

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING
JUNE 16, 2026
8:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Council President Almonte, and Council members Thomas 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 8:04 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."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Lodato.

AGENDA CHANGES

Council President Almonte motioned to add the following to add the following items to the agenda:

- Correspondence Item D: Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion and Field on August 2, 2026
- Ordinance for Introduction: Ordinance 26-2669 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 299 of the Code of the Borough of Bergenfield, Entitled "Vehicles and Traffic"
- Resolution #26-192 to Approve Award for Purchase, Delivery, and Set-up for Two Washers and Two Drying Cabinets for the Fire Department – EAC Business International LLC dba Aghua Tech LLC
- Resolution #26-193 to Approve Award for IT Consulting & Management Services – AMHI Technology Holdings LLC dba Education Technology Integrators
- Resolution #26-197 to Hire Part-Time Violations Clerk – Marlene De Los Santos
- Closed Session: Redevelopment and Financial Agreements – Added to Closed Session for Discussion.

Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth to approve minutes of the May 19, 2026 Regular Public Meeting and the May 19, 2026 Closed Session Minutes (not to be released). Councilperson Rivera 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.

John Smith, resident, stated that with reference to purchasing vehicles, he inquired that what happens when an engine ceases on a vehicle, if it needs repairs, who makes the decision that the vehicle goes off the road. He stated that all the purchases are for the Department of Public Works and the Police Department. He inquired what happened with the vehicles for the BVAC and Fire Department. Mr. Smith stated that borough needs to look into purchasing new vehicles for the Fire Department. He noted that one of their vehicles is operating with a cracked frame, and another vehicle is over 25 years old. They respond to the fire and do a good job with the equipment they have. He commented that when you look at buying vehicles for departments, you need to look across the board.

Barry Doll, resident, thanked the Mayor and Council, Borough Administrator, and all the employees for putting on a very nice program at Coopers Pond for Flag Day. He expressed that it was very well done and very educational. Thank you for your cooperation. He inquired with regards to the Audit, the certification of the audit and the approval of the correction action plan. He stated that he couldn't find anything on the audit in the paperwork received. He commented that to go through an audit in 15 minutes is very difficult. He inquired what was in the audit and asked if that could be sent out ahead of time with the agenda as an attachment. He also stated that this is not in any derogatory way, but he noticed that a Councilman's son will be hired for a clerical position in the Borough. He understands he was recently hired, and must have done a very good job that he was asked to come back. He inquired what is happening.

Diana Flagg, resident, inquired whether there is a nepotism ordinance in Bergenfield and questioned the hiring of the Councilman's son.

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

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that with regards to the equipment, over the last couple of years, the borough has purchased SUVs, a utility truck, and various equipment per the Fire Department's request. He stated that when you look to purchase a fire truck, a ladder truck is about 2 million, and a pumper is about 1 million. These are items we have been planning for because of their costs. We work with the Fire Department and support them with their needs. We purchased the SBCAs for their breathing apparatus and are in the process of integrating that equipment. We recently purchased their washers and dryers, and purchased the utility truck.

Mayor Amatorio stated that the Police Department and DPW purchased trucks and a command vehicle was purchased for the Fire Department based on the specifications they provided. Mayor Amatorio explained that annually, all department heads are asked for the needs of their department. Depending on the budget capacity, we will try to purchase all they need. We look forward to purchasing additional fire trucks in the near future. Grant applications have been submitted with the help of Congressman Gottheimer.

Mr. Gallo further explained that with the road program and purchase of items, we run about 3.3 to 3.5 million a year. The year a pumper is purchased for 1.5 million, funding for roads and other departments will need to be cut. It eliminates half of the borough's budget. He expressed that we do try to maintain a discipline financially.

Councilperson Rivera requested clarification from the Fire Chief, to confirm the age of the fire trucks. Fire Chief Zadrozna confirmed that one truck is 28 years old, and another is turning 30 years old this year. Councilperson Rivera requested this information for the record.

Mr. Gallo further stated that with regards to the Audit, it has been posted online. All the documents have been posted. With regards to the findings, we did very well. He explained that a

note was received this year, related to an accounting issue pertaining to the payments to the Board of Education. He explained that the borough noticed the issue in advance and informed the auditor. Given the difference in fiscal year versus calendar year budgets, the Board of Education payments vary between 5 to 6 payments, which resulted in one of the payments being posted improperly. The audit documents can be found under finance documents on the website. Mr. Gallo further explained that with regards to nepotism, the hiring involves a temporary part-time position to scan documents. He stated that the building department records are completely digitized to current date. The staff is extremely busy due to the high volume of permits they are issuing and have boxes of records that need to be scanned. In order to ensure this is done, the borough is hiring a college student who is capable of doing it, knows the system, as a temporary part-time summer hire for a few weeks at \$20 an hour, to scan the records. The employee will only be hired on a temporary basis for a few weeks. The employee isn't being hired for the summer or on a full-time basis. He expressed there is no nepotism involved. He further commented that we have hired people for summer camp, working for DPW on the back of a truck, and other positions in the past.

PRESENTATIONS

No presentations were made.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Borough Engineer Tino D'Amore of Remington & Vernick Engineers stated that the 2026 road program is fully under construction, including the parking lot and the roads coming into the lot. D&L Paving Contractors is performing the work, and subbed out the work to another contractor that is completing the work ahead of schedule. They will continue to work in the next couple of weeks. He also reported that the bid opening for NJDOT funded road Porter Avenue was held last Thursday, and D&L Paving Contractors was also the lowest responsible bidder. The recommendation to award is on the agenda this evening. They will complete the work when they conclude the 2026 road program.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that the roads being done this year as part of the 2026 road improvement program are the two streets coming into Borough Hall, the north side parking lot, the parking lot by the cell tower. In addition to that, Brook Street, Harcourt, North Queen, Rivera Way – which is the entrance of the PAL field, South Demarest, Wildrose, and Porter Avenue. These roads are all being done this year.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if all the roads will be done on schedule by the fall and whether the engineers have coordinated with utility companies.

Mr. D'Amore confirmed that all roads will be done on schedule by the fall and the utility companies have all been informed of the roadwork.

CORRESPONDENCE

a.) Mejia/Resident

RE: Request to Reserve Hickory Field for Birthday Party/June 20, 2026/1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

b.) Ballo/Bergenfield Public Library

RE: Request to Reserve Coopers Pond for Community Program – Petting Zoo/Sunday, October 18, 2026/12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

c.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers

RE: Personnel Action Letters dated May 11, 2026 and June 8, 2026

d.) Pardo/Resident

RE: Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion and Field for Party/August 2, 2026/ 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinance

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinance published herewith was first read by title only on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

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

Public Comments on Ordinance 26-2667.

No one came forward.

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Deauna, to pass Ordinance 26-2667 on second and final reading and are hereby adopted and notice of same shall be published according to law.

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

Mayor Amatorio read the title of the ordinances into the record:

ORDINANCE 26-2668 – AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILOT) SERVICE CHARGE SCHEDULE

ORDINANCE 26-2669 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 299 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC"

Motion by Councilperson Rivera, second by Council President Almonte, that **Ordinance 26-2668** be tabled.

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>

Motion by Councilperson Pascual that **Ordinance 26-2669** be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, July 21, 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. Council President Almonte seconded the motion.

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>

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 26-166. 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.

Councilperson Lodato requested that Resolution #26-167 be considered separately and be amended to remove reimbursement payment to the Borough Clerk in the amount of \$294.43. Councilperson Kornbluth seconded the motion.

- ~~26-167/To Approve Bill List – as amended~~
- **26-168/**To Approve Liquor License Renewals for the 2026-2027 License Term
(Borough Clerk)
- **26-169/**To Renew Inactive Liquor License – K1BBQ LLC (Borough Clerk)
- **26-170/**To Approve Person to Person Liquor License Transfer – Chapala Grill Restaurant LLC t/a Chapala Grill to AM Styles LLC d/b/a Chapala Grill – License No. 0203-33-012-011 (Borough Clerk)
- **26-171/**To Certify 2025 Audit (Borough CFO)
- **26-172/**To Approve Corrective Action Plan for 2025 Audit (Borough CFO)
- **26-173/**To Approve the Insertion of a Special Item of Revenue in the 2025 Budget for a Green Acres Grant – Chapter 159 (Borough CFO)
- **26-174/**To Approve Veteran’s Tax Exemption – 154 N. Prospect Avenue (Tax Collector)
- **26-175/**To Authorize Tax Refund – 125 W. Main Street (Tax Collector)
- **26-176/**To Authorize the Cancellation of Improvement Assessment and Approve Tax Refund for Fire Damaged Property – 166 W. Main Street (Tax Collector)
- **26-177/**To Approve Pay Certificate No. 3 Final and Change Order No. 1 Final – New Jersey Avenue Improvements – D&L Paving Contractors Inc. (Deputy CFO)
- **26-178/**To Approve Purchase – Stertil-Koni Mobile Column Lifts and Stands – Hoffman Services, Inc. (Deputy CFO)
- **26-179/**To Approve Purchase and Agreement – One (1) Labrie Automizer 31 Cubic Yard Right-Hand Side Loader Refuse Body with Options – Sanitation Equipment Corp. (Deputy CFO)
- **26-180/**To Approve Purchase – One (1) Autocar Truck Chassis – Hudson County Motors (Deputy CFO)
- **26-181/**To Approve Purchase – One (1) 2027 F-350 4x4 Super Duty Truck – Paramus Ford Inc dba All American Ford of Paramus (Deputy CFO)
- **26-182/**To Approve Purchase – Schaefer 95-Gallon Roll-out Carts – Sanitation Equipment Corp. (Deputy CFO)
- **26-183/**To Approve Purchase – One (1) Bandit Intimidator 18xP Hand-Fed Drum Chipper – Dujects Corporation dba Northeastern Arborist Supply (Deputy CFO)

- **26-184/**To Approve Proposal – Computer Equipment & Peripherals for GovPilot Government Management Platform – SHI International Corporation (*Deputy CFO*)
- **26-185/**To Authorize Rejection of Bid for Reevaluation Services (*Borough Administrator*)
- **26-186/**To Approve Shared Services Agreement – Snow Plowing and Salting Agreement of County Roads for 2026-2028 Term – County of Bergen (*Borough Administrator*)
- **26-187/**To Approve Purchase – Custom Ball Safety Netting System – Sportsfield Specialties, Inc. (*Borough Administrator*)
- **26-188/**To Authorize Inclusion in the Bergen County Community Development Program (*Borough Administrator*)
- **26-189/**To Authorize the Execution of an Agreement with the County of Bergen to Supersede the Cooperative Agreement dated July 1, 2024 and Amendments Thereto Establishing the Bergen County Community Development Program (*Borough Administrator*)
- **26-190/**To Authorize the Submission of a New Jersey Department of Transportation Local Aid Infrastructure Fund Application (*Grant Consultant*)
- **26-191/**To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 250-270 E. Main Street (*Tax Appeal Counsel*)
- **26-192/**To Approve Award – Purchase, Delivery, and Set Up of Two (2) Washers and Two (2) Drying Cabinets for Fire Department – EAC Business International LLC dba Ahgua Tech LLC (*Deputy CFO*)
- **26-193/**To Approve Award – IT Consulting & Management Services – AMHI Technology Holdings LLC dba Education Technology Integrators “ETI” (*Borough Administrator*)

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve the Consent Resolution as amended. Councilperson Kornbluth seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote on the 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>

Motion by Councilperson Lodato to approve Bill List Resolution #26-167 as amended. Councilperson Kornbluth seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote on the 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>

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth to approve reimbursement payment to the Borough Clerk in the amount of \$295.43. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote on the 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>recused</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>recused</i>

B. RESOLUTIONS

26-194/To Hire Part-Time Summer Laborers

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #26-194 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote on the 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>

26-195/To Hire Temporary Part-Time Clerical Employee – Marcus Pascual

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, that Resolution #26-195 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote on the 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>recused</i>

26-196/To Award Bid and Approve Contract – Porter Avenue Road Improvements – D&L Paving Contractors

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, that Resolution #26-196 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote on the 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>recused</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

26-197/To Hire Part-Time Violations Clerk – Marlene De Los Santos

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Council President Almonte, that Resolution #26-197 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote on the 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>

Councilperson Rivera made a motion to allow the borough to keep the lights on at the fields on Sunday evening from 6:00 p.m. till 9:30 p.m. at Vivyen Field. Councilperson Kornbluth seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

No unfinished business.

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.

Frederick Sahlberg, resident, congratulated Mayor Amatorio's son for joining the military, and thanked him for his service and wished him a safe career. He stated that Sunday was Flag Day, a day in the United States to honor the American flag. It is a day of honor for the national flag, which is red, white, and blue. He expressed that he is disappointed that flag day was celebrated at Cooper's Pond, which was extremely well presented, but later in the afternoon, the flag of the Philippines, a separate nation, was raised at Borough Hall. He stated that Flag Day is only for the American flag. Mr. Sahlberg stated that the Philippine Flag could have been raised any other day on Friday, Saturday, the following week, but it should have never been done on Flag Day. He doesn't understand why flag day was chosen to raise another country's flag. He expressed that he believes Flag Day is the second most important day aside from the 4th of July to celebrate America and honor the American flag. He thanked Borough Administrator Gallo and Councilperson Kornbluth for keeping the American flag shirt on.

Gina Marie Agderian, resident, stated this is the second meeting she is attending since her father was sworn-in as a police officer. She is homegrown Bergenfield, she was raised here, went through Franklin School, middle school and the high school, and still lives here. She stated that she and many others are extremely disappointed in the direction this town is going. She is disappointed that another country's flag is flown on our Flag Day. She expressed that she is a proud Italian woman, I would never consent to the Italian flag being flown on Flag Day. She further expressed that she is very upset with overdevelopment in the borough. Her parents moved her here from Fairview. Bergenfield was a safe haven for her parents to raise her in. She stated that this place is being turned into a city, and it is not right. She stated the overdevelopment is disgusting as well as all the speed humps. She expressed that they need to reconsider the redevelopment plans, as no one wants to live in a city. She also stated to never raise another flag on Flag Day, find another day. She is incredibly disappointed.

Cherise Infante, resident, stated that she attended the Zoning Board and Planning Board meeting yesterday, and stated that she is also very upset over the over development in the borough, as we are turning into a city. She inquired if tax abatements have been granted to the buildings being erected on Washington Avenue.

Mayor Amatorio stated that there has been an application made, but it is under consideration and has been voted on.

Ms. Infante stated that yesterday she was told that her taxes would be lower because of the tax abatements. She would like to make sure that taxpayers would not be affected by the tax

abatements if they are in place for 20-25 years. She expressed that she is upset over the developments in town as this is supposed to be a suburban town. It is being turned into a city. She stated that she is speaking on behalf of the majority of Bergenfield residents, that buildings being erected all over town are causing traffic and congestion. Many buildings are being built in the same area, making commutes 20-25 minutes when it would normally take 3 minutes.

Desiree Paton, resident, stated that she would like to expand on Gina and Cherise's comments. She stated that on the corner of Terhune and Washington Avenue, there is a 25-unit apartment building being erected in a B2 zone, of 2 stories of all residential units, no mixed use. She would like to know how this is possible for B2 zoning. Now, there is discussion of a 45-unit apartment building, 4 stories, on .6 acres of land, with no ample parking. She inquired how this was changed for redevelopment, as it is not a DEF zone. It is right next to Roy W. Brown Middle School, and is offering a sorry excuse for a retail store, a bagel store for 11-13-year old to shop, to make it a mixed-use building. She inquired how this is happening, and inquired why only the people within 200 feet received notification. She stated that she lives about 500 feet from both developments, and never received any notice. She expressed that everyone receives notice on flag day and family fun day, they should have also received notice on this. She expressed that you work for us, not the developers, and what good can come from a 45 unit building on that lot of land for Bergenfield. It is spot zoning for one developer. It is going to lead to congestion. She inquired if research has been done at the other sites to understand how traffic will be impacted. She stated that they are not considering the other developments down the road, as well as the other businesses such as McDonalds and Dunkin Donuts. Since 1963, she has lived in Bergenfield, married and purchased a home here, her children grew up here and purchased condos here. People come to Bergenfield for the good school system, which is now being compromised. This was being discussed like it is a done deal, but we need to stop it.

Sonia Chapman Newman, resident, expressed that she agrees with almost everything that has been said. She stated that she thanks Borough Administrator Corey Gallo for taking the time to speak with them and addressing their concerns. She further expressed that she has one more question pertaining to parking. Ms. Chapman stated that she understands that Dumont eliminated their overnight parking to allow for vehicles to be parked on the street overnight. She stated that one way to demonstrate that your small town is being turned into a city is when you allow cars to be parked on the street all night long. She is wondering if there have been any discussions amongst yourselves about eliminating overnight parking.

Diana Flagg, resident, expressed that her shirt is a reminder of the old Bergenfield, when the borough was a friendly town. There are no more friendships, as you do not care about how we react to your actions. When you planned Filipino day, which you are entitled to, it was held in a public place. All decisions need to be voted on by the Mayor and Council publicly. She expressed that tax bills were received yesterday and residents received another tax increase. She inquired what happened to the millions of dollars the borough was supposed to rake in from the marijuana farm. She stated they are open and inquired if we have received the millions to reduce our taxes. Ms. Flagg expressed that it is time to tighten their belts and go to the boards that they appointed and tell them to cut off these apartments, because how much more Section 8 do we need in this town.

Nelson Reynoso, resident, stated that he moved to the New York City many years ago in search of a friendly town, and when he first arrived, it was a friendly town. I truly don't know what happened, everything started changing and now there is overdevelopment. He agrees with development, but it needs to be done responsibly. He stated that he wants to examine the ordinances passed in 2023 that opened the floodgates to allow these developers to come to our town. Mr. Reynoso stated that while he was running for office, he spoke with residents who have been living here for over 40 years and inquired what he will do to bring back the old Bergenfield. The Council was elected to represent us, not the other way around. He expressed that we can work together. He asked if the

redevelopment plans will be reopened for review and if the community will be allowed in to discuss, as these decisions can no longer be made behind closed doors. At the next meeting, people will flood this place. We want to work together, not separately.

Jennifer Barry, resident, stated she moved to Bergenfield as a mom because ten years ago, her and her husband moved here for a better quality of life and for better schools for her kids. She expressed that she and her husband made a big effort to come here because it would be better for her kids. She has been very happy raising her kids here, but now she is concerned. The schools are receiving more kids and teachers have more kids in the classroom. She understands more people will come here, but she doesn't hear a plan. She inquired what will happen to the schools when they have more kids and teachers have more students in their classrooms. She stated there is a lot of congestion and traffic in town especially on Clinton Avenue, the lines are long. I see the development, but doesn't hear or see a plan.

Jose Delgado, resident, stated that he is upset with overdevelopment. He stated that living on Murray Hill Terrace, the traffic is constantly rerouted to Murray Hill Terrace, which creates noise, pollution, and crime. He expressed that cars are constantly parking on Murray Hill Terrace, you cannot even navigate the street on a good day. He expressed that his concern is that we keeping adding and adding to a small town. He moved away from a big city, but is starting to see what he left behind.

Barry Doll, resident, stated that he is delighted that residents have come here tonight to discuss the overdevelopment that has been going on in this town. He expressed that he sued the Zoning Board and a developer because they wanted to build two family houses on property that is only 5,000 square feet, and won. If residents want to discuss filing a suit, he is glad to work with you. He received his tax bill yesterday and for an average home appraised at the average \$320,000, he received 8% increases in his taxes. He asked what the borough is doing about it.

John Smith, resident, stated that he is happy to see people finally showing up to the meetings, but what they are complaining about, the Mayor and Council have no control over. Yes, the governing body appoints the members, but they are separate boards. All their information is on the borough website. He stated that with regards to the traffic, he shared an article with the governing body about Fair Lawn's action on overnight parking. He stated that residents want to do away with overnight parking, but the moment that happens, this town will turn into a city. He stated that people cannot drive down the street on Murray Hill Terrace because people park on both sides of the street, but that is an enforcement issue. He expressed that nobody does anything about it because you can go on the computer and request to park on the street. He stated if the borough does away with overnight parking, there will be more crime in this town. He expressed its laziness because people can find parking for 2-3 days when there is snow on the road. Mr. Smith stated that the 10 S. Washington project is coming up and invited everyone to join him at the Zoning Board meeting on July 13th. He stated it shouldn't be approved because there is no parking and the Fire Department is against it. He stated the borough should have a new master planner. With regards to overdevelopment, the property everyone is referring to was offered to the Board of Education and they turned it down. He expressed that with the 8% increase in taxes, 62% of taxes goes to the schools. Residents need to attend the school board meetings to ask about the increase to their taxes. Teachers nowadays complain because they have 20 students. He stated that when he was in school, teachers had more than 25 kids. Nowadays, they have 20 kids, but they also have aides. It's ridiculous, that's where the complaints need to go. Mr. Smith expressed that the Memorial Day ceremony was beautiful. He thanked the Mayor and Council, Borough Administrator, the DPW, PD, and all that made the event happen. The floral arrangements were beautiful and he loves the new banners.

Brian Gilligan, resident, expressed his congratulations to Councilmembers Marc Pascual and Domingo Almonte for winning the election. Mr. Gilligan stated that he lives on Beucler Place and has an office on Woodbine, and sometimes it takes him 25 minutes to go from his home to his office due to traffic. He stated that there are some matters he rather not bring up, but he will for answers. He expressed that he hears the gossip. He received his tax bill and sees that taxes have gone up. He also understands that there was a flag ceremony that was recently held. He inquired if taxpayers paid for this flag event. He also expressed that there are many rumors going around regarding the swindling of \$20,000 to \$100,000 from the borough. He inquired if everyone is aware of the rumor and if it is being investigated. He stated that the rumor is that the check is being signed by certain people.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that he is unaware of this rumor and would like to hear more about it. He expressed it is fake news.

Mr. Gilligan expressed that he heard there were issues involving the Public Health Nurse and the Mayor's wife.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated that a few nights a month, she attends all Mayor and Council meetings, Zoning Board and Planning Board meetings to find out what is going on in town. She stated that it would be nice if many people that are complaining would attend these meetings and understand what is going on. The borough has little control about what is going on because the borough is under a mandate, by judiciary and State government, to have a number of affordable apartments built. She commented that this is happening in every town in this County. Some municipalities have taken this matter to court and all have lost. She suggested that people become more informed and start going on the phone, on the computer, and sending letters to the Governor, Attorney General, and representatives in the State, and say to them you want something changed. They need to make the changes otherwise the developments will continue. It's always the same five people at the meeting. It would be nice if people became more involved. She stated that we have all spoken out against it, but I am usually the lone voice.

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, to close Verbal Communications II. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated there were several issues raised about the notices on the developments that take place. First, that is all controlled by State Statute. There are notices that have to be provided either designating an area for redevelopment or development. The notices have to be provided by law to residents within 200 feet. The notices used to be published in the newspaper, but now can be placed on the borough website. This is what the State legislature determined is sufficient notice to be provided to residents in any community, not just in Bergenfield. Perhaps some of you were unaware, but as Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Smith mentioned, you can go on the borough's website and you will be fully informed as to all applications that are being presented for development in this municipality. Now, with respect to the redevelopment areas, that is also governed by State Statute. It is not spot zoning. It would be spot zoning if it weren't for the criteria and redevelopment laws that need to be followed. There isn't only one hearing, there are multiple public hearings when a property is designated as an area in need of redevelopment. In order to be considered an area in need of redevelopment, it needs to meet certain criteria. There is a study that is done by the municipal planner, a hearing held based on the study, and the Planning Board decides whether they believe the area should be designated an area in need of redevelopment. There is no tax abatement, there is a payment in lieu of taxes, a payment made to the borough, which has to be at least the equivalent or often more, than they paid upon receiving approval. They also have to pay tax on the land. The payment in lieu of taxes is based upon the revenue that is generated by the property. If they have 10 apartments that generate \$200,000 in gross revenue, not net, they make a payment to the town based on the gross revenue. Now, the

reason to offer the PILOT is because State law requires municipalities have affordable housing. I know there was a comment made about Section 8 housing. There is nothing wrong with people that qualify for Section 8. I deal with Section 8 recipients and they are hardworking people who unfortunately cannot receive high paying jobs, but would like a good education for their children and good living for their families. The fact that they receive assistance doesn't make them undesirable. In any event, someone that needs rental assistance is someone who is struggling to make ends meet and receive assistance from a program from the State of New Jersey. As many of you know, there is a housing crisis. Rents are extremely high and the value of homes is going through the roof. If you purchased your home several years ago, the value of your home has doubled. This is good for you, but it isn't good for young families looking to buy a home. A home valued at \$300,000 is now valued at \$700,000 and it needs work. There is an affordable housing crisis. The State legislature decided that the communities should meet that requirement by providing affordable housing. In order to force developers to rent units below market rent at \$1,000 instead of \$3,000, is by receiving more density than they typically would. This is happening all over. As Ms. Sullivan said, when municipalities bring this to court, they spend a lot of money, and they lose. He explained that 20% has to be set aside as affordable housing units. This is part of the 4 rounds of affordable housing, where municipalities have to show the courts how they will meet their needs. Prior to 4th round, there was a 15% set aside. Now it's a higher set aside. The higher percentage of the set aside, the higher the density the developers can receive. He stated this is the end product. Most developers wanted double, and the Mayor and Council stated that cannot happen. There is no giveaway. Developers wanted to have more units and less parking, but there has to be compromise. I answered the question on the notices, transparency, why there is more density and the affordable housing obligation. There is such a crisis in the State, there is bipartisan legislation introduced to allow any religious organization to build up to 40 units per acre, on their property, without town approval. Religious organizations will be able to build 40 units, 5 stories high, without approval. This is being proposed because of the housing crisis. As for cannabis, once they open, they will have to pay a minimum of 2% of their gross revenue to the municipality. If and when the facility opens, they will pay. The more business they do, the more revenue generated, and the borough will receive the benefit of the 2%. That is the law, it is not optional. Mr. Schettino stated that property taxes have gone up everywhere across the country. He explained that property taxes are broken up into 4 components and the municipality only receives one. He stated that of every dollar paid, it takes about 60 cents of the dollar to run the schools, which has their own budget. He stated that 10% goes to the County for the County parks and facilities, and a small percentage goes to the Public Library, which is mandated by State statute. If you are concerned with taxes, you need to attend the school board meetings, and ask why the school budget is high. Bergenfield has a good school system, but it is going to cost the residents. New Jersey has highest rate per pupil in the State.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that with regards to the speedhumps, he received many complaints of people driving fast on roadways, and there were certain areas that had accidents, like the intersection of W. Central and Prospect, where there were 11 accidents as a result of left-hand turns. A sign was put up and people ignored it. Therefore, the speedhump was put in. Since the installation, there have been no accidents at the intersection. As such, speedhumps started to be placed around areas that were deemed problematic. They may be an inconvenience, but they slowed the traffic down. Streets are safer now because people are forced to slow down, or you lose the bottom of your car. Most complaints have been made by people that live outside of the town that drive through town. He expressed that the feedback received is usually very positive and people have asked for more. This is the first time he receives a negative complaint on speed humps. He further stated that we cannot discuss personnel matters, but the Public Health Nurse is no longer employed by the borough. With regards to theft, she had no access to money. There has been no theft reported nor am I aware of any monies missing in any of the departments. There is no cash in our departments and I physically sign every check. There is a purchase order process and then checks are issued once approved by the bill list. He explained that every check has three

signatures, one live signature, which is his. He expressed that if he had access to the Bergenfield Moms Facebook page, he would clarify the same. He stated that he would address all the trash that is shared on the page, because if someone committed theft, he would have no problem placing them in jail.

Mayor Amatorio stated that to mention his wife's name is malicious and very political. He stated his wife has no access to checks nor involvement in finances. She is member and volunteers in committees helping the programs. She has no access to funds.

Mr. Gallo confirmed that the Mayor's wife has zero access to funds. He stated that there are employees assigned to committees and they volunteer their time to serve them for continuity. But, there is a distinct difference from them using their time and theft. Theft is not tolerated. He would like to find the basis and foundation behind this.

Mayor Amatorio stated that I can assure you that all our actions and desires are in the best interest of the community. We are not trying to change the character of the borough. In terms of development, the development that we are allowing is limited to the business district. It will not go into the residential areas. It is only proposed for dilapidated buildings upon proper application and proposals by land owners and developers. Financially, taxes were raised based on costs that are outside of our control, such as health benefits. He stated that a small portion went to expenses.

Mr. Gallo stated that we are required to provide employee health benefits, which cost 1.5 million this year. The pension cost for the Police Department alone was \$496,000. That is a total of 2 million. He explained that every \$340,000 is spent is a tax point. He stated that at 2 million dollars, that is 7%. He inquired how do you propose generating that revenue. He also inquired what should be done with the property next to Roy Brown Middle School. He explained that there are two choices. The property can be left as is, which is undesirable, or it is development. He inquired if a fast food restaurant should be there instead.

Councilperson Rivera stated that a third choice was for the school district to purchase the building, but they were not interested.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato stated developments or redevelopments are ongoing and will continue in the future. He knows that everyone knows his position. He expressed that he doesn't oppose redevelopments, but it must be in moderation. He explained that his objections are based on building height and parking requirements. He stated that he isn't very flexible on those. There were two individuals that were at the Planning Board meeting last night. If they stayed, they would know that I voted no on the project due to parking and height. I will continue to take that position going forward. I know that the Mayor and Council understands those concerns as well.

Councilperson Deauna stated that we hear the concerns of the public, but we have no control on the decisions made by the boards. There are state laws that dictate. The applications are being considered by the Zoning Board, we have no control over that. I thank you for coming to meeting.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that with regards to Flag Day, the date that it was done, was probably not the best day. However, even at this event, there was a raising of the American Flag. The Flag Day ceremony was held at Cooper's Pond as requested by the Bergenfield Elks and Bergenfield Museum, because it is the oldest building, and it is historic. It was done there to accommodate their requests. He stated that the only person that was there was Mr. Doll and Mr. Sahlberg. It was beautifully done. There were dignitaries that were present at the event whose schedules only permitted that day. He explained that events were scheduled all other weekends like

Family Fun Day, Barrier Free Car Show, Father's Day. He stated that the timing wasn't the best. Respectfully, to say the American Flag wasn't recognized, is incorrect.

Council President Almonte stated that we hear and understand your concerns, and we thank you for coming to the meeting. I suggest that the same group and even more, attend the Board of Education meetings. We have been accused for raising taxes for many years, but people aren't educated on how this works. We see how Mr. Reynoso, who has been a member of the Board of Education for many years, has also worked on the budget, and can elaborate and bring people to their meetings. The Board of Education receives 60% of our taxes. We are all homeowners and we all pay taxes too. We also have our taxes raised every year. The monies that go to the schools, the borough has no control of that money. Thank you again for attending the meeting and I hope we can continue to see you fighting for your rights and raising your voices, because we are here to serve you and your community. Please don't only come when something affects you, come for the good of the community. Respect others how you want to be respected.

Councilperson Kornbluth thanked all for coming and for voicing your concerns. Whether or not we agree, we are here to serve the residents. Thank you for speaking out.

Councilperson Rivera stated that we also do not want to live in a city, but we want to improve the community of Bergenfield. He stated that everything we do, all the outreach, the projects, in all the months, is because we are trying to do what is best for everyone. Even if some don't agree, we do the best for all. He provided the example of the new municipal building. He stated that while some may not agree with the new building, this was built for the next 100 years, for future generations. He expressed that he is proud of that, as well as the Vivyen Field, which is considered one of the best fields of the 70 towns in Bergen County. He stated that given what is happening with the business district, many have asked what is happening, and why can't we have businesses like in other towns. He stated there is a need to create commercial areas for stores. We are focusing on commercial areas, not residential areas. If the vote for four stories is within my power, the vote is no. But, the voting power is within other people on the Zoning Board and Planning Board. They also vote on what is best for the community. We appoint them, but we cannot tell them how to vote. The boards are autonomous, they consider the projects and decide how to vote. We cannot tell them how to vote on the project. He advised the public to become more informed, check all the information, not just one side. Thank you for coming here, we are listening to you, and we are trying to do our best. If you can, allow us to join the Bergenfield moms Facebook page, and we will offer the correct information.

Councilperson Pascual stated that he takes pride in everything he does, he respects everyone, and he knows that people voted for him because they trust his decisions. He decided that he chose to be here to serve the community. It is not about power, it is about serving. He explained that he has been part of the redevelopment committee since the beginning, he heard many proposals, and many developers have been turned down. If you think this developer isn't good for our town, the others were turned away. There has been back and forth, positively, understands their concerns and will take them into consideration. He doesn't understand all the negativity. With regards to nepotism, corruption, there is no wrongdoing, we are transparent. It is insulting to say that there is money in our pockets, because if I knew of any wrongdoing, I'd personally expose them. I am here to be transparent and represent you, and go back and forth in a respectable manner. As for Flag Day, I take pride that I am in America. I am also from the Philippines. He expressed that he always respects our soldiers and thanks them for allowing him to have an American dream, and raise two kids in a nice friendly town, thanks to our Veterans. We work together, we may not always agree, but our doors are always open. This is great and we thank you for being here tonight.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION **26-198**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

A. Attorney-Client Privilege/Litigation Matters/Agreements

1. Professional Appointment
2. Massey v. Borough of Bergenfield
3. PBA Local 309 Agreement
4. Redevelopment and Financial Agreements

B. Personnel

1. Building Department Personnel
2. Health Department Personnel

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 Rivera, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9:56 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Lodato, second by Councilperson Kornbluth, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk