

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
RE-ORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES**

**JANUARY 1, 2014
12:00 Noon**

OPENING STATEMENT: Mayor Stephen Pote called the Reorganization meeting to order at 12:05 PM 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 has been posted and sent to the Echoes Sentinel, the Courier News and the Star Ledger by way of annual notice.

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

INVOCATION - The Invocation was given by Reverend Barbara Peters, Wilson Memorial Church.

Mayor Pote welcomed the dignitaries who were present: Governor Donald DiFrancesco, Senator Thomas Kean, Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz, Freeholders Pat Walsh and Bob Zaborowski, former Mayors Tony Addario and Albert Ellis, Warren Police Chief Russ Leffert, and Watchung former Police Chief Sean Whelan, Steve McDermott from the firm of Suplee Clooney, Local Republican Chair Doyle Hunsinger, Board of Adjustment Chair Dan Cronheim, Borough Administrator Tom Atkins..

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

Stephen K. Pote - Mayor

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to Stephen Pote as his daughter Jenny, brother Jeff, and sister Debbie Melillo held the Bible.

William Nehls - Councilmember

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to William Nehls as his daughters Savannah and Scarlett held the Bible, and his wife Georgia stood by his side.

Robert Gibbs - Councilmember

With daughter Rya in his arms, Rob Gibbs took his Oath of Office, administered by Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, as his son Calvin held the Torah and his wife Robyn stood by his side.

Dianna Beck-Clemens - Councilmember

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to Dianna Beck-Clemens, as her husband James held the Bible.

ROLL CALL

Joren [P] Black [P] Franklin [P] Nehls [P] Gibbs [P] Beck-Clemens [P]

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

Joseph Cina, Police Chief

Council President Joren read a brief bio of Chief Cina's background, and read the following resolution, Councilman Nehls seconded the resolution and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Nehls, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, "aye."

R1:01/01/14 Appointment of Police Chief

Mayor Pote administered the Oath of Office to Chief Cina as his son Vinny held the Bible, and daughter Lucia and wife Fran stood by his side.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

Mayor Pote administered the Oath of Office to the following Borough Officials:

Fire Chief - Thomas Carlucci, Sr.
Chief Carlucci's wife Madaline, son Tom Jr., daughter-in-law Angela, and granddaughter Isabella stood by his side.

Assistant Fire Chief - Peter Martino
Asst. Chief Martino's wife Rosebud, his son Mario, and daughter Bianca stood by his side

Rescue Squad Captain - Adam Wexler
Captain Wexler's wife Jessica held the Bible.

Rescue Squad First Lieutenant - Rich Young
Lt. Young's friend and co-Squad member Alison Dieke held the Bible.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Council President Joren read the following resolution with a second by Councilman Nehls and on roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Nehls, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, "aye."

R2:01/01/14 Honoring Kathy Davies - 35 years of service to the Borough

Council President Joren presented the resolution to Kathy Davies.

NOMINATION FOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Councilman Franklin nominated Councilman Nehls for the position of Council President, with a second by Councilman Black. No other nominations were made. Nominations were closed and the motion carried unanimously on roll call.

NOMINATION FOR LIAISON TO PLANNING BOARD

Councilman Franklin nominated Councilman Nehls for the position of Liaison to the Planning Board, with a second by Councilman Black. No other nominations were made. Nominations were closed and the motion carried unanimously on roll call.

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were adopted on roll call, with offering and seconding as indicated:

	<u>Offered</u>	<u>Seconded</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
R3: Adoption of Rules of Order	Nehls	Joren	
R4: Designation of Official Newspapers	Joren	Franklin	
R5: Designation of Depositories	Franklin	Beck-Clemens	
R6: Appointment of Officials - 1-year term / Attorneys	Black	Gibbs	Joren
R7: Appointment of Officials - 1-year term / Professional Services, Fire Officials	Gibbs	Black	
R8: Appointments - Boards, Committees, Commissions	Beck-Clemens	Franklin	Joren

- R9: Appointments - Boards, Committees, Joren Gibbs Black, Franklin
Commissions
- R10: Temporary Budget Franklin Beck-Clemens
- R11: Re-establish Petty Cash Funds Nehls Joren
- R12: Payment of Property Taxes and Establishing Joren Gibbs
Payment Procedures
- R13: Authorize Borough Attorney to file Tax Gibbs Black Joren
Appeals and Petitions on behalf
of the Borough for 2014
- R14: Appointment of JIF Commissioner Black Joren
and Alternate
- R15: Authorizing the execution of agreement Beck-Clemens Black
for the services of James F. Hurley
Insurance Agency Corp. as Professional
Risk Management Consultants
- R16: Payment of Bills Franklin Black

APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Mayor Pote announced the following Committee appointments:

Administration & Finance

Chair: Franklin, Black, Beck-Clemens

Police

Chair: Nehls, Franklin, Joren

Public Works / Building and Grounds

Chair: Nehls, Franklin, Joren

Public Affairs

Chair Black, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens

Open Space - Beck-Clemens

Board of Health - Black

Environmental - Gibbs

Solid Waste - Gibbs

Recreation - Beck-Clemens

Historic - Beck-Clemens

Fire

Chair: Black, Franklin, Gibbs

Laws & Ordinances

Chair: Joren, Nehls, Gibbs

Special Liaison to Rescue Squad - Black

RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Council President Nehls read the following employee milestones and congratulated all.

45 Years: Ralph LaCanna, Fire Department Member

40 Years: Paul Ost, Fire Department Member

35 Years: Kathleen Davies, Police Secretary
Robert Furnald, Fire Department Member
Walter Niegisch (36), Rescue Squad Member

30 Years: Lane Solan, Fire Department Member
Claire Ohl, Rescue Squad Member

25 Years: Anita Nappa, Police Dispatcher
Andrea Meyer, Administrative Assistant / Police Department

20 Years: Joe Cina, Police Chief

15 Years: Catherine Hammel, Assistant Tax Collector
John McDonald, Bd. of Adjustment Attorney
James Jackson, Community Service Coordinator
Ken Boyle, Sergeant / Police Department
Gemmy Siegel, Rescue Squad Member

10 Years: Debra Joren, Council Member
Michelle DeRocco, Borough Clerk
MaryAnn Hance, Deputy Clerk

5 Years: Scott Tallmadge, Police Officer
Linda Monetti, Administrative Assistant / Recreation Coordinator
Peter LaVecchia, Detective / Police Department
Robert Morales, Police Dispatcher
Ryan Valentino, Fire Department Volunteer
Rich Young, Rescue Squad Member

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

The following is Mayor Pote's 2014 Address:

Again, good afternoon and a Happy New Year to all of you. I sincerely thank you for taking the time to come to our reorganization meeting. I again want to welcome our special guests.

I know that for many January 1st is a friendly reminder that we're yet another year older. But I think most of us who come to this reorganization meeting also see January 1st representing a rebirth and a new beginning. It's a time to proudly look back on what has been done, and to look ahead with anticipation to see what can be achieved in the year ahead. And we as a borough have accomplished a great deal this past year, and are fortunate enough to have alot to look forward to.

So let's begin with the obvious change that has occurred. We brought on two new council people in the last year, my bookends Rob Gibbs and Dianna Beck-Clemens, and I am excited and very proud to be sitting here as your Mayor. We all appreciate your support last November. But as your Mayor I must again reflect on last year being an unexpected year of transition. Recently you all know that we very visibly lost a part of our rock wall formation outside by Public Works; but last March we also very visibly lost within Borough Hall part of our own "rock wall" with the loss of a life time resident and long-time colleague and friend, Mayor Jerry Mobus.

We continue to remember our beloved "Mr Watchung". But I think Jerry has been an inspiration for us, and I believe he would be proud that we have marched forward with purpose and direction. As a result we have accomplished a great deal in the 9 months since his passing.

In the aftermath of Sandy we today have moved closer to a better state of preparedness in the event of another incident. We have dramatically improved communication through a redesigned and regularly updated website and new Facebook page. We update weekly our 1610 radio station. By the end of February we anticipate completing 17 annexes, which are policy documents which after four years require updates to ensure that our various organizations know their role and know how to respond in the event of an emergency or incident.

From an infrastructure perspective, we have awarded the bid and are anticipating in 2014 the installation of permanent generators at the police station, Borough Hall, and Fire Department. We have updated our telephone service. We also have purchased an enhanced radio system for the Watchung Volunteer Fire Department, Watchung Rescue Squad, DPW and Emergency Management. Our goal has been and continues to be fully functional in the event of another crisis. You need to be able to depend upon us.

From a residents' perspective, we have taken the initial steps towards increased resident awareness, preparedness, and participation. We have trained and have put to use an initial CERT team of close to twenty, and we are in the process of both expanding our CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) team and establishing a neighborhood captain program.

But we have a lot of other 2013 accomplishments to be proud of. To name several:

- *Across the street, we have a beautiful new Texier House now operating as the Watchung Historical Museum which houses hundreds of Watchung artifacts --- Watchung's history is now captured not just for display purposes but to proudly communicate Watchung's identity. I couldn't be more proud of the Historical Committee and for what they have done.*
- *Down the road from the Texier Building we have three new tennis courts, a dream of Jerry's and a reality thanks to Dave Mobus, the Council, our engineers, the administration, the Recreation Commission and Weldon Concrete.*
- *We have commenced a sanitary sewer installation on portions of Johnston Drive and Valley Drive with an interest free loan from NJEIT (NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust).*
- *We have made storm water management improvements on Mountain Drive and portions of some adjoining streets (Edgemont Drive, East Drive, and North Drive) – this project is almost complete.*
- *In 2014 we will commence and will complete roadway, curbing and storm water improvements on Lakeview Avenue and Cedar Road.*
- *Many of you I am sure have noticed the recent demolition of a building – a blue-painted house – on the Ness site. Demolition of these buildings will continue in 2014. And all this follows the massive cleanup of tons and tons of trees and mulch placed on the Ness property after the storm.*
- *In 2013 Watchung received approval to establish the Watchung Community Foundation, a 501c (3) organization that can receive and is receiving tax-deductible donations for numerous groups, such as the Historical Committee and the Library.*
- *During 2013, several members of the Governing Body provided input into the Watchung Board of Education's development of its strategic plan.*
- *We received an excess of \$346,000 in grants in 2013, including \$220K in road aid from the DOT and \$87,000 from Safe and Secure communities.*
- *The police department achieved a VERY important state accreditation status, which extensively validates that our Watchung Police Department ensures that its police-related policies and procedures are structured in their creation, in their understanding, maintenance, and enforcement. This greatly minimizes our town's exposure and liability – the Police should be very proud of this accomplishment.*
- *From a personnel perspective, we are proud that:*
 - o *Our own Health Officer Kevin Sumner was named this year's sole recipient of the prestigious Frank J. Osborne Award for meritorious achievement in Public Health by the NJ Association of Health Officers.*
 - o *And Deb Joren was named one of Somerset County's Outstanding Woman of the Year for her role in Government and Public Service.*
 - o *We welcomed 4 new police officers: Ryan Dunn, Andrew Pero, Robert Hofmann, and Brian McLaughlin. And a new dispatcher Paulina Krawiec (starting today).*
 - o *The police saw the departure of our Chief Tim Wenzel, but also saw the promotions of not only our Police Chief Joe Cina, but of Andy Hart to Lieutenant and Ken Boyle, Tim Hale, and Art Holzheimer to the rank of Sergeant. Congratulations.*
 - o *We welcome Jonathan Erber to the Department of Public Works.*
 - o *And we have appointed Linda Monetti to the PT position of Recreation Coordinator.*
- *We had several memorable events, including the resurrection of Watchung's fishing derby, now named in memory of Jerry. We*

continue to host the Doc and Sok mini triathlon, as well the Municipal Alliance 3K. We had a great showing at both our Memorial Day and Harvest Festival picnics. And we also had a great turnout for our very important Memorial Day, 9/11 and Veterans Day services. The year ended again with a fantastic display of fireworks that followed a very well orchestrated tree lighting ceremony by the Rescue Squad. We must not forget our participation in "White Out Day" – the high school's anti-bullying campaign.

- *And in December we had a great volunteer dinner, where our showing of volunteers was the largest ever.*
- *We had 3 special elections held in addition to the June Primary and November General election. It was a tremendous effort to coordinate and execute these special elections in August, September, and October. Thank you to Michelle and MaryAnn.*
- *We don't take lightly the fact that we lost for six months our own internal legal counsel, but are very glad to have Al Cruz back up here with us.*
- *We have had a full year of shared services with the Borough of North Plainfield and the Township of Green Brook as it relates to our municipal court, court judge, prosecutor and court staff.*

So now let's look ahead at 2014. We have projects to complete around preparedness. We will be budgeting to make some additional important capital investments in the Fire Department among other areas. We will continue to complete as required our street projects. We have part of a rock wall that requires stabilization. I look forward to continuing to grow our relationship with Watchung Borough Schools, Watchung Regional High School, and our neighboring towns.

As many of you have heard or have read, I very recently created a Council subcommittee to be chaired by Councilman Franklin to look at our current library and community center situation, using as input the great work performed by our Library Study Group. I feel a library and community center are both a strategic and tactical part of our future. We need to be planful, but it is time to set a course for this town in order to meet its library and community center needs. Libraries are more than brick and mortar and books – we are well aware of that; acting as both a library and community center, in many cases in towns they collectively become the central nervous system both in good times and bad, providing more than an enhancement in property values, the value and benefits in having a strong library and community center include the strengthening of a sense of community -- for people of any age. And the collective value in educating our community I personally believe far exceeds the cost. You know, it is our primary job as your Mayor and Council to see that we legislate and enforce responsible ordinances and resolutions to protect and support the town. It is our job to provide necessary services to support your well-being. It is our job to be responsive to our residents' requests.

But I personally feel very strongly that your Mayor and Council also have an important responsibility to maintain and to enhance a sense of community for our residents. Whether it be the Memorial Day picnic or Harvest Day Festival, the services on Memorial Day, 9/11 and Veteran s day, or the fishing derby, Sunday hours at Texier, or supporting the Tree of Lights, we have a responsibility to support efforts to increase Watchung's sense of community. The Borough needs to do what it can to work with the schools' administration, the Boards of Educations and PTO, the Little League, Softball, and basketball leagues, the girl and Boy scouts, the places of worship and other service organizations. I believe that a strong community center and library presence in the center of town, one that greatly enhances the library programs we already have, provides a forum upon which our sense of community awareness, understanding, and participation can grow. This will take time, but it is important that we aim for this.

And it is no secret that one of the alternatives that must be considered is the old Valley Furniture building, which is a centerpiece of the town regardless of what it becomes. But we do all of this with an eye on the budget at all times and a careful analysis of our debt over time.

I would be remiss if I didn't personally thank several who have made my transition and the work of all of us up here a lot easier. Our Administrator, Tom Atkins and Clerk Michelle DeRocco, thank you for your leadership, support, advice, and guidance. Thanks to the rest of the administration – Bill, Mary Ann, Jessica, Linda, Carolina, Maria, Airline, Ed, Kathy, and others, who day to day make this place run. Thanks to Bob Burns and Andy Balladeer and the Public Works Department who did an incredible job last year, running a good part of last year two people short. Thanks to all of our emergency services; as well Gary Greves and Skip Bell who lead our OEM group - we're lucky to have all of you. Thank you Tom Herits and Al Cruz for your highly valued expertise.

Thanks to all of you sitting up here on the Council. We have had an extremely productive year because all of you have rolled up your sleeves and have worked hard to move things along. Each of us have taken on more this year and have responded well to the challenges we have faced. Thanks to each of you for your commitment, your time, and your results. I thank Deb Joren for her service as our Council President and Police Commissioner, and I welcome Bill Nehls into these roles.

And finally, thanks to all of you out there. It selfishly starts with my family who, as you can imagine, has had to demonstrate great patience as I have transition into this role. I thank all of you volunteers who annually give thousands of hours of service to your community that we can not function without. I thank the public at large for your support and constructive feedback, as well your thoughts and ideas. We need that to continue. I welcome it.

So with that, I want to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. This year, let's day to day keep in perspective what's important in our lives, and let's continue to move forward with a strong sense of purpose in support of what best serves this town and its people. I will do what I can to make that happen.

God bless all of you. God Bless Watchung. Thank you.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Pote thanked Councilwoman Deb Joren for the past 3 years and her service to the Borough as Council President, he said it was very much appreciated.

Council President Nehls wished everyone a happy New Year, and thanked all for coming today. He said there is a lot to do, citing the Ness property, the Johnston Drive sewer project, and road improvements on Lakeview and Cedar, to name a few. He emphasized, a lot to do, with a tight budget. He thanked the many Borough volunteers for their hard work and dedication. He thanked Borough Clerk Michelle DeRocco, Administrator Tom Atkins, Engineer Tom Herits, our legal Counsel Albert Cruz, and Public Works Manager Bob Burns, and said we are lucky to have a great crew.

Councilman Black congratulated Mayor Pote, Councilman Nehls, Councilman Gibbs, and Councilwoman Beck-Clemens on their re-appointments. He thanked Administrator Tom Atkins, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, Engineer Tom Herits, and our Counselor, Albert Cruz, for all of their work and support throughout the year. He thanked our emergency service departments and volunteers - the Police, the Fire Department, Rescue Squad, and OEM staff for all that they do. Councilman Black congratulated Joe Cina for his appointment as our Police Chief, and said he was sure he will do a great job. He said volunteerism is one of Watchung's great strengths, as the people who dedicate their time on our Boards, Committees, and Commissions make up the full picture of our municipality. He wished all a happy New Year!

Councilman Franklin wished all a happy and healthy New Year, on behalf of him and his wife, Lynn. He wanted to recognize the efforts of all of the Borough's employees, noting that we have a very small work force and many must wear many hats. He said our employees are dedicated and committed, and are like a family. He thanked our volunteers, noting that they make the Borough run, and said he was pleased with the new addition of the CERT Team, that will step up with OEM in the event of an emergency.

Councilwoman Joren said she wished to echo everyone's comments and thanks to the Borough's employees and volunteers. She said her years of serving as a Council member have been a learning experience, because new issues arise every day. She said since Mayor Mobus appointed her to the Public Works Department she now knows more about sewage than she ever would have thought. She said the residents made it clear after Sandy that we had gaps in our communication systems, and we made improvements. We have an improved website, and we get messages out through Nixel, FaceBook, and email alerts. Councilwoman Joren said she is looking forward to the next years and said this governing body will continue to work hard for all of its residents.

Councilman Gibbs said serving on this Council has been a personal journey for him and a learning experience. He said it has been an eye-opening experience. He said it is an honor and a pleasure to serve this Borough and its residents. He thanked the Rescue Squad for the wonderful Tree of Lights celebration, and said it was a great show of community. Councilman Gibbs said his goal is to build better relationships. He wished all a happy New Year.

Councilwoman Beck-Clemens said she has thoroughly enjoyed working with the Mayor and Council, the Borough's staff, and all of our Boards, Commissions, and Committees. She said she now knows her friends and neighbors better than ever. She said a special group of residents have stolen her heart, and they are the members of the Historical Committee. Councilwoman Beck-Clemens said she will continue to work 24/7 for the next three years, and announced if anyone would like to speak to her personally, that they should feel free to call her. She said thank you, God bless you, and happy New Year to all.

PUBLIC PORTION

Mary Mobus, Washington Drive, came forward with a special presentation for Mayor Pote. She had a package for him, that was given to her husband, the late Mayor Jerry Mobus when he was sworn into office, by former Mayor Al Ellis. Mayor Pote opened the package to find a "bullet proof" vest. She explained it is now tradition to pass it on.

Mary Mobus also invited all back to her home for refreshments after today's ceremony. She said Jerry always loved a house full of people, and she was happy to host this reception. She wished all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Peter Martino, Assistant Fire Chief, said the Mayor and Council have thanked many people today, however, no one has thanked them (Mayor and Council) for all that they do for the Borough.

BENEDICTION

The Benediction was given by Reverend Barbara Peters, Wilson Memorial Church.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 1:10 P.M. and to the next scheduled meeting of January 10, 2013 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Clerk