

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

October 28, 2024

7:30 PM

Mayor Bernstein called the meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm and invited those assembled to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Michael Greco, Deputy Borough Clerk
Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Peter Suh, CFO
Frank Visaggio, Acting Chief of Police
Jason Gangi, Public Works Manager

ORDINANCE (INTRODUCTION): (none)

ORDINANCE PUBLIC HEARING (ADOPTION):

ORDINANCE 1149 -2024 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND MODIFYING CHAPTER 122 OF THE DEMAREST BOROUGH CODE (NOISE)

Mayor Bernstein asks for a motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance # 1149-2024

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins

Roll Call:

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

Nays: None
Motion Carries

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

Speaker(s): *None*

Mayor Bernstein asks for a motion to close the Public Hearing on this ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins

Roll Call:

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

Nays: None

Motion Carries

Mayor Bernstein asks for a motion to adopt this ordinance with notice of final passage to be published in the Bergen Record.

A motion 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

Motion Carries

RESOLUTION 193-24 A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST APPROVING THE HIRE OF LUKE CATALDO AS A POLICE OFFICER WITH THE BOROUGH OF DEMAREST POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mayor Bernstein stated that Mr. Cataldo is currently at the academy and that the borough sees it as a good idea to hire Mr. Cataldo officially and increase the number of police officers.

Mayor Bernstein asks if any member would like to make a motion to approve resolution 193-24.

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Councilmember Marks

Roll Call:

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

Nays: None

Motion Carries

Consent Agenda

Mayor Bernstein asks if any member would like to have any resolution removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately.

Councilmember Reiss asked that resolution 186-24 be removed and voted on separately.

Mayor Bernstein asks if any member would like to abstain from voting on any resolution on the consent agenda.

Mayor Bernstein asks for a motion to accept the consent agenda (with any abstentions noted)

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 181-24	Authorizing Payment #2 DLS Contracting-Riverside Coop Paving
Resolution No. 182-24	Soil Moving – 44 Orchard Rd.
Resolution No. 183-24	Capital Purchase – DPW Chipper
Resolution No. 184-24	Capital Purchase – DPW Leaf Vacuum
Resolution No. 185-24	Capital Purchase – DPW Leaf Loader
Resolution No.187-24	Capital Purchase – ALPR – PD
Resolution No.188-24	Authorization of Execution of MOA
Resolution No.189-24	CY2023 LOSAP Contributions
Resolution No.190-24	Return of Escrow

Resolution No.191-24
Resolution No.192-24

Payment of Bills
Resolution to Supplement Resolution 153-24 Dated 9/9/24

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Jiang

Roll Call:

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

Nays: None
Motion Carries

RESOLUTION 186-24 Court Consolidation SSA

Mayor Bernstein explained the correction that needed to be made in the wording of the resolution.

Mayor Bernstein asks if any member would like to make a motion to approve resolution 186-24.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Jiang

Roll Call:

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

Nays: None
Motion Carries

Mayor's Report

Mayor Bernstein stated that the redevelopment plan resolution was received by the DCA (Department of Community Affairs), and a letter was already received by the borough letting us know that it has been accepted and approved. The letter was given to the clerk.

Mayor Bernstein explained that some of the public present were here in regard to a recent attempted burglary in town. The mayor spoke on safety in the borough and explained what the town is working on to increase safety in town. He added that the residents need to help in creating safety for themselves and others by being diligent in locking doors and cars.

Council Committee Reports

Finance & Personnel (Slowikowski)

Council President Slowikowski explained that she met with Peter and Julie about the borough's audit and asked peter to come up with a summary of the audit findings. She stated that the report addressed the findings very well and that the borough will have addressed most of the issues. They also discussed the upcoming 2025 budget, in an attempt to make sure there is plenty of time to do their review and prepare for the budget season. The Council President explained that the finance committee would meet with each department head the first week in December to review all budget requests.

Ordinance (Fox)

Councilmember Fox stated that the council adopted the noise ordinance tonight, and that the tree removal ordinance is well underway, and she hopes to get that in before the end of the year. She also stated that the 14 or more changes to the zoning ordinance are under review but may not be complete until next year.

DPW & Recreation (Marks)

Councilmember Marks explained that recreation has another very successful event, the Halloween carnival. The next event is the tree lighting on December 3, 2024. He stated that DPW would help with the lights. The Menorah lighting would be run by the Chabad. Mayor Bernstein explained that he spoke with them and that the menorah lighting would be moved to the Sunday after Christmas. Councilmember Marks explained that the Recreation Commission Chair, Leigh Barker, would be stepping down in the new year, and so the commission is searching for new members and figuring out who would fill that position. He talked about the upcoming DAA sporting events.

Jason Gangi, Public Works Manager, thanked the council for their latest appointment to the DPW. He spoke on leaf season, which is in full swing, but stated that it is exceptionally dry and apologized for the amount of dust being kicked up by the trucks, stating that it is out of their control. Jason continued to bring to the Mayor and Council's attention a situation brought to his attention by a resident who had concerns about the gate in the playground in Wakelee Park. He requested the council's opinion and approval to move forward with installing a new type of more secure gate.

Mayor Bernstein stated that Jason had spoken with him about multiple quotes that were received. He confirmed the amount and said he agrees with this and thinks that as long as Peter certifies that funds are available then we should move forward. Peter stated that funds are available.

Councilmember Marks confirmed the end of leaf season.

Mayor Bernstein explained the reason that the Recreation Commission Chair is resigning and asked that Councilmember Marks reach out to the Recreation Commission to make recommendations for people to take these positions.

Economic Development (Jiang)

Councilmember Jiang restated what the mayor spoke about for the letter about Redevelopment. He stated that they are scheduling meetings with developers and looking into the town's options. Councilmember Jiang also stated that the Board of Education has expressed being happy with being fully staffed and well equipped to handle the school years.

Police and OEM (Reiss)

Councilmember Reiss stated that the Police Department wants to remind residents to take in their packages as it is getting dark earlier. On October 21, the Demarest police department conducted a mass evacuation drill with Northern Valley and was extremely successful. He also spoke about Trunk or Treat which will be taking place soon run by the Demarest police department. Officer Dennis Cameron will be representing the borough in the New York City marathon. He thanked the police, Fire Department and EMS for their help in the Halloween Festival.

Fire and EMS (Collins)

Councilmember Collins stated that tonight the LOSAP contributions were approved, and that the Fire and EMS representatives were here to make their reports.

Reports of Borough Officials

Borough Attorney

No report.

Borough Treasurer

No report.

Ambulance

Roberta Hoag gave a report on EMS activity for the month.

Police Chief

Frank Visaggio, Acting Police Chief, gave his report on the month's activity. Acting Chief Visaggio spoke on the burglary in town and explained how serious and hard the police take any and every incident. He commended Detective Lt. Del Greco and Detective Hampton for exemplary work. He stated that the town has experienced two home burglaries in the last month, and that the detective's office is working with the Bergen County Prosecutor's office and New York State and all surrounding municipalities. He explained the burglary incident and explained that the police responded and located the stolen vehicles as well as numerous other stolen vehicles which were all recovered. He thanked the borough council for allocating funds for their requests. He spoke on the department's efforts to minimize these occurrences.

Mayor Bernstein thanked the police department for their efforts. Mayor Bernstein explained that it is equally important for the residents to do things to help minimize the incidents. Lock your doors, lock your cars, move keys from the doors, arm your alarm systems, close garage doors, keep lights on both inside and out to create the view that people are home, be wary of landscaping, and be cautious of social media. He also spoke about an incident where someone was being followed from the highway and the individual drove to the police station. The Mayor stated this was smart, but that the residents should also call the police in route to increase the opportunity for the police to aid.

Fire Chief

John McLoughlin, Fire Department Chief, gave a report on this month's activity. He spoke on the state being in a stage 3 dryness warning and urged the residents to not use open flames until otherwise told. He talked about the classes the fire department members were taking to help improve the department's readiness. He stated that trunk or treat was approaching, and the department would be present.

Meeting Open to the Public

A motion was made to open the meeting to the public by Council President Slowikowski and seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

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

Joseph Canny, 41 Rodney Place, spoke on the burglaries, thanked the police department, and explained his concerns and asked that things be done to make the town safer.

Mayor Bernstein explained that the officers who responded are being recognized for their efforts.

Mr. Guedalia, 42 Rodney Place, asked why Bergen County is not lending more aid as this is affecting a few towns in the county.

Mayor Bernstein explained that he has already met with the county sheriff's office and Tedesco's staff requesting an increased shared service for Demarest and neighboring towns and now it is in their hands.

A motion was made to close the meeting to the public by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Collins.

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

Closed Session Resolution No. 2024-009 (Action may be taken upon return to open session)

Contract Negotiations
Property Acquisition

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Fox to approve convening into closed session.

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

The Council returned to open session at 9:17 pm and took no action.

There being no more business before the Council, a motion was made by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Collins and approved by all to adjourn at 9:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Greco
Deputy Borough Clerk