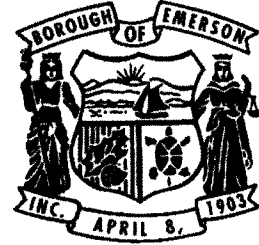


MINUTES
BOROUGH OF EMERSON
MAYOR & COUNCIL
February 17, 2026
7:30 PM
BOROUGH HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1 Municipal Place, Emerson, NJ 07630



I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor DiPaola welcomed everyone to the February 17, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Emerson Governing Body. She said the meeting was being videotaped and could be viewed from a link on the Borough website. The meeting was also being live-streamed on YouTube.

This meeting of February 17, 2026 was adequately noticed and in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act on January 12, 2025 and noticed to The Record and Ridgewood News newspapers; posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and remained continuously posted as required under the Statute.

Fire Chief Joseph D. Mara led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor DiPaola asked for a moment of silence for our troops are home and abroad.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Danielle DiPaola, Council President Ashley Rice, Councilwoman Ashley Sayers, Councilman O'Neil Ellis, Councilwoman, Nicole Argenzia, Councilman Michael Timmerman, Councilwoman Megan Ciolino

Also Present: Borough Attorney John McCann, Borough Administrator Michael Carelli, Borough Clerk Triessa DeSimone

III. EXCUSED ABSENCE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

All Council members were present.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS & CITATIONS

None.

V. APPOINTMENTS

Mayor DiPaola appointed the following Library Board of Trustees with Consent of the Council:

- Janet Bosco as a Regular Member for a 5-year term expiring 12/31/2030
- John Tumino as a Regular Member for a 5-year term expiring 12/31/2030
- Richard Hodgeman as a Regular Member for a 5-year term expiring 12/31/2030
- Christopher Johnson as a Regular Member for a 5-year term expiring 12/31/2030
- Kevin Leeds as a Regular Member for a 5-year term expiring 12/31/2029

VIII. FINANCIAL BUSINESS

- **Resolution 77-26:** Approval of February 17, 2026 Bills List

Motion to approve the February 17, 2026 Bills List made by Councilwoman Argenzia, **seconded** by Council President Rice. Carried by a roll call vote of 6-0

Roll call:

YES: Ciolino, Argenzia, Ellis, Rice Timmerman, Sayers

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Carelli reported to the Governing Body that the Grants Committee met with Alexa Reed, the Borough's Grant Writer through Bruno Associates. The Committee wanted to bring forward some ideas to the Governing Body. First, the Bergen County Open Space Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. The Borough has an outstanding project for FY2024 and FY2025 both for the improvements to Ackerman Park Project. Projects cannot be phased with Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund so if the Borough intends to apply for more funding toward Ackerman Park, it needs to be for a new asset to the park. Mr. Carelli asked for feedback from the Governing Body. Mayor DiPaola asked if the Governing Body wants to go back to looking at Rosengart Park or continue with Ackerman Park.

Councilwoman Ciolino stated they were looking at new playground equipment, leveling the ground and a water mister and asked if a shaded area or gazebo included in the original application. She also stated they were interested in creating a permitting process to allow residents to rent the space for parties and gatherings.

Mayor DiPaola said a gazebo would be a good addition to the project if it wasn't included in the previous grant applications.

Councilwoman Ciolino stated we should focus on Ackerman and make it fully come to fruition before moving on to the next park.

Michael also pointed out that on Consent Agenda there is a resolution to confirm the application to the NJCAA FY2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant. The Borough is applying for \$75,000 toward Ackerman Park as the match for Bergen County Open Space. This would leave only a local match of about \$4,500 for the project.

Another grant that the Committee is considering is the NJ Local Efficiency Achievement Program, otherwise known as LEAP Grant which is meant for Shared Services Agreements and associated capital expenditures. The LEAP Grant funds up to \$350,000 for capital costs. Mr. Carelli had a meeting with Mr. Solimando, DPW Superintendent, who recommended replacing the fuel tank at the DPW that is currently used by both the Borough and the Board of Education.

Mr. Carelli continued with two more programs through the federal and local state legislatures. The congressional earmark appropriations are being accepted by Senator Booker, Senator Kim

and Congressman Gottheimer and we are looking for some ideas for submissions for these funds. On the local level, Senator Schepisi also accepts appropriation requests to be included in the State Budget. These applications are due in the spring so we have time to discuss at Committee level and then bring back some more ideas.

XI. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Mayor DiPaola announced that, upon approval, these ordinances will be further considered at a Public Hearing to be held on March 3, 2026 at 7:30 pm. Or as soon thereafter as the matter can be addressed in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall, 1 Municipal Place, Emerson, NJ. It will be published in The Record, and posted on the borough website and bulletin board. Copies are on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk in Emerson Borough Hall, 1 Municipal Place, Emerson, NJ. Should a hard copy be needed, please contact the Borough Clerk's Office.

First Reading:

1712-26: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING BOROUGH CODE TO INCLUDE A NEW ZONE DISTRICT, THE RC OVERLAY ZONE

Motion to introduce Ordinance 1712-26 on first reading was moved by Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers and carried by a roll call vote of 5-0-1:

Roll call:

Yes: Rice, Sayers, Ellis, Timmerman, Ciolino

Abstain: Argenzia

1713-26: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING BOROUGH CODE TO INCLUDE A NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT FEE ORDINANCE.

Motion to introduce Ordinance 1713-26 on first reading was moved by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Council President Rice and carried by a roll call vote of 6-0:

Roll call:

Yes: Rice, Sayers, Argenzia, Ellis, Timmerman, Ciolino

1714-26: AN ORDINANCE TO REVISE THE REQUIRED AFFORDABLE SET-ASIDE IN THE MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY ZONE

Motion to introduce Ordinance 1714-26 on first reading was moved by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia and carried by a roll call vote of 6-0:

Roll call:

Yes: Rice, Sayers, Argenzia, Ellis, Timmerman, Ciolino

Mayor DiPaola announced that these ordinances are to effectuate the Round Four Affordable Housing Obligations of the Borough.

XII. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

None.

- I encourage our residents to sign up to receive emergency notifications and other borough information through our RAVE Alert System at www.emersonnj.gov/RAVE. And, as always, all of our events and current news are posted on the borough website at www.emersonnj.gov/news and our social media pages.
- The Military Banner program is open for 2026. The Borough has made this program available to our residents who wish to honor their family members who currently live or have resided in Emerson in the past. The banners are displayed from Memorial Day through Veterans Day are then stored by the DPW during the winter months. They are rehung every year as long as they are in good shape. We look forward to displaying many more this year. This is our way of saying “Thank You” to the men and woman of our great United States Military. The sponsorship rate is \$200 per banner and is tax deductible. Please place your order by April 30th in order to have them displayed by Memorial Day.
- The next regular meeting of the Governing Body will take place on Tuesday, March 3rd at 7:30 PM.

Borough Administrator reported:

- Mr. Carelli met with Borough Engineer to discuss ongoing projects in the Borough and looking forward to working with Dave in the future.
- Mr. Carelli also met with Perry Solimando, DPW Superintendent and the architectural consultant regarding the Salt Bin. We are looking into several options but not limited to replacing the entire building, cutting off the building and building a new salt bin or repairing the structure. It does need to be addressed immediately so we are working to get this done as soon as possible.
- A meeting is scheduled with KC Signs to discuss the digital sign project later this week.
- Thank you to Lauren and the finance committee for all their hard work on the 2026 municipal budget. For those who aren't aware we have a budget hearing on March 3, 2026 at which point the proposed budget will be presented to the Governing Body.

Borough Engineer reported:

- CDBG Grant for Senior Center Doors: Preconstruction meeting was held on February 9th with the contractor and Bergen County CDBG Office. Its anticipated that the door replacement work will take place mid-April. Installation should be completed within a couple days.
- Vivian-Dorchester Area Drainage Study: The analysis of the existing system is just wrapping up and we will be analyzing the data to come up with potential solutions to enhance the capacity of the drainage system.
- West Side Drainage Study (Jordan/Forest): The data collection has been completed and the analysis of the system is currently underway.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion to open the meeting to comments from the public was **moved** by Councilwoman Argenzia, **seconded** by Councilman Ellis and carried unanimously.

With no requests from the public, **Motion** to close the meeting to comments from the public was **moved** by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia and carried unanimously.

Mayor DiPaola asked for a **Motion** to go out of order which was **moved** by Councilwoman Argenzia, **seconded** by Councilman Ellis and carried unanimously.

Mayor DiPaola asked for a **Motion** to continue with Reports which was **moved** by Councilman Ellis, **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia and carried unanimously.

Mayor DiPaola continued with reports from the Council.

REPORTS (CONTINUED)

Councilwoman Ciolino reported:

- DPW:
 - The last snow storm averaged about 14 inches, on-street parking was much better this time and only two vehicles required police assistance to have them moved.
 - One plow truck sustained damage from hitting a curb.
 - A set of keys was found in the cardboard recycling bin at the DPW.
- EVAC:
 - No Report
- EEC:
 - There will be a fundraiser for a fence around a proposed honeybee area.
 - DPW Trucks and More and Community Garden Opening Day TBD
 - Dad and Me Fundraiser with New City Florist will take place closer to Father's Day
- Fire Department:
 - Responded to 20 calls for service this year.
 - Provided mutual aid on two occasions in January.
 - A dedicated Fire Department member was on stand-by during the recent snow storm.
 - The Department logged 366.5 hours in Emergency Response Training, Mutual Aid, Community Engagement Activities.

Councilwoman Argenzia reported:

No Report

Councilman Ellis reported:

No Report

Councilman Timmerman reported:

No Report

Councilwoman Sayers reported:

No Report

YES: Ciolino, Argenzia, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

XVI. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to enter closed executive session at 8:20 pm to discuss matters exempt from the public as duly noticed by Resolution No. 91-26 was **moved** by Councilwoman Argenzia, **seconded** by Councilwoman Ciolino and carried by a roll call vote of 6-0:

Roll call:

YES: Ciolino, Argenzia, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

Personnel	N.J.S.A. 10.4-12b (8)
Contract Negotiations	N.J.S.A. 10.4-12b (4)
Litigation/Redevelopment Update/Attorney-Client Privilege	N.J.S.A. 10.4-12b (7)

The Borough reserves the right to return to Open Session and, if appropriate, take formal action.


XVII. RECONVENE

Motion to reconvene was **moved** by Councilwoman Argenzia, **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers and **carried** unanimously at 9:12 p.m.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, at the request of Mayor DiPaola a motion to adjourn was **moved** by Councilwoman Ciolino **seconded** by Councilman Ellis and carried unanimously at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Triessa DeSimone, RMC
Borough Clerk