

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 2025
8:00 P.M.**

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

ABSENT: All members present.

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, 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 Almonte.

AGENDA CHANGES

Council President Kornbluth requested that Resolution #25-301 to Rescind Resolution #25-288 and Reintroduce for Approval Salary Increase for Borough Clerk, Resolution #25-302 to Rescind Resolution #25-289 and Reintroduce for Approval an Amended Agreement for Deputy Borough Clerk, Resolution #25-303 to Approve Amended Agreement for Additional Work – C.R. Restoration be added to Resolutions, and Resolution #25-304 PBA Local 309 Agreement be added to Closed Session. Councilperson Pascual motioned to make the additions. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2025 Regular Public Meeting, the September 16, 2025 Closed Session Meeting Minutes (not to be released), October 7, 2025 Work Session Meeting, and the October 7, 2025 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released). 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.

Mr. Barry Doll, resident, stated he was instrumental in getting the tree planted by Columbia Bank at 97 Highgate Terrace. Mr. Doll stated Resolution #25-293 was from April 18, 2025 and wanted to know why it was done now. Mr. Doll inquired why the police department is purchasing two Maverick XL ADW trucks, what are they replacing, and what the mileage is on the old cars. Mr. Doll expressed his concern about resolution #25-300 and inquired why the Deputy CFO is authorizing the purchase of the Polaris Ranger. He inquired why they are spending the money and if there are so many chases around town. Mr. Doll stated for Resolution #25-301 to approve salary increase of Marie Quinones, he stated for the record that the entire council voted for the resolution, even though a council member should have recused himself because of a conflict of interest since his

wife works for Mrs. Quinones. Mr. Doll stated the same is true for Resolution #25-302 regarding the Deputy Clerk as it is a conflict of interest.

Yehuda Borg, resident, stated the police department bought a Polaris Ranger in May, and inquired why they need a second one.

Borough Administrator Corey Gallo stated the police department is only buying one Polaris. There was a change in the model. The Mavericks will be utilized strictly for off duty- traffic duties. They are replacing the old fleet. Mr. Gallo stated all three items are being purchased with assert forfeiture funds, that can only be utilized for equipment for the police department. Mr. Gallo stated with regards to resolutions related to staffing, there was an oversight with the vote and how it happened. The notion that there is an under comment or wave going on is nonsense and he was personally insulted by that. Mr. Gallo stated the Borough runs clean and do everything by the book. Mr. Gallo added that the positive audit, high score in best practices, a requirement that is done every year with the State, exceeds the requirements of good governance. Mr. Gallo expressed that alluding that there was wrong doing was an oversight. The concern was presented to the Borough Attorney, who provided guidance, and it was immediately placed on the agenda. The purpose for the Arbor Day resolution is in order to maintain the Borough's Tree City status, which is in good standing.

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

PRESENTATIONS

CORRESPONDENCE

- a.) Fanaras/Rent Leveling Board Member **RE:** Letter of Resignation – Effective September 29, 2025

Motion by Councilperson Pascual to accept Correspondence. Councilperson Rivera 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 Thursday, November 6, 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. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion.

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

25-2653 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ADOPTING A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BLOCK 243 LOT 20 - 150 SOUTH WASHINGTON AVE.

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

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

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 25-293. 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. **25-294**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **25-295**/To Honor 2025 Arbor Day – April 18, 2025
- c. **25-296**/To Approve Person to Person Liquor License Transfer – Bergenfield Liquors LLC to DI Liquor Holdings LLC for License No. 0203-44-005-008
- d. **25-297**/To Approve Purchase – Two (2) 2025 Ford Maverick XL AWD Trucks for the Police Department- All American Ford of Paramus
- e. ~~**25-298**/To Terminate all Participation Under the State Health Benefits Program “SHBP” in the Borough of Bergenfield~~
- f. **25-299**/To Approve Proposal for Environmental Services – Twin Boro Park Phase III Improvements – T&M Associates
- f. **25-300**/To Authorize Purchase – Polaris Ranger Crew XP 1000 Northstar ULT – Ledgewood Power Sports, Inc.

Motion by Council President Kornbluth 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Resolutions

25-298/To Terminate all Participation Under the State Health Benefits Program “SHBP” in the Borough of Bergenfield

Motion by Council President Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Lodato the Resolution #25-298 be approved.

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

25-301/To Rescind Resolution #25-288 and Reintroduce for Approval Salary Increase for Borough Clerk – Marie Quiñones-Wilson

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Council President Kornbluth that Resolution #25-301 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>recuse</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

25-302/To Rescind Resolution #25-289 and Reintroduce for Approval an Amended Agreement for Deputy Borough Clerk – Hilda Tavitian

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Lodato that Resolution #25-302 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>recuse</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

25-303/To Approve Amended Agreement for Additional Work – C.R. Restoration

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna that Resolution #25-303 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Traffic Study for 52 E. Johnson Avenue

Mayor Amatorio stated the council was sent a draft ordinance. If anyone has questions, it should be discussed now. If not, the ordinance will be introduced at the next meeting. The ordinance pertains to North Taylor Street and East Johnson Avenue, the vicinity around the mosque. Mayor Amatorio stated these recommendations were made by the Police Department Traffic Bureau.

Council President Kornbluth inquired if the entire street will be alternate side street parking and why those three days only.

Councilperson Rivera inquired if Saturdays and Sundays should be regulated, as parking is worse on those days.

Mayor Amatorio stated this will be a test case for the rest of the town. The area is problematic and if it could be resolved, this can help resolve some of the issues Borough wide.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated he will ask the Police Department to look at the alternate side Monday, Wednesday, Friday on one side and Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday on the other side, and possibly look at part of First Street near the area.

Council President Kornbluth inquired if the street will be one way or two way. She commented that alternate side street parking shouldn't be Borough wide.

Mr. Gallo stated they need to look into this, whether it's long term or not. He explained that this needs to change, whether it's to expand the regulation to allow the expansion of driveways, usage of more space, or allow for alternate side street parking. He stated that having alternate side street parking impacts day-to-day operations. The residents have to decide and needs to be agreed upon by referendum.

Councilperson Pascual stated the times need to be adjusted as there can be emergencies at any time of the day and night.

Mayor Amatorio stated that the time shouldn't be a factor in alternate street parking.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Best Practices Inventory

Borough Administrator Gallo stated best practices is a requirement the state mandates in order for municipalities to receive their municipal aid. It involves a series of questions that covers an array of compliance and governance from auditing, IT and cybersecurity related matters, operation matters to finance questions. He explained based on the scoring, it is determined whether the municipality receives state aid. The borough is always 100% qualified and in good governance.

Mayor Amatorio congratulated the team as it shows our governance is good to the letter.

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.

Madeline Park, resident, stated she is seeking a solution for ongoing parking problems in front of her building and block. There is only a one parking space in front of their building and another parking spot in front of the conjoined building next to hers. Ms. Park explained that while there are only two spots in front of the buildings, they are enclosed on both sides by active 24-hour driveway, causing congestion and a dangerous situation. She referenced a situation with a new restaurant located next door, that is constantly using the parking spaces. She informed them that they will work with them and leave one spot open, but cars are constantly blocking the driveway, routinely parking on their properties and blocking the tenants, ignoring town signage. She presented pictures for the governing body to review. Ms. Park stated this is a daily occurrence and there have been verbal assaults and physical threats. They have made over 100 calls in the recent months and sometimes the police are busy and do not respond to their calls. She suggested removing the two parking spots in the front to open up the sight of line for the drivers on the road and pedestrians, to help traffic slow down on the two-lane road.

Joel Dapper, resident, stated he is frustrated with the parking situation because his driveway is blocked and the police are not responding to many of his calls. He has been verbally and physically assaulted. He takes offense that no one receives summonses and he is not protected. He is demanding quite enjoyment as his last appeal. He suggested that the Borough create a parking enforcement authority. He comments is that the atrocities he has to endure have been out of control. People are always parking in front of his drive way and he cannot take it anymore. The restaurant has several code complaints including lighting on windows and four garbage cans on the sidewalk. He expressed that he hopes the governing body can resolve it.

Barry Doll, resident, stated this Council is personally legally responsible if anything happens to this man as he is telling you his concerns on record. Mr. Doll stated he was in the borough parking lot after the rain, and noticed there were puddles five feet from the drainage. The drainage system is not working as the water is collecting on sides of the lot. In the winter, that will be a real problem. He stated that when he was part of the handicap committee, he worked on having the drive-up mailbox put in front of Borough Hall. He understands that now there no spot for the mailbox. He inquired the reason the meetings are not streamed. He learned that the meetings are not streamed in order for the information not to be used against the borough, in the meantime, the residents are deprived of hearing the council meetings. He inquired how this went into best practices. As for the appeal process for Zoning and Planning Board decisions, Borough residents have to go to the

Supreme Court to appeal because of the costs and time to make an appeal to the Superior Court. He proposed that an appeal committee be comprised to review any unfavorable decisions due to a single vote. The residents deserve that because the average person cannot appeal a decision right now. I was fortunate. Mr. Doll stated there a leak in the museum. He needs a repair in the roof on the end, it's been several months. He commented the resolution on the salary increases. The Borough Administrator stated it was a mistake or an oversight. Mr. Doll expressed it was stupidity because you represent us and you have a Borough Administrator and Borough Attorney guiding you. You should be ashamed. He also stated that he did a search on the internet and learned that the Borough Clerk's salary was in the top in 1923 and top 60% of salaries in 1963. The comment that she was not enough and was due more money was not right.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated at the Zoning Board meeting last night, the Chairman voted in favor of the mosque, provided the alternate street parking is approved. There were nonstop complaints last night about illegal parking and nothing is being done. The parking needs to be effectively enforced. The drive-up mail box is an important feature as it is the only one in town. Ms. Sullivan's suggestion was to put the mailbox at the entrance where the residents park their car for business and make it a one-way street on the corner, or put it where the police parking is and put it on the corner, but needs to be done with the cold weather coming.

John Smith, resident, stated a lot's been said about the parking on East Johnson Avenue and North Taylor Street. The residents are the biggest violators parking at the yellow curb. The mosque even put down cones for cars not to park at the yellow curb. The resident had a party and cars were parked at the yellow lines. The police passed by twice and did not issue a ticket. Mr. Smith recommended to make East Johnson Avenue one way and park on one side only. Mr. Smith also stated that widening the driveways is going to cause a water problem. He suggested residents put in a retention basin. If anyone wants to widen their driveway, they should do pavers, no concrete. There are seven houses that people park on the grass and it's not only a code enforcement problem, but a police department problem. Mr. Smith stated it takes him 23 minutes to get from the VWF Post to the NVE Bank or to Borough Hall. He has complained about the Sunshine Day Care Center bus drivers parked at the bus stop on Washington Avenue. It is not the first time that someone has complained, they need to enforce parking violations. Mr. Smith stated there are about eight employees that opt out of the health benefits, saving the Borough roughly between \$500,000-\$1 million. If someone is going to complain about salaries, they should know about everything. Mr. Smith stated do something about East Johnson Avenue and North Taylor Street.

Ana Martinez, resident, speaking Spanish, spoke about the parking situation in Foster Village and in front of the armory. There is not enough parking for all the tenants. Miss Martinez inquired if it was possible to park on both sides of the street. The Police Department issues tickets regularly.

Mayor Amatorio stated Foster Village is private property and the Borough cannot force them to provide parking to all the tenants.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated he has contacted the health department, code enforcement, zoning and building, and will follow up with the police department and ask how many phone calls were made. Mr. Gallo stated he will follow-up on the business turned into a restaurant and will learn if they illegally put the tables in. Mr. Gallo stated they are aware of the issues with the Borough parking lot. The parking lot may need to be pulled up and redone, because it failed to meet the DOT qualifications and standards. Mr. Gallo stated the location of all three mailboxes will be moved, and will be under surveillance. It's a work in progress, but will happen. Mr. Gallo stated he already spoke with the DPW Superintendent last week about the leak at the Museum and they are working on it. Mr. Gallo stated they have 130 seats in the courtroom. Residents are welcome to come to the meetings. Mr. Gallo stated changes to East Johnson Avenue and North Taylor Street are under advisement and they are going to make the changes. The Borough administrator also stated that he will look into the Foster Village parking situation.

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Rivera stated recognizing one's mistake is a sign of humility, self-awareness and commitment to personal growth. God bless everyone and have a good night.

Councilperson Lodato wished all a good night.

Councilperson Deauna wished everybody a good night.

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

Council President Kornbluth thanked all for coming and wished everyone a good night.

Councilperson Pascual wished all a good night and to stay safe.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION **25-304**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege/Contract Negotiations
 - 1. PBA Local 309 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, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Council President Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk