

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 16, 2023**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council members Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Domingo Almonte, Ora Kornbluth (8:45 p.m.), and Hernando Rivera

ABSENT: Council President Marc Pascual

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 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. Notice of this meeting dated Friday, May 12, 2023 was published in the Record and sent to the 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 Almonte.

AGENDA CHANGES

Borough Clerk Quiñones-Wilson stated that Resolution #23-179 awarding the bid and approving their contract to Halecon, Inc. for the Thomas Roos Park Improvement Project, including the Tennis Court Resurfacing and Pickleball Court Installation should be added to the consent agenda.

Councilperson Lodato motioned to add the Resolution #23-179 to the Consent Agenda. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilperson Deauna to approve minutes of the April 18, 2023 Regular Public Meeting and April 18, 2023 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released), May 2, 2023 Work Session Meeting and May 2, 2023 Closed Session Meeting (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 with regards to storm water management, he referenced N.J.A.C. 7:8 for major developments in regards to storm water development. He stated that although there are no major developments going on in the Borough at the moment, there are a lot of non-major developments, which is increasing stress on the storm water management system. He stated that home construction projects are causing problems. He mentioned that there are houses that have gutters running straight to the road and not running into areas where it can be soaked up. The Zoning Board of Adjustment deals with different variances for side yards or lot coverage, which not all require a seepage pit. He stated there is nothing in the ordinance that requires smaller projects to have seepage pits.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that this ordinance pertains lot coverage because if the addition exceeds lot coverage, it will need a seepage pit. This ordinance was previously tabled and is up for discussion, and he will take the information under advisement. There are many moving pieces and opinions on how this should be done and that is why it is up for discussion tonight. Under the current format for example, if a resident chooses to add an addition to their driveway with no issues to lot coverage, they would be required to add a seepage pit.

Mayor Amatorio stated that based on the proposed arguments, there would be a need for a seepage pit if the addition exceeds lot coverage. He suggested that the discussion to be continued and the matter be tabled.

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

PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation in honor of the Department of Public Works

Mayor Amatorio stated that he extends his appreciation to the DPW for all their hard work helping with Borough operations, as well as all the residents when they are in need. He then acknowledged and thanked every member of the DPW present at the council meeting; Superintendent Phil Neville, Supervisor Ryan Brophy, Supervisor Nick Watkins, Assistant Jamie Luppino, and laborers Michael, Craig, Jason, Raymond, Dan and Jacob. Mayor Amatorio read the proclamation into the record.

Superintendent Phil Neville thanked the Mayor and Council for the acknowledgement of the hard work of the DPW. He went on to state we have the best DPW in the state and he really appreciates them.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato stated he extends his appreciation for to the DPW for the hard work on a daily basis.

Councilperson Deauna stated you can see the good work of the DPW in every corner in the town. If something needs to be fixed, the DPW does it.

Councilperson Almonte stated thank you for the service to the public and community.

Councilperson Rivera stated its one DPW employee per 1,000 residents and its remarkable what you the community. He went on to say they have helped to improve the town and helped welcome in the automatic waste removal which has made their job much safer. He hopes the council will help attain more automatic projects that will help you in the future and keep the workers safe. Congratulations, you are the best DPW in the state and even nationally.

Mayor Amatorio thanked and gave his appreciation to the workers of the DPW, he stated he was proud of their excellence, from Christmas lights, removing leaves, to cleaning Colon Hall. The DPW has improved the quality of life for the residents by the hard work that they do. The DPW is a big part of Bergenfield and he cannot thank you enough for the work you do every day.

Motion by Councilperson Lodato to recess the meeting for two (2) minutes. Councilperson Rivera seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed. The meeting recessed at 8:24 p.m. The meeting reopened at 8:26 p.m. Roll Call.

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council members Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Councilperson Almonte, Ora Kornbluth, and Hernando Rivera
ABSENT: Council President Marc Pascual

CORRESPONDENCE

- a.) Zai's Dessertery **RE:** Request for a Street Closure for Memorial Day Remembrance Event/W. Johnson Avenue between N. Washington and Irving Place/Sunday, May 28, 2023/1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- b.) Maravillas/Resident **RE:** Request to Reserve Tennis Courts at Veterans Memorial Park for a Tournament/Saturday, June 3, 2023
- c.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers **RE:** Personnel Action Letter dated May 9, 2023

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to accept Correspondence items A through C. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

ORDINANCES

A. Tabled Ordinance

The following ordinance published herewith was first read by title only on March 21, 2023 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

ORDINANCE 23-2612 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 268 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED “STORMWATER MANAGEMENT” (TABLED 5-2-23)

No action taken.

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 23-163. 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. **23-164/**To Approve Bill List
- b. **23-165/**To Approve Insertion of a Special Item of Revenue in the 2023 Budget – Storm Water Assistance Grant – Chapter 159
- c. **23-166/**To Approve Insertion of a Special Item of Revenue in the 2023 Budget – Distracted Driving Crackdown U Drive. U Text. U Pay. Grant – Chapter 159
- d. **23-167/**To Approve Insertion of a Special Item of Revenue in the 2023 Budget – Bergen County Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Youth Leadership Grant – Chapter 159
- e. **23-168/**To Approve Dedication by Rider – Police Youth Academy
- f. **23-169/**To Authorize Electronic Tax Sale
- g. **23-170/**To Authorize Electronic Tax Sale Notice Fee to Delinquent Taxpayers
- h. **23-171/**To Authorize Fee to Redeem Third or More Tax Sale Certificates
- i. **23-172/**To Approve Veterans Tax Exemption – 60 Lunn Avenue
- j. **23-173/**To Approve Annual Subscription Renewal Agreement – GovPilot - SHI International Corp
- k. **23-174/**To Approve Purchase – Three (3) 2023 Ford Utility Police Interceptor Vehicles – Gentilini Chevrolet LLC
- l. **23-175/**To Approve Proposal and Contract Agreement – Heating and Cooling System Maintenance – Pow/R/Save Inc.
- m. **23-176/**To Approve Contract – Professional Janitorial Service Proposal – FDG Universal Cleaning and Maintenance Services LLC

- n. **23-177**/To Reject Bid and Authorize Rebid – Office Furniture for New Municipal Building
- o. **23-178**/To Authorize Bid – Road Program Phase I
- p. **23-179**/To Award Bid and Approve Contract – Thomas Roos Park Improvement Project, Tennis Court Resurfacing & Pickleball Court Installation – Halecon, Inc.

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

B. Resolutions

23-180/To Hire Part-Time Summer Laborers

Motion by Councilperson Rivera, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #23-180 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>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>absent</i>

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Public Hearing on the Submission of a 2023 Bergen County Trust Fund Grant Application
 - ❖ 2023 Bergen County Trust Fund Municipal Program for Park Development
 - 1. Public Comments on the Grant Application

John Smith, resident, inquired if the \$60,000 received from the County is for Veterans Memorial Park.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that the grant application is for a matching grant for Clover Park. This is a different application.

Sergeant Major Williams inquired if the grant funding will be used for the renovations at Veterans Memorial Park or spread throughout the park.

Mr. Gallo stated he is unsure the funding he is referring to, but will look into tomorrow. The funding referenced in this particular resolution is for Clover Park.

Mayor Amatorio stated this grant is for the renovations to Clover Park tennis courts.

Barry Doll, resident, stated that the application references the preservation of farmland and historic preservation trust fund.

Mr. Gallo clarified that is how the County names the program for the grant funding, that is not the Borough's title.

Marisa Lonardo-Xu, resident, inquired if the private tennis club is still around.

Mr. Gallo stated that the private club is in operation under a different owner. It still exists. The borough used to lease the facility to Adheek Tennis Club, but now someone else leases and maintains the property.

2. Resolution 23-181/To Authorize Submission of a Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floor Plain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund (Bergen County Trust Fund) Grant Application

Motion by Councilperson Rivera, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #23-181 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>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>absent</i>

Committee/Department Reports

Motion offered by Councilperson Lodato that the Committee/Department Reports be spread upon the minutes in full and filed. Councilperson Rivera 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.

John Smith, resident, shared pictures with the governing body and asked for citation or award to the Bergen County Sheriff's Department for building a wheelchair accessible ramp to help a Veteran from Hawthorne. The program employes prisoners to build accessible playgrounds and ramps through a prison release program. He asked on behalf of the Veteran's Committee for the Mayor and Council to issue an award the Sheriff's Department and the Officer who oversaw the project which was completed in a day and a half. All the Veteran had to do was provide food to the workers. He also mentioned the meeting that went on between the Veterans Committee and the Administration in reference to the Memorial Day Parade and the planning for that continues.

Sergeant Major Williams, resident, explained the situation of the Veteran from Hawthorne and how they worked to get not only the ramp, but enrolled him for his Veteran's health benefits. He announced that the Post would hold enrollment and information sessions on Wednesdays. He also wanted to extend his and the Veterans Committee appreciation to the DPW for an outstanding job.

Marisa Lonardo-Xu, resident, stated she emailed the Borough Administrator about the Pride Event in town. She asked when the Pride event will take place, saying there was nothing on the calendar, as Bergenfield drags their feet on the event. She continued to state that Bergenfield is the only town that puts the date out late. There is no notice and the hope is that the date can be put on the calendar sooner.

Borough Administrator Gallo responded that the Stigma Free Committee coordinates the events and shares the information with the borough.

Mayor Amatorio stated that last year we had a great event at Cooper's Pond. The Stigma Free held a flag raising and a public speaking event, and may be planning other events this year. These events will happen all year round, not just in June and are run by the Stigma Free Committee.

Barry Doll, resident, stated that the Mayor and Council should update the process for appealing the decisions of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. He mentioned that in Old Tappan, the Mayor and Council handle the appeal process for the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Planning Board. Mr. Doll requested that the Mayor and Council adopt a similar process and he volunteered to do the research on how other towns do this as a private citizen. The average person should be able to come to the Mayor and Council and ask for an appeal and reverse of a zoning board approval, it is currently not due process in his view.

Councilperson Lodato stated Bergenfield used to have a similar statue, but the Borough repealed that section under Mayor Bohan.

Borough Administrator Gallo that with regards to the pride event, the date for the flag raising is on the event calendar on the Borough newsletter, which was delivered to every household in the borough. The information will be updated on the website and advertised closer to the event date. He also stated that all the information received from the County regarding the Veteran's events are posted through all borough channels to ensure all residents are informed.

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Amatorio extended his sincere congratulations to John Smith for his award and recognition by the Bergen County Veteran's Services this past Friday.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION 23-182/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege
 - 1. Police Department Personnel Matters
- B. Personnel Matters
 - 1. Administrative 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 Lodato, second by Councilperson Rivera, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 8:52 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Lodato, second by Councilperson Rivera, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk