

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION
DECEMBER 5, 2023**

PRESENT: Council President Marc Pascual, Council members Buddy Deauna, Thomas A. Lodato, Domingo Almonte, and Hernando Rivera

ABSENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio and Council member Ora Kornbluth

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Administrator Corey Gallo
Borough Attorney John Schettino
Deputy Borough Clerk Hilda Tavitian

Council President Pascual called the meeting to order at 8:00 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 December 1, 2023 was sent to the Record, the Star Ledger, Twin Boro News, and Cablevision, placed on two Municipal Bulletin Boards and posted on the website, and is on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk."

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilperson Lodato.

AGENDA CHANGES

Motion by Councilperson Deauna to add two resolutions. Resolution 23-365 To Approve Designating a Conditional Redeveloper Concerning Redevelopment Area Block 126, Lots 9-12, 15-16, and Block 126, Lot 14 – FAMCO, LLC and New West Properties, LLC and Resolution 23-366 To Authorize Community Development Block Grant CDBG Projects – Bradley Avenue Improvement Project. Seconded by Councilperson Rivera. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamations

1. Bergenfield Jr. Football Team

Council President Pasqual read the proclamation into the record and presented individual citations to each of the players.

2. Bergenfield Fall Baseball U10 Team

Council President Pasqual read the proclamation into the record and presented individual citations to each of the players.

3. Bergenfield Jr. Cheerleaders

Council President Pasqual read the citations into the record and presented individual citations to each of the cheerleaders.

B. Police Department Presentation

Police Chief Rabboh congratulated the football and baseball teams. He acknowledged the great work of the Police Officers and the Tele-Communications Dispatcher with assisting a woman who gave birth to a baby girl, in September 2023. He issued citations to Police

Officers Oscar Lopez, Eric Lind, Matthew Siemaszkiewicz, Andres Enriquez, and Tele-Communications Dispatcher Michael Casper.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Robert Klein, Remington Vernick engineer, stated the sidewalk replacement program should wrap up by next week. North Taylor Street and Mackay Drive have been milled and paved. The two street are complete, except for punch list items. He stated Roosevelt Avenue is scheduled to be milled and paved by Thursday. The roads that will not be gotten to this year are Smith, Edward, and O'Neil. These streets will be started in March and paved in April 2024. The contractor is not concerned about the weather affecting the paving and cement work.

ORDINANCES

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough administrator Gallo stated they had conversations with the vendors about the repairs and concrete work as they are not drivable as the winter months approach. He thanked all the volunteers and the DPW that helped at the Holiday in the Park event. It was an enormous success. Mr. Gallo stated it takes a team effort to put on events like this and there have been borough events every month this past year. The new borough hall building continues to make strides. Mr. Gallo explained there are challenges right now that they are working on. They are getting the technologies coordinated and working on the interior of the new building.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato

No report.

Councilperson Deauna

stated he attended the last Board of Health meeting. They will hold the rabies clinic at the DPW garage on December 10nd, 2023. Dr. Aurea Tobias-Quiroz of the Board of Health suffered a stroke and they will need to find a replacement.

Councilperson Almonte

No Report.

Councilperson Rivera

stated at the League of Municipalities the borough received the Bronze Level Recognition by Sustainable New Jersey. They are proud to receive this honor.

Council President Pascual

stated at last night's Zoning Board meeting, there were 3 applications passed and 1

application was pushed to next year. The Rent Leveling Board will be held tomorrow. He will have a report from this meeting at the next meeting. The Holiday at the Park event was a great success.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Women's and Children Program (WIC) **RE:** Request to Reserve the Borough Hall Council Chambers/2nd Monday of Every Month in 2024

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, and all members present voting in favor, to accept Correspondence Item A. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Smith, resident, inquired why there are several businesses (Lidl, Oil Change) getting tax reductions. He suggested the governing body consider getting a new tax appeal attorney. He inquired why they are losing all of these tax appeals. He stated residents getting denied and businesses are being approved. Mr. Smith stated he appreciates the presentations for the teams and cheerleaders, but it would be better if they are held at the school during the day to encourage children who do not play sports.

Mary Sullivan, resident, echoed what John said. Lidl has had a \$2 million dollar drop in taxes, yet they have added a new tenant. She inquired why they are getting \$34,000 back.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 23-346. 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. **23-347**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **23-348**/To Approve Tax Appeal Settlement – 20 New Bridge Rd
- c. **23-349**/To Approve Tax Refund – 50 E. Clinton Avenue
- d. **23-350**/To Approve Grant Application – NJ Department of Community Affairs, Purchase Dryers to Clean Firefighting Gear
- e. **23-351**/To Authorize Refund Rejected 2023 Online Tax Sale Bidder – Kareda LLC
- f. **23-352**/To Approve Tax Court Judgement – 80 New Bridge Road
- g. **23-353**/To Approve Raffle Application RA 1407
- h. **23-354**/To Approve NJDOT Grant Cancellation – West Central Avenue
- i. **23-355**/To Approve Transfer of Appropriations
- j. **23-356**/To Approve Tax Refund – 49 Haring Street
- k. **23-357**/To Authorize Tax Collector to Cancel Assessment on N. Railroad Avenue and Annex Place
- l. **23-358**/To Approve NJ DEP Green Acres and Urban Parks Grant - PAL Field Lighting Improvements Project
- m. **23-359**/To Authorize Award and Approve Contract – AV Equipment for New Municipal Building - Sharp Electronics Corporation
- n. **23-360**/To Approve Lease and Service Agreement - Eight (8) Document Systems – Sharp Electronics Corporation

Motion by Councilperson Lodato, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, to approve Consent Resolution #23-346.

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>aye</i>

B. RESOLUTIONS

23-361/To Approve Hire Part-Time Laborer – Richard Ramsden

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Almonte to approve Resolution #23-361.

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>aye</i>

23-362/To Approve Hire Part-Time Laborer – Michael Skeahan

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-362.

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>aye</i>

23-363/To Approve Hire Part-Time Senior/Community Bus Driver – Mary Clemons-Muhammad

Motion by Councilperson Almonte, seconded by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-363.

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>aye</i>

C. ADDED RESOLUTIONS

23-365/To Approve Designating a Conditional Redeveloper Concerning Redevelopment Area Block 126, Lots 9-12, 15-16, and Block 126, Lot 14 – FAMCO, LLC and New West Properties, LLC

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-365.

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

Councilperson Lodato:	<i>abstain</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>aye</i>

23-366/To Authorize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Projects – Bradley Avenue Improvement Project

Motion by Councilperson Deauna, seconded by Councilperson Rivera to approve Resolution #23-366.

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>aye</i>

COUNCIL COMMENTS

The Mayor and Council thanked all for attending the meeting and wished all Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION 23-364/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Personnel
 - 1. Police Department Personnel Matters

- B. Attorney-Client Privilege
 - 1. Massey v. Borough of Bergenfield Litigation Update
 - 2. Tortora v. Borough of Bergenfield Litigation Update
 - 3. Miller v. Borough of Bergenfield Litigation Update
 - 4. Rispoli v. Borough of Bergenfield Litigation Update


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, seconded by Councilperson Rivera and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 9:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Council President Pascual, second by Councilperson Rivera and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Hilda Tavitian
Deputy Borough Clerk