

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

JANUARY 24, 2013

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Mobus called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and a MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD

ROLL CALL

Pote [P] Black [P] Franklin [A] Joren [P] Nehls [P] Cassidy [P]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, police Chief Tim Wenzel, Engineer Tom Herits, Chief Finance Officer Bill Hance, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 75 members of the public present.

APPOINTMENTS TO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Council President Pote moved the following Resolution:

R1:01/24/13 Appointment of Police Officers- Ryan S. Dunne, Andrew Pero and Robert D. Hofmann

Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Pote, Black, Joren, Nehls, Cassidy, "aye".

Councilman Pote gave a brief synopsis of the background of each appointee prior to their coming to the Watchung Police Department.

Mayor Mobus administered the Oath of Office to Ryan S. Dunne as his mother Diane held the Bible and his father Jeff and cousin David stood by his side.

Mayor Mobus administered the Oath of Office to Andred Pero as his mother Patty held the Bible and his father Jim stood by his side.

Mayor Mobus administered the Oath of Office to Robert D. Hofmann as his fiancé Rachel held the Bible and his mother Catherine stood by his side.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

- 1. Administration & Finance:** In the absence of Councilman Franklin Council President Pote read an article published in the January 13, 2013 Sunday Star Ledger on the front and second page dealing with the percentages of change in the real estate taxes in various towns for the year 2012. The changes were used for all purposes, municipal, county, schools, etc. Using this type of calculation does not give a true picture because it uses only one particular value. Property values in Watchung vary widely and one quarter of homes are re-evaluated each year. In a slow economy commercial properties may loose values putting a heavier burden on residential properties. A accurate method would be to use the increase in the total levy of 2012 as a percentage of the 2011 levy. Using this method the tax increase for all purposes in Watchung would be 3.32% far lower than the 4.1% published in the Star Ledger. Also using this method for the Municipal purposes in Watchung would be 2.16%. Since municipalities do not have any control over fluctuating assessments the true picture of responsibility and accountability of keeping taxes stable would come from using the percentage of change in the total levy.
- 2. Police:** Council President Pote reported that the Court has changed their dates to the first and third Wednesday of the month at 9:00 A.M. This schedule will take effect on February 1, 2013, with Judge Richardson presiding.
- 3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds:** Councilman Nehls reported that the Public Works Department had to apply to the DEP for TDMA's (temporary debris management areas) and both sites have been approved. The Department fielded 65 service calls and processed 111 work orders. There have been five snow events since November 25th and 380 tons of salt has been used to date. 105 Glen Eagles Drive has been milled to alleviate a drainage issue, with all the work being done by the Public Works Department. On December 5th Solitude removed the aerators from both lakes and they will clean and store them for the winter and reinstall them in April when

the Borough contacts them. Cleanup from Super Storm Sandy started January 2nd and to date approximately 85% of Borough streets are completed and Christmas tree pickup will continue until the end of January. The Public Works Department has been working late and on Saturdays to complete this massive cleanup. Leaf bags have been picked up and disposal of the bags and dumpsters has been completed by the Plainfield Municipal Utility Authority. This was part of a shared services program which reduced the cost of the dumpsters. The Borough had a roofing contractor come and repair the roof over the Court area. The quarterly air filter exchange has been completed and the springs on the overhead door at the east end firehouse have been replaced.

Councilman Nehls also reported he attended his first Planning Board meeting on January 15th. They held election of officers with Donald Speeney as Chairman, Diana Beck-Clemens as Secretary. The board also appointed the attorney, engineer and clerk. Various resolutions were moved naming professionals, newspapers and meeting dates, committees were set up and he was volunteered to be liaison to the County Planning Board along with Mr. Ellis and Mr. Speeney.

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – Councilwoman Cassidy reported the committee did not meet in January and they have a meeting scheduled for February 18th.

Environmental – Councilwoman Cassidy reported a meeting was held on January 21st, however, she came to Borough Hall on the 22nd which was the date on the calendar. She had not been informed of the date change. She did get in touch with the Chair person Jean Forlano who sent her two items that had been discussed at the meeting. The first one was to research other Municipalities to see what Ordinances they might have regarding the size of a home vs the lot size which Laws and Ordinances has been looking at in the past. The Committee is also looking into increasing points to bring us to the next level for the sustainable New Jersey. Councilwoman Cassidy will contact Councilman Franklin who was on this committee last year to see where he left off. There was also a grant from opportunity from NJ American Water and said she would forward it to CFO Bill Hance and the appropriate departments.

Recreation – Council President Pote reported there was a meeting held last week. They discussed the possibility of the Mayor and Council to consider changing the date for the Memorial Day Picnic preferably to the week before. It has been difficult to get members of the Recreation Commission to help run the event and also to have Council Members attend when the picnic has been held on Memorial Day weekend. Councilwoman Joren agreed with this suggestion, commission members should be there to help with this event, there is a lot of physical work to do. It should not fall on one or two members to run the entire event. All Council members agree with allowing the Commission to make the date change and recommend it should be the weekend before the Memorial Day weekend but suggested the Commission check to see if there is any other event being held on the same date. The Commission also discussed the Summer Program and the possibility of holding the program at the Brook Hill Swim Club. Mayor Mobus said would support this move if Brook Hill Swim Club were to reduce the fee charged to the Borough. He said there are enough children in town who do not go away for the summer that would benefit by a summer program. Council President Pote said the Commission is considering a fee of \$200 per child for the program. Councilwoman Cassidy said she is concerned with the issue of liability to the Borough and contracting with a third party, and noted going from a playground to a pool facility there are many more distractions. She also feels the cost is also a great concern. Councilwoman Joren agreed with Councilwoman Cassidy and questioned who would have the ultimate responsibility for the safety of the children? Would the lifeguards be responsible or the Borough summer program counselors who would then be required to have lifeguard training. She said the cost is the main concern, there should be no cost to the Borough. Councilman Nehls said he does not like the idea of subsidizing a private enterprise and suggested parents could take their children directly to Brook Hill if they chose to. He requested more information and said this program must be neutral. Council President Pote said the Recreation Commission wanted to offer a better program to the community. Mayor Mobus suggested Council President Pote bring this discussion back to the Commission and ask them for more information.

Historical – Council President Pote reported the Historical Committee did not meet this month.

Board of Health – Councilman Black reported the Board of Health met on January 16th. He said the Board would like to know if traffic cameras are a Health Department issue or traffic issue. All Council members agreed it was a traffic issue. Councilwoman Joren stated there was an error in the Board of Health minutes which stated there was a traffic camera already in Watchung but she reported the Borough does not have any traffic cameras. She requested the minutes be amended. Councilman Black also reported the Board would like the Laws and Ordinance Committee to revisit the possibility of a smoking ordinance to cover no smoking on public lands. Council President Pote said the Laws and Ordinance Committee felt this would be difficult to enforce. Mayor Mobus said there are Police at the football fields and they do enforce there. The Laws and Ordinance Committee will review. The Commission also discussed the Grease Trap

Ordinance which falls under a Borough Ordinance. The Health Department has to be more vigilant enforcing the requirements of this ordinance. Food establishments must submit to the Health Department a minimum of three inspection reports annually from a qualified company each year. The Board of Health Secretary has sent all food establishments a letter stating this requirement and when the reports are due along with a copy of the Ordinance. These reports will be due the months of April, August, and December each year. Councilman Nehls stated that our Environmental Health Specialist does this more routinely when she inspects the establishments. He feels the enforcement of this is with Kevin Sumner and Robyn Key. At the Board of Health meeting, Robyn Key, our Health Specialist, said she is not qualified to know if a grease trap is working properly she only checks to see one is installed. Mr. Cruz feels that when the Health Department is doing their inspections the owner can show them where the grease trap is and operate it to prove it is in working order. He does not feel you have to be an expert to determine if the trap is working properly. Councilman Black will take this discussion back to the Board of Health at the next meeting.

5. **Fire:** Councilman Black reported there was a meeting and they were working on the budget.

Rescue Squad: Councilman Black gave a brief report of year end totals. He said there were 424 responses by all volunteers. They installed all the officers. Senior Citizen Claire Ohl has done the entire Rescue Squad Budget herself. He said she is amazing!

6. **Laws/Ordinances:** Councilwoman Joren reported there will be a meeting on February 8th. She then spoke about the Technology Review Committee. There have been several meetings with the Borough Administrator and Clerk to discuss where to start to update the Borough technology. After Super Storm Sandy it was evident we needed to improve our communication system. She asked Clerk Michelle DeRocco to reach out to neighboring communities asking them who did their webpage, were they satisfied with their services, do they have a Facebook page or a twitter account and do they have a Public Information Officer. Michelle did receive several responses and they are in the process of reviewing them. The next step will be for Michelle to contact some of the company websites to see what they have to offer. Councilwoman Joren also reported they are moving forward with a Facebook page and hope to have it up and running by mid February. She also had suggested the use of our radio station and would like some input from the Council. Clerk Michelle DeRocco is now able to change information on the Radio Station, this will be an easy way to get information out to residents and she is suggesting it be updated weekly with "pops" possibly include in town traffic issues, or any information that could impact the daily lives of our residents, and maybe a schedule of committee meetings, etc. Councilwoman Joren spoke about the Register Ready program which is through the State OEM. She is not sure of the exact procedure to sign up for this program. Mayor Mobus has contacted Denise Wilson of the Rescue Squad and she has agreed to work on this. Councilwoman Joren stated she received a memo from Bill Hance that we did get FIOS at the Fire House and Borough Hall and will be going down to the Police Station and Borough DPW shortly. Mayor Mobus questioned whether it was still a consideration to split the committee up into two separate committees one would be communications and the second would be technology. Councilwoman Joren said they will be doing this.

Council President Pote reported he has put together an updated spread sheet to include all actions that came about after the "after actions" review which was held on December 10th for Super Storm Sandy. Linda Monetti has sent copies out to all of the participants who were part of that. We have made a first attempt to assign primary ownership for these actions but feel free to reassign as needed. Mayor Mobus said these committees could be broken down into smaller committees.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. **Engineer:** Engineer Tom Herits reported there was a pre-construction meeting held Wednesday to discuss Phase II of the Mountain Boulevard Project. The water company is anticipating a start date of February 4th between the hours of 8:45 AM – 4:00 PM. They will start at Wildwood Terrace and end at Wetumka Lane and the water company should have their portion done in approximately 2 months. The road contractor is not ready to start, there are poles to be relocated and a few other things. Once they start it should be completed by sometime in November. It is anticipated there will be two lanes open during bridge construction. Mayor Mobus stated work crews should be off the road no later than 4:00 PM because there have been some traffic problems when they were still there past that time.
8. **Police Chief:** No report was presented
9. **Fire Department:** Chief Carlucci gave a year end report for 2012. There were 373 calls with a total man hours of 2,909.37 and they held 38 drills and 16 work nights. Equipment upgrades included new gear racks in the apparatus room, two new siren receivers at the main and east end fire houses. Both of these upgrades were installed by members of the department at no cost to the Borough. Installation of Knox Box key secure system in three of the apparatus was done with monies from fire prevention WIP and a computer aided hydrant mapping system was installed in two apparatus and the Chief's car which was partially funded by the active fire company. There was a complete computer system upgrade in the fire house. During Super Storm Sandy there were 106 calls from October 29-November 13. Members handed out to residents

1176 MREs (meals ready to eat), and 1464 bottles of water. Members also assisted FEMA with escorts around town, a space for them to work, rest, meals, transportation and any other information they requested to help residents. The Fire House was manned 24/7 throughout that entire time and they had an engine company at the east end fire house at the height of the storm – two four hour shifts – to handle calls on the east side of town, route 22 and 78. They did have a flood plan but it was not needed. The Fire Department also assisted the Public Works Department with clearing trees from roads. Chief Carlucci thanked Assistant Chief Pete Martino, all his officers, Rosebud Martino who kept everyone well fed and assisted in answering calls, and his entire membership for all the hard work during the storm and the entire year, Brian Greves, Steve Speeney, Ryan Valentino, Mario Abbruzzese, Tim Erber, Pete Martino, Rosebud Martin (night calls). He thanked the Mayor and Council for their support, Police Chief Wenzel, Lieutenant Cina and the entire Police Department and dispatchers, Adam Wexler and the Rescue Squad rehab at fire calls, Robert Burns and the Public Works Department, and a special thanks to Maria Fittapaldi for all her hard work and assistance to him, and of course his wife.

10. **Rescue Squad** : No report was presented

11. **Attorney** : No report was presented

12. **Clerk**: Mrs. DeRocco announced February 1st, 8:30 AM the Borough will be celebrating “Go Red For Women” day. This is our fifth or sixth year for this event. It is a day to bring awareness to heart disease. This year we are expanding our event a little bit. Mrs. Monetti is chairing the event and has invited a guest speaker to our “Go Red Day” and Dennis Kelly of the Echoes will speak a little bit about his heart condition and maybe enlighten us on things we can do to be more aware. This event began about 5 years ago with the request for a small donation to the Heart Association in exchange for allowing Borough employees to wear jeans for the day. Anyone wishing to participate should be at Borough Hall, Friday, Feb. 1st by 8:30 AM and wear red. We have already received a generous donation from the Watchung PBA and we are grateful for that. Mayor Mobus said he looks forward to this event every year.

13. **Administrator**: Mr. Tom Atkins reported he will be meeting with Borough CFO Bill Hance to go over the budget submissions and requests and the challenges will be huge but they will not be insurmountable. The past several months we have been dealing with the aftermath of Sandy but top priority now will be the Budget. For the second part of the budget he has been approached by several Council members, Fire Chief Carlucci, and Captain Adam Wexler of the Rescue Squad and several others to gather some of our directors together in the public safety realm to talk about radio communications. He needs to work with Chief Carlucci, Bill Hance and the others so we can get a recommended plan to the Council on the communications improvements that need to be made and where to start. He sees all Council Members being involved in some way.

=====

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

=====

=====

NEW BUSINESS

=====

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda items listed below were unanimously accepted, following a motion by Councilman Pote, a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call as follows: Pote, Black, Joren, Nehls, Cassidy, “aye”.

Approval of the following Council minutes:

- January 1, 2013
- January 10, 2013

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

- Finance Department Revenue Report – November, December, 2012
- Tax Collector’s Report – December, 2012
- Board of Health Minutes – December, 2012
- Historical Committee Minutes – December, 2012

Councilwoman Joren requested a correction be made to the December 2012 Board of Health Minutes. It was stated there was a red light camera in Watchung – there are none in the Borough.

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #3 - Fred Corigliano 1/11/13 Letter thanking Mayor Mobus for offering assistance in his proposed Christmas celebration for Sandy victims of Union Beach c: M & C, TEA

=====

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Councilman Pote, and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote as follows: Pote, Black, Joren, Nehls, Cassidy, “aye”.

R2:01/24/13 Purchases Over \$2,000. – L-3 Communications Mobile –Vision, Inc. (3); The Rodgers Group; Effinger Sporting Goods; Microstrategies; Behavioral Medicine Consultant; Cliffside Body Corp.; Atlantic Tactical

R3: Authorize Emergency Purchases – Debris Removal, Equipment Rental/Hurricane Sandy

R4: Authorize Return of Escrow – As listed

R5: Appointments to Boards, Commissions – C. Meehegan/Library Advisory Board
D.Sherry Buono/Municipal Alliance
G. Sopko/Traffic & Beautification

R6: Authorize Clerk to Issue Raffle License – Childrens Tumor foundation

R7: Authorize Mayor to Sign contract – 2013 Municipal Alliance Grant

=====

NON-CONSENT AGENDA : Items listed below will be individually addressed and acted upon accordingly. Council reserves the right to refer an item to Committee for further review and discussion.

=====

NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

Councilman Black moved the following resolution:

R8: Payment of Bills

Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Pote, Black, Joren, Nehls, Cassidy, “aye”.

Councilman Nehls stated the Borough received a request from Cross River fiber to install telecommunication cable through our right-of-way and requested the representative to please come up to the microphone and state your name and give us the idea of what you are requesting.

Representative Fred Brody does business development for the company and he had spoken to Mr. Cruz and Clerk Michelle DeRocco prior to this meeting. Mr. Cruz suggested he bring a map of the proposed route. He then gave a brief explanation of what the company would like to do and Council Members then asked several questions to further clarify. Mr. Cruz asked the Council if there was a consensus to have an Ordinance and the majority of the members supported an Ordinance.

PUBLIC PORTION

Catherine Higgins (11th grade), Engy Gadelmawla (11th grade), Molly Garyantes (9th grade), and Holly O’Byrne (9th grade) came to discuss a program they are working on and would like to have the support of the Mayor and Council. They gave a brief presentation of the program, which they have called “White Out Against Bullying WHRHS”. They will be doing this during the week of testing on March 8th and request everyone wear white on that day. They will be going out to businesses and all the schools with posters to bring awareness to the problem of bullying and advised they are reaching out to Students beginning at the kindergarten level.

Mayor Mobus commended these students for taking on this project and said the Council fully supports them. Councilman Nehls requested the Mayor and Council do a proclamation. This will be presented at the next council meeting.

=====

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 P.M. to the Call of the Chair, and to the next scheduled Council meeting to be held February 14, 2013 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk