

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION
DECEMBER 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: 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 8:03 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 Councilman Almonte.

AGENDA CHANGES

Council President Kornbluth requested to add the introduction of Ordinance 25-2658, an ordinance amending Chapter 299 of the Code of the Borough of Bergenfield entitled "Vehicles and Traffic." Councilperson Deauna motioned to make the addition. Councilperson Pascual seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

PRESENTATIONS

No presentations.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Robert Klein of Remington & Vernick Engineers, Borough Engineer, stated that the 2025 roadwork is complete except for Tulip Street. The contractor is trying to find a subcontractor with the proper machinery to mill a concrete road.

Council President Kornbluth inquired why did the contractor bid for the job if he didn't have the proper machinery to complete the job. She further inquired what is the game plan if the street isn't paved by December 31st.

Mr. Klein explained that if the work isn't complete by December 31st, the contractor will be held accountable for the work and it will need to be completed when possible in 2026. Mr. Klein further stated that the 2026 roads list is set and the DPW started to prepare for the work. The roads included in the 2026 road program are Porter Avenue, Brook Street, Harcourt Avenue, North Queen, North Queen and portion of South Queen, Rivera Way, South Demarest Avenue and Wildrose Avenue.

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinances published herewith were first read by title on Thursday, November 7, 2025 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

ORDINANCE 25-2654 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 17 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "DEPARTMENTS"

ORDINANCE 25-2655 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 186 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "LAND DEVELOPMENT"

Public Comments on Ordinance 25-2654 and 25-2655.

John Smith, resident, stated that with regards to the ordinance pertaining to fences, the fence cannot be higher than 6 feet. He stated that people put their fences on top of a stone wall instead of the ground, exceeding 6 feet.

Barry Doll, resident, stated that John brings up a valid point. Mr. Doll stated that he has seen fences built on top of dirt that are higher than 6 feet. Mr. Doll added that the council should not vote on that because there is a loophole. Mr. Doll asked that why is the off-duty rate is an exorbitant amount. He questioned the 20%, inquiring what is the base being charged.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the ordinance is to amend the fees. There is nothing else being changed in the fence ordinance, it remains the same. Mr. Gallo responded that the Borough receives 20% of the off-duty expenses to cover the gas for cars, when an entity like Veolia, needs off duty officers. The Borough receives the administrative costs.

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Pascual, to pass Ordinances 25-2654 and 25-2655 on second and final reading and are 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Introduction of Ordinances

Motion by Council President Kornbluth that the following ordinances be introduced and passed on first reading and setting December 16, 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 ordinances. Councilperson Pascual seconded the motion.

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

ORDINANCE 25-2656 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 50 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES"

ORDINANCE 25-2657 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 17 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "DEPARTMENTS"

ORDINANCE 25-2658 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 299 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC"

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

Mayor Amatorio inquired if there were any updates on Johnson Avenue parking.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated there are no updates. There were recommendations to change some of the street regulations, but it encompasses additional street for one-side street parking. Mr. Gallo stated it will be done for the next meeting or 2026, as there will not be enough time to take action this year.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that as the Borough Engineer Mr. Klein stated, the 2026 Road program has been established. In the next couple of weeks, need to determine if the parking lot, the lot on the northern end, the cell tower lot, will be done, as engineers noticed the current contractors were overwhelmed. The cement work, the base coat, and some of the sewer work was completed with the oversight of the engineer, however, they were unable to continue. They were too slow and the crew was not set-up properly. Mr. Gallo and the engineers determined the contractor will not be able to complete the parking lot. As such, the work will need to be rebid in January and will be part of the 2026 road program to receive more aggressive pricing. Hopefully the work can start in March, and then we can decide if the front parking lot can be done as well. Otherwise, the borough will pull the performance bond. The rain garden work at PAL field was completed. There are some plantings that still need to go in, but the project is complete. The borough is continuing with the project as Rivera Way, continuing to improve the field and surfaces. The fields have been seeded and will continue to be improved to bring the facility to the standard of the rest of the municipality.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato

last night the Board of Adjustment met. It was continuation of an application relative to a property on Frederick Place and there was a new application for a home on Norfolk Street. The continuation of the Frederick Place property, since the last meeting, they revised their plans to remove two variance requests. The application was approved by the Board. While the boards are doing their part to help the residents meet their needs, they are holding the line to setback requirements, parking, etc. The boards are helping the residents, but also holding the line. The Planning Board met and reviewed the structure on Main and Washington Avenue and approved the same. The Fire Department will be meeting on December 10th to choose 2026 officers.

Councilperson Deauna

No report.

Councilperson Almonte No report.

Council President Kornbluth No report.

Councilperson Rivera stated that he attended the League of Municipalities conference, which was very productive. He attended a course which will give back \$250.00 to the Borough, which is great. The Turkey drive was a great event, we gave about 250 Turkeys to the community. There were many kids helping, which provided an immense sense of pride during the event. I was so proud in the League because our Borough Administrator Corey Gallo received the Municipal Administrator Award.

Councilperson Pascual stated that November 11th was the Veterans Day. A ceremony was held at the Borough and then we headed over to the VFW to be part of the event they hosted and were able to enjoy great good. It was a wonderful experience. The Stigma Free committee volunteered at the Turkey Drive, which was a great success. The Veteran's Christmas party will be held on December 13, 2025 and Stigma Free will be having a reading at the Library from 6:30 to 8:00 pm.

Mayor Amatorio stated that on behalf of the Mayor and Council, he extends his heartfelt congratulations to Corey Gallo, for being awarded the Outstanding Municipal Manager of the Year award. It's a testament to his work and the entire team at the borough. This is a great time for us to review the work we have done and plan the work for next year. The Mayor's Wellness program will be extended chair yoga at the Bergenfield Public Library. The Planning Board approved the Main St. and Washington Avenue redevelopment plans. An application may be put forward to move the curb and expand Washington Avenue to make it wider. Thanks to the New Jersey Food Bank, Mom's, and the donations from the Bergenfield Trust Fund, the turkey drive was a great success. Many people, including a lot of kids, volunteered. He thanked everyone that helped with the event.

CORRESPONDENCE

a.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers **RE:** Personnel Action Letter dated November 17, 2025

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Barry Doll, resident, stated that the Mayor and Council have a responsibility to keep a high bar. Mr. Doll stated he drove around the parking lot and there are puddles all over. He inquired when is

the parking lot going to be fixed because if someone falls, it's going to be an issue. He also stated that why are the mayor and council patting themselves in the back, but they should a plaque downstairs in the lobby in gratitude to the taxpayers for the taxes they paid to put this building up. He also asked why the borough doesn't stream the meetings when it has the latest technology. The borough should show the meetings, no need to work as a secret society. Mr. Doll questioned the bill list and stated that the last page of Resolution #25-323 says that a certain amount needs to be paid, but the bills list has a different amount. She inquired what is going on, this is not the first time. He commented that the Board of Education is an important part of our budget and we need to have reports here.

Borough Administrator Gallo responded he just referenced the parking lot situation.

Mary Sullivan, resident, congratulated Mr. Gallo on his award. She inquired when the plans and surveys will be displayed on the screens for the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Board meetings.

Gregory Martin, resident, stated that with regards to the concrete road, the concrete may be too high. He suggested that perhaps they don't rip it off completely, and just do the top, covering up the side walks and curbs.

John Smith, resident, recommended the Mayor and Council to table the parking situation for further review. Mr. Smith handed the Mayor and Council an article from the Bergen Record as an idea of action being taken in Fair Lawn. He stated that in Fair Lawn, overnight parking will only be permitted 14 times in a year. Homes being built with 6 bedrooms need to have enough parking spots. Mr. Smith commented he is happy that the chair yoga program will be extended and thanked the Mayor's Wellness programs for brining these programs to the community. The borough should budget for more events like this. The Veteran's holiday party will be on Saturday, December 13th at 1:00 p.m.

Mayor Amatorio stated the programs are all based on donations.

Borough Administrator Gallo spoke about the bill list and stated that if Mr. Doll wanted to come to the Borough to review it, he is welcome. Mr. Gallo stated on the record, the numbers are done properly, there are no missing numbers. He further stated that the parking lot situation is in the works. The contractor will be held responsible, but it is a process. Mr. Gallo referred to Ms. Sullivan and advised that he will inform the staff and teach them how to put up the plans on the screens. He commented that with regards to the concrete road, they have to cut and open the concrete and then mill, because the cement shifts. With regards to the article about overnight parking, the Council is contemplating putting the parking situation on the ballot. The decision will need to be made by the community. Mr. Gallo expressed that the Borough outreach efforts in providing information about what is going on in town, is much more now than it was before. The Borough has created a social media account, minutes are published publicly on the website, the Borough has a Facebook page, and continuously posts information to inform the public, quarterly journal, calendar, robocall. We inform our town more that most towns in Bergen County.

Mayor Amatorio referred to Mr. Doll's insinuation that there is money missing, and stated that the Borough goes through annual audits, has accountants and CPAs that review the information every year, and we have an excellent audit rate.

Mr. Gallo also stated that about streaming the meetings, we are looking to see how we can amend the bylaws, to be more open, but it defeats the purpose to stream a meeting where we cannot correspond with the public.

Councilperson Rivera commented that to put the names of 28,000 residents on the plaque will be too much. In the United States, citizens vote for the officials to act on their behalf. The names of

the officials represent the will and contribution of the tax payers. The purpose of the plaque is accountability and is to be kept for historical purposes. We are all taxpayers. There is no Borough Hall that has a plaque with taxpayer's names.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 25-322. 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. **25-323**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **25-324**/To Schedule the 2026 Reorganization Meeting – January 1, 2026
- c. **25-325**/To Approve Grant Cancellation – Bergen County Community Development Block Grant for North Taylor Street
- d. **25-326**/To Approve Grant Cancellation – FY 2025 Municipal Alliance Grant
- e. **25-327**/To Approve Transfer of Appropriations
- f. **25-328**/To Approve Purchase and Installation of Equipment to Upfit Two (2) 2025 Ford Maverick XL AWD Vehicles for Police Department – Gold Type Business Machines – GTBM
- g. **25-329**/To Approve Shared Services Agreement for the Maintenance and Repair of Vehicles in 2026 with the Borough of Paramus

Motion by Councilperson Council Person President Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, to approve the Consent Resolution #322.

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>

B. RESOLUTIONS

25-330/To Hire Part-Time Laborer – Nicholas Conti

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Lodato, that Resolution #25-330 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>

COUNCIL COMMENTS

The Mayor and Council thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and invited everyone to the Holiday in at the Park event on Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and the light up of the borough hall Christmas tree, which was donated by the Veteran's, and will be lit up on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION **25-331**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

A. Attorney-Client Privilege/Personnel/Agreements/Litigation Updates

1. Police Department Personnel Matters

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 Council President Kornbluth and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 8:58p.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, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk