



MINUTES
BOROUGH OF EMERSON
MAYOR & COUNCIL
April 21, 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 21, 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 21, 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.

Borough Administrator, Michael Carelli, led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor DiPaola asked for a moment of silence for Emerson residents who passed away in 2025. She advised everyone the Emerson residents that passed away in 2025 will be honored at the Arbor Day Ceremony on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at 10:00 AM at Rosengart (Sunset) Park.

II. ROLL CALL

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

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

III. EXCUSED ABSENCE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Motion to excuse Councilwoman Argenzia from tonight's meeting was moved by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0.

Roll Call:

YES: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

IV. PROCLAMATIONS & CITATIONS

- Emerson Jr/Sr High School Cast and Crew of “*Godspell*”:

PRESENT	ABSENT
Jeffrey Adams	TJ Rice
Danielle Beahm	Finn Barragan Gonzalez
Aruwyn Connor	Lyla Cuhadaran
Savannah Dennehy	Ed Nienstedt
Briella Donahue	Olivia Abbate
Claudia Droste	Olivia Kim
Lila Hassett	Emily Kim
Haley Karathomas	Ben Danenza
Giana Kim	Thomas Santos
Brandon Matthews	Gabriela Calafiore
Catalina Menez Lopez	Madeline Kim
Lucas Molina	Briana Lazar
James Nienstedt	Giovanni Solimando
Audrey Riquelme	Camryn Spurr
Sophia Rizzo	Mia Woodward
Chloe Sinisi	Maia Congiusti
Leonard Toolen	Lila Manning
Joshua Varghese	Halle Luttrell
Rebecca Ware	Michael O'Reilly
	Ella Comeau
	Chris Schama
	Miranda Inglese
	Judy Kagel
	Dave Monchino
	Richard Gonci
	Lauren Quenano
	Sofia Gobin
	Sienna Rhea
	Jason Meusel
	James “Buddy” Fox
	Kara Woodward

- “*Godspell*” Directors/Choreographers:
 - Bill Ullman
 - Lisa Ullman
- Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month in Memory of the Victims of Armenian Genocide Proclamation
- Arbor Day 2026 Proclamation

Mayor DiPaola congratulated the Emerson Jr/Sr High School students that participated as the cast and crew of “*Godspell*” on their performances. She stated she had been present opening

weekend and was impressed by the creativity and talent of the students and Directors/Choreographers, Bill and Lisa Ullman. She announced the present cast and crew members would be performing some songs from "Godspell". The students present put on a performance of clips of the play.

Mayor DiPaola thanked everyone for coming out to support the cast and crew. The present cast and crew members took a photo with the Governing Body and exited.

Mayor DiPaola also announced that April 25, 2026, is Arbor Day and April is Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month in Memory of the Victims of Armenian Genocide and announced the proclamations for both. Mayor DiPaola reiterated the Arbor Day Ceremony will be held at 10 AM, on April 25, 2026, at Rosengart (Sunset) Park.

Mayor DiPaola stated all proclamations can be found on the Borough website.

V. APPOINTMENTS

None.

VI. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Motion to approve the April 7, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes made by Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0.

Roll Call:

YES: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

Motion to approve the April 7, 2026 Closed Session Meeting Minutes, not available to the public at this time, made by Councilman Ellis, **seconded** by Councilwoman Ciolino. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0.

Roll Call:

YES: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VIII. FINANCIAL BUSINESS

Motion to approve Resolution 126-26 Approval of April 21, 2026 Bills List was moved by Councilman Timmerman **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0.

Roll Call:

YES: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

- Public Hearing – FY 2026 Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund Grant Application – Ackerman Park Phase II Improvements Project (Pavilion, Turf Playing Area, Swings)
 - **Project Name:** Improvements to Ackerman Park Phase II
 - **Location:** Ackerman Park, Block: 509, 508 Lot: 6,5. 9-10 Remington Ave, Emerson, NJ 07630
 - **Scope of Project:** Purchase and installation of a new pavilion, turf playing area and swings.

Mayor DiPaola stated that in accordance with grant requirements, a public hearing is being held prior to the submission of a Municipal Park Improvement Grant application to the 2026 Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund for a project entitled “Improvements to Ackerman Park Phase 2”. The proposed improvements would elevate the functionality and accessibility at Ackerman Park located at 9 & 10 Remington Avenue, Blocks 509 and 508. With these funds, the Borough is hoping to install a covered pavilion, purchase and install a turf area for open play as well as make upgrades to the existing swing set.

She then stated that beyond the well-known physical benefits of playing outdoors, playgrounds are the starting line of curiosity and imagination, providing the “scaffolding” upon which a child builds confidence, practices problem-solving and can engage socially with their peers. With this project, the Governing Body is dedicated to providing a safe, fun and welcoming environment for Emerson families to enjoy the playground at Ackerman Park. We will be applying to the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund’s Municipal Park Improvement Program for a matching grant of \$75,861.51 and expect to hear the outcome later in 2026.

Mayor DiPaola then asked for a motion to open the meeting for public comments on this matter only.

Motion to open the meeting to comments from the public on this matter was moved by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers and carried unanimously.

With no comments from the public, Mayor DiPaola asked for a motion to close the meeting on this matter only.

Motion to close the meeting to comments from the public on this matter was moved by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Councilman Ellis and carried unanimously.

Mayor DiPaola asked for a motion to approve **Resolution 127-26** - Authorize Submission of a 2026 Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund Municipal Park Improvement Grant Application for the “Improvements to Ackerman Park Phase 2” Project.

Motion to approve Resolution 127-26 Authorize Submission of a 2026 Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund Municipal Park Improvement Grant Application for the “Improvements to Ackerman Park Phase 2” Project was moved by Councilman Timmerman **seconded** by Council President Rice. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0.

Roll Call:

YES: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

XI. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

Second Reading and Public Hearing

Mayor DiPaola announced that all ordinances are posted on the Borough website and are on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk in Emerson Borough Hall, Municipal Place, Emerson, NJ. Should a hard copy be needed, please contact the Borough Clerk

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 open the meeting for public comment on Ordinance **1715-26** only was **moved** by Councilman Ellis, **seconded** by Councilman Timmerman and carried unanimously.

With no requests from the public a **Motion** to close the meeting to public comment on Ordinance 1715-26 only, was **moved** by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Council President Rice and carried unanimously.

Motion to adopt **Ordinance 1715-26** on the second reading was **moved** by Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilwoman Ciolino and carried by a roll call vote of 5-0:

Roll call:

YES: Ciolino, 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

Motion to open the meeting for public comment on Ordinance **1716-26** only was **moved** by Councilwoman Sayers, **seconded** by Councilman Timmerman and carried unanimously.

With no requests from the public a **Motion** to close the meeting to public comment on Ordinance 1716-26 only, was **moved** by Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilman Ellis and carried unanimously.

Motion to adopt **Ordinance 1716-26** on the second reading was **moved** by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Council President Rice and carried by a roll call vote of 5-0:

Roll call:

YES: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

XII. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Mayor DiPaola announced that, upon approval, these ordinances will be further considered at a Public Hearing to be held on May 5, 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:

1717-26: CAPITAL ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF EMERSON, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE MAKING OF VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND ACQUISITIONS IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH, APPROPRIATING THEREFOR THE SUM OF \$318,875 AND PROVIDING THAT SUCH SUM SO APPROPRIATED SHALL BE RAISED FROM THE BOROUGH'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

Motion to introduce Ordinance 1717-26 on first reading was moved by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Council President Rice and carried by a roll call vote of 5-0:

Roll call:

Yes: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

1718-26: BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAKING OF VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF EMERSON, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$775,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS

Motion to introduce Ordinance 1718-26 on first reading was moved by Councilman Timmerman, **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers and carried by a roll call vote of 5-0:

Roll call:

Yes: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

1719-26: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 274-34 MUNICIPAL PARKING LOTS, "KENNETH STREET/EMERSON VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE CORPS PARKING LOT" TO RETITLE NEW SECTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE LOCUST AVENUE PARKING LOT AND ADD DIAGRAM AS NEW SCHEDULE "D"

Motion to introduce Ordinance 1719-26 on first reading was moved by Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilwoman Sayers and carried by a roll call vote of 5-0:

Roll call:

Yes: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

XIII. REPORTS

Councilwoman Ciolino reported:

- The DPW is getting the baseball fields ready for the upcoming season. Baseball opening day is Saturday April 25, 2026, at noon.
- The DPW is planting a Red Oak tree for the Arbor Day Ceremony being held April 25, 2026 at 10:00 AM.
- The DPW is working with a contractor to replace the lights at the baseball fields with LED lights in order to have more cost-efficient lighting for the Borough.
- Bergen County's first Hazardous Waste Collection Day is this Sunday, April 26, 2026 at Bergen Community College from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. More information can be found on www.bcua.org.
- The fire department reported 17 calls to service in the month of March including water emergencies, a structure fire in the Borough, carbon monoxide emergencies, and power emergencies. In total, department members contributed 385 hours of service which included calls to service, training, vehicle and tool maintenance, and community activities.
 - A particular call that stood out was the structure fire in the Borough. It was a testament to the department members' knowledge and training. The call came in as a reported garage fire, and the department was met with a working structure fire upon arrival. All parties in the residence had evacuated, there were no reported injuries, and the fire was quickly extinguished. A pertinent factor in keeping the fire contained was a closed door between the home and the attached garage.
 - The fire department would like to share with the Borough that "closed doors save lives". Closing a door can be the difference between life and death during a fire.
- In March, the fire department held their annual Easter Egg Hunt and toss. Although it was a cooler day, it was an enjoyable time for all who attended, and it was a reminder to the firefighters as to why they do what they do.
- The fire department hosted a railroad emergency operations course in order to enhance their knowledge on the challenges faced during a railway incident.
- The Environmental Commission had a successful "From Bees to Cheese" event that helped raise \$900 dollars for the fence around the Community Garden.
- The DPW Trucks and More event is being held by the Environmental Commission tomorrow, April 22, 2026, at 3:30 PM.

Councilman President Rice:

- The Recreation Commission had the 4th and 5th grade social, which was a success.
- As Councilwoman Ciolino stated, softball/baseball opening day is this Saturday, April 25, 2026, at noon. Keep an eye on the weather, social media, and your emails for any changes or updates.
- The Board of Education has a meeting on April 27, 2026, at 7:30 PM. It's a public hearing for their proposed budget.
- The Board of Education budget is separate from the Borough budget.

Mayor DiPaola reported:

- Former Mayor of Emerson and CEO of New Concepts for Living, Steve Setteducati, who has lived with progressive kidney disease for several years and is now in search of a living kidney donor. If you're open to learning more or seeing if you might be a match, apply with Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center — Living Donor Program or the Kidney Transplant Program, a part of the NYU Langone Transplant Institute.
- Weekly collection for mixed garden debris restarted on Mondays from April 6th through December 28th. There is no interruption in service on Memorial Day, Labor Day or Columbus Day.
- The Shade Tree Commission will once again plant a tree in memory of those Emerson residents who passed away in 2025 in conjunction with their 2026 Arbor Day Ceremony being held on April 25th at Rosengart Park starting at 10AM.
- Also on April 25th, Emerson Little League Baseball/Softball will be having their Opening Day. It begins at noon with a parade starting at the High School and ending at Benkovic Field where there will be a ceremony.
- Thank you to Emerson Fence for the donation and quick action in providing a fence for the new bee hives at the Community Garden, and another big thank you to those who attended the "From Bees to Cheese" event that assisted in paying for the fence.
- 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.
- Free paper shredding day is on May 16th 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, May 5th at 7:30 PM. Before the meeting, at 6:30 PM, Congressman Gottheimer's office is holding mobile office hours. During the meeting, we will be presenting the 2026 Municipal Budget and holding its final adoption/public hearing.

Borough Administrator reported:

- A meeting was held this week with the Borough Engineer this week to discuss the final plans for the Westend Drainage Project which includes stormwater infrastructure improvements to the Jordan Avenue and Forest Avenue Area. The Borough should be in the position to be able to go out to BID later this Spring with an award of BID sometime early this Summer. This is being funded by a one-million dollar grant from the State with strict guidelines that the project be completed by the end of this year.

- As a follow up to the public hearing tonight for the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund, we would like to thank the DPW for the continuing landscaping improvements to the Ackerman Park area including overgrown tree and shrub cleanup.
- We thank Perry and the DPW for the cleanup of the baseball fields for opening day pending for this Saturday along with the repainting of weathered signs in the parks that was completed today.
- The Borough has ordered new garbage cans for the baseball fields. These garbage cans will be metal mesh, and they were paid for by funds from the Green Communities Grant Funding.
- The Borough is in the process of finalizing the candidates for the 2026 Road Resurfacing Program. We are working on obtaining a grant to resurface Lincoln Boulevard, and the grant would be awarded in the Fall of 2026.
- We are also working on identifying candidates for the 2027 Municipal Aid Program which is due by July 1st. We are working with the Borough Engineer on that.
- The Digital Sign Improvement Project continues to progress. We have obtained an electrical contractor for the ready-made elements of the sign, and we are waiting on delivery from the manufacturer.
- I'd like to thank Mayor DiPaola for the invitation to the Seniors Meeting a few weeks ago. It was enjoyable to meet Emerson's seniors.
- The budget presentation is being held May 5, 2026 at 7:30 PM. The presentation will be available live on YouTube as well as after the meeting.

Borough Engineer reported:

- CDBG Grant for Senior Center Doors: New doors, hardware and floor mat have all been ordered and in production. We anticipate delivery of the doors by the end of May with an anticipated installation time of about 1 week. The contractor's electrical team has already been onsite and has wired up the power for the new doors to make the installation as seamless as possible. With respect to the Bergen County CDBG an extension for grant completion has been requested and approved.
- West Side Drainage Study (Jordan/Forest): The analysis of the existing system has been completed and it demonstrates that there are some issues related to undersized pipes, back pitched pipes, etc. which is reducing the capacity within the system. We are presently analyzing several alternatives to improve the system and should have a report completed early April.
- FY27 NJDOT Local Aid Grant Applications: The NJDOT announced the opening of the FY2027 Grant Application. This is where the borough has traditionally submitted for roadway improvements to main thorough fair within the borough. Grant applications are due by July 1, 2026. We have already started preliminary discussions with the borough on the roadway for this application.
- MS4 Tier-A Permitting/SPPP Update: Neglia will be working with the Borough to submit the Borough's annual report and updates to the SPPP. The documents are due to be submitted to the state by the May 1st deadline. It should also be noted that the state has made some additional revisions to the stormwater regulations which the borough will need to adopt by the end of the year as well as update to your Stormwater Management Plan.

Mayor DiPaola added:

- The Borough is aware of the congestion issues at Kinderkamack Road and Linwood Avenue that we believe have been somewhat resolved. By working with the County, our Borough Clerk, and speaking with the business owners and residents, the County has offered a partial solution to the congestion problem. We will continue to keep an eye on the issue and provide solutions as we can.
- If you find issues in the Borough, bring them to someone's attention. If you see something, say something.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion to open the meeting to comments from the public was **moved** by Councilman Ellis, **seconded** by Council President Rice 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 Councilman Ellis 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.

- 128-26:** Authorize Payment Application #1 for Emerson Senior Center ADA Door Improvements Project
- 129-26:** Accept Resignation of Nicole Sweeney as Recreation Commission Secretary
- 130-26:** Authorize Grant Submittal to FY 2026 State Farm Good Neighbor Grant Program
- 131-26:** Initiate Borough Wide Revaluation Program
- 132-26:** Ratify Memorandum of Agreement to the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local No. 125 (DPW)
- 133-26:** Approve 2025 Safety Incentive Bonuses for Department of Public Works

Motion to approve Consent Agenda Resolutions **No. 128-26** through **133-26** was **moved** by Councilman Timmerman, **seconded** by Council President Rice. Carried by a roll call vote of 5-0:

Roll call:

YES: Ciolino, Ellis, Rice, Timmerman, Sayers

XVI. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to enter closed executive session at 8:22 pm to discuss matters exempt from the public as duly noticed by Resolution No. 134-26 was **moved** by Councilwoman Ciolino, **seconded** by Council President Rice and carried by a roll call vote of 5-0:

Roll call:

YES: Ciolino, 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 Council President Rice, **seconded** by Councilman Timmerman and **carried** unanimously at 9:11 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 Sayers and carried unanimously at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Triessa DeSimone, RMC
Borough Clerk