

Borough of Palisades Park
Work Session of Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2026

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

Mayor Chong Paul Kim called the Work Session of the Mayor and Council to order at 6:00 PM.

2. STATEMENT

The Borough Clerk read the required public notice statement into the record, confirming that notice of the Work Session 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 was preserved in the Clerk's Office.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council President Sang Lee.

4. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Chong Paul Kim, Councilman Donohue, Councilman Kwak, Councilwoman Lee, Councilman Shin, Councilwoman Won-Yoon, Borough Attorney, Borough Administrator

Absent: Councilman Min

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- April 28, 2026 — Regular Meeting (Revised)
- June 16, 2026 — Executive Session (Summarized)
- August 18, 2026 — Work Session
- August 25, 2026 — Regular Meeting

Mayor Kim stated the Borough Clerk's efforts to ensure the meeting minutes were properly recorded and recommended that Council review them for adoption at the next regular meeting.

Councilman Shin expressed concern regarding the late distribution of meeting packets and supporting documents. The Clerk explained that backup materials had been emailed Friday, with two items sent separately that morning. Councilman Shin indicated he had not received the initial email, the Clerk stated could've been a possible IT issue.

Mayor Kim clarified that no action would be taken that evening and that Council members would have the week to review the minutes.

6. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2026-27 — An Ordinance Regarding "Officers and Employees of the Borough of Palisades Park not covered by Collective Bargaining, Benefits Section I – Benefits"

The Borough Administrator and Borough Attorney discussed Ordinance 2026-27, a comprehensive update to the benefits ordinance for non-collective bargaining employees, replacing the outdated 2021 ordinance. The revisions are intended to align benefits with current collective bargaining standards, particularly health benefit contributions and leave payouts, to reduce costs.

The Borough Attorney explained that employees hired before January 1, 2017, retain certain existing benefits, while those hired on or after that date are subject to reduced benefits. Longevity pay will be capped at 10% for eligible employees and eliminated for employees hired after the cutoff date. Current Chapter 78 health benefit contribution requirements remain unchanged, although health plan provisions are being revised.

Councilman Shin raised concerns about inconsistencies between the ordinance and the Borough's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual adopted in January 2025. The Borough Attorney recommended developing a Borough-specific manual for 2027 to ensure consistency with applicable ordinances and agreements.

The Mayor and Council also discussed reducing the number of paid holidays to align more closely with the county schedule, paying close attention to Election Day, Christmas Eve, and Thanksgiving. Council members were asked to review the ordinance and submit comments before the next regular meeting, at which time it would be adopted.

Ordinance 2026-28 — Amending Chapter 247: "Sewers" of the Code of Palisades Park

The Borough Administrator stated Ordinance 2026-28, describing it as a fully corrected and updated sewer ordinance that had been comprehensively reviewed with both the Borough's Construction Official and Town Engineer. She stated that all previously identified deficiencies and omissions from the prior version of the sewer code had been addressed, the update is intended to bring the ordinance into compliance with current state law and regulations and to incorporate procedural requirements for new construction including escrow requirements and a formal process for obtaining approvals prior to the commencement of construction work. Council members were asked to review and provide feedback prior to formal introduction at the next meeting.

Ordinance 2026-29 — An Ordinance of the Borough of Palisades Park entitled "Stormwater" Ordinance

The Borough Administrator stated Ordinance 2026-29, a comprehensive stormwater ordinance intended to bring the Borough into compliance with DEP and MS4 stormwater regulations. She reported that engineering work was underway on stormwater mapping and other required components, with the Borough nearing readiness for submission to the County. The ordinance complements previously introduced ordinances addressing specific stormwater requirements. All relevant parties had provided input, and Council members were asked to review the ordinance and submit any questions before the next meeting.

7. 2ND READING OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2026-22 — Revising existing Ordinance to incorporate Berkley Palisades Project included in the Housing Element and Fairshare Plan

The Borough Attorney presented Ordinance 2026-22, explaining that it addresses the "Trio Properties" a site whose affordable housing approval dates to the second round of litigation and had never been constructed. He indicated that this amendment is being brought forward in the context of the fourth round of affordable housing obligations. The two principal changes in the ordinance are: first, a change in the building designation from mid-rise to high-rise; and second, an increase in units from 64 to not to exceed 180 units. He explained that the affordable housing set-aside obligation would be calculated on the incremental difference of 116 units (180 minus the original 64), and that the ordinance is compliant with all applicable affordable housing requirements. Councilman Donohue confirmed that the high-rise designation applies exclusively to the Berkeley Palisades application. Mayor Kim noted that council members retain the opportunity to raise further questions regarding this ordinance during the week, including in consultation with special affordable housing counsel.

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

Mayor Kim noted that this ordinance had been discussed extensively at prior sessions. No additional questions were raised by council members.

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

Councilwoman Won Yoon raised a question about how this ordinance would be enforced, expressing some skepticism about the practicality of active enforcement. The Borough Administrator responded that most municipalities handle such matters reactively relying on reports from residents rather than through any dedicated enforcement presence. She noted that feeding stray cats, for example, is most reported to and handled by the health department. She acknowledged that no town could realistically stake out locations to catch violations, and that the ordinance functions primarily as a regulatory baseline. She also stated that once adopted, this ordinance and the related stormwater ordinances must be posted to the Borough website, as required by the DEP under the MS4 program.

Ordinance 2026-25 — An Ordinance to establish Requirements for the proper disposal of Pet Solid Waste in the Borough of Palisades Park

Mayor Kim noted the relationship between Ordinances 2026-23, 2026-24, and 2026-25, explaining that Ordinance 2026-24 addresses the feeding of wildlife, while 2026-25 addresses the resulting waste.

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

Mayor Kim emphasized the importance of preventing unauthorized private connections to the Borough's public stormwater system, citing instances discovered during road construction. The Borough Administrator explained that the ordinance would require the Construction Official to verify that stormwater connections are properly addressed in

construction plans. She also noted that improperly directed pipes on Broad Avenue would be corrected during ongoing construction.

The ordinance establishes penalties of \$500 for a first offense, \$1,500 for a second offense, and \$3,000 for a third and subsequent offenses. Although Mayor Kim indicated that higher penalties could be considered, he noted that the current amounts are consistent with those of surrounding municipalities and directed that the ordinance proceed as presented, with any future increases addressed by amendment.

8. OFF CONSENT AGENDA (For Approval at the Work Session)

The Borough Clerk explained that both liquor license transfer applications had been submitted in May 2026 and had remained pending for some time. She noted she had anticipated these would be addressed at a regular meeting that was originally scheduled for the prior week, but there was an error in the advertisement for the meeting. She stated that the applicants were eager to proceed with their business operations and that she had committed to resolution by September 22nd.

Resolution 2026-256, the Borough Clerk explained that the license at 400 Broad Avenue previously held by the original owner was being transferred via a person-to-person transfer to Broad Banner LLC.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-256, was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak.

Roll Call: Councilman Donohue – Yes; Councilman Kwak – Yes; Councilwoman Lee – Yes; Councilman Shin – Yes; Councilwoman Won-Yoon – Yes. Motion carried.

Absent: Councilman Min.

Resolution 2026-257, the license previously held by Grace LLC at 520 Bergen Boulevard was being transferred via a person-to-person transfer to Akshar LLC.

Mayor Kim acknowledged the unusual nature of conducting a vote at a work session, but commented the special circumstances and the Borough Clerk's commitments to the applicants. He confirmed that all council members present agreed and that all documentation was confirmed to be in order by the Borough Clerk.

Councilman Kwak noted a general preference for ensuring such matters are brought through regular session, though he acknowledged the practical necessity in this instance.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-257, was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak.

Roll Call: Councilman Donohue – Yes; Councilman Kwak – Yes; Councilwoman Lee – Yes; Councilman Shin – Yes; Councilwoman Won-Yoon – Yes. Motion carried.

Absent: Councilman Min

Mayor Kim requested that the Borough Clerk note in the regular meeting agenda that these resolutions were approved at the Work Session.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (DISCUSSION)

The Borough Clerk read through all items on the consent agenda for the purpose of discussion in advance of formal adoption at the next regular meeting.

The Borough Administrator made some corrections on Resolution 2026-261, noting that the backup documentation correctly reflects the work performed on Broad Avenue, but that the resolution itself incorrectly referenced "Commercial Avenue." She also noted that the vendor name on the resolution which appeared as Cifelli and Son General Contracting was erroneous and should instead read "4 Clean Up," the correct contractor name. She confirmed that all underlying backup documentation is accurate and that the corrections would be made to the resolution prior to the vote at the next meeting.

Mayor Kim also noted that the printed breakdown of quantities in the backup documentation was too small to be legible and directed staff to ensure future submissions include enlarged, readable copies of quantity breakdowns.

Resolution 2026-259, the Borough Administrator clarified that this payment to Colliers Engineering for construction services on the Commercial Avenue project reflects the second phase of their engagement, the first having covered design. She noted that the construction itself has been delayed until spring due to PSE&G completing gas line replacement work at 74 connection points along Commercial Avenue. The Borough determined it was preferable to allow adequate settlement time before paving.

Resolution 2026-265, the Borough Attorney provided an update on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Palisades Park PBA, advising that an agreement in principle had been reached with the PBA but that the written MOU document had not yet been finalized due to time constraints that day. He anticipated distributing the document to council members by the following evening, allowing sufficient time for review prior to the next regular meeting.

Councilman Donohue asked whether the salary guide included longevity provisions. The Borough Attorney confirmed that longevity is eliminated for new officers, with grandfathered employees retaining applicable benefits consistent with the January 1, 2017 cutoff. He also explained that the agreement establishes structured salary differentials for sergeants, lieutenants, and captains to provide a more consistent pay progression upon promotion. Councilwoman Lee requested a salary guide showing the step calculations. The Borough Attorney agreed to provide detailed calculations in the MOU to be distributed the following evening.

Resolution 2026-265, Councilwoman Lee noted she wished to add a resolution regarding a workplace policy to the consent agenda. The Borough Attorney indicated that matter would be discussed in executive session.

Tax Collector and Treasurer Michael Apicella presented Resolutions 2026-266 and 2026-267 concerning Tax lien redemptions, noting that one property at 462 11th Street was at risk of foreclosure before the owner redeemed the Lien. He explained that the redemption amounts were substantial due to the age of the Liens, with one totaling approximately \$403,000.

Mr. Apicella also explained that Resolutions 2026-268 through 2026-270 authorize refunds for homeowner overpayments, commonly resulting from duplicate payments by homeowners and mortgage servicers or taxes paid at closing that were not owed. Mayor Kim thanked Mr. Apicella and noted that the resolutions address outstanding financial obligations being resolved by the current administration.

10. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Kwak presented Pave Pulse, a beta-testing application that allows residents to report infrastructure issues, including potholes, sidewalk damage, and streetlight outages, directly to the Department of Public Works. Residents can submit photographs, categorize issues, and receive email status updates. The system also generates daily reports to track submissions and responses.

Mayor Kim praised the initiative and directed that development continue in coordination with the Borough Administrator, DPW, and Council Chair, with a goal of full operational readiness by Christmas. He also requested that the application be accessible through the Borough's official website. The Borough Administrator noted that additional improvements were needed to simplify the user interface.

11. ATTORNEY REPORT

The Borough Attorney had no report.

12. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Borough Administrator Stern provided a calendar notice regarding the November meeting schedule, stating that the standard meeting dates required rescheduling due to holidays and the League Convention. She stated that the November Work Session would be held on Monday, November 9th, and the November Regular Meeting on Tuesday, November 24th. She asked the Borough Clerk to advertise these dates as soon as possible to avoid the type of scheduling error that had affected the current meeting cycle.

13. POLICE REPORT

Deferred to the next regular meeting.

14. ENGINEERS REPORT

No report was provided.

15. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Motion to open the meeting to public participation was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak.

Mayor Kim invited members of the public to address the governing body, allowing three minutes per speaker.

Ernst Beerly raised concerns about road repairs being undone shortly after completion, specifically the recurring pattern of a road being paved, only for utility companies to subsequently excavate it. The Borough Administrator responded that the Borough has worked closely with PSE&G and other utilities on all active road projects to coordinate sequencing. She noted there is a five-year

moratorium preventing utilities from disturbing a newly paved road except in emergencies. She cited Commercial Avenue as an example where the paving schedule was adjusted to accommodate PSE&G's gas line replacement of 82 connections before paving begins in the spring, ensuring the roadway would not need to be cut again.

Mr. Beerly also asked whether the stormwater flooding issues related to undersized pipes. Mayor Kim provided an extensive explanation, noting that historically there were no regulatory requirements compelling developers to install appropriately sized stormwater infrastructure as a condition of development, resulting in undersized systems throughout the Borough. He stated the administration was working to create an ordinance requiring developers to install or fund stormwater infrastructure if adequate capacity does not exist within a specified distance of a proposed project. He noted the Borough was also moving forward with a planned upgrade to the Grand Avenue stormwater main currently six inches in diameter and widely believed to be insufficient to twelve inches, funded in part by a \$1 million grant secured through Congressman Josh Gottheimer. He anticipated construction on that project would begin the following year.

A resident, speaking through Councilman Shin who translated some of the remarks, described a recurring problem with their parked vehicle being struck by other vehicles at their residential location on Palisades Boulevard on multiple occasions. The resident had relocated the vehicle to Glen Avenue, where it was subsequently struck again. The resident sought guidance and assistance, with Councilman Shin noting that the Police Chief had suggested some form of median or traffic calming measure. The resident also described the expense of installing private security cameras and expressed concern about the lack of streetlight near their property.

Mayor Kim responded that the Borough could not provide private security but committed to having the Borough Administrator conduct a site visit to evaluate the location for infrastructure deficiencies, including possible streetlight installation or traffic engineering review. He noted that if the Administrator was unable to determine the cause of the recurring incidents, a traffic engineer would be engaged. The resident mentioned that the difficulty was compounded by a lack of on-site parking due to their duplex configuration. Mayor Kim asked the Borough Administrator to follow up accordingly.

Motion to close public participation was made by Councilman Kwak and seconded by Councilman Donohue.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Borough Attorney indicated that the governing body would convene in executive session to discuss two matters: (1) a workplace policy matter raised by Councilwoman Lee, and (2) the terms of the Tamares redevelopment agreement (Resolution 2026-271).

The governing body convened in executive session at 7:15 PM and returned to the Work Session at 8:43PM.

No formal Action was taken after reconvening to open work session

17. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the Work Session was made by Councilman Donohue and seconded by Councilman Kwak. All in favor.

The Work Session adjourned at 8:50 PM.

CERTIFIED TO BE A COPY OF AN ORDINANCE INTRODUCED AT A MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 27, 2026.

Laura Borchers, RMC, CMR
Interim Borough Clerk.