

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST  
WORK SESSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 11, 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.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:**

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

Also Present:

Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator  
Peter Suh, CFO/Treasurer  
Anthony Dimitriadis, Police Chief  
Frank Visaggio, Deputy Police Chief  
Members of the Demarest PD  
Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney  
Nick Chelius, Borough Engineer

Mayor Bernstein asks for a motion to suspend the Regular Order of Business for a Police Promotion

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

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

Nays: None

**Resolution 062-24**

**RESOLUTION TO PROMOTE PAUL SCHMIDIG TO THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT**

A motion was made by Councilmember Reiss and seconded by Council President Slowikowski to approve Resolution No. 062-24

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

Nays: None

Mayor Bernstein's comments about Paul Schmidig:

*Good evening everyone and I want to welcome Paul's family and friends, his girlfriend Toni Scardino, neighbors, the members of our Police Department, members of other Police Departments and Agencies, together with all of whom are here tonight to witness and celebrate this well-deserved promotion.*

*A few special recognitions, Paul's mother Laura Cima, and his daughters Anna, Kathleen, Cecelia Schmidig, Paul's extended family and his cousin **Detective Michael Henricks** of the Montgomery County Detective Bureau of Pennsylvania.*

*Paul's journey into law enforcement began a little differently than most of our officers standing here tonight. You see, Paul grew up in a law enforcement household, making Paul a second-generation law enforcement officer. Paul's late father, John "Jack" Schmidig was his hero and was Chief of the Bergen County Police Department before his retirement in 2009. Despite the very large shadow his father cast, and the impressive career his father had, Paul decided to follow in his father's footsteps to carve out his own career path in Law Enforcement.*

*I am proud to say that I was a member of the Demarest Council that hired Paul as a Police Officer. He started his career with the Demarest Police Department as a Special Police Officer in 2003 and we hired Paul on January 21, 2005 as a full-time officer. He then attended the Bergen County Police Academy where the officers training Paul were some of Chief Schmidig's finest officers.*

*Paul's service to the Borough has always been exemplary and demonstrates that the Council made a good decision in 2005 with his hire. He was the department's very first Field Training Officer. With Paul's passion, skills and knowledge, he was the perfect fit for training the newest members of the department. Paul is also one of the Police department's Traffic Officers. This responsibility included training, teaching officer's how to handle accident scenes, investigations and preparing accident reports. As the expectations on Law Enforcement Professionals have changed over the years so has the training. Most recently due to the uptick in school violence and because of his proficiency with his firearm, Paul became one of the department's Active Shooter Instructors.*

*Paul has held positions in, and has been a member of, the Bergen County "R.D.F." Rapid Deployment Force, and the Bergen County "R.D.T." Rapid Deployment Team.*

*Paul has been on loan with the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office Fugitive Task Force on multiple occasions searching and apprehending Bergen County's Most Wanted.*

*Paul has received multiple letters of Commendation from neighboring towns. He has received 4 Life Saving Awards, 1 Exceptional Police Duty Award, and 1 Excellent Police Duty Award, and more recently, he has completed and Graduated from Fairleigh Dickson University with a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration. It is clear why Paul is such as an asset.*

*Despite Paul's 22-inch biceps and hulking mass, Paul is easy to speak with, knows how to deescalate a situation and commands respect within and outside the Department. He exemplifies leadership among his peers. As a borough, we respect and appreciate his grit, determination, and passion for pursuing his dream in Law Enforcement and serving Demarest.*

*Paul, we all know that your father Jack would be extremely proud of you, for the person that you are, your service in law enforcement and tonight's well-deserved promotion.*

*With that, I would like to invite Paul and his family members to come up and join me so he can be sworn in as Lieutenant.*

The Mayor then administered the oath of office to Lt. Schmidig.

The Mayor then asked for a 5 minute recess.

The meeting was called back to order at 7:54 pm.

### **Work Session Discussion Items:**

#### Engineer's Report

Mr. Chelius updated the Council on the progress of the CAP for the Compost Site. The next step is the requirement for a forensic forester from Green Acres.

#### Year End Zoning Board Report

Ms. Falkenstern explained the requirement of the Mayor and Council receiving the end of year report, but further explained that while she forwarded the report provided by the Zoning Board, the Planning Board asked for some more information so there is likely to be a new report.

#### Demarest Swim Club

Council President Slowikowski reported that a new pool manager had been hired and the pool board had made the decision that they would be able to open for the 2024 season. Members of the pool board came forward to ask the Mayor and Council for services from the DPW and some other items from the Borough. It was explained that any permit fees required could only be waived if there was an ordinance in place to waive fees for non-profits. They should check with any department that issues permits for the pool on that requirement. They were told that the DPW can not provide tax provided services to a private club, but that they would be able to borrow equipment from the DPW as needed if insurance information was provided. Additionally, it was explained that the club will need to provide previously requested insurance policy information naming the Borough as additionally insured due to the lease agreement in place that the club operates on Borough property. The board said they would provide that information from their insurance carrier through the Durkin Agency.

Mayor Bernstein offered the pool a compromise that if they would consider opening the club to all Demarest residents for some usage it would be easier to justify using tax dollars to assist the pool's operation. The board said they would discuss the option. The Mayor also asked what was being done to protect the bond holder's money if, as previously reported, the Board could only use bond money to reimburse other bond

holders but could be at risk if the club went out of business. The board reported they shared that concern for bond holders and would reach out to those whose bonds they still hold to see if they wanted to donate or have it returned to them.

A discussion ensued regarding a capital improvement fund and the clubs' bylaws' requirement for how bonds could be spent. The board did not have available a current copy of their by-laws.

The Council will await a decision about whether the residents will be offered any time at the pool before they decide if any tax-funded services would be available to the club.

Lastly, the board asked that they either receive an additional garbage pickup or a larger dumpster.

### **Consent Agenda**

Mayor Bernstein asked if any member would like to have any resolution removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately. (none)

Mayor Bernstein asked if any member would like to abstain from voting on any resolution on the consent agenda. (none)

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Reiss to approve the consent agenda.

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

Nays: None

### **Consent Agenda:**

Resolution No. 063-24	Release of Escrow – 23 Central Ave.
Resolution No. 064-24	Authorize Contract – File Bank
Resolution No. 065-24	Approval of Raffle License -Project Graduation
Resolution No. 066-24	Authorizing Jr. Fire Department Member
Resolution No. 067-24	Bills List

### **Approval of Minutes:**

February 26, 2024 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Councilmember Collins and seconded by Councilmember Jiang to approve the minutes.

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 Jiang and approved by all to open the meeting to the public.

There being no member of the public wishing to speak, the meeting was closed to the public.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Reiss and approved by all to adjourn and the meeting was therefore adjourned at 8:53 pm.