

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 17, 2026
7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Council President Domingo Almonte, and Council members Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Ora Kornbluth, Hernando Rivera, and Marc Pascual (arrived at 7:40 p.m.)

ABSENT: Councilperson Deauna

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

Mayor Amatorio called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m. with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act Statement, "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."

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION **26-066**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Personnel
 - 1. Police Department Personnel Matters

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Lodato, that Resolution #26-066 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>absent</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, and all members present voting in favor, the meeting returned to open session at 8:05 pm. R.C. Councilperson Deauna absent.

The Salute to the Flag was led by Council President Almonte.

There was a moment of silence in honor of our friend and community volunteer, Mr. Joe Verga.

AGENDA CHANGES

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth to approve minutes of the January 20, 2026 Regular Public Meeting, the February 3, 2026 Work Session Meeting, and the February 3, 2026 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released). Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion. All members 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.

No one came forward.

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

PRESENTATIONS

A. Police Department Presentations

1. Hiring of Colin Concannon to the Rank of Police Officer

- ❖ Biography of Colin Concannon

Chief Rabboh read Colin Concannon's biography into the record.

- ❖ Resolution **26-067**/To Hire Colin Concannon to the Rank of Police Officer in the Bergenfield Police Department.

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Council President Almonte, that Resolution #26-067 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>absent</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

- ❖ Oath of office to Police Officer Concannon was administered by Mayor Amatorio.

Chief Rabboh thanked the Mayor and Council for their support.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato Congratulations on your appointment. You are joining a very fine Police Department, with a great Chief. I wish you long and safe and productive career in Law Enforcement.

Councilperson Deauna Absent.

Council President Almonte Congratulations Officer Colin, I wish you a career filled with purpose, service, and pride in our community.

Councilperson Kornbluth Welcome back to the Borough! You are joining an amazing force. We are looking forward to a long and safe career.

Councilperson Rivera Congratulations Officer Concannon! It is a great privilege to have you here. I can see your roots in the presence of your family. Your family raised a great man, that will now serve and protect our

community. I know it is part of your heart and duties. You are coming into a great family, the Police Bergenfield, one of the best in Bergen County and one of the best in New Jersey. In 25 years, you can be the next Chief in Bergenfield.

Councilperson Pascual

Congratulations Colin, and to your family as well. You have a great team behind you. We are here for you. We pray for your safety and a bright future.

Mayor Amatorio

Congratulations to you and your family. It's a great opportunity and a privilege to serve. I wish you a safe and long career in law enforcement.

On a motion by Councilperson Rivera, seconded by Council President Almonte, and all members present voting in favor, the meeting was recessed. The meeting returned to open session at 8:17 p.m. R.C. Councilperson Deauna absent.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a.) Rev. Gelson/South Presbyterian Church **RE:** Request to Reserve Coopers Pond for Easter Sunrise Service/Sunday, April 5, 2026/7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

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

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinance published herewith was read by title on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

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

Public comments on Ordinance 26-2661.

John Smith, resident, stated that Section 233.3 A, talks about vacant and abandoned properties with over grown or neglected vegetation. The next section pertains to violations. He stated there is nothing in the statute related to federal property. He noted that that the property on the railroad is always an issue with overgrown vegetation.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated no one can touch federal property, even if it's in the Borough.

Borough Administrator stated that he will have the Borough Attorney's office write a letter to CSX. He commented that he has tried communicating with them in the past to no avail. He also received several warnings when the borough cleaned the property.

Mayor Amatorio stated that the borough will take pictures to submit with the letter that Mr. Schettino will write to address the issue.

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Lodato, to pass Ordinance #26-2661 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>	Councilperson Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>absent</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 26-068. 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) **26-069**/To Approve Bill List
- b) **26-070**/To Approve Green Acres Grant Application for Twin Borough Park Improvement Project Phase III
- c) **26-071**/To Approve Grant Application – New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) Program for Bergenfield Recreation Center
- d) **26-072**/To Authorize Electronic Tax Sale
- e) **26-073**/To Authorize Electronic Tax Sale Fees
- f) **26-074**/To Approve Tax Refund – 223 S. Washington Avenue
- g) **26-075**/To Approve Veteran Tax Exemption – 34 S. Franklin Avenue
- h) **26-076**/To Adopt the Bergen County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- i) **26-077**/To Approve Agreement Extension with Foveonics Imaging Technologies, Inc for Document Management Records Retention and Disposal
- j) **26-078**/To Approve Contract Extension – HVAC Maintenance Agreement for the Municipal Building – DeSesa Engineering Co.
- k) **26-079**/To Approve Change Order No. 1 – 2025 Bergenfield Road Program Sanitary and Storm Sewer Cleaning & Video Inspection – National Water Main Cleaning
- l) **26-080**/To Approve Proposal for Professional Arboricultural Services for Community Forestry Management – Sterling Consultants Inc

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Grant Application Public Hearing for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program, for Improvements at Hickory Field**
 - 1. Presentation on the application.

Special Projects Engineer, Peter Bondar of T&M Associates, presented on the Borough's Green Acres application for DEP funding for improvements to Hickory Field. Mr. Bondar stated that the project will include 4 to 5 improvements to the park. The first improvement will be the infield synthetic turf. The existing clay is poorly draining during rain causing cancellations of events. The improvement will add storage to existing draining system. The second major improvement will be to the basketball court on site. It is going to be made larger and have a new surface, new asphalt. The third will include a new pavilion. The fourth includes the fence and concrete improvements.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if the funding is for this year or 2027.

Mr. Bondar stated the decision will most likely be made in June 2026 for project completion in 2027.

Councilperson Kornbluth inquired how long will the field be out of service.

Mr. Bondar explained that the field will be out of service for a few months, probably in the fall.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the work would be done in the early fall to year end, which will probably impact football. He stated that some programs may need to be moved to Vivien Field.

Mr. Bondar further explained that an environmental impact report has to be done, as well as a report on mitigation efforts. He stated there should be no adverse impact since the park is already developed and no trees will be removed. Mr. Bondar stated the borough will also have to complete an addendum regarding the maintenance requirements of synthetic turf fields.

Councilperson Pascual inquired if metal cleats can be used on the field.

Mr. Gallo and Council President Almonte confirmed no metal cleats are used on the fields. All players use rubber cleats.

Councilperson Rivera inquired if the other parts of the field, the grass areas, are used for soccer and other programs. He also requested confirmation of the size of the basketball court. Councilperson Rivera additionally requested that the playground equipment be inspected for necessary updates.

Mr. Gallo stated that there are lines on the field for football and soccer. The field is used by all.

2. Public Comments on the application.

Mary Sullivan, resident, inquired if the grant is 100% green acres funded.

Alfredo Rubio, resident, inquired the dimensions in the field.

Estanislao Ramos, resident, asked if the dugouts are going to be renovated as well. He stated that if there will be improvements to the field, the dugouts or the bench and covers should be included.

Mayor Amatorio stated that this is just an illustration and more detailed plans will be reviewed later on. All improvements will be included.

3. Adoption of Enabling Resolution.

26-081/To Approve the Green Acres Program Grant Application for Hickory Field Project

Motion by Councilperson Rivera, seconded by Council President Almonte, that Resolution #26-081 be approved.

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

Committee/Department Reports

Motion offered by Council President Almonte that the Committee/Department Reports be spread upon the minutes in full and filed. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion. All 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.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated that in November 2024 a 100% exempt disabled veteran was paying taxes, but the records were never to reflect the same. She stated another exempt disabled veteran is not paying property taxes, but just received a tax post card showing that payments were being made. She expressed that someone needs to do their job. She is unsure if it's a Borough or County issue, but has the suspicion that the problem may be here. Ms. Sullivan stated that AARP ranked the Borough as one of the top 100 places to live-in for older adults, rated Bergenfield as top #11 in the Country. Ms. Sullivan stated this should be noted and published in the Borough newsletter and website.

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato thanked all for coming and wished all a good night.

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

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

Councilperson Rivera stated that on behalf of the Council, he thanks Joe Verga for all his hard work and all he did for this town. God bless everyone and have a good night.

Councilperson Pascual extended his sincere condolences to the Verga family, his memory will live on. Wished all a good night and reminded all to stay safe.

Mayor Amatorio thank you all for coming and for their suggestions this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Pascual, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk