BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE
Mayor & Borough Council Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2026

Mayor Canose called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Council Members Al Ribeiro, Jeff Roos, Charlie Szrom, Rich Traynor, Christine Zamarra, and Ross Zazzarino. Also present were John Pidgeon, Borough Attorney, Nancy Malool, Administrator, and Anthony Suriano, Borough Clerk.

STATEMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

Notice of this meeting was provided to the Bernardsville News and Courier News, filed with the Municipal Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board on December 4, 2025.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATIONS

CivicPlus, Ms. Malool said the Borough is exploring CivicPlus as a potential new website design and hosting company. The change is being considered in conjunction with the Borough's evaluation of alternatives to SDL, which currently owns the GovSites platform used for the Borough's website. Staff is reviewing website options with the goal of developing a more modern, user-friendly website and coordinating the transition with the Borough's existing technology contracts. Alex Monroe and Brian Wheeler were present from CivicPlus. They discussed how the website would be implemented for resident communication for road closures, snow plowing, utility projects, website accessibility. They discussed year one cost of $52,901.92 and year two costs of $31,726.53 which included options of website, initial implementation, migration, training, SeeClickFix 311, mass notifications, AudioEye, and DocAccess. It was noted that if some options were not selected, the cost would change. A resolution for a contract with CivicPlus will be considered for adoption later in the meeting.

Mayor's Proclamation, Mayor Canose read a proclamation designating September as Ovarian Cancer Awareness month in the Borough of Bernardsville.

Mayor's Proclamation, Mayor Canose read a proclamation in honor of Jacqueline Milito Demarco's 100th Birthday.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Zamarra moved to approve the minutes of June 15, 2026, June 22, 2026, and July 13, 2026. Mr. Ribeiro seconded and the motion was approved with six yes votes.

OPEN SESSION

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public.

Fran Daley, Library Director, said she is concerned about the potential impact of the Church Street redevelopment plan on parking at the Bernardsville Library. She said the library's current parking supply is important to its large number of visitors, particularly seniors and others who require convenient, barrier-free access. She questioned the conclusions of the parking study, noting that the library had approximately 94,000 visitors in 2025 and is expected to exceed 100,000 visitors in 2026. She cited recent library events that attracted more than 800 visitors and emphasized that the parking spaces in question are regularly used. She expressed concern that reducing available parking would make it more difficult for seniors and other patrons to access the library. Mayor Canose clarified that the redevelopment plan does not propose eliminating the existing library parking spaces. She said the map presented in the study was an overlay covering the larger redevelopment area, including the adjacent grassy area, which may have created the impression that the parking lot would be removed. She said the borough is instead seeking additional parking as part of the redevelopment and would like the adjacent area improved as a park for library patrons and downtown visitors. Ms. Daly thanked Mayor Canose for the clarification.

Robert Baker, Olcott Avenue, said he has concerns regarding the parking study. He questioned the quality and conclusions of the report, stating that residents had raised similar concerns during the Planning Board process. He also questioned aspects of the report concerning the inspection of existing apartments, and the inclusion of photographs of private living spaces, and urged the governing body to review the report.

Jeff Hammond, Flintlock Court, asked about accessibility features of the proposed new municipal website, specifically whether users with visual impairments would be able to enlarge the text and whether audio functionality would be available. Mr. Roos and Mr. Szrom said that the website would include tools allowing users to adjust the display and have content read aloud. Mr. Hammond also asked how targeted notifications would be delivered. Mayor Canose said users would be able to select their preferred notification method, including phone calls, text messages, or email, as well as choose the categories for which they wished to receive notifications.

Tom Slocum, Pill Hill Road, suggested that meeting documents be hyperlinked directly to agenda items on the Borough's website. He noted that, for example, an agenda item concerning a redevelopment study could include a direct link to the related study or supporting documents. He said this could improve residents' ability to access relevant information and asked whether technology or AI could help streamline the process of accomplishing this.

Dan Lincoln, Olcott Avenue, speaking on behalf of the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, provided an update on the 1926 Somerset Hills map and two historical aerial photographs. He said that the bank has confirmed its willingness to provide the large map to the Borough, and a member of the HPAC committee has offered to pay for restoration of the map's deteriorating frame. The two aerial photographs, believed to date to approximately 1960, are also available for display. Mr. Lincoln explained that the large map was originally purchased by Millington Savings Bank to support the Olcott Avenue Historic District and was later retained by Kearney Bank. He said he will coordinate with the HPAC member regarding restoration and

pickup of the map and suggested holding a photo opportunity when the materials are brought to Borough Hall, including representatives from Kearney Bank.

Bob Graham, Dryden Road, distributed his comments in writing. He asked council to pursue state and federal grants to fund an elevator connecting the train station to Boylan Terrace, citing increased residential density and the importance of providing safe and accessible transit connections as part of the Borough's transit village vision. He said as Chairman of the Planning Board, he also is urging the council to establish collaborative committees to review and optimize the cost, design, and operability of the planned AH9 Claremont Church Street and AH10 Quarry/Bernards Avenue affordable housing projects before they proceed further. He recommended broader participation from individuals with relevant experience to help identify potential issues and avoid unexpected construction and legal costs. He also asked council to maintain the intent of the downtown zoning regulations by ensuring that first-floor retail space is provided along US 202 and that future redevelopment supports downtown walkability and viability. He recommended that the borough consider mobile or modular facilities rather than permanent construction for recreation improvements where appropriate, including conducting a cost-benefit analysis before constructing permanent restroom facilities.

Mark Cherone, Brookside Avenue, raised concerns regarding the private bridge serving the frontage of 29 Brookside Avenue and a neighboring property, which he stated was never dedicated to the Borough. He said the private status of the bridge was not disclosed when he purchased his home and that he only became aware of the issue several years later when the bridge began to deteriorate. He said the borough had previously advised that the property owners would be responsible for bringing the bridge into compliance before it could be dedicated to the borough. He said he has a potential need to sell his home which made the issue more pressing, as he believes he would be required to disclose the bridge's private status to a prospective buyer and potentially account for significant repair costs. He asked whether the borough could assist in identifying or securing watershed or infrastructure grants to address the bridge, bring it into compliance, and ultimately dedicate the road to the borough. He expressed his willingness to work with the borough and neighboring property owners to find a long-term resolution. This item is on the agenda and will be discussed by council later in the meeting.

Kerry Haselton, Mine Brook Road, commented on the proposed recreation restroom facilities and suggested that all three proposed single-stall restrooms be designated as unisex rather than separately designated for men, women, and family use. She said single-stall facilities can be used by anyone and that having separate designations could result in unnecessary wait times when one restroom is available while another is occupied or unused. She referenced the restroom facilities at the South Street bike trail in Morristown as an example, noting their accessibility, changing tables, and ease of maintenance. She recommended that similar options be considered as the borough moves forward with its recreation facility improvements.

David Dean, North Finley Avenue, spoke in support of the Borough's license plate readers, recalling a period of increased vehicle thefts and organized vehicle theft activity in the community. He stated that the readers were implemented in response to those concerns and, while acknowledging privacy considerations, said they provide an immediate alert when a stolen vehicle enters the Borough. Mr. Dean credited the Police Department with using the technology

effectively and referenced a reported incident in which a stolen vehicle was identified through the system. He encouraged the borough to recognize the purpose and value of the readers in preventing a recurrence of increased vehicle theft.

Dan Buttel, Police Captain, provided an overview of the Borough's Flock license plate reader system, which was implemented in 2024 following an increase in vehicle thefts. He reported that the Borough had averaged approximately five to six stolen vehicles annually during the preceding ten years, while since implementation the average has been less than one stolen vehicle per year. He stated that the system has also assisted the Police Department in locating missing or endangered persons and identifying stolen vehicles entering the Borough. Captain Buttel addressed concerns regarding potential misuse of the system and explained that access is restricted. He said patrol officers receive real-time alerts but cannot conduct searches; searches are limited to detectives and administrators. Investigative searches must be associated with a CAD number and documented with a reason for the search. He said the Police Department conducts an annual audit and submits a report to the New Jersey Attorney General's Office regarding system use. Captain Buttel also described instances in which the system has assisted with locating missing persons and identifying individuals wanted on outstanding warrants. He emphasized that, when properly used and subject to the department's safeguards and oversight procedures, the system has been a valuable public safety resource. Mr. Ribeiro thanked the Police Department for implementing and effectively utilizing the Flock system, noting the significant reduction in vehicle thefts in the community since its implementation. He acknowledged residents' privacy concerns and emphasized the safeguards and oversight in place, including review by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office. He said the system has provided a clear public safety benefit and noted that the participation of neighboring municipalities creates a broader regional network that can help deter criminal activity. He also noted that the system provides these benefits at a relatively minimal cost to the Borough. Mayor Canose said that following the increase in vehicle thefts, the Mayors of the Somerset Hills municipalities formed a safety committee and worked with the respective Police Chiefs to identify measures to address the issue. She noted that the municipalities coordinated the installation locations and access to the Flock cameras across all five communities, creating a broader network to monitor vehicles entering the area. She said the system is a valuable investigative tool and noted the benefit of neighboring municipalities participating as well.

Andrew Mallia, Columbia Drive, commented on the Planning Board's recent designation of areas in need of redevelopment, particularly the Bernards Avenue area. He acknowledged the State-mandated timeframe for identifying the areas but expressed concern about potential increases in density and the resulting impacts on traffic and the surrounding family-oriented neighborhood. He encouraged the borough to conduct appropriate due diligence before determining the number of units, building size, and density, with consideration given to maintaining opportunities for starter homes and long-term residency. Mr. Malia also supported involving community members in the process and emphasized that the borough now has an opportunity to carefully evaluate the best approach moving forward.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

Prospect Street Speed Bumps, Sgt. Richard discussed the results of the Police Department's investigation into concerns regarding speeding and vehicles parked along Prospect Street, particularly in the area of the hillcrest and Condit Place where sight distance is limited. He said the roadway is posted at 25 mph, with an unenforceable 15 mph advisory speed in the area of the hillcrest. Recent speed data showed an 85th-percentile speed of 29 mph, compared with 28 mph in a 2020 study. Between May and July, approximately 31,435 vehicles were recorded, with an average speed of approximately 20 mph. The Police Department also reviewed roadway geometry, sight distance, parking conditions, and crash history. Since 2020, there have been 16 parking complaints, two speeding complaints, and 11 reported crashes in the area, most involving parked vehicles. At the narrowest point, parked vehicles allow approximately 15 feet of roadway clearance, with measurements of less than 13 feet when a delivery truck was present, potentially violating applicable state requirements. The Police Department recommended that a qualified traffic engineering firm conduct a focused evaluation using the updated speed, parking, crash, and sight-distance data. The engineer would recommend appropriate traffic-calming measures and reevaluate the parking restrictions proposed in 2020. Council discussed the need for an engineering review before installing speed humps and requested that staff determine the cost and whether the work could be accommodated within the current engineering budget. If appropriate, a resolution would be considered.

General Redevelopment Discussion, Mayor Canose clarified the distinction between traditional zoning and an area in need of redevelopment, explaining that an area in need of redevelopment designation provides the borough with greater input regarding land use, building design, density, parking, setbacks, and other site-specific considerations, as well as opportunities for public input. She noted that the approach allows the borough to better ensure that future development is consistent with the character and needs of the community. Mayor Canose also raised the possibility of setting aside 10% of future PILOT payments for the school district, to be used specifically for capital improvements. She said this proposal would provide the school district with additional funding for projects without requiring additional borrowing and would represent a way for the borough to share the benefits of future redevelopment. She noted that the proposal would apply regardless of whether the development generated additional school-age children and would be discussed further at the September work meeting. Mayor Canose said there is a proposed mutual agreement with Advance Realty to terminate the existing Quimby Lane redevelopment agreement. Matt Jessup, Redevelopment Attorney, explained that after more than four years of efforts, sufficient properties had not been assembled to advance the original redevelopment concept. The proposed resolution would terminate the 2022 redevelopment agreement and immediately end Advance Realty's designation as redeveloper for Block 71, while allowing an additional 60 days to determine whether a redevelopment plan could be developed for Block 70. The area-in-need-of-redevelopment designations and existing redevelopment plans would remain in place. Council members expressed support for taking a fresh look at the area. Discussion emphasized the opportunity to reduce the scale of the original vision, preserve the character of the downtown, provide clarity for existing businesses, and obtain greater community involvement in developing a future plan. Council also discussed the importance of establishing a clear process and timeline for the redevelopment review, including opportunities for input from residents, property owners, and downtown businesses before any future proposal proceeds through the Planning Board and governing body. Mayor Canose said

that when the borough initially considered the Quimby redevelopment, it was the only project under consideration, which supported a larger redevelopment area. Given the number of other projects now underway, she stated that a smaller project would be more appropriate, while still providing the 13 affordable housing units required under the Borough's housing plan. She also reported that the Department of Community Affairs had approved the Borough for free technical assistance through its Local Planning Services program, available because Bernardsville is a Main Street New Jersey community. The assistance is expected to begin in September and will involve a committee consisting of Mr. Szrom, Mayor Canose, Ms. Malool, Sam Maddaluna, Peter Cocoziello, Anthony Melillo, and Bill Morrison. The committee will review the stalled project and consider potential revisions or a new redevelopment plan. Mayor Canose stated that this review would provide a fresh perspective and would be followed by a public forum based on the committee's findings. Mr. Ribeiro expressed support for the progress being made on the Quimby redevelopment. He acknowledged the significant work that had gone into the project over the years, while noting that changing circumstances and the economics of the original proposal made it necessary to take a fresh look. He supported continuing discussions with Advance Realty during the 60-day period and emphasized the importance of establishing a clear timeline and process for community involvement, including input from residents, property owners, and downtown businesses, as well as opportunities for public forums and review by the Planning Board and Borough Council. He stated that the proposed approach was a positive first step toward moving the project forward.

Millenium Strategies Application for Grant for Dam Removal Project, Ms. Malool said that the borough had identified a grant opportunity through the Department of Community Affairs' Community Resilient Communities program. The project is currently estimated at $3.5 million, with approximately $800,000 secured through grants. The borough would apply for $2.7 million to cover the remaining costs. She said the grant writer and engineer would charge a combined $9,000 to prepare the application, but the potential return would make the expense worthwhile. Ms. Malool asked council for approval by resolution to proceed with the application. She said the engineer would be required to hold a public hearing during the week of September 7th, followed by a 14-day public comment period. The application deadline is September 30th, with awards expected to be announced in November. She noted that applying would delay the project's start until next year, but the Borough would not lose its existing grants or other project-related progress. She also reported that the project was still awaiting approval from the DEP, and that the engineer was working to resolve the delay. Mr. Szrom expressed support for pursuing the grant opportunity, noting that reducing the project cost from $3.5 million to $2.7 million would be a significant benefit. Mayor Canose said even a partial award would help offset the project's cost. Council supported moving forward and there will be a resolution authorizing the application later in the meeting.

Highlands, Mayor Canose said Resolutions #176 and #183 relate to two planning elements being prepared by the Borough Planner. She said the Highlands Center Plan Element will consolidate the Borough's existing downtown and center-related planning documents into a single plan addressing Bernardsville's designation as a Highlands Center. It will address zoning, redevelopment areas, affordable housing proposals, and resources within the Center. The Highlands Planning Area Element will incorporate Highlands planning area regulations into the Borough's Master Plan for areas outside the Center. Mayor Canose noted that both studies are

funded by the Highlands Council.

Aquatic Facility Feasibility Study, Mayor Canose said the Recreation Department had requested an aquatic facility feasibility study, which would be conducted by Brandstetter Carroll, the firm that prepared the borough's Recreation Master Plan. She said the firm's process includes extensive public outreach, including meetings with committees, commissions, and sports groups, public sessions, and surveys. The study would evaluate the existing pool's condition, identify needed repairs and improvements, and consider alternatives such as renovation, replacement, or additional amenities. The cost would be $30,000, funded through the Open Space Trust Fund. A resolution to authorize the study will be done later in the meeting.

Post Office, Mr. Pidgeon said US Postal Service had agreed to pay $15,000 per month in rent for the post office, retroactive to August 1st of the prior year, resulting in approximately $168,000 in retroactive payments. Mr. Szrom said this is a month-to-month lease that we're extending and there is no long term to this. It was noted that the lease extension runs through December 31st of the current year and is intended to be temporary while the Postal Service makes a good-faith effort to find a new location within the Borough. Ms. Malool said after consulting with the CFO, the additional rental revenue could not be used until the following year and it was suggested to apply the funds toward a capital project rather than ongoing operating expenses.

Pinto Consulting Assisting the Borough with Farmland Preservation, Mayor Canose said the borough has a contract with Pinto Consulting to provide expert advice on farmland preservation and to explore how farmland preservation could be used as a tool in the community. She said the borough had met with representatives from the firm and Meadowbrook Farm to assess whether the approach was viable. The borough will pay for the consultants' research, while property owners will ultimately decide whether to participate.

Girl Scout Troop 64323 Silver Award Project, Mayor Canose said the local Girl Scout troop proposed installing informational kiosks at the Polo Grounds and Peters Park as part of its Silver Award project. She said kiosks had previously been discussed for those locations and highlighted the benefit of a kiosk at the Polo Grounds, where the entrance to the rear access toward the Old Army Trail can be difficult to locate. Council consent was given for this project.

Back to School Celebration, Kiwanis Park, September 5th, Mayor Canose said the annual back-to-school celebration assists English as a Second Language students with completing required forms and accessing special services. She said the event typically includes police distribution of backpacks and car seat assistance and is held in the picnic area of Kiwanis Park. . Council consent was given for this project.

Beer Garden Location at Somerset Hills Education Foundation's (SHEF) 30th Anniversary Event, Mayor Canose said the Somerset Hills Education Foundation will hold a 30th anniversary fundraiser on September 26th at the Polo Grounds, on the baseball field side, featuring food trucks, vendors, and other activities. The event will benefit the local schools. Council consent was given for this event and beer garden.

Beer Garden Location at Somerset Hills Mountaineers Pep Rally, Mayor Canose said the

Somerset Hills Mountaineers will hold a Pep Rally on September 3rd at the Polo Grounds in conjunction with the high school pep rally. Council consent was given for this event and beer garden.

Cub Scout Temporary Sign Request Extension, Mayor Canose reported that the Cub Scouts had requested an extension of the 14-day period permitted for temporary signs advertising their rocket launch events. The request was to display the signs for an additional two weeks through September 13th. Council consent was given.

ORDINANCES (Public Hearing) - None

ORDINANCES (Introduction)

Mr. Traynor moved that Ordinance #2026-2055, **ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LAURELWOOD ROAD IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY, AND APPROPRIATING $259,208 THEREFOR, CONSTITUTING PROCEEDS OF GRANTS FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,** be introduced by title, passed on first reading, published according to law, and that a public hearing be scheduled for a meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m., September 28, 2026. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved with six yes votes.

RESOLUTIONS

#26-174	**AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS (as of 7/22/26)**
#26-175	**AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS (as of 8/12/26)**
#26-176	**AUTHORIZING BOROUGH PLANNER JESSICA CALDWELL TO PERFORM WORK ON THE HIGHLANDS CENTER PLAN**
#26-177	**CONFIRMING APPOINTMENTS BY THE BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR**
#26-178	**AUTHORIZING MILLENIUM STRATEGIES AND RIPPLED WATERS ENGINEERING, LLC TO APPLY FOR A GRANT FOR THE DAM REMOVAL PROJECT**
#26-179	**AUTHORIZING FRANK PINTO OF PINTO CONSULTING TO ASSIST THE BOROUGH WITH THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM WITH MEADOWBROOK FARM**
#26-180	**AUTHORIZATION OF TAX REFUND**

#26-181 **AUTHORIZING CONTRACT WITH FOVEONICS FOR DOCUMENT SCANNING**

#26-182 **APPROVING A 100% DISABLED VET EXEMPTION FOR 14 STEVENS STREET**

#26-183 **AUTHORIZING BOROUGH PLANNER JESSICA CALDWELL TO PERFORM WORK FOR "HIGHLANDS MASTER PLAN ELEMENT AND REEXAMINATION REPORT"**

#26-184 **APPOINTING A MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

#26-185 **AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF LEASE WITH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR THE BERNARDSVILLE POST OFFICE**

#26-186 **MEMORIALIZING APPROVAL OF SPECIAL EVENTS**

#26-187 **RESOLUTION FOR RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE SUBURBAN MUNICIPAL JOINT INSURANCE FUND**

#26-188 **AUTHORIZING THE WAIVER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT FEES FOR OFF-DUTY LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSIGNMENTS DURING MUNICIPALLY SPONSORED ROAD PROJECTS UNDER RECIPROCAL AGREEMENTS WITH THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS AND OTHER MUNICIPALITIES**

#26-189 **AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF DEVELOPER'S AGREEMENT WITH 114 CLAREMONT, LLC FOR PLANNING BOARD APPLICATION NO. SP-248 (BLOCK 37, LOT 17; 114 CLAREMONT ROAD)**

#26-190 **AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH BRANDSTETTER CARROLL INC., FOR AN AQUATIC FACILITY FEASIBILITY STUDY**

#26-191 **AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT OF MINE BROOK 2006 LLC, TAX APPEAL, TAX COURT OF NEW JERSEY, DOCKET NOS.: 007924-2021; 004142-2022; 004316-2023; 002818-2024; 005485-2025**

#26-192 **AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT OF 150 MORRISTOWN RD BERNARDSVILLE, NJ LLC / 150 MORRISTOWN RD LLC, TAX APPEAL, TAX COURT OF NEW JERSEY, DOCKET NOS.: 008815-2023; 002260-2024; 004088-2025; 007940-2025**

#26-193 **ENDORSING THE PROMULGATION OF A NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER PROHIBITING CERTAIN LEFT TURN MOVEMENTS ALONG MORRISTOWN ROAD (U.S. ROUTE 202)**

#26-194 **APPROVING MEMBERSHIP IN THE FIRE COMPANY**

#26-195 **RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY TERMINATING AR AT QUIMBY, LLC'S DESIGNATION AS REDEVELOPER OF CERTAIN PROPERTY WITHIN THE BOROUGH AND TERMINATING THE REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT DATED AS OF JANUARY 12, 2022**

#26-196 **AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN A RENEWAL CONTRACT WITH SOMERSET HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS (SLEO III)**

Regarding Resolution #26-181, Mr. Szrom noted that the total cost was down from $200,000 to $160,000 and thanked Ms. Malool for her efforts on this.

Regarding Resolution #26-189, Mr. Pidgeon said the proposed agreement is a traditional development agreement prepared by the Planning Board Engineer. The agreement memorializes the developer's obligations in connection with the development, including the requirements for performance and maintenance guarantees. He noted that, unlike a redevelopment agreement, it does not add substantive requirements beyond the approvals already granted by the Council.

Regarding Resolution #26-194, the Mayor and Council thanked Hope Kaczynski for her volunteering to become a member of the Fire Company.

It was noted that Resolution #26-197, **AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH CIVICPLUS FOR WEBSITE DESIGN,** will be added regarding a contract with CivicPlus, who presented earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Zazzarino moved to pass Resolutions #26-174 through #26-197. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved with the following roll call vote: Mr. Ribeiro, Mr. Roos, Mr. Szrom, Mr. Traynor, Ms. Zamarra, and Mr. Zazzarino voted yes.

REPORTS

Mayor's Update, Mayor Canose said a food pantry has been established at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel on Bernards Avenue through the Somerset County Food Bank. The pantry is currently operating on Tuesday evenings and has been well attended. Somerset County

has provided shelving and refrigerators, and the program is expected to expand to two Tuesdays per month beginning in September or October. Mayor Canose said she recently performed her 39th wedding. Mayor Canose thanked the Police Department for hosting National Night Out at the pool, noting that the new location was well received and provided residents who are not pool members with an opportunity to see the facility. Mayor Canose met with Ed Zimmerman regarding efforts to reestablish the Somerset County Governing Officials Association, which previously met monthly for dinner and provided elected officials with an opportunity to exchange ideas and hear guest speakers. Efforts are underway to resume meetings, potentially in September. Mayor Canose said a barbecue for senior citizens will be held at the pool on August 26th at noon. The Community In Crisis overdose awareness vigil will be on August 31st at 8:00 p.m. at their facility on Church Street. Mayor Canose will again participate in the Over the Edge fundraiser on September 19th and encouraged anyone who would like to sponsor her to do so.

Administrator's Report, Ms. Malool said a locked drop box would be installed outside of the Construction Office within the next week or two. This will allow contractors and homeowners to submit permit applications, checks, and other paperwork outside of regular business hours. Ms. Malool gave an update on the Boylan Terrace project. An onsite meeting with the engineer, contractor, and Department of Public Works was scheduled for the following day, and the project is expected to begin soon. She said they inspected the area and identified several signs that need to be relocated. Further direction from the engineers is needed regarding the timing and method of correcting the striping. Ms. Malool said there are delays concerning the Childs Road sidewalk project, which will complete the connection from the Delta station to Somerset Hills Court. The original plans were bid before receiving NJDOT approval. Following its review, NJDOT identified 19 corrections that must be addressed by the engineer. The engineer also determined that a state highway occupancy permit and a county road opening permit are required. The borough is working with a new engineer and hopes the process will quickly move forward. Any necessary changes are expected to be handled through a change order, and the project has remaining grant funds available to cover potential additional costs. Ms. Malool said that New Jersey American Water agreed to pay $156,213 toward paving associated with its water-main work in the Boylan Terrace area. This amount excludes the section near the train station where the utility company excavated a deep pit. New Jersey American Water will be responsible for that portion. Ms. Malool gave an update on the NJ Transit station building. NJ Transit advised that asbestos-related work had been awarded to a contractor and work was expected to begin in the coming weeks. Some cleaning and temporary asbestos-abatement work had already been taking place. The borough continues to seek a timeline and is working with state representatives regarding the station's reopening. No definitive completion date has been provided. Ms. Malool said old playground equipment has been removed by Public Works and that the area was being prepared for the replacement playground. The annual milling and paving program was completed in August, which was earlier than the previous year. The program included nine corridor roads and one partial road. Ms. Malool said the property at 5 Crestview Drive across from Kirkpatrick Park, which the borough had considered purchasing, received multiple offers and is now under contract. The borough remains in contact with the realtor and may revisit the possibility of acquiring the property if the sale does not proceed. Ms. Malool discussed a temporary parking request from RPM, the developer constructing affordable housing across the street. Following the withdrawal of permission to park at the neighboring doctor's office, RPM requested permission to park employee vehicles in the gravel area near the Public Works facility.

Council indicated that daytime weekday parking would be acceptable, subject to the duration of the project and the area's availability for other uses. The project's completion deadline was discussed, with November being identified as a possible deadline. Ms. Malool said an RSVP was required by August 22nd for the senior barbecue. Registration could be completed through the Recreation Department, phone, or email.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Ms. Zamarra moved to accept the monthly reports. Mr. Ribeiro seconded and the motion was approved with six yes votes.

OTHER REPORTS

Environmental Commission, Mr. Szrom said the Green Team was seeking recommendations for additional vendors for the Farmers Market. Council members were encouraged to share information about businesses or other farmers markets that may help identify potential vendors. The Recreation Department, which operates the Farmers Market, will relay the information to the Green Team. Mr. Szrom said the Commission made a request for a bench made from recycled materials to be placed at Olcott Avenue near Bernards High School. A request to mow the community garden was also raised. Mayor Canose asked whether the garden was still operating and whether someone was responsible for its maintenance. Ms. Malool said DPW was there recently and it did not look like it was being maintained. Regarding benches, Ms. Malool said the borough had applied for benches as part of its proposed downtown sidewalk and train station improvements. She noted that Main Street had also purchased benches and that, if the application was successful, the Borough would have additional benches available. The benches could be used for the requested location, while maintaining a uniform appearance. It was clarified that the requested bench would be made from recyclable materials, and no objections were raised.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Correspondence

Letter from American Lung Cancer Screening Initiative (ALCSI), Mayor Canose said that the borough had received an email requesting support for legislation S4042/A5028 to expand access to lung cancer screenings for veterans, service members, and first responders. She noted that these individuals may face increased exposure to smoke, chemicals, and other hazardous substances through their service. Mayor Canose and the council were in support of the bills and proclamation. Mayor Canose entered the proclamation into the record.

Letter regarding Brookside Avenue, Mark Cherone, Brookside Avenue, raised concerns regarding the deteriorated private bridge and culvert serving two properties on Brookside

Avenue, including the substantial cost of bringing the structure into compliance. The discussion noted that the Borough does not currently own the bridge and therefore may have limited eligibility for grants. Matt Jessup, Redevelopment Attorney, suggested that the Borough could potentially undertake the improvements and finance them through a bond ordinance, with the costs specially assessed to the affected properties over a period of up to 20 years. Such an assessment would run with the land and transfer to future property owners. Alternative access through an easement to Tysley Street was also discussed, including the possibility of using a borough-owned strip of land. However, wetlands, stream crossings, neighboring property rights, and other engineering issues would need to be evaluated. Mr. Cherone said he is thinking about the possibility of pursuing the prior owner or title company about the failure to disclose the bridge obligation at the time of purchase. Council members discussed determining the applicable construction standards, obtaining updated engineering information regarding the culvert and bridge, and reviewing the property's tax assessment. Mayor Canose indicated that the resident's first step should be to contact the Tax Assessor to determine whether the property had been assessed appropriately. Mr. Cherone was given the contact information for Tax Assessor, Ed Kerwin, and he will reach out to Mr. Kerwin the following day.

Unfinished Business - None

New Business - None

OPEN SESSION

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public.

Dan Lincoln, Olcott Avenue, questioned whether the borough could more actively monitor the U.S. Postal Service's efforts to secure a new location rather than relying on periodic updates. He noted that resolving the Postal Service's relocation is important to moving the related project forward and suggested that the Borough take a more proactive role in facilitating the process. Ms. Malool said the Postal Service is seeking a small retail storefront of approximately 900–1,000 square feet with convenient parking and space for postal vehicles. Several potential locations had already been suggested to the Postal Service, including properties near the downtown area and the former recreation office at the library, although parking, cost, or availability had presented obstacles. Mr. Lincoln suggested that the train station could be an ideal location and offered to assist the borough in pursuing grant funding for its rehabilitation and potential use as the new post office. Mayor Canose expressed interest in the suggestion and indicated that she would follow up with Mr. Lincoln.

Bob Graham, Dryden Road, commended Ms. Malool on the progress regarding the Memorial Park Dam removal project. He emphasized the importance of reducing project costs through public input, creative approaches, and adjustments to the project, including potential opportunities related to earth removal. Mr. Graham requested that the AH10 zone project be expanded to include a small Borough-owned cul-de-sac property on Mine Avenue, identified as Block 1, Lots 2 and 3, to optimize land use, improve emergency access, and mitigate traffic congestion. He noted that the Borough Planner was aware of the request. Mr. Graham also

recommended that an easement or equivalent arrangement be incorporated into the AH9 Clarus project to allow for a small restroom trailer serving the downtown area, preferably utilizing existing sewer, water, and electrical connections. He stated that this could eliminate the need for restroom space within the Clarus project. He said the library currently provides the only public restroom during operating hours, but is less convenient and lacks signage. He suggested that public restroom facilities or additional portable toilets also be considered at the train station in coordination with NJ Transit while the station waiting room remains closed. Mayor Canose note that there is currently a port-o-john at the train station. Ms. Malool agreed and said she thought there were two.

Hearing no further comments from the public, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved to adjourn to an executive session to consider Attorney/Client Privilege and Personnel Matters and that the time when and circumstances under which the matter can be disclosed to the public is when it is finally resolved. The motion was seconded and approved with six yes votes.

REOPEN

The meeting was reopened to the public.

Motion (labeled Resolution #26-198), Mr. Szrom moved that the Borough Attorney is hereby authorized to file a motion to intervene on behalf of the Borough in the matter of Henry Ruschmann vs. Roberta Ruschmann, etal. Mr. Zazzarino second and the motion was approved with the following roll call vote: Mr. Ribeiro, Mr. Roos, Mr. Szrom, Mr. Traynor, Ms. Zamarra, and Mr. Zazzarino voted yes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50pm.

_____