

**BOROUGH OF KEYPORT
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2025 at 7:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM

SUNSHINE LAW NOTICE: Read by Municipal Clerk

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council, Borough of Keyport, held on the above date in Borough Hall Council Chambers, Keyport, NJ, pursuant to the Annual Notice on file with the Borough Clerk forwarded to the Asbury Park Press, and Newark Star Ledger and posted on the Bulletin Board in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L.1975, c.231.

ROLL CALL:

Members present: Councilmember Brady, Councilmember Gross, Councilmember McNamara, Councilmember Merla, Councilmember Reilly, Council President Vecchio, Mayor Araneo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE

PROCLAMATION

National Child Abuse Prevention Month – read by Mayor Araneo

Woman in Leadership Certificate of Recognition from the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners presented to Mayor Araneo – read by Council President Vecchio

PRESENTATIONS

1. NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) – Keyport Fire Department

Vince Granese and Eileen Brennan from the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) presented a report on the Keyport Fire Department, which was requested by the Borough. They looked at the budget, volunteer manpower, equipment, call volume, ordinances, and the websites. The study reviewed the borough's fire services, which include five firehouses and seven fire vehicles covering 1.3 square miles. Most emergency calls are handled by the Eagle and Lincoln fire companies; some equipment is outdated. Call volume has increased significantly over the past few years, and while there are 146 volunteers, getting enough active members remains a challenge.

The DCA offered a three-phase plan to improve fire services. Phase 1 focuses on updating ordinances and creating a single administrative point of contact. Phase 2 recommends consolidating firehouses by relocating Lincoln and Eagle companies to an expanded site at 34 First Street. Phase 3 suggests securing land for a new central fire station and reducing the number of fire vehicles from seven to four, keeping essential equipment like the marine unit.

Additional recommendations include upgrading facilities to meet safety standards, improving volunteer recruitment with incentives, and establishing a clear organizational structure. Selling unused firehouses could also provide new tax revenue. The report is intended to guide Keyport in strengthening and modernizing its fire department.

2. NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA) – Garden State Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy C-PACE

Max Frank from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) gave a presentation on the Garden State C-PACE program. This is a voluntary program that allows commercial property owners, including nonprofits, to finance energy efficiency, renewable energy, and stormwater or flood management upgrades. The costs are repaid through a special charge on the property tax bill. The funding comes entirely from private lenders, and repayment can be spread over up to 30 years. The loan stays with the property if it's sold.

To use the program, a town must adopt a sample ordinance provided by the EDA. Participation is optional and towns can leave the program at any time with notice. Properties must be in a participating town and not in bankruptcy.

C-PACE benefits property owners by lowering energy costs and potentially increasing property value. Towns benefit by encouraging private investment without spending public money. In the Q&A, Councilmember McNamara asked about property resale impacts, and Mr. Frank said there's no local data yet, but nationally the program tends to raise property values. Councilmember McNamara also asked if the EDA helps connect property owners with lenders, and Mr. Frank said support is available, though formal matchmaking isn't guaranteed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

1. Ordinance No. 2025-02– Amending Borough Code of Fire Department

The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT, IN THE COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING BOROUGH CODE CHAPTER III (PUBLIC SAFETY), ARTICLE II (FIRE DEPARTMENT)**

Borough Attorney Andrew Ball commented regarding this ordinance stating that the new entity incorporation process is not yet complete. He recommended the governing body table the ordinance for public hearing at the next council meeting, April 15, 2025.

- 1a. Motion to Table until the next meeting (April 15, 2025):
MM: Brady 2nd: Reilly
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla, Reilly, Vecchio
 Nays:
 Absent:
 Abstain:

2. Ordinance No. 2025-01– Community Garden Lease

The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT, IN THE COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF LEASE OF BOROUGH PROPERTY WITH THE KEYPORT GARDEN CLUB FOR USE AS A COMMUNITY GARDEN**

- 2a. Motion to Open Public Hearing: 8:21 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: McNamara
No comments.
- 2b. Motion to Close Public Hearing: 8:22 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: McNamara
- 2c. Motion to adopt Ordinance
MM: Merla 2nd: Reilly
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla, Reilly, Vecchio
 Nays:
 Absent:
 Abstain:
- 2d. Motion authorizing the Clerk to publish the Ordinance as adopted
MM: Merla 2nd: Reilly Ayes: all present Nays:

A question was asked about the payment of bills for April 1st and an \$8500 payment for a CME feasibility study for a new building. Is this different than Settembrino? The Borough Administrator confirmed that it is different.

Councilmember McNamara – asked about the planner's proposal dated January 24th – was this an RFP? Can we get an estimated price from CME? She commented she is frustrated with non-fair and open contracts and not going out to bid.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Meeting was opened to the public for comments on **agenda items only**.
Opened: 8:38 PM Motion by Vecchio, Carried by Brady. Ayes by all present.

Robert Bergen – asked about the budget for constructing a new building and spending 60k now.

Paul McKeefry, Maple Place – asked whether the municipal building has an expected life span. Commented on hearing gossip about converting the post office into a new municipal building.

Suggests finding an alternative site since waterfront property is highly tax ratable. Asked about where and when the KBBC Italian Festival is taking place.

Mike Lane, First Street – commented that resolutions not including a statement of work are doing a disservice to the residents. Borough Hall flat roof is the reason for leaks and you can add siding to improve leaking issue.

John Merla, Broad Street – asked will the fire department ordinance be revised before next hearing and adoption. Commented on fire department budget line items and on the PPC rating being tied to homeowner’s insurance.

Elmer Graham Jr., St. Peters Place – asked about the affordable housing planner, **R2025-139**.

Closed: 8:53 PM Motion by Reilly, Carried by Brady. Ayes by all present.

Re-Opened: 8:54 PM Motion by Brady, Carried by McNamara. Ayes by all present.

John Merla, on behalf of the Italian American Club, commented about the Italian Festival event street closures and the safety of pedestrians crossing.

Jack Straub, on behalf of KBBC – commented that the event is a KBBC event, he is meeting with police, and all questions and needs will be addressed as we move forward.

Closed: 8:56 PM Motion by Reilly, Carried by Brady. Ayes by all present.

CONSENT AGENDA

(All resolutions listed hereunder will be enacted in one motion. Any person may request that an item be removed for separate consideration.)

- R2025-136 Payment of Bills Listed on the March 21, 2025 Bills List
- R2025-137 Payment of Bills Listed on the April 1, 2025 Bills List
- R2025-138 Approving Request of Our Lady of Fatima Parish to Conduct Palm Sunday and Good Friday Processions
- R2025-139 Authorizing the Award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract for Professional Planning Services – Affordable Housing Planner
- R2025-140 Authorizing Keyport Bayfront Business Cooperative (KBBB) Event – Italian Festival

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS

Motion to approve resolutions **R2025-136 through R2025-140** on the Consent Agenda.

MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio

Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 18, 2025 Regular Meeting

MM: Brady 2nd: Gross Ayes: all present Nays:

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember McNamara asked about the TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) presentation scheduled for the next evening. As a resident who lives on Broadway, one of the affected streets, she asked if all residents on Broadway were notified or just those near the proposed crosswalk. It was explained that only residents whose properties require a right of entry were specifically notified.

There was concern about the potential loss of street parking due to crosswalk installation, and whether those affected would be notified, and it was confirmed that all impacted residents would be notified once the project reaches the appropriate stage in the design process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Meeting was opened to the public for comments.

Opened: 8:59 PM Motion by Merla, Carried by Gross. Ayes by all present.

Robert Bergen – commented regarding the recent roof study and asked if the report is available.

Mike Lane – asked when will we see Trevor’s utility upgrade presentation on the website; commented it was a very good presentation on the fire department; recommends Schultz Oil site as space for fire department; Dave Gibson food truck event last year really impacted the town with the huge fence system put in. He further commented that the recent calendar distributed was a waste of money.

Vinny Kyne, East Front Street – asked if a recent incident at McDonagh’s was reported to the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), and if there will be repercussions.

Jennifer Henning – asked about reporting to the ABC. Commented regarding speeding and on line of site at W. Front and Main Street.

Elmer Graham Jr. – recommended We Care Adult Care in Middletown. Urged veterans to join the American Legion Post 23.

John Merla – addressed Mr. Kyne’s comments about the event at McDonagh’s and false rumors on social media.

Alan Hudson, Broadway – addressed Mr. Merla’s comments regarding Mr. Kyne’s comments.

Jack Straub, Main Street – Commented on speeding on W. Front Street while coming up the hill. He said the white pain has helped some. Asked about possibly having a stop on each side or a red blinking light.

Alissa Pecora, Chingarora – asked what time the event at Mcdonagh’s started the day of the incident. Asked about food truck event and search for charitable organization.

Councilmember Brady explained we are looking for non-profit to work beer garden. They must commit to provide volunteers in exchange for the donation.

Closed: 9:23 PM Motion by Reilly, Carried by Vecchio. Ayes by all present.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn

MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio Ayes: all present Nays:

Time of Adjournment: 9:23 PM