

The meeting was called to order at 7:35PM

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-absent  
Mr. Rivera-absent

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

### **OPEN HEARINGS**

Resident Pat August addressed the Board regarding concerns about municipal taxes, Health Department staffing, and the utilization of public health nursing resources. She referenced information she had heard from the residents regarding salary increases, organizational changes, and the expansion of responsibilities assigned to the full-time public health nurse, including social service functions.

Ms. August requested reassurance regarding fiscal responsibility and questioned how duties are delegated within the Health Department. She noted that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, nursing services were provided through a combination of part-time and per diem staffing and stated that federal funding received during the pandemic created different circumstances. She also questioned the necessity of multiple nurses attending school audits and expressed concerns regarding the use of nursing personnel for activities associated with the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign.

Ms. August emphasized the increasing need for communicable disease surveillance and suggested that community wellness programs should rely heavily on volunteers and community champions. She recalled that many wellness activities in prior years were supported by volunteers rather than paid instructors and questioned whether paid educational or physical activity sessions were necessary.

She further stated that residents have approached her with concerns that they have been unable to reach the Health Department nurse and referenced recent referrals involving some elderly couples. She asked how nursing resources are currently being utilized and expressed interest in understanding available referral pathways for residents.

Board members responded to the comments regarding volunteer utilization, nursing student involvement, and program staffing. President Cabuhat noted that the Health Department currently administers several programs and commented on the importance of proper supervision and credentialing of volunteers and students participating in public health activities. President Cabuhat responded to a question from Ms. August regarding referrals and volunteer participation in Health Department programs. He stated that volunteers should not work independently and that certified personnel are required to provide appropriate supervision. Ms. August commented that, during her time with Health Department programs, she maintained relationships with local colleges and utilized nursing student volunteers. She noted that nursing students require supervision and that, in some instances, her presence was necessary. She referenced the Police Youth Academy, where a nurse was initially requested, but she determined that nursing coverage was unnecessary because police personnel were certified EMTs.

Ms. August also discussed exercise programs, including the Healthy Bones exercise classes held at the library through the Health Department, noting that no nurse was present at those sessions.

She stated that her comments were not intended as criticism but were related to understanding what measures the Health Department was taking to control costs. She added that budgetary decisions ultimately rest with the Mayor and Council.

Mrs. Nath reported that she had contacted Rutgers University and other institutions regarding nursing student participation in Health Department programs. She stated that the institutions expressed interest in providing students under their own supervision and requested renewal of existing agreements. Mrs. Nath indicated that she supports the use of volunteers and inquired whether there was an established model that could be followed. She emphasized the importance of minimizing costs and utilizing volunteers where appropriate.

Mrs. Nath further discussed prior efforts involving high school student volunteers. She stated that students were asked to arrive early and assist with activities such as taking blood pressure readings. She noted that the students generally did not remain for the full duration of the programs and indicated that she would seek additional information regarding the outcomes of the initiative. Mrs. Nath stated that, because of her relatively short tenure on the Board, she preferred to review budgetary and program data before offering detailed opinions regarding the Wellness Campaign. She also referenced comments she had heard concerning staffing levels for the Safe Sitter Program and indicated that she would reserve further judgment until she had served on the Board for a longer period.

Dr. Cheriyan stated that he had served on the Board prior to President Cabuhat's appointment and discussed historical Board oversight of Health Department operations. He emphasized the Board's responsibility to ensure fiscal accountability and appropriate use of public funds. Dr. Cheriyan expressed concerns regarding staffing practices, overtime expenditures, program activities, volunteer management, and the utilization of nursing students. He discussed the Board's statutory oversight responsibilities, the reporting structure within the Health Department, and the need for accountability among department personnel. He also raised concerns regarding the expiration of agreements related to nursing student participation and the management of volunteer programs. Dr. Cheriyan stated that Board members have an obligation to raise concerns regarding departmental operations and the use of public resources when warranted.

During Dr. Cheriyan's remarks, President Cabuhat interrupted and stated that the discussion involved comments regarding an individual employee's capabilities in a public meeting. Dr. Cheriyan stated he did not mention the name of any individuals. President Cabuhat cautioned against discussing personnel matters in an open public forum. Dr. Cheriyan responded that he was expressing his views as a resident during the public hearing portion of the meeting. President Cabuhat requested that the discussion be concluded. Dr. Cheriyan made a motion to close the public hearing portion of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nath.

Following the motion, Dr. Cheriyan requested that President Cabuhat ensure compliance with quorum requirements and maintain decorum during Board meetings. Dr. Cheriyan stated that, as a resident and taxpayer, he believed he had the right to express concerns during a public hearing and emphasized the importance of conducting meetings in a respectful manner.

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

#### MINUTES:

A motion was made by Dr. Cheriyan seconded by Mrs. Nath and carried that the minutes of the regular meeting of **May** 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.

Bergen County Health Services	\$ 23,364.83
Mid -Bergen Regional Health Commission (quarterly Payment)	\$ 23,929.00
McKesson Health	\$118.18

A motion was made by Dr. Cheriyan and seconded Mrs. Nath and carried that the following bills were reviewed and approved.

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

"No Report"

**Medical**

Dr. Cheriyan discussed concerns regarding hantavirus. He noted that, in preparation for FIFA-related activities, guidance had been provided to public health nurses, and that many public health nurses attended the related training sessions. He referenced a document containing a list of infectious diseases and the countries expected to be visiting in the coming months. Guidance and protocols issued by the CDC and the State Department were reviewed, and he stated that the document is available on the State Department of Health website. Dr. Cheriyan also explained that hantavirus is not transmitted in the same manner as many other infectious diseases. Additionally, Dr. Cheriyan reported on his attendance at the Executive Committee Meeting of the Boards of Health, where there was discussion regarding training for Board of Health members. He provided a detailed overview of those discussions. Finally, Dr. Cheriyan discussed data center-related issues and their potential impact on public health. He explained these matters in detail to Mr. Fedorko.

**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**

Mrs. Nath reported that a symposium of the Stigma-Free Committees from all Bergen County municipalities will be held and hosted by Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco. The keynote speaker will be Susan Stallone of the New Jersey Governor's Council. Mrs. Nath noted that Bergenfield will be recognized and showcased for its accomplishments over the past three years. She will also serve as one of three panelists discussing how Bergenfield High School students have been engaged in mental health awareness initiatives and discussions. She provided a detailed overview of these efforts. Mrs. Nath was congratulated by Dr. Cheriyan and Mr. Fedorko on this achievement. President Cabuhat asked whether this initiative was related to the Bergen Promise program discussed at the previous meeting. Dr. Nath clarified that it was not; although Bergen Promise had been discussed previously, no further developments have occurred at this time.

**WRITTEN REPORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT**

Mr. Fedorko commented on Dr. Cheriyan's mention of the FIFA world cup. He said mid Bergen's plan was that if there is a surge in communicable diseases the retired nurses should be brought back since they already know what is going on even though there is a contract with Ramapo college for nursing students but it will be difficult since they will have to be trained. Also, re Hantavirus he mentioned that there was a rumor that two people in NJ had hantavirus and he discussed this in detail. He mentioned the outbreak of chickenpox in 3 children in Wallington and the declining vaccination rates. He discussed decreasing licensing of pets and the same with pet vaccines. This was discussed in detail and the importance of vaccinations.

Mrs. Nath asked if there is a requirement for a Vet to report pet vaccines. Sue explained this in detail. Mr. Fedorko mentioned there were promotional events. Mrs. DelaCruz said notices are not sent out anymore since people are not receiving their emails. However, this is included in the bulletin. President Cabuhat questioned the validation of the vaccination period. Mrs. DelaCruz answered this question and this was discussed in detail. Sue Barker discussed dog bites. Ruby Parra mentioned the opening of new restaurants and Sue mentioned the restaurant that will open where the movie theater was and discussed this in detail. She mentioned the convenience store that changed owners and installed a new water purification system which was not approved by the zoning an

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

**CORRESPONDENCE**

“No Report”

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Dela Cruz stated that she had emailed a draft of the massage parlor ordinance. Once agreed the ordinance will be forwarded to the attorney for review prior to the first reading. Mr. Fedorko expressed concerns about the Health Department being responsible for massage parlor inspections. The matter was discussed in detail. Sue noted that the Mayor and Council had previously passed this ordinance she stated that the health department along with the police dept were responsible to enforce it. The Board decided to table the discussion until September.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

“No Report”

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Dr. Cheriyan invited the senior students to share any comments or updates. Mr. Cabuhat inquired whether a closed-door meeting was necessary and informed the committee that he would be on vacation beginning May 28 for one month. Following discussion, it was agreed that a closed-door meeting would be held.

A motion was made by Mrs. Nath and seconded by Dr. Cheriyan and carried that Verbal Communications be closed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being nothing further to come before the Board, on a motion by Dr. Cheriyan seconded by Mrs. Nath and carried, that the meeting be at adjourned at 9:45pm.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Annemarie DelaCruz  
Registrar of Vital Statistics*