

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 4, 2025**

PRESENT: Mayor Arvin Amatorio (arrived at 8:21 p.m.) and Council President Ora Kornbluth, Council members, Thomas A. Lodato, Buddy Deauna, Domingo Almonte, Hernando Rivera and Marc Pascual

ABSENT: No one.

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

Council President Kornbluth 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, 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 Councilperson Lodato.

AGENDA CHANGES

None.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS/BOROUGH ENGINEER

A. Engineering & Inspection Status Report

Robert Klein, Borough Engineer from Remington & Vernick, stated they are waiting for spring to complete last year's road program. The contractor will mill and pave Bedford Avenue, Delford Avenue, and N. First Street. The list for the 2025 roads program is close to being finalized.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated the road program is going to be limited this year due making improvements to the borough property and parks. We reached out to PSE&G and Veolia and provided them a preliminary list of where we would like work, as the work can be split 60/40 with them. The borough will address New Jersey Avenue and Bradley Avenue as grant monies will be used towards paving those streets. He explained that the deteriorated driveway going down from Coopers Pond also needs to be addressed. Council President Kornbluth inquired if the borough can obtain a grant for this work. He stated that the borough can apply for grants, but for the cost, it can use the funds for projects that are more costly. He also referenced that we will have to look into Willet Court and Tulip Street. He reminded everyone that the borough does all the infrastructure work, repairs the sewer lines if needed, completes the storm drain repairs, curbs, and any aprons damaged by borough trees. The resident is responsible for fixing sidewalks. Mr. Gallo stated the borough also needs to plant trees this year to replenish trees removed during the street repair program last year. As for the road program, this is the second time the contractor is late. He is going to look into issuing a penalty.

ORDINANCES

A. Adoption of Ordinance

Council President Kornbluth read into the record:

The following ordinance published herewith was first read by title only on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 and posted on the bulletin board of the municipal center.

ORDINANCE 25-2637 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 186.50.1 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "GARAGES"

Public Comments on Ordinance 25-2637.

No one came forward.

Council President Kornbluth closed public comments.

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Councilperson Deauna, to pass Ordinance 25-2637 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>	Council President Kornbluth:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Deauna:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Rivera:	<i>aye</i>
Councilperson Almonte:	<i>aye</i>	Councilperson Pascual:	<i>aye</i>

B. Introduction of Ordinances

Motion by Councilperson Rivera that the following ordinances be introduced and passed on first reading and setting Tuesday, February 18, 2025 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 Lodato seconded the motion.

Mayor Amatorio read the title of the ordinance(s) into the record:

ORDINANCE 25-2638 - AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 194 ENTITLED "LIBRARY" OF THE BOROUGH CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

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

ORDINANCE 25-2639 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 273-19 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERGENFIELD, ENTITLED "PERMISSION REQUIRED FOR PUBLIC GATHERINGS AND DISPLAY OF MERCHANDISE"

Council President Kornbluth inquired if they consulted with the Attorney General's office regarding this ordinance.

Borough Attorney Schettino stated that he did not reach out to the AG's office, but researched the existing case law. He took the language from several court cases that are out there, based on what was permitted or not, and turned it into an ordinance. Mr. Schettino reminded everyone that this ordinance is going to stop a protest. A violation can be issued and the fine can be paid based on the ordinance. However, it does not allow the borough to stop protests from happening. Protestors can never target residential homes or cause obstructions.

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, that Ordinance 25-2639 be tabled. All present voting in favor, none opposed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Ordinance for Consideration - An Ordinance Establishing Special Parking Licenses for Borough Emergency Vehicles, Borough Vehicles, and Designated Personal Vehicles of Employees, Staff, and Officials performing Official Duties

Mayor Amatorio stated they want to introduce this ordinance to provide flexibility for borough employees to park at designated areas, such as the nurses visiting the senior center. The number one requirement is not to create hazard or impede operations. The ordinance will be introduced at the next meeting.

Mr. Gallo stated nurses would be able to come to the borough and request a placard to park their vehicles without being ticketed. For example, the borough clerk would be able to use the placard during elections to park her own vehicle or for health inspectors.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Borough administrator Gallo stated they are in the process of creating a new borough website. They have been working the past few months behind the scenes to update the website so it is more user friendly and aligns with AI capabilities. Hopefully, it will be done by President's Day. Mr. Gallo stated at the March 4th, 2025 Work Session meeting, the budget and capital budget will be introduced. The budget committee will try to keep a lean, tight budget operationally due to increase in costs for parts, medical insurance, fuel, and liability insurance. They will try to keep all other line items to zero increase. There are some obstacles that need to be cleared up with the road program to ensure there is enough funding for the paving of the entire footprint of borough hall. A grant was submitted for two scoreboards for Twin Boro Field.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT

Councilperson Lodato	stated there were no new applications on the agenda at the Zoning Board meeting last night. The board members were appreciative of the ordinance regarding the garages. They were looking for clear direction and guidelines. The Planning Board met on January 27 th , 2025, but he was unable to make the meeting. The Library Board will meet next Thursday.
Councilperson Deauna	stated he did not attend the Barrier Free Committee meeting.
Councilperson Almonte	No report.
Council President Kornbluth	stated BVAC has gone on 187 calls year to date. There were three crews on standby during the snow storm. They responded to several medical calls during the storm without any incident. OEM also monitored the storm.

Councilperson Rivera

No report.

Councilperson Pascual

stated the Stigma Free Committee is hosting a Domestic Violence Awareness event on February 27th, 2025 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. There will be guest speakers from the prosecutor's office, assistant prosecutor's office, and the Executive Director of Domestic Violence. The committee is also welcoming any new members that would like to attend and participate. The first Veterans Advisory Committee meeting of the month was the oath taking for Chairman Tom Lang and Vice Chairman Gerald Ferra. The VFW 6467 Post is holding a Valentine's Day party on February 14th, 2025. Donation is \$40. If a veteran appears in uniform, they will receive two free drinks. He welcomed John Smith, Jose Vasquez, and Edward Lora to the committee. The committee would like to discuss details of the Memorial Day parade.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Sullivan, resident, inquired if the new website can be nj.gov instead of .com.

Borough Administrator Gallo stated that is the borough's domain and if nj.gov is available, he will try to get it if he can.

John Smith, resident, inquired if the golf course will be fined for cutting down the trees. He can send pictures tomorrow.

Mr. Gallo stated they filed a complaint with the NJDEP and never received a response. Mr. Gallo stated another complaint has been submitted and he emailed the Commissioner directly. The borough has been waiting over eighteen months to get a permit to do the work at Metzler's Brook. The borough has tried to address the issue, but it has fallen on deaf ears. Some of the property they cut was wetlands and built beds along the brook line, which is a violation. As a result, a complaint was filed. The borough can't do anything about broken windows. The golf club should have insurance and reimburse residents for the broken windows.

Yehuda Borg, resident, inquired if the residents can negotiate a rate to have trees planted in front of their homes with the company the borough hires to plant trees, similar to the agreement for the sidewalks.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS TO BE ACTED UPON:

A. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT RESOLUTION 25-066. 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. **25-067**/To Approve Bill List
- b. **25-068**/To Approve the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) for Green Acres as part of the Twin Boro Park Improvement Project

Motion by Councilperson Pascual, seconded by Councilperson Deauna, to approve Consent Resolution #25-066.

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

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

B. Resolutions

25-069/To Hire School Crossing Guard – George Kapitanelis

Motion by Council President Kornbluth, seconded by Councilperson Rivera, to approve Resolution #25-069.

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

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

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

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION 25-070/Authorizing the Governing Body to Enter into Closed Executive Session to discuss:

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege/Personnel
 - 1. Police Personnel and Procedures

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, seconded by Councilperson Rivera and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned to the Closed Session in the Executive Chambers at 8:32 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilperson Pascual, second by Council President Kornbluth and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Marie Quiñones-Wilson
Borough Clerk