

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 7, 2025**

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

ABSENT: Council President Kornbluth

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

Mayor Amatorio 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, 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

None.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Robert Klein, Borough Engineer from Remington Vernick, stated that there are two contracts for road work are moving along. New Jersey Avenue is about half way done, and all the concrete work is done for the second contract. They are currently working in the Memorial Field parking lot. Mr. Klein stated that they appear to be on schedule. He will inform the Council when the work is concluded.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if the work will be finished by the end of the month.

Borough Engineer Klein stated that they appear to be on pace, contractors are working along and should be done on time. Mr. Klein stated that he doesn't have the paving schedule.

Mayor Amatorio asked if any work is done.

Councilperson Rivera stated that the Borough did their due diligence to have the roads done on time, before Thanksgiving.

Mr. Klein mentioned that the roads appear to be on time based on where they are at now.

Councilperson Deauna stated the town looks beautiful and congratulated the engineer on the work done.

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinance published herewith was first read by title only on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

ORDINANCE 25-2652 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 186 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "LAND DEVELOPMENT"

Public Comments on Ordinance 25-2652.

John Smith, resident, stated Ordinance 25-2652 is missing one building type, duplexes.

Borough Administrator stated that duplex houses fall under the apartments.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated that a duplex is one building, but each side has separate ownership. There are two separate deeds, one for each side.

Mr. Smith inquired why the tax assessor is given \$10.00 when he doesn't list the properties correctly.

Motion by Councilperson Lodato, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, to pass Ordinance 25-2652 on second and final reading and is hereby adopted and notice of same shall be published according to law as amended.

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Tabled Resolution

25-271/To Approve Veteran Tax Exemption – 14 Phelps Avenue (Tabled 9/16/25)

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Almonte, that Resolution #25-271 be removed from the table.

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

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

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Almonte, that Resolution #25-271 be approved.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

A. Traffic Study for 52 E. Johnson Avenue

Mayor Amatorio read the traffic study into the record. He commented that everyone was given a copy. Mayor Amatorio read that the street sizes report a safety concern and that it had been mentioned in previous reports. Mayor Amatorio also stated that Mr. Smith had mentioned at the last meeting that both the Mosque members and residents park in the streets.

Councilperson Lodato suggested that parking should be on one side of the street only, not to confuse the residents or visitors.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the only issue with keeping the parking to one side is for the Department of Public Works sweeper to pass through to clean the street. The DPW may need alternate side parking for their operations.

Councilperson Rivera stated that the arrangement can be similar to that of Foster Village, where alternate side parking is required during specific hours, but everyone is permitted to park after 10:00 pm.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated they can put something together for the next meeting.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that at the next meeting, they will present the best practices inventory for review. A certain score is required for state funding. Mr. Gallo also stated that in order to submit for a two-year certification, the borough will be presenting the policies and procedures manual for review. He further stated that next week, the renovation of the side building parking lot will begin. The job will take about a month. He mentioned that cars will be relocated to Staples. The punch list for the Borough Building is ongoing. He announced that the Halloween Trunk or Treat and Haunted Coopers Pond will be on Friday October 31, 2025. Volunteers are needed.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato

stated there is nothing to report. The dedication for the building was well planned and coordinated.

Councilperson Deauna

congratulated the Administrator for a job well done. He attended the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee meeting on September 4th. They have activities planned for October 2nd, October 5th, November 20th, and are ready to attend the volunteer Christmas Party on December 7th. They have their Christmas Party on December 14th. Mayor and Council are invited. There will be a Municipal Alliance meeting via zoom on October 10, 2025.

Councilperson Almonte

stated the Shade Tree Committee finalized the planting of 10 trees on Lilac Street, Bradley Avenue, West Central Avenue, and Summit Street. Next year, the committee will start in the spring time and 60 trees will be planted.

Councilperson Rivera

stated the new building is a collective effort of all and will be available for generations to come in the next 100 years.

Councilperson Pascual

stated the Veterans Advisory Committee discussed the plans for Veterans Day. The VFW is also hosting a Christmas party. He stated the Rent Leveling Board meeting will be held tomorrow. William "Bill" Fanaris resigned after many years of service. The board is short members.

Mayor Amatorio

stated the development plan proposal for W. Main Street and Washington Avenue was awarded by New Jersey Planning Officials. He attended the Black Poster Project and Suicide Prevention events at the high school. He stated it was an important event that targeted the high school students. It was a big push by the police department. There were officers that spoke during the events along with the Chief of Police. The Mayor's Wellness program is ongoing with barre and chair yoga classes at the library.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Barry Doll, resident, stated that the inauguration for the building was a very nice ceremony. The plaque that was put up should include the taxpayers as the taxpayers pay 6% increases a year in property taxes to pay for the building. He stated the mail box is not accessible to people who have problem walking. It is difficult to drop off from their cars. Mr. Barry stated the Deputy Comptroller is receiving a 17% increase in salary for one job and a 20% increase for the other job, that is extreme. There is no mention of how much the Borough Clerk's increase is. She does a wonderful job, but the Council can't give up extreme salary increases and expect taxpayers to pay for it. Mr. Doll added he was disappointed about the Deputy Borough Clerk, one of the hardest workers in the department, not getting a salary increase and having a low salary compared to other people in similar roles. Mr. Doll requested live streaming Council meetings. The Council should be listening to Zoning Board and Planning Board meetings. He requested the borough come up with one central, religious symbol decoration for the holidays.

John Smith, resident, congratulated the Governing Body and Administration on the building's inauguration. He also spoke about the alternate side street parking ordinance and inquired who is going to enforce the ordinance. He commented that the borough may need to hire a meter maid to oversee parking.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated that some parents from the middle school, when dropping off their children, stop at the New Jersey Transit bus stop creating traffic. Ms. Sullivan asked if the police are able to assist with this matter. Ms. Sullivan stated Bergenfield ranked in the top 10% of the best cities in the United States, beating all surrounding towns.

Fred Salhberg, resident, stated when he has a parking issue, he calls the police department and the traffic officer takes care of it.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 25-277. 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. **25-278**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **25-279**/To Approve Agreement – Administrative Agent Services for the Affordable Housing Program – Community Grants, Planning and Housing, LLC
- c. **25-280**/To Authorize Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – 2026 Professional Services and Extraordinary Unspecifiable Services
- d. **25-281**/To Authorize Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – Municipal Court Judge
- e. **25-282**/To Authorize Award and Approve Lease of Real Property – Tennis Courts – Infinite Future Tennis
- f. **25-283**/To Approve New Jersey Tax Court Judgement – 250-270 E. Main Street
- g. **25-284**/To Authorize an Extended Grace Period of 4th Quarter Tax Payments for Federal Employees who are Residents of Borough of Bergenfield Affected by Federal Government Shutdown
- h. **25-285**/Authorizing Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreement

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Almonte, that the Consent Agenda be approved.

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

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

B. RESOLUTIONS

25-286/To Approve Salary Increase – Deputy CFO – Kent Christner

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Almonte, that Resolution #25-286 be approved.

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

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

25-287/To Approve Salary Increase – Qualified Purchasing Agent – Kent Christner

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #25-287 be approved.

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

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

25-288/To Approve Salary Increase – Borough Clerk – Marie Quiñones-Wilson

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, that Resolution #25-288 be approved

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

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

25-289/To Approve Amended Agreement – Deputy Borough Clerk – Hilda Tavitian

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #25-289 be approved.

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

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

25-290/To Hire School Crossing Guard – Dara J. Brown

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Almonte, that Resolution #25-290 be approved.

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

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

25-291/To Hire Part-Time Laborer – Cory Gordon

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Almonte, that Resolution #25-291 be approved.

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

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

The Mayor and Council thanked all for coming and wished everyone a good night.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION 25-292/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Personnel/Collective Bargaining
 - 1. Police Department Personnel Matters
 - 2. Department of Public Works Personnel Matters

B. Contract Negotiations
1. FMBA 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 Rivera, second by Councilperson Almonte, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9:00 p.m.

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, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk