

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
SEPTEMBER 2, 2025**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council President Ora Kornbluth, Council members Thomas A. Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Domingo Almonte, Hernando Rivera and Marc Pascual

**ABSENT:** Council member Hernando Rivera

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

Mayor Amatorio called the meeting to order at 8:02 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, Twin Boro News, and Cablevision, placed on two Municipal Bulletin Boards and is on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Almonte.

**AGENDA CHANGES**

Council President Kornbluth stated two resolutions need to be added: Resolution #25-262 To Approve Crossing Guards Pay Increase and #25-263 To Approve Hiring Crossing Guards for the 2025-2026 School Year to the agenda. Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna to approve addition of the two resolutions. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

**PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER**

Robert Klein, Borough Engineer from Remington Vernick, stated they updated the tax maps for the borough and have been submitted to the state for review and approval. There were comments from the State that have been addressed, and it's back with them. Hopefully, they can concur with the comments so they can finalize the tax map. Mr. Klein reported there are two contracts open. The first is New Jersey Avenue that is DOT funded. The contractor told him that he is starting next week. The second contract is for the rest of the roads: Bradley Avenue, Willet Street and Martin Street, Beaulah Place, Laurel Court, Tulip Street, the Museum area, back of the museum, maintenance area and also the Memorial Field parking lot. That contractor started today on Bradley Avenue. He expects to be done with everything at the end of October, with the exception of milling and paving.

Mayor Amatorio asked if there is any reason for the delay.

Mr. Klein answered that they went out to bid in June, awarded in July, and were supposed to done by October. They didn't start yet probably because they had other jobs. He finds it hard they will be done by end October. They should be done by the end of the year.

Mayor Amatorio asked if they will be done by October, weather wise.

Council President Kornbluth inquired about the schedule for milling and paving. Council President Kornbluth inquired if that includes milling and paving.

Mr. Klein stated, outside of New Jersey Avenue, the rest of the roads should be done towards the end of October, not the milling and paving. Mr. Klein stated no, they are not doing the milling and paving themselves. They have to find someone to do it for them.

Council President Kornbluth inquired if he believes that all those roads should be done by Thanksgiving.

Mr. Klein stated they should be done, but can't promise anything on their behalf.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if they have any accountability.

Mr. Klein stated that they do. They have a contract time period, if they go over they risk liquidated damages. Both times periods end at the end of October.

Mayor Amatorio stated that was the reason the council opened the bid earlier this year so they do not hit this problem.

Borough administrator Gallo stated that they have issued penalties to 2024 to 2025 projects. The roads that were supposed to be done last November, penalties were issued. They haven't heard anything from them. Mr. Gallo added that the borough deducted their penalty cost.

Mayor Amatorio stated that they want to have the roads done rather than the penalties. They should be reminded if they don't finish the project, there are going to be repercussions.

Mr. Klein affirmed that they have been reminded them several times since they are awarded the project.

Mr. Gallo stated they are documenting it and could potentially take them out, if they don't complete the project.

Councilperson Pascual inquired when Marcotte Lane was repaved. There was a concern about the asphalt in the drain on Marcotte Lane.

Mr. Klein stated Marcotte Lane was fixed about 3 years ago. There was asphalt found in one of the basins, it should've been cleaned out and checked. It seemed to be the one catch basin. The drain was cleaned by the DPW.

Mr. Gallo inquired if it was it cleaned out by the contractor.

Councilperson Deauna asked if the eight projects will be done this year. If not, will face the penalty.

Mr. Klein said they have until October to finish. He'll be surprised if they do finish.

## ORDINANCES

### A. Adoption of Ordinance

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinances published herewith were first read by title on Tuesday, August 19, 2025 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

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

Public Comments on Ordinance 25-2651.

Barry Doll, resident, inquired if a person is evicted, is the landlord responsible to pay them. He inquired if an illegal alien would be covered. He stated they should not be entitled to any compensation.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated the law still applies to an undocumented individual and is still entitled to due process. Borough Attorney Schettino stated regardless of being illegal or undocumented, they have the right to be treated humanely. Borough Attorney Schettino added they are entitled to whatever the law provides.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if the landlord refuses to do it, can they oppose it in court.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated tenants would have to go to court for the relief that they are seeking.

Councilperson Lodato stated in paragraph #239-26, there appears to be a typo at the end of the sentence, it should say "ANY" resident that needs to be added. In addition, the same paragraph refers to penalties issued for the landlord to second and third, subsequent offenses. He inquired if there are no penalties for the first violation.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated this is an existing ordinance and this is amendment to the chapter. He believed the penalty was already described, but needs to confirm it before the council adopts the ordinance.

Fred Sahlberg, resident, stated illegal aliens are undocumented and agrees illegal aliens shouldn't be getting federal, state or municipal town benefits, unless it is for a child. He stated maybe the landlord shouldn't rent illegally.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated that this ordinance does not give them funds from state, federal or town. It is the responsibility of the landlord that rented illegally.

Mr. Gallo stated that is what the ordinance is calling for. If the landlord is renting illegally, they are going to be punished because they are renting illegally regardless of who it is to.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated she has a two-family home, and inquired if will she receive a penalty if she rents it to an illegal unknowingly.

Mr. Gallo stated you have a legal two family, you are fine.

Council President Kornbluth stated the ordinance is referring to the rental being illegal.

Mr. Gallo clarified the ordinance is referring to landlords that have a two-family home and are renting to three or four families.

Motion by Council President Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Almonte to carry Ordinance 25-2651 to the next meeting. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

## NEW BUSINESS

None.

## ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough Administrator Gallo stated they have already discussed the roads programs. The building is moving along. Mr. Gallo stated the monuments are starting to get finished. It's a slow process. The summer hours have ended and they are back to 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The union will have the opportunity to discuss going back to summer hours next year from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The 9/11 Ceremony will be held at Coopers Pond at 7:00 p.m.

## MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato

stated the Lucille Tendler Annual Award goes to a local resident for their contributions to the Borough. This year's recipient is going to be the late TJ Lee, a long-time resident and police officer in town. The award is on Sunday at the library at 2:00 p.m. There were three applications presented at the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting. The Planning Board didn't have any applications, although the development plan for 150 S. Washington Avenue was voted down 4 to 1.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated the Planning Board only makes recommendations. It goes back to the governing body to decide whether they agree with the Planning Board's comments, wish to amend it or leave it as it is. The Planning Board had to decide whether the plan was consistent with the master plan or not. If the governing body disagrees, it has to be put on record that they don't agree and explain why they think it is not consistent.

Councilperson Deauna

stated the senior citizens are waiting for the inauguration of the building. They are busy with their schedule, planning parties that are Borough funded.

Councilperson Almonte:

No report.

Council President Kornbluth

stated there is nothing to report on the ambulance and Fire Department in August. The residents are concerned with deer in town. They are concerned about ticks and their kids.

Mayor Amatorio stated he received emails as well from organizations trying to control the population.

Council President Kornbluth inquired if there is anything that they can do about the deer.

Mr. Gallo stated he could reach out to the county.

Councilperson Pascual

stated there is a Stigma Free meeting tomorrow. They are hosting a movie at the library, Silver Linings Playbook. The Veterans Committee pig roast at the post went well. The Rent Leveling Board meeting is tomorrow and provide a report at the next meeting.

Mayor Amatorio

stated the opening for the young adult room at the library is September 10, 2025. He stated part of the grant received was from the state.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

a.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers

**RE:** Personnel Action Letter dated August 28, 2025

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Council President Kornbluth to accept Correspondence Item A. All present voting in favor. None opposed.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Sullivan, resident, asked if there will be parking restriction signs to prevent commuters from parking in the wrong end. She stated she never receives a report on the schools. Ms. Sullivan stated there was a notice on the website stating they were going to have a meeting on August 11, 2025 and inquired what that was about. She inquired whether the ordinance was lifted and overnight street parking was permitted without registering for the summer. If so, there wasn't anything on the website. She stated on South Demarest Avenue, three times a neighbor's car fell into the pot hole damaging the front axle. She stated every street around her is repaved and inquired why her street isn't being done.

John Smith, resident, stated Allison is doing a great job at the library, but there is no parking available with all the events going on at the same time. Mr. Smith suggested hiring an animal control person to take care of the deer situation.

Barry Doll, resident, stated the deer don't pose a danger. He inquired about the geese at Coopers' Pond. They are more of a pollution problem. Mr. Doll stated a friend that lives in Teaneck told him they are inviting residents with a finance background to work with them on the budget and provide ideas. People should be allowed to give their input. Mr. Doll stated the Shade Tree Committee is moving forward with planting this fall. They will plant 10 trees to see how they do. He stated they are going to plant the other trees in the spring.

Council President Kornbluth inquired who are they. Council President Kornbluth stated she is surprised because she didn't hear anything about it.

Mayor Amatorio stated he has an economics background.

Councilperson Lodato stated that the Borough had a similar committee years ago. The reason it was eliminated is because years ago, they came back with salary decreases across the board. It didn't work.

Mr. Gallo inquired what happened to planting 63 trees.

Kathy Sahlberg, resident, asked how do you look for apartments for residents that are being rented illegally.

Mayor Amatorio closed public comments.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the signs will be put back up in the parking lot, but it's still so premature. There's still time away from that. There are multiple road signs that still need to be done, citizens parking, the veterans sign, and no parking for buses. He is not aware that overnight parking was relaxed. They are not aware of it.

Council President Kornbluth stated someone in my block got a ticket parking overnight in the summer.

Mr. Gallo stated S. Demarest is one of the roads that will be done as he is aware of it. He stated they will speak with the police department to find creative ways to have parking in the library area. Mr. Gallo stated that the hard part of the 2025 budget was that the medical insurance for employees went up a \$1 million this year and is projected to go up more next year. He stated pension and liability insurance went up 10%. The average borough contract increase was under 2.75%, with 7 or 8% inflation before. A collective amount of \$1.9 million, plus garbage flipping fees, has been challenging due to inflation. He further explained that the only way to overcome this is by generating more revenue.

Mayor Amatorio further explained that the borough has already capped activities and expenses. This is mostly due to expenses that cannot be avoided.

Mr. Gallo stated that as far as the schools, they are a separate entity. We have a liaison. The public can attend their open meetings. He stated that they can try to obtain a report from the board, but it would improper for the borough to comment on their budget or issues.

Mayor Amatorio advised that they will look into it and discuss at the next meeting.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

**CONSENT RESOLUTION 25-256.** 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. **25-257**/To Pay Bills
- b. **25-258**/To Approve Tax Refund – Block 268 Lot 1 Marcotte Lane
- c. **25-259**/To Approve the Cancellation of the 2025 Mother Lot Assessment – 22 Homestead Place
- d. **25-260**/To Approve Final Pay Certificate No. 3– 2024 Road Improvement Program Phase 2 – D&L Paving Contractors Inc.

Motion by Council President Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Pascual to approve Consent Resolution #25-256.

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>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. RESOLUTIONS

**25-261**/To Authorize Rebidding of the Municipal Fountain Project

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Pascual, that Resolution #25-261 be approved.

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

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

**25-262/To Approve Crossing Guards Pay Increase**

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Council President Kornbluth, that Resolution #25-262 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>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

**25-263/To Approve Hiring Crossing Guards for the 2025-2026 School Year**

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Pascual, that Resolution #25-263 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>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilperson Pascual stated that the last summer concert will be held on Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at Coopers Pond.

**CLOSED SESSION**

**RESOLUTION 25-264/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:**

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege
  - 1. Fire Department Shared Services 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 Council President Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Lodato and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9: 26 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 Lodato and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

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Marie Quiñones-Wilson  
Borough Clerk