergenfield to recognize the outstanding contributions of our Department of Public Works employees and express our sincere gratitude for their dedication, professionalism, and service;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that I, Mayor Arvin Amatorio, on behalf of the Borough Council and the residents of Bergenfield, do hereby recognize and honor the Bergenfield Department of Public Works during National Public Works Week, May 18–24, 2025.

Mayor Amatorio expressed his gratitude for their service to the community and congratulated them.

Motion by Council President Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Rivera for a one-minute recess at 8:14 pm. The meeting was re-opened at 8:15 pm.

CORRESPONDENCE

a.) Brophy/Resident

RE: Request to Reserve Memorial Park for Family Gathering/Saturday, June 7, 2025/11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

b.) Voigt/Jefferson Elementary

RE: Request to Reserve Memorial Park for 5th Grade Safety Picnic/Wednesday, June 11, 2025/9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

c.) Beucler Tree Experts LLC

RE: Request to Reserve Cooper’s Pond for Continuing Education/Friday, July 11, 2025/7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

d.) Hannibal/Resident

RE: Request to Reserve Grube Park for Celebration/Saturday, June 14, 2025/1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Motion by Councilperson Deauna to accept Correspondence. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinance

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinance published herewith was first read by title only on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

ORDINANCE 25-2647 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 17 ARTICLE II OF THE BOROUGH CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED “POLICE DEPARTMENT”

Public Comments on Ordinance 25-2647.

No one came forward.

Motion by Council President Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Rivera, to pass Ordinance 25-2647 on second and final reading and is hereby adopted and notice of same shall be published according to law.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Introduction of Ordinance

Motion by Councilperson Pascual that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at 8:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard as the date and time and the Council Chambers of the Bergenfield Borough Hall as the place for a hearing on said ordinance. Seconded by Councilperson Rivera.

Mayor Amatorio read the title of the Ordinance into the record:

ORDINANCE 25-2648 - AN ORDINANCE BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AMENDING THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REPEAL CHAPTER 161 – FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION; TO ADOPT A NEW CHAPTER 161 – FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT; TO ADOPT FLOOD HAZARD MAPS; TO DESIGNATE A FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>

Councilperson Almonte: *absent* Councilperson Pascual: *aye*

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 25-160. All matters listed below are considered by the Governing Body to be routine in nature. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If any discussion is desired by the Governing Body, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separately.

- a. **25-161**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **25-162**/To Approve Veteran's Tax Exemption – 95 Murray Hill Terrace
- c. **25-163**/To Authorize the Preparation and Mailing of Estimated Tax Bills in Accordance with P.L. 1994 C. 92
- d. **25-164**/To Approve Purchase – One (1) 2025 Ford Utility Interceptor Base Vehicle for the Police Department – Chas. S. Winner, Inc. (dba) Winner Ford of Cherry Hill
- e. **25-165**/To Approve Purchase – One (1) 2025 F-450 4X4 Super Duty Truck for the Department of Public Works (DPW) – Paramus Ford Inc. (dba) All American Ford of Paramus
- f. **25-166**/To Approve Purchase & Installation of Equipment to Upfit One (1) 2025 Ford Utility Interceptor Base Vehicle for the Police Department – Gold Type Business Machines (GTBM)
- g. **25-167**/To Approve Purchase – Stertil-Koni Mobile Column Lifts and Accessories for the Department of Public Works (DPW) – Hoffman Services, Inc.
- h. **25-168**/To Approve Authorization with Recovery Solutions and Title LLC
- i. **25-169**/To Approve Authorization for Bid – Lease of Real Property Tennis Courts
- j. **25-170**/To Authorize Preliminary Investigation of Block 243 Lot 20 located at 150 South Washington Avenue

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve the Consent Resolution. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote on the Consent Resolution was recorded as follows:

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Resolutions

25-171/To Hire Part-Time Cleaning Person – Lourdes Sanchez

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Pascual that Resolution #25-171 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

25-172/To Hire Part-Time Summer Laborers

Motion by Council President Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Deauna that Resolution #25-172 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Committee/Department Reports

Motion offered by Council President Kornbluth that the Committee/Department Reports be spread upon the minutes in full and filed. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS II

Mayor Amatorio opened the meeting to Verbal Communications II and invited the public to comment on any subject, limited to five minutes per speaker.

Mary Sullivan, resident, inquired who receives the fine for Airbnb rentals that are less than 30 days. Ms. Sullivan stated you can do a search and find several property rentals on Airbnb.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated the property owner receives the fine.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated code enforcement does check on a regular basis and consistently looks for any short-term rentals.

Edward Kochakian, resident, stated he's been a Bergenfield resident for 40 years and has lived on Fairview Avenue since 1989. It's been a troubled block for many years with highs and lows and a murder. Now, we're at the lows again that needs to come to an end. It's mayhem with many cars parked on the street. There can't be Section 8 people in the neighborhood. The landlord of 35-37 Fairview needs to be spoken to. He requested the council step in and do something. The garbage cans are left on the street for a week. He sees cars all hours of the night. Kids are sitting in their cars on a dead-end street. He has called the police department and it is all on record. He can't get his car down the street. The problems are escalating and it's going to snowball.

Councilperson Rivera inquired if the cars are parked on the street overnight.

Mr. Kochakian stated that cars are parked on the street overnight.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if he has observed any illegal activities on the street. Mayor Amatorio stated he doesn't want Mr. Kochakian to intervene or put himself in harm's way, but if he sees anything suspicious or any illegal activity, he should call the police desk. If it's reported, the police chief will notify patrol to put more police officers on watch.

Council President Kornbluth inquired if he called the police department about the parked cars on the street.

Marcia Arias-Johnson, resident, stated she lives right across the street from the buildings and has seen the commotion. She stated when the police cars come to address the commotion, she is blocked and can't get out of her home. The landlord needs to screen the people they rent to. There

was a car parked in front of her home for over a week last year and had an altercation with the owner of the car. She stated every week this month, the police have been there for something that's going on. There are many problematic tenants at 35-37 Fairview Avenue. Garbage from 55 Fairview Avenue is left on the street for over a week and if it's windy, it all comes onto her property. She requested it be addressed.

Simon Walcott, resident, stated he lives on the street also and witnessed a lady cursing and using foul language while walking her dog. He looked at the lady and had to use the same language. There was a fire and the house burned down a few months ago. The house smells, has overgrown grass, and the pool is unattended. The garbage trucks can't get down the street to pick up the garbage because of the cars parked on the street.

Mr. Gallo stated he will have a meeting with the team including DPW, police department, code enforcement, and the building department, tomorrow to address this matter. The house that burned down can be an insurance related matter. The owner has a responsibility to maintain the property. It will be addressed also.

Mayor Amatorio stated they will address their concerns with an inter-department meeting. The borough can't be involved with who they rent the property to. They can only ensure that the residents follow the rules of the town. Section 8 is allowed.

John Smith, resident, stated 85% of people that use the online system to get approval to park their car on the street overnight are lazy. There are illegal people living in the apartments. If the parking regulations are enforced, there won't be people coming down the dead-end streets. Mr. Smith inquired if there is a way to find out how many times the same person calls in requesting overnight parking. The same residents shouldn't be allowed to call in every single day. There is an ordinance for no overnight parking, but residents still do it. The borough needs to start enforcing the ordinance and tow the vehicles.

There being no one else who wishes to be heard, Mayor Amatorio closed Verbal Communications II.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Deauna thanked all for coming. The council will try to address the concerns.

Council President Kornbluth thanked all for coming. She stated they will look into everyone's concerns and will try to resolve the issues, maybe not 100%, but to make it bearable and livable. She thanked the DPW. She gets the most compliments about the DPW from residents who really appreciate the day out work they do. She expressed her condolences to the family of Coach V and John Gallagher.

Councilperson Rivera expressed his condolences to the two coaches and thanked them for their service. The parking situation is a problem and he is frustrated. He stated it needs to be addressed and apologized to the residents for having bad experiences with the neighbors.

Councilperson Pascual stated this will be at the top of the list to address. He knows the street and apologized for not noticing all the problems. He stated they are all invited to ensure the council has done their job in addressing the concerns. The council is open to suggestions. The Memorial Day ceremony will be Monday, May 26, 2025 at Cooper's Pond with the parade to follow afterwards. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Mayor Amatorio invited the public to join the Memorial Day parade. The fire department ceremony will be at 10:00 am. The Veterans committee ceremony will be at 11:00 am. He stated the parade will be immediately after the ceremony. He reiterated their appreciation of the DPW workers for their work and commitment. He expressed his condolences to the two members of the community

that passed away this week. He reminded everyone there is one week left for Zumba, Latin dance, and line dancing. He thanked council members for supporting the Mayor's Wellness program and honoring the Mayor's Wellness committee. He thanked the police department for a successful Bike with a Cop event. They raffled 17 bicycles, gave out helmets, and taught the children how to properly ride bicycles. He stated they hear the concerns raised by the residents, thanked them for expressing their sentiments, and welcome any suggestions. He welcomed the new pastor of the South Presbyterian Church.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION **25-173**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

A. Personnel Matters

1. Department of Public Works Personnel
2. Police Department Personnel

Minutes will be taken of the meeting and released to the public at the time that the matter is resolved. After Closed Executive Session, the Mayor and Council will reconvene in the Executive Chambers to adjourn this public meeting.

On a motion by Council President Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Rivera, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 8:50 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Council President Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Pascual, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk