



*MAYOR'S ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLAGE
Reorganization Meeting
Tuesday, January 6, 2026*

Welcome to the 122nd (one hundred and twenty second) Reorganization Meeting of the Borough of Emerson. I would like to welcome those who are joining us this evening in person as well as everyone watching on YouTube. Congratulations to our newly sworn in members of the Council; Councilwoman Nicole Argenzia on her 3rd, 3-year term and Councilman O'Neil Ellis for his first full 3-year term. I look forward to continuing to work with you and the rest of the Council as we serve the tax payers of Emerson.

Borough Hall is a very busy place and there is a lot going on every day. On behalf of the Governing Body, I want to thank all of our borough hall staff, police department, DPW, fire department, ambulance corps, auxiliary police, and all of the volunteers on our boards and commissions for all of their hard work throughout the year as well as for always keeping everything running smoothly. Your commitment to the Borough is commendable and we thank you for that.

- We were excited to offer events and programs throughout 2025 that promoted healthy lifestyles and overall wellbeing including Community Conversations regarding opioid abuse and healthy eating as part of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign. We completed our third year of the Summer Concert Series showcasing local bands from an array of musical genres and gave our residents opportunities to unplug and socialize for a couple of hours each week. Stay tuned for some new programming via the Mayor's Wellness Campaign in 2026.
- The Recreation Commission put together another spectacular Summer Kickoff and fireworks display this past June as well as an exciting 3rd Annual Fall Harvest Festival packed with fun family activities including a tractor hayride, live music, face painting and a pumpkin patch.
- Earth Month 2025 was well celebrated with the Environmental Commission's "Yoga & Hiking Adventure in the Woods" and the "DPW Trucks and More" Tour. They're recycling of holiday lights at the firehouse, maintaining our community garden and in 2026 they will be introducing a raw honey and beekeeping program.
- The Library continues to offer wonderful programs and activities for residents of all ages. There are a variety of programs held on weekdays that are geared towards young children whether you are new to town or a lifelong resident who wants to become more acclimated in the community, the Emerson Library is a great place to start!

- All residents 55 and over, should consider joining our vibrant senior group. They meet monthly and plan fun trips and have weekly activities at the clubhouse on Palisade Avenue.
- 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, more information on all of our events and current news is posted on the borough website at www.emersonnj.gov/news or our social media pages Facebook, Instagram and X.
- You'll also notice I just mentioned ".gov". As of January 1st our website domain has changed from .org to .gov. This upgrade provides us with stronger security, increased reliability, and aligns with the standard many other local government agencies are now adopting. You can continue to use ".org" for both emails and the website and you will be automatically rerouted to ".gov". The change was seamless and required no downtime.

The Emerson Volunteer Ambulance Corp and the Emerson Volunteer Fire Department are always looking for members. Please consider joining! Although it is a commitment, the reward of helping a neighbor in their greatest time of need is priceless.

Our shared service agreement with the Board of Education for the Student Resource Officer (SRO) as well as the SLEO's continue to protect our schools and keep our children, teachers and staff safe.

As part of our affordable housing commitment, Emerson's Home Improvement Program continues into 2026. Information about eligibility requirements and the application process is available on the borough's website.

We continue to make investments in our infrastructure that not only maintain our facilities, but also bring greater efficiency to our operations:

- Our Street Sweeping Shared Service with Washington Township continues to be a successful and mutually beneficial agreement.
- In addition to finishing the Cindy Lane Pump Station, the Randolph Pump Station project was completed in the fall of 2025 and both are fully up and running.
- Our shared service with the Board of Education for the Pickleball & Tennis Court project at the Emerson JR/SR Highschool was successfully completed and the courts have been fully open for play!
- We received notice of award from Bergen County Community Development Block Grants in the amount of \$85,500 for New ADA Doors at the Senior Center. We have gone out to bid on this project and plan to complete the work by March of this year.
- Since deer management has been a concern for many residents the Borough is pursuing a Forest Drone Study following the award of an \$8,000 grant from the DEP to gather data on how white-tailed deer have populated in Emerson.

- Another grant received in 2025 from Bergen County Division of Community Development in the amount of \$7,500 will be used toward senior transportation in 2026.
- As addressing persistent flooding throughout town has been a top priority of this administration's agenda, we worked very hard to successfully obtain two appropriations, totaling nearly \$2,000,000 in federal funds to help mitigate stormwater and drainage issues in the areas of Forest Ave and Jordan Road as well as Vivian Avenue and Dorchester Road. We have been approved for these funds as we are currently in the design phase of the projects.
- In addition to this, the Borough was also awarded a grant in the amount of \$129,561 for drainage projects on Dorchester and S. Dorchester Avenues by the Department of Transportation which will be used to resurface the roads after the drainage portion of the projects are complete.
- The Groundbreaking Ceremony for Phase Two of the Veterans Home took place this past September and in 2026 this project will bring additional safe and affordable housing for disabled veterans as well as a dedicated meeting space for our American Legion Post 269 heroes.
- PSE&G completed their gas system upgrade project and the effected roadways have been repaved.
- To enhance pedestrian and roadway safety, digital speed signs have been put up on Lincoln Blvd, Main Street and Ackerman Avenue in town reminding drivers to slow down and drive safely.
- In addition to all of the changes you can see around town, we are also making significant improvements to our online presence with a full website redesign coming early this year.

Regarding the Block 419 project, I, along with all of you, am eager to see this project that the prior administration approved, be completed. Our efforts to move forward with declaratory actions will continue and we are determined to complete this project with or without the developer.

I encourage you to join us in person at our meetings and if you can't, please watch live on YouTube or watch us on television after the meeting in order to keep updated on all the work of the Governing Body and the Borough. And as always, if you need me, please call me. I am always available to our residents, to answer questions and to listen to recommendations on how we can make our Borough even better than it already is.

Finally, thank you to the residents of Emerson for continuing to entrust all of us to lead our beloved family town. I am truly humbled by your constant support. This year is going to be an extraordinary and productive one in Emerson! I wish you all a happy and healthy 2026!