

The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM

President Cabuhat stated that notice of this meeting held via Zoom was posted on the Bergenfield Website, sent by e-mail to the Record and Cablevision in compliance with "The Open Public Meetings Act". It was placed on one Bulletin board in the Municipal Building and placed on file in the Borough Clerk's office.

**ROLL CALL**

- Dr. Cheriyan
- Mrs. Nath
- Mr. Cabuhat
- Ms. Aquino
- Mr. Rivera

Also Present, AnneMarie Delacruz , Liz Cruz, Jim Fedorko, Susan Barker, Ruby Parra (absent) councilman Hernando Rivera was absent.

**OPEN HEARINGS**

There being no one present who wished to be heard on a motion made by Dr. Cheriyan and Seconded by Mrs.Aquino the time for Open Hearings was closed.

**MINUTES**

A motion was made by Dr. Cheriyan seconded by Mrs. Aquino and carried that the minutes of the regular meeting of **March** 2026 be accepted as written.

**BILLS TO BE PAID**

Mrs. Delacruz stated that on behalf of President Cabuhat, Purchase Orders have been signed by Mrs. Delacruz and submitted. A motion was made by Dr. Cheriyan and seconded Mr. Rivera and carried that the following bills were reviewed and approved.

Munidex-	\$ 2150.00
Safe Sitter-	\$ 206.00

**REPORTS****Legal and Finance**

“No Report”

**Medical**

Dr. Cheriyan reported attending a monthly meeting of the New Jersey Department of Health, where cannabidiol (CBD) in food products such as cookies and crackers was discussed at length. He stated that the Governor has issued an executive order directing local authorities to take action on this matter. However, the issue remains under debate. Dr. Cheriyan emphasized that increased attention and monitoring are necessary. Mrs. Nath inquired about any associated health concerns or reported impacts. Dr. Cheriyan addressed her question by explaining the current understanding of potential health risks. Sue Barker noted that until recent conflict between US Federal and State Laws regarding Hemp products and D8 and D9 products was unresolved. NJ has reclarified conflicts and directed the local Health Departments to enforce. The recent changes in NJ Statutes have led to NJ DOH directing LHD that all cannabinoid products containing food products (drinks, gummies) are illegal and maybe embargoed. They are considered adulterated food products under NJAC 8:24T. She explained that while federal law permits hemp products, some of these products contain THC compounds (including Delta-8 and Delta-9 THC), leading to inconsistencies between federal and state regulations.

As an example, Sue Barker mentioned that a business in Bergenfield, “Happy Daze,” was found to be carrying such products. She provided additional detail on enforcement considerations and regulatory implications. The issue of CBD and THC-containing food products remains complex due to conflicting regulations. Local health authorities are advised to exercise heightened awareness and consider enforcement actions where appropriate under existing food safety codes.

**Personnel**

“No Report”

**Publicity**

The Board of Health meeting was advertised on the Bergenfield Website, The Record and Cablevision.

**Liaison To Mayor & Council**

“No Report”

**Legislature & Regulatory**

“No Report”

**Written Reports of the Department**

Mr. Fedorko presented his report, focusing on communicable diseases and causes of death. He discussed school immunization data, noting that vaccination rates in New Jersey have been declining. He highlighted the role of religious and medical exemptions and observed that while many parents ensure their children receive the MMR vaccine, fewer prioritize the influenza vaccine. Nurse Liz added that schools and daycare centers have been encouraged to reinforce the importance of vaccinations. Mr. Fedorko also addressed drug overdoses, reporting that rates remain high in Bergen County, with Garfield identified as having the highest incidence. He referenced demographic trends, including affected age groups. Mrs. Nath inquired about the availability of data connecting mental health issues with overdoses and deaths. Mr. Fedorko explained that his data is sourced from official records, including death certificates, and is compiled with assistance from Mrs. Delacruz who is the Registrar for the Health Department. Dr. Cheriyan further responded to Mrs. Nath's questions regarding overdose-related concerns. Sue noted that Bergenfield and surrounding communities have increased the availability of naloxone. While this intervention does not address the root causes of substance use, it is effective in preventing overdose deaths. Nurse Liz mentioned that a Narcan education event was held the previous year, but attendance was low. She also shared that, based on a discussion with Captain Duran, there has been no significant increase or decrease in drug abuse, domestic violence, or overdose incidents.

Mr. Cabuhat informed Mrs. Nath that detailed data on these issues is limited and is most reliably obtained through hospital records. Nurse Liz also discussed her report, highlighting the Mayor's Wellness five-week program aimed at improving community health. Sue provided updates from her report, including enforcement actions taken against a barbershop with sanitary and licensing violations, which ultimately resulted in its voluntary closure. She referenced the 2025 Annual Report as a resource to help new Board members understand the range of complaints handled by staff. Additionally, she noted that 13 new businesses have opened in Bergenfield. The reports underscore ongoing public health challenges, including declining vaccination rates, persistent overdose incidents, and data limitations related to mental health. Continued community outreach, education, and enforcement efforts remain essential.

A motion was made by Dr. Cheriyan and seconded by Mrs. Aquino and carried that the written reports for **March 2026** be accepted as written.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Annemarie mentioned the email from Mrs Stanton that she will not be attending the meetings in the future.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Salary Resolution for 2026-2027.

Dr. Cheriyan opened the motion to pass the resolution regarding salaries. Seconded by Mrs. Aquino, on roll call all members voted yes and resolution was passed.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

"No Report"

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Mrs. De La Cruz submitted the annual financial report for 2025, summarizing all revenue collected by the Health Department. Dr. Cheriyan noted that the financial performance showed improvement compared to the previous year. Mrs. De La Cruz explained that the increase was attributed to revenue from summonses, a rise in licensing activity, and additional funds collected for certified copies, health licenses, and reinspection fees that had not been consistently collected in prior years.

Mrs. Nath provided an update on initiatives from the Stigma-Free Committee. She shared that she has organized an essay-writing competition in collaboration with Bergenfield High School, now in its third year. She also noted that she has been in communication with the county office regarding these efforts. Additionally, Mrs. Nath announced an upcoming stigma-free event scheduled for May 13. The event is being organized by Jim Tedesco in coordination with the county's mental Health Division.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being nothing further to come before the Board, on a motion by Dr. Cheriyan seconded by Mrs. Aquino and carried, that the meeting be adjourned the Board wished everyone a Happy Easter.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Annemarie DeLaCruz  
Registrar of Vital Statistics*