

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 19, 2026
8:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Council President Domingo Almonte, and Council members Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Ora Kornbluth, and Marc Pascual

ABSENT: Council member Hernando Rivera

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. Notice of this meeting was 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 Council President Almonte.

AGENDA CHANGES

Council President Almonte motioned to add Closed Session. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilperson Lodato to approve minutes of the April 21, 2026 Regular Public Meeting, the May 5, 2026 Work Session Meeting, and the May 5, 2026 Closed Session Minutes (not to be released). Council President Almonte seconded the motion. All 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.

Nelson Reynoso, resident, questioned the purchase of four or five Ford F-250s for the Fire Department. He inquired what is wrong with the trucks that the fire department has now and asked if the departments have looked into electric vehicles.

Maria Ng, resident, questioned Resolution 26-155 and inquired the reason for the contract amendment for the purchase of trees and inquired the cost. The resident further asked about the purchase of the vehicles and questioned if they are replacing old ones and what is the cost for the new vehicles.

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

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that the Ford F-250 will help the Fire Department's command staff after operations. Mr. Gallo explained that when responding to a fire, their equipment becomes soiled and can sometimes have carcinogens. As such, they need the pick-up truck be able to load

their equipment to return to the Fire House. It will support them as part of their regular operations.

Fire Chief Ryan Zadrozna confirmed that the Ford vehicle will replace their 2003 Suburban.

Mr. Gallo stated that with regards to the electric vehicles, it has been explored for emergency vehicles as the technology has been evolving, but it is not there yet. He stated that the borough has been briefed by different entities on about their use of EVs. It can be challenging for emergency services because the down time to charge takes longer, and the technology is not there yet for the equipment the vehicles are required to have in them. Mr. Gallo further stated that the borough received a grant for two EV garbage trucks. Jersey City had them, and they are not even operating them anymore, because they just don't function well, they can even do a route. Mr. Gallo further explained that the price for the truck is about \$67,645, which includes the light package and everything that they need in it.

Mayor Amatorio stated that we are supporting the Fire Department because they deserve it, the vehicle they are using is old and obsolete.

Mr. Gallo stated that with regards to Resolution 26-155, a few years ago, the Borough held a side walk improvement program, where we fixed sidewalks that were damaged by roots. He stated that about 130 trees that were dead were removed. Mr. Gallo explained that funds were put aside to replant the trees that were taken out. In order to revitalize those areas, we're putting them wherever owners want the trees. There are some owners where we took trees out, that no longer want the trees. The trees are also being placed on the curbs.

Mayor Amatorio stated that residents have asked for trees to be planted.

PRESENTATIONS

No presentations were made.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a.) Paes/Cub Scout Pack 139 **RE:** Request to Reserve Cooper's Pond for Fishing/Saturday, May 23, 2026/7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- b.) Harper/Resident **RE:** Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion for Birthday Party/Sunday, May 31, 2026/12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- c.) Gonzalez/Resident **RE:** Request to Reserve Hickory Field for Birthday Party/Sunday, August 2, 2026/1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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

ORDINANCES

A. Introduction of Ordinance

Motion by Councilperson Pascual that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting June 16, 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.

Mayor Amatorio read the title of the ordinance(s) into the record:

ORDINANCE 26-2667 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO AMEND CHAPTER 240 ENTITLED "RENT CONTROL"

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>absent</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 26-150. 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) **26-151/**To Approve Bill List
- b) **26-152/**To Approve Grant Cancellation – FY 2026 Distracted Driver Grant
- c) **26-153/**To Approve Purchase – Two (2) Stryker Power – Pro Stretchers - Howmedica Osteonics Corp, D.B.A. Stryker Sales, LLC.
- d) **26-154/**To Approve Proposal – Amendment to Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan
- e) **26-155/**To Approve Contract Amendment for the Supply and Planting of Trees – Victoria’s Nursery
- f) **26-156/**To Approve Purchase and Installation of Equipment to Upfit One (1) 2026 Chevrolet Tahoe PPV 4WD Vehicle for the Police Department – Elite Emergency Lights LLC d/b/a Elite Vehicle Solutions
- g) **26-157/**To Approve the Purchase of One (1) 2026 Chevrolet Tahoe PPV 4WD Vehicle for the Police Department – Mark Anthony Chevrolet d/b/a Pellegrino Chevrolet
- h) **26-158/**To Approve the Purchase and Installation of Equipment to Upfit One (1) 2026 Ford F-250 Vehicle for the Fire Department – East Coast Emergency Lighting, Inc.
- i) **26-159/**To Approve Purchase – One (1) 2026 Ford F-250 Vehicle for the Fire Department – Nielsen Ford of Morristown Inc.
- j) **26-160/**To Reject Bids - Metzler’s Brook Stream Clearing and Bank Stabilization Project
- k) **26-161/**To Approve Proposal – Sanitary and Storm Cleaning Video Inspection and Repairs – National Water Main Cleaning Company
- l) **26-162/**To Authorize Rebid – Revaluation Services

Motion by Councilperson Pascual to approve the Consent Resolution. Councilperson Lodato 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>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>absent</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Public Hearing on the Submission of a 2026 Bergen County Trust Fund Grant

Application for Park Developments to Edwin Grube Park

1. Presentation.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that for the park has been run down. The borough is proposing to give the park a facelift with a high school size basketball court. In addition, the borough hopes to upgrade the park equipment, improve the fencing, and install ADA compliant equipment as well.

2. Public Comments on the Application.

John Smith, resident, stated that there is another Veteran's Park on Hallberg Avenue. Years ago, people tore down the trees and removed the basketball court. He inquired if the borough will also seek grant funding to replace the basketball court and fix that park as well.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that the borough can certainly seek funding to improve that park.

Maria Ng, resident, inquired if the park will be fixed prior to applying for the grant.

Mr. Gallo stated that the borough needs to the apply for the grant prior to completing the improvements.

3. Adoption of Enabling Resolution.

26-163/To Approve the Submission of a 2026 Bergen County Trust Fund for Park Development Grant Funding for Edwin Grube Park

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Pascual, that Resolution #26-163 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>absent</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Public Hearing on South Presbyterian Church Submission of a 2026 Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Application

1. Presentation.

Melissa Naylis, Elder of South Presbyterian Church, stated that South Presbyterian Church is applying for a grant from the Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund, to restore our historic graveyard. Mrs. Naylis stated that as part of the application process, we are required to hold a public hearing on municipal resolution of acknowledgment for nonprofit applicants. Mrs. Naylis respectfully requests the Mayor and Council's support for this project and asked that a resolution be passed for our records. She further stated that South Presbyterian Church is not seeking or requesting any financial assistance for the borough, and that the grant is to restore the historic headstones in our cemetery. She expressed that many of these markers are deteriorating due to age, weather, and environmental factors. Preserving them is essential to honoring our community's heritage, safeguarding the memory of those who came before us, and maintaining the dignity of the historic site for current and future generations. She expressed that for those who don't know, our cemetery is over 300 years old.

2. Public Comments on the Application.

Mayor Amatorio stated that South Presbyterian Church has our full support with your application and we'll do everything to help you get grant.

3. Adoption of Municipal Resolution of Acknowledgement for South Presbyterian Church Application as a Non-Profit.

26-164/To Approve Resolution of Acknowledgement for the 2026 Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Application by South Presbyterian Church

Motion by Council President Almonte, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #26-164 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>absent</i>
Council President Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

C. Board Recommendations and Appointments

PLANNING BOARD

Mayor appoints the following to serve on the Planning Board for the following terms:

Ariel Forman Class IV Member, unexpired 4-year term, term exp. 12/31/27

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Council President Almonte recommends and nominates the following to serve as members of the Zoning Board of Adjustment:

Gregory Martin Alternate #1, 2-year term, term exp. 12/31/27
Diana Cifuentes Alternate #2, 2-year unexpired. term, term exp. 12/31/26

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that the nominations be confirmed.

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>absent</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 Lodato 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.

Maria Ng, resident, stated that at the last meeting, the reserve for uncollected taxes was discussed. Mrs. Ng inquired what is the equation used to determine the percentage of uncollected taxes. Mrs. Ng also inquired if there is a conflict of interest to have Paul Lerch prepare the budget and then his firm audits the Borough's operations.

Nelson Reynoso, resident, stated that at the last meeting, it was stated that the drug problems were under control. Yet, on May 5th, there was a drug bust in Bergenfield and no one was notified. Mr. Reynoso stated that many people are concerned about this, and inquired why no one was notified that this was going on. He further inquired what is the Board's plan to continue to fight this problem, not only in Bergenfield, but for surrounding towns.

John Smith, resident, distributed a letter referenced to the Planning Board to the governing body. He requested that the governing body consider an ordinance about generators and air conditioning units, to have residents move them to the back of their homes. He stated that there is nothing in the current ordinance that talks about the location where the generators and air conditioners should be placed. Mr. Smith further stated that on the Zoning Board, as part of the application, we tell residents that they need to place the generators and air conditioning units in the rear of their home. But, when residents receive their CO, they move the units to the site of their home. He stated that there are numerous noise complaints. He further stated that back in August, he provided an article on how other municipalities are addressing overnight parking. He stated that during a snow emergency, people have no issues finding parking. Residents call in their cars 365 days a year. He stated that residents are lazy, others have to do with the illegal apartments. Mr. Smith also expressed that the drug problem is not a borough problem. The Police Department cannot go into the schools unless they are called. He inquired what is the Board of Education doing about this.

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

Mayor Amatorio stated that the Building Department is working on an ordinance pertaining to generators and air conditioning units.

Councilperson Kornbluth asked if other municipalities have anything like this.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that the information will be researched and that the Construction Official/Zoning Official is looking into it.

Borough Attorney Schettino explained that most towns require some kind of screening to cover generators or AC units, they need to comply with the set back.

Councilperson Pascual inquired about the air conditioners mounted on the walls, the split units.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated that by statute, the Borough has to appoint an independent Auditor. The Audit has specific rules and regulations they need to follow. If they don't follow the rules, they can potentially lose their license. It is not a conflict of interest. Mr. Schettino explained the process to calculate the reserve for uncollected taxes percentage. He provided an example to explain, that if the Borough of Bergenfield has one million dollars to collect in taxes, but for whatever reason, due to economic hardship, the town only collects \$990,000 in taxes, then the borough is \$10,000.00 short of the total that should've been collected. That is the percentage of uncollected taxes. The remaining balance is the percentage reserves in the budget.

Mr. Gallo stated that in regards of the police activity last week, the investigation was not conducted by the Borough of Bergenfield Police Department. He further explained that the investigation was conducted by the Bergen County Prosecutors Office Narcotic Task Force. He stated that numerous towns were involved and they coordinated with our detectives on the day they acted. The governing body wasn't aware of the police action, until it was done. He stated that for obvious reasons, no one knew. No one should know when this is going to happen, as we cannot people at risk. This is

standard operating procedure. The narcotic task force had probable cause to be there with search warrant for the home. Mr. Gallo stated that every town has a drug problem, and it is unfortunate. The issue exists and we are doing the best we can to coordinate the best we can. He stated that if anyone see something or has any information, and they do not feel comfortable calling the Police Department, they can call me and I will disseminate the information, it will be confidential.

Mr. Schettino stated that most schools have grant programs that involve drug prevention programs through the school system, because they have the access to educate the students and parents. The cooperation of the public is also needed to inform the Police Department of any issues.

Mayor Amatorio stated that the borough has an active Municipal Alliance Committee ran by a school counselor, and the Mayor's Wellness Program is also partnering with the high schoolers to bring information and safe activities to the schools. The Bergenfield Police Department is doing their best job. We have been recognized as a safe town for several years. We recognize this may be a problem and we collaborate with the County and other towns to address the issue.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that the town has many outreach programs, such as the Junior Police Academy. The foundation of the program is mentorship to build leadership and teach children how to be a good person, throughout conversation of right and wrong. Mr. Gallo further stated that another program is Bike with a Cop, which involves a safety program on bicycles, but is an outreach program to strengthen community ties.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor and Council thanked all for coming. Councilperson Pascual reminded everyone that Memorial Day will be recognized on May 25, 2026. The Fire Department will be holding its ceremony at 10:00 a.m. at Cooper's Pond. The Veteran's Advisory Committee will be at 11:00 a.m. at Borough Hall. The parade will begin at 12:30 p.m., the line up will begin at 12:00 p.m. Then, everyone is invited to the VFW post for hotdogs and hamburgers. He also commented that the Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, June 2nd. He expressed that regardless on who you vote for, get out there and vote!

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION 26-165/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

1. Attorney-Client Privilege/Personnel
 - A. Health 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 Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Lodato, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 8:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Lodato, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk