



MINUTES

Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council
Thursday, August 27, 2026
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER –

This Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of River Edge was held in person at the Council Chambers located at 705 Kinderkamack Road, River Edge, NJ 07661 and virtually via Zoom on Thursday, August 27, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Mayor Thomas Papaleo.

SILENT PRAYER – FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Papaleo called for a moment of silent reflection for all in the area and world suffering from severe weather and natural disasters. Councilwoman Montisano-Koen led the flag salute.

STATEMENT –

Mayor Papaleo read the Statement of Compliance into the record as follows:

This meeting complies with the Open Public Meetings Act by notification via the August 19, 2026 Sunshine Notice containing the location, date, time, and access information to the Town News and the Record and by posting of same on the municipal bulletin board and Borough website and filing a notice of the same with the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL –

PRESENT: Councilwoman Montisano-Koen, Councilman Glass, Councilman Feffer, Mayor Papaleo

ABSENT: Council President Kinsella, Councilwoman Malellari, Councilwoman Dhariwal

ALSO

PRESENT: Borough Administrator Lissette Aportela
Borough Attorney Sabrina Santamaria, Esq.
Police Chief Michael Walker

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

On a motion by Councilwoman Montisano-Koen, seconded by Councilman Glass, and all present voting in favor, to open the floor for public comments.

No one came forward.

On a motion by Councilman Glass, seconded by Councilman Feffer, and all present voting in favor, to close the floor for public comments.

PRESENTATION

Chief Walker explained that when the Public Safety Building was built in 1986 or 1987, the original intent was to have a gym for the Police Department to use, but an office area was needed for the Recreation Department and Prosecutor. A wall was added to create this office space. Now that the Recreation Department has been relocated to Borough Hall, he is seeking to have the wall taken down and ceiling tile replaced in order to create the gym. Chief Walker advised that he has been working with the Municipal Court Administrator to find office space for the Prosecutor and accommodate safety requirements for the Judge. Chief Walker reported that there is approximately a balance of \$16,000 in capital accounts from 2021 and 2024 associated with the dispatching desk upgrades that can be applied to start the project. The PBA offered to contribute to the project and there may be equipment that can be obtained from the federal LESO program.

Chief Walker reminded the governing body that body worn cameras were purchased in 2021 using a state grant, but the devices have reached their useful life. He has conducted research on the replacement of the cameras. New technology now incorporates the ability to translate into multiple languages. The original devices were a direct purchase, but new devices are available through a 5-year lease program with Axon, which includes maintenance and upgrades after 2 ½ years. He cited the cost of approximately \$77,000 annually and recommended funding the purchase using the outside duty traffic trust fund. Chief Walker expressed confidence that the trust fund will be replenished during this time period to cover the lease payments.

Chief Walker requested that the governing body approve the purchase of additional borough-wide cameras with license plate readers to install for the perimeter of the Borough. He explained how it will be used as an investigative tool with regards to home burglaries, car thefts, and missing persons. Chief Walker noted that the Borough already has cameras throughout Borough buildings and parks. He advised the cost would be approximately \$160,000 for the purchase and installation of the cameras, with about \$20,000 to \$21,000 for the annual contract which also includes the existing cameras. The cost for the purchase and installation would also be covered by the outside duty traffic trust fund. He added that the system would be connected to the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, which handles the storage. The Police Department follows the guidelines from the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and State Attorney General.

Ms. Aportela informed the governing body that she needs to confirm with the Chief Financial Officer upon receiving the paperwork on the body worn cameras from the Police Department whether a resolution authorizing the purchase would be sufficient or if there would need to be a funding ordinance to use the outside duty trust fund. With regards to the borough-wide cameras with license plate readers, upon receiving the paperwork from the Police Department, she will coordinate with the Chief Financial Officer to create a capital funding ordinance to use the outside duty trust fund. If the governing body approves moving forward with the gym, first a resolution needs to be adopted to cancel these balances since the projects are not related; then a bond ordinance would need to be adopted to finance this purchase.

Mayor Papaleo stated that since Council President Kinsella could not attend tonight's meeting, she requested that the governing body not vote on the gym as she has additional questions. However, she has no objection regarding the proposals for body-worn cameras or borough-wide cameras.

Councilman Glass inquired about the quantity of the body-worn cameras will be purchased, if there is a trade-in value for the existing ones, and if the concerns reported in the news about Flock cameras are related to the manufacturer. Chief Walker responded that this lease program will be for 30 body worn cameras, which will be provided to all officers in the department, the SLEO III

officers in the schools, and to have a couple of extras on hand in case any are damaged. He advised that he is looking into the resale value of the current devices. The concerns recently reported about Flock cameras pertain to the length of time for the storage of records and the retrieval process. Councilman Glass concluded that he is in favor of all 3 proposals.

Councilwoman Montisano-Koen asked if a warranty on the product is included in the price for the body-worn cameras and if the borough wide cameras would continue to work in the event of a power outage, as well as the potential locations where they would be installed. Chief Walker noted that the 5-year lease includes a warranty, but after 2 ½ years the devices will be upgraded. He didn't believe the cameras would continue to work in the event of a power outage. As far as the locations are concerned, he stated that their placement will button up the borough. The cameras capture video and the plate readers capture the vehicle.

Councilman Feffer remarked that he is in favor of all 3 proposals and asked if there are guidelines in place. Chief Walker responded that only certain companies are authorized for this service as they have the requisite security clearance. Each year every officer undergoes training. The usage and retrieval of footage is governed by guidelines set forth by the State Attorney General, the Bergen County Prosecutors Office, and River Edge Police Department. He detailed how the footage is used to put together chronology as an investigational tool.

Mayor Papaleo emphasized that since the body-worn cameras and borough-wide camera program will be covered by the outside traffic duty trust fund and if the gym is approved, it will be covered by existing capital balances, these requests will not incur additional taxes.

On a motion from Councilwoman Montisano-Koen, seconded by Councilman Glass, and all present voting in favor, the Borough Administrator was authorized to coordinate with the Chief Financial Officer to put the funding mechanism in place for the purchase and installation of borough-wide cameras with license plate readers using funding from the outside traffic duty trust fund.

On a motion from Councilman Glass, seconded by Councilman Feffer, and all present voting in favor, the Borough Administrator was authorized to coordinate with the Chief Financial Officer to put the funding mechanism in place for leasing of new body-worn cameras using funding from the outside traffic duty trust fund.

Further discussion on the proposed gym will be listed on the September 10th Mayor and Council meeting agenda.

CLOSED SESSION –

On a motion from Councilman Glass, seconded by Councilwoman Montisano-Koen, and all present voting in favor, the public meeting was adjourned to the Closed Executive Session via Resolution #26-225 at 7:46 p.m.

#26-225 – Resolution To Go Into Closed Session and Exclude the Public

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-12 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

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

1. That the public shall be excluded from the August 27, 2026 special regular meeting and discussion of the hereinafter specified subject matter:
 - A. Personnel – N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(8)
 1. Police Officer Interviews
2. Formal action may/may not be taken.
3. Minutes will be kept and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then the minutes can be made public.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Glass, seconded by Councilman Feffer, and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lissette Aportela, MPA, RPPO, QPA
Borough Administrator