

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**July 22, 2024**

**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.

The Mayor invited all in attendance to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to open the meeting.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Mayor Bernstein, Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Jiang, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

Absent: None

Also Present: Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator  
Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney  
Frank Visaggio, Acting Police Chief  
Jason Gangi, DPW Manager  
Carl Pavlik, Deputy Fire Chief

**Mayor Bernstein announced an appointment to the Recreation Commission:**

Punit Menda, filling unexpired term expires 12/31/2025

**Ordinance (Introduction):**

**Ordinance No. 1144-24 ORDINANCE AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 149 OF THE DEMAREST BOROUGH CODE**

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Reiss to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1144-24 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on August 26, 2024.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nays:** None

## **Ordinance No. 1145-24 ILLICIT CONNECTIONS**

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Reiss to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1145-24 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on August 26, 2024.

### **Roll Call:**

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

## **Ordinance No. 1146-24 ORDINANCE AMENDING AND MODIFYING ARTICLE XII SMALL ANIMALS §189-77 OF THE DEMAREST BOROUGH CODE**

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to introduce on first reading by title Ordinance No. 1146-24 and it published in the Bergen Record with notice of Public Hearing to be held on August 26, 2024.

### **Roll Call:**

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

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### **Ordinance Public Hearing (Adoption):**

## **Ordinance No. 1142-24 ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION BY DONATION OF REAL PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 563 PIERMONT ROAD, AND DESIGNATED ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST AS BLOCK 67, LOTS 5.01 AND 6 FOR PUBLIC USE**

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1142-2024

### **Roll Call:**

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

Mayor Bernstein asked if anyone wishes to be heard concerning adoption of this ordinance.

### **Speaker(s):**

Ray Cywinski asked if there were restrictions on the use of the building.

Mayor Bernstein explained that the intended use is for community space, likely for seniors.

Mr. Cywinski then asked if Capital Improvements were needed.

Mayor Bernstein answered that there was nothing major apparent upon inspection.

Mr. Cywinski asked why we would need the building since the seniors previously met in the train station.

Mayor Bernstein answered that the train station is very small and inappropriate for a large group of people. He hopes to reinvigorate the group which will need a bigger space.

A motion to close the Public Hearing on this ordinance and that it be adopted with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Marks.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nays:** None

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**Ordinance No. 1143-24 AN ORDINANCE TO FIX THE SALARIES, WAGES AND COMPENSATION OF CERTAIN PUBLIC OFFICIALS, OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST, COUNTY OF BERGEN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY.**

A motion was made by Council President Slowikowski Collins and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1143-2024

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nays:** None

Mayor Bernstein asked if anyone wishes to be heard concerning adoption of this ordinance.

Speaker(s): None

A motion to close the Public Hearing on this ordinance and that it be adopted with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Marks.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nays:** None

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## **RESOLUTION 129-24 2024 Salaries**

A motion to approve Resolution 129-24 was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Marks.

### **Roll Call:**

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

**Nays:** None

Councilmember Fox noted that while she was voting yes so that the other salaries on the resolution were not affected, she objects to the members of the governing body receiving a stipend. She has confirmed with the CFO that any member wishing to decline the salary can do so.

### **Consent Agenda:**

Resolution No. 130-24	Salary Adjustment – Chief of Police
Resolution No. 131-24	Release of Escrow
Resolution No. 132-24	Soil Moving 74 Pine Terrace
Resolution No. 133-24	Soil Moving 11 Central
Resolution No. 134-24	Bill List
Resolution No. 135-24	Approval of Hydrant Installation

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

### **Roll Call:**

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

**Nays:** None

### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Bernstein noted that the new lectern was obtained from the Baptist Church and a closing was planned for August to finalize the donation of the Church. He also noted that he would like the Council to consider policy on which public land they would like to allow dogs. He thanked those who have reached out in response to his email to volunteer and he will be reviewing volunteer opportunities for the best fit.

### **Council Committee Reports**

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

Council President Slowikowski reported that the Environmental Commission met and discussed bringing household composting to the Borough. She explained some of the benefits and the Commission would like to explore if enough residents would be interested in participating. Start up would cost approximately \$3,000-\$5,000 and could

be funded by the residents participating or subsidized by the Borough in part of in full. Members of the Governing Body asked about whether schools would be involved, how many residents would need to be involved, would the Borough need to guarantee that number of residents and whether the schools would be interested in participating. Council President Slowikowski said she will follow up the EC to get the answers to the Mayor and Council's questions.

### **Ordinance (Fox)**

Councilmember Fox explained that the ordinances introduced this evening were the last in the group of ordinances required by the DEP. She anticipates the larger zoning ordinance to be ready later in 2024 or in early 2025 for consideration.

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

Councilmember Marks welcomed Mr. Menda to the Recreation Commission. He reported that Demarest Summer Camp was a success for the 148 children enrolled. Demarest Day planning is continuing, and the committee was working to attract new vendors. He reported that the Library Board would be coming to the Council in the near future to present a master plan. He further reported that the library is expanding their museum pass program and is working on software to teach coding to kids.

Mayor Bernstein noted that he asked the recreation commission to consider in the future whether a drone show would be possible in place on fireworks.

Councilmember Marks stated that while it was too late for that change this year, Dakota Griffin, who is spearheading Demarest Day, is familiar with drone show planning and the Commission will look into it for the future.

Lastly, Councilmember Marks thank Michael Greco for working on improving and updating Recreation's forms and applications and that the Commission is reviewing fees. He stated that the tennis court needs resurfacing, and the Commission will work with tennis court benefactor, Mary Anne Rich, on a plan. They would like to consider adding pickleball as well but will need to discuss with Ms. Rich.

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

Councilmember Jiang explained that the Planning Board will consider a recommendation for Redevelopment on their July 30, 2024 agenda and he hopes they will make a recommendation that will then come before the Council to consider such designation.

He reported that the gym construction at the school is on schedule.

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

Councilmember Reiss reported that Police Officer Connor Owens was acknowledged by MADD for having the most DUI arrests at a recent ceremony. He reported that newly sworn officers Kyle Polo and Vincent Quintatna have been working with the PD on orientation to Demarest ahead of their 22-week training program at the Bergen County Police Academy that will begin August 1. Lastly, he reported that the Borough received its last grant reimbursement for body worn cameras that paid up to 97% of the cost of the devices.

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

Councilmember Collins detailed the EMS and Fire training and call activity year to date and thanked both organizations for their extraordinary service.

## **Reports of Borough Officials**

### **Borough Administrator**

Ms. Falkenstern asked the Council to provide direction on the issue mentioned by the Mayor earlier, where dogs are permitted vs. prohibited on public land. She explained that the Garden Club and Environmental Commission asked that dogs be excluded from the Arboretum due to the presence of protected plants and wildlife. She noted dogs are permitted on the nature center trails as long as they are leashed.

The Council came to a consensus that dogs should be prohibited completely from the Arboretum and on the playing fields at Wakelee. Leashed dogs are allowed on all other public lands including nature trails and parks. The Administrator will ask the DPW to ensure that the appropriate signage is installed at these locations.

Ms. Falkenstern also asked for feedback from the Council on an updated Noise ordinance. She explained that the ordinance adopted in 2023 needed updated language and was not working as intended. With input from the Acting Chief Visaggio and Ms. Falkenstern, the council consensus was to update the ordinance to prohibit commercial building and landscaping on Sundays, but to allow Saturday with limited hours. Homeowners are allowed to work on their own homes all days with a certain time range. Councilmember Fox and the ordinance committee will work with the Borough Attorney to draft an updated ordinance for the Council's consideration.

### **Borough Attorney**

No Report.

### **Borough Treasurer**

CFO Peter Suh reported that taxes are due 11/1 with a grace period of 11/12. A discussion ensued on estimated tax bills received by residents and whether residents were confused as to whether it is a real bill. Mr. Suh explained that it is a real bill, and he had addressed this with many residents. Mayor Bernstein will again include this explanation in his weekly email correspondence to ensure residents understand.

### **Ambulance**

No Report.

### **Police Chief.**

Acting Chief Visaggio detailed police activity for the month and then thanked the Council, Borough Administration and the department for their support during his recent transition to overseeing the Department. He thanked the Fire Department, EMS, Public Works and Building Department for their assistance and support on several calls.

### **Fire Chief**

Assistant Chief Pavlik reported on recent training and responses in the Department. He then echoed Acting Chief Visaggio's appreciation for departmental support and cooperation.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**April 8, 2024 Work Session Minutes**

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2024 meeting.

**Roll Call:**

**Ayes:** Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember Collins, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Marks, Councilmember Reiss

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** Councilmember Jiang

**July 8, 2024 Work Session Minutes**

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2024 meeting.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nays:** None

**Meeting Open to the Public**

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Collins and approved by all to open the meeting to the public.

Ray Cywinski

Mr. Cywinski asked for final approval for the little library donation from the Lions Club. The Council consensus was to approve the donation, and they thanked Mr. Cywinski and asked that he work with the Borough Administrator and DPW to find the appropriate location, preferably near the train station.

Mr. Cywinski then talked about Styrofoam recycling and asked that the Borough consider a shared service to encourage residents to recycle their Styrofoam. The Council thanked him for his information and said they would research it further.

Finally, Mr. Cywinski asked if the footbridge damaged in Sandy would be replaced. The Borough Administrator advised that there is concern with DEP approval, but she would speak to the Borough Engineer.

**Closed Session Resolution 2024-003.1**

A motion to move to closed session for personnel issue discussion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins and approved by all. It was noted that no action would be taken.

The Council returned from closed session and a motion to adjourn was offered by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Jiang and approved by all. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern  
Acting Borough Clerk