

**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 Dieter 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; Administrator, Joe Voytus; Borough Engineer, Nick Chelius and Municipal Clerk, Fran Scordo

ROLL CALL:

Councilmember Arendacs
Council President Cudequest
Councilmember Koelling

Councilmember Lane
Councilmember Roche
Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang - absent

ORDINANCES:

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-1586 ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF MONTVALE, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, AMENDING ORDINANCE #2025-1575, FINALLY ADOPTED JUNE 27, 2025, TO AMEND THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF THE SPECIAL EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION ACCORDINGLY
(public hearing 3-12-26)

A motion to Introduce Ordinance 2025-1586 for first reading was made by Council President Cudequest; seconded by Councilmember Lane; Clerk read by title only; Councilmember Lane made a motion that this ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised in The Bergen Record; seconded by Councilmember Roche - a roll call was taken – all ayes
The BA gave a brief explanation stating that this is a special emergency that was done last year for the revaluation of the taxes with \$500,000 ordinance. The town would have owed \$100,000 on that this year. But we still don't have the tax maps approved by the state. We haven't begun the revaluation process. So, what we're doing is reducing it down to the \$35,000 that was needed to prepare the tax maps. We will subsequently do a new special emergency later on this year that will then become due over five years, but starting in 2027.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-1587 AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A FINANCIAL AGREEMENT WITH NOUVELLE MAIN STREET URBAN RENEWAL LLC INCLUDING A PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILOT) RELATING TO REAL PROPERTY DESIGNATED AS BLOCK 1601, LOT 7 ON THE TAX MAP OF THE BOROUGH OF MONTVALE, COUNTY OF BERGEN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY
(public hearing 3-12-26)

A motion to Introduce Ordinance 2025-1587 for first reading was made by Council President Cudequest; seconded by Councilmember Lane; Clerk read by title only; Councilmember Lane made a motion that this ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised in The Bergen Record; seconded by Councilmember Koelling - a roll call was taken – all ayes
The BA stated this is just authorizing the pilot with the disabled veterans housing.

MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC:

Agenda Items Only

Motion to open meeting to the public by Council President Cudequest; seconded by Councilmember Lane – all ayes

No Public Comment

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

MEETING CLOSED TO PUBLIC:

Agenda Items Only

MINUTES:

Budget Meeting January 26, 2026

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

January 27, 2026

A motion to accept minutes by Councilmember Koelling; seconded by Council President Cudequest – all ayes

CLOSED/EXECUTIVE MINUTES:

January 27, 2026

A motion to accept closed session minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest - all ayes

RESOLUTIONS: NON-CONSENT

55-2026 Resolution Authorizing the Issuance Of \$35,000 Special Emergency Notes for The Preparation Of an Approved Tax Map in and by the Borough of Montvale, in the County Of Bergen, New Jersey

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council Of The Borough Of Montvale, In The County Of Bergen, New Jersey (not less than two-thirds of all members thereof affirmatively concurring), AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. An ordinance of the Borough of Montvale, in the County of Bergen, New Jersey (the "Borough"), authorizing a special emergency appropriation in the amount of \$35,000 for the preparation of an approved tax map has been finally adopted and a copy thereof has been filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs of the State of New Jersey (the "Director").

Section 2. (a) In order to finance the special emergency appropriation described in Section 1 of this resolution, the Borough is hereby authorized to borrow the sum of \$35,000 and to issue special emergency notes (the "Notes") therefor in accordance with the Local Budget Law of the State of New Jersey (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-55).

(b) The Notes authorized by this resolution may be issued in amounts and denominations not exceeding in the aggregate the amount of Notes authorized herein, as determined by the chief financial officer of the Borough pursuant to this resolution.

(c) The Borough may finance the special emergency appropriation from surplus funds available or may borrow money in the manner prescribed herein. Where an appropriation is financed from surplus funds available, at least one-fifth of the amount thereof shall be included in each annual budget until the appropriation has been fully provided for.

Section 3. The following matters in connection with the special emergency notes are hereby determined:

- (a) All Notes issued hereunder and any renewals thereof shall mature at such time as may be determined by the chief financial officer within the limitations of the Local Budget Law, provided however, that at least one-fifth of all such Notes and the renewals thereof shall mature and be paid in

each year so that all Notes and renewals shall have matured and have been paid not later than the last day of the fifth year following the date of this resolution.

- (b) All Notes issued hereunder shall bear interest at such rate or rates as may be determined by the chief financial officer.

- (c) The Notes shall be in the form determined by the chief financial officer and the chief financial officer's signature upon the Notes shall be conclusive as to such determination.

Section 4. The chief financial officer is hereby authorized and directed to determine all matters in connection with the Notes not determined by this or a subsequent resolution and the chief financial officer's signature upon the Notes shall be conclusive as to such determination.

Section 5. The chief financial officer is hereby authorized to sell the Notes from time to time at public or private sale in such amounts as such officer may determine at not less than par and to deliver the same from time to time to the purchasers thereof upon receipt of payment of the purchase price plus accrued interest from their dates to the date of delivery thereof and payment therefor.

Section 6. Any instrument issued pursuant to this resolution shall be a general obligation of the Borough. The full faith and credit of the Borough are hereby pledged to the punctual payment of the principal of and interest on the obligations and, unless otherwise paid or payment provided for, an amount sufficient for such payment shall be inserted in the budget and a tax sufficient to provide for the payment thereof shall be levied and collected.

Section 7. The chief financial officer is hereby authorized and directed to report in writing to this governing body at the meeting next succeeding the date when any sale or delivery of the Notes pursuant to this resolution is made, such report to include the amount, description, interest rate and maturity of the Notes sold, the price obtained and the name of the purchaser.

Section 8. The Borough hereby makes the following covenants and declarations with respect to Notes to be issued by the chief financial officer of the Borough on a tax-exempt basis. The Borough hereby covenants that it will comply with any conditions subsequent imposed by the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), in order to preserve the exemption from taxation of interest on the Notes, including, if necessary, the requirement to rebate all net investment earnings on the gross proceeds above the yield on the Notes. The chief financial officer is hereby authorized to act on behalf of the Borough to deem the obligations authorized herein as bank-qualified for the purposes of Section 265 of the Code, when appropriate. The Borough hereby declares the intent of the Borough to issue Notes in the amount authorized in Section 1 of this resolution and to use the proceeds to pay or reimburse expenditures for the costs of the purpose described herein. This Section 8 is a declaration of intent within the meaning and for purposes of Treasury Regulations §1.150-2 or any successor provisions of federal income tax law.

Section 9. Solely for purposes of complying with Rule 15c2-12 of the Securities and Exchange Commission, as amended and interpreted from time to time (the "Rule"), and provided that the Notes are not exempt from the Rule and provided that the Notes are not exempt from the following requirements in accordance with paragraph (d) of the Rule, for so long as the Notes remain outstanding (unless the Notes and any renewals thereof have been wholly defeased), the Borough shall provide electronically to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board's Electronic Municipal Market Access system or such other repository designated by the Securities and Exchange Commission to be an authorized repository for filing secondary market disclosure information, if any, for the benefit of the holders of the Notes and the beneficial owners thereof, in a timely notice not in

excess of ten business days after the occurrence of the event, notice of any of the following events with respect to the Notes:

- (1) Principal and interest payment delinquencies;
 - (2) Non-payment related defaults, if material;
 - (3) Unscheduled draws on debt service reserves reflecting financial difficulties;
 - (4) Unscheduled draws on credit enhancements reflecting financial difficulties;
 - (5) Substitution of credit or liquidity providers or their failure to perform;
 - (6) Adverse tax opinions, the issuance by the Internal Revenue Service of proposed or final determinations of taxability, Notices of Proposed Issue (IRS Form 5701-TEB) or other material notices or determinations with respect to the tax status of the Notes, or other material events affecting the tax status of the Notes;
 - (7) Modifications to the rights of holders of the Notes, if material;
 - (8) Note calls, if material, and tender offers;
 - (9) Defeasances;
 - (10) Release, substitution or sale of property securing repayment of the Notes, if material;
 - (11) Rating changes;
 - (12) Bankruptcy, insolvency, receivership or similar event of the Borough;
 - (13) The consummation of a merger, consolidation or acquisition involving the Borough or the sale of all or substantially all of the assets of the Borough, other than in the ordinary course of business, the entry into a definitive agreement to undertake such an action or the termination of a definitive agreement relating to any such actions, other than pursuant to its terms, if material;
 - (14) Appointment of a successor or additional trustee or the change of name of a trustee, if material;
 - (15) Incurrence of a Financial Obligation (as defined in the Rule) of the Borough, if material, or agreement to covenants, events of default, remedies, priority rights or other similar terms of a Financial Obligation of the Borough, any of which affect holders of the Notes, if material; and Default, event of acceleration, termination event, modification of terms or other similar events under a Financial Obligation of the Borough, if any such event reflects financial difficulties.
- If all or any part of the Rule ceases to be in effect for any reason, then the information required to be provided under this resolution, insofar as the provision of the Rule no longer in effect required the provision of such information, shall no longer be required to be provided.

The chief financial officer shall determine, in consultation with Bond Counsel, the application of the Rule or the exemption from the Rule for each issue of Notes prior to their offering. Such chief financial officer is hereby authorized to enter into written contracts or undertaking to implement this resolution and is further authorized to amend such contracts or undertakings as needed to comply with the Rule or upon the advice of Bond Counsel.

In the event that the Borough fails to comply with this resolution or the written contract or undertaking, the Borough shall not be liable for monetary damages, remedy of the holders or beneficial owners of the Notes being hereby specifically limited to specific performance of the covenants contained in this resolution or the written contract or undertaking.

Section 10. This resolution repeals Resolution No. 147-2025, duly adopted June 27, 2025, in its entirety and such resolution shall no longer be of further force or effect.

Section 11. A copy of this resolution as adopted shall be filed with the Director.

Section 12. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Introduced by: Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - – all ayes

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.

56-2026 Authorize Execution of Agreement with The Enclave at Montvale Condominium Association, Inc. Municipal Service Agreement

WHEREAS, the Condo Services Act provides for a phase in schedule for municipal reimbursement payment at the municipal cost for certain enumerated municipal services or the providing of such services by the municipality in lieu of such reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, an agreement has been negotiated between the Borough of Montvale and The Enclave at Montvale Condominium Association, Inc. to satisfy the obligation of the Borough as provided by the Condo Service Act, which agreement is attached and made part of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, this agreement shall remain in effect for a five-year period to commence on January 1, 2025 and terminating on December 31, 2029; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale hereby authorize the execution of the attached Agreement on behalf of the municipality by the appropriate municipal officials.

57-2026 Authorize to Apply for FY 2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) for Improvements to Railroad Park located at Kinderkamack Road

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale desires to apply for and obtain a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for approximately \$75,000.00 to carry out a recreational infrastructure improvement project at Railroad Park to install new playground equipment, rubber safety surfacing, fences, benches, and landscaping.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Borough of Montvale:

- 1) does hereby authorize the application for such a grant; and,
- 2) recognizes and accepts that the Department may offer a lesser or greater amount and therefore, upon receipt of the grant agreement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, does further authorize the execution of any such grant agreement; and also, upon receipt of the fully executed agreement from the Department, does further authorize the expenditure of funds pursuant to the terms of the agreement between the Borough of Montvale, New Jersey and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the persons whose names, titles, and signatures appear below are authorized to sign the application, and that they or their successors in said titles are authorized to sign the agreement, and any other documents necessary in connection therewith

58-2026 Award Professional Service Contract to Colliers Engineering & Design, for Tier A Municipal Stormwater Permit, Storm Water Outfall Inspections and Storm Sewer Locations

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale is required to perform inspections on all stormwater outfalls. One third has been completed and the final third by end of 2025. This requirement deems it necessary to engage the professional services of an Engineer to provide inspection services for the Montvale's Tier A- Municipal Stormwater General Permit; and

WHEREAS, section N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5 of the Local Public Contracts Law, (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.) exempts such professional services from competitive bidding; and

WHEREAS, Colliers Engineer & Design, 300 Tice Blvd, Suite 101, Woodcliff Lake, NJ 07677 has submitted a proposal dated January 23, 2026 which is attached to this resolution; and

WHEREAS, Colliers will perform the preparation of the MS4 compliance report, Storm Sewer Outfall and Detention Basin Inspections, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan Update and GIS mapping of approximately one third of the Borough's stormwater conveyance system for a cost not to exceed \$16,000.00; and

WHEREAS, the Certified Municipal Finance Officer certifies funds are available said certification is hereto attached to the original of this resolution; and.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED a copy of this resolution shall be published in an official newspaper of the Borough of Montvale, be on file, available for public inspection, in the office of the Municipal Clerk, 12 DePiero Drive, Montvale, NJ 07645.

59-2026 Appointment of Regular Member, Montvale Fire Department – John K. Rothschild

WHEREAS, the Montvale Fire Department is desirous of adding a regular member; and

WHEREAS, John K. Rothschild of Montvale, NJ has been approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners and has undergone a satisfactory physical, pursuant to the attached application which has been made part of this resolution; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Montvale that the appointment of John K. Rothschild, as a Regular Member of the Montvale Fire Department, is hereby approved.

60-2026 A Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Grant Agreement with the BMED Gateway Fund for the Borough's Health and Wellness Program for 2026

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale affirms its understanding that the BMED Gateway Fund offers a grant opportunity to its member agencies who wish to initiate a partnership with the Fund to incentivize employee participation in health and wellness programming and awareness; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale understands that the grant is a matching grant and that participation in the Program requires local budgetary support and administration; and

WHEREAS, the application for grant consideration requires a resolution of the governing body's understanding and support for promoting health and wellness concepts within their employee population.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough of Montvale authorizes the submission of a grant application for \$5,000.00 to the BMED Gateway Fund to enable their participation in the Fund's Health and Wellness Program for the 2026 calendar year.

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

BILLS: Administrator read the Bill Report.

Motion to pay bills by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest - all ayes

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Council President Cudequest

TV Access

They needed to reschedule their taping for January due to the storm. However, they were able to tape this past Tuesday.

Board of Health

BOH did not meet this past month, however, Monica Danna and Kim from Tyco were just filmed on Montvale TV Access regarding animal control and their program should be ready to be viewed next week.

Seniors

Because of the repairs the seniors did need to reschedule some of their January meetings and activities. For February their business meeting was held on February 5th, Bingo will be tomorrow evening and on February 19th their social meeting will be their Valentine luncheon. The lock boxes have been ordered and once they arrive, we will need to discuss how we're going to distribute them.

Library

Now they offer a library of things. This includes a selection of board games and puzzles that can be checked out with a valid library card for 14 days. A new board member was appointed Debbie Lease. She's going to be a wonderful addition to the board because of her many years of experience working in both Montvale and Hillsdale libraries. The library, in conjunction with Friends of the Library, are going to sponsor a scholarship award this year of \$1000 to a graduating high school student who values the role of public libraries in education, personal growth and community life. This is the first time that they will be offering this. The board members are also in the process of Redoing some of their policies including the community bulletin board policy, the tutoring guidelines for a library use and their service dog policy.

Councilmember Roche**Chamber of Commerce**

Had a sold-out kickoff event last Wednesday, February 4th. Special thank you to Flemings for hosting the event, it was an amazing evening. Looking forward to the Street Fair scheduled on Paragon Drive on June 14th.

Recreation

Summer camp registration begins on Monday, March 2nd. Applications for camp counselors are available at Borough Hall or on the Montvale Recreation website; March 1st tennis season opens, new access cards must be purchased this year and are available at Borough Hall and on the Borough website.

Councilmember Lane**Fire Dept**

26 fires; 7 work details and 1 meeting; there was a working fire at 40 Forest Ave; a significant effort on the part of Montvale and other local fire departments to fight that fire. Would like to thank all the other communities that provided mutual aid. Even though there was significant property damage, there were no personal injuries. Reminder, please clean the snow away from fire hydrants near your home.

Budget

We completed the budget meetings with all departments; the finance committee will begin to review all departments to determine a budget.

Councilmember Arendacs**Engineering**

Monthly report included in original minutes;

DPW

The crews did an excellent job with clearing the snow, despite a shortage of salt; after a couple of days, the DPW did clear some of the roadways that had obstructed views and widened narrow roadways.

Councilmember Koelling**Police**

Monthly report included in original minutes;

Planning Board

Heard testimony from professionals on the Dunkin' Donuts move across Chestnut Ridge Road.

Mayor Ghassali

Attended the Chamber of Commerce event at Fleming's, they did an amazing job; many new businesses came to meet and network, even people looking for jobs; We had 5 major water main breaks within a couple of days.

ENGINEER'S REPORT: Nick Chelius

Report included with original minutes

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Dave Lafferty

We did receive a decision from the program judge on special master, which we are currently reviewing with our special counsel. The next stop would be the Superior Court judge who is assigned to Montvale for final approval on the affordable housing plan. Every town in New Jersey does have an obligation currently by March 15th to rezone whatever properties are to be included in their fair share plan, our council has filed a motion to extend that date, as is many other towns throughout New Jersey, given that they're just receiving decisions the second week of February and we're expected to rezone by the middle of March.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Joe Voytus

We had our first meeting with the facilities committee; we talked about a number of different properties in town coming up with a sort of a rolling schedule of projects to try to tackle. Spoke with The MAL President, Assistant Rec Director and Councilmember Roche to follow up on some of the issues that were mentioned during the budget meetings, including field scheduling and some capital projects. Tri-Boro safety has a proposal to do a new T1 line approximate cost of \$40,000; the BA's from Park Ridge and Woodcliff Lake suggested that a member of council from each town should be included in the discussions; Joe will schedule a meeting for the end of February; Joe and a few employees are working on a plaque to honor Lorraine Hutter, hopefully will have that in place in the coming weeks; ordered some lighter tables for the senior club; thanked the DPW for clearing the snow away from areas of handicapped sidewalks and roadways.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion – Color Samples for new water tower

The clerk stated the planning board received a letter from the Summit Ridge Condo Assoc which include paint samples of colors for the new proposed water tower; the PB Chairman referred the decision to be made by councilmembers; after a brief discussion, councilmembers chose shades of green for the water tower.

Mayor Ghassali stated the Pascack Valley Mayors are working on the 250 anniversary and asked if any of the council would like to join the committee, Councilmember Lane stated he would join the committee.

Councilmember Cudequest stated she would be available to help the seniors fill out the forms for the lockboxes. Councilmember Cudequest also mentioned if we can replace some of the planters that are at the senior center with ones that have legs so they are a little higher

Mayor Ghassali mentioned that Peter Hekemian donated \$35,000 to the borough for the community garden.

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

No Public Comment

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 Roche; seconded by Councilmember Lane - all ayes

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm

Regular Workshop Meeting of the Mayor & Council to be held at 7:30pm on February 24, 2026

Elected Officials Training on February 24 @ 6PM

Respectfully submitted, Frances Scordo, Municipal Clerk