



BOROUGH OF OCEANPORT MAYOR & COUNCIL MINUTES • WORKSHOP

Clement V. Sommers Municipal Building
910 Oceanport Way, Oceanport, NJ 07757

FEBRUARY 12, 2026 at 7:00 PM

1. **Meeting Called to Order:**
2. **Statement of Compliance with Open Public Meetings Act:**
3. **Flag Salute, Statement to the Public:**
4. **Roll Call:**

STATUS	NAME, TITLE	ARRIVED
PRESENT:	Councilman Richard Gallo Councilman Bryan Keeshen Councilman Michael O'Brien Councilwoman Patricia Cooper Councilman William Deerin Councilwomen Kara Manna Mayor Thomas J Tvrdik	7:04pm
ABSENT:		

ALSO PRESENT: Stephanie Kramer, Acting Borough Clerk
Katie Cassidy, Deputy Borough Clerk
Andrew Bayer, Borough Attorney
Donna M. Phelps, Administrator
Catherine D. LaPorta, Chief Financial Officer

5. **Proclamations:**

Shore Regional Soccer, Field Hockey, Cross Country Championship Teams: Mayor Tvrdik read the proclamation recognizing the Shore Regional Soccer, Field Hockey, and Cross Country Championship Teams and presented individual Certificates of Recognition to each player.

6. **Administrator's Report :**

The Borough Administrator, Donna Phelps, stated that she attended the State of the County event last week, noting that it was very informative. She reported that Commissioner Arnone provided a recap of the many county accomplishments and stressed the importance of the county's partnership with New Jersey municipalities.

Borough Administrator Phelps stated that she also met with Assemblyman Clifton, who serves as the Government Affairs Representative for Comcast. She noted that he advised the Borough's one-time technology grant in the amount of \$18,000 should be processed shortly, explaining that this was completed in conjunction with the renewal of the Comcast franchise agreement. She further stated that an additional component of the agreement includes the provision of a municipal access channel to allow meetings to be broadcast on both Comcast and Verizon, noting that implementation is underway but has encountered delays due to weather-related issues.

Borough Administrator Phelps reported that the Borough received Verizon's 2025 franchise fee this month in the amount of \$56,460.90.

She stated that she attended the MEL JIF Safety Breakfast and was pleased to report that the Borough was recognized for achieving sufficient points to qualify for the safety incentive program, noting that the award consisted of a check in the amount of \$1,750.

Borough Administrator Phelps reported that she has completed the 2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant application and stated that, upon adoption of the resolution approving the Borough's application later this evening, the grant will be submitted, noting that the deadline is tomorrow.

Regarding discussion items, BA Phelps stated that she provided Council with comments from Borough Engineer Bill White concerning opposition to the NJDEP REAL rules. She explained that, in summary, the proposed changes would impact the Borough by expanding flood hazard areas and requiring new construction to be elevated approximately two and a half feet higher than current requirements. She further noted that the Borough's infrastructure would need to be updated, resulting in increased costs and additional work for Borough staff and professionals.

Borough Administrator Phelps stated that other municipalities are adopting resolutions requesting further review of these rules. She noted that Mr. White is available should Council have any questions and advised that a resolution regarding this matter is listed on the agenda for action. She then inquired as to Council's preference regarding the resolution.

7. Discussion :

Regarding Opposition to the NJDEP REAL Rules - Donna Phelps: Borough Administrator Phelps discussed this item during the Administrator's Report.

Vacating Paper Streets Within the Borough - Mayor Tvrdik:

Council discussed several paper streets, with members emphasizing the importance of evaluating each location individually. Councilwoman Manna noted that municipalities often vacate paper streets that were mapped but never utilized, returning them to adjacent property owners when no public purpose is served. Councilman O'Brien stated that he supports reviewing each case on its own merits and expressed support for vacating the Centennial Avenue paper street, as well as the Onondaga and Iroquois streets, finding

little public benefit in maintaining them and noting they do not appear to affect public access to waterways. Mayor Tvrdek generally supported exploring the vacation of certain paper streets, particularly Iroquois Avenue, citing safety concerns, potential future land-use planning opportunities, reduced Borough maintenance obligations, and the addition of property to the tax rolls. Councilmen Keeshen, Gallo, and Deerin agreed with Councilman O'Brien's comments. Councilmen Gallo and Deerin specifically emphasized the importance of maintaining the Borough's longstanding practice of not vacating streets that provide access to waterways. Councilwoman Cooper also agreed with Councilman O'Brien regarding the Centennial Avenue paper street and supported maintaining the Borough's position on preserving waterfront access, while noting concerns about navigation applications directing traffic through the area.

Changes to the Ordinance regarding: Swimming Pools, Plot Plan Checklist, Architectural Standards / Guidelines, Building Height - Councilwoman Cooper:

Councilwoman Cooper presented several recommendations from the Planning Board. The first involved reclassifying the water surface of swimming pools from impervious coverage to pervious coverage, while continuing to count associated decking and coping as impervious coverage. She explained that the change was suggested to reduce the need for variance applications for residents seeking to install swimming pools. Chairman Whitson stated that the proposal would align the Borough with practices in neighboring municipalities and provide relief to applicants while still allowing the Board to require drainage plans when necessary. Councilwoman Cooper and Chairman Whitson was invited to speak and also commented on adding a drainage plan requirement to the plot plan checklist for applications that exceed impervious coverage limits to ensure runoff does not negatively impact neighboring properties. Following discussion, Council generally supported adding the drainage plan requirement to the checklist but requested additional time to consider the proposed change to impervious coverage calculations for swimming pools.

Councilwoman Cooper then presented a Planning Board recommendation regarding architectural standards and guidelines for residential development within the Borough. The discussion included existing building height restrictions and a potential approach that would consider the location and scale of a dwelling in relation to surrounding properties. Following discussion, Mayor Tvrdek and Council agreed that the matter required additional review and consideration before any further action would be taken.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT - Action Items Only:** There were no public comments

9. **Action Items - Consent Agenda :**

Resolution #2026-63 - Payment of Bills:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien

SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-64 - Authorizing 2026 Budget Appropriation Reserve Transfer:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-65 - Authorizing Change Order #1- Final - Abandoned Hydrant Removal Project:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-66 - Tax Sale Certificate 25-00004:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-67 - Authorizing Application for Local Recreation Improvement Grant:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-68 - Opposing the NJDEP REAL Rules:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-69 - Awarding a Contract for Drainage Improvements Phase A - to Monarch Excavation:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (5 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilman William Deerin
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	Bryan Keeshen

Resolution #2026-70 - Tax Collector's Annual Report for 2025:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-71 - Approving Mediation Agreement With Fair Share Housing Center:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Resolution #2026-72 - Authorizing a Stipend to a Municipal Employee to Serve as Wellness Champion:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper

AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

10. First Reading Ordinances:

Ordinance #1119 — Affordable Housing Ordinance Implementing the Fourth Round Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan :

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
SECONDER:	Councilwomen Kara Manna
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Ordinance #1120 - Amending Chapter 390-14 -Zoning R-5 Affordable Housing Overlay (R-5) Zone:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
SECONDER:	Councilman William Deerin
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

11. Second Reading & Public Hearing Ordinances:

Mr. Terry McGhee, 450 Branchport Avenue, addressed the Mayor and Council regarding ongoing traffic safety concerns at the intersection of Branchport Avenue and Port-Au-Peck Avenue. Mr. McGhee stated that he has resided at the location for approximately 17 years and has witnessed numerous accidents at the intersection, estimating no fewer than 50 incidents over that time. He explained that vehicles frequently accelerate approaching the traffic light, often attempting to beat the signal, and reaching speeds in excess of 40 to 50 miles per hour.

Mr. McGhee expressed concern for the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and nearby residents, noting that the conditions are severe enough that he does not allow his children or grandchildren to play on the front lawn. He further stated that vehicles have, at times, left the roadway and entered his property, causing damage and posing a risk of injury. Mr. McGhee indicated that the situation remains hazardous and urged the Borough to consider measures such as reducing the speed limit and increasing traffic enforcement to improve safety at the intersection.

Mr. T.J. Geltzeiler, 281 Port-Au-Peck Avenue, along with his wife, addressed the Mayor and Council regarding traffic safety concerns. Mr. Geltzeiler stated that he and his family recently moved to the

area and have two young children, and identified speeding along Port-Au-Peck Avenue as a significant concern. He noted that, in the short time he has resided there, he has experienced multiple near-accidents and observed frequent speeding, particularly as the speed limit increases from 25 mph to 40 mph.

Mr. Geltzeiler indicated that there is ongoing and anticipated residential development in the area, resulting in an increase in families with young children. He expressed concern for pedestrian safety, particularly for his son who attends Maple Place School and walks or rides his bike to and from school. He further stated that speeding vehicles and regular police stops in front of his home, including late at night, have created safety concerns and disruptions.

Mr. Geltzeiler suggested that the Borough consider reducing the speed limit along Port-Au-Peck Avenue, particularly between Myrtle Avenue and Branchport Avenue, and also recommended evaluating the installation of a traffic signal at Myrtle Avenue. He emphasized the need for proactive measures to address increasing traffic associated with new development and to improve safety for residents, pedestrians, and children in the area.

Mr. Tom Leavy, 451 Branchport Avenue, addressed the Mayor and Council in support of traffic safety measures at the intersection of Branchport Avenue and Port-Au-Peck Avenue. Mr. Leavy stated that he has resided at the location since 2002 and has witnessed numerous accidents over the years, often contacting emergency services to respond. He noted that, similar to neighboring properties, vehicles have left the roadway and entered his yard, despite the presence of a retaining wall.

Mr. Leavy expressed support for efforts to improve safety in the area, indicating that action is necessary to address ongoing hazardous conditions. He further stated that such measures could benefit the community overall and potentially generate additional revenue through enforcement, while expressing hope that compliance would improve driver behavior.

Ordinance #1118 - Reducing Speed Limit along Port-Au-Peck Avenue from 40 MPH to 25 MPH:

RESULT:	ADOPTED (5 TO 1)
MOVER:	Councilwoman Patricia Cooper
SECONDER:	Councilman Michael O'Brien
AYES:	Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	Richard Gallo
ABSTAIN:	None

12. New Business:

- 13. Mayor Tvrdik's Report:** Mayor Tvrdik announced that the Water Project is nearing completion in the Blackberry section and that road paving will begin on various streets. He congratulated Kyle Nagy and Auggie Zilencar on achieving Eagle Scout status. The Mayor asked Chief Grimes to place the

sign board a distance away from the railroad tracks on Port-au-Peck Avenue to notify motorists of the new posted speed limit, and stated that warnings should be issued to residents to inform them of the change.

14. **Adjourn to Executive Session:** The Executive Session was tabled.

Resolution #2026-73 - Authorizing an Executive Session, February 12, 2026 - Matters Relating to the Employment Relationship- *Matters Relating to Litigation, Negotiations and the Attorney-Client Privilege-Affordable and Matters Relating to Collective Bargaining and Contract Agreements*

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15. **Return From Executive Session:**

16. **Adjournment:**

RESULT:	ADOPTED (6 TO 0)
MOVER:	Councilman Bryan Keeshen
SECONDER:	Councilwomen Kara Manna
AYES:	Richard Gallo, Bryan Keeshen, Michael O'Brien, Patricia Cooper, William Deerin, Kara Manna
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Kramer
ACTING BOROUGH CLERK