

**WORK SESSION
MINUTES**

The Work Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council was in the Council Chambers and called to order at 7:30pm. Adequate notification was published in the official newspaper of the Borough of Montvale. 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).

ROLL CALL:

Councilmember Arendacs
Council President Cudequest
Councilmember Koelling

Councilmember Lane
Councilmember Roche
Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang

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

ORDINANCES:

PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-1588 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)

WHEREAS, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S. 40A:4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget up to 2.5% or the cost-of-living adjustment, whichever is less, unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, the cost-of-living adjustment for calendar year 2026 budgets is calculated at 2.0% pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.2 and amounts to \$287,763; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Borough of Montvale in the County of Bergen finds it's advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2026 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the Governing Body hereby determines that an additional 1.5% increase in the budget of said year, amounting to \$215,822 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

WHEREAS, the Governing Body hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Governing Body of the Borough of Montvale, in the County of Bergen, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that, in the 2026 budget year, the final appropriations of the Borough of Montvale shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$503,585, and that the 2026 municipal budget for the Borough of Montvale be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and, **BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

Motion to Introduced for second reading Ordinance No. 2026-1588 by Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang; seconded by Councilmember Lane; Clerk read by title only.
Motion to open meeting to public by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - All ayes.

No public comment

Motion to close meeting to the public by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - All ayes.

Motion to adopt on Second and Final Reading on the Borough of Montvale's website <http://www.montvale.org/publicnotices> by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - All ayes on a roll call vote.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-1589 ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF MONTVALE, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$90,000 FROM CAPITAL FUND BALANCE FOR THE KINDERKAMACK ROAD / MAGNOLIA AVENUE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, OF WHICH NOT TO EXCEED \$55,000 SHALL BE THE NET COST OF THE BOROUGH AND NOT TO EXCEED \$35,000 SHALL BE SUBJECT TO REIMBURSEMENT BY THE COUNTY OF BERGEN PURSUANT TO A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT
(public hearing 5-14-26)

A motion to Introduce Ordinance No. 2026-1589 for first reading was made by Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang; seconded by Councilmember Lane; Clerk read by title only; Councilmember Lane made a motion that this ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised on the Borough website <http://www.montvale.org/publicnotices>; seconded by Councilmember Roche - a roll call was taken – all ayes

INTRODUCTION OF BOND ORDINANCE NO. 2026-1590 BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF MONTVALE, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$2,113,250 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$1,517,087 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF
(public hearing 5-14-26)

A motion to Introduce Ordinance No. 2026-1590 for first reading was made by Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang; seconded by Councilmember Lane; Clerk read by title only; Councilmember Lane made a motion that this ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised on the Borough website <http://www.montvale.org/publicnotices>; seconded by Councilmember Roche - a roll call was taken – all ayes

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-1591 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SALARY ORDINANCE NO. 2025-1563 TO PROVIDE FOR AND DETERMINE THE RATE, AMOUNT AND METHOD OF PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION TO PERSONS HOLDING CERTAIN OFFICES AND POSITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE BOROUGH OF MONTVALE FOR THE YEAR 2026
(public hearing 5-14-26)

A motion to Introduce Ordinance No. 2026-1591 for first reading was made by Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang; seconded by Councilmember Lane; Clerk read by title only; Councilmember Lane made a motion that this ordinance be passed on first reading and advertised on the Borough website <http://www.montvale.org/publicnotices>; seconded by Councilmember Roche - a roll call was taken – all ayes

MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Agenda Items Only

A motion to open the meeting to the public for agenda items only by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Russo-Vogelsang – all ayes

No public comment

MEETING CLOSED TO PUBLIC

Agenda Items Only

A motion to close the meeting to the public for agenda items only by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest – all ayes

MINUTES:

March 31, 2026

A motion to accept the minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest - all ayes with the exception of Councilmember Arendacs abstaining

April 9, 2026

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

April 20, 2026

A motion to accept the minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche - all ayes with the exception of Council President Cudequest abstaining

CLOSED/EXECUTIVE MINUTES:

March 31, 2026

A motion to accept the closed session minutes by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Koelling - all ayes with the exception of Councilmember Arendacs

April 9, 2026

A motion to accept the closed session minutes Councilmember Lane; seconded by Council President Cudequest - all ayes with the exception of Councilmember Roche abstaining

April 20, 2026

A motion to accept the closed session minutes Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Koelling - all ayes with the exception of Council President Cudequest abataining

RESOLUTIONS: NON-CONSENT

92-2026 Resolution Opposing Bill S-1836

WHEREAS, municipalities are required to establish a Municipal Master Plan with a combination of mandatory and optional elements including Goals and Objectives, Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Community Facilities, Downtown Economic Development, Historic Preservation, and Sustainability; and

WHEREAS, municipalities are also required to reexamine the Municipal Master Plan every 10 years to ensure that the master plan meets the community needs and is relevant as communities, evolve, grow, and change; and

WHEREAS, municipalities complete this effort at great cost and community input to ensure their community has a roadmap for growth; and

WHEREAS, a municipality is best suited to plan for and understand their community's needs, the existing infrastructure to address the municipality's public safety, health, traffic, and character and the ability to expand such infrastructure for desired growth; and

WHEREAS, there are many mechanisms for exceptions and variances to the local planning process; and

WHEREAS, municipalities have been diligently working to comply with the changes outlined in the passage of A-4/S-50 in 2024 that made substantial changes to the 4th Round of Affordable Housing obligations; and

WHEREAS, affordable housing construction has generally comprised between 10 – 20 % of a total development, but municipalities will end up constructing far more units during this current round of affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, recent legislative proposals that preempt the planning process by permitting the conversion of underutilized properties into mixed used developments, reducing the number of parking spaces required for new developments near transit, making Accessory Dwelling Units permissible, and most recently, legislation that enhances the ability of religious and nonprofit organizations to convert certain property to inclusionary developments with affordable housing undermine the careful planning process outlined in the Municipal Land Use Law; and

WHEREAS, this proposal, S-1836 is particularly egregious because the required percentage of affordable housing units is only 20% with the remaining 80% at market rate as more than 400 municipalities have adopted plans to fulfill their 4th Round Affordable Housing obligations far in advance of previous rounds; and

WHEREAS, this legislation bypasses local planning for increased density and height, regardless of a municipality's ability to ensure safety; and

WHEREAS, a worthy project could, and should participate in the local planning and zoning process to engage with the public; and

WHEREAS, S-1836 permits the bypassing of the local planning process which is an egregious assault on municipal autonomy and local decision making.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough of Montvale urges the legislature to defeat S-1836 and similar legislation that denies local autonomy in land use planning and ignores the well thought out master plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution is forwarded to the Senator Holly Schepisi, Assemblymember Robert Auth, Assemblymember John Assariti, Jr., Governor Mikie Sherrill, and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

Introduced by: Councilmember Koelling; seconded by Councilmember Lane - a roll call was taken - 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.

90-2026 Resolution Authorizing The Sale Of Property No Longer Needed For Public Use On An Online Auction Website

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale has determined that the personal property described on Schedule A attached hereto and incorporated herein is no longer needed for public use; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Montvale intends to utilize the online auction services of Municibid located at <https://municibid.com/nj/njinfo/>; and

WHEREAS, the sales are being conducted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-36 and the guidance set forth in the Division of Local Government Services' Local Finance Notice 2019-15.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body of the Borough of Montvale in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, that the Borough of Montvale is hereby authorized to sell the surplus personal property as indicated on the list, which is attached to the original resolution, on the online auction website entitled <https://municibid.com>; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the terms and conditions of the agreement entered into between Municibid and the Borough of Montvale are available at <https://municibid.com/nj/njinfo/> and in the Borough of Montvale Clerk's office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution shall be available for public inspection in the office of the Borough Clerk.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

91-2026 Approval to submit an award extension request for Contract No. 2024-LAIF-00025-LA-2024 LAIF Montvale Borough (Memorial Drive Pedestrian Safety Improvements), to the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough Council of Montvale formally approves the request for a six-month award extension for the above stated project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to submit a formal request for a six-month award extension for the above referenced project to the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the six-month award extension request on behalf of the Borough of Montvale and that their signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and approves the execution of the grant agreement.

93-2026 Appointment of Regular Member, Montvale Fire Department – Rian J. Murphy

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

WHEREAS, Rian J. Murphy 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 Rian J. Murphy, as a Regular Member of the Montvale Fire Department, is hereby approved.

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

BILLS: Administrator read the Bill Report

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

ENGINEER'S REPORT: Nick Chelius

Working on Tier 1- Stormwater Improvement Plan; Riverside Co-op received bids for the road paving; Pre-con meeting will be scheduled in May, Montvale's portion is \$438,973.60; DLS was the winning bidder; preparing to do a study on the pavilion structure by Huff Pond; received 2 grants for Memorial Drive resurfacing with sidewalks and pathways

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Dave Lafferty

No Report

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Joe Voytus

Pre-con meeting with Veolia on May 20; street fair meeting is set for early May; a new storage shed for the seniors has been installed; had a meeting with Oritani Foundation about funding a pavilion for the Farm

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Discussion - Senior Fee Waiver

The BA explained to council that the current ordinance does not have a not to exceed amount of fees to be waived; councilmembers agreed to revise the ordinance to add a not to exceed amount of \$1,000 of fees to be waived;

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion – DRAFT Ordinance Amending Overnight Street Parking Regulations

After a brief discussion, councilmembers added that this ordinance should be for residential vehicles

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.

A motion to open meeting to the public by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche – all ayes

No Public Comment

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

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn by Councilmember Lane; seconded by Councilmember Roche – all ayes

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm

**Regular Workshop Meeting of the Mayor & Council to be held at 7:30pm on May 14, 2026
Public Hearing and Adoption of Municipal Budget to be held on May 14, 2026 at 7:30pm**

Respectfully submitted, Frances Scordo, Municipal Clerk