

Borough of Palisades Park
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council
August 25, 2026

1. MAYOR CHONG PAUL KIM WILL CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Council President Lee called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM in the absence of Mayor Kim, noting that as Council President, she would be presiding over the evening's proceedings.

2. STATEMENT

Council President Lee read the public notice statement into the record, advising that this is a Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council, and that notice was filed on January 13, 2026, with The Record and the Newark Star Ledger, both official newspapers of the Borough. Notice was also posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, on the Borough website, and a copy is preserved in the Clerk's Office.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Council President Lee led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ROLL CALL

The Borough Clerk conducted roll call.

Present: Councilman Donohue, Councilwoman Lee, Councilman Shin, Councilman Kwak

Absent: Mayor Kim, Councilman Min, Councilwoman Won-Yoon

Borough Attorney and Borough Administrator were also present

The Borough Clerk noted that Councilman Min and Councilwoman Won-Yoon had each communicated via email in advance of the meeting that they would not be in attendance..

5. PUBLIC HEARING OF 2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET AS ADVERTISED

Council President Lee opened the floor to the public for comment on the 2026 Municipal Budget, inviting residents to approach the microphone, state their name and address, and limit remarks to three minutes.

No members of the public came forward to offer comment.

Council President Lee declared the public hearing closed. A motion was made and seconded to formally close the public hearing.

Motion to close the public hearing on the 2026 Municipal Budget was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak,

Councilmember Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

Resolution 2026-253 — Resolution Approving Settlement: David Chung v. Borough of Palisades Park, Docket No. BER-L-3013-24

Prior to proceeding to the budget amendment, Council President Lee and the Borough Attorney advised that Resolution 2026-253 needed to be voted upon first, as its passage was a prerequisite for the budget amendment language. The Borough Clerk read the resolution by title: a resolution approving settlement of David Chung v. the Borough of Palisades Park, et al., Docket No. BER-L-3013-24.

Council President Lee invited the Borough Attorney to explain the resolution's necessity. The Borough Attorney noted that this is a back-pay settlement, and that the amount agreed upon is actually less than the total amount owed to the claimant. The settlement had been previously discussed and agreed upon during the June executive session.

Councilman Shin indicated some hesitation and asked to return to discussion. The Borough Attorney clarified that this is precisely the settlement reviewed during the June executive session, at which all members present had signaled their approval. He confirmed that the funds had not yet been disbursed and that the disbursement was contingent upon the passage of this resolution. Council President Lee confirmed that the settlement amount had been agreed upon in prior sessions.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-253 was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilwoman Kwak with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

6. BUDGET AMENDMENT

Resolution 2026-254 — Amendment to 2026 Municipal Budget

Council President Lee asked Roy Riggitano the Borough's CFO, who addressed the governing body to explain the purpose and substance of the proposed budget amendment.

Mr. Riggitano explained that the Borough has been under state budget review for some time, a process that began months prior to this meeting. After several rounds of review and responses, the Borough received technical comments from the state and had worked to resolve them. He described August 25th as the day the Borough had "barely pushed it across the initial line," satisfying the state's primary technical concerns.

Mr. Riggitano outlined the nature of the amendments as follows:

The most significant adjustment involves the judgment appropriation for the David Chung settlement, which was reduced from \$300,000 to \$173,000. He explained that the original budget anticipated three separate judgments. One had already been paid, one was now addressed through the just-passed Resolution 2026-253, and a third potential settlement had not yet been agreed to by both parties. Because the state requires an adjudicated or settled judgment to include an appropriation in the budget, the third item could not remain in the document. Should that matter be settled during 2026, Mr. Riggitano indicated the Borough would need to process an emergency appropriation at that time and address it in the 2027 budget.

The Borough Attorney noted for the record that both plaintiff's counsel and the Borough's defense counsel and insurance carrier had indicated their intent to bring the remaining settlement to a vote at the September meeting. Mr. Riggitano acknowledged this context but reiterated that the law requires formal adjudication or settlement before a budget appropriation can be included.

Mr. Riggitano also described several technical modifications required by the state. These included a reclassification of parking meter revenue specifically, a \$50,000 portion of the previously listed \$360,000 in revenue was shifted from one section to another to reflect the appropriate offsetting appropriation structure. He emphasized that "no change to the budget" was made in substance; it was purely a technical reallocation between line items.

Additional technical corrections were made in response to issues identified with prior financial statements and audit presentation, again resulting in no material change to the total amount to be raised by taxes.

Councilman Shin raised a question about the parking meter revenue figures, noting that the budgeted amount appeared split between multiple sections (Section A and Section E) and asked what the practical difference was. Mr. Riggitano explained that the state had flagged that a portion of the parking meter revenue was tied to an outside offsetting appropriation and therefore had to be listed separately. He confirmed that the total anticipated revenue was unchanged and that the CFO would post revenues to the appropriate section as funds are received.

Councilwoman Lee asked for confirmation of the average household's tax impact on the municipal side. Council President Lee and Mr. Riggitano confirmed that the figure remains \$565, unchanged from the originally introduced budget.

Councilman Shin also asked whether the tax rate information had been posted online. Staff indicated it was in the process of being posted.

Mr. Riggitano then clarified the procedural path forward. Because certain line item changes technically exceed the 10-percent statutory threshold that would allow simple adoption, the amendment requires advertisement before adoption. The Borough would advertise the amended budget and, following a mandatory three-day period, hold another public hearing on the amendment followed by formal adoption. He confirmed that the governing body was not adopting the budget at tonight's meeting but rather introducing the amendment.

Councilman Donohue expressed support for moving forward, noting that the substance of the budget had not changed. Councilman Shin seconded the sentiment, adding that services to residents remained a priority and expressing his agreement with moving the process forward.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-254, the Amendment to the 2026 Municipal Budget, was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Shin, with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The following minutes were presented for adoption:

- June 16, 2026 — Work Session (Revised)
- June 23, 2026 — Regular Meeting (Revised)
- June 23, 2026 — Executive Session (Original)
- July 10, 2026 — Special Meeting (Revised)
- July 21, 2026 — Work Session
- July 28, 2026 — Regular Meeting
- July 28, 2026 — Executive Session

Council President Lee invited questions or comments on the minutes. No questions were raised.

Motion to adopt the minutes as presented was made by Councilman Kwak and seconded by Councilman Donohue, Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

8. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2026-22 — Revising Existing Ordinance to Incorporate Berkley Palisades Project Included in the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

The Borough Clerk read Ordinance 2026-22 by title. Council President Lee provided context, explaining that this ordinance relates to setting standards and criteria for the development of high-density apartment buildings.

Councilman Shin asked whether this ordinance was related to assistance with a particular project. The Borough Administrator clarified that the ordinance is part of a court-ordered directive and constitutes an amendment to an existing ordinance rather than the introduction of an entirely new one, thereby incorporating the Berkley Palisades project into the existing framework as required by the court.

Motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-22 on first reading was made by Councilman Kwak and seconded by Councilman Donohue, with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

Ordinance 2026-23 — Establishment of Ordinance for Proper Management of Residential Yard Waste in the Borough of Palisades Park

Motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-23 on first reading was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

Ordinance 2026-24 — An Ordinance to Prohibit the Feeding of Unconfined Wildlife in any Public Park or on any other Property Owned or Operated by the Borough of Palisades Park

Motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-24 on first reading was made by Councilman Kwak and seconded by Councilman Donohue, with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

Ordinance 2026-25 — An Ordinance to Establish Requirements for the Proper Disposal of Pet Solid Waste in the Borough of Palisades Park

Motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-25 on first reading was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak, with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

Ordinance 2026-26 — An Ordinance to Prohibit Illicit Connections to the Municipal Separate Stormwater System(s) Operated by the Borough of Palisades Park

Motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-24 on first reading was made by Councilman Kwak and seconded by Councilman Donohue, with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

9. 2ND READING AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2026-21 — Calendar Year 2026 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Cost of Living and to Establish a Cap Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A-4-45.14)

The Borough Clerk read Ordinance 2026-21 by title. Councilman Donohue, in moving the ordinance, remarked that "for a long time, we haven't been able to do this," indicating a sense of significance in finally being positioned to act on this matter.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-21 on second reading was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

10. OFF CONSENT AGENDA

Council President Lee advised that all items listed under the Off Consent Agenda — Resolutions 2026-228 through 2026-232 — had been voted upon at the prior work session and were therefore skipped at this meeting without further action required.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

Before the vote, the Borough Attorney drew attention to Resolution 2026-243, advising that it had not been listed on the original consent agenda but was included as item number 243. He explained that Resolution 2026-243 was necessitated by events following the prior work session vote on Resolution 2026-228.

The Borough Attorney provided the following explanation. After the governing body amended Resolution 2026-228 (the Shared Service Agreement with the Board of Education) at the work session, the amended language was shared with the Board of Education's attorney. It was discovered that the Board of Education had already voted on the original language of the agreement on August 18th, without the amendment. The Board of Education was not inclined to reconvene and approve revised language particularly language that would include the Board in the "vetting process" for Special Law Enforcement Officers (SLEOs). Accordingly, at the Mayor's direction, Resolution 2026-243 was prepared to rescind the amended version (Resolution 2026-228) and restore the original language of the shared service agreement.

Concerns were raised about accountability, noting that during the interview process for the SLEO positions, Board of Education members and school staff had participated and contributed to the selection of the officers, yet the Borough bore total legal responsibility for hiring. He questioned why the Board had such involvement if the Borough held full liability.

The Borough Attorney clarified the legal framework at length. He explained that under New Jersey law, only the municipality not the Board of Education is legally authorized to hire a Special Law Enforcement Officer. That hiring can only occur after vetting by the police chief or police director. While the Board of Education may, as a courtesy, have input into the selection process, the legal and employment responsibility remains solely with the Borough. He noted that the individuals who participated in the interview panel from the school were administrators and school staff, not elected Board members, and therefore their participation did not bind the Board in any legal sense.

Councilman Donohue stated that out of nine interview panel members, approximately five or six had been from the school side, and that their vote effectively chose the officers. He characterized this as a meaningful role in hiring despite the Borough's formal legal responsibility.

The Borough Attorney reiterated the Board of Education's role was advisory and one of courtesy. The legal authority to hire rests entirely with the Borough, and the original language of the shared service agreement reflects this accurately. He further noted that the amended language which would have acknowledged the Board's participation in the vetting process was the language the Board had not approved.

The Borough Administrator explained that when the Borough's attorney shared the amended language with the Board's attorney, the Board's attorney communicated uncertainty that the Board would vote to amend the agreement, as they had already voted on the original. She noted that all parties were ultimately comfortable with the original language given the existing indemnification clause, and that the original language does not prevent the Borough from joining the Board of Education as a party in any litigation if necessary.

Council President Lee sought to draw out the practical concern, asking directly: "If somebody sues the Borough for selecting the wrong officers, is that what we're worried about?" The Borough Attorney confirmed that the legal exposure is addressed through the statutory vetting process conducted by the police department, including PTC-required review and Attorney General guidelines specifically applicable to Class III SLEOs. He also noted that because SLEOs are retired police officers with specific qualifications, the vetting process is particularly rigorous.

Councilman Shin further questioned a specific budgetary matter under the consent agenda the certification of funds under Resolution 2026-233. The Borough Attorney clarified that a resolution certifying funds simply means the funds are available to the Borough, not that they are being spent.

Councilman Shin also raised concerns about Resolution 2026-236, the Corrective Action Plan for the Year Ended December 31, 2025. He noted that many of the findings cited by the auditor were repeated items from prior years 2021, 2024, and 2025 and called on the administration to take the corrective actions seriously so that the same findings would not reappear in the 2026 audit.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda, including Resolutions 2026-233 through 2026-253, was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak with Councilmembers Donohue, Kwak, Lee, and Shin all voting in favor.

Absent: Members Min and Won Yoon

12. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Shin (DPW Liaison) reported on DPW activity for the month of July, providing the following service statistics: 22 days of street sweeping, 3 days of leaf collection, 25 additional service days of various categories, 3 days of design/replace/install work, 133 metal goods collection pickups, 79 electronic collection pickups, 19 appliance collections, and 5 additional service events — totaling 392 total work events for the month.

Councilman Shin also reported a staffing update for the DPW. Following the passage of a prior resolution, the department now has 9 full-time workers and 3 part-time workers, which he characterized as meeting the full staffing recommendation. He further highlighted ongoing development of a digital reporting platform for residents to submit service requests, noting that the framework is being developed and will be presented to the DPW supervisor and deputy supervisor for review before launch. He noted that the system requires significant debugging, but the infrastructure is being built.

Councilman Shin also noted he would be yielding to the police director regarding a policing matter he wished to raise separately.

Councilwoman Lee had no report.

Councilman Kwak provided a recreation and community events update:

- The Street Festival has been rescheduled to October 3rd (changed from the 26th), running from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM.
- A Doggy Swim Day will be held at the Borough pool on September 7th and 8th, from 4:30 to 7:00 PM. The event is open to Palisades Park residents only, and a local Broad Avenue pet store business will be participating with treats and toys for attendees' pets.
- The September 11th, 25th Anniversary Memorial will be held at the Bergen Boulevard memorial site on September 11th at 7:30 AM. Councilman Donohue noted that the Borough is working on flags and commemorative elements to honor those from Palisades Park who were lost.
- The Public Library continues to offer a wide range of programming, including outdoor book giveaways, adult calligraphy classes, Korean calligraphy, and Korean language classes. He praised Library Director Albanese and her staff for their work. He noted that some material delivery delays had affected library improvement work but that the project remains on track.
- Regarding the Orto bed (community garden program), Councilman Donohue indicated that discussions are ongoing and that the council is working to resolve outstanding matters.

13. ATTORNEY REPORT

No report

14. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

The Borough Administrator noted that the meeting's passage of Resolution 2026-249 finalizes the conversion of Roff Avenue to a two-way street. The Administrator confirmed that the barricade would be removed, that Police Director and Captain Rotundo would have Traffic Enforcement Officers (TEOs)

posted in the area, and that the DPW is prepared and ready to implement the necessary changes. The Administrator also noted that a letter to residents regarding the change would require a date correction before being distributed, due to a small delay in the resolution process. She expressed that the Borough should be "very happy to see that barricade removed."

15. POLICE REPORT

Crime Statistics: Four arrests were made during the prior month two related to domestic violence, one theft, and one additional matter.

Call Volume: As of the afternoon of August 25th, the department had responded to approximately 16,459 calls for service year-to-date, reflecting a daily average of approximately 70–73 calls. The representative noted the wide variety of call types, including motor vehicle accidents and quality-of-life complaints.

Special Law Enforcement Officers (SLEOs): The representative expressed appreciation to the governing body for hiring the three Class III Special Officers and offered brief biographical remarks about each:

- Frank DeCicco — A 26-year veteran of the Palisades Park Police Department, including service as a detective sergeant with extensive knowledge of juvenile law and the Borough's school environment.
- Anthony Kim — A 25-year veteran of the Fort Lee Police Department, a Borough resident, and a Korean speaker, which the representative characterized as a valuable community connection.
- Terry Tennant — A retired New Jersey State Trooper and member of the state police's elite polygraph unit, who grew up in Palisades Park. His brother also served as a detective sergeant in the Borough.

Lt. Beck stated that collectively, the three officers bring over 75 years of law enforcement experience to the Borough's schools, calling the combination "unheard of" and "incredible." He added a personal note: "My wife's a teacher in town, and it's a big deal for me to know that they'll be safe if I can't get over there quick enough."

National Night Out: The representative reported that National Night Out earlier in the month was "a huge success," with more than 92 percent of the police department's officers attending voluntarily. He praised the officers for being genuinely engaged with residents and children, contrasting it with prior years where officer participation was more perfunctory. He also acknowledged the Borough Administrator for significant contributions to the event, including donations and coordination.

Drive Sober — Get Pulled Over Campaign: The representative noted the ongoing DWI enforcement campaign, running through September 7th and fully funded by a grant, with no additional cost to the Borough. He highlighted that the Borough has received this grant for approximately 18–19 consecutive years, a testament to the department's consistent enforcement activity.

The Police Director Michael Gardner provided remarks:

Code Enforcement Activity: SPOs and TEOs addressed over 3,500 parking-related and code enforcement issues during the prior month. Individual officers addressed over 46 issues, utilizing a warnings-first approach before escalating to summonses.

The Director confirmed that the three Special Officers are proceeding through the necessary site orientation and are on track to be present in the schools on the first day of the school year, which was described as the goal all parties had shared.

The Director reported that two residents on Broad Avenue had submitted complaints about commercial garbage being collected at approximately 4:00 AM, disrupting sleep. He visited the businesses in question and, encountering a language barrier, enlisted the assistance of SLEO Officer Kim to translate. The business owners indicated they would contact their waste carrier to schedule pickup between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM. The Director indicated the situation would be monitored for compliance.

September 11th, 25th Anniversary: The Director noted that as a result of his prior position with the Port Authority, he has been personally invited to both a ceremony on September 8th for the placement of a new void at Ground Zero — in remembrance of a Port Authority employee who died as a direct result of

the September 11th attacks — as well as the main 25th anniversary memorial on September 11th itself. He noted that the evening ceremony concludes at nearly 10:00 PM, and that only approximately 1,000 individuals outside of government inner circles are invited. He confirmed he had accepted the invitation, calling it "an honor." Council President Lee expressed that she was grateful he would be there representing Palisades Park.

16. ENGINEERS REPORT

No engineer's report.

17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Council President Lee opened the floor to public comment. A motion was made by Councilman Donohue, seconded by Councilman Kwak and carried to open public participation.

Mr. Ernst Beerly expressed concern about the number of Borough employees who had been leaving their positions, asking: "Why are so many people leaving? Is anybody looking into why people are leaving their jobs here?" He noted that retraining takes time and that there seems to be an ongoing pattern.

The Borough Administrator responded at length. She acknowledged that some departures were retirements of long-tenured employees, noting that those individuals are "entitled to enjoy their retirement." She noted one particularly unfortunate situation where a recently retired employee was hospitalized shortly after leaving. She attributed other departures to the natural competition for talented young employees, explaining that other municipalities recruit Borough staff and that she could not fault individuals for pursuing opportunities offering more growth or higher pay. She also noted that at least one departure was entirely personal in nature. She characterized the Borough's approach as supportive: "I've always encouraged any of my employees to do things that are good for themselves...because by doing that, they're doing more for the Borough."

He also raised the issue of pothole recurrence, noting that some patches seem to fail quickly, particularly around Broad Avenue near Horizon. He asked whether there was a plan to prevent potholes from reoccurring.

The Borough Administrator responded by noting significant road improvement progress, citing Broad Avenue from Edsall to Oak Dean as a formerly severe problem area that had been properly paved through grant funding. She noted an ongoing federal grant application for Edsall Boulevard from Broad Avenue westward, one of the Borough's worst remaining streets with a potential response expected by November. She also referenced the road improvement bond that was utilized to address First, Second, Fourth, and Highland Streets, as well as a section of Fifth Street, when grant funding was not forthcoming. She also highlighted upcoming CDBG-funded work on Bellview Avenue near the new parking lot, expected in the coming spring.

Councilman Shin added to the administrator's response, noting that the volume of road improvements had increased substantially compared to prior years from roughly two or three repaired streets annually to five, six, or seven. He also described the Borough's transition from a cold-patch approach to a more durable hot-patch/hard-patch system, which he expects will meaningfully reduce recurrence. He noted that the new resident-facing digital reporting platform will also allow residents to flag potholes directly, improving response times.

Mr. Beerly expressed appreciation and suggested that sealcoating could serve as a preventive measure, noting that some municipalities apply it broadly to extend road life.

Motion to close public participation was made by Councilman Kwak and seconded by Councilman. The motion carried unanimously.

18. EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held.

19. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Kwak and seconded by Councilman Donohue. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Laura Borchers RMC, CMR
Interim Borough Clerk.

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY OF MINUTES APPROVED AT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING ON
SEPTEMBER 29, 2026.

Attest:


Laura Borchers, RMC, CMR
Borough Clerk


Chong Paul Kim
Mayor