

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD  
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 16, 2024  
8:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Council President Hernando Rivera (arrived at 8:30 p.m.) and Councilmembers Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Domingo Almonte, Ora Kornbluth and Marc Pascual (arrived at 8:12 p.m.)

**ABSENT:** No one.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Borough Administrator Corey Gallo  
Borough Attorney John Schettino  
Borough Clerk Marie Quiñones-Wilson

Mayor Amatorio called the meeting to order at 8:02 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**

None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth to approve minutes of the March 19, 2024 Regular Public Meeting and March 19, 2024 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released), April 2, 2024 Work Session Meeting and April 2, 2024 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released). Councilperson Deauna 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.

Barry Doll, resident, stated he would like an explanation regarding Ordinance 24-2623. He stated that at the last meeting, there weren't any amounts listed for capital improvements and would like to know how it fits into the budget.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the items included in the capital budget are road work, speed humps, vehicles, garbage trucks for DPW, and police vehicles. Mr. Gallo explained that \$1.5 million out of the \$4.2 million is monies that were part of the capital budget from last year and only \$2.7 million is being bonded. The \$1.5 million was CARES Act money that will be utilized towards the capital bond this year. Mr. Gallo stated the borough's budget collectively over the past five years, inclusive of this budget, will have an increase of 1.6%. They've done everything possible to be as efficient as possible. There needs to be an increase as medical insurance, salaries/wages, liability insurance, cost of goods and products have all increased.

Mayor Amatorio stated the budget for the Board of Education will increase by 2%.

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

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a.) Nunez/Shade Tree Committee      **RE:** Request to Reserve Cooper's Pond for Arbor Day Celebration /Friday, April 26, 2024/10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- b.) Rivera/Resident      **RE:** Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion for Baby Shower/Sunday, April 28, 2024/12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- c.) Shaw/Washington School Parents Association      **RE:** Request to Reserve Hickory Field for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Picnic/Monday, June 10, 2024/8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Rain Date: 6/11/24)

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

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read into the Record:

The following ordinances published herewith were first read by title only on April 2, 2024 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

**ORDINANCE 24-2621- AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE SALARY RANGES OF EMPLOYEES NOT SUBJECTED TO UNIONIZED CONTRACTUAL UNITS OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD**

**ORDINANCE 24-2622 - AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK**

Public Comments on Ordinances 24-2621 and 24-2622.

No one came forward.

Motion by Councilperson Almonte, second by Councilperson Kornbluth to close Public Comments on Ordinances 24-2621 and 24-2622.

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

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Deauna, to pass Ordinances 24-2621 and 24-2622 on second and final reading and are hereby adopted and notice of the 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>	Council President Rivera:	<i>absent</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

#### B. Introduction of Ordinance

Motion by Councilperson Pascual that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting May 7, 2024 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. Second by Councilperson Almonte.

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

**ORDINANCE 24-2623 – BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAKING OF VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND THE MAJOR REPAIR OF A PUBLIC WORKS VEHICLE, AND THE ACQUISITION OF NEW ADDITIONAL OR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY, NEW COMMUNICATION AND SIGNAL SYSTEMS EQUIPMENT, NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT AND A NEW AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLE, INCLUDING ORIGINAL APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT, IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$4,200,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT OR FULLY FUND APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.**

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

#### A. CONSENT AGENDA

**CONSENT RESOLUTION 24-136.** 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. **24-137**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **24-138**/To Honor 2024 Arbor Day – April 26, 2024
- c. **24-139**/To Certify Compliance with the EEOC Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and sign the Group Affidavit
- d. **24-140**/To Approve Raffle Application – RA 1419
- e. **24-141**/To Approve Temporary Capital Budget
- f. **24-142**/To Authorize Tax Refund – 311 S. Prospect Avenue
- g. **24-143**/To Authorize Veterans Tax Exemption – 101 Merritt Avenue
- h. **24-144**/To Approve the Purchase of Public Litter Receptacles for the Department of Public Works
- i. **24-145**/To Approve Proposal – 2024 Road Program – Remington & Vernick Engineers
- j. **24-146**/To Approve Solid Waste Shared Service Agreement – Solid Waste Cooperative Marketing Program – Bergen County Utilities Authority “BCUA”
- k. **24-147**/To Authorize Bid – 2024 Speed Hump Project
- l. **24-148**/To Approve Temporary Emergency Appropriation

m. **24-149**/To Approve Proposal – Master Plan Reexamination Report

Motion by Councilperson Lodato to approve the Consent Resolution. Councilperson Kornbluth seconded the motion.

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

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

B. Resolutions

**24-150**/To Promote to Full-Time Laborer – Robert Jurgensen

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Almonte, that Resolution #24-150 be approved.

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Amatorio stated that he would like to bring the following three items to the Council in hopes to receive updates on these matters.

A. Cooper's Pond Renovation and Pond Dredging

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that a \$750,000 grant was received from HUD and T&M Associates is currently scoping out the project and working on the application with DEP. It is a long, arduous process. He stated that dredging of the pond will be equally as challenging as other projects, there are no short cuts. He commented that in terms of the Cooper's Pond park improvements, including the walkway, lighting, gazebo, and building improvement, T&M started evaluating the projects and preparing their scope of work based on monies received and the million dollar grant. Mr. Gallo stated that at this time, the borough has received \$1.7 million for the dredging and renovations.

Mayor Amatorio stated that he understands the borough doesn't have the money, but he would like to start exploring and have a plan in place.

Mr. Gallo stated that the engineers have started working on this and he understands the walkways have to be done, the frontage entrance way and how this should be improved.

Mayor Amatorio stated the way Vivyen Park was done, the same should be done with Cooper's Pond. He would like to know the cost of renovating the entire park, including the building, to have a bird's eye view of the cost and see whether the borough needs \$2.5 to \$3 million to do the dredging, repair the walkway, and complete all the renovations.

Mr. Gallo stated that he will have a long-term plan available for everyone at the next meeting.

Councilperson Kornbluth inquired about the additional million dollars and how that should be spent.

Mr. Gallo stated that the borough has to work from the outside in, as the whole side of the pond may get destroyed from dredging. He stated that he looked at pictures from years ago and learned that the entire side the pond gets destroyed. Mr. Gallo stated they'll have to go in with heavy machinery, put everything into piles, and then they have to be tested and dried out. This will take a very long time.

Mayor Amatorio stated that we should speak to our team and put a plan in place.

Councilperson Pascual stated that we should have a plan and they should break it down in phases.

#### B. Phase II of Vivyen Field

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the borough received \$725,000 in federal grant monies to do the walkways around the park. He stated that he was required to attend a training in New Brunswick, and learned this will take about two years to complete.

Mayor Amatorio inquired what is the plan for fencing. He stated that he understands that it will go from the Dumont property to our property. He commented that Dumont should be notified to remove their equipment beforehand, so that they can prepare and find a place for their vehicles and equipment.

#### C. Park and Recreation Updates

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the borough is currently out to bid for the PAL lighting project. The borough received a \$955,000 Green Acres grant for this project. The borough also received a \$235,000 grant from DEP for the final phases for the rain garden at the PAL field, which is the area the trees were taken out. The borough will also be going out to bid for the surfaces of the updates of the basketball and tennis surfaces using the open space grant. The dug outs will be improved on Hickory Field. Mr. Gallo stated the borough is moving along with these projects, it just takes a long time because the borough needs to receive approvals in order to use the grant funds.

#### Committee/Department Reports

Motion offered by Council President Rivera that the Committee/Department Reports be spread upon the minutes in full and filed. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present voting 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.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that he received an answer to Mr. Doll's question. He clarified that the bond ordinance is \$4.2 million. Of that amount, \$1.7 million is debt, and \$1.5 million is cash on hand. There is zero increase to the budget. He explained that it is zero because the cash on hand is being used as the down payment for capital funding.

Chris Nowell, requested the governing body endorse a letter of support to Bergen County for a county wide complete streets policy. He stated he is aware Bergenfield has a complete streets policy, but it only applies to municipal roads. He commented the complete streets policy should

also include the county roads. He clarified that complete streets policies are not just about bike lanes, but about safety and accessibility for all roads uses, for children, the elderly, and the most vulnerable populations. Mr. Nowell stated that it has to do more with speed, as that is the most common factor that causes deaths and injuries. He stated that speed calming like speed humps, narrowing lanes, pedestrian bump outs are all approaches that can be taken. He stated that he searched online and Bergenfield has six county roads. He also received a list of road segments that are dangerous, and areas on Washington are considered to be the top five most dangerous. He stated that measures need to take place on County roads and commissioners are on board, but they need support from the towns. He stated that we need to get past moving trucks and cars more efficiently and make roads more accessible as people want to walk, bike, and roll.

Jacqueline Romney, resident, stated that there are many issues going on with Cooper's Pond. She asked if the borough would consider perhaps adding a dog park near Cooper's Pond, as Cooper's Pond has two signs that do not allow cars or dogs at Cooper's Pond. She stated if people will continue to bring dogs to Cooper's Pond, the borough should consider having another dog run near the park. She further stated that she has sent several emails regarding E. Church Street and would like to know if there will be an additional Do Not Enter sign on the street. She also asked if the parks can be kept dog free.

Mr. Gallo stated the signage will be added when the road is repaved.

John Smith, resident, stated he disagrees with having bicycle lanes. He stated that bicyclists do not use the bike lanes and are the main cause of accidents. He further stated that he has complained about this in the past, but kids ride the entire length of Washington Avenue and feel they have the right of way. He has suggested to the Police Chief to impound the bikes for those bicyclists who get in front of motorists and break the law. Mr. Smith stated there is a reason why there isn't a dog run at Cooper's Pond. He commented that parents bring their children to walk and fish at Cooper's Pond. If children see a dog, they want to pet it, and it becomes a dangerous situation. Mr. Smith stated that no dogs should be allowed in the park.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated she is in agreement with Mr. Smith about not having a dog run at Cooper's Pond. She further stated that there is no place for bike lanes on Washington Avenue as it will create more accidents. Mrs. Sullivan questioned whether the newsletter continues to be delivered to residents' homes.

Mr. Gallo stated the newsletter is delivered to homes, but it has been slow this month because of bulk pick up. The newsletters are being placed in stores as well.

Barry Doll, resident, requested that residents stop putting memorials at Cooper's Pond. He commented that people are putting flowers and other decorative items on memorials. He requested the borough receive input and keep the museum informed with regards to renovations as some areas are historical.

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

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

The council members thanked all for coming to the meeting.

Mayor Amatorio thanked all for coming. He stated the Mayors Wellness Campaign was launched last Sunday. The public is invited to partake in the many events planned Monday through Friday. The schedule of all events is posted on the borough website. He invites the public to take advantage of the great activities that are being offered.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Council President Rivera, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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Marie Quiñones-Wilson  
Borough Clerk