

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 7, 2021**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council President Hernando Rivera, Council members Thomas A. Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Rafael Marte, Ora Kornbluth, and Marc Pascual

ABSENT: No one.

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Administrator Corey Gallo  
Borough Attorney John Schettino  
Borough Clerk Marie Quinones

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 is sent to the Record, Star Ledger, Twin Boro News, and Cablevision, placed on two Municipal Bulletin Boards and is on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Lodato.

**AGENDA CHANGES**

Councilperson Kornbluth motioned to add Resolution #21-376 to Confirm Endorsements to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Projects – North Taylor Street Improvement Project and Resolution #21-377 to approve agreement for Public Road Resurfacing with SUEZ Water New Jersey Inc. to the Consent Agenda, and Resolution #21-378 supporting the location and operation of an Adult-Use Cannabis Cultivator and Manufacturer by Eleven Eleven may be approved after the Closed Session meeting.

**PRESENTATIONS**

A. Proclamation in Support of the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Campaign Holiday Crackdown

Mayor Amatorio read the proclamation into the record. Mayor Amatorio stated that even without the campaign, residents should be safe and not drive while impaired.

B. Presentation – Feed the Front Lines

Mayor Amatorio stated that the Mayor of Ridgewood, the County Commissioner, and borough officials have served more than 300,000 meals. The organization started their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and the borough is very appreciative of their generosity. The Mayor and Council presented Commissioner Ramon Hache and Jeanne Johnson with a plaque as a token of their appreciation.

Commissioner Hache thanked Mayor Amatorio and the council in recognition the work Feeding the Front Lines has done. They are proud of everything they have accomplished going beyond the measurable impact they have had in providing the number of meals. You receive a lot more in giving than receiving. They are humbled by the amount of cooperation of volunteers they have had. It is an example of how much can be accomplished when everyone works together to better the community.

Mayor Amatorio stated that the Bergenfield Museum collected fees from their recent events, and in turn would like to donate the same to the Bergenfield Food Pantry.

Barry Doll, Trustee, stated that he and several members of the Board of Trustees would like to present a \$300.00 check to the Food Pantry.

Mayor Amatorio thanked the members of the Bergenfield Museum for their generosity. The Mayor and Council presented a citation as a token of their appreciation.

### C. Presentation - Annual Insurance and Risk Management Report

Ezio Altamura, Risk Manager, stated that he would like to offer a matching donation for \$300.00 to the Bergenfield Food Pantry. Mr. Altamura reviewed the borough's insurance plan and coverages. He stated that the borough has a very low number of claims, and as such, the borough receives a better deductible. The borough has a MEL umbrella policy, million in coverages for volunteers, cyber security coverages for any data breaches, emergency services excess liability, and so on. Mr. Altamura stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most courses are offered via MSI live and are free for all members. He further stated that meetings are held quarterly with the Safety Coordinator and all department heads. The borough received an \$1,000 award, \$6,571 dividend, and \$9,033.00 credit for the Police Department's accreditation. Mr. Altamura stated that municipalities can expect to see an increase in claims due to the number of flooding issues.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

#### A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Rob Klein, Borough Engineer, stated that all the roads have been completed with the exception of Anderson Avenue, which will be completed in the spring.

Mayor Amatorio inquired with regards to PSE&G digging up roads that have already been paved.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that PSE&G cut into Spring Street last week, but they will make sure to infrared the road.

Mr. Klein stated that he will look into the matter. He stated that RVE notifies the utility companies when a road will be paved in anticipation that the road will be put on their list, in case they have to do any work on that road. He mentioned that PSE&G even created a database, and he keeps up with it to make sure.

Mr. Gallo will follow-up and send them a notification as well.

### ORDINANCES

#### A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinance published herewith was first read by title only on November 4, 2021 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

### **21-2588 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 299 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC"**

Public Comments on Ordinance 21-2588.

No one came forward.

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Marte, to pass Ordinances 21-2588 on second and final reading and are 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: *aye*  
Councilperson Deauna: *aye*  
Councilperson Marte: *aye*

Councilperson Kornbluth: *aye*  
Council President Rivera: *aye*  
Councilperson Pascual: *aye*

## B. Introduction of Ordinance

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, December 21, 2021 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 ordinances. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion.

Mayor Amatorio read the titles of the ordinance into the record:

### **21-2589- AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 232 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "PROPERTY MAINTENANCE"**

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Councilperson Lodato: *aye*  
Councilperson Deauna: *aye*  
Councilperson Marte: *aye*

Councilperson Kornbluth: *aye*  
Council President Rivera: *aye*  
Councilperson Pascual: *aye*

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No discussion.

## NEW BUSINESS

No discussion.

## ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that he met with the contractor and engineer regarding the new municipal building to review the timelines. He stated that he learned that the utility lines will need to be relocated, and so the work will start in the next coming weeks. Mr. Gallo stated that special projects engineer T&M Associates met with the NJDEP in hopes to streamline the work within the basins. Mr. Gallo stated that the NJDEP reiterated that the Borough cannot tamper with the water. The water must continue funneling while the borough is working on the basins. Mr. Gallo also stated that he is in the process of finalizing the details for the Twin Boro fields project. He anticipates that the bids will be done next year for the actual field work. Mr. Gallo stated that the turf and lights will be purchased under state contract. He also stated that the Holiday in the Park event was a great success. He thanked the Recreation Director, the Department of Public Works employees, and all the volunteers for their efforts. Mr. Gallo stated that his office is in the process of coordinating the volunteer dinner for December 15<sup>th</sup>. The Health Department held a COVID-19 vaccine clinic today at Conlon Hall for boosters for adults, and will have another clinic on December 9<sup>th</sup> and December 30<sup>th</sup> for COVID-19 vaccines for children. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, the Food Pantry received a donation of 150 turkeys for residents. Feeding the Front Lines has been donating 135 meals for seniors every week, and the same will continue through January.

## MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato

No report.

Councilperson Deauna

reported that the Board of Health has been very active distributing the vaccines and the governing body has been helping with serving food to seniors every Wednesday.

Councilperson Marte

reported that there are free baseball clinics being held at the High School every Sunday for children of all ages starting December 15<sup>th</sup> through February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Councilperson Kornbluth

reported that the BVAC has responded to 1,940 calls year to date. In November, they went on 214 calls as opposed to 148 calls in November 2020. Even with the increase in calls, the average response time has been reduced to under 3 minutes. OEM has filed for additional FEMA reimbursement for COVID-19 as well as working on reimbursements for Ida and other storms. All fall recreation sports have ended and winter sports have started. They started a volleyball program and started a free clinic. The Recreation Committee has been working with the schools to review more gym usage time. Holiday in the Park was a huge success. All the volunteers from the different organizations made it a great day.

Councilperson Pascual

No report.

Council President Rivera

No report.

Mayor Amatorio

reported that the governing body celebrated the opening of a new business at Foster Village. The Pediatric Urgent Care is an emergency care center with a state-of-the-art facility that will not compete with local physicians. The urgent care will attend to emergencies and refer patients back to their primary pediatrician. We extend our appreciation to Republic 23 for the 300 turkeys that were donated to our residents. The Board of Health is holding vaccination clinics today and Thursday, and will accommodate everyone, including children, who wish to be vaccinated. The parking issues on Hickory Avenue have been resolved as the building department officials and the Police Department came to a solution with the landlord. The Volunteer Fire Department will be holding their parade of lights on December 19<sup>th</sup> and the PBA is currently holding a toy drive for anyone who wishes to donate.

## CORRESPONDENCE

a.) De La Cruz/Girls Scout Troop #97137

**RE:** Request to Reserve Cooper's Pond for Holiday Celebration/Saturday, December 18, 2021/4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

b.) Moroses/Friends of the Bergenfield Library

**RE:** Request to hold Town-Wide Garage Sales in 2022/April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and October 8<sup>th</sup> – October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022/9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Motion by Councilperson Marte, seconded by Councilperson Kornbluth, and all members present voting in favor, to approve Correspondence Items A through B. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

Irwin & Sharon Motechin, 41 Highgate Terrace, stated they have a driveway that only holds two cars. They also have adult children that have vehicles that poses two issues. They park their cars on the street, which creates a barrier for the police, but they have to sign-in every evening to be able to park their cars on the street. He inquired if there was a way to get a pass or register their vehicles so they wouldn't have to call the police department every night. The second issue is that they were not able to register their cars due to leaf pick up. He inquired what can be done in this situation.

Stephen Wohlberg, 47 Highgate Terrace, stated he has been living in the same home for 20 years with his wife and adult son. They have three cars, but their driveway is not long enough. He stated that in the evening of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 12:30 a.m. in the morning, they received a ticket for the for blocking the sidewalk for the very first time. The police commissioner/captain told his wife that they are not allowed to park in the front and block the sidewalk and they had forgotten to sign in that night. He requested that the homeowner be allowed to park in front of their own home without having to sign-in every night. He stated the crosswalk on New Bridge Road by the Church of God Shepherd is very busy and dangerous, even with a crossing guard present. The traffic should be enforced by the police department. He commented that cars zoom by and do not stop for the pedestrians. Police officers can also help pedestrians cross the street.

John Smith, resident, inquired who will be enforcing the new property maintenance ordinance. It cost him over \$1500 to get his wife's and daughter's cars to get fixed because the code enforcer does not want to issue a summons to a contractor doing work and the contractor told him to sue him. He called the code enforcer today since his fence is down. Mr. Smith stated that the borough is paying the employee a lot of money and no one is enforcing it. Mr. Smith inquired when the pedestrian signs are going to be put up. Mr. Smith stated people are walking in the middle of the street on New Bridge Road at 9:30 p.m. wearing black clothing and it is a dangerous situation. There are tree branches on Prospect Avenue and Clinton Avenue that are blocking the street light. Mr. Smith stated that many residents are complaining about parking. Councilman Lodato stated in September that the board would look into an ordinance regarding the number of vehicles permitted per home. Mr. Smith stated that he also mentioned this at the Zoning Board of Adjustment meetings several times. Mr. Smith commented that people want to have homes with six bedrooms, but do not have enough room to park their cars. The ordinance does not address the requirement for 4-to-5-bedroom homes. He stated that the boards continue to grant variances for the building of large homes, without enough parking spaces. Mr. Smith stated there should be one parking space for each bedroom.

Sergeant Major William thanked the borough administrator for fixing the light on the flag pole. He stated the traffic at the cross walk on New Bridge Road is dangerous, especially at night. The trains are getting too long and they need to change their timeline. Sergeant Major stated the borough needs to monitor the speed of the trains.

Barry Doll, resident, stated he is following up with the status of the new building. He thanked the borough administrator for posting the financial date on the website. He inquired if they are overextending themselves and putting everyone in a financial bind down the road with other projects going on at the same time. Mr. Doll stated people are starting to lose their jobs. Mr. Doll stated one of the schedules on the website is "summary of existing and estimated debt service municipal building and authorized property." He stated that according to the schedule, the building is going to cost \$45 million, and inquired what happened with the cost being \$18 million. He stated that the cost is \$18 million plus the debt service. Mr. Doll stated that is an extravagant amount of money for a building.

Mike Shanahan, resident, stated on the morning of December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 hundreds of imperial Japanese aircrafts attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Oahu, Hawaii. 2,403 service members and civilians were killed. This day of remembrance is a day to reflect on all that served and lost their lives so everyone can live free today. He further stated that Norm Hoyt Sr. passed away on Friday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. Norm Hoyt Sr. served the borough fire department for almost 49 years as lieutenant, captain, deputy chief, and chief of the department. Mr. Shanahan played the recording dispatch sent out on the day of his funeral.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated her neighbor parks behind her in the driveway. The neighbor mentioned she would park her car in the street since street parking is suspended for Hanukah. Ms. Sullivan stated that she didn't see any notice on the suspension of parking on the borough website or the police department website, but there was a notice on Facebook. Ms. Sullivan stated the notice should have been posted on the borough website. Ms. Sullivan stated she attends all the zoning board meetings and a lot of people do not use their garages as parking spaces. She commented that residents cannot have 6-bedroom homes with 2 parking spaces.

Mr. Smith stated it was posted on Facebook that parking was suspended on certain days.

Tzippy Giller, 50 Highgate Terrace, stated there is no choice but to walk in the street as there are streets in Bergenfield that do not have sidewalks and inquired how they can get sidewalks on their streets.

Fred Sahlberg, resident, congratulated Councilman Lodato and Councilman Rivera on their win. Mr. Sahlberg stated Ms. Quinones was identified as "the lady in green" in an article in the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary journal. He inquired if it was an oversight. Mr. Sahlberg stated Ms. Quinones is always professional and extends herself whenever he interacts with her. Mr. Sahlberg stated he sees a lot of problems on New Bridge Rd. It's ok when there is a police officer assigned to that area, but when the office leaves, there are 150 cars going by. He provided the parking situation in Teaneck as an example of how the borough can handle the situation going forward.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that was an oversight by the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee. They organized, structured, and put the book together. They just took it and submitted it to the printer. Mr. Gallo thanked Mr. Shanahan for sending the parking information. He stated the information that was put out was "Parking enforcement is suspended. Please be advised from 11/29/21 to 12/3/21 and 12/6/21 to 12/10/21 no overnight parking will be permitted due to borough-wide leaf pick up by the DPW. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation." Mr. Gallo stated this leaf collection season has been rough. There have been cars parked everywhere. He explained the sweepers with the pushers are out on the streets at 4:00 a.m. to push the leaves into bigger piles. Then the bulldozer scoops up the leaves into a truck. The sweeper can't push the leaves if there are cars parked in the street, since it cannot push the leaves around the cars. DPW will have three crews working on Saturday from 4:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to pick-up leaves.

Mayor Amatorio stated they sympathize with the concerns of the residents. They want to make use of their streets because there is an overflow of cars. Every time this issue comes up, they receive concerns from the first responders because a lot of Bergenfield roads are narrow. The borough has lifted the parking ban during certain months to see how it impacts the delivery of services to residents. The borough has also considered alternate parking. He stated that opinions vary, but the borough will continue the discussion to try and come to a solution. Mayor Amatorio stated residents call to complain that code enforcement is not enforcing the rules. They understand the concerns of the residents. Code enforcement and the police department have an obligation. They will try to find an alternative in the future.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated there is a process every department has to follow when they want to post things on the borough website. Mr. Gallo stated when someone wants to post something on the website, he needs to review and approve it first. He reads all the content. Once it's approved, it's posted to all the other social media outlets. All notifications go through administration first. Mr. Gallo stated he will email CSX regarding the concerns with the long cars in the trains being excessive and ask them to evaluate. Mr. Gallo stated he contacted the county and requested they contact PSE&G to put LED lighting on New Bridge Rd from the base all the way up. He wants all the yellow dim lights replaced with bright LED lights. Mr. Gallo stated Mr. Hoyt provided a great service to the community. The fire trucks were used as a reflection of the respect for his service and the borough sent flowers. The unfortunate news was announced on social media. It was an oversight on the part of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee to include the picture without the Borough Clerk's name, as the committee rushed the book. Mr. Gallo stated they are waiting for the synagogue to complete construction work to put in a walkway.

Councilman Marte stated there are many more cars on the street now and they seem to be less tolerant. The Mayor and Council has been paying close attention to this, not just on New Bridge Road, but other parts of town also. They have to find a way to slow down traffic before something happens. They are looking into the possibility of installing speed bumps that have been approved by the state and try to set them around schools and parks.

Mr. Gallo stated they wouldn't be able to put speed bumps on county roads - Main Street, River Edge Road, Prospect Avenue, New Bridge Road, and Washington Avenue. They have spoken with traffic and have a list of the number of speed bumps that will be put in throughout town.

Council President Rivera stated he is pro-overnight parking. There needs to be balance between fairness and what is secure for everyone. There is no difference between residents calling every night to park their cars in front of their homes and just leaving a car parked on the street overnight. They did an experiment last summer to test overnight parking. It is a serious situation and they need to be accommodating.

Councilman Pascual stated they need to revisit the parking situation.

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, second by Councilperson Kornbluth to close public comment. All present voting in favor. None opposed.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

**CONSENT RESOLUTION 21-353.** 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. **21-354/**To Pay Bills
- b. **21-355/**To Approve Chapter 159 - Insertion of a Special Item of Revenue in the 2021 Budget – 2021 Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Year End Holiday Crackdown Grant
- c. **21-356/**To Approve Cancellation of Capital Appropriation
- d. **21-357/**To Approve Transfer of Appropriations
- e. **21-358/**To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 11 Garden Street
- f. **21-359/**To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 60 Beucler Place
- g. **21-360/**To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 132 Grove Street
- h. **21-361/**To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 44 E. Broad Street
- i. **21-362/**To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 297 S. Prospect Avenue
- j. **21-363/**To Approve Tax Refund – 48 Woodbine Street
- k. **21-364/**To Approve Capital Purchase – Mohawk Vehicle Lift – Mohawk Lifts LLC
- l. **21-365/**To Approve Change Order – Toro Mower/Polar Trac Snow Cat – Storr Tractor Company
- m. **21-366/**To Approve Change Order No. 1 Final – 2021 Road Improvement Program Phase 1 – Marini Brothers Construction
- n. **21-367/**To Approve Payment Certificate No. 2 Final and Accept Maintenance Bond – 2021 Road Improvement Program Phase 1 – Marini Brothers Construction
- o. **21-368/**To Approve Grant Agreement – FY 2021 CDBG First Street & Bergen Avenue Improvements – County of Bergen
- p. **21-369/**To Approve Capital Purchase – Body Worn Cameras and Software – Watchguard Video Inc.
- q. **21-370/**To Approve Endorsement– Bergen County CDBG Application for Brookside Gardens Lighting Update Project – Housing Development Corporation of Bergen County
- r. **21-371/**To Authorize Tax Refund – 272 S. Prospect Avenue
- s. **21-372/**To Authorize Tax Refund – 34 Brewster Place
- t. **21-373/**To Authorize Tax Refund – 46 Surrey Lane

- u. **21-374**/To Authorize Refund of Redemption Monies to Outside Lien Holder for TTL #19-00004
- v. **21-375**/To Approve Raffle Application 1373
- w. **21-376**/To Confirm Endorsements to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Projects – North Taylor Street Improvement Project
- x. **21-377**/To Approve Agreement – Public Road Resurfacing – SUEZ Water New Jersey Inc

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Deauna, to approve the Consent Resolution 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>aye</i>	Council President Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Marte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato thanked everyone for coming.

Councilperson Deauna stated that on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the United States entered war with Japan as a result of Pearl Harbor. He thanked all the veterans present, including many of his relatives that died to defend democracy. Thank you for your service.

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

Councilperson Kornbluth expressed her condolences to the Hoyt family and the entire Bergenfield fire department on his passing. He was a legend in Bergenfield. She thanked everyone for their service.

Council President Rivera thanked all the veterans and all who have served for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Councilperson Pascual expressed his condolences to the Hoyt family. He stated that this is a day that we will never forget and thanked all the veterans for their honor and service.

Mayor Amatorio thanked all their residents for their input and expressed that he will do his best to address their concerns. He thanked all the veterans for giving up their lives to fight for our freedom. He wished everyone happy holidays.

Mayor Amatorio further stated that the governing body will consider a matter in closed session and may return to open session to take action in 20 to 45 minutes.

#### CLOSED SESSION

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

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege
  - 1. Liquor License Request
  - 2. PBA Local 309 Contract Update
  - 3. Review of Cannabis Ordinance
- B. Contracts
  - 1. Telecommunicator's Contract
- C. Personnel
  - 1. Administrative Personnel Updates



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 Marte, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 10:00 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Marte, and all present voting in favor, the Closed Session meeting was adjourned and the meeting returned to open session at 11:29 p.m. Roll call. Councilperson Kornbluth is absent.

**21-378/Resolution Approving Support of the Location and Operation of an Adult-Use Cannabis Cultivator and Manufacturer by Eleven Eleven Wellness LLC**

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #21-378 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Deauna, second by Councilperson Pascual and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Quinones  
Borough Clerk