

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2026
8:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Council President Domingo Almonte, and Council members Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, and Marc Pascual

ABSENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council members Ora Kornbluth and Hernando Rivera

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

Council President Almonte 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 was published in the Record Newspaper, placed on a Municipal Bulletin Board, posted on the Borough website, and is on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk. In case of an emergency, exits are in the back and to your right. Please turn off all cell phones."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Deauna.

AGENDA CHANGES

Councilperson Pascual motioned to add Resolutions #26-048 to approve shared professional services for Municipal Court Administrator with the Borough of Tenafly; #26-049 to approve agreement grant writer and consultant, Millennium Strategies; #26-050 to endorse Bergen County Community Development Block Grant; and #26-051 to approve tax appeal settlement for 223 South Washington Avenue. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilperson Pascual to approve minutes of the 2026 Reorganization Meeting held on January 1, 2026. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS I

Council President Almonte opened the meeting and 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 Almonte closed Verbal Communications I.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers **RE:** Personnel Action Letter dated December 19, 2025
- b.) Aquino/Lincoln Elementary School **RE:** Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion and Field/June 18, 2026/7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Rain Date: June 23, 2026)

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

ORDINANCES

A. Introduction of Ordinances

Motion by Councilperson Pascual that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, February 3, 2026 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 Almonte read the title of the ordinance into the record:

ORDINANCE 26-2659 - 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:	aye	Councilperson Kornbluth:	absent
Councilperson Deauna:	aye	Councilperson Rivera:	absent
Council President Almonte:	aye	Councilperson Pascual:	aye

Motion by Councilperson Deauna that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, March 3, 2026 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 Pascual.

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

ORDINANCE 26-2660 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 186 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "LAND DEVELOPMENT"

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

Councilperson Lodato:	aye	Councilperson Kornbluth:	absent
Councilperson Deauna:	aye	Councilperson Rivera:	absent
Council President Almonte:	aye	Councilperson Pascual:	aye

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 26-024. 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.

- **26-025/**To Approve Bill List
- **26-026/**To Approve Agreement – Borough Attorney – John L. Schettino, Esq.
- **26-027/**To Approve Agreement – Borough Engineer – Remington & Vernick Engineers

- **26-028/**To Approve Agreement – Special Projects Engineer – T&M Associates
- **26-029/**To Approve Agreement – Bond Counsel – Rogut McCarthy LLC
- **26-030/**To Approve Agreement – Labor Counsel – John L Shahdanian II Esq., Trenk Isabel Siddiqi & Shahdanian P.C.
- **26-031/**To Approve Agreement – Tax Appeal Counsel – Boggia Boggia & Betesh, LLC
- **26-032/**To Approve Agreement – Borough Auditor – Lerch, Vinci, & Bliss, LLP
- **26-033/**To Approve Agreement – Risk Manager – GJEM – Otterstedt Insurance Agency
- **26-034/**To Approve Agreement – Borough Appraiser – Appraisal Systems, Inc.
- **26-035/**To Approve Agreement – Borough Prosecutor – Marc A. Calello, P.C.
- **26-036/**To Approve Agreement – Alternate Borough Prosecutor – Linda H. Schwager, Esq.
- **26-037/**To Approve Agreement – Borough Public Defender – Robert C. Metzdorf, Metzdorf Law Office
- **26-038/**To Approve Agreement – Planner/Engineer for Economic Development – Neglia Engineering Associates
- **26-039/**To Approve Agreement – Municipal Advisor Services – Phoenix Advisors LLC
- **26-040/**Approve Professional Services Proposal – 2026 Road Improvement Project – Remington & Vernick Engineers
- **26-041/**To Approve Veteran Tax Exemption – 63 Day Avenue
- **26-042/**To Approve Veteran Tax Exemption – 42 Elm Street
- **26-043/**To Approve Veteran Tax Exemption – 65 New Jersey Avenue
- **26-044/**To Approve Veteran Tax Exemption – 85 Haven Avenue
- **26-045/**To Approve Church and Charitable Exemption – 92 N. Taylor Avenue
- **26-046/**To Approve the Adoption of the 2026 Notice of Claim Form
- **26-047/**To Approve Proposal – Hickory Park Green Acres Grant Application – T&M Associates
- **26-048/**To Approve Shared Professional Services – Municipal Court Administrator – Borough of Tenafly
- **26-049/**To Approve Agreement – Grant Writer and Consultant – Millennium Strategies
- **26-050/**To Endorse Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application for Fire Pump at Brookside Gardens submitted by Housing Development Corporation of Bergen County
- **26-051/**To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 223 South Washington Avenue

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:	aye	Councilperson Kornbluth:	absent
Councilperson Deauna:	aye	Councilperson Rivera:	absent
Council President Almonte:	aye	Councilperson Pascual:	aye

B. Resolutions

26-052/To Approve Agreement – Municipal Court Judge – Franklin S. Montero, Esq.

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #26-052 be approved.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	aye	Councilperson Kornbluth:	absent
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Councilperson Deauna: aye
Council President Almonte: aye

Councilperson Rivera: absent
Councilperson Pascual: aye

26-053/To Appoint Recycling Coordinator – Jaime Luppino

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #26-053 be approved.

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

Councilperson Lodato: aye
Councilperson Deauna: aye
Council President Almonte: aye

Councilperson Kornbluth: absent
Councilperson Rivera: absent
Councilperson Pascual: aye

26-054/To Appoint Shade Tree Committee Clerk – Jaime Luppino

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Lodato, that Resolution #26-054 be approved.

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

Councilperson Lodato: aye
Councilperson Deauna: aye
Council President Almonte: aye

Councilperson Kornbluth: absent
Councilperson Rivera: absent
Councilperson Pascual: aye

26-055/To Approve 2025 LOSAP Lists

Motion by Councilperson Lodato, seconded by Councilperson Pascual, that Resolution #26-055 be approved.

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

Councilperson Lodato: aye
Councilperson Deauna: aye
Council President Almonte: aye

Councilperson Kornbluth: absent
Councilperson Rivera: absent
Councilperson Pascual: aye

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Committee/Department Reports

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

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS II

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

Gregory Martin, resident, stated that streets Valkenberg and West Dudley were done this summer, and on Dudley Drive to Spring Avenue, water is coming out running down the street and the ground is concaving. He explained it looks like a sinkhole and asked that the Borough please send DPW to check the street.

Council President Almonte inquired when the road was paved.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that he will take care of it and will have them check if its a sinkhole or water pipe.

John Smith, resident, stated that based on what the County Executive and County Clerk mentioned at the reorganization meeting, the Council people did very well in this past election. Mr. Smith asked the council how many registered voters are there in Bergenfield and noted that the councilmembers received 66% of the registered votes in Bergenfield. Mr. Smith stated that everyone on the council has been re-elected at least once, which means the residents think you are doing a wonderful job. Mr. Smith also stated that what everyone is complaining about is the parking and school tax. Bergenfield used to trim down the school budget, but now the Borough does not have say. He stated that it was mistake to have the town make this decision via referendum. Mr. Smith stated that now the Council is thinking about putting parking on the ballot to let the residents decide, which will be the second mistake the governing body makes in this town. Mr. Smith added that the Council has been elected over and over again, because you have been making the right decisions. He explained that some people want to do away with overnight parking, because the lazy people, and people renting illegal apartments, need parking. He also mentioned that variances are being approved for no parking in Washington Avenue. Mr. Smith stated that people find parking when it snows, and inquire what happens on other days. Mr. Smith mentioned the Opra request he put in for overnight parking on Frederick Place, where one family called 125 times. He stated that another lady that lives on Prospect Avenue parks on my street every night, did not register once, and has never received a ticket. Mr. Smith advised the council to not put this on the ballot and told them to think about. Mr. Smith stated that he will contact Mayor and Council about doing something Patriotic for Memorial Day in honor of the 250th celebration. He mentioned that will give the information to the council liaison.

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Lodato, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk