BOROUGH OF KEYPORT
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025, 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
A moment of silence was observed in memory of "Ex Chief" Betram Morris, former firefighter.

PROCLAMATION
56th Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week – read by Mayor Araneo

COMMITTEE REPORTS
(Councilmember is lead or co-lead liaison of Committees in bold)

Councilmember Brady: Environmental, Recreation/Senior Center, Municipal Alliance, Fire/First Aid/OEM, Green Team

- Environmental Commission – no quorum at the recent meeting; waiting for engineering specs replace duck bill valve; next meeting is June 23rd
- Recreation – upcoming events include the Food Truck Festival on May 31st, Pride Event at the Waterfront, and movies at dusk; job posting for camp counselors for camp in July
- MAC – no quorum at the May meeting; will host a table at the car show; National Night Out is August 5th

Councilmember Gross: KBBC, Police, Recycling, Health/Registrar/Construction/Fire Bureau/Code Enforcement/Zoning

- Read the Police Department calls for service report
- Read the construction office report.
- Read the Board of Health/Registrar treasurers report.
- KBBC – board approved St. Patrick's Parade

Councilmember McNamara: Public Works/Water-Sewer, Green Team, Cannabis, NPP, Finance/Grants, Recreation/Senior Center

- DPW – rebuilt dock at boat ramp, and the old docks to be dismantled; Street sweeping round one completed; leaf and branch pickup completed – next in September; park maintenance; fire hydrant repair at Broad and Hurley waiting for parts
- Green Team – Explore the Bayshore series recently had a Save Coastal Wildlife program about eels; next will be Erica Kline presenting about wild bee hotels at 6:30pm Wednesday May 28th; the team will also be available at the garden walk
- Cannabis – Q1 revenue is $46,436; revenue from end of April 2024 through December 2024 was $116,000

Councilmember Merla: Planning Board, Redevelopment, Public Works/Water-Sewer**,** Harbor Commission

- Planning Board – Cass Street matter postponed to June 26th
- Redevelopment – no report
- DPW doing great job around town
- KBBC – pleased it'll host the St. Patrick's Parade, updates for signs and streetscapes
- Asked that grass and leaf blowing be addressed to prevent blocking storm drains

Councilmember Reilly: Finance/Grants, **Fire/First Aid/OEM,** Police, Municipal Alliance**,** Cannabis

- Read the First Aid calls for service report
- Finance – intro budget this evening
- Read the Fire Department calls for service report; noted the 4/11 commercial building fire on Cass Street and 4/12 residential fire multiple explosions; fire department response time has decreased to an average of 4 minutes; increase to 5 members per apparatus

Council President Vecchio: Harbor Commission, NPP, Finance/Grants, Redevelopment

- NPP – four picnic tables installed with the fifth one to be installed soon
- Harbor commission – working toward finalizing the snapper contest
- US Coast Guard Auxiliary safe boating certification course will be at Airport Plaza Sat. May 31st
- Installation of Hometown Hero banners has begun; thanked KBBC for donating brackets, thanked Denise Nellis and Borough Administrator Humphrey for their assistance.

Mayor Araneo: **Library, Cultural/Civic, Mayors Wellness Campaign,** Planning Board, KBBC, Green Team

- KBBC – I Love Keyport/Taste of Keyport Day – thanked all volunteers, DPW, and police and noted that all businesses participated including the Arts Society and Garden Club. Requested the complaints regarding garbage in the business district be addressed with property maintenance, and consider placing more trash cans; finding many airplane bottles and cigarette butts and asked that businesses be notified about keeping their area clean and seeing if Clean Communities can be involved; will be hosting the St. Patrick's Parade March 21, 2026 and will be contributing $6,000 to sponsor it, and three bands are already booked; asked how to make uniform garbage cans; noted the list of events was printed before the Food Truck Festival and Italian Festival were approved.
- Library – issues with the website being addressed; summer programs being worked on; Storywalk was on the Henry Hudson Trail but the Cedar Street Park walkway may be considered; gardening has begun
- Semiquincentennial 250th planning committee will hold its first meeting on May 27th at 6:15pm
- Status of the fire hydrant at Broad and Hurley – still waiting on 2 pieces to arrive.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Meeting was opened to the public for comments on **agenda items only**.
Opened: 7:20 PM Motion by Merla, Carried by McNamara. Ayes by all present.

Dennis Fotopoulos, Beers Street – asked about the introduced budget levy increase for public purposes. Thanked Mayor and Council and the Arts Society for moving with honoring Charles Merla, and read a previously prepared resolution.

Cora, Chingarora Ave – agreed with Dennis Fotopoulos and honoring Charlie Merla. Asked about **R2025-166**; the Borough Administrator provided an explanation.

Closed: 7:27 PM Motion by McNamara, Carried by Reilly. Ayes by all present.

Councilmember McNamara – asked that the First Aid fill out the more comprehensive Use of Property form; asked who is providing the tables.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

R2025-164	Payment of Bills Listed on the May 16, 2025 Bills List
R2025-165	Payment of Bills Listed on the May 20, 2025 Bills List
R2025-166	Authorizing "Window" Contracts
R2025-167	Authorizing Extension of the Contract with Suburban Disposal, Inc. for the Provision of Solid Waste and Recyclable Materials Collection and Disposal for the Borough
R2025-168	Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Improvements to Second Street

R2025-169 Authorizing Use of Borough Property by Keyport Public School for a Class Trip
R2025-170 Approving the Request of the Keyport Fire Department's 2025 Fair Chairman for Exclusive Use of Fireman's Park for the Annual Fireman's Fair
R2025-171 Authorizing Keyport First Aid Squad to Use Veteran's Park for Annual Picnic
R2025-172 Appointment of Recreation Committee Member
R2025-173 Approving Request for Private Memorial Service and Semi-Permanent Art Installation Contingent upon Engineer Review and Approval

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS

Motion to approve resolutions **R2025-164 through R2025-173** on the Consent Agenda.
MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla*, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain: *Merla on R2025-173

PUBLIC HEARINGS/ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

1. Ordinance No. 2025-04– Municipal Alliance Committee Chairperson

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 II (ADMINISTRATION) SECTION 2-7.9 (MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE COMMITTEE)**

1a. Motion to Open Public Hearing: 7:29 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: McNamara

Elmer J. Graham, Jr. – asked for an explanation and the Borough Attorney replied that there is a State requirement to allow for a chairperson; this ordinance would add this provision to the Borough Code.

1b. Motion to Close Public Hearing: 7:31 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: Brady
1c. Motion to adopt Ordinance:
MM: Reilly 2nd: Brady
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain:
1d. Motion authorizing the Clerk to publish the Ordinance as adopted:
MM: Brady 2nd: Reilly Ayes: all present Nays:

2. Ordinance No. 2025-05– West Front Street Loading Zone – Keyport Fishery

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 7A (TRAFFIC SCHEDULES) SCHEDULE XIII (LOADING ZONES)**

2a. Motion to Open Public Hearing: 7:29 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: McNamara

Elmer J. Graham, Jr. – asked for an explanation and the Borough Attorney explained it would designate a loading zone in front of the Fishery.

2b. Motion to Close Public Hearing: 7:31 PM
MM: Vecchio 2nd: Gross
2c. Motion to adopt Ordinance:
MM: Gross 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: Gross 2nd: Brady Ayes: all present Nays:

3. Ordinance No. 2025-06– Designate Alley between Block 21.01, Lots 53 and 54 as a One-Way Street

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 7A (TRAFFIC SCHEDULES), SCHEDULE IX (ONE WAY STREETS)**

3a. Motion to Open Public Hearing: 7:35 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: Gross

Alissa Pecora, Chingarora Ave. – asked whether the alley is private property or Borough property. The Borough Attorney clarified that it is designated as an easement; this ordinance is in conjunction with next ordinance. It's a public right-of-way. She asked if there is an additional cost to taxpayers, and the attorney replied there is not as it's already an easement.

3b. Motion to Close Public Hearing: 7:37 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio

3c. Motion to adopt Ordinance:
MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain: Merla

3d. Motion authorizing the Clerk to publish the Ordinance as adopted:
MM: Reilly 2nd: Brady Ayes: all present Nays:

4. Ordinance No. 2025-07– Cross-Access Easement between 18-24 Broad Street and Borough Parking Lot

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 A CROSS-ACCESS EASEMENT WITH THE OWNER OF BLOCK 21.01, LOT 54, FOR ACCESS BETWEEN LOT 54 AND THE BOROUGH PARKING LOT LOCATED AT BLOCK 21.01, LOT 49**

4a. Motion to Open Public Hearing: 7:38 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio

Elmer J. Graham, Jr. – asked for an explanation and the Borough Attorney explained it would allow access between the parking lot and the adjacent property.

4b. Motion to Close Public Hearing: 7:39 PM
MM: Reilly 2nd: Merla

4c. Motion to adopt Ordinance:
MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain: Merla

4d. Motion authorizing the Clerk to publish the Ordinance as adopted:
MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio Ayes: all present Nays:

PRESENTATION

New Jersey Film Ready – Amy Denholtz Lewandowski, Deputy Clerk

The presentation provided an explanation of the New Jersey Film Ready program sponsored by the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission, an overview of the State's rules and regulations concerning the program, and highlighted the advantages of being certified as "Film Ready." Keyport has completed four of five required steps to becoming certified as a Film Ready community; the final step is adopting amendments to the Borough's existing film ordinance. Upon adopted of the amendments, it will take about two weeks for the commission to review and issue preliminary approval. The commission will meet in July to formally approve and certify the next cohort of Film Ready communities.

Following an opportunity to ask questions, the presentation concluded.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

1. Ordinance – Amend Film Permit Ordinance

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 CHAPTER 5 SECTIONS 14.3 AND 14.4 OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT CONCERNING FILMING MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION ACTIVITIES IN THE BOROUGH**

1a. Motion to introduce:
MM: Gross 2nd: Brady
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain:

1b. Motion authorizing the Clerk to publish the Ordinance as introduced for a public hearing:
MM: Merla 2nd: Reilly Ayes: all present Nays:

2. Ordinance – COLA Rate Ordinance

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 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)**

2a. Motion to introduce:
MM: Gross 2nd: Reilly
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain:

2b. Motion authorizing the Clerk to publish the Ordinance as introduced for a public hearing:
MM: Reilly 2nd: Merla Ayes: all present Nays:

INTRODUCTION OF 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

1. **RESOLUTION NO. 2025-174 Introducing the 2025 Municipal Budget**

The Clerk read the Budget by Title: **MUNICIPAL BUDGET OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY FOR THE YEAR 2025**

MM: Reilly 2nd: Vecchio
Roll Call: Ayes: Brady, Gross, McNamara, Merla, Reilly, Vecchio
Nays:
Absent:
Abstain:

Motion authorizing the Clerk to publish the Budget Summary as introduced for a Public Hearing to be held June 17, 2025.
MM: Brady 2nd: Merla Ayes: all present Nays:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 3, 2024 Workshop Meeting
November 15, 2024 Special Meeting
May 6, 2025 Regular Meeting
MM: Gross 2nd: Brady Ayes: all present Nays:

REPORTS

1. Municipal Clerk's Report for April 2025
2. Tax/Water/Sewer Collector's Report for April 2025
3. Board of Health Treasurer's Report for April 2025
4. Building Department Report for April 2025
5. Municipal Court Report for April 2025

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

The Borough Attorney commented regarding the subdivision application scheduled to be heard by the Keyport Unified Planning Board with regard to the creation of 22 lots along American Legion Drive; the purpose is to officially designate new boundaries. While the lots are

contiguous to existing lots, this will not result in the sale of any parcels; if the Borough decides to sell them in the future, any sale would be subject to an ordinance, including a public hearing, at a later date.

Mayor Araneo reaffirmed that the waterfront is not for sale, and dispelled social media mischaracterizations.

Councilmember McNamara asked for more information about this action as part of compliance with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Green Acres requirements.

The Borough Administrator responded that this was previously discussed in an executive session and that the proposal was also put before the Governing Body by resolution.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Meeting was opened to the public for comments.
Opened: 8:07 PM Motion by Vecchio, Carried by Merla. Ayes by all present.

Kathy Graham, Myrtle Avenue – asked about when the DEP approval was made, whether the property is still listed as Green Acres, and what State approvals were given in order to do this. She believes the State must approve this before it can go before the Planning Board, and that Green Acres property displaced must have equity property.

The Borough Attorney replied that in 2017 the DEP approved the road relocation, and determined that the exchange of park land was equivalent value. The ROSI [Recreation and Open Space Inventory] was updated in 2017 but does not reflect the current property.

Dennis Fotopoulos, Beers St – commented in regards to the old tax map of 2007 and the lots and blocks established on the new tax map on the Monmouth County website.

Mike Lane, First St – provided background information about his involvement in the changes at the Waterfront Park, noting involvement with the Army Corps of Engineers and public support, and distributed exhibits. Expressed concern that the area between the roadway and business lot boundaries is subdivided to create 22 new lots with an exact match to the business lot boundaries, appearing like a set-up.

Mike Lane requested and received permission to exceed the public comment time allotted per person.

Mike Lane forwarded an extensive memo to all council. Asked the subdivision reasoning. Suggested it should be listed relative to the application. All the lots are in the General Commercial District, so if the businesses have those lots then it could change the nature of Waterfront Park. Asked about the costs to the taxpayer to create lots and have surveys and deeds. Recommends look at Robert Bergen's document, which he provided by email. Urged the Borough to pause.

Mr. Fotopoulos offered a correction to the record – it was James Waltz – not CME – on the 2008 tax map on the county website.

Kenny Schwartz, Broad St – recommended audio/visual improvements for Council chambers, such as a second television. He owns a few of the lots being talked about, and the [new] lots appear to just be more gravel that is a liability, like if someone is going to slip on and file a lawsuit. They are just an extension of the property that isn't usable.

Patrick Maroney, Main Street – asked about video recording the meetings, and it was noted that this feature is in progress. Commented about aesthetics of Keyport.

Vinny Kyne, East Front Street – commented that Keyport is in a crossroads in terms of development. People are cynical and worried that you're going to ruin it.

Lorna Day, Jackson Street – asked council to prohibit JCP&L smart meters opt-out fee. Provided commentary and read from the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 noting that smart meters are a choice; however, JCP&L forced a cost to opt out. Supports New Jersey Assembly

Bill No.4786, which prohibits public utilities from charging opt-out fees. Believes the opt-out fee is extortion and discrimination, and the added charge is a penalty on selective customers. Referenced exhibits she assembled. Warned of smart-meter cyber threats and safety concerns.

Nicole Henn, Kearney Street – commented on increased number of vehicles accessing Kearney Street via Barnes and turning the wrong way onto Kearney, which is a one-way street. Noted that the next cross street is Elizabeth and there is no Stop sign since they are coming the wrong way. Also noticed people parking along the no-parking section of Barnes. The Police Chief will take a look. Commented on 2013 enrollment in Monmouth County annual re-assessment and asked if it is still continuing since it was supposed to be a 5-year program. Asked how to get out of that.

Mike Strollo, West Front Street – asked about the logic used concerning the 22 subdivided lots.

Elmer Graham – believes that mayor and council have taxpayer interests at heart. Commented on We Care Adult Day Care and recommends them to any caregiver of a loved one. Commented on American Legion Raritan Post 23 and encouraged any honorably discharged veteran to join.

Mayor Araneo mentioned services will be held by the American Legion on Memorial Day.

Suzanne Sokolosky, Walnut Street – commented regarding speeding vehicles between the end of Walnut to end of First Street, as well as vehicles ignoring the Stop sign at Oak Street. There are not ample sidewalks. Requesting this be addressed.

Donna Speranza, First Street – commented regarding traffic on First Street and asked what can be done to slow vehicles down – perhaps stop signs, traffic lights or speed bumps. Noted that there is no signage on the road indicating there is a playground there. Happy to be part of a committee to enforce this. Commented regarding the subdivision at Waterfront Park and expressed concern about all of the development and associated traffic and activity. Asked about the status of Cedar Street Park, which the Borough Administrator provided.

John Schneider, First Street – spoke about the 250th and noted he's on county committee and would be happy to represent Keyport; Mayor Araneo responded that Tom Gallo is Keyport's representative to the county on this. Mr. Schneider is working on a travel guide for the County Clerk about revolutionary sites and stories. He also has a book that will be out in a couple weeks.

Charles Miller, Green Grove Avenue – identified himself as a Keyport resident since 1980 who attended because he was influenced by social media about the subdivision. Asked for clarification on American Legion Drive and lot boundaries. Opposes condominiums there.

John Merla, Broad Street – commented on property issue and DEP violation at Pedersen's Marina, across from Raritan Cove; suggested if they are not going to remove it then it should be covered. Commented on the 1961 Master Plan and how property owners lost their riparian rights and property so American Legion Drive could be built; one property owner refused to give up their riparian rights to this day. Noted that on R2024-147 the Council voted unanimously to move forward with the subdivision and Councilmember McNamara was the only councilmember who asked questions.

Mike Lane – commented regarding the impact of a movie filmed in Keyport, and referenced a prior film operation that set up food service on East Front and blocked the street for days; suggested alternatives be used such as empty parking lots, the Yacht Club parking lot, or a food establishment. Regarding the subdivision, reiterated that it's Green Acres property and it can't be given to adjacent property owners. Commented on councilmembers not voting on items of personal interest.

Closed: 9:13 PM Motion by Merla, Carried by Brady. Ayes by all present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Employment Counsel Jonathan Cohen reported that Code Enforcement Officer Paul Murphy received a Rice notice and chose to have his employment matter discussed in public. Mr. Murphy was issued a written reprimand for failing to mail violation notices. Additional concerns were

raised about communication, procedure, and professionalism. The Borough Administrator investigated following reports from an employee and a resident, with input from Councilmember McNamara. Councilmember Brady reviewed the reprimand and questioned procedural clarity. Mr. Cohen reminded council that public employee discipline must follow a progressive process and advised that complaints regarding employees be directed to the Administrator and not investigated by councilmembers. Mr. Murphy stated that the actions against him were defamatory and damaging to his health and career. No public comments were made.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

R2025-175 – Authorizing a closed session in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b, to discuss personnel matters pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(8).

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-175

RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING A MEETING NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, *N.J.S.A.* 10:4-12.

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A.* 10:4-12 provides that an Executive Session, not open to the public, may be held for certain specified purposes when authorized by resolution; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Borough to discuss, in a session not open to the public, personnel matters pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(8).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and the Council of the Borough of Keyport, County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Mayor and Council assembled in public session on May 20, 2025 and determined that an Executive Session closed to the public shall be held on May 20, 2025, at approximately 7:00 P.M. at the Borough Hall located at 70 West Front Street, Keyport, New Jersey, for the discussion of matters relating to the specific items designated above.

2. This resolution will take effect immediately.

Motion to go into Closed Session at 10:11 PM.
Moved by Reilly, Carried by Brady. Ayes by all present.
Council reconvened to Open Session at 10:54 PM

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn
MM: Vecchio 2nd: Reilly Ayes: all present Nays:
Time of Adjournment: 10:54 PM