

BOROUGH OF KEYPORT
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2026, 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 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 Bergen, Councilmember Kyne, Council President McNamara, Councilmember Merla, Councilmember Pecora, Mayor Araneo; Councilmember Brady was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Araneo read a statement providing an update on the Aeromarine site which focused on the soil and groundwater quality investigation. A draft Focused Site and Investigation Report will be issued as soon as the data evaluation is complete.

Mayor Araneo thanked the Fire, First Aid, and Police departments for assisting through the power outages this past weekend.

PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Presentation for Improvements to the Keyport Senior Center

Borough Engineer Matthew Zwingraf explained the Borough intends to apply for Monmouth County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to undertake critical improvements to the Keyport Senior Center, which is located within an eligible census tract. The proposed project is designed to enhance accessibility, improve building infrastructure, and better serve the community, particularly older adults. Planned improvements include replacement of the aging HVAC system to ensure the facility can continue to function as a community cooling center, upgrades to the building's Wi-Fi and information technology infrastructure, ADA-compliant improvements to the front and rear entrances, and replacement of deteriorated perimeter fencing. The Senior Center building is more than 100 years old and, while the parking lot has recently been repaved, the facility requires additional upgrades to address aging infrastructure and improve accessibility. The total estimated project cost is approximately \$200,000, the maximum CDBG funding available. If awarded less than the maximum amount, the Borough will adjust the project scope as necessary to align with the funding received while maintaining the project's primary objectives of improving accessibility, promoting inclusion, and enhancing the facility's functionality for senior programming and emergency cooling center operations.

The Meeting was opened to the public for comments or questions at 7:17 p.m., moved by Kyne, carried by Pecora with ayes by all present

Judi Scibetti, Jackson Street – commented regarding getting first aid stretchers up and down the ramp. She said it's tight and asked if the ramp could be adjusted a little bit to make it easier.

Mr. Zwingraf said yes, we could take a look at that.

George Walling, Second Street – asked will there be automatic doors put in.

Mr. Zwingraf said if the budget allows it, that's something we could look into. However, as part of the current proposal, it would just be exterior improvements leading up to the existing doors.

Jeffrey Spangler, Second Street - asked whether the proposed project would be fully funded by the CDBG grant or whether any costs would be borne by Borough taxpayers if the grant award was less than the total project cost. He commented about the Senior Center's funding sources, including nonresident membership fees, and suggested that increasing those fees could help fund improvements not covered by the grant rather than relying on the taxpayers to cover it.

Motion to Close Public Hearing at 7:19 p.m. moved by Merla, carried by McNamara with ayes by all present

Mr. Zwingraf added that the project scope could be modified to prioritize improvements that would provide greater benefit to Senior Center users, such as installing automatic doors in lieu of certain fencing improvements.

Resolution No. 2026-202 Authorizing Preparation and Submittal of a Community Development Block Grant Funding Application for Fiscal Year 2027

MM: McNamara 2nd: Merla

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Merla, Pecora

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent: Brady

Mayor Araneo stated applicant requested to remove R2026-212 Authorizing a Cars and Social Event on American Legion Drive as they will need to change the date.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Meeting was opened to the public for comments on **agenda items only**.

Comments are limited to no more than five minutes per person.

Opened: 7:31 PM MM: Merla 2ND: Pecora

Sandy Marion, Perry Street – asked if R2026-209 regarding the moratorium on the data centers is preempting.

John Merla, Broad Street – commented regarding the P&A payment citing concerns about the Second Street project related to water ponding, depressed curbs, and a retaining wall. Asked whether we are keeping track of expenses related to Excel for the Aeromarine site work to seek reimbursement.

Jennifer Henning, Main Street – asked what is the alternative to depressed curbs to accommodate strollers and the disabled.

Elmer J. Graham, Jr., St. Peters Place – asked for explanations of R2026-204 and R2026-206 which the mayor provided.

Bill Greaux, First Street – commented regarding the \$6,000 payment to Excel and questioned the work they are doing. He thanked the mayor for action taken during the recent power outage. Mr. Greaux addressed Councilmember Bergen directly, criticizing the handling of the environmental contamination issues at the Aeromarine site and accused him of failing to act over several years. Mr. Greaux made additional comments which were characterized as threats to the councilman and he was escorted from the meeting.

Jennifer Henning, Main Street – reiterated her past comments that Councilmember Bergen was not reelected in 2011 and stated that in 2024 he ran on a platform of readdressing Aeromarine but lost the election. She referred anyone interested in his comments on the issue to view the 2024 New Jersey League of Women Voters debate. Said she's tired of people accusing him of failing on Aeromarine when he was one of two officials that addressed it.

George Walling, Second Street – stated that the gentleman who was just appointed to the Planning Board should be removed as of tonight. Asked if additional calls were received requesting to add items to the Second Street punch list. Asked if a bill was ever sent to the gentleman with the tree.

Jeffrey Spangler, Second Street – said the bills list was not posted to the website and asked about the two invoices that were posted. Commented on the Monmouth County dispatch renewal agreement expressing dissatisfaction with the current 911 service. Mr. Spangler questioned why we are waiving the fees for the Fire Department related to the Fireman's Fair when everyone else has to pay their fair share. Asked where the money goes that they make from the fair.

Donna Purcell, Maple Place – commented regarding the cost for paid firemen and first aid. Expressed incredulity for questioning the waiving of fees for the volunteer fire department.

George Walling, Second Street – questioned if the reason the fire chief's car needed repair could be due to the extra miles for which it was approved to be used.

Closed: 7:53PM MM: Merla 2ND: Pecora

Councilmember Bergen explained that the Borough could only obtain funding through the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund (HDSRF) by certifying its intent to redevelop the Aeromarine property within three years. Without a redevelopment plan, the Borough would not have been eligible for additional HDSRF funding after 2010. Redevelopment is the fastest and most reliable way to address the landfill because the Borough does not own the property, lacks the authority to clean it up directly, and does not have the financial resources to do so independently.

CONSENT AGENDA

- R2026-203 Payment of Bills Listed on the July 7, 2026 Bills List
- R2026-204 Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation-N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87 HDSRF-Aeromarine
- R2026-205 Authorizing an Electronic Tax Sale
- R2026-206 Establishing Fee for Tax Sale Mailings In lieu of Advertising Fee
- R2026-207 Authorizing the Borough of Keyport to Enter into Shared Services Agreement with the County of Monmouth and the Monmouth County Sheriff’s Office for the Provision of Emergency Dispatch Services
- R2026-208 Waiving Certain Fees for Special Duty Assignments for the Keyport Fireman’s Fair
- R2026-209 Urging the Governor and the New Jersey State Legislature to Enact a Moratorium on New Data Center Construction and Calling for a Temporary Pause on Such Applications within the Borough of Keyport
- R2026-210 Approving the Bylaws of the Monmouth Municipal Joint Insurance Fund
- R2026-211 Authorizing the Issuance of a Social Affair Permit for Keyport Fire Department Fireman’s Fair
- R2026-212 Authorizing a Cars and Social Event on American Legion Drive
- R2026-213 Authorizing the Issuance of a Social Affair Permit for Raritan Post 23-American Legion
- R2026-214 Authorizing Temporary Road Closure for the 2026 Keyport 5K Race
- R2026-215 Authorizing Request of the Keyport Fire Department to Hold the Annual September 11 Service
- R2026-216 Appointment of Keyport Bayfront Business Cooperative (KBBC) Board of Directors Member – Donna Purcell

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS

Motion to approve resolutions **R2026-203** through **R2026-216**, pull **R2026-212** on the Consent Agenda

- MM: Merla 2nd: McNamara
- Roll Call:** Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Merla, Pecora
- Nays:
- Abstain:
- Absent: Brady

PUBLIC HEARING/ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

- 1. **Ordinance No. 2026-14 – Truck Restrictions on Certain Streets**
The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **ORDINANCE ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 7 (TRAFFIC), SCHEDULE VIII (TRUCKS OVER FOUR TONS AND VEHICLES OVER THE REGISTERED GROSS WEIGHT EXCLUDED)**

- 1a. Motion to Open Public Hearing at 7:55 PM MM: Merla 2nd: Bergen

John Merla, Broad Street – asked Councilman Bergen how he plans to enforce this ordinance. Councilmember Bergen said the ordinance prohibits tractor-trailers from using Jackson and Perry to access the site. He noted that trucks currently have access to the property through another route, but they will no longer be permitted to use those roads. He also said the ordinance requires violators to appear in court. If the same driver appears before a judge multiple times, the judge could impose additional penalties beyond a fine, such as jail time or impounding the truck.

Sandy Marion, Perry Street – asked if trucks will not be allowed to go down Perry Street and if there will be police out there to enforce this ordinance. She asked if there is any way to lock the gate, install a fence. We’ve had fires and cars stolen – now it’s a hazard.

- 1b. Motion to Close Public Hearing at 7:59 PM MM: Merla 2nd: Kyne

The Borough Attorney stated her office recommended tabling the ordinance because, in its current form, it is too vague and unenforceable. She said the ordinance, as written, would affect delivery trucks

traveling on the street, including vehicles making residential deliveries such as appliances. She further noted that her office had previously recommended that the ordinance be tabled and amended, and she wanted that recommendation reflected in the record.

Council discussed the Borough Attorney's recommendation to table the ordinance for clarification, including questions about whether it could affect residential deliveries. It was explained that the ordinance applies to articulated vehicles, retains the existing exemption for pickups and deliveries, and could be amended in the future if additional clarification is needed.

1c. Motion to adopt Ordinance MM: Bergen 2nd: Kyne

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Pecora

Nays: Merla

Abstain:

Absent: Brady

2. Ordinance No. 2026-15 Vacation of a Portion of Monroe Street

The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY, VACATING A PORTION OF THE RIGHT OF WAY OF MONROE STREET WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT AS SET FORTH HEREIN**

2a. Motion to Open Public Hearing at 8:05 PM MM: Bergen 2nd: McNamara

Elmer J. Graham, Jr., St. Peters Place – asked for an explanation of the ordinance and the Borough Attorney explained that the ordinance vacates a portion of the Monroe Street right-of-way at the request of the owner of 18 Madison Street. She stated that the right-of-way does not connect to Madison Street without crossing the owner's private property and noted that it exists only on paper.

Jeffrey Spangler, Second Street – asked if this means the Borough no longer owns it and the person it's vacated to owns it.

Mayor Araneo said it goes on the tax rolls.

2b. Motion to Close Public Hearing at 8:07 MM: Merla 2nd: McNamara

2c. Motion to adopt Ordinance MM: McNamara 2nd: Bergen

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Merla, Pecora

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent: Brady

3. Ordinance No. 2026-16 Salary and Wage Ordinance

The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY, ESTABLISHING SALARIES AND WAGES FOR DESIGNATED OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT**

3a. Motion to Open Public Hearing at 8:08 PM MM: Merla 2nd: Kyne

3b. Seeing no one, Motion to Close Public Hearing at 8:08 PM MM: Merla 2nd: McNamara

3c. Motion to adopt Ordinance MM: Kyne 2nd: McNamara

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Merla, Pecora

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent: Brady

4. Ordinance No. 2026-17 Employee Background Checks

The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10, "PERSONNEL," BY CREATING NEW SECTION 10-11 "BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR BOROUGH OF KEYPORT EMPLOYEES" THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT**

4a. Motion to Open Public Hearing at 8:08 PM MM: Merla 2nd: Pecora

Elmer J. Graham, Jr., St. Peters Place – asked don't we already have background checks on our employees. The Borough Attorney explained that we are just codifying the requirement for our borough code.

4b. Motion to Close Public Hearing at 8:10 PM MM: Merla 2nd: Kyne

4c. Motion to adopt Ordinance MM: Pecora 2nd: Kyne

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Pecora
Nays: Merla
Abstain:
Absent: Brady

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

1. Ordinance – Residential Construction Site Maintenance

The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **ORDINANCE CREATING NEW CHAPTER 26, “RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION SITE MAINTENANCE” OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT**

1a. Motion to introduce: MM: Kyne 2nd: Pecora

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Merla, Pecora
Nays:
Abstain:
Absent: Brady

2. Ordinance – Multiway Stop Intersections

The Clerk read the Ordinance by Title: **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 7, “TRAFFIC” BY AMENDING CHAPTER 7A TRAFFIC SCHEDULES, SUBSECTION 7-18 “SCHEDULE XXIII MULTIWAY STOP INTERSECTIONS” OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF KEYPORT**

2a. Motion to introduce: MM: McNamara 2nd: Bergen

Roll Call: Ayes: Bergen, Kyne, McNamara, Merla, Pecora
Nays:
Abstain:
Absent: Brady

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 16, 2026 Regular Meeting

MM: McNamara 2nd: Merla Ayes: all present

OLD BUSINESS

- *Handicapped Parking Space at Therese Street Park (Merla)
- *Kearney Street (Pecora)
- *Resident Parking Permit Division & Osborn (Merla)
- *Short Term Rentals (McNamara)
- *Street Closure Fees (Brady)

Councilmember Merla would like to move forward with the handicapped parking space at Therese Street Park. However, given Chief Ferm’s absence tonight, we will revisit. Also working with Chief Ferm on the Division and Osborn resident parking permit matter. Hope to have this solved before the start of the new school year.

Councilmember Pecora commented regarding addressing the issue of wrong-way drivers on this one-way street. We’ve had the signs installed and now hope to curb the problem with targeted enforcement which could see violators incur 2 points on their driving record resulting in increased insurance costs. Additionally, you could be assessed a fine of between \$52 and \$202 plus court costs, and face 15 days in jail and license suspension.

Council President McNamara reported that she has begun reviewing potential regulations for short-term rentals, along with Councilmembers Brady and Pecora. They have reviewed ordinances from nine other municipalities to evaluate different approaches, including regulations specific to short-term rentals. The next step will be to gather input from residents and also Tony Vecchio who issues the CO’s before developing a proposed ordinance. The goal is to establish clear rules for short-term rentals, such as those listed on Airbnb and VRBO, while recognizing there are differing opinions on how they should be regulated.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Prepare Hurley Street Lot for Parking (Pecora)
- *Premo Live Burn Permit (McNamara)

Councilmember Pecora commented regarding developing a small lot at the corner of Hurley and Division for overflow parking for teachers or residents to help address parking issues near the school. It’s a small lot, not currently a parking lot, that could potentially accommodate 8 to 10 vehicles.

The discussion followed meetings with school officials, the Mayor, police, and others regarding parking issues in the area. It was also noted that additional parking for teachers may be available behind the Board of Education building, which could help reduce parking demand on nearby residential streets. It was further noted that the Hurley Street parcel already has a curb cut, which may assist with future development of the lot.

Council President McNamara addressed Premo's request for a live burn permit commenting that she submitted about a dozen questions about the event and has to receive any answers. There was not a lot of detail provided with the request.

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

The Borough Administrator provided the following report:

- Parking
 - o We are working with legal and our police department to address the local parking issues near the schools (Atlantic, Division, Osborn).
 - o We will have an ordinance for an introduction at the next meeting that will reduce the no parking zone in front of a stop sign from 50-feet to 25-feet.
 - o We are looking to restripe the parking lot at the Beach Park & Playground to allow more car parking. We will look to formalize/stripe the gravel lot across the street for boat-trailer parking.
- Redevelopment
 - o The Redevelopment Committee met with the property owners of Cass Street to review a proposed redevelopment plan for the area. There will be a presentation to the entire Council at an upcoming meeting.
- Property Maintenance Ordinance
 - o I am working with our code enforcement officers to create a new chapter in our Borough Code for the Property Maintenance Code.
- Bus Stop Ordinance
 - o We will have an ordinance ready for the next meeting that describes the new bus stops in the Borough.
- NJDOT 2024 Safe Routes to School Grant
 - o We are interviewing design consultants for this grant.
- Water & Sewer Line Upgrades
 - o We submitted an application for a \$2 million grant to design and plan upgrades to our water and sewer lines (including lead line replacement) that utilize NJ Infrastructure Bank Principal Forgiveness Program and 75% interest-free financing through NJIB.
- Street Excavation and Restoration Ordinance
 - o We are working on an ordinance that would require that any excavation or trench made in a public road to be restored full-width, curb to curb restoration. This means an area much wider than the original trench must be milled and repaved.
- Health Insurance
 - o We continue to work with our risk manager to find a cost-effective solution/alternative for employee health insurance. We expect to go out to the market within the month to solicit proposals for employee health insurance.
- Municipal Court
 - o The Vicinage approved the shared service agreement for a shared court with Aberdeen. There will be a resolution for Council at the next meeting. We expect to make the move September 1.
- Harbor Commission
 - o We will have an ordinance for introduction at the next meeting that will add a seat to the Harbor Commission designated for a member of the Keyport Yacht Club.
- Recycling Center
 - o Starting next week, the recycling center will be open one night a week until 7 p.m. This will go until September and then we will reassess.
- Personnel
 - o The Public Works Committee held interviews for the superintendent of public works position. We are looking to have a special meeting next week to interview the potential candidates.
- Resignations
 - o Shamar White resigned from the Environmental Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Meeting was opened to the public for comments.

Comments are limited to no more than five minutes per person.

Opened: 8:34 PM MM: Merla 2ND: Kyne

Sandy Marion, Perry Street – expressed concern regarding the smell and smoke created by a live burn event.

Jen Henning, Main Street – asked if the Police could take a look at the corner of E. Front and Church to determine whether a stop sign is supposed to be there. There is only a pole there now. Stated the governing body needs to address the board member making threats at a public meeting.

John Merla, Broad Street – commented on strip of grass between the curb and sidewalk on newly paved Second Street and potential property maintenance issues, including placement of garbage cans. He asked if the terms and conditions of the agreement between Keyport and Aberdeen for court services will stay the same, similar to the Middletown agreement. He commented on the grant timeline and when Excel drilled the wells.

Kathleen Bell del los Reyes, Therese Avenue – was bothered by the demeanor of the Planning Board member tonight and previous meetings, suggesting he be let go. She commented that putting a handicapped parking spot at Therese St Park would take away parking from moms who need the space to unload young children. It's something that maybe would serve somebody every once in a while as opposed to people who come all the time.

Jeffrey Spangler, Second Street – clarified that he is not against the fire department. He commented regarding a prior request to include “garbage can blocks” along Second Street and being told they were too expensive, the poor condition of the grass put in along Second Street, the paving of a residential driveway, and the timeline for completing the remaining Second Street items.

He also expressed concerns about the excavation at 144 Therese Street, including the impact on a neighboring property, whether appropriate protective measures had been taken. The Borough Administrator advised him the matter had been addressed with the contractor and that backfilling was expected to begin shortly. Mr. Spangler asked who is responsible for ensuring compliance with Planning Board resolution conditions. Councilman Bergen explained that resolution conditions are being reviewed and any concerns should be referred to the Construction Official.

George Walling, Second Street – commented on new sidewalk being put in without permits and fines not being issued. Borough Administrator explained we are working on better operating procedures for that department. Mr. Walling further commented on lack of reports from the department.

Judi Scibetti, Jackson Street – addressed Councilmember Pecora regarding parking issues in front of the First Aid building on Atlantic Street and asked if she could include this while she's working on the parking issues in that area. There are spots marked out on either side of the apron and signs for emergency vehicles only which are ignored. She asked for an update on the storm drain reporting.

Inge Westphal, Therese Avenue – said she would rather have a speed bump on Therese Avenue than a handicapped spot. She said teenagers speed up and down the street. She has never seen a car there with a handicapped sign.

Ed Carew, Broadway – presented a proposal to install a Little Free Library on Borough property near the boat ramp area. He explained that the structure, modeled after the original Keyport Library, would be built at no cost to the Borough, with materials funded by the Keyport Public Library and labor donated by him. He requested permission to install and maintain the library, or alternatively, to have Borough staff perform the installation. The proposal also included a commitment by the Keyport Public Library to monitor the book collection.

The Borough Administrator noted that the proposed location may be affected by the future pavilion project and recommended waiting until that project is complete before determining the final placement and installation. Mr. Carew acknowledged the timing and indicated the library would be ready for installation within the next few weeks.

Alan Hudson, Broadway – asked if there would be any repercussions following the incident that happened earlier and if the individual would be allowed to come back to the next council meeting. The Borough Administrator said the matter would be reviewed with the Police Chief and legal counsel to determine the appropriate outcome. Mr. Hudson echoed earlier sentiments that the individual be

removed from the Planning Board. He suggested the Mayor shut down comments when inaccurate information is being given.

Elmer J. Graham, Jr., St. Peters Place – can understand some of the frustration with the cancer situation and asked when we can expect the next update. The Mayor expects a report this week and thinks NJDEP will be coming out soon. Mr. Graham expressed his support of We Care Adult Care in Middletown and American Legion Raritan Post 23 in Keyport. He urged civility.

Donna Purcell, Maple Place – questioned if all the little signs lined up on First Street are allowed. If not, can we do something about them.

Closed: 9:12 PM MM: Merla 2ND: Pecora

The Borough Attorney read the Executive Session resolution.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

R2026-217 - Authorizing a meeting not open to the Public in accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, for the purpose of discussing attorney-client privileged matters concerning collective bargaining agreement pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b (4).

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Motion to go into Executive Session at 9:16 PM, MM: Bergen 2nd: McNamara, Ayes: all present

Motion to reconvene to Open Session at 9:20 PM, MM: McNamara 2nd: Pecora, Ayes: all present

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn at 9:21PM MM: Kyne 2nd: Pecora