

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 3, 2026**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council President Domingo Almonte, Council members Thomas A. Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Ora Kornbluth, 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 8:05 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 to Council President Almonte.

AGENDA CHANGES

Motion by Council President Almonte to add Ordinances for Introduction, Ordinance #26-2661 to amend Chapter 233 of the Code of the Borough of Bergenfield, Entitled "Property, Abandoned," and Ordinance #26-2662 titled Affordable Housing; the Board of Fire Officers Personnel Action Letter dated January, 29 2026 to Correspondence; and Resolution #26-063 to Appoint Commissioners to the Bergen Municipal Employee Benefits Fund, and Resolution #26-064 to authorize the use of Holy Name Medical Center Occupational Health Services for Department of Transportation (DOT) Drug and Alcohol Testing for the Bergenfield Department of Public Works for Calendar Year 2026. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Robert Klein, Borough Engineer from Remington & Vernick, stated they started the preparation for the 2026 Road Program. Mr. Klein stated the snow and cold weather has hindered the ability to have the roads surveyed. The engineers explained that they are doing what they can to progress the project. Mr. Klein stated for last year's road program, they had some tests done on all the roads, just need to make sure they were all compacted properly. He stated that one road that was paved in December did reveal a small penalty, so they're going to dock the contractor a little bit of money. It's still in an acceptable condition, but part of it has to do with Department of Transportation expectations.

Councilperson Kornbluth inquired which road received a penalty.

Mr. Klein stated it was Tulip Street. He stated that New Jersey Avenue, Department of Transportation funding, also revealed a small penalty.

Mr. Klein further stated that they have been updating the tax maps for the town and will to have the final version approved by the State.

Councilperson Pascual stated a concerned resident brought to his attention the little dip on the sidewalk on Bridge Street and Roosevelt Street. He inquired if it normal to have a dip and what is a nonstandard ramp.

Mr. Klein stated ramps follow a standard ADA compliant. The ramp was customized because of the retaining wall. The dip is supposed to be there.

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinances published herewith were first read by title on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

ORDINANCE 26-2659 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 239 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "RENTAL PROPERTY"

Public Comments on Ordinance 26-2659.

No one came forward.

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Lodato, to pass Ordinances 26-2659 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>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Introduction of Ordinances

Motion by Councilperson Pascual that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting February 17, 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. Councilperson Lodato seconded the motion.

Mayor Amatorio read the titles of the Ordinances into the Record:

ORDINANCE 26-2661 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 233 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "PROPERTY, ABANDONED"

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting March 17, 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. Councilperson Pascual seconded the motion.

ORDINANCE 26-2662 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORDINANCE

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

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

Councilperson Kornbluth: *aye*
Councilperson Rivera: *aye*
Councilperson Pascual: *aye*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough Administrator Gallo stated prior to the snow storm, there was an emergency coordination meeting among all the different departments, including DPW, Police Department, Office of Emergency Management, Fire Department and BVAC. Mr. Gallo stated that the Recreation Department has partnered with USA Sports and will be offering a cheer and dance camp as well as flag football. Mr. Gallo added that they are working to have the Yankees camp back in the summer. They are also working and negotiating for programs with Red Bull to come and provide soccer training. The Borough Administrator stated the budget process is closed out for 2025. Overall, the Borough's fiscal strength is very good. As they enter 2026, there is a surplus.

Councilperson Kornbluth inquired what percentage of Bergenfield residents are signed up for the robo call.

Mr. Gallo stated that he doesn't have the exact number off hand.

Councilperson Kornbluth stated that more residents should be encouraged to join, as some of her neighbors were unaware of the robo calls. She inquired how residents knew to parking in the alternate parking lots.

Mr. Gallo stated that the information was also put out on the Borough social media pages and electronic sign. The information will also be shared on future newsletters.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato

No report

Councilperson Deauna

stated the Senior Citizens' Committee held a meeting on January 8th, 2026. It was a very fruitful and healthy discussion. They mentioned the bank statement and their Christmas party was a success. They enjoyed the volunteer dinner at the Fiesta.

Council President Almonte

stated the Stigma Free Committee assisted at the Bergenfield High School on January 19th during Martin Luther King Day. Their next meeting is February 19th at the Bergenfield Public Library. The topic will be Domestic Violence and how men experienced it. The Barrier Free Committee is looking for men to volunteer for the meeting. The Stigma Free Committee is looking forward to working with

other committees. They are collaborating with the Barrier Free Committee in the coming months.

Councilperson Kornbluth

stated OEM activated the emergency operations center to help monitor the storm and coordinate emergency response. BVAC is actually expecting a new ambulance next week that was paid 100% with donations from the community. OEM received another \$1,000 grant for all power radios from the federal government. She thanked Congressman Gottheimer and his office for assisting with that. She thanked Police, DPW, the Fire Department, BVAC, and everyone else who really worked hard during the storm to ensure everyone was safe. She commented that everyone did an amazing job. DPW did a great job cleaning the roads. The Recreation Committee did not meet on Monday.

Councilperson Rivera

thanked Congressman Gottheimer for the donation of \$1,000 to replace the radio system that is obsolete. It is a great accomplishment for the town.

Councilperson Pascual

stated the Veterans Advisory Committee met on January 1st. They are planning for Memorial Day and Independence Day. This year marks the 250th birthday of the United States of America and the veterans are proposing the Borough present "The Most Patriotic Citizen Award." He suggested residents can dress up their houses in patriotic colors for a friendly competition. He thanked Congressman Gottheimer for helping the town to get grant money. He thanked the Bergenfield Police Department, OEM, and the Fire Department for their work during the last storm.

Mayor Amatorio

thanked everyone for their great team effort. It shows that when everyone is on the same page, they can really make things better. It was a lot easier for the DPW to plow the streets once the Police Department announced that residents move their cars. He really appreciates the collaboration between the DPW, the Police Department, and of course the Bergenfield Ambulance Corps and Fire Department. He thanked Congressman Josh Gottheimer for completing the grant to upgrade the communication system and receive \$1,000 last year and another \$1,000 this year to complete the programs. The Mayor's Wellness program has been meeting and are planning to have the 5K on April 26th.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a.) Wrendelken/Little League Baseball Club of Bergenfield, Inc. **RE:** Coin Toss Requests for Several Dates in 2026 to Fund Raise/New Bridge & Washington Ave., Main St. & Washington Ave. S. Prospect & W. Clinton Ave., Clinton Ave. & Washington Ave., Church St. & Washington Ave., Hickory Ave. & Washington Ave./9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- b.) Skaret/Calvary Church **RE:** Request to Reserve Hickory Field for Easter Egg Hunt/April 4, 2026/1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- c.) Inglis/BHS Project Graduation **RE:** Request to Reserve Coopers Pond for 2026 Prom Show Off/June 4, 2026/3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- d.) Brown/Franklin School **RE:** Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion and Field for 5th Grade Picnic/June 4, 2026/8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Rain Date 6/9/2026)
- e.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers **RE:** Personnel Letter dated January 29, 2026

Motion by Councilperson Rivera, seconded by Councilperson Kornbluth, to accept Correspondence. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Smith, resident, stated that he submitted a proposal to administration pertaining to a contest for the most Patriotic Citizen Award in honor of the country's 250th anniversary. Mr. Smith stated he would like to do it for July 4th or Family Fun Day. Mr. Smith thanked the Borough Administrator and his assistant for their fast response to help the VFW. Mr. Smith recommended that schedule R-5 and R-6 in the master plan be the same. Mr. Smith stated the resident's attorney at the Zoning Board meeting argued about the 35 feet height requirement. Mr. Smith inquired about recommendations made for the master plan from 2005.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated once recommendations are made and put in effect, the Mayor and Council would have to adopt the ordinance. You have to go according to the master plan that exists, not as the recommendations are. Mr. Schettino stated it's a document submitted as a report. The position of the Board would be that although it was a recommendation, it was never implemented by the governing body. It is based on the ordinance, not the recommendations. Mr. Schettino stated at the meeting for resolution memorialization, someone can make a motion for reconsideration.

Mayor Amatorio stated that the governing body can make clarifications on an existing ordinance in effect. He stated the new master plan was adopted one or two years ago.

Councilperson Rivera stated that none of the council members were here in 2003.

Councilperson Lodato stated that if the Board has made a mistake, they can vote again on the subject.

Councilperson Kornbluth stated that it is a pre-existing condition of the house.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 26-056. 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. **26-057**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **26-058**/To Approve Temporary Emergency Appropriation
- c. **26-059**/To Approve Fire Department Automatic Mutual Aid Agreement - Borough of Dumont
- d. **26-060**/To Authorize Bid – Metzler Brook Stream Cleaning and Streambank Stabilization
- e. **26-061**/To Approve Revised Agreement with Veolia Water New Jersey

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Kornbluth, to approve the Consent Resolution #26-056.

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

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

B. RESOLUTIONS

26-062/To Approve Stipend for Recreation Director – Edward Volmer

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, that Resolution #26-062 be approved.

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

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

26-063/To Appoint Commissioners to Bergen Municipal Employee Benefits Fund

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Pascual, that Resolution #26-063 be approved.

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

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

26-064/Authorizing the Use of Holy Name Medical Center Occupational Health Services for Department of Transportation (DOT) Drug and Alcohol Testing for the Bergenfield Department of Public Works for Calendar Year 2026

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #26-064 be approved.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Council President 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.

Councilperson Rivera stated that supporting Councilperson Kornbluth suggested establishing a common rule where residents are supposed to park during snow, maybe it can be published in the newsletter.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION 26-065/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

A. Attorney-Client Privilege

1. Borough Clerk's Office Operating Procedures
2. New Municipal Borough Hall
3. 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 Councilperson Deauna, second by Councilperson Kornbluth and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 8:49 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Pascual and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk