

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
WORK SESSION Minutes
May 12, 2025
7:30 PM**

Mayor Bernstein began the meeting with the following 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.

Mayor Bernstein then invited the assembly to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Councilmember Jiang

Also Present: Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator
Peter Suh, CFO
Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Nick Chelius, Borough Engineer

Mayor Bernstein explained that he drafted a proclamation in honor of Edan Alexander, a Tenafly resident who was just released from captivity in the middle east.

PROCLAMATION

Welcoming Home Edan Alexander

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2023, Edan Alexander, a courageous young man from Tenafly, New Jersey, was taken hostage by Hamas while serving in the Israel Defense Forces; and

WHEREAS, for over 19 months, Edan endured unimaginable hardship in captivity, during which time his strength and resilience served as a beacon of hope for his family, friends, and community; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Demarest stands in solidarity with our neighboring community of Tenafly, sharing in the collective relief and joy upon Edan's safe return; and

***WHEREAS**, the release of Edan Alexander on May 12, 2025, marks a momentous occasion, bringing closure to a period of uncertainty and reaffirming our shared commitment to the values of freedom and human dignity; and*

***WHEREAS**, Edan's unwavering spirit and the steadfast support of his family and community exemplify the strength and unity that define our region; and*

***NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Brian K. Bernstein, Mayor of the Borough of Demarest, do hereby proclaim May 12, 2025, as a day of celebration and welcome home for Edan Alexander.*

Let us honor Edan's bravery and the collective efforts that led to his release, and let this day serve as a reminder of the power of community, perseverance, and hope.

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to suspend the regular order of business to present a proclamation to the Demarest Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

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

Roll Call:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Jiang

Mayor Bernstein noted that the Demarest Volunteer Ambulance Corps. members were not able to attend the meeting due to their attendance at training. He thanked them for their service and said the proclamation will be forwarded to the President.

EMS Week Proclamation

***WHEREAS**, emergency medical services is a vital public service; and*

***WHEREAS**, the members of emergency medical services teams are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and*

***WHEREAS**, access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and*

***WHEREAS**, emergency medical services fills healthcare gaps by providing important, out-of-hospital care, including preventative medicine, follow-up care, and access to telemedicine; and*

***WHEREAS**, the emergency medical services system consists of first responders, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, firefighters, police officers, educators, administrators, pre-hospital nurses, emergency nurses, emergency physicians, trained members of the public, and other out of hospital medical care providers; and*

***WHEREAS**, the members of emergency medical services teams, whether career or volunteer, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their lifesaving skills; and*

***WHEREAS**, it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of emergency medical services providers by designating the Emergency Medical Services Week; now*

THEREFORE**, I, Mayor Brian Bernstein, on behalf of the entire Governing Body of the Borough of Demarest, in recognition of this event do hereby proclaim the week of **May 18 - 24, 2025, as EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK

Mayor Bernstein then congratulated resident Sarah Slowikowski, daughter of Council President Slowikowski for her recent achievement representing Dartmouth at a track and field Championship.

Ordinances (Introduction):

ORDINANCE NO. 1163-25 AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST AMENDING THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REPEAL {CHAPTER 100 SECTIONS 1-20}; TO ADOPT A NEW {CHAPTER 100 SECTIONS 100-1 TO 100-88}; TO ADOPT FLOOD HAZARD MAPS; TO DESIGNATE A FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Bernstein asked for a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1163-25, and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on June 2, 2025.

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

Roll Call:

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

Ordinance Public Hearing (Adoption):

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)

Councilmember Collins made a motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance No. 1160-25. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all on a voice vote.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak a motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to close the public hearing. The motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Council President Slowikowski made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1160-25 with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: Councilmember Jiang

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

Councilmember Fox made a motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance No. 1161-25. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all on a voice vote.

Councilmember Reiss asked for clarification of how the \$3M is funded and whether the entire cost will be needed. The Borough Engineer explained that while this is a construction estimate he does expect that the total cost will be close to this number. Councilmember Marks asked how the Westwood property acquisition affects the budget. The Borough Engineer explained that the Westwood property acquisition satisfies the green acres tree requirement and without that the budget would have climbed closer to \$4M.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak a motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Marks to close the public hearing. The motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Councilmember Collins made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1161-25 with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks.

Roll Call:

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

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

Councilmember Collins made a motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance No. 1162-25. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox and approved by all on a voice vote.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak a motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Reiss to close the public hearing. The motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Councilmember Collins made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1162-25 with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox.

Roll Call:

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

Resolution 097-25 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING USE OF BOND FUNDS FOR REPLACEMENT TREE PLANTINGS ON STELFOX STREET AND STEWART STREET

Mayor Bernstein explained that these funds would cover purchase, delivery and planting and costs should not exceed \$20,000.00. This number was arrived at by feedback from the Shade Tree Commission. He added that the Shade Tree Commission is going to make recommendations on species, number of trees, and proper placement.

Councilmember Fox asked for clarification on the budget and asked if the not to exceed budget number is necessary. The Borough Administrator explained that a number was necessary in order for the CFO to certify that the funds were available. Councilmember Fox believes that the number is too low. Mayor Bernstein advised that the budget was based on information from the Shade Tree Commission. The Borough Attorney advised that the resolution authorizes the use of the funds and that the recommendations of the Shade Tree Commission will then be approved by the Council. Councilmember Fox asked if language could be added requiring mature trees be planted. A discussion ensued on the final language concerning the size of the trees. The council decided to change the language to authorize up to \$50,000.00 in funds. Additionally, language to ensure that Shade Tree provided the most mature viable trees as practicable.

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Reiss to approve the resolution as amended.

Roll Call:

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

Work Session Discussion Items:

Engineer's Report

Borough Engineer Nick Chelius reported that the work on Stelfox began but needed to be stopped due to an error by the concrete subcontractor. He noted that the updated

schedule was not available yet. Councilmember Collins asked if the conditions of the street could be cleaned up while the work is paused. Mr. Chelius reported that the trenches have been filled in so the residents can use their driveways, but that some Belgian block, while unsightly would have to stay while the errors are corrected. In response to Councilmember Fox, Mr. Chelius noted that the Borough has not incurred any extra cost due to this contractor error. Mr. Chelius then reviewed the remainder of the month's engineering report. Ms. Fox asked if there were any tree removals related to Prescott and Forest Rds. since there had not been any negative feedback from the residents. He replied that that project had a similar number of tree removals, but the residents did not respond negatively. Mayor Bernstein asked Nick to provide the following in future reports to the council concerning road improvements: tree removals, drainage, sidewalks, curbs, knowledge of any unsafe conditions, any encroachment into the ROW. The Borough Administrator noted that she will work with the Borough Engineer to change the procedure of future road projects to increase feedback and notice to residents of the items the Mayor mentioned. Council President Slowikowski asked if these types of design discussions are usually done with the entire Council weighing in. He noted that in his experience the procedure that Demarest has been following is what is typical in other towns that the Administrator, Engineer and sometimes the DPW have these meetings rather than the entire Council, but he is happy to work on the new procedure to keep the residents informed. He did note that the process would obviously be a little slower due to having to wait for public meetings, but he will work with the Administrator to keep projects moving forward. A discussion ensued on how best to implement a new process. Councilmember Fox noted that she was not suggesting that the residents necessarily need to provide input, just that they receive notice as the Council still needs to make decisions and can't necessarily be guided by all the input.

Land Use Bill in NJ Legislature S116/A2623

Councilmember Fox wanted the Council to be aware of this proposed legislation, and it will be addressed in the upcoming zoning ordinance revision. Ms. Rosendahl noted that the proposed legislation would allow business use changes but not require it.

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. 092-25	Soil Moving-3 Central Ave.
Resolution No. 093-25	Release of Escrow
Resolution No. 094-25	Execution of Shared Service Agreement for Vehicle Maintenance-Bergen County
Resolution No. 095-25	Execution of Shared Service Agreement for Equipment-Bergen County

Resolution No. 096-25 Soil Moving-592 Piermont Rd.
Resolution No. 098-25 Payment of Bills

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Councilmember Collins.

Roll Call:

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

Minutes for Approval

April 28, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2025 Closed Session Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Reiss.

Roll Call:

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

Meeting Open to the Public

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

Linda Cetta

Ms. Cetta asked if there are any trees impacted on Stewart St. Mayor Bernstein answered that there is one tree removal. Ms. Cetta then asked how Shade Tree would be involved in tree replacement recommendation. Mayor Bernstein told Ms. Cetta that the resolution approved this evening asks for a recommendation from the Commission. Ms. Falkenstern told Ms. Cetta that she will provide the Commission through their secretary with a copy to her as the Chair the resolution that sets not to exceed funding. Ms. Cetta said she would need more information. Mayor Bernstein told Ms. Cetta to ask the Borough for any information that she would need to help the Commission make a recommendation and it would be provided to them. Ms. Cetta asked about clarification of tree removals related to other road programs.

There being no other members of the public wishing to speak a motion was made by Councilmember Collins, seconded by Councilmember Reiss and approved by all on a voice vote to close the meeting to the public.

There being no other business before the Council a motion was made by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Council President Slowikowski and approved by all on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstein, RMC
Borough Clerk