

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

April 28, 2025

7:30 PM

Mayor Bernstein called the meeting to order at 7:50 pm and read the compliance statement.

The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, have been satisfied by the inclusion of the date, time and place of this meeting in the annual schedule of meetings of this Governing Body. Such schedule of meetings is posted at Borough Hall, on the Borough website and was published in the Record and Star Ledger and was filed in the office of the Borough Clerk.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Bernstein invited the 5/6th grade Soccer Team to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Mayor Bernstein, Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Absent: None

Also Present: Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator
Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Frank Visaggio, Acting Police Chief
Jason Gangi, DPW Director
Peter Suh, CFO
Andrea Johe, Deputy Tax Collector
Liz Shick, Borough Auditor
John McLoughlin, Fire Chief
Jeff Geisenheimer, EMS President

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to suspend the regular order of business to present Certificates of Achievement to the DAA 5/6 Boys Championship Indoor Soccer Team.

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Councilmember Jiang

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES OF ACHEIVEMENT

Mayor Bernstein invited Councilmember Marks, the liaison to DAA, to join him for the presentation. Councilmember Marks noted that he spent time as a coach for all seasons of soccer and he especially enjoyed indoor soccer, and he congratulated the team on the Championship. He invited the coaches to join them.

Certificates of achievement were presented to the following members of the 5/6 Championship Boys Team.

*Bode Champ
Cole Kang
Ethan Kowalewski
Evan Oh
Harry Maurer
Jake Harrison
Liam Natan
Sam Passer
Samuel Donzis
Zain Shamin*

Ordinance (Introduction):

ORDINANCE 1160-25 - CALENDAR YEAR 2025 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1160-25 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on May 12, 2025.

A motion was made by Marks and seconded by Councilmember Fox.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss
Nays: None

ORDINANCE NO. 1161-25-AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LEAF COMPOSTING FACILITY, APPROPRIATING \$3,000,000 THEREFOR, AND AUTHORIZING \$2,850,000 IN BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST TO FINANCE THE SAME

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1161-25 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on May 12, 2025.

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Councilmember Fox.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss
Nays: None

ORDINANCE NO. 1162-25 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF A 1994 PIERCE DASH PUMPER TO THE TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1162-25 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on May 12, 2025.

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Council President Slowikowski.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss
Nays:

Ordinance Public Hearing (Adoption):

ORDINANCE 1159-25 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 1159-25.

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

Mayor Bernstein asked if anyone wishes to be heard concerning adoption of this ordinance.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Jiang

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1159-25 with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record.

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

RESOLUTION NO. 085-25 INTRODUCTION OF THE 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED that the following statement of revenues and appropriations attached hereto constitute the local Budget of the Borough of Demarest, Bergen County, New Jersey for the year 2025; and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the said Budget be published in The Record, in the issue of the Friday May 2, 2025 and that a hearing on the Budget will be held at the Borough Hall during the Public Meeting on June 2, 2025 at 7:30 PM, or as soon thereafter, as the matter may be heard

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Collins.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

RESOLUTION NO. 086-25 AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF CAPITAL ORDINANCES

WHEREAS, there appears open of record unexpended balances on ordinance 1087/1125 appropriations in the General Capital Fund, and

WHEREAS, the capital projects have been completed, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body of the Borough of Demarest, County of Bergen, New Jersey, that the following ordinance appropriation balances in the General Capital Fund be cancelled of record.

Ord. No.	Improvement Description	Cancelled to:		
		Capital Improvement Fund	Deferred Charges Unfunded	Total
1087/1125 (b)	Borough Hall Renovations and Sallie Port Construction	\$ 10,000	\$ 190,000	\$ 200,000
1087/1125 (c)	Affordable Housing Site Work and Construction	140,000	2,660,000	2,800,000
	Total	<u>\$ 150,000</u>	<u>\$ 2,850,000</u>	<u>\$ 3,000,000</u>

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Marks.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: Councilmember Fox

RESOLUTION NO. 087-25 ADOPTING A TEMPORARY CAPITAL BUDGET

Whereas, the local capital budget for the year 2025 has not been adopted.

Whereas, it is desired to Introduce a Capital Ordinance.

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Demarest, County of Bergen that the following temporary capital budget amendment of 2025 be made:

(FULL TEMPORARY CAPITAL BUDGET ATTACHED)

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Collins.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss
Nays: None

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE SUBMISSION OF 2025 BERGEN COUNTY TRUST FUND

Mayor Bernstein opened the floor to the public for the Public Hearing on the submission of a grant application for the 2025 Bergen County Trust Fund Municipal Parks Program, whereas the Borough of Demarest desires to obtain a matching grant in the amount \$143,200.00 from the County Trust Fund to fund the Wakelee Field, Drainage Improvement Project “Phase II”

The project will include the installation of drainage pipes, pedestrian safety grates, and the cleaning and televising of the existing storm pipes.

Speaker(s): None

RESOLUTION NO. 088-25 MUNICIPAL endorsement of application described above

WHEREAS, the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floodplain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund (“County Trust Fund”), provides matching grants to municipal governments and to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the development or redevelopment of outdoor municipal recreation facilities; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough of Demarest desires to further the public interest by obtaining a matching grant of \$143,200.00 from the County Trust Fund to fund the Wakelee Field, Drainage Improvement Project “Phase II” including the installation of drainage pipes, pedestrian safety grates, and the cleaning and televising of the existing storm pipe; and,

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Demarest has reviewed the County Trust Fund Program Statement and the Trust Fund Municipal Program Park Improvement application and instructions, and desires to make an application for such a matching grant and provide application information and furnish such documents as may be required; and,

WHEREAS, as part of the application process, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Demarest held the required Public Hearing to receive public comments on the proposed park improvements in the application on April 28, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Bergen shall determine whether the application is complete and in conformance with the scope and intent of the County Trust Fund; and,

WHEREAS the applicant is willing to use the County Trust Fund in accordance with such rules, regulations, and applicable statutes, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the County of Bergen for the above named project and ensure its completion on or about the project contract expiration date.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Demarest:

- 1. That it is hereby authorized to submit the above completed project application to the County by the deadline as established by the County; and,*
- 2. That, in the event of a County Trust Fund award that may be less than the grant amount requested above, the Mayor and Council has, or will secure, the balance of funding necessary to complete the project, or modify the project as necessary; and,*
- 3. That the Mayor and Council is committed to providing a dollar for dollar cash match for the project; and,*
- 4. That only those park improvements identified and approved in the project application, its Trust Fund contract, or other documentation will be considered eligible for reimbursement.*
- 5. That the Mayor and Council agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations in its performance of the project; and,*
- 6. That this resolution shall take effect immediately.*

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Council President Slowikowski.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

Consent Agenda

Mayor Bernstein asked if any member would like to have any resolution removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately. *(none)*

Mayor Bernstein asked if any member would like to abstain from voting on any resolution on the consent agenda. *(none)*

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to accept the consent agenda (with any abstentions noted)

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 089-25	Release of Escrow
Resolution No. 090-25	Authorizing Place-to Place Transfer for Liquor License
Resolution No. 091-25	Payment of Bills

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Nays: None

Mayor's Report

Mayor Bernstein discussed how road improvement projects have been approved in the past. He proposed that the Borough Engineer provide a checklist in the future of all special conditions including but not limited to tree removals, road widening, curbs, and drainage. He further noted that he would like a notice to be sent to residents during the design process to avoid further problems with neighbors having issues when they become aware too late in the project.

Councilmember Fox added that she would like to solicit input from residents before the design phase so all concerns can be considered.

Mayor Bernstein noted that he doesn't disagree but wants to make sure that we do not miss any grant deadlines.

Council Committee Reports

Finance & Personnel (Slowikowski)

No report.

Ordinance (Fox)

Councilmember Fox noted that work on the Zoning Ordinance is continuing.

DPW & Recreation (Marks)

Councilmember Marks reported upcoming events from Recreation and the status of enrollment for summer camp.

Economic Development (Jiang)

Councilmember Jiang reported that he had nothing new to report for Economic Development. He further reported that the Demarest Schools want to discuss shared services, including the cost of a generator in the new gym which should be completed in August and could potentially be used by the Borough's OEM team. Councilmember Fox asked if a town hall meeting would be planned to discuss downtown redevelopment. Councilmember Jiang noted that while they would solicit the public's comment in the future, it was premature at the moment.

Police and OEM (Reiss)

Councilmember Reiss noted that he was disappointed that the larger crowd did not attend this public meeting to hear the discussion on new policies discussed in the Mayor's report. He noted that Detective Cho was studying at the Bergen County Academy as defensive tactics, and that the entire department is training in weapons. And he congratulated Acting Chief Visaggio on recently becoming a 7th degree blackbelt in Taekwondo.

Fire and EMS (Collins)

Councilmember Collins noted that there is a meeting tomorrow with the EMS and Fire Departments in regard to a new LOSAP ordinance. He thanked the Fire Department for their work on Easter Sunday.

Reports of Borough Officials

Borough Administrator

Ms. Falkenstern shared some feedback from residents that visited the office during the week in regard to the Stelfox project. She noted that these were productive conversations. She further reported that while it was normal procedure for the Administrator, DPW Director and Borough Engineer to make design decisions and not necessarily highlight each issue to the Council she would in the future highlight these issues so that the Council would be better informed. She also reminded the Council that the June meeting is scheduled for June 2.

Borough Attorney

No report.

Borough Treasurer

Mr. Suh reminded those present that taxes are due May 1. He thanked the finance committee for their hard work on the budget.

Police Chief

Acting Chief Visaggio reported the monthly activity of the Police Department. He thanked the Fire, Ambulance and Public Works Departments for their support.

DPW Director

Mr. Gangi reported that the DPW is working on spring projects including field maintenance, work on the bathrooms at the DAA building and sidewalk repairs. Ms. Falkenstern added that the Borough received a grant for \$21K to repair the roof on the DAA building.

Ambulance

Jeff Geisenheimer reported the monthly activity of the EMS. He noted that the 2026 luncheon has already been planned for next February. He thanked the Fire Department and Police Department for their support. Mayor Bernstein asked if there had been any response from the Northvale Mayor concerning their lack of volunteers to give mutual aid. He reported that there was no response, and he does not believe that Northvale is able to help other towns, and they are being covered by Demarest and other towns in the mutual aid association.

Fire Chief

Chief McLoughlin reported the monthly activity of the department. He noted that Mutual Aid Associations are more of a club and may not hold any legal weight. He reported that the new truck should be ready in June.

Councilmember Collins asked to speak before the meeting was open to the public. He noted that the budget process was difficult, and he thanked the finance committee for their work.

Meeting Open to the Public

Councilmember Collins made a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox and approved by all.

Ray Cywinski

Mr. Cywinski asked Councilmember Marks about the decision to include Belgian block curbing along Stelfox.

Councilmember Marks explained the process and noted that the laid-back curb will secure the side of the streets. Mayor Bernstein added that while in the past Belgian block used to be the more expensive option, due to the increase in the cost of concrete the more aesthetic Belgian block has become a better option.

Mr. Cywinski expressed his opinion that the tree marked for removal on Stewart St. is healthy and he does not want it removed. Ms. Falkenstern noted that one of the reasons that the tree is being removed is that it is blocking the line of sight and stop sign causing a safety issue as raised by the Police Chief.

There being no other members of the public wishing to speak Councilmember Fox made a motion to close the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all.

There being no more business before the Council a motion was made by Council President Slowiksowki, second by Councilmember Collins and approved by all to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern

Acting Borough Clerk