

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 18, 2023
8:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council President Marc Pascual, Council members Thomas Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Ora Kornbluth, and Hernando Rivera (7:43 p.m.)

ABSENT: Councilperson Almonte

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

Mayor Amatorio called the meeting to order at 7:22 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."

CLOSED SESSION I

RESOLUTION **23-132**/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Personnel
 - 1. Police Department Personnel Matters
 - 2. Fire Department 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 Lodato, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 7:24 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Council President Pascual, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to Open Session in the Council Chambers at 7:53 p.m.

Roll Call.

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

ABSENT: Councilperson Almonte

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Lodato.

Mayor Amatorio held a moment of silence in memory of United States Army soldiers killed in the crash involving two helicopters, including Sgt. David Solinas Jr. from Oradell, New Jersey.

AGENDA CHANGES

Council President Pascual motioned to add a proclamation honoring Vietnam War Veteran's Day 2023 to the agenda, Resolution #23-148 amending the Veteran's Advisory Committee membership to add Yvonne C. Aponte as a member, Resolution #23-149 to authorize bid for Thomas Roos Park tennis court resurfacing and pickleball court installation to the Consent Agenda, and the appointment of Sylvia Rosario to the Rent Leveling Board under New Business. Councilperson Kornbluth seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Council President Pascual to approve minutes of the March 21, 2023 Regular Public Meeting and March 21, 2023 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released), April 4, 2023 Work Session Meeting and April 4, 2023 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released).

Councilperson Kornbluth 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.

No one came forward.

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

PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation – Mental Health Awareness Month 2023

Mayor Amatorio read the proclamation into the record.

B. Proclamation – Vietnam War Veteran's Day 2023

Mayor Amatorio read the proclamation into the record.

C. Police Department Presentations

Chief of Police Rabboh thanked the Mayor and Council for their continued support of the Police Department. He also thanked all the residents and colleagues present for coming out to support one another in the department.

1. Promotion of Lieutenant William Duran to the Rank of Captain

- ❖ Biography of Lt. Duran read by Chief of Police Rabboh.
- ❖ Resolution **23-133**/To Promote William Duran to the Rank of Captain in the Bergenfield Police Department.

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-133. Council President Pascual 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>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Oath of Office administered by Mayor Amatorio.

Captain Duran congratulated Lieutenant Witty and Sergeant Portorreal for promotions and service. He also welcomed newly hired Police Officers Gluckman and Pizzuto. He thanked his family, his friends, his colleagues for all their support. He also thanked the Mayor and Council for giving him this opportunity to serve.

2. Promotion of Sergeant Kyle Witty to the Rank of Lieutenant

- ❖ Biography of Sgt. Witty read by Chief of Police Rabboh.
- ❖ Resolution **23-134**/To Promote Kyle Witty to the Rank of Lieutenant in the Bergenfield Police Department.

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-134. Councilperson Kornbluth 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>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Oath of Office administered by Mayor Amatorio.

Lieutenant Witty thanked his wife, his family, and his mother and father for all their support. He also thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to serve the community. He expressed that he is grateful to be here because they gave him an opportunity during layoffs. He thanked his brothers and sisters in the department for being here and for all their support, it has been a pleasure to work with them all. He looks forward to continuing to work with everyone.

3. Promotion of Police Officer Jose Portorreal to the Rank of Sergeant

- ❖ Biography of P.O. Jose Portorreal read by Chief of Police Rabboh.
- ❖ Resolution **23-135**/To Promote Jose Portorreal to the Rank of Sergeant in the Bergenfield Police Department.

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-135. Councilperson Kornbluth 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>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Oath of Office administered by Mayor Amatorio.

Sergeant Portorreal thanked his family and friends for all of their support, his colleagues, and the Mayor and Council.

4. Hiring of Andrew Gluckman to the Rank of Police Officer

- ❖ Biography of P.O. Gluckman read by Chief of Police Rabboh.
- ❖ Resolution **23-136**/To Hire Andrew Gluckman to the Rank of Police Officer in the Bergenfield Police Department.

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-136. Council President Pascual 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>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Oath of Office administered by Mayor Amatorio.

Officer Gluckman thanked the Mayor and Council for this opportunity.

5. Hiring of Vincent Pizzuto to the Rank of Police Officer

- ❖ Biography of P.O. Pizzuto read by Chief of Police Rabboh.
- ❖ Resolution **23-137**/To Hire Vincent Pizzuto to the Rank of Police Officer in the Bergenfield Police Department.

Motion by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-137. Council President Pascual 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>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Oath of Office administered by Mayor Amatorio.

Officer Pizzuto thanked the Mayor and Council for this opportunity.

Chief of Police Rabboh thanked the Mayor and Council once again.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Lodato congratulated Captain Duran, Lieutenant Witty, and Sergeant Portorreal on their promotions this evening. He stated that as they advance in rank, it's a recognition of their service, performance, and leadership abilities. He wished them many more successful years of service in the Police Department. He welcomed Officers Pizzuto and Gluckman to the Bergenfield Police Department and wished them a very long and productive careers here. He wished all the officers their safety.

Councilperson Deauna congratulated each of the officers, Captain Duran and Lieutenant Witty, on their promotions. He expressed that they are a shining example of dedication, which is incomparable. He thanked them for their loyalty to the residents of the Borough of Bergenfield. He stated that for the newcomers, Officers Pizzuto and Gluckman, he hopes that can inject new ideas to the police force, which is one of the finest organizations.

Councilperson Kornbluth congratulated Captain Duran, Lieutenant Witty, and Sergeant Portorreal and their families on the promotions. She expressed that they put in the hours, but the wives are the ones looking after the family and worrying about their safety. She thanked them for their many years of service and congratulated them and their families. She wished them long and safe careers. She welcomed Officers Pizzuto and Gluckman to one of the finest forces in a great town. She commented that they have both shown their commitments to their communities, whether it be as a volunteer fireman and other positions, and also wished them long and safe careers.

Councilperson Rivera thanked all in attendance, as there are many faces in the crowd that he has never seen. He especially thanked the retirees, including Chief Carr, for all that he taught him in the past. He expressed that it brings him joy to see the retirees because it goes to show that the force is a fraternity for life. He thanked all the officers that are present in support of the promotions. He stated that the promotions demonstrate the bright future that we have here in Captain Duran, Lieutenant Witty, and Sergeant Portorreal, and knows that one of them will become Chief of this marvelous department, and the borough will be in good hands. He feels safe knowing that they will bring good things to the borough, and will serve as leaders for the new officers such as Officer Gluckman and Officer Pizzuto. He also congratulated all their families because you can see the efforts of their up brining. He reminded the new officers that they are now part of the best departments nationwide. He expressed that for many years, the borough was considered the second safest town within this population. He expressed the standard is high, which is why the department is also one of the highest compensated. The officers are very respected by the community. He wished them well and hopes to see them for a very long time.

Council President Pascual congratulated each officer and their families, and prayed for their safety. The Councilperson also acknowledged the other first responders in attendance and prayed for their safety as well. He thanked their families and their spouses for all their support because of all the work and anxiety that goes behind this. He expressed that he hopes to continue having a growing and productive relationship with the department. He further expressed that he wants to do their part as a member of the governing body to ensure their safety and help Bergenfield move forward.

Mayor Amatorio thanked Chief Rabboh for arranging all the promotions and for hiring the new officers. He also thanked all the retirees for their attendance this evening. He welcomed back Chief Lucas, Chief Carr, and Chief Monaghan. He congratulated the newly promoted officers, Captain Duran, Lieutenant Witty, and Sergeant Portorreal. He stated that it has been a while since we have had this event, but he is glad they have moved forward and hopes to have more in the future. He also stated that he hopes we can hire more officers to help the community be safer. He congratulated the new officers, Officer Gluckman and Officer Pizzuto, and thanked all their families as they have been through so much these past years. He expressed that their success would not be possible without their support. He wished for their safety and that they return home each time they wear that uniform. Mayor Amatorio also expressed his support of the department. He also thanked the volunteer fire department for their presence and for supporting their colleagues.

Councilperson Kornbluth motioned for a five-minute recess. Council President Pascual seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. The meeting recessed at 8:51 p.m. The meeting reopened at 9:04 p.m.

Roll Call.

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

ABSENT: Councilperson Almonte

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Amatorio read the following into the Record:

The following ordinances published herewith were first read by title only on April 4, 2023 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

ORDINANCE 23-2614 - AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE SALARY RANGES OF EMPLOYEES NOT SUBJECTED TO UNIONIZED CONTRACTUAL UNITS OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD

ORDINANCE 23-2615 - AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

Public Comments on Ordinances 23-2614 and 23-2615.

No one came forward.

Motion by Council President Pascual, second by Councilperson Rivera, to pass Ordinances 23-2614 and 23-2615 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>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Introduction of Ordinances

Motion by Council President Pascual that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting May 2, 2023 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 Kornbluth seconded the motion.

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

ORDINANCE 23-2616 - BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAKING OF VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND THE ACQUISITION OF NEW ADDITIONAL OR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY, NEW COMMUNICATION AND SIGNAL SYSTEMS EQUIPMENT AND NEW AUTOMOTIVE AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES, 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 \$3,302,000 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>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting June 20, 2023 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 Kornbluth seconded the motion.

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

ORDINANCE 23-2617 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 186 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "LAND DEVELOPMENT"

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

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 23-138. 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. **23-139/**To Approve Bill List
- b. **23-140/**To Approve Temporary Emergency
- c. **23-141/**To Approve Temporary Capital Budget
- d. **23-142/**To Approve Form 1B – DMHAS Youth Leadership Grant
- e. **23-143/**To Approve Veteran’s Tax Exemption – 60 Lunn Avenue
- f. **23-144/**To Honor 2023 Arbor Day – April 28, 2023
- g. **23-145/**To Authorize a Request for Proposal for the Sale of Borough Property – Block 76, Lot 3, North Prospect Avenue
- h. **23-146/**To Authorize Bid – New Municipal Complex Furniture
- i. **23-147/**To Approve Summer Camp Counselors Hourly Rate
- j. **23-148/**To Amend Membership to Appoint Yvonne C. Aponte on the Veteran’s Advisory Committee
- k. **23-149/**To Authorize Bid – Thomas Roos Park Tennis Court Resurfacing and Pickleball Court Installation

Motion by Council President Pascual 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>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>absent</i>	Council President Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Recommendation and Nominations for Boards and Committees

Mayor recommends and nominates the following to serve on the Rent Leveling Board as follows:

Sylvia Rosario Alternate Member, 1-year term, term exp. 12/31/23

Motion by Council President Pascual that the nomination be confirmed. Councilperson Lodato seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

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

Committee/Department Reports

Motion offered by Council President Pascual 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.

Barry Doll, resident, congratulated the new police officers and the promotion of the Lieutenant, Sergeant, and Captain. He also saluted Councilperson Rivera on the comment of the highest paid police in the nation. He filed a summons against the zoning board in the courts and stated that it was an arduous process. He suggested that the council change the rules in terms of zoning board appeals. He questioned the three-million-dollar bond for improvement if it is added to the budget. Borough Administrator Gallo identified that 2.4 million capital bonds and nine hundred is CARES ACT to upgrade emergency and waste disposal systems.

John Smith, resident, reminded the Mayor and Council about the Vietnam Pinning Ceremony on Saturday April 22nd at 2pm.

Jaqueline Romney, resident, asked what is being done to address traffic safety in the community. She acknowledged the decline in traffic accidents, but wanted to know what was going to be done to further improve. She stated that she has been mentally and emotionally affected by the accident numbers. She referenced accidents that happened in the borough, including near the Dunkin Donuts. She inquired what is the approach the borough has taken to address the road crisis and why hasn't the Traffic Safety Committee had any appointments? She further inquired if there can be a flashing light at West Main St and Portland and Magnolia and S. Washington Ave? She also asked why there is no tv or internet stream for the council meetings for transparency.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated West Main and S. Washington are both County roads and require County Approval. He also stated that in the new building, the borough will have the ability to record the council meetings and then post but will not do a live stream.

Mayor Amatorio stated they won't be investing in the old building to have that AV equipment installed, instead the recording will start when the new building is open.

Borough Administrator Gallo responded again to the question about studies on the roads in question, that they are county roads and anything done would require the county approval.

Councilperson Lodato asked a follow up question about pedestrian accident by Dunkin Donuts, which Borough Administrator Gallo stated it was caused by a pedestrian walking outside of a crosswalk and was hit by a pole on the PSEG vehicle. Councilperson Lodato agreed you cannot enforce whether the pedestrian crosses in the crosswalk.

Mayor Amatorio asked Chief Rabboh to affirm that accidents are down.

Chief Rabboh responded that while accidents are down, more people will be out now that the weather is getting warmer, and so they are expected to rise again.

Sergeant Major Williams, congratulated the new officers and promotions and offered support from the VFW. He also reminded the Mayor and Council to attend the Vietnam Veterans Pinning Ceremony on Saturday April 22nd at the VFW.

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Council President Pascual, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk