

**PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES**

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers and called to order at 7:32PM. Adequate notification was published in the official newspaper of the Borough of Montvale. Matt Goldman led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and roll call was taken.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to The Bergen Record informing the public of the time and place according to the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975).

Also Present: Mayor Mike Ghassali; Borough Attorney, Dave Lafferty; Borough Engineer, Nick Chelius; Administrator, Joe Voytus; and Municipal Clerk, Fran Scordo

ROLL CALL:

Councilmember Arendacs
Councilmember Cudequest
Councilmember Koelling

Councilmember Lane
Councilmember Roche
Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang - absent

Hometown Hero Matt Goldman

ORDINANCES:

None

MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC:

Agenda Items Only

Motion to open meeting to the public by Councilmember Cudequest; seconded by Councilmember Koelling – all ayes

Regina McClusky

Mrs. McClusky applied for a 100% Total Disabled Veteran deduction; the resolution is on the agenda for adoption tonight. Mrs. McClusky is asking for the council's consideration to reimburse her property taxes to the date the VA has which is June of 2024;

Motion to close meeting to the public by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Cudequest – all ayes

MEETING CLOSED TO PUBLIC:

Agenda Items Only

MINUTES:

February 13, 2025

A motion to accept minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche – all ayes

February 25, 2025

A motion to accept minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Koelling – all ayes

CLOSED/EXECUTIVE MINUTES:

February 13, 2025

A motion to accept closed minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche – all ayes

February 25, 2025

A motion to accept closed minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Koelling – all ayes

RESOLUTIONS: (NON-CONSENT)

89-2025 Authorize The Cancellation of All Future Taxes Due to Granting Of Totally Disabled Veteran Status By Department Of Veterans Affairs

WHEREAS, this resolution authorizes the municipality to cancel all future taxes due to the granting of totally disabled veteran status by the Department of Veterans Affairs per the Department's letter attached to the original resolution, for Regina McCluskey. Mrs. McCluskey is the owner of 1 Beechwood Road, Block 3003, Lot 8; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale, County of Bergen, New Jersey, that the Tax Collector be and is hereby authorized to cancel all future taxes as per the above.

Introduced by: Councilmember Roche; seconded by Councilmember Lane - a roll call was taken – all ayes with the exception of Councilmember Koelling abstaining

Borough Administrator stated that the assessor processes the request as of the date of application, the statute states that municipalities are permitted but not required to retroactively go back to the date determined by the VA and refund those taxes to that date. Montvale has not done that historically. The borough clerk reached out to other municipalities and it appears that it is not the norm to refund retroactively. Mayor Ghassali asked the question do we have to do this for other cases? Joe stated possibly for consistency's sake you might want to; just note there is a financial component to it. The borough attorney reiterated about the financial impact not only for this case but other applications that the borough has.

RESOLUTIONS: (CONSENT AGENDA*)

*All items listed on a consent agenda are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Borough Council and will be approved by a motion, seconded and a roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Council member(s) so request it, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

87-2025 Adoption of By-Laws of the Montvale Volunteer Fire Department – Year 2025

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale, that the By-laws of the Montvale Fire Department are hereby adopted.

90-2025 Authorize Release of Escrow – Toll Brothers Land Development – 2 Paragon Drive - Block 1903, Lot 7

WHEREAS, Toll Brothers have requested release of escrow posted for 2 Paragon Drive, Block 1903, Lot 7; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Engineer and other Borough professionals take no exception to the release; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale hereby release escrow to Toll Brothers Land Development, to be mailed to 100 Willow Brook Road, Suite 200, Freehold, NJ 07728 in the amount of \$4,018.68; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Treasurer shall receive a copy of this resolution for processing.

91-2025 Borough of Montvale Fire Department LOSAP Eligible Individuals

WHEREAS, The Borough of Montvale, has adopted a LOSAP program for the members of the Montvale Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, to be eligible for the annual \$1,617.00 stipend for 2024, totaling \$30,723.00 for the Department, the Montvale Fire Department must meet certain criteria; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale that the Borough Treasurer initiate LOSAP payments in the name of those Fire Department members deemed eligible to receive them.

92-2025 A Resolution Authorizing the Receipt of Bids for Solid Waste and Recyclable Materials Collection and Disposal Services

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale's current contract for Solid Waste and Recyclable Materials Collection and Disposal Services with Westphal expires on August 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale has a need to obtain the services of an appropriately-licensed contractor to provide Solid Waste and Recyclable Materials Collection and Disposal Services in the Borough of Montvale upon the expiration of the current contract; and

WHEREAS, the Borough is therefore desirous of formally soliciting bids for this work in accordance with the procedures set forth in the *Local Public Contracts Law*.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale that the Borough Clerk is hereby authorized to receive bids for the above-referenced project in accordance with the *Local Public Contracts Law* and pursuant to the revised bid documents prepared by the Borough Attorney.

93-2025 Temporary Emergency Appropriations For Operating Purposes

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-20* provides that, in addition to temporary appropriations necessary for the period prior to the adoption of the budget and regular appropriations, the governing body may make emergency temporary appropriations for any purposes for which appropriations may lawfully be made for the period between the beginning of the current fiscal year and the date of the adoption of the budget for the current fiscal year and the date of the adoption of the budget for the current fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the amount of such emergency temporary appropriations shall be included under corresponding headings in the budget as adopted or, if such appropriations are adopted after the introduction and approval of the budget and were not included in the budget as approved such appropriations shall be included by amendment in the budget as adopted without public advertisement or public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Township has deemed certain emergency temporary appropriations to be necessary and such appropriations are conforming to the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-20*.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-20* an emergency temporary appropriation be and the same is hereby made for:

Current Fund: \$ 3,500,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the said emergency temporary appropriations will be provided for in the 2025 Budget under the title of same.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Financial Officer is hereby directed to file a certified copy of the resolution with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

94-2025 Resolution Authorizing for Place-to-Place Transfer (Extension of Premises) of Plenary Retail Consumption License #0236-33-005-008– The Waterfall, Inc. (Hearth & Tap)

WHEARAS, an application has been filed for a place-to-place transfer (expansion of premises) of Plenary Retail Consumption License #0236-33-005-008, for purposes of expanding the premises under license wherein the sale, service, and storage of alcoholic beverages are authorized; and

WHEREAS, the submitted application form is complete in all respects, the transfer fees have been paid, and the license has been properly renewed for the current license term; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale does hereby approve, effective March 13, 2025, the expansion of the aforesaid Plenary Retail Consumption licensed premises located at 121 & 125 North Kinderkamack Road, Montvale, NJ 07645 to place under license the area delineated in the application form and the sketch of the licensed premises attached thereto.

Introduced by: Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Koelling - a roll call was taken – all ayes

88-2025 Authorize Hiring of Corrine Duffy – Town Photographer

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale has deemed it necessary to engage the services of a Photographer to take photos of all town events; and

WHEREAS, Corrine Duffy has met all qualifications and will be paid \$2,500 for the year 2025; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale, approves the hiring of Corrine Duffy as town photographer with the effective date of April 1, 2025.

*Mayor Ghassali would like this resolution - **WITHDRAWN***

BILLS: Administrator read the Bill Report.

Motion to pay bills by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - all ayes

REPORT OF REVENUE: Administrator read the Report of Revenue – February

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Council President Lane

Fire Dept

23 Fires; 2 drills; 2 work details and 1 meeting

Budget

Will be introducing the budget on March 25 and adopting on April 29 all meetings are open to the public

Councilmember Roche

Chamber of Commerce

Street Fair is scheduled for June 8 – 10am-5pm

Recreation

Held camp counselor interviews; Upcoming events include, egg coloring – April 6 – 1-3pm; Fishing with a 1st Responder is May 31st; Halloween Carnival is Oct 24 and Christmas Tree Lighting is Dec 5th.

Environmental Commission

Clean-up day is scheduled for April 19 – Arbor Day

Councilmember Cudequest

Seniors

Are looking into some dates for a possible town hall meeting with the Mayor and Council; at last meeting it was announced that President John Rotante is undergoing Chemo treatments and hopes to be back in the Spring; On March 27 from 3:30-5pm, a representative from the State Department of Taxation will have a presentation regarding new filing forms for the property tax relief programs.

BOH

16 food establishments were inspected; school audits are underway; water analysis was conducted at Lifetime; BOH found out about the Ramadan ceremony Tuesday before the event which was serving food; Reminder if anyone is having an event involving food, notify the BOH.

Library

Installed new blinds throughout the library; children dept is focusing the toddler population with new programs; Friends of the Library will be hosting a second jewelry sale in May.

Councilmember Arendacs

DPW

Status quo at this time.

Engineering

Monthly report included in original minutes.

Councilmember Koelling

Police

Monthly report included in original minutes;

Planning Board

It has been quiet – only 2 use permits; 22 Railroad Ave gave testimony and was asked to come back.

Mayor Ghassali

Working with a car company that may be moving to Montvale; had ribbon cutting for a new steakhouse Flemings located on Market Street; Hackensack Meridian move to 50 Craig Road; a settlement date in March for affordable housing litigation.

ENGINEER'S REPORT: Nick Chelius

Started to design the paving on Paragon Drive NJDOT project, once NJDOT approves the design we can go out to bid.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Siobhan Bailey

No report

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Joe Voytus

After the incident regarding the bus crash on the parkway, Joe reached out the Boswell engineering to review the site; DPW is currently working on the fields; Letters of Intent for Historic Preservation and Open Space grants are due by the end of March in regards to the Octagon House; we need to decide for Open Space projects for potential projects like fixing up south park, sidewalks on Memorial around the senior center, around Huff park.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion – Councilmember Cudequest – Senior Club

Councilmember Cudequest mentioned the seniors have some concerns regarding the following:

1. *When Jeff the senior van drive goes on vacation, the van is not available*
2. *The club needs a new sound system*
3. *The hometown hero's banners located by the hardware store cannot been seen*
4. *Are interested in having lock boxes to use for their homes in case of an emergency the police can use the key or code to get into their home*
5. *Would like DPW to clear away some debris near the bocce courts*

COMMUNICATION CORRESPONDENCE:

- *County of Bergen resurfacing program 2026/2027 will be Spring Valley Road from West Grand Ave to Upper Saddle River Road*
- *Councilmember Cudequest read a letter of appreciation from BCUW/Madeline Partnership owners of 11 East Grand Ave*

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

HEARING OF CITIZENS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

Upon recognition by the Mayor, the person shall proceed to the floor and give his/her name and address in an audible tone of voice for the records. Unless further time is granted by the Council, he/she shall limit his/her statement to five (5) minutes. Statements shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member thereof. No person, other than the person having the floor, shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, without recognition by the Mayor.

Motion to open meeting to the public by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - all ayes

Carolee Adams

Suggested to reach out to the high school to get volunteers for the ambulance corp; In regards to the Hometown Hero banners, going forward what will you do when the banners are worn; are you looking into addressing the gravel issues on Murray Road.

Motion to close meeting to the public by Councilmember Koelling; seconded by Councilmember Roche - all ayes

MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC:

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn Public Meeting by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Cudequest - all ayes

Meeting was adjourned at 8:52pm

Regular Workshop Meeting of the Mayor & Council to be held at 7:30pm on March 25, 2025

Introduction of Municipal Budget to be held on March 25, 2025 at 7:30pm

Public Hearing and Adoption of Municipal Budget to be held on April 29, 2025 at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted, Frances Scordo, Municipal Clerk