

**PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES**

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers and called to order at 7:34PM. Adequate notification was published in the official newspaper of the Borough of Montvale. Master Sergeant Koelling 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

ORDINANCES:

None

MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC:

Agenda Items Only

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

No Public Comment

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

MEETING CLOSED TO PUBLIC:

Agenda Items Only

MINUTES:

July 22, 2025

*A motion to accept minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Cudequest
– all ayes with the exception of Councilmembers Arendacs*

CLOSED/EXECUTIVE MINUTES:

None

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.

166-2025 Requesting Approval Of Items Of Revenue And Appropriation N.J.S.A. 40a:4-87 – Click It Or Ticket 2025 Seat Belt Mobilization

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87 provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by law, and the amount was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget; and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for an equal amount.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough Council of the Borough of Montvale, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the CY 2025 Municipal Budget in the sum of \$7,000, which is now available as revenue from:

Miscellaneous Revenues – Section F:

Special Items of Revenue Anticipated with Prior Consent of the Director of Local Government Services – Public and Private Revenues Offset with Appropriations:

Click-It-or-Ticket (FCOA 10-507).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$7,000 is hereby appropriated under the caption:

General Appropriations:

(A) Operations – Excluded from “CAPS”

Public and Private Revenues Offset by Revenues

Click-It-or-Ticket (FCOA 41-507).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be electronically filed with the Director for approval as required by law.

167-2025 A Resolution Authorizing Appointment of Municipal Representatives To The Bergen County Community Development Regional Committee FY 2025-2026 Covering Period July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Borough of Montvale has entered into a three-year Cooperative Agreement with the County of Bergen as provided under the Interlocal Services Act N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 et seq. and Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974; and

WHEREAS, said Agreement requires that the Municipal Council to appoint a representative and alternate and that the mayor appoint a representative and alternate for the FY 2025-2026 term starting July 1, 2025 and ending on June 30, 2026.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Municipal Council hereby appoints Joseph Voytus as its representative and Councilmember Dieter Koelling as its alternate and that the Mayor hereby appoints Councilmember Timothy Lane as his representative and Councilmember Douglas Arendacs as his alternate to serve on the Community Development Regional Committee for FY 2025-2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an original, certified copy of this resolution be immediately emailed to Robert G. Esposito, Director; Bergen County Division of Community Development at resposito@co.bergen.nj.us

168-2025 Amending Resolution No. 127-2025 To Establish Recreational Fees for Year 2025

WHEREAS, The Recreation Department hereby establishes the programs, times and fees for various programs; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation Director has recommended that the following fees, programs, and times be revised as described; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale that the following fees and programs and services be and are hereby established

TIME SCHEDULE FOR PICKLEBALL COURTS:

Weekdays and Weekends:

8:00AM - Dusk

<u>Program Name</u>	<u>Session Length</u>	<u>Resident Fee</u>	<u>Non-Resident Fee</u>
30+ Basketball	Sept-May	\$75	\$95
	Jan-May	\$40	\$60
Adult Soccer	10 weeks	\$15	\$20
Chess Lessons- Beginner	8 weeks	\$160	\$190
	7 weeks	\$140	\$170
	6 weeks	\$120	\$150
Chess Lessons- Intermediate	8 weeks	\$210	\$240
	7 weeks	\$190	\$220
	6 weeks	\$170	\$200
Drills and Skills Basketball	4 Day Camp 9:00am-12:00pm	\$155	\$185
Golf Instruction	6 weeks	\$120	\$150
	8 weeks	\$150	\$170
Pickleball Instruction	6 weeks	\$120	\$150
	8 weeks	\$160	\$200
Summer Camp: Grades 1-5	4 weeks	\$500 per child \$1500 family max	\$600 per child \$1800 family max
Adventure Camp: Grades 6-7	4 weeks	\$650 per child	\$750 per child
Summer Camp Resident/Non-Resident	\$45 late charge for every 15 minutes a child is left under care after camp dismissal. Payment shall be made directly to the Camp Director or Asst. Director and turned over to the Borough of Montvale. Camp financial assistance fee amounts will be at the discretion of the Recreation Director.		
<u>Program Name</u>	<u>Session Length</u>	<u>Resident Fee</u>	<u>Non-Resident Fee</u>
Multisport Camp by TGA	1 week (Full Day)	\$90	\$120
	1 week (Half Day)	\$60	\$90
The Way- The Art of Life	8 weeks (@ 2 classes per week)	\$120	\$180

BOROUGH OF MONTVALE**AUGUST 26, 2025**

Tai Chi	8 weeks	\$80	\$100
Montvale Senior Club Tai Chi Discount:	8 weeks	\$40	\$40
Tennis Lessons	6 weeks	\$120	\$150
	8 weeks	\$160	\$200
Tennis Badges			
Adult (Ages 18-61)	January-December (weather permitting)	\$30	\$60
Child (Ages 17 & Younger)	January-December (weather permitting)	\$10	\$20
Family Max	January-December (weather permitting)	\$60	\$120
Seniors (Ages 62 & Up)	January-December (weather permitting)	\$15	\$30
		\$10 Fee for Replacement Tennis Badge	
Basketball Badges			
Adult (Ages 18-61)	Residents: Lifetime Non-Residents: January-December	Free	\$25
Child (Ages 17 & Younger)	Residents: Lifetime Non-Residents: January-December	Free	\$15
Seniors (Ages 62 & Older)	Residents: Lifetime Non-Residents: January-December	Free	\$10
		\$5 Fee for Replacement Basketball Badge	
Pickleball Badges			
Adult (Ages 18-61)	January-December (weather permitting)	\$30	\$100
Child (Ages 17 & Younger)	January-December (weather permitting)	\$10	\$30
Seniors (Ages 62 & Older)	January-December (weather permitting)	\$15	\$100
Family Maximum		\$60	\$200
		\$10 Fee for Replacement Pickleball Badge	
Townwide Garage Sale Registration Fee	2 Day Permit. Dates TBD by Rec. Dept	\$15	
Ultimate Frisbee	6 weeks	\$75	\$95
	8 weeks	\$100	\$120
Volleyball- Adult	January-May	\$240	\$260
Volleyball- Girls	10 weeks	\$200	\$250
Women's Softball- Adult	April - August	\$60	\$80
Yoga	8 weeks	\$80	\$100
	6 weeks	\$60	\$75
	4 weeks	\$40	\$50

Youth Theater	September-December	\$10	\$50
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WHEREAS, Borough Owned Recreational Fields and Facilities shall be scheduled by the Borough of Montvale Field Coordinator; and

WHEREAS, Montvale Athletic League ("MAL"), Montvale Recreation and Pascack Hills High School shall have first priority field scheduling use and shall be provide a schedule to the Field Coordinator no later than February 1 and June 1 for the respective Spring and Fall seasons.

WHEREAS, MAL, Recreation, Pascack Hills High School and churches are exempt from payment of fees relating to field use.

<u>Facilities</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Resident Team/Corporation</u>	<u>Non-Resident Team/Corporation</u>
Ballfields: Baseball or Softball (Memorial, Fieldstone or LaTrenta)	Per Hour Per Field (2 hour minimum)	\$25	\$50
Turf Fields: Soccer or Lacrosse (Fieldstone)	Per 2 Hour Time Slot Per Field	\$75 (full field) \$50 (half field)	\$150 (full field) \$100 (half field)
Basketball Courts: (Memorial)	Per Hour: Court #2 Only	\$25	\$50
Tennis Courts: (Memorial or LaTrenta) *Two court maximum reservation at any one location	Per Hour Per Court	\$25	\$50
Pickleball Courts: (Memorial)	Per Hour Per Court	\$25	\$50

Field and Facility Permit Regulations

MAL endorsed programs in sports that are not offered by MAL, and which have Montvale residents participating, shall be charged the resident fee for field use.

Resident Corporation: Any company that owns or leases commercial within the borough.

Non-Resident Corporation: Any company that does not own or lease commercial space within the borough.

Residential Team: Any athletic team comprised of at least 75% of its roster with Montvale residents.

Non-Residential Team: Any team not having at least 75% of its roster filled with Montvale residents.

Time Slot: An uninterrupted 1 or 2 hour time period or any part thereof, that a field/facility is being used by an approved team.

Season: Spring season will begin March 1 and end August 30. Fall season will begin September 1 and end December 31.

Field/Facility users who provide 7 days or more notice of changes in their scheduled use can receive a time credit if the scheduled hours are decreased. Any changes in field schedules without 7-day notice will not receive a time credit for unused field time. Time credits are only valid for the existing season and the following season.

Lightning Detection Credit Policy: If the lightning detector activates with less than 50% of scheduled time elapsed for that date, the organization shall receive a credit for that day's scheduled timeslot. If the lightning detector activates after 50% of the scheduled time has elapsed, no time credit will be granted.

Payment is required prior to use on all fields or no field use will be granted.

Once field use requests are received in full by February 1st for Spring season and June 1st for Fall season, field use will be established with the following order of preference:

1. Montvale Athletic League, Recreation and Pascack Hills High School
2. Resident: Not-For-Profit Entity
3. Resident: For Profit Entity
4. Non-Resident: Not-For-Profit Entity
5. Non-Resident: For-Profit Entity

WHEREAS, it is the Borough of Montvale's intention by the adoption of this resolution that if any prior established fee is in conflict with fee schedule the fees set forth in this fee schedule shall be the fees charged and any conflicting prior fee is hereby superseded, repealed and replaced with the fees adopted pursuant to this resolution.

169-2025 Refund Tax Overpayment / Block 1405, Lot 13 – 35 Eagle Ridge

WHEREAS, a resolution authorizing the Tax Collector to refund an overpayment of taxes for the property located at 35 Eagle Ridge, also known as Block 1405, Lot 13;

WHEREAS, a duplicate payment was made by the homeowner; 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 refund \$5,016.00 to Ian James Dunsdon, 35 Eagle Ridge, Montvale, NJ 07645

170-2025 Authorizing Hiring Full Time Administrative Assistant/Floater – Tina Mouikis

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale is in need of a full time Administrative Assistant/Floater position within the Administration; and

WHEREAS, Stamatia Tina Mouikis meets the qualifications for this position and agrees to the terms and conditions of employment, and has previously completed a satisfactory background investigation; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey that the above-named individual is hereby appointed to the position of full time Administrative Assistant/Floater effective September 2, 2025

171-2025 Award Professional Service Contract - Alternate Public Defender for Pascack Joint Municipal Court to Azcona & Associates, LLC

WHEREAS, the Pascack Joint Municipal Court has a need to contract for the services of various professionals to serve as the municipal alternate public defender, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2B:24-1, et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Pascack Municipal Court Committee agreed to acquire Public Defender Services through the alternate process pursuant to the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 or 20.5*; and

WHEREAS, there are occasions when the appointed municipal public defender may have a conflict of interest, thus creating a need for an alternate public defender; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Pascack Joint Municipal Court to appoint the following individual to the position of Alternate Public Defender, Yohayra Azcona, Esq.; and

WHEREAS, said salaries shall be included as part of the Operational Costs for the Pascack Joint Municipal Court as per the agreement between the participating municipalities; and

WHEREAS, compensation to be paid to the Alternate Public Defender shall be \$300 per appearance; and

WHEREAS, the term of this contract shall commence on August 26, 2025, and shall continue for the remainder of the calendar year 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Certified Municipal Finance Officer has the availability of funds; and,

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1, et seq.) requires that the Resolution authorizing the award of contracts for "Professional Services" without competitive bids and Contracts must be available for public inspection.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale as follows:

1. This Contract is awarded without competitive bidding as "Professional Services" in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a) of the Local Public Contracts Law, because the services are to be performed by a person authorized by law to practice a recognized profession.

2. A Notice of this action shall be printed once in the official newspaper of the Borough.

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

RESOLUTIONS: (NON-CONSENT)

**172-2025 Authorizing Tax Court Settlement – Paragon Drive 1, LLC – Block 1102; Lot 1
1 Paragon Drive**

WHEREAS, a property tax appeal had been filed by the Borough of Montvale against Paragon Drive 1, LLC, under Docket Numbers 012836-2019 and 005851-2020 (hereinafter the "Borough Tax Appeal"); and,

WHEREAS, the Borough Tax Appeal sought to increase the tax assessment of the property located at 1 Paragon Drive in the Borough of Montvale, also identified as Block 1102 Lot 1 on the Borough tax maps (hereinafter the "Subject Property"); and,

WHEREAS, Paragon Drive 1, LLC filed Tax Appeals against the Borough of Montvale, under Docket Numbers 000353-2023, 000355-2023, 002388-2023, 002578-2024 and 002824-2025-2023 (hereinafter the "Paragon Tax Appeals"); and,

WHEREAS, the Paragon Tax Appeals sought to reduce an added assessment that was placed on the Subject Property for the 2021 and 2022 tax years, and to reduce the total tax assessment for tax years 2023, 2024 and 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the parties attended a court-ordered mediation on August 11, 2025 to discuss the proposed settlement of the Borough Tax Appeal and Paragon Tax Appeals; and,

WHEREAS, a proposed settlement was reached at the conclusion of the mediation, subject to Governing Body approval; and,

WHEREAS, the Montvale Governing Body has been advised as to the merits of the subject Tax Appeal by the Borough Tax Assessor and the Borough Appraiser; and,

WHEREAS, the terms of the proposed settlement are set forth in the Schedule "A" attached herein; and,

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Borough of Montvale to settle the subject Tax Appeal in accordance with the settlement proposal set forth hereinabove.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale, that the settlement of the Borough Tax Appeal and Paragon Tax Appeals is hereby approved, in accordance with the terms set forth in the attached Schedule "A"; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that with respect to same, the Mayor, Borough Administrator, Borough Tax Appeal Attorney and/or any other appropriate Borough official is hereby authorized to perform any act necessary to effectuate the purposes set forth in this Resolution.

SCHEDULE "A"
(REVISED)

A. The terms of the aforesaid tax appeal settlement shall consist as follows:

2019 Appeal: \$9,500,000
2020 Appeal: \$9,500,000
2021 Appeal: \$12,500,000 (\$3,650,000 added assessment)
2022 Appeal: \$11,450,000 (\$2,600,000 added assessment)
2023 Appeal: \$11,205,000
2024 Appeal: \$10,995,000
2025 Appeal: \$10,575,000

B. The total assessment for the Subject Property shall not exceed \$9,500,000 in the 2026 tax year.

Introduced by: Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - a roll call was taken – all ayes – Councilmember Cudequest asked for an explanation, the BA, Joe, stated the property owner submitted his own appraisal which was much higher than ours, the attorneys for both parties agreed on the above settlement which would result in a refund to the property owner of approximately \$200,000 rather than the original refund of approximately over \$1million.

173-2025 Authorizing the Approval of Rescinding Resolution No.199-2024 - Withdrawal from the Pascack Joint Municipal Court

WHEREAS, on or about November 26, 2024, Resolution No. 199-2024, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale adopted a resolution approving their withdrawal from the Pascack Joint Municipal Court; and

WHEREAS, upon further review, the Borough desires to rescind the prior resolution of withdrawal and remain in the Pascack Joint Municipal Court as same are in the best interests of the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Court Committee has reviewed this matter and recommends the approval of same; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, that the prior Resolution No. 199-2024 dated on or about November 26, 2024 approving the withdrawal from the Pascack Joint Municipal Court be and is hereby rescinded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough Administrator be and is hereby authorized and directed to take all steps necessary to effectuate the intent of this resolution by forwarding a copy of same to the State of New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts, the Assignment Judge of the Bergen County Superior Court, the Joint Court and the Borough of Woodcliff Lake and Borough of Park Ridge upon its passage.

Introduced by: Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - a roll call was taken – all ayes The BA, Joe stated after a brief discussion with all 3 towns, it was decided to agree upon a fair allocation of funding between the 3 towns

174-2025 Authorize the Issuance of a Request for Proposal for Appraisal Services

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale is in need of Professional Appraisal Services in connection with the Revaluation for the Tax Year 2027

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale authorize the Municipal Clerk to advertise for Request for Proposals for Appraisal Services

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

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 – July

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Council President Lane

Fire Dept

45 fire calls; 2 drills; 6 work details; 1 meeting

New Fire Engine M3 has arrived on Sept 27 1-5pm will have a celebration wet down with food and drinks;

Sept 5th will be hosting a Poker tournament

Councilmember Roche

Day in the Park is on Sept 6 3-9pm; Hills HS starts this week

Councilmember Cudequest

Library

End of summer celebration was a good turnout; Forever Young concert was held inside due to high heat temperatures

Councilmember Arendacs

Engineering

Paving of Woodland Road, Paragon Drive and Philips Parkway have been completed; the county approved the plans for Magnolia and Kinderkamack Road intersection, construction should begin this Fall DPW

Working on the fields for the Fall sports season; started the process of getting equipment ready for winter operations; held a joint meeting with River Vale last month, it was a productive meeting and both towns are continuing to enjoy an excellent working relationship

Councilmember Koelling

Police

Monthly report included in original minutes;

Planning Board

The last meeting was cancelled; re-doing the parking lot by CVS on Grand Ave

Reminder – Touch – a – Truck event is August 27

Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang

Local School

Update on renovations: HVAC systems, new fire alarms, new doors and locks; 5 new classrooms at Memorial and a new kindergarten playground; new library at Fieldstone; school starts Sept 4th

Mayor Ghassali

We had the final walk thru at the Farm, we will take ownership on Aug 28th; 2 more towns joined the coalition, Montgomery and Hawthorne; we are waiting for a date from Federal court; 9/11 ceremony will start at 7pm; Farm Celebration will be on October 18; still having issues on the Parkway, be careful driving on both sides

ENGINEER'S REPORT: Nick Chelius

No Report

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Dave Lafferty

Thursday we will take legal possession of the Farm; will start the process to find a manager and or farmer to continue to run it as a farm; Affordable Housing deadline for objections is August 31st; we expect objections.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Joe Voytus

The ramp for the GSP should be opening mid-September; Boro employee, Lorraine Hutter, passed away due to ALS diagnosis; Councilmember Cudequest asked about the Narcan boxes, Joe stated the County plans to install the box near the Fire department and Memorial Field sometime in September.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

The BA, Joe, mentioned if Council would consider paying for a new concrete path to the bathrooms at Fieldstone School – an estimate of approximately \$45,700 was received by the school; after a brief discussion by councilmembers, it was decided to check with the CFO for funding.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

COMMUNICATION CORRESPONDENCE:

None

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 Koelling - all ayes

Carolee Adams

Brought up a recent article in the Pascack Press regarding the ongoing deer issues; Old Tappan is having a meeting with representatives from NJDEP Fish and Wildlife and Mrs. Adams asked if Mayor Ghassali will be attending that meeting; Mrs. Adams asked for an update on the repairing and/or repaving of Lewis, Maple, Murray, Nichols, Prospect and Wilson in regards to the micro-paving and asked Mayor Ghassali if he would publicly confirm he would walk around those streets with town engineers to inspect the above mentioned roads, Mayor Ghassali said he would; currently we have 96 Eagle Scouts; a second data center is being proposed on Lake Tappan, there is a lot of opposition and she encourages councilmembers to get involved; is there an overall review of the water pipes in town, Mayor Ghassali stated that the pipes are owned and controlled by Veolia.

Jim Zurretti

Spoke with Chris Gruber in regards to his property maintenance complaint he submitted on June 3rd for 48 E Grand Ave— there has been no resolution – why is it not on the abandon property list??

Motion to close meeting to the public by Councilmember Lane; 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 8:20pm

Regular Public Meeting of the Mayor & Council to be held at 7:30pm on September 9, 2025

Respectfully submitted, Frances Scordo, Municipal Clerk