

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL MINUTES

JUNE 18, 2015

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Pote called the meeting to order at 7:32 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 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

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

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, Engineer Tom Herits, Police Chief Cina, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk Mary Ann Hance.

There were 11 members of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Franklin reported the Committee met Monday, June 15, 2015 and discussed salary adjustments and it is hoped the resolution can be ready for the July 9th Council meeting. Councilman Franklin said other issues discussed included the RFP's for banking services, which is still a work in progress, and also for grant writing proposals. The Committee also checked on the possibility of getting a system for credit card payments for the Tax Collector's office. Councilman Franklin said there are fees associated with this process and a separate account would have to be set up for the collection of these fees. He also said the Committee will be checking with the Borough offices to see how the summer hour schedule is working.

2. Police - Council President Nehls reported he attended the June 9th Rotary Club luncheon honoring the Watchung and Warren Police Departments as their "Citizens of the Year." He said members of the County Prosecutor's office and State Police were in attendance, and the Borough Police Department was well represented. Council President Nehls congratulated Chief Cina and the entire Police Department for this honor.

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council President Nehls reported the statistics since May 21st and said that through the shared service program with the Somerset County Public Works, the Borough's backhoe was transported to Modern Group in Edison for repairs and then returned to our Public Works. Council President Nehls also said pothole repairs were done on Ridge Road, Parlin Lane, North Drive, Knightsbridge, Raymond Avenue and Redmont Road, and hazardous trees were removed on Washington Drive, Washington Rock Road, Lakeview Terrace and Rock Avenue. He said the Public Works Department assisted with setting up and cleanup for the Community Picnic.

Council President Nehls reported there was a meeting today with architect Mr. Iovino who brought copies of the existing Library layout and two concept plans. He said the difference between the concept plans is the use of the attic space, one would use the space for offices and storage and the other would leave it alone. He explained if it were to be used for offices and storage, then the elevator would have to go all the way up and the stairway would have to be enclosed. Council President Nehls said Mr. Iovino would like to know how to move forward at this time. The preliminary plans were left on the table for public review

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space- Councilwoman Beck-Clemens had no report but asked Council President Nehls how the remediation of the Ness Property is going. Council President Nehls replied that he would be scheduling a meeting with Maser shortly.

Environmental – No report was submitted.

Recreation – Councilwoman Beck-Clemens reported the first movie night was well attended. Mayor Pote was there and Councilwoman Joren sold tickets for refreshments. She said the next big event is the fishing derby which is scheduled for Saturday, September 12th, 9 to 11 AM, with a rain date being September 13th.

Historical – Councilwoman Beck-Clemens reported the Commission met Wednesday and decided they would not be open Sundays in the summer, but if anyone wished to have a private viewing they could contact either Barbara Diem or Betty Aldrich to arrange a time and day. She said the Commission will still continue to meet on Tuesdays for their workshops, 11 AM to 1 PM. Councilwoman Joren asked if the Museum would be open this coming Saturday since there is a Memorial for Dave Eaton who passed away. Councilwoman Beck-Clemens said she will email someone to see if this can be arranged.

Board of Health - Councilman Black reported he attended the meeting last evening and the main discussion was the possibility of having an Ordinance for mandatory carbon monoxide detectors for businesses. While it was determined that it would be difficult to mandate this, the Board would like Mr. Greves to suggest installation of these when he does his fire inspections. Mayor Pote asked if it is difficult to detect if the building has a larger area and he also asked if these detectors should be installed in the Borough buildings, and Councilman Black said he will discuss this with Mr. Greves.

5. Fire – Councilman Black reported the Committee met this morning and are anxiously awaiting receipt of the Rodgers, Phase 2 study, and once received, they will analyze the report and submit it to the Council for their input for further review. Councilwoman Joren asked when the report will be given to the Council and Councilman Black said hopefully by the end of July. Mr. Atkins said Chairman Black asked to work with him regarding the apparatus and equipment evaluation and discuss action items to propose to Committee members Franklin and Gibbs, prior to presenting recommendations to the Council.
6. Laws/Ordinances - Councilwoman Joren had no report.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – Tom Herits reported the Knollwood Drive project is in the system and he is waiting for the surveyors to get the plans started. He said the Borough did receive the FEMA Grant of \$100,000 for the DPW garage generator and included in this award is the East End Firehouse, but he is not sure if there will be enough money to cover the cost for both. Mr. Herits said he met with the Historic Commission to discuss the lighting request and he will get another quote before presenting the information to the Buildings and Grounds Committee for approval. He also reported the pole barns have been installed. Mr. Atkins asked Mr. Herits if there was anything he needs to complete the Washington Rock Road project and Mr. Herits said all the material is at Weldon and he just has finalize this project with the Committee. He said the cost is approximately \$11,000 for labor and equipment.
8. Police Chief – Chief Cina reported June 7th, which marked the one year passing of Officer Chris Hoffman, and the Department held a ceremony. He said Officers Dunne and McLaughlin had a plaque made and it was installed at Police Headquarters. Chief Cina also reported the Department can no longer do background checks on applicants and said the onus for such checks should be put on the applicants. He said the Borough Police Department terminals are monitored by the FBI and can only be used for criminal background checks. Chief Cina reported on the local school security assessment and said the Somerset County Chiefs Association has put together a committee to prepare a document to assess school facilities, He said he met with Dr. Resko, Lt. Kelly, and Lt. Anderle and the school is working on their portion of it and the Borough Police Department is working on theirs. Chief Cina said the dates for the joint drill with Watchung, Warren, Green Brook, and North Plainfield are scheduled for June 26th and June 29th. He said the drill is very extensive and includes not only the Police, but also Rescue Squads, and Paramedics from various hospitals. He explained this will test the skills and preparedness when dealing with mass casualties and large scale incidents. Chief Cina then distributed information the Council had requested on the thirty (30) man police force, and includes some of the daily tasks of the Police Department with item number one being of the most importance. The crime rate for Watchung is

65 crimes per 1,000 residents and putting this in perspective, Chief Cina noted the average for Somerset County is 13, Newark is 50 and Camden is 69. Most of the crimes in Watchung are non-violent but they still require arrests, investigations, and the processing of alleged criminals.

9. Fire Department – No report was submitted.
10. Rescue Squad – President Denise Wilson reported the statistics for the month. She also said the squad has four new adult members, and they are hoping to have a total of six for the year. Ms. Wilson said they are keeping a close watch on the budget and spending with most of their Committees being on or below budget.
11. Emergency Management – No report was submitted, however, Mr. Atkins said Mr. Greves has had good meetings on OEM Drills with surrounding towns.
12. Attorney – Mr. Cruz had no report.
13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco reported the Borough’s shred event last Saturday was a big success with approximately 23,000 to 25,000 pounds of paper being shredded and almost 300 cars from various Somerset County towns. Ms. DeRocco thanked the Public Works Department employees, Arthur and Jonathan for their help, and also Recycling Coordinator and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance for being there and coordinating the event with the County. She also reminded Council that tonight was a bill paying night and reminded all to sign the purchase order before they leave.
14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins had no report but wished to commend Mr. Cruz for all the work involved associated with getting the information together on the Affordable Housing issue. Mr. Cruz has been working with the Borough staff and Marcia Shiffman to prepare the information needed for the items on R2, R3, and R4.

PUBLIC PORTION – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

At this point it had been discovered that the Agenda distributed to the Council and the Agenda made available to the public, was missing the second page, and copies were re-printed and distributed.

Doris Fine, Johnston Drive asked if R2, R3 and R4 has any effect on the O’Connor property and Mr. Cruz responded it does not affect that property and the O’Connor property is in the front of the Board of Adjustment at this time.

With no other public members wishing to speak Mayor Pote closed the public portion.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda Items listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Nehls and a second by Councilwoman Joren and upon roll the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

Approval of the following Council minutes:

Approval of the following Council minutes:

- April 30, 2015 – Special Budget Meeting
- June 4, 2015 – Regular and Executive Sessions

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

- Building Department Report – May, 2015
- Board of Adjustment Minutes – April 9, May 14, 2015
- Historical Committee Minutes – May 13, 2015

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #16 - Buena Vista Township 6/10/15 Resolution Opposing Legislative Bills S781 and S782 (Amendments to OPRA/ Open Public Records Act and OMPA/ Open Public Meetings Act)
c: M & C, TEA

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda Resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Nehls and a second by Councilwoman Joren and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

Due to the misprint of the Agenda, Attorney Cruz verbally read the Consent Agenda Resolution titles for clarification purposes.

- R1:06/18/15 Resolution Opposing Proposed Amendments to the Open Public Records Act (Senate Bill S781) and the Open Public Meetings Act (Senate Bill S782)
- R2: Authorizing the Borough Attorney to File a Declaratory Judgment Action
- R3: Authorizing the Borough Planner to Provide Support Services in the Declaratory Judgment Action and Prepare an Amendment to the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, if Necessary
- R4: Authorizing the Retention of an Expert for the Declaratory Judgment Action
- R5: Authorize Submission of Grant Application – NJ DEP “Bonus” Grant
- R6: Authorize Liquor License Renewals: Colorado Café, Inc.
TGI Friday’s Inc.
VDK Ho Corp.
- R7: Authorize Duplicate Tax Payment Refunds – 92 Sunbright Rd., 45 Edgemont Rd.
- R8: Authorize 2014 Senior Tax Deduction – 30 Schmidt Circle
- R9: Authorize Appointment of Acting Tax Assessor / Employee Tax Appeal – 26 Fawn La.

Mr. Atkins asked Mr. Cruz to explain there is no cost to the Borough for appointment of an acting Tax Assessor on the R9 resolution.

NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: 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.

Councilman Franklin moved the following resolution with a second by Councilwoman Beck-Clemens and upon roll call the vote was as follow: Nehls, Franklin, Joren, Beck-Clemens, “aye”, Black, “abstain.”

R10:06/18/15 Waive Chapter 46 of the Code – Gray’s Florist

Councilwoman Beck-Clemens moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

R11: Payment of Bills

PUBLIC PORTION – GENERAL DISCUSSION

Rachael Funcheon, Cedar Road, thanked the Mayor and Council for their continued support opposing the Pilgrim Pipeline. She said Mr. Tittle of the Sierra Club has heard that Pilgrim will be going back to PSE&G to ask them to reconsider their denial for use of their right-of-ways. Mayor Pote said if it is the consensus of the Council the letter Ms. Funcheon requested be sent to PSE&G is ready and he will sign it. All Council were in agreement for this to be sent. Mayor Pote also said he would like to get the Mayor’s Round Table to continue their support to prevent this from occurring. Councilwoman Joren said SR106 came out of the Senate Environment Committee and it has to go to the floor and there are two more voting sessions so hopefully it will come up for vote.

Doris Fine, Johnston Drive, asked why the Borough still has not built the 911 Memorial since it is already 14 years since the event occurred and she would like to see this completed by the 15th anniversary. She said the Borough needs to have the Memorial all inclusive, remembering not only those who lost their lives but also the survivors. Ms. Fine suggested the Borough contact her father-in-law who may be able to assist in getting funds for the project. Mayor Pote said there have been meetings over the last two weeks and they are looking to make some changes in the design and also discussions with Arlene McCoy on the best location for the Memorial. Mayor Pote said the Committee is open to any and all suggestions.

Denise Wilson, gave the Council the website for the company the Squad uses for background checks – Absolute Background Search.com.

Pete Martino, Sunbright Road, said he agrees with Ms. Fine that 14 years is way too long for erecting the Memorial and out of respect for her comments, he wait until the next Council meeting to discuss his concerns. He said his only suggestion is the Borough needs to be more proactive in getting people to volunteer for not only the Fire Department, but for other committees.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M. to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council meeting on Thursday, July 9, 2015 at 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Hance
Deputy Clerk