

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST  
REGULAR MEETING Minutes  
September 29, 2025  
7:30 PM**

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 introduced Shreya Iyer, Deputy Mayor of the Day to the public and noted that she will be sworn in after the Pledge of Allegiance which he invited all in attendance to stand and join in reciting.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Mayor Bernstein, Council President Slowikowski (arrived 7:40 pm)  
Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks,  
Councilmember Reiss

Absent: Councilmember Fox

Also Present:

Ms. Falkenstern noted that Council President Slowikowski was en route and expected to attend the meeting.

**Swearing in the Deputy Mayor for the Day**

Mayor Bernstein administered the oath of office to Shreya Iyer as Deputy Mayor for the Day.

**Ordinances (Introduction):**

**ORDINANCE 1166-25** AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS, APPROPRIATING \$249,375 THEREFOR, INCLUDING A \$152,040 DOT GRANT, AND AUTHORIZING \$97,335 IN BONDS OR NOTES TO FINANCE THE SAME

Councilmember Collins a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No.1166-25 and it published as required by law with notice of Public Hearing to be held on October 14, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks.

**Roll Call:**

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Fox

**ORDINANCE 1167-25** AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST AND APPROPRIATING \$1,170,750 THEREFOR, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$1,115,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH TO FINANCE THE SAME

Councilmember Collins a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No.1167-25 and it published as required by law with notice of Public Hearing to be held on October 14, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks.

**Roll Call:**

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

**ORDINANCE 1168-25** AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST AND APPROPRIATING \$385,612.50 THEREFOR, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$367,250 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH TO FINANCE THE SAME

Councilmember Collins a motion to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No.1168-25 and it published as required by law with notice of Public Hearing to be held on October 14, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Ordinance Public Hearing (Adoption):**

**ORDINANCE 1165-25** A CAPITAL ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$90,000 FOR DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS TO WAKELEE FIELD TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST AND TO APPROPRIATE \$90,000 FROM THE OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND.

A motion was made by Councilmember Marks and seconded by Councilmember Collins to open the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 1165-25.

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

Council President Slowikowski made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1165-25 with notice of final passage to be published as required by law. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Collins.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Resolution No. 170-25** Authorizing Escrow Agreement – 232 County Rd.

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski to approve resolution 170-25. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Resolution No. 174-25** Authorizing Shared Service Agreement

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins to approve resolution 174-25. The motion was seconded by Council President Slowikowski.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Resolution No. 175-25** Adopting Fourth Round Spending Plan

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski to approve resolution 174-25. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Reiss.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Presentation from Shade Tree Commission**

Mitigation Plan for Stelfox St.

Linda Cetta, Chair of the Shade Tree Commission asked what information the Mayor and Council were seeking. Mayor Bernstein noted that this item was on the agenda at her request so he assumed she was presenting a recommendation from the Shade Tree

Commission regarding tree planting and mitigation on Stelfox St. as requested. Ms. Cetta discussed the issue and expressed frustration because she does not understand what a “plan” is. She has provided a list of trees recommended by the Commission to plant. Mayor Bernstein asked for clarification on the size of the trees, being recommended to be planted under the electrical wires. A discussion ensued on the height of the wires and the expected height of the trees. The proper time for mark outs for planning vs. planting was discussed. Ms. Cetta stated that she feels now that she has made the recommendation, she no longer needs to be involved in the project. It is a Borough project now.

### **Consent Agenda**

Mayor Bernstein asks if any member would like to have any resolution removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately.

Mayor Bernstein asks if any member would like to abstain from voting on any resolution on the consent agenda.

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

### **Consent Agenda:**

Resolution No. 167-25	Soil Moving Permit – 35 Lake Rd.
Resolution No. 168-25	Soil Moving Permit – 127 Hardenburgh Ave.
Resolution No. 169-25	Authorizing Refund Tax Overpayment – 258 County Rd.
Resolution No. 171-25	Release of Performance Bond
Resolution No. 172-25	Authorizing Engineering Services
Resolution No. 173-25	Payment of Bills

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

### **Roll Call:**

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

### **Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Bernstein thanked the Shade Tree Commission for their recommendations in regard to Stelfox mitigation and for their work on the beautification of the cemetery. He reported that he has discussed adding some additional skip laurels to the cemetery project to address local resident concerns. He reported the status of the upgraded traffic light at the corner of Hardenburgh and County Rd. He then reported that the trains station bid is out and he looks forward to reviewing the responses. He also thanked the Council for approving, earlier this evening the 232 County Rd. Escrow Agreement so that expenses for Borough Professionals to

review all items related to the 232 County Rd. housing challenge can be covered by the challenger and not by the Borough. He then wished all who are observing the upcoming Yom Kippur holiday an easy fast.

### **Council Committee Reports**

#### **Finance & Personnel (Slowikowski)**

Council President Slowikowski reported that the finance committee has begun to discuss the 2026 budget and she looks forward to working with Andrea, the new CFO, to plan next year's finances. She reported that the Environmental Commission is looking to collaborate with the nature center and the Shade Tree Commission. She reported that the pool is now closed for the season and after a more successful year than anticipated, she wishes the new board well in planning for 2026. She also congratulated the swim and dive teams for their successful seasons as well.

#### **Ordinance (Fox)**

Absent

#### **DPW & Recreation (Marks)**

Councilmember Marks reported that Recreation has successful summer programs including concerts and day camp. He thanked them for their work on Demarest Day. He reported that they are now finalizing plans for Halloween as well as the tree lighting in the coming months. He then reported that DAA is looking for volunteers if anyone is interested.

#### **Economic Development (Jiang)**

Councilmember Jiang reported on the new gym at the middle school. He congratulated the staff and students from NVD as it was named one of the best high schools in New Jersey. He reported that he has fielded many questions and interest regarding the bank building property and the committee is discussing the proposals and he looks forward to the committee continuing to work with interested parties on ultimately achieving a proposal that will balance a use of the property that advances the Borough's goals while preserving the Borough's small town charm. He recommended the Council obtain an appraisal so that the Borough can ensure they are getting appropriate offers.

#### **Police and OEM (Reiss)**

Councilmember Reiss thanked the PBA and the DPW for their support of the Demarest Day event and the school's back-to-school bash. He reported that Acting Chief Visaggio and Captain Talty are continuing important leadership training. He congratulated Officer Owens on the impending arrival of his first child.

#### **Fire and EMS (Collins)**

Councilmember Collins thanked the Recreation Commission, DPW and emergency services for their participation in successful Demarest Day celebration. He reported that both the Fire and EMS organizations are in need of volunteers. He thanked the Shade Tree Commission for their work on both Stelfox mitigation and the cemetery.

## **Reports of Borough Officials**

### **Borough Administrator**

Ms. Falkenstern highlighted upcoming election day deadlines and noted that the Clerk's office will be open until 9 pm to accept last-minute registrations on 10/14/25. She advised that the Borough is accepting candy donations before Halloween that the Recreation Commission will arrange to get to families in high trick or treat zones. Lastly, she updated the Council and the public on the progress of Orchard and Wellwood. She reported that she and DPW Director Jason Gangi met on site with the Borough Engineer who is continuing his work on the design and they will consult residents directly affected before the plans are finalized.

### **Borough Attorney**

No report.

### **Borough Treasurer**

Ms. Diekmann Johe reported on the status of tax collection year to date and that she looks forward to working with the finance committee on doing the hard work of budgeting in the months to come.

### **Ambulance**

Ms. Hoag thanked the DPW and Police Department for their assistance and professional response to swarming bees at the Nature Center. She then detailed the monthly activity of the Corps and again made an appeal for additional volunteers.

### **Police Chief**

Acting Chief Visaggio detailed the department's monthly activity. He noted that the fall and winter see an uptick in burglaries, so he reminded residents to secure their properties and keep outdoor lights on whenever it is dark. He said the department will increase communication and reminders to the residents regarding how to keep their properties safe. He reported that the department participated in the Back to School Bash. He thanked all the other departments and the governing body for their positive working relationship. He congratulated Shreya on being Deputy Mayor for the day.

### **Fire Chief**

Chief McLoughlin gave Deputy Mayor for the Day Iyer with a fire department tee shirt. He reported on the department's activity and status of equipment repairs. He also made an appeal for volunteers.

### **DPW Director**

Mr. Gangi presented Deputy Mayor for the Day Iyer with a DPW tee shirt. He praised his staff for their professional work at the cemetery. He reported the status of the fields. Lastly, he reported that his department is gearing up for leaf season beginning in October.

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

Mike Clark

Mr. Clark asked if the compost site was being used again. Mayor Bernstein stated that we are under contract with ORI to assist with leaf composting and the compost site is still under remediation.

Mr. Clark then asked about the use of bank building and why it isn't being used as a Borough Hall. Mayor Bernstein advised that the Council decided the location is not needed for a Borough Hall and they believe there are better uses for the bank building. Mr. Clark said he hoped that the train station would not be used as a coffee shop because he wouldn't want it to compete with either Dunkin Donuts or the deli.

Paul Traeger

Mr. Traeger asked if the Borough or County has a plan to deal with the deer population. Mayor Bernstein reported that he spoke to the experts at DEP and the County and the only recommendation is lethal management. Mr. Traeger asked if the Borough would consider a bow and arrow program. Mayor Bernstein answered that the nature of the homes in Demarest are not conducive to bow and arrow hunts. He then reported that the DPW was trying a repellent to see if it was effective. Mr. Traeger asked if it would be legal to use a bb gun or a permitted rifle to shoot the deer on his own property. Acting Chief Visaggio advised Mr. Traeger that it would not be legal and asked that he please refrain from using either of those weapons as it would not be safe for him or his neighbors.

Marian Hayden

Ms. Hayden asked the status of 127 Hardenburgh. Ms. Falkenstern answered that the project has all its approvals but is waiting for funding. Mayor Bernstein explained that available funding was reduced but the application related to 127 Hardenburgh is complete and the Borough is hopeful it will be funded in November.

Ray Cwynski

Mr. Cwynski reported that Old Tappan had a meeting concerning deer management. He then addressed mark outs for Stelfox and why they are needed. He then opined on the maximum height some trees may grow. He then made recommendations on how the Shade Tree Commission could function more efficiently including using sub committees.

He then asked if the trees in Westwood would all be identified. Ms. Falkenstern answered that the tree survey would satisfy what green acres is asking for. Lastly, he asked if the challenge period was still open to challenges to the Borough's housing plan. He asked if the Recycling Coordinator was making spot checks. Ms. Falkenstern said she was not sure what checks he makes.

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

### **Closed Session Resolution 2025-010.1**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 provides for a Public Body to go into a Closed Session during a Public Meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governing Body of the Borough of Demarest has deemed it necessary to go into closed session to discuss matters which are exempted from the public.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Borough of Demarest that the Governing Body shall go into closed session on September 19, 2025, for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12:

1. Negotiations

Council President Slowikowski made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-010.1 to convene a closed session. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Collins and approved by all on a voice vote.

The Council returned from closed session and authorized the Borough Administrator to obtain a survey and appraisal of the bank building.

**Resolution 175A-25 Appointment of Redevelopment Counsel**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Demarest previously appointed Deena B. Rosendahl, Esq (the “Borough Attorney”) of DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick, Cole & Giblin LLP to serve as Borough Attorney; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of the Borough Attorney’s duties, professional legal services in connection with the Borough’s various redevelopment projects within the Borough were performed by the Borough Attorney’s partner, Paul Kaufman, Esq.; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Attorney recently left the employ of Decotiis, Fitzpatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP and joined the firm of Clearly Giacobbe Alfieri Jacobs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough previously approved the transfer of files from the Decotiis, Fitzpatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP law firm to Cleary Giacobbe Alfieri Jacobs thereby retaining the Borough Attorney to continue to serve as Borough Attorney for the Borough of Demarest; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interest of the Borough to authorize Paul Kaufman, Esq. to continue to perform legal services in connection with the Borough’s various redevelopment projects within the Borough and to name Paul Kaufman, Esq. as the Borough Redevelopment Counsel through December 31, 2025.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Borough of Demarest that Paul Kaufman, Esq, is appointed to serve as Redevelopment Counsel for the Borough of Demarest through December 31, 2025.

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to approve Resolution 175A-25 to appoint Paul Kaufman, Esq. as Redevelopment Counsel.

**Roll Call:**

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

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmember Fox

There being no other business before the Councilmember Collins made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks and approved by all on a voice vote.

The meeting was therefore adjourned at 9:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted

*Julie Falkenstern, RMC*  
Borough Clerk