



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



**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor DiPaola welcomed everyone to the April 7, 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 April 7, 2026 was adequately noticed and in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act on January 12, 2026 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.

Joseph Mazzeo led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor DiPaola asked for a moment of silence for Emerson residents Former Councilman Vincent Donato, Dwayne Miller and Marcella Cafarella.

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

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

**III. EXCUSED ABSENCE OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

None.

**IV. PROCLAMATIONS & CITATIONS**

- Emerson/Park Ridge Wrestling Sectional Title Winners:
  - Jarah Mazzola
  - Luna Nieves
  - Ryan Osbie
  - Ethan Arevalo
  - Mason Mulhern
  - Justin Giella

- Nick Giella
  - Anthony Cinelli
  - Chase Monahan
  - Damien Gonzalez
  - Marcos Garcia
  - Tony Rinkiewicz
  - Jackson Shannon
  - Nate Shannon
  - Triston Festa
  - Jake Falkenstern
  - Joseph Dimotta
  - Devin Deubel
  - Evan Constante
  - Emily Mitnick
  - Aitana Vargas
  - Brooke Muller
  - Deana Alverez
- 
- Emerson/Park Ridge Wrestling Coaches:
    - Rich Eichenlaub
    - Luke Mazzeo
    - Logan Mazzeo
    - Loudon Mazzeo
    - Anthony Abate
    - Zach Lewis
    - Caiden Brouwer
  
  - Emerson/Park Ridge Wrestling Coach Joseph Mazzeo named NJIC Liberty Division Coach of the Year
  
  - Autism Acceptance Month Proclamation
  
  - Earth Day 2026 Proclamation

Mayor DiPaola congratulated the Emerson/Park Ridge Wrestling Team on their accomplishments this season. She announced that they are now 17-time NJIC Champions, North One, Group One, State Sectional Champions and State Group One Runners-up. Mayor DiPaola also gave special recognition to Coach Joseph Mazzeo for being named the NJIC District One and Region One Coach of the Year. Mayor DiPaola called each wrestler up to the dais by name and presented Coach Mazzeo with a Certificate of Commendation. Coach Mazzeo graciously accepted the recognition and stated that he is very proud of the athletes for their dedication and hard work as a team. He stated that this was a special year and when you enjoy the moment, good things will happen.

Mayor DiPaola thanked everyone for coming out to support the athletes and coaches. The team took photos with the Governing Body and exited the meeting.

Mayor DiPaola also announced that April is Autism Acceptance Month and Earth Month. Proclamations are available on the Borough's website.

## V. APPOINTMENTS

None.

## VI. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

**Motion** to approve the March 3, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes made by Councilman Ellis, **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia. Carried by a roll call vote of 6-0.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Motion** to approve the March 3, 2026 Closed Session Meeting Minutes, not available to the public at this time, made by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilman Ellis. Carried by a roll call vote of 6-0.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Motion** to approve the March 16, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes made by Councilwoman Argenzia, **seconded** by Councilwoman Ciolino. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0-1.

**Roll Call:**

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

**ABSTAIN:** Rice

**Motion** to approve the March 16, 2026 Closed Session Meeting Minutes, not available to the public at this time, made by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilman Ellis. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0-1.

**Roll Call:**

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

**ABSTAIN:** Rice

## VII. CORRESPONDENCE

- Thank you card for Mayor DiPaola for Read Across America from Emerson students.
- Thank you card and poem for Mayor DiPaola from Emerson Resident, Fran Ianora.

Mayor DiPaola announced that all correspondence is available in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

## VIII. FINANCIAL BUSINESS

**Motion** to approve Resolution 119-26 Approval of the Temporary Emergency Budget was moved by Councilman Timmerman **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia. Carried by a roll call vote of 6-0.

**Roll Call:**

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

Mayor DiPaola stated, before I ask for a motion to introduce the 2026 Municipal Budget, I want to thank everyone for their hard work to craft this budget, especially our CFO and the Finance Committee. The 2026 Municipal Budget focuses on improving Borough infrastructure as well as maintaining all current services. The 2026 municipal tax increase is currently at \$85, which amounts to \$7 per month on the average assessed home at \$449,575. That is a 1.9% tax increase over 2025. The public hearing and discussion on the budget are scheduled for May 5, 2026 at 7:30 PM. The Borough Auditor and the CFO will both be in attendance to answer questions. The budget documents will be posted on the Borough's website tomorrow for anyone who would like to review it. We welcome you at our May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting when the budget hearing is discussed.

**Motion** to approve Resolution 120-26 Introduction of the 2026 Municipal Budget was moved by Councilman Timmerman **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia. 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

- Building Department Fee Adjustments

Borough Administrator Michael Carelli reported that the Building Department has requested to update their fees to bring them inline with current market rates comparable to other municipalities in the area. The CFO and the Construction Official provided a report showing that the current fees were less than expenditures. Councilman Timmerman asked if other towns were surveyed to compare fee structures, to which Mr. Carelli confirmed that they were. Consensus of the Governing Body was to prepare an ordinance to amend the fees at an upcoming meeting.

- FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Funding Opportunity FY 2024 & 2025

Mr. Carelli stated that this program is administered by the federal government through FEMA and has sent this to the Borough Engineer to help identify eligible properties that would qualify for this funding however it is only available for repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss properties. Congressman Gottheimer did not select the Borough for the West End Drainage

Phase 2 project so he is looking into whether or not this project would qualify under the BRIC definition of repetitive loss. Mr. Carelli asked if any Governing Body members have any other suggestions or projects in mind. There were no comments from the Governing Body.

#### **XI. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES**

None.

#### **XII. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES**

Mayor DiPaola announced that, upon approval, these ordinances will be further considered at a Public Hearing to be held on April 21, 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 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:**

**1715-26:** BOROUGH OF EMERSON BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY CALENDAR YEAR 2026 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

**Motion** to introduce Ordinance 1715-26 on first reading was moved by Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilwoman Ciolino and carried by a roll call vote of 6-0:

##### **Roll call:**

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

**1716-26:** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE BOROUGH CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF EMERSON CHAPTER 200-55, "RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SUMMER RECREATION CAMP FEES" TO ADJUST THE FEE FOR BASKETBALL PROGRAM

Mayor DiPaola stated that there was a typographical error on the introduced ordinance document as presented to the Governing Body. The fee range for basketball Pre-K through First Grade is \$80-\$115.

**Motion** to introduce Ordinance 1716-26 on first reading was moved by Councilman Ellis, **seconded** by Council President Rice and carried by a roll call vote of 6-0:

##### **Roll call:**

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

#### **XIII. REPORTS**

##### **Mayor DiPaola reported:**

- Tomorrow, April 8<sup>th</sup>, the Borough of Emerson celebrates its 123<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Incorporation!

- Weekly collection for mixed garden debris restarted on Mondays from April 6<sup>th</sup> through December 28<sup>th</sup>. There is no interruption in service on Memorial Day, Labor Day or Columbus Day.
- The Quality Institute has announced that the Borough of Emerson, through the Mayor's Wellness Campaign, has been designated a Healthy Town to Watch for 2025! The first Mayor's Wellness Campaign event of 2026 is this coming Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the Senior Center. Chef Michael Merida will be joining us again for a Healthy Cooking Demonstration. I am also resuming Walks with the Mayor at 4:30 on Wednesdays. Starting April 8<sup>th</sup>, April 15<sup>th</sup>, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 29<sup>th</sup>. Please check the Borough website for updates as the weather may impact our ability to walk outside together.
- Please get your applications for the Community Garden in asap. All plots will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis and are strictly limited to Emerson residents. A donation of \$20.00 along with the completed application can be dropped off at the Clerk's Office. Applications are available on the Borough website, social media or from the Clerk's Office.
- As the weather gets nicer and people are outside more, please be alert for pedestrians walking, kids playing outside, and people riding their bicycles. If you are walking your dog, remember to "curb your dog" and pick up after them. Keep them on leashes and make sure that you have control of the dog at all times when out and about, especially if they are on a long leash. Reminder: It is the law that everyone 17 and under wears a helmet when biking, skateboarding, and rollerblading/skating.
- The Philip Morgan Blood Drive is being held at the Senior Center on April 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. To schedule a donation appointment, please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: "PhilipMorgan" to schedule an appointment. If you would like to continue to support the Philip Morgan Foundation, on April 18<sup>th</sup> from 1-5 there will be a Corn Hole Tournament Fundraiser at Valley Brook Country Club. For more information please call Amy Morgan at 201-294-3265.
- Free paper shredding day is on May 16<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am-1:00 pm at Borough Hall.
- The senior bus is available to residents age 55 and up and to those with special needs. It runs each week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Please call Samantha at 201-262-6086 x1201 to book a ride. In addition, the County of Bergen offers senior van services for doctor's appointments outside of our coverage area. The coverage area is Emerson, Westwood, Oradell, and Paramus. Please call 201-368-5955 to learn more about their services.
- The next regular meeting of the Governing Body will take place on Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 PM.
- Congratulations to the Emerson Police Department. The Borough was named the Second Safest City in the County, according to Safe Wise's Annual Safety Report. Thank you, Chief Mark Savino and the Emerson Police Department.

**Borough Administrator reported:**

- The Shared Services Agreements for the School Resource Officer and the Special Law Enforcement Officer are both up for renewal this year and currently under negotiation with the Board of Education.
- The Mayor, Councilwoman Rice, Councilwoman Ciolino and Superintendent of DPW, Perry Solimando had a meeting with MRC Recreation, the vendor for the Ackerman Park Improvements Project. This project will be completed in phases. Phase I will focus on new playground area while Phase II will focus on a new playing turf, pavilion and repairs to the existing swing set. The team is aiming to begin work on this project later this year contingent on funding through the Local Recreation Improvement Program.
- The Public Hearing for the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund Grant will be held at the next meeting on April 21, 2026 beginning at 7:30 PM. This phase of the Improvements to Ackerman Park will include a turf playing area, swing set and a covered pavilion.
- The Borough is making progress toward the installation of the new digital sign. An electrical contractor has been retained and the project is moving forward. There is a 4-6-week lead time on the unit.
- The Environmental Commission had a successful Bees and Cheese fundraiser event last week for the community. Thank you to all the volunteers, Councilwoman Ciolino and the Mayor for participating in this event.
- On May 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a budget presentation to the public as part of the adoption of the municipal budget this year.

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Motion** to open the meeting to comments from the public was **moved** by Councilman Timmerman, **seconded** by Council President Rice and carried unanimously.

Robert Obernauer, an Emerson business owner, thanked the Governing Body for being helpful over the past few years in working to get his past projects completed in a timely manner. He is here tonight to speak about a new solar project he is trying to complete by installing solar panels on the rooftop of his 7-Eleven/Valero Service Station Building. Mr. Obernauer said he received word that his application for solar panels was denied and will have to go before the Land Use Board for this project. Mr. Obernauer stated that energy costs are about \$10,000 for his two Emerson properties and it is imperative, for the viability of his businesses, that he change to solar energy. He stated that Governor Sherrill has signed two executive orders and declared a State of Emergency on Utility Costs. Mr. Obernauer is concerned that a lengthy Land Use Board application process will delay the project causing him significant time and utility costs. He feels this process could prevent the project from moving forward altogether and force him to make business changes. Mr. Obernauer stated that this is the exact kind of project that Governor Sherrill's Executive Order is calling for and he is asking for the Governing Body to apply urgency and flexibility to help guide this process forward efficiently.

Mayor DiPaola asked Mr. Obernauer to give the Borough Administrator a call with all the appropriate information and he will present it to the Governing Body for consideration.

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

**XV. RESOLUTIONS ON CONSENT AGENDA**

Matters listed below are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion of the Council and one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests an item be removed for consideration.

- 121-26:** Accept Resignation of Dawn Congiusti as Violations Clerk for the Municipal Court
- 122-26:** Approve Change Order #1 Emerson Home Improvement Program – EMRSN-2506
- 123-26:** Authorize Shared Service Agreement with Emerson Board of Education for the Provision of the Procurement of Fuel Services
- 124-26:** Authorize Tax Exemption for 100% Disabled Veteran

**Motion** to approve Consent Agenda Resolutions **No. 121-26** through **124-26** was **moved** by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia. Carried by a roll call vote of 6-0:  
**Roll call:**  
**YES:** Ciolino, Argenzia, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

**XVI. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion** to enter closed executive session at 8:18 pm to discuss matters exempt from the public as duly noticed by Resolution **No. 125-26** was **moved** by Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilman Ellis 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 8:52 p.m.

**XVIII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, at the request of Mayor DiPaola a motion to adjourn was **moved** by Councilman Ellis **seconded** by Councilwoman Argenzia and carried unanimously at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Triessa DeSimone, RMC  
Borough Clerk

