

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD  
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
August 19, 2025  
8:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Council President Ora Kornbluth, and Council members Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, and Marc Pascual

**ABSENT:** Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Council members Domingo Almonte and Hernando Rivera

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

Council President Kornbluth called the meeting to order at 8:03 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 Lodato.

**AGENDA CHANGES**

Motion by Councilperson Pascual to add to Correspondence a request from Ruff Ryders Softball League to reserve Hickory and Memorial Field for Softball League Games from August 2025 through November 2025 8:30 from a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Resolution #25-251 to hire Crossing Guard Christine C. Moore, Resolution #25-252 to approve proposal for Construction Inspection Services for the Borough Hall Parking Lot Improvements from T&M Associates, and Resolution #25-253 to approve contract amendment for the Borough Hall Sanitary Sewer Remedial Work by T&M Associates. Seconded by Councilperson Deauna. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Councilperson Pascual to approve minutes of the July 15, 2025 Regular Public Meeting and the July 15, 2025 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released). Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS I**

Council President Kornbluth 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, Council President Kornbluth closed Verbal Communications I.

**PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- a.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers **RE:** Personnel Action Letter dated July 30, 2025
- b.) Martinez/Resident **RE:** Reserve Hickory Field for Family Reunion/August 30, 2025/9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- c.) Martinez/Bergenfield Dominoes Club – BDC **RE:** Request to Reserve Hickory Field for 2025 BDC Family Day Annual Event/September 1, 2025, Rain Date: September 7, 2025/8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- d.) Ronen/Yeshivat He'Atid **RE:** Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion/School Picnic/September 9, 2025/9:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
- e.) De La Rosa/Sunday Fun League **RE:** Request to Reserve Hickory Field and Memorial Field for Softball League Games/August 20, 2025 to November 23, 2025/9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- f.) Gamss/Congregation Beth Abraham **RE:** Request to Reserve John Pall Park for Family Fun Day/August 31, 2025
- g.) Malley/Ruff Ryders Softball League **RE:** Request to Reserve Hickory and Memorial Field for Softball League Games/August 2025 through November 2025/8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

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

**ORDINANCES**

A. Introduction of Ordinance

Motion by Councilperson Pascual that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, September 2, 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 Deauna.

Council President Kornbluth read the title of the ordinance into the record:

**ORDINANCE 25-2651- AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 239 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "RENTAL PROPERTY"**

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

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

A. CONSENT AGENDA

**CONSENT RESOLUTION 25-233.** 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. **25-234**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **25-235**/To Approve the Insertion of a Special Item of Revenue in the 2025 Budget – 2025 Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Grant – Chapter 159
- c. **25-236**/To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 250-270 E. Main Street
- d. **25-237**/To Approve Tax Refund – 201 Porter Avenue

- e. **25-238**/To Authorize Bid – Fire Hose and Related Equipment for the Bergenfield Fire Department
- f. **25-239**/To Authorize Bid – Purchase of Washer and Dryer Cabinets for the Cleaning of Turnout Gear for Bergenfield Fire Department
- g. **25-240**/To Approve Contract – Wide Area Network (WAN) Services and Internal Network Support - AMHI Technology Holdings LLC
- h. **25-241**/To Approve Proposal – Sanitary and Storm Sewer Cleaning, Video Inspection and Repairs for 2025 Road Program – National Water Main Cleaning Company
- i. **25-242**/To Approve Contract Period Adjustment for Owner’s Representation Services – Accenture
- j. **25-243**/To Appoint Alternate Prosecutor – Linda Schwager, Esq.
- k. **25-244**/To Award Bid and Approve Contract – Police Athletic Field Rain Garden – B. Puntasecca Contractors Inc.
- l. **25-245**/To Award Bid and Approve Contract – Borough Hall Parking Lot Improvements – Chiach1 Builders
- m. **25-246**/To Authorize the Construction Official to Proceed with all Legal Remedies and Record any Liens of Incurred Costs

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

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

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

**B. Resolutions**

**25-247**/To Hire Assistant to Director of Recreation – Chris Brown

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Lodato that Resolution #25-247 be approved.

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

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

**25-248**/To Hire Full-Time Keyboard Clerk 1 – Anthony Agudelo

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Lodato that Resolution #25-248 be approved.

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

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

**25-249**/To Hire Temporary Part-Time Clerical Employee – Marcus Pascual

Motion by Councilperson Lodato, seconded by Councilperson Deauna that Resolution #25-249 be approved.

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

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

**25-250/To Hire Part-time Laborer – Matthew Rajner**

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna that Resolution #25-250 be approved.

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

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

**25-251/To Hire Crossing Guard – Christine C. Moore**

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna that Resolution #25-251 be approved.

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

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

**25-252/To Approve Proposal – Construction Inspection Services for the Borough Hall Parking Lot Improvements – T&M Associates**

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Pascual that Resolution #25-252 be approved.

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

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

**25-253/To Approve Proposal – Contract Amendment for the Borough Hall Sanitary Sewer Remedial Work – T&M Associates**

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna that Resolution #25-253 be approved.

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

## NEW BUSINESS

None.

## Committee/Department Reports

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

## VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS II

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

Ellen Browski, resident, stated her neighbor across the street passed away and the two homes next to each other (307 and 313 Phelps Avenue) have been purchased by a company that will supposedly build one large home. Ms. Browski explained the street always floods and she has to call police to move her car. There are cars that had to be towed and is concerned in an emergency an ambulance or police car would get stuck. The former resident at 310 Phelps Avenue lost both of their cars during hurricane Ida. She had a sinkhole in her backyard that Tenafly fixed because her backyard is in Tenafly. Ms. Browski stated an engineer and another gentleman stopped by to look around her property because Cresskill is now flooding. There will be even more flooding on the block if there is a large home built there as there is no drainage and not enough storm drains in Bergenfield.

Ben Cabrera, resident and Chairman of the Zoning Board of Adjustment, stated he wanted to bring to the council's attention that there are some safety concerns with some of the applications being presented before the Zoning Board of Adjustment, primarily related to parking issues in town. Some concerns include narrow two-way streets in which emergency vehicles wouldn't be able to get through if cars parked on the street or make turns, specifically E. Johnson Avenue and N. Taylor Street. He requested the governing body give their full attention and provide assistance to this matter and that whatever is determined should be enforced by the police department.

Shirlene Campbell, resident, stated that she resides next to the Mayhill apartments. There has been a lot of bulk items, a motorcycle, and garbage that was leaned against their fence and damaging it. She noticed on July 11, 2025 that the garbage was removed, the alley was paved, and all the garbage bins were moved to that area. Ms. Campbell stated they have not been able to sit in their backyard since the apartment complex hasn't been maintaining the garbage as promised by the superintendent. She stated that when they paved, a portion of her fence was removed. She presented the council pictures. This is an ongoing issue that no one should have to live with. She inquired how she can petition for an ordinance.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated he is familiar with the situation. He stated if they did something incorrectly, Mike and Joe will be out there to look at it to verify what was done. The borough is obligated to pick up their garbage. However, they will have to deal with a private hauler if they can't make it right. Mr. Gallo stated he'll continue to address the issue but everyone will have to work together to figure out a solution.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated garbage cans are required to have lids. He stated Ms. Campbell can submit dated pictures and file a complaint with the police department. The owners of the apartment may be fined when they go to court.

Mr. Gallo stated there were broken garbage cans with no lids and they were forced to change that. The borough received the complaint and action was taken. A special citizen's report can also be filed with violations. Mr. Gallo stated they have been aggressively addressing the issue. The owners of the apartment building replaced their pails and remedied the situation. However, they will need to be held accountable if they are not going to maintain the garbage.

Fred Sahlberg, resident, stated that as a former police officer, he never told a citizen to place a complaint for safety reasons. He stated that the proper authorities should be called. He further stated that during the Veterans Committee meeting, the Chaplain stated the word Chaplain is misspelled on the borough website. Mr. Sahlberg stated the Chaplain brought this to someone's attention a year ago and nothing was done. He also stated there is federal law regarding railroad quiet zones in which Bergenfield might be eligible. There might be some expenses to the town. He counted 132-138 cars and knows there's a limit to the number of cars they can pull and should be checked out if they are violating the law.

Mr. Gallo stated Mr. Sahlberg should have called him and told him when he first found out about it instead of waiting until now. It could have been changed immediately.

Ron Filera, resident, stated he has a 16x32 in-ground pool and has had a concrete backyard for the past 50 years. He had taken out a home equity loan to repair the hole in the pool and put pavers in, new fence, and backyard porch. He had gotten permits for the fence, back porch, and pavers to cover the backyard. He was going to replace pre-existing concrete with pavers. He called the contractor and had started the work. Some of the walls of the pool were damaged and he had looked into replacing them. It was explained to him he would have to go to the Zoning Board of Adjustment if he was going to take out the walls of the pool for a variance, as it would be a new built and wouldn't be pre-existing. He started the variance process and set up the escrow account. The engineer requested a grading plan in which two surveyors came and there is nothing to grade as the yard is flat. His application was taken off the agenda as the paperwork was not done prior to the meeting. Mr. Filera explained had asked Mr. Ravenda if he can go back to his original plan of just repairing the walls of the pool. He was told no because he still needed a variance for lot coverage. He went before the Zoning Board of Adjustment and informed the board members of what was going on and they recommended he speak with the zoning officer. The next day, the zoning officer sent him pictures of the pool stating he had removed the walls, and still needed a variance since it is no longer pre-existing, which is false. Mr. Filera stated he sent a video the other day to the board attorney and the zoning officer showing that the walls of the pool were still intact and just needed to be repaired. Mr. Filera had then proceeded to speak with Mr. Ravenda and he stated he didn't remember approving the lot coverage and that he had the right to change his mind. He doesn't understand how the zoning officer can go back and forth with the different changes. He didn't lie to the zoning board.

Mr. Gallo stated he will speak with all the department representatives tomorrow regarding this and will put together a definitive plan to move it forward.

John Smith, resident, stated the Mayor and Council, the Planning Board, and the master Planner are not listening to the residents and the police. The chairman of the Zoning Board came up and spoke about the safety problem the board is facing. Mr. Smith stated he requested alternate side street parking for over ten years. The Department of Public Works complained about not getting through narrow streets. There are going to be problems with the development that's being built next to the car wash. The site committee told the developers for the Washington Ave and W. Main Street project they are doing the bare minimum for safety. The Planning Board doesn't even have the plans, but approved it. They don't read the ordinances or review the plans. The VFW Post will have its annual pig roast this coming Saturday.

Barry Doll, resident, stated New Jersey State law does not allow window tint on windshields or front windows. He would like the borough to make an effort to stop this and the police department to

start a campaign for those who have severe tinted windows. He inquired if the council meetings can be televised/broadcasted as not everyone is able to come to the meetings in-person. Mr. Doll stated the court approved his appeal against the Zoning Board of Adjustment for the 145 W. Main Street variance application. It took a lot of time and money that could have been saved if there was an internal appeal process. Mr. Doll stated residents are complaining about rulings. These are issues that should be resolved here by the Council.

Mary Sullivan, resident, inquired when they will be able to see Zoning Board of Adjustment plans up on the screen.

Mr. Gallo stated the boards will be done by September.

Kathy Sahlberg, resident, inquired who is responsible for fixing and paying the sanitary line.

There being no one else who wishes to be heard, Council President Kornbluth closed Verbal Communications II.

Mr. Gallo stated the contractors are responsible. The engineers are checking the pitch to ensure it's being done properly. The borough has been working with various organizations and towns to go over flooding issues and how it can be addressed on a regional level to get funding from the county and state. Mr. Gallo stated they have been working with DEP to get permits to be able to do work at Metzler's Brook. It has taken close to four years to get permits from the DEP and the back and forth is unfortunate. Mr. Gallo stated they have also been seeking grants. Mr. Gallo stated they needed to get permission from residents to be able to go on their properties. There were five residents that refused and didn't want to participate. It's one of the Mayor and Council's initiatives to correct flooding issues, but it's not an easy task. Mr. Gallo stated the DPW has discussed alternate street parking, not the police department. The parking issues need to be addressed and they have discussed having a big picture plan in a referendum. It will create a lot of changes that will affect community wide dynamics and culture. It's not a decision the governing body can make. The voices of the community need to be heard by referendum, possibly in 2026 by putting it to a vote. Mr. Gallo stated he will look into the CSX rail crossings.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated all the laws for the railroad were enacted for their benefit 100%. They are very difficult to get them to do anything they don't want to do, even cleaning up next to their tracks. Mr. Schettino stated Mr. Doll is not proposing a good idea. The only appeal that can be taken to the governing body is if there is an ordinance that allows for approvals of a use variance. The borough cannot create an appeal process that is inconsistent with state statute.

Councilperson Lodato stated the Borough had this process, but was appealed during Mr. Bohan's administration.

Mr. Gallo stated when there's something that doesn't conform, the zoning officer is obligated to deny it and send it to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. He stated the broadcasting of council meetings is a working progress. The ambulances are at that side of town due to the close proximity to the synagogue and where the volunteers live.

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato stated Mr. Smith's criticism of the Planning Board is harsh. There was a redevelopment plan that was denied by the Planning Board at last night's meeting. The Board felt there wasn't enough information before them. He thanked all for coming and wished everyone a good night.

Councilperson Deauna thanked all for coming and wished everyone a good night.

Councilperson Pascual reminded everyone the VFW is hosting the pig roast Saturday. All are welcome. He thanked all for coming and wished everyone a good night.

Council President Kornbluth wished all a good night and thanked everyone for coming and to enjoy the last two weeks of summer.

#### CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION **25-254**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

A. Attorney-Client Privilege

1. Paoli v. Siemaszkiewicz
2. New Municipal Building Contract

B. Labor Agreement

1. Local 108 R.W.D.S.U., UFCW Agreement

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 Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Lodato, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9:16 p.m.

On a motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Deauna, and all present voting in favor, the meeting returned to open session at 9:45 p.m.

**Resolution #25-255**/To Approve Settlement Agreement – Paoli v. Siemaszkiewicz

On a motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #25-255 the settlement be approved.

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

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Deauna, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

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Marie Quiñones-Wilson  
Borough Clerk