



BOROUGH OF OCEANPORT

MAYOR & COUNCIL

MINUTES • JANUARY 2, 2025

Reorganization Meeting

Clement V. Sommers Municipal Building

7:00 PM

910 Oceanport Way, Oceanport, NJ 07757

1. **Meeting Called to Order:** Mayor Tvrdik called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.
2. **Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act:** This meeting complies with the Open Public Meetings Act by adequate and electronic notification on December 18, 2024 of this meeting and its location, date and time to the Asbury Park Press and Two River Times and by the posting of same on the municipal bulletin board and Borough's Web Site.
3. **Flag Salute:** Police Chief Gary Grimes led attendees and the Governing Body in the flag salute.
4. **Invocation:** Pastor Lydel Aikens gave the invocation.
5. **Clerk's Certificate of Election and Administration Oaths of Office to:** Ms. Smith read the Certificate of Election from the Board of County Canvassers of Monmouth County, New Jersey certifying the following positions filled and duly elected for full terms.

Mayor Tvrdik administered the Oath of Office to William Deerin, Councilman, 3-year term expiring 12/31/27

Mayor Tvrdik administered the Oath of Office to Michael O'Brien, Councilman, 3-year term expiring 12/31/27

Monmouth County Commissioner Arnone administered the Oath of Office to Patricia Cooper, Councilwoman, unexpired term ending 12/31/25

6. **Roll Call of the 2025 Governing Body:**

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Thomas Tvrdik	Mayor	Present
William Deerin	Councilman	Present
Richard Gallo	Councilman	Present
Bryan Keeshen	Councilman	Present
Michael O'Brien	Councilman	Present
Keith Salnick	Councilman	Present
Patty Cooper	Councilwoman	Present
Jeanne Smith	Borough Clerk	Present
Andrew Bayer	Borough Attorney	Present
Donna M. Phelps	Administrator	Present
Stephanie Kramer	Deputy Borough Clerk	Present
Catherine D. LaPorta	Chief Financial Officer	Present

7. **Mayor's Greeting:** Mayor Tvrdik opened by welcoming all in attendance and wishing everyone a Happy New Year. He extended his gratitude to the representatives and the Commissioner Director of Monmouth County for their presence. He also expressed appreciation to the Oceanport team for their continued dedication, as well as to the Council for their commitment to public service. Mayor Tvrdik thanked the Borough staff for their hard work, along with the first responders, volunteers, and the Oceanport Police Department for their ongoing service and support to the community.

The Mayor reviewed the accomplishments of 2024, highlighting that over three miles of roads were paved, with new drainage systems and sidewalks installed in specific areas. He noted that the Borough entered into a shared services agreement with Monmouth County to investigate and address storm drain issues. He reported the expansion of the Department of Public Works (DPW) team and emphasized the importance of keeping certifications current to maintain high standards of service.

Looking ahead, the Mayor shared plans for the coming year, including the acquisition of new equipment, enhanced municipal services, and continued road replacements. He noted a rise in the average home prices in Oceanport while successfully maintaining a flat municipal tax rate.

The Mayor stated that the year 2025 may present financial challenges, as the Finance Department will be required to go out to bid for a new garbage truck contract. In preparation, a committee has been established to evaluate options, including potential re-zoning efforts throughout the Borough. He further reported that the Borough has entered into new shared service agreements with the municipalities of Monmouth Beach and West Long Branch to offset costs. In addition, the Borough has signed an agreement with Monmouth Beach specifically for the provision of a Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector. Mayor Tvrdek emphasized the importance of maintaining strong relationships and collaborating with neighboring municipalities and leadership.

He highlighted the efforts of the Recreation Committee, noting that the Committee had significantly increased its activity over the past year. Events included various festivals, parades, and the successful Holiday Extravaganza. The Mayor discussed improvements to local parks. He reported that the Borough has received a grant to construct an all-inclusive playground and renovate outdated restroom facilities at Blackberry Park. He noted that Monmouth University and Christian Brothers Academy is leasing a portion of the park. Additionally, Trinity Park is scheduled for aesthetic and structural improvements in the coming year, and Old Wharf Park is currently under construction with ongoing upgrades. The Borough will also be meeting with residents to discuss the replacement of dying trees in public spaces. Mayor Tvrdek announced that the Borough has acquired 40 acres of open space, further contributing to the community's environmental and recreational assets.

The Mayor acknowledged the recent retirement of Michael Kelly, expressing appreciation for his service. He then provided an update on public safety initiatives, including a new mutual aid agreement with the Board of Education and the acquisition of a replacement ambulance for the First Aid Squad. He noted that the Fire Department recently took delivery of a new E-1 pumper vehicle. The Mayor concluded his report by introducing County Commissioner Tom Arnone.

County Commissioner Tom Arnone addressed the Mayor and Council, commending the Borough of Oceanport for its strong and effective leadership, which he stated has contributed significantly to the community's continued growth and success. He noted that working with the county is the proper way to do it. And the ultimate goal is to work with the municipalities in getting things done. Commissioner Arnone emphasized that the county is taking some of the fiscal responsibility off the town, but no decision is made without the members of the FEMRA board agree.

Mayor Tvrdek thanked Commissioner Arnone and noted that Netflix has received its first round of approvals. He stated that they anticipate breaking ground in November and will close on the property after receiving final approvals, which are expected sometime in December. He also mentioned that plans for the remaining sound stages have not yet been presented. Mayor Tvrdek further stated that prior to development activity in the 400 District on Riverside Avenue, Horseneck Point Road, and Park Street, he will arrange a meeting between Netflix representatives and the residents impacted by this area of development.

Mayor Tvrdek provided an update regarding Monmouth Park, highlighting the recent upgrades and noting that the board is working closely with the facility. He mentioned that there are ongoing discussions about the potential development of a diamond field within Monmouth Park, with the goal of establishing it as a premier Youth Sports Mega destination on the East Coast. Mayor Tvrdek then extended his appreciation to his team for their continued efforts. He concluded by announcing that the recipient of the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award would be Ralph Maris.

8. **Oaths of Office Ceremony - Police Department:** Ms. Smith administered the Oaths of Office to the following members of the Police Department. Family members and attendees welcomed and offered congratulations.

1. Patrolman Malik Q. Jenkins
2. Sergeant Daniel Petrucci
3. Chief Gary Grimes

9. **Election of Borough Council President:**

1. RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF OCEANPORT ELECTING THE 2025 BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Bryan Keeshen, Councilman
SECONDER:	Michael O'Brien, Councilman
AYES:	Deerin, Gallo, Keeshen, O'Brien, Salnick, Cooper

10. **Borough Council Appointment of Class III Member to the Planning Board:**

1. RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF OCEANPORT APPOINTMENT OF CLASS III MEMBER TO THE PLANNING BOARD FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2025 to DECEMBER 31, 2025

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Michael O'Brien, Councilman
SECONDER: Keith Salnick, Councilman
AYES: Deerin, Gallo, Keeshen, O'Brien, Salnick, Cooper

11. **Borough Council Adoption of 2025 Bylaws:**

1. RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF OCEANPORT ADOPTING THE BOROUGH BYLAWS FOR CY2025

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Bryan Keeshen, Councilman
SECONDER: William Deerin, Councilman
AYES: Deerin, Gallo, Keeshen, O'Brien, Salnick, Cooper

12. **Mayor's Appointments for Council Standing Committees:**

1. RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF OCEANPORT APPOINTMENT OF 2025 BOROUGH COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: William Deerin, Councilman
SECONDER: Bryan Keeshen, Councilman
AYES: Deerin, Gallo, Keeshen, O'Brien, Salnick, Cooper

13. **Mayor's Appointments to the PLANNING BOARD:** BE IT RESOLVED that Mayor Tvrdik made the following appointments to the Planning Board:

Christopher Widdis	Class I	1yr Term
Leslie Barham Widdis	Class IV	4yr Term
Darren Davis	Class IV	4yr Term
John Kahle	Class IV	4yr Term
David Gruskos	Alternate I	2yr Term

The PLANNING BOARD is now composed of the following members:

Christopher Widdis	Class I	1yr Term expiring 12/31/25
Joseph Foster	Class II	3yr Term expiring 12/31/25
Kevin Calver, Jr.	Class IV	4yr Term expiring 12/31/27
Leslie Barham Widdis	Class IV	4yr Term expiring 12/31/28
Darren Davis	Class IV	4yr Term expiring 12/31/28
John Kahle	Class IV	4yr Term expiring 12/31/28
James Whitson	Class IV	4yr Term expiring 12/31/25
Michael Dailey	Class IV	4yr Term expiring 12/31/25
David Gruskos	Alternate I	2yr Term expiring 12/31/26
Louis J. Padula	Alternate 2	2yr Term expiring 12/31/25

14. **Mayor's Appointments to the Environmental Commission:** BE IT RESOLVED that Mayor Tvrdik made the following appointments to the Environmental Commission:

Robert Broege	3yr Term expiring 12/31/27
Peter Litwin	Unexpired 3yr Term expiring 12/31/27

The ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION is now composed of the following members:

Robert Broege	3yr Term expiring 12/31/27
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Peter Litwin		3yr Term expiring 12/31/27
Patricia Cooper		3yr Term expiring 12/31/26
Richard Gruskos		3yr Term expiring 12/31/26
Joseph Foster		3yr Term expiring 12/31/25
Jack L. Harris		3yr Term expiring 12/31/25
Meghan Walker	Alternate #1	2yr Term expiring 12/31/25
Vacant	Alternate #2	2yr Term expiring 12/31/26

15. **Mayor's Appointments to OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** BE IT RESOLVED that Mayor Tvrdik made the following appointment to the Office of Emergency Management:

Mauro Baldanza	Director	3yr Term ending 12/31/28
Chief Gary Grimes	3 rd Asst. Director	3yr Term ending 12/31/27

The following are currently serving in the Office of Emergency Management

Mauro Baldanza	Director	3yr Term expiring 12/31/28
Chris Baggot	1st Asst. Director	3yr Term expiring 12/31/25
Wes Sherman	2 nd Asst. Director	3yr Term expiring 12/31/26
Chief Gary Grimes	3 rd Asst. Director	3yr Term expiring 12/31/27

16. **First Aid Squad 2025 Officers:** The Mayor and Council recognized the following First Aid Officers for 2025. Ms. Smith administered the Oaths of Office to the following:
1. Sergeant, Margaret Lippolis
 2. 2nd Lieutenant, Doris Agaman
 3. 1st Lieutenant, Will Reger
 4. Captain, Jonathan Ryan
17. **Acknowledgment of Outgoing Captain Fred Filippone:** Mayor Tvrdik expressed great appreciation and recognized the long service of outgoing Captain Fred Filippone whose service has included five consecutive years serving as Captain with the highest call response each year.
18. **Fire Department 2025 Officers:** The Mayor and Council recognize the following Fire Department Officers for 2025. Ms. Smith administered the Oaths of Office to the following:
1. 2nd Assistant Chief Kenneth Carroll
 2. 1st Assistant Chief Francis Lippolis
 3. CHIEF James Gallo, Jr.
19. **Acknowledgment of Outgoing Chief Joseph Wolf:** Mayor Tvrdik advised Joe Wolf was unable to attend and thanked Joe for his tremendous efforts as he worked with other members to modernize the Department's records including member certifications, training and equipment maintenance.
20. **Consent Agenda:** Mayor Tvrdik summarized the Borough's annual resolutions as listed on the Consent Agenda, asked for any questions or items that needed to be taken separately. Councilman Salnick asked to take Resolution #2025-29 separately. Mayor Tvrdik asked for a motion on the remaining 32 items which was moved by Councilman O'Brien, seconded by Councilman Gallo.
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| #2025-5 | Resolution fixing date, time and place of the Governing Body meetings |
| #2025-6 | Resolution designating the official newspapers for Borough advertising |
| #2025-7 | Resolution approving the 2025 temporary budget |
| #2025-8 | Resolution setting a fee schedule for various miscellaneous administrative items |
| #2025-9 | Resolution designating depositories |
| #2025-10 | Resolution approving a Cash Management Plan and Investment Policy |
| #2025-11 | Resolution permitting prepayment of certain items |
| #2025-12 | Resolution Tax Grace Period & Interest for Delinquent Taxes |
| #2025-13 | Resolution authorizing the Tax Collector to cancel small balances |
| #2025-14 | Resolution authorizing the annual tax sale |

- #2025-15 Resolution of Police Department Appointments
- #2025-16 Resolution setting fees for extra duty assignments for 2025
- #2025-17 Resolution awarding contract for 2025 Towing Services
- #2025-18 Resolution authorizing participation in the 1033 LESA program for 2025
- #2025-19 Resolution appointing a Public Agency Compliance Officer
- #2025-20 Resolution appointing Community Development Representatives
- #2025-21 Resolution appointing Clean Communities Coordinator
- #2025-22 Resolution appointing an ADA Coordinator for CY2025
- #2025-23 Resolution appointing Designated Employer Representative for CDL requirements
- #2025-24 Resolution authorizing limited waiver of alcoholic beverage hours – Monmouth Park
- #2025-25 Resolution appointments to Boards & Committees
- #2025-26 Resolution appointing a Municipal Prosecutor
- #2025-27 Resolution appointing Andrew Bayer, Esq. as Borough Attorney
- #2025-28 Resolution appointing a Borough Auditor
- ~~#2025-29 Resolution appointing a Borough Engineer (separate)~~
- #2025-30 Resolution appointing a Bond Counsel
- #2025-31 Resolution appointing a Borough Planner
- #2025-32 Resolution appointing Special Counsel for Redevelopment
- #2025-33 Resolution reappointing Michael MacStudy to TRWRA
- #2025-34 Resolution re-appointing Tim Griffin as Fire Official
- #2025-35 Resolution re-appointing Jason Sutton as Vital Statistics Registrar
- #2025-36 Resolution confirming Mayor's appointment of Zoning Officer, Michael Thulen
- #2025-37 Resolution confirming 2025 Borough Officials

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Michael O'Brien, Councilman
SECONDER: Richard Gallo, Councilman
AYES: Deerin, Gallo, Keeshen, O'Brien, Salnick, Cooper

21. **Resolutions Taken Separately:**

- #2025-29 Resolution appointing a Borough Engineer

RESULT: ADOPTED [5 TO 0]
MOVER: Bryan Keeshen, Councilman
SECONDER: Richard Gallo, Councilman
AYES: Deerin, Gallo, Keeshen, O'Brien, Cooper
ABSTAIN: Salnick

22. **Borough Administrator Remarks:** The administrator began by wishing everyone a happy and, most importantly, healthy New Year. Congratulations were extended to Councilmen Deerin and O'Brien on their re-election, with appreciation for the opportunity to continue working alongside them. Councilwoman Cooper was congratulated on her appointment as Council President, with confidence expressed in her leadership abilities. Reflecting on 2024, the administrator noted it was an exciting, busy, and challenging year, and anticipated no slowdown in 2025. Gratitude was expressed to Mayor Tvrdik for his hands-on leadership and his support of employees, which has contributed to a strong team dynamic at Borough Hall.

Thanks were given to all Oceanport employees for their tireless work. Specific mention was made of Jeanne, Katie, Steve, Mike, and Lesley, along with their staff, for their dedication and teamwork. The administrator highlighted the excellence of the Oceanport Police Department, expressing appreciation for working with new Chief Gary Grimes. Congratulations were offered to Sergeant Dan Petrucelli and Officer Malik Jenkins. The administrator emphasized how the dedication of department heads makes the job easier and expressed gratitude for each of them.

Further congratulations were given to Captain Jonathan Ryan, 1st Lieutenant Wil Reger, 2nd Lieutenant Doris Agaman, and Sergeant Maggie Lippolis on their swearing in. A special thank-you was extended to outgoing Captain Fred Fillipone for his close collaboration over the past four years, and to outgoing Chief Joe Wolf for his efforts in improving departmental efficiency. Congratulations were also offered to new Chief Jimmy Gallo, 1st Assistant Chief Frank Lippolis, and 2nd Assistant Chief Ken Carroll. Buzz Baldanza was recognized for his reappointment as OEM Coordinator and for his dedication to the residents. Appreciation was also extended to members of the First Aid Squad, Fire Department, OEM, Planning Board, and various committees including Recreation, Historical, Environmental, Water Watch, and the newly revived Shade Tree Committee, as well as to all coaches, parents, and volunteers contributing to the community.

The administrator reported that 2024 was a good year for Oceanport. Electrical work was completed at Maria Gatta Park, and the park now has lighting. An additional grant from Monmouth County's Open Space Program was secured for the park, with bathroom and storage improvements planned for 2025. Improvements at Trinity Park began, funded by a Local Recreation Improvement Grant. Another grant from the same program supported work at Blackberry Bay Park, where the pool was filled in and three new bathrooms will be installed in 2025. Recreation improvements throughout 2024 were significant and are expected to continue. The Recreation Committee has been revitalized by the appointment of Kelle Burrough as Recreation Coordinator. The year's events, particularly the Holiday Extravaganza, were noted for their success. The Employee Assistance Program remained funded through the CJIF and was extended to fire and first aid volunteers. The Borough also requested its 2024 share of sports betting revenue, totaling just under \$200,000.

In closing, the administrator remarked on the pride and dedication of the governing body, employees, volunteers, and residents, all working to make Oceanport a great place to live. Gratitude was expressed for being part of the team, and optimism was shared for what promises to be an epic 2025.

23. Borough Council Remarks:

1. Councilman William Deerin
2. Councilman Richard Gallo
3. Councilman Bryan Keeshen
4. Councilman Michael O'Brien
5. Councilman Keith Salnick
6. Councilwoman Patricia Cooper

24. Mayor Remarks:

1. Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award - Mayor Tvrdik offered remarks on the life of Ralph Marra who recently passed earlier that month and gave the following proclamation:

WHEREAS, RALPH C. MARRA SR. passed away on Friday, December 20, 2024 at the age of 87; and

WHEREAS, RALPH C. MARRA SR. was an important and influential resident of the Borough of Oceanport for the better part of six decades, having become a member of the Oceanport Hook And Ladder Volunteer Fire Company at the tender age of 18 in 1955; and

WHEREAS, RALPH C. MARRA SR. served the Borough of Oceanport as Fire Captain in 1962 and as Fire Chief in 1970 during his tenure as a volunteer firefighter, and he was a lifelong member of the Oceanport First Aid Squad, attaining the rank of Captain in 1964; and

WHEREAS, as if all that was not enough, RALPH C. MARRA SR. also served the Borough of Oceanport as a Councilman from 1976 through 1985, during which time the Port Au Peck fire house was built, the first Chief's car was purchased and put in service, a 1977 LeFrance fire truck was purchased and put into service, and significant improvements were made to Oceanport's parks, most notably Old Wharf Park, and while he was Councilman he also served as Police Liaison, Fire Liaison, and as a Finance Chairman; and **WHEREAS, RALPH C. MARRA SR.** was also one of Oceanport's first mailmen, served our country in the Army National Guard,

pitched the Oceanport Fire Departments' softball team to several championships, and donated all the tile when the Oceanport First Aid Building was built by volunteers; and

WHEREAS, while in his later years RALPH C. MARRA SR. came to cherish winters in Florida rather than the less than balmy ones offered by Oceanport, he returned to Oceanport every spring to the great delight of all his friends and family in Oceanport and towns nearby, touching all their lives in a most positive way; and

WHEREAS, RALPH C. MARRA SR. met every Sunday at Fanagle The Bagel with his good friends John Bonforte, Dr. Gerry Parisi and Bob Raskin for over twenty years to solve the world's problems and chat with anybody who walked through the door, developing the type of firm bond with each other and their families that we should all aspire to; and

***WHEREAS, RALPH C. MARRA SR.** will long be remembered as the greatest and only fan of the Oceanport O1 over 40 softball team and also for helping his lifelong best friend, Jack Caputo, on countless Christmas Eves as he served free coffee — while wearing a Santa hat a Caputo's Bakery shirt and a big smile — to the long line of people waiting for their Caputo's Christmas orders (there will always be a hot cup of coffee for Ralph at Caputo's); and*

***WHEREAS,** whether they knew it or not, the lives of generations of Oceanport residents were improved because of the good works, civic contributions and volunteer efforts of **RALPH C. MARRA SR.**; and*

***WHEREAS,** Oceanport is "A Great Place to Live" because of **RALPH C. MARRA SR.**; and*

***WHEREAS,** the Borough of Oceanport would be remiss if it did not recognize **RALPH C. MARRA SR.** for his life-long commitment to the health, safety and welfare of the people of Oceanport, his good natured ambassadorship on behalf of the Borough and, most importantly, his friendship, mentorship and guidance throughout the entirety of his incredibly accomplished life; now*

THEREFORE, I, THOMAS J. TVRDIK,** Mayor of the Borough of Oceanport, on behalf of Oceanport's Governing Body and its residents, do hereby recognize and laud **RALPH C. MARRA SR.** for his unfailing, altruistic service to the Borough of Oceanport and for his myriad contributions to Oceanport as our friend, mentor and colleague, and, to further celebrate his accomplishments and extend to him our deepest appreciation for everything he has done to ensure that Oceanport remains "A Great Place to Live," I declare: **January 2, 2025 as "RALPH C. MARRA SR. DAY"** in the Borough of Oceanport, and I hereby further confer the **Mayor's 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award** to **RALPH C. MARRA SR.

25. **Public Comments:** Mayor Tvrdik opened the meeting for public comments. As no one from the public appeared, Mayor Tvrdik closed that portion of the meeting.
26. **Adjournment:** As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM on a motion by Councilman O'Brien, seconded by Councilman Keeshen and approved by Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Kramer
Deputy Borough Clerk