BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE
Mayor & Borough Council Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2026

Mayor Mary Jane 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

OPEN SESSION

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public.

Fran Daley, Library Director, said the Library's summer programming was successful. October is Friends of the Library Week, starting October 14, 2026, with an author visit from Nita Prose. There will be a ticketed fundraiser wine-pairing dinner at Bistro 73 during the same week. There will be a Zoom event on October 14, 2026, at noon, titled Researching New Jersey Revolutionary and Civil War Records.

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

MAYOR & COUNCIL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Event – Iron Diamond Fitness, Bernardsville Half Mile on October 25th, council agreed to the concept of this half mile event at the Polo Grounds. It was noted that the organizers of the event have coordinated the route with the Police Department. A resolution for approval will be placed on the September 28th council agenda. A certificate naming the Borough of Bernardsville as additional insured and a signed hold harmless agreement is required.

SHEF30 Special Event – Change in Start Time to 8:00am (originally 12:00pm), council agreed to the change ~~it~~the time for this event.

Request from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church for Nativity Scene at Boro Pond/Stream, council agreed to the concept. A resolution for approval will be placed on the September 28th council agenda. A certificate naming the Borough of Bernardsville as additional insured and a signed hold harmless agreement is required.

Deer Management – Sustainable Habitat Solutions, it was noted that the Environmental Commission supports renewing Sustainable Habitat Solutions for Deer Management for the 2026/2027 season.

Special Event – Jessica Walker, Football Booster Homecoming Bonfire at the Polo Grounds on October 8th, Ms. Malool said the school district denied ~~due~~ this request due to liability/insurance concerns so the Booster Club is requesting borough approval to hold the bonfire on borough property at the Polo Grounds. The Football Booster Club would need requirements, a fire permit, NJ Forest Fire Service sign-off, proof of insurance, use of facilities form, hold harmless agreement. There were concerns about liability and cleanup (nails from pallets) and council discussed possible relocation to the pickleball parking lot (gravel). It was decided to invite the event organizer, Jessica Walker, to the next council meeting on September 28th to further discuss this request and go over the required documents with her.

West Street & Boylan Terrace – Change Order for Drainage, and Cost Estimates for Curb Installation, Ms. Malool said that Van Cleef Engineering has determined that the entire road did not need to be reconstructed, resulting in a savings of approximately $132,000. Additional drainage work was identified as necessary, including catch basins and piping, to prevent water from pooling and entering residents' driveways during the winter. Due to the need to immediately order materials, Ms. Malool said a change order resolution will be on the September 28th council agenda that will authorize drainage work at a cost of $31,880. She said Van Cleef also recommended installing Belgian block curbing on the north side of Prospect Street and the east side of Center Street to provide consistent curbing in conjunction with the planned road improvements. The estimated cost was $10,149 for Prospect Street and $22,047 for Center Street. She said Van Cleef further recommended removing the existing sidewalk on the east side of Center Street, which is in poor condition and unsafe, since a new sidewalk will be installed on the west side. If the additional work is approved, the project would remain approximately $78,000 below the original project cost. Council discussed the need for consistent criteria when determining when Belgian block curbing should be installed, including factors such as street width, drainage, sidewalks, parking, driveway access, emergency vehicle access, and available funding. It was agreed to consult with the Borough Engineer and Director of Public Works regarding appropriate criteria for future projects. On Prospect Street, the existing plan includes a new sidewalk and Belgian block curbing on the south side of the block between West Street, Boylan Terrace, and Center Streets. Council indicated its agreement to proceed with the additional work, with resolutions to be prepared for the next meeting.

PILOT Money to be used for School, the Mayor and Council discussed a proposal that, for future PILOT agreements, a portion of the Borough's PILOT revenue be considered for allocation to the local schools for capital projects. Mayor Canose suggested a 10 percent allocation, noting that PILOT revenues could otherwise be directed toward the Borough's capital fund and used to pay cash for capital projects rather than incur additional debt. Mr. Traynor sa?id it's important to maintain flexibility because each PILOT project has different characteristics. It was suggested that an ordinance or separate agreement with the school district may be appropriate. Council further discussed pending state legislation concerning the use of PILOT revenues for school district capital projects and whether a Borough policy could establish requirements that are more restrictive than State law. Matt Jessup will be consulted to look into how such an arrangement could be structured and may come to a future meeting to discuss the matter. Council also expressed interest in maintaining communication with the school district regarding future capital needs and the potential sharing of PILOT revenues.

Pavilion Update/(Pavilion) Concession Stand & Restrooms at the Polo Grounds, Ms. Malool provided an update on the proposed pavilion at the Polo Grounds, noting that the project had previously been bid twice, with both bids exceeding the Borough's budget. A semi-prefabricated building is now being considered through a New Jersey cooperative purchasing program. The proposed 36-by-44-foot structure would include an enclosed concession/kitchen area, a plumbing and storage chase?, and three restrooms consisting of a women's room with two stalls, a men's room with two stalls and a urinal, and a family restroom with a toilet and changing station. The estimated building cost is $220,154, with installation, footings, and the concrete pad estimated at approximately $160,073. Plumbing and electrical work would be additional. The proposed location would face the turf field and provide access to the baseball, soccer, lacrosse, flag football, tennis, and playground areas. The existing driveway and pedestrian and ambulance access would be modified as necessary. The Borough Engineer is reviewing the location and will plot the structure on the existing survey to confirm that it fits appropriately while maintaining pedestrian and emergency access. The existing gazebo would remain in place if feasible. The council discussed maximizing the covered outdoor area if space permits, including potentially restoring some of the overhang that was reduced to accommodate the additional restrooms. It was noted that the Recreation Committee reviewed the proposal and generally expressed support for moving the project forward. Comments included providing sufficient picnic-table seating, securing the tables, considering storage for sports organizations, obtaining a final rendering, and discussing the new location with the sports leagues. The Committee also noted that the proposed location appears to be the most central and practical of the locations considered. Ms. Malool said the structure would have an estimated three-month delivery period after ordering, during which time DPW could complete trenching and utility work. The Council discussed whether the project could be approved once the engineer confirms the location so that the order could be placed and the project advanced. The project remains substantially below earlier cost estimates, which had originally been approximately $1 million and were subsequently reduced to approximately $500,000. Council also discussed operational considerations, including scheduled locks for the restrooms, daily restroom cleaning, and potential arrangements for sports organizations to operate the concession stand. The concession area would not include a fryer or grease-intensive equipment, although organizations could potentially provide hot food using an outdoor grill.

Playground Update, Ms. Malool provided an update on the Claremont Field playground replacement. Delivery and installation had been delayed due to material shortages; however, confirmation was received that the equipment was scheduled for delivery on Monday, with installation expected to begin the same day. Installation of the playground structures and rubber surfacing is anticipated to take approximately two weeks, with a few smaller components still backordered. The rubber surfacing will require 48 hours to cure, during which time the area must remain closed. DPW installed temporary safety fencing, and signs and other measures will be used to prevent access during the curing period. A grand opening will follow completion of the project.

Sidewalk Grant, Ms. Malool, discussed a potential Safe Routes to School grant application to address gaps in sidewalks along Route 202 and Mount Airy Road. The goal would be to complete existing sidewalk segments and establish a continuous pedestrian connection where

feasible. Staff will identify and measure the gaps and develop a cost estimate for the proposed work. Council discussed prioritizing connections to existing sidewalks in Basking Ridge and improving pedestrian access for residents, including those near Dayton Crescent. The project would require coordination with NJDOT and Somerset County, depending on the location. Council also discussed contacting State representatives regarding support for the project. Any new sidewalks constructed within the Borough right-of-way would be subject to the applicable maintenance responsibilities of adjacent property owners.

Tie The Town Pink 2026, Mayor Canose said we have received the annual "Tie the Town Pink" request for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. Pink ribbons will be placed throughout the borough. The materials for the initiative had not yet been delivered and are expected by the end of September.

Traffic Related Issues (Prospect Street, Anderson Hill Road), council discussed traffic safety concerns at Prospect Street and at Anderson Hill Road. A representation from Van Cleef Engineer is expected to present findings and recommendations at the September 28th council meeting.

Ordinances

Public Hearing of the following ordinances to be held at the September 28, 2026 council meeting:

Ordinance #2026-2055, **ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF HARDSCRABBLE ROAD IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY, AND APPROPRIATING $284,571 THEREFOR, CONSTITUTING PROCEEDS OF GRANTS FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Resolutions

The following resolutions will be on for adoption at the September 28, 2026 council meeting:

--Bill List
--Authorization of Sewer Bill Adjustment
--Approving Membership in the Fire Company
--Authorization of Tax Refund
--Amending the Amount of Morris County Co-Op Contract #6A: Road Resurfacing (Milling And Paving – District 1)
--Accepting the Resignation of Alex Mann, Patrolman
--Confirming Appointments by the Borough Administrator
--Setting Revised Hours and Salary for Ryan Valentino, Fire Official/Fire Inspector, and Steve Waters, Fire Inspector
--Authorizing Refund of Overpayment of 2025 Taxes For Tax Court of NJ Appeal, 27 Mine Brook Road

--Authorizing Refund of Overpayment of 2025 Taxes For Tax Court of NJ Appeal 150 Morristown Road
--Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriations Per NJSA 40A:4-87 (Clean Communities Grant)
--Resolution of the Borough of Bernardsville, in the County of Somerset, New Jersey, Authorizing the Borough Planning Board to Undertake an Investigation to Determine Whether all or a Portion of that Certain Property Identified on the Tax Maps of the Borough as Block 67, Lots 2, 3 and 4, Constitutes a Non-Condemnation Area In Need Of Redevelopment (Gallic)
--Resolution of the Borough of Bernardsville, in the County of Somerset, New Jersey Declaring Property Identified on the Tax Maps of the Borough as Block 66, Lots 10, 11, 12, 14 and a Portion of Lot 22, as a Non-Condemnation Area In Need Of Redevelopment (Clarus)
--Resolution of the Borough of Bernardsville, in the County of Somerset, New Jersey Declaring Property Identified on the Tax Maps of the Borough as Block 100, Lot 2.01 and Block 102, Lots 2 and 13, as a Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment (Danbro)
--Adopting a Change to Personnel Policy

Presentations

The following proclamation will be done at the September 28, 2026 council meeting. Mayor's Proclamation for Luke Bubnowski on Achieving the Rank of Eagle Scout.

A representative from Van Cleef Engineering will be present to discuss Traffic Related Issues (Prospect Street, Anderson Hill Road).

Reports

Municipal Attorney Report, there were no comments or questions from council about Mr. Pidgeon's report.

Committee and Council Liaison Reports

Board of Health, Mr. Zazzarino said the Board met on September 21st. The shared health contract with the Bernards Township Health Department is expiring on December 31, 2026. A new three-year contract is expected to be presented at the November Bernardsville Board of Health meeting. The proposed contract would increase the current annual cost of $115,000 by approximately $23,000 per year over the three-year contract term. Council discussed the proposed three-year contract for health services and the significant increase in the annual fee which would result in an annualized cost of approximately $183,000 by the end of the three-year term. Council agreed to have Ms. Malool explore other options including from neighboring municipalities and Somerset County due to the magnitude of the increase.

Recreation Committee, Mr. Zazzarino said the committee discussed the timeline and scope of the pool study. The consultant was scheduled to begin the study on October 1st, with the completion timeline to be determined. The study will include an assessment of the pool and physical facilities, needed repairs and associated costs, bathroom facilities, and input from pool user groups, management personnel, and the public. Public input will address potential improvements, including whether to retain the existing pool, add a splash park or improve the

baby pool. The consultant will also review the pool's revenues and expenses and make recommendations regarding fees, membership, costs, and methods to increase participation. The study is expected to provide a foundation for a longer-term, five-year plan for the pool. Mr. Zazzarino said the Recreation Committee discussed improving coordination between them and Public Works regarding maintenance needs at recreation facilities such as mowing near trailheads and replacing missing benches. A Public Works Committee meeting was suggested to develop a process for identifying and addressing Recreation-related maintenance requests.

Correspondence

Unfinished Business

Brookside Avenue, Mr. Ribeiro said he met with Mark Cherone, who had come to the August 17th council meeting, regarding Mr. Cherone's ongoing concerns about a deteriorating culvert bridge on Brookside Avenue providing access to his residence. Mr. Ribeiro said he has additional information from Mr. Cherone, including personal and financial circumstances, that he will discuss with Ms. Malool to review the information and explore potential solutions, with any viable options to be brought back to the Council for further discussion. Mayor Canose said the bridge serves two properties and was never accepted or turned over to the Borough, so the Borough cannot undertake repairs due to ownership and liability concerns.

Council Priority List, Mr. Ribeiro discussed the importance of regularly reviewing the borough's list of major priorities during work sessions meetings to monitor progress and keep the council and public informed. It was noted that many of the priorities are progressing as planned, while some, including improvements to the train station, remain dependent on outside agencies. Mr. Traynor discussed whether the borough could undertake certain train station repairs itself, subject to obtaining the necessary approvals, and potentially offset the costs against future rent payments. Mr. Szrom supported the idea of having the priority list on work meeting agendas. Council mentioned progress on recreation priorities, noting that the walking path and football field lighting had been completed, the pavilion project was moving forward, and the pool study was underway. They also discussed improving accessibility around the Polo Grounds by either paving the JCP&L path or using a less expensive stone-dust surface to provide a smoother route for strollers and wheelchair users.

Sidewalk Grant, Mr. Zazzarino discussed potential sidewalk grant opportunities, including whether funding could be used for ADA-accessible curb cuts at existing locations in addition to new sidewalk construction. Ms. Malool said we will review the available grant opportunities and determine whether locations such as Five Corners and Essex Avenue can be included. There was a missing crosswalk estimated to cost approximately $20,000 and it was suggested to include eligible projects in a grant application if possible. If any council member has a list of area to add to the grant application, they will send to Ms. Malool.

Open Space Fund, Ms. Malool provided an update on the Borough's Open Space Fund. The acquisition-only portion of the fund, which may be used solely for the acquisition of open space, has a balance of approximately $6.32 million following the cancellation of unused ordinance

funds associated with properties that are no longer being acquired. The portion of the fund that may be used for either acquisition or improvements has a balance of approximately $2.71 million, including $1 million appropriated in the 2026 budget to reimburse prior-year open space improvements. An additional approximately $2.75 million remains in a bond ordinance for Master Plan improvements, of which approximately $500,000 is already encumbered for items including the playground, pavilion engineering, and other projects. Council discussed the availability of approximately $10 million across the various Open Space Fund categories and the importance of developing priorities for future acquisitions and improvements. The Borough's long-range Recreation Plan to identify projects and improvements for parks and recreational facilities beyond the current focus on the Polo Grounds will be revisited. It was noted that the existing Recreation Plan is lengthy and outdated, and efforts are underway to make the document more concise and useful. Council discussed having the Recreation Committee identify current short- and long-term priorities for each park and then establish overall priorities for consideration by the Planning Board as part of the Borough's Master Plan. The discussion would include both projects identified in the prior plan and new needs that have since emerged. A Recreation Committee progress chart documenting projects completed or addressed over the past several years will also be reviewed as part of the process.

New Business - None

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved to adjourn to an executive session to consider Personnel Matters – Deputy Clerk Pending Litigation – Ruschmann, Attorney/Client Privilege – Quimby Lane, Pending Litigation - Claremont Encroachment, Attorney/Client Privilege - Pending Duff Lawsuits Against the Borough, 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.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00p.m.

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