

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MAY 7, 2024**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council President Hernando Rivera, Council members Thomas A. Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Domingo Almonte (arrived at 8:10pm), Ora Kornbluth, and Marc Pascual

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 8:03 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 a Municipal Bulletin Board and is on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Council President Rivera.

AGENDA CHANGES

Councilperson Kornbluth made a motion to amend the introduction of ordinances to include the correct public hearing dates, amend correspondence to remove a request to reserve Memorial Park and add Louise Moroses' of the Friends of Bergenfield Public Library request to hold a Town-Wide Garage Sale on Saturday, September 28th and Sunday, September 29th, add Resolution #24-159 to Authorize Borough Internship Program to the Consent Agenda, and add Administrative Personnel Matters to Closed Session. Councilperson Deauna seconded the motion. All present, voting in favor, none opposed.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation in honor of Juan Arango, President of Bergenfield United Soccer Club

Mayor Amatorio read the proclamation in honor of Juan Arango into the record. Mr. Arango retired from Bergenfield United Soccer Club after serving for over two decades as coach, board member, and president. His leadership, vision, and tireless efforts played a pivotal role in the growth and success of the program. The governing body expressed their deepest gratitude and appreciation to Coach Juan.

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Council President Rivera, and all present voting in favor, for a five-minute recess at 8:11 p.m. The meeting reopened at 8:14 p.m. Roll Call. All members present.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Robert Klein, borough engineer, stated the last three streets from last year's road program, including Smith Avenue, Edward Street, and O'Neil Street, have been paved. They have chosen the roads and are now preparing designs for this year's road program. The project will be out to bid

later this month. The bid package for this year's speed hump program is currently out for bid and is expected to be awarded at the next meeting.

Councilperson Kornbluth stated that Bergen County CDBG would like all the towns to confirm all their paperwork has been completed.

Mayor Amatorio stated they will have to monitor the schedule to ensure all road work is completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Klein stated that he is unsure who the contractor will be as bids haven't been received, but once he knows, he will make sure to meet with them and go over the schedule.

Borough Administrator Gallo confirmed the borough ensures the project remains on schedule and there was one contractor that was monetarily penalized for not completing the road work on time.

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read into the record:

The following ordinances published herewith was first read by title on April 16, 2024 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

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.

Public Comments on Ordinance 24-2623

Barry Doll, resident, stated he is opposed to this ordinance. He feels that too much money is being spent all at once.

John Smith, resident, inquired whether the funds designated to technology will go to fixing the computers and recording system.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the plans for the technology cannot be shared because the network is being built. He explained that it's like an infrastructure that cannot be built all at once. Mr. Gallo confirmed the computers and recording system are all functioning, but all the technology will be up and running by the summer.

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, to pass Ordinances 24-2623 on second and final reading and is 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 Kornbluth: *aye*
Council President Rivera: *aye*

Councilperson Almonte: *aye* Councilperson Pascual: *aye*

B. Introduction of Ordinances

Motion by Councilperson Deauna that the following ordinances be introduced and passed on first reading and setting May 21, 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. Council President Rivera seconded the motion.

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

24-2624 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO ESTABLISH CHAPTER 313 TO REQUIRE LEAD PAINT TESTING AS MANDATED BY P.L. 2021, C.182

24-2625 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ADOPTING A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BLOCK 122, LOTS 1-14 - 60-90 WEST CHURCH STREET, 11-43 TYSON PLACE, 22-24 NORTH FRONT STREET, AND 31 NORTH DEMAREST AVENUE

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

Motion by Councilperson Deauna that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting June 18, 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. Councilperson Almonte seconded the motion.

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

24-2626 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO AMEND CHAPTER 186 TO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Cooper's Pond Improvements

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that he received and shared with Council the estimate for the dredging process of Cooper's Pond. It's going to cost roughly \$1.8 million to dredge the pond. The borough has received two grants, approximately \$2 million, to use for the dredging.

Mayor Amatorio stated the \$750,000 grant was for dredging and the \$1 million grant was for capital improvements. He stated when the engineering study was done, it was determined it would cost \$1.5 million just for the cleaning and removal of aquatic life. They would have to look into additional grants.

Council President Rivera inquired if it can be done in phases.

Mr. Gallo stated they would have to discuss it with the state, but the dredging cannot be done in two parts.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing for the Submission of a 2024 Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floor Plain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund (Bergen County Trust Fund) Grant Application for Improvements to Wayne Golon Park

1. Presentation on the application.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the park has no shade. The borough will be putting a shade over the playground equipment, similar to the one in Franklin School. The cost is estimated at \$98,000.

2. Public Comments on the application

John Smith, resident, inquired if the borough will be applying for a Green Acres grant.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that Green Acres grant funding are used for other major projects for millions of dollars.

Mayor Amatorio stated the application is for consideration for a Bergen County Open Space grant. There is already a pending application with Green Acres for \$2 million for Vivyen field.

Mr. Smith stated that trees should be planted as they were cut down in the park.

Mr. Gallo stated that the maturity of the tree will come years from now to cover the park.

Mayor Amatorio stated that the borough will consider planting more trees.

Barry Doll, resident, stated that this application is for a shade to be placed over the playground because of the sunshine. He commented that all the parks are open and that's the idea. He expressed that its fresh air, green, enrichment and vitamins from the sun. He commented that children should put hats on. He asked that the governing body learn to say no because the taxpayers have to pay the bill, as the funds are coming indirectly from the taxpayers.

Efrayim Clair, resident, stated he is a resident on Hallberg Avenue and thanked the Council for their attention to this issue. He stated that this past week the weather was near 80 degrees and his neighbors commented whether they will have to continue walking to Memorial Park instead of going to the park at the end of the road. Mr. Clair stated that the neighbors maintain and landscape the park. He thanked the Council for making the park usable and welcoming to all the children.

3. Adoption of Enabling Resolution

24-151/To Authorize the Submission of 2024 Bergen County Trust Fund Grant Application for a Park Development Grant for Improvements to Wayne Golon Park

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Kornbluth that Resolution #24-151 be approved.

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

Councilperson Lodato: *aye*
Councilperson Deauna: *aye*
Councilperson Almonte: *aye*

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

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the borough continues to progress with the building. He stated there are various punch list items, such as the technology that needs to be finished and items that need to be followed up with the contractors. He stated that the rug in the room has to be replaced and there are issues with other items. He stated that big ticket items that need to be fixed include the first phase of removing all the sheetrock and interior materials of the old municipal building, which should be done by the second week of June. They will systematically remove all the other materials including copper and mechanical, and then they will start the demolition. After the demolition, they will clear the property, and retainage pits will be installed, curbs and sidewalks will be put in, and the whole footprint will be paved. The hope is to be completed by Veteran's Day.

Councilperson Pascual stated that during the Zoning Board meeting, the seat was being caught on the rail. He asked if this can be looked into during improvements.

Mr. Gallo stated that the rail cannot be moved, but something will need to be done about the chairs being caught underneath the dais.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato

no report.

Councilperson Deauna

stated he attended the Mayors Senior Citizen's Committee meeting and gave them an update on the progress of the building. The committee is planning an event on May 22, 2024 and their annual picnic will be in June. The Barrier Free committee will be hosting the second annual car show on June 23, 2024 at the high school. The flyer will be distributed. The chairperson discussed the possibility of allowing membership from outside of town. The Board of Health committee discussed the current health issues of the town.

Councilperson Almonte

no report.

Councilperson Kornbluth

stated BVAC has gone on 696 calls years to date, down 15% from last year. It's due to responding to other town calls for mutual aid. They actually had a CPR save in April. OEM did not have a report. All of the spring and summer sports are up and running. There has been a nice turnout with the Mayors Wellness Campaign with all the various activities. It started with the fun run, where there were many sponsors and many people attended. The wellness campaign continues with all different activities including ZUMBA, bar method exercise class, martial arts, yoga, taekwondo, gym, pickleball and line dancing.

The Recreation Committee is also preparing for the Memorial Day Parade and Family Fun Day. I attended the CDBG meeting and Bergenfield received 100% of their request for the repaving of Bradley.

Council President Rivera

no report.

Councilperson Pascual

stated there were four applications at the Zoning Board meeting. One was old business that was carried over to the June meeting. The three new applications were passed with conditions. There is a Memorial Day Parade meeting scheduled for May 14th, 2024 with all department heads. The ceremony will be at Cooper's Pond and the parade will be on Prospect Avenue to New Bridge Road, ending at Memorial Park.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated due to the construction, we need to start moving the piles of dirt alongside the water bank. All of the monuments need to be moved and the area needs to be cleared in the next two weeks. The Veterans Committee thought it would be best to have the ceremony at Cooper's Pond, line-up, and then start the parade. The fire department's ceremony will be held at Cooper's Pond, also.

Mayor Amatorio

stated men's softball officially opened last Saturday. They held a fundraiser to help Lucille Volmer. The Stigma Free Committee attended the event at Biaggio's in Paramus hosted by Bergen County. I saw the program and congratulate one of our residents for being a presenter. Bike with a Cop will be on May 19th, 2024 in the morning. They will be giving out helmets and donuts. The Mayor's Wellness program is into its third week with three more weeks left. There has been a great turnout and the most participation this year. As part of the Mayors Wellness program, Bergenfield Fitness is offering free use of the gym, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10am-4pm. Residents can visit and sign-in as part of the program to use the gym.

CORRESPONDENCE

a.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers

RE: Personnel Action Letter dated April 25, 2024

b.) Santiago/Dumont Resident

RE: Request to Reserve Cooper's Pond for Photos/Saturday, May 11, 2024/4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

c.) Rodriguez/Franklin School Parent Association

RE: Request for Road Closure/North Franklin Avenue from West Church Street to West Main Street/Tuesday, May 21, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m./Rain Date 5/23/24

d.) Davina Thomas

RE: Request to Reserve Memorial Park Pavilion/Saturday, June 22, 2024/ 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

e.) Moroses/Friends of Bergenfield Public Library

RE: Request for Approval for Town-Wide Garage Sale/Saturday, September 28th and Sunday, September 29th/9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Motion by Councilperson Lodato, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, and all members present voting in favor, to accept Correspondence Items A through E. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Smith, resident, stated the recreation committee should take the PAL field back as there aren't many kids as there used to be in the past and the field are not being utilized. The field can be used for summer camp with all the things the Recreation Director is doing with the program. Mr. Smith stated DPW is doing a great job with cutting the grass at all the parks and could maintain the PAL field, also. The borough could make money from the snack stands. He stated something needs to be done about the overnight parking. People are too lazy to move their cars.

Mark Stein, resident and realtor, stated the council, along with the boards and the building department need to have a more in-depth discussion regarding the parking ordinance. He stated over the years, families and housing styles have changed, use of space has changed. Bergenfield has tried to adopt over the years. The parking ordinance being discussed is directly from the state. Mr. Stein stated how new houses are being built and space is being used should be considered.

Diana Flagg, resident, stated she knows that the Mayor didn't write the letter in the newsletter as there were some typos. She commented that no one read the letter and it is embarrassing it was delivered by the DPW that way. She complimented the police department for making people move their cars that are illegally parked.

Yehuda Borg, resident, requested clarification on the revaluation and how it will impact Bergenfield residents.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated Bergen County orders the revaluation and the borough is required to comply. The town retains a company to perform the assessment. There may or may not be any impact to the residents. Mr. Schettino explained if a home is assessed presently at \$400,000, but its real value is \$600,000, you're supposed to be assessed at 100% value. If everyone's property is in the same boat, there should be minimal impact. If everyone's tax assessment is going up and the same amount of money needs to be raised, there will be a negligible impact, if any. At this point, it is impossible to predict the extent of outcome there will be until the assessment is actually done. The tax rate is based on the assessed value of all the homes. It's not a good idea to now allow the inspectors into your home because then you cannot appeal. The assessment is based on the condition of your home when the inspection is done and comparable sales in past years.

Mary Sullivan, resident, inquired when the ordinances #24-2624, #24-2625, and #24-2626 will be posted on the borough website for residents to review.

Borough administrator Gallo stated they will be posted tomorrow.

Nina Eizikovitz, resident and realtor, has offered her help and assistance whenever the town council or building department has needed a sounding board for people looking to move into the community. She expressed concern over the parking ordinance and asked to have more time for the public to speak on it.

Barry Doll, resident, stated something needs to be done about overnight parking as there isn't enough spaces to park. He suggested giving stickers for those allowed to park overnight. Mr. Doll stated it's a waste of money to spend \$1 million on lighting for the PAL fields.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that back in 2015 when he first started with the borough, he was handed over the keys to the Bergenfield Swim Club, which was in dilapidated state and was no longer functional. It took the borough almost seven years to develop it and bring it back to what it deservingly should be, a recreational facility. Mr. Gallo stated before the PAL field gets to that point of disrepair, the borough needs to take responsibility. He authorized the field to be treated chemically. He stated that they are not playing games all the time because the lighting quality is below standard and needs to be improved. You cannot have kids playing in substandard facilities.

Mayor Amatorio stated the borough is always looking for grant funds to invest in facilities and the future of the town's children.

Councilperson Pascual stated if Bergenfield doesn't apply for the grant monies, it will go to another town. He rather the grant funds be used for the borough residents.

Mr. Gallo stated that RSIS stops at three parking spots for five bedrooms. Applications are received for 6-to-8-bedroom homes with only two to three parking spots. The parking ordinance aligns the existing ordinance to expand what was there to meet the same standards. He and the Council are looking at ways to address the parking issues and is part of doing the reexamination of the master plan. He stated it's not as simple as giving everyone a sticker as there are streets that are so narrow, that emergency vehicles are not able to pass. If anyone has any ideas, they can present them to him and the council.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 24-152. 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. **24-153**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **24-154**/To Approve Raffle Application – RA 1420 and RA 1421
- c. **24-155**/To Adopt Procedures for Administration and Inspection of Federal Aid Highway Projects
- d. **24-156**/To Authorize the Sale of Surplus Property
- e. **24-157**/To Award Bid and Approve Contract – PAL Field Lighting Improvements Project – John J. Faccas, Inc. T/A Quality Electrical Construction
- f. **24-158**/To Authorize Tax Refund – 198 Elder Avenue
- g. **24-159**/To Authorize Borough Internship Program

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Council President Rivera, to approve Consent Resolution #24-152.

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

B. RESOLUTIONS

24-160/To Promote to Keyboard Clerk III – Lisa Sereno

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Council President Rivera that Resolution #24-160 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

24-161/To Promote to Keyboard Clerk III – Jaime Luppino

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Council President Rivera that Resolution #24-161 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

C. 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

1. 24-162/To Read Budget by Title Only

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Council President Rivera that Resolution #24-162 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

2. Public Comments on the Adoption of the 2024 Municipal Budget

Barry Doll, resident, stated the budget is too high with a 4% increase on the municipal side and haven't received the school budget yet. He's predicting they are going to have a 5% to 7% increase in taxes.

3. 24-163/To Adopt the 2024 Municipal Budget

Motion by Council President Rivera, second by Councilperson Deauna that Resolution #24-163 be approved.

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

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato stated he will address the parking at the time of the hearing. He thanked all for coming to the meeting

Councilperson Deauna thanked all for coming to the meeting and stated insults are counter-productive.

Councilperson Almonte thanked all for coming to the meeting.

Councilperson Kornbluth thanked all for coming and wished all a good night.

Council President Rivera inquired of Mr. Doll if he were to get \$100,000 Green Acres grant money for benches at Cooper's Pond or the Museum, wouldn't he get it.

Councilperson Pascual stated whatever the council does is for the betterment of the town and trying to serve the community as efficiently as possible. The Council is human and trying to inform the residents through the newsletter. He apologized for the small mistakes. Cars are getting bigger and is something that will be further discussed.

Mayor Amatorio thanked all for coming to the meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION **24-164**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege
 - 1. Reassessment
- B. Personnel
 - 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 Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Pascual and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9:27 p.m.

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 10:18 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson, Borough Clerk