

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD  
MAYOR & COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024  
8:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Arvin Amatorio (arrived at 8:06 p.m.), Council President Hernando Rivera, and Council members Buddy Deauna, Ora Kornbluth, and Marc Pascual

**ABSENT:** Council members Thomas Lodato and Domingo Almonte

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

Council President Rivera 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**

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth to add to Correspondence Request to Reserve Cooper's Pond for a Shade Tree Committee monthly meeting October 7, 2024 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., add Ordinance for Introduction 24-2632 - An Ordinance of the Borough of Bergenfield, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey Providing for a Special Emergency Appropriation in an Amount Not to Exceed \$50,000 to Fund Tax Map Services for Revaluation Compliance, and add Resolutions #24-258 to Approve Proposal for HRA Services - EB Employee Solutions, LLC, DBA as the Difference Card and #24-259 to Approve Change Order No. 002 to Increase Allowance Authorization - New Municipal Complex to the Consent Agenda, and add discussion on the WWII Death March Memorial Park to New Business. Councilperson Pascual seconded the motion. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Councilperson Deauna to approve minutes of the August 20, 2024 Regular Public Meeting and August 20, 2024 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released), September 3, 2024 Work Session Meeting and September 3, 2024 Closed Session Meeting (not to be released). Councilperson Pascual 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.

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

Neil Rothman, resident, stated there has been an ongoing request for single-sided parking for the past 18 months on Rector Court. The synagogue has been a wonderful success. However, there is congestion during events and activities taking place at the synagogue in which residents have to direct traffic themselves. Mr. Rothman stated they have requested that parking be restricted on New

Bridge Road and Maiden Lane to ensure the streets are safe for residents and visitors. Mr. Rothman stated any parking spaces that would be lost have already been replaced by synagogue parking. He requested this matter be prioritized.

John Smith, resident, inquired what side of the street is it going to be. He requested the governing body take into consideration no parking. The police department put together a traffic plan for the area previously. He stated putting cones out is illegal and there should be no excuses.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated they are requesting no parking on the western side, on the side of the synagogue.

Lisa Escott, resident, stated this isn't the city. There is no shortage of parking. It's a long street and doesn't understand the complaint.

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, to Close Verbal Communications I. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

#### PRESENTATIONS

None.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| a.) Naylis/Board of Fire Officers | <b>RE:</b> Personnel Action Letter dated September 9, 2024   |
| b.) Javier/Shade Tree Committee   | <b>RE:</b> Request to Reserve Cooper's Pond for a Monthly Meeting/October 7, 2024/7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. |

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

#### ORDINANCES

##### A. Introduction of Ordinances

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth that the following ordinance be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, October 1, 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 ordinance(s) into the record:

**ORDINANCE 24-2631 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 284 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD ENTITLED “OFFICIAL TOWERS”**

**ORDINANCE 24-2632 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000 TO FUND TAX MAP SERVICES FOR REVALUATION COMPLIANCE**

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

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

A. CONSENT AGENDA

**CONSENT RESOLUTION 24-254.** 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. **24-255**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **24-256**/To Approve Contract – Line Clearance Arborist Workshops for the DPW – ACRT, Inc.
- c. **24-257**/To Approve Contract – Supply and Install (1) New Mitsubishi P-Series for Server Room – ML Mettler Corp. Mettler Mechanical
- d. **24-258**/To Approve Proposal for HRA Services – EB Employee Solutions, LLC, DBA as the Difference Card
- e. **24-259**/To Approve Change Order No. 002 to Increase Allowance Authorization - New Municipal Complex

Motion by Councilperson Deauna to approve the Consent Resolution. Council President Rivera seconded the motion.

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

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

B. Resolutions

**24-260**/To Approve Pay Increase for Payroll Clerk - Alexandra Cacciatore

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #24-260 be approved.

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

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

**24-261**/To Approve Pay Increase for Public Information Officer - Andrew Stewart

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, that Resolution #24-261 be approved.

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

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

**24-262**/To Promote to Part-Time Laborer – Michael Torres

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Council President Rivera, that Resolution #24-262 be approved.

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

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

#### **24-263/To Hire Part-Time Laborers**

Motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, seconded by Council President Rivera, that Resolution #24-263 be approved.

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

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

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

##### A. Ordinance to Prohibit On-Street Commercial Parking

No action taken.

##### B. Ordinance to Re-Establish Parking for Commercial and Industrial Buildings

No action taken.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Ordinance to Amend Chapter 240 of the Borough Code entitled Rent Control

Robert Policano, Rent Leveling Board Chairman, stated they have been working on updating Chapter 240. It was last updated in 1975. They have been working on it for a year and have completed it. Mr. Policano explained some of the areas they revamped was: hardship, hardship applications, capital improvements, capital improvement applications, how to handle tenant and landlord complaints, and attached a fee to the application to produce income for the borough. Mr. Policano requested the governing body approve Andrew Lehr from being an alternate member to a permanent member. They are also short two board members, landlord and tenant.

##### B. Single-Sided Parking on Rector Court

Mayor Amatorio stated they should get a new report from the police department with recommendations. The ordinance will be introduced based on the final recommendations made by the police department.

##### C. WWII Death March Memorial Park

Mayor Amatorio stated the council liaison, himself, VFW, and the Veterans Advisory Committee had a discussion about at joint project at Memorial Park to establish a WWII memorial by the vacant area by the playground. It would be a 20x20 space.

Mr. Smith stated someone will do a drawing and proposal.

Mr. Gallo stated if they are going to build a memorial, they need to ensure it won't impede where the kids play and disrespect the memorial.

Mayor Amatorio stated it will improve esthetics and functionality of the area. You don't want to cut trees. A private organization will help raise money for it so it won't cost the borough anything.

#### Committee/Department Reports

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

Kathy Nolan, resident, expressed her concern regarding speeding on Murray Hill Terrace. She stated that people do not stop at the stop sign, and drive straight through at 40 to 50 mph. She witnessed a dog hit and killed at the corner. She suggested putting a speed hump or a sign that registers the speed there.

Mayor Amatorio stated they will notify the traffic division to conduct a study to determine if additional stop signs are needed in the area.

Neil Rothman, resident, stated he has several emails from town members dating back to June 2023 requesting a study be done by the police department, but never received a response. The special events that happen are sporadic, but when they do, you cannot get down the block. The traffic study by the police department needs to be done. He has documentation from the past year and a half letting the Mayor and Council know of his safety concerns as an accident is waiting to happen. He explained that residents are only asking for no parking on one side of the street. He inquired if there is anything that can be done to expedite the process. There's always been challenges on Rector Court, but the community has grown. There are more kids and more people.

Council President Rivera stated he remembers citizens who were against the synagogue being built in the past mentioning something like this would happen. They were assured no one was going to drive, everyone was going to walk to the synagogue.

Mr. Gallo stated he will speak with the Police Chief to get this matter prioritized and done. During the application process, the boards questioned the size of the synagogue. It's a beautiful synagogue and they are in support of it. Parking being a challenge was a general concern of the public because there wasn't enough parking at the synagogue to support the size of the synagogue. The Board chose to go in a different direction and pursue it without making any adaptations. People are now parking their cars instead of walking, which is something that wasn't adequately measured at the time and now has become a hazardous condition. The borough has to figure out how to fix it. It's not within the synagogue's scope to have an enforcement policy.

Council President Rivera inquired who owns the cars. He stated that the community should take action as well.

Michael Nadata, resident, stated he lives by the synagogue and has an insurance agency. He received three calls on accidents since the synagogue was erected. There is an additional nuisance when someone makes a right turn on Rector Court from New Bridge Rd to avoid stopping when the train is passing. The cars belong to members of the synagogue. There are set times for prayer services.

Mr. Gallo inquired if there is a specific time so they can limit the parking to certain days and times.

John Smith, resident, stated this is really getting out of hand. People are walking on the street on Rector Court without vests at night. There were cars parked on both sides of Prospect Avenue today. Ignorance of the law is no excuse and there shouldn't be any exceptions made. Mr. Smith stated the monument should be at the entrance of the park where it will be visible. He inquired about the cost of the new building. He inquired if there is credit for the repair work.

Mr. Gallo stated the number hasn't changed and is still under \$16.1 million. The contract was for \$15.4 million. The money being added now is for the demolition. There was \$150,000 in additional costs for tile and other items that had to be removed from the building. Mr. Gallo stated the contractor won't be paid until the punch list is done and everything is accounted for.

Mary Sullivan, resident, stated she was at all the Zoning Board meetings for Rector Court and the issue of needing parking kept coming up. They finally gave in to 10 parking spaces and were assured parking wasn't going to be a problem. Ms. Sullivan stated the religious exemptions need to be looked into. Someone is going to get hurt. She recognized and thanked the Bergenfield Volunteer Ambulance Corps. for their expertise and compassion in assisting her. Ms. Sullivan stated the stop light at the crosswalk on Woodbine Street was painted. The trucks can't make the turn and should be looked at.

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

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

The Mayor and Council thanked all for coming and to have a good night.

#### CLOSED SESSION

**RESOLUTION 24-264/**Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

A. Attorney-Client Privilege

1. Massey v. Bergenfield Litigation Updates
2. Tortora, Miller, Rispoli v. Bergenfield Litigation Updates

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 Pascual, second by Council President Rivera, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 8:51 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Kornbluth, second by Councilperson Pascual, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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Marie Quiñones-Wilson  
Borough Clerk