

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

**JANUARY 1, 2015
12:00 Noon**

OPENING STATEMENT: Mayor Stephen K. Pote called the 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 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.

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

Mayor Pote welcomed the dignitaries who were present: Senator Thomas Kean, Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz, Freeholder Pat Walsh, former Mayor Albert Ellis, and Police Chief Joe Cina,

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

Mayor Stephen K. Pote

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to Stephen K. Pote as his daughter Jenny held the Bible.

Stephen L. Black – Councilmember

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to Stephen L. Black as Council President Nehls held the Bible.

Robert Gibbs – Councilmember

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to Robert Gibbs as his son Calvin held the Torah and his wife Robyn and daughter Rya stood by his side.

ROLL CALL

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

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

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

Fire Chief – Jonathan Erber
Chief Erber's daughters Mackenzie & Danielle held the Bible and his wife Rosangela, holding baby daughter Riley, stood by his side.

Assistant Fire Chief – Thomas Carlucci, Sr.
Assistant Chief Carlucci's son Stephen held the Bible and Donald Scotti stood by his side.

Rescue Squad Captain – Alison Diecke
Captain Diecke's father Dietrich Diecke held the Bible.

Rescue Squad First Lieutenant – Charles Pivnichny
Lt. Pivnichny's co-squad member, Noah Monetti held the Bible

NOMINATION FOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

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

NOMINATION FOR LIAISON TO PLANNING BOARD

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

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

Council President Nehls moved the following resolutions:

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

- R1: Adoption of Rules of Order
- R2: Designation of Official Newspapers – Star Ledger, Echoes Sentinel, Courier News
- R3: Designation of Depositories – TD Bank, PNC Bank, Haven Savings Bank
- R4: Re-establish Petty Cash Funds – Borough Clerk, Police Chief
- R5: Payment of Property Taxes and Establishing Payment Procedures
- R6: Authorizing the execution of agreement for the services of Meeker Sharkey Associates LLC D/B/A James F. Hurley Insurance Agency as Professional Risk Management Consultants

The motion was seconded by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

NON CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

Councilman Franklin moved the following resolution with a second by Councilwoman Beck-Clemens:
R7: Appointment of Officials - 1-year term

Upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, “aye,” Joren, “Abstain.”

Councilman Black moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Franklin:
R8: Appointment of Officials - 1-year term / Professional Services, Fire Officials

Upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

Councilwoman Joren moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Gibbs:
R9: Appointments - Boards, Committees, Commissions

Upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

Councilwoman Beck-Clemens moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Black:
R10: Appointment of JIF Commissioner and Alternate

Upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

Councilman Franklin moved the following resolution with a second by Councilwoman Beck-Clemens:
R11: Temporary Budget

Upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, Beck-Clemens, “aye.”

Councilman Gibbs moved the following resolution with a second by Council President Nehls:
R12: Authorize Borough Attorney to file Tax Appeals and Petitions on behalf of the Borough for 2015

Upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Black, Franklin, Beck-Clemens, “aye,” Joren, Gibbs, “abstain.”

RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Mayor Pote read the following employee milestones and congratulated all:

- 30 Years: Gary Greves, Fire Prevention Official
- 25 Years: Robert Burns, Public Works
- 20 Years: Timothy Hale, Police Department
Ed Bennett, Construction Official
Anthony Saccaro, Fire Sub-Code Official
Richard Lyons, Police Department
Bill Hance, Finance Department
Robert Winston, Rescue Squad
Steve Black, Governing Body
- 15 Years: James Kimock, Police Department
William Stankan, Police Department
Arlene McCoy, Engineering Department
- 10 Years: Maria Fittipaldi, Engineering/Public Works Department
Scott Anderle, Police Department
Michael Dolinski, Police Department
Jason Moberly, Police Department
Lelia Garcia, Rescue Squad
Stephen K. Pote, Governing Body
- 5 Years: Kyle Poulsen, Police Department
Sherif Zaiton, Police Department
Sean Bouchard, Police Department
Charles Pivnichny, Rescue Squad

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

The following is Mayor Pote's 2015 address:

Good afternoon to all of you.

Let me begin my remarks by saying how honored I am to have been elected by the public to serve you for the next four years! Today I start my 11th year as part of Watchung's Governing Body, and it has been and continues to be a privilege to serve with and for all of you.

In 2014 we accomplished a great deal, had a few setbacks, and are now preparing for the year ahead. We continue to manage for you a budget that respects our 2% tax levy cap, as well a responsible level of debt service that balances between fiscal responsibility while still investing in our required infrastructure to ensure that Watchung is maintained as a great place to live.

Last year we resurfaced Washington Rock Road, a large portion of Anderson Road, and Cedar and Lakeview along with making drainage improvements and installing Belgium Block curbing on Cedar and Lakeview. We invested in sewers on sections of Johnson Drive and Valley Drive.

We invested in Mobus Field, replacing our worn equipment with a new playground for our kids (although I have seen some adults playing on there as well!!). We also performed some drainage work, and cleaned up the pavilion with help from townspeople and a Boy Scout Eagle project. Mobus Field opened its heart to several great events, including an even better Memorial Day Picnic and Harvest Festival, thanks in part to a lot of people including our own Linda Monetti, our Recreation Commission, DPW, and Tom Herits.

The Mobus Field area was also the site of a new Farmer's Market we established this past year, over 6 weekends, in part to draw together more of our community. They were a great success and we look forward to having them again this year! Watchung's Shelini Parikh took the lead on making this happen, and along with our CFO Bill Hance and our Green team, also earned Watchung "bronze"

status in in New Jersey's "Sustainable Jersey" program. Thank you to them, and to Freeholder Pat Walsh for the "nudge" I got to pursue Bronze status shortly after taking over as Mayor.

I promised you last year at this time that we would make further progress towards being more prepared as it relates to readiness in the event of another incident, like Super Storm Sandy. Well at this time, I am proud to say that with the huge investment of time by Gary Greves, Skip Bell, Tom Atkins, Joe Cina, and others, the Borough has now revised or created (but have completed) well over 20 annexes, which are the detailed procedures that we in the Borough would follow, depending on the nature and type of incident or emergency in town. The Borough also has completed its task to install permanent generators at the Police Station, Fire House, and Borough Hall. Having lost the ability to continue to piggy back on Warren Township's Nixle system (and we thank them for having allowed this), our Chief Joe Cina negotiated a new contract for our own Nixle text and reverse 911 system.

Speaking of contracts, this year we signed a negotiated Police Contract with PBA Local 193, running from 01-01-13 through 12-31-16. We are proud to have just sworn in two new police officers in December, Officers Cruz and Migliore who, with them aboard, bring our police force to a much-needed full staff. At this time I want to thank our Police force and its leadership for being there at every major event or meeting and for being proactive in your approach. Local holiday shopping this year was again safe and secure because of the police's planning and presence in our shopping areas. Another promise I had made was that the Borough Council and I would start some much-needed but wise investing in the Fire House. The second garage door has been put in, as well the entire floor and apron has been redone to greatly improve the safety conditions for our fire personnel. The air ventilation system has been replaced. And now in 2015 we look to make some other much-needed improvements, possibly including the replacement of 40 year old bathrooms. We have just ordered new fire department ice rescue equipment, long missing from this town with two beautiful but potentially hazardous lakes. At this time I want to thank our outgoing Fire Chief Tom Carlucci, and welcome again our new Chief John Erber. I look forward to efforts to increase membership, and thank the Fire Department for their continued volunteerism and commitment to the town.

In 2014 the Borough applied for and received 7 grants totaling an excess of \$280,000. We thank the County, State, and Federal government for their support.

In regards to the library, with the very recent completion of the structural review of the existing structure, we the Mayor and Council, in the near future, will need to assess what that means, and will determine what the next steps are for how we should invest in a library reconstruction project that is both cost-effective and meaningful to our town. We look forward to more progress in 2015. And I thank the public for their continued expressed interest in our library.

In 2014 we faced several other challenges, the most apparent of which was the tragic loss of a newly sworn in police officer, Christopher Hoffman, who was killed while off-duty in a motorcycle accident. While very new to our Borough, it was just like losing a friend or family member. And his untimely death made us once again take pause and reflect on previous losses.

We wish Officer Mike Bouchard well in his retirement. And at this time I want to thank the Watchung Rescue Squad for not only remembering Officer Hoffman and former Police Chief King at the recent Tree of Lights and the fantastic fireworks event we had, but for their dedication throughout the year to all of us in town. To the Rescue Squad I again state that your consistency and stability does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated.

In 2014 we faced the challenge of falling parts of the rock wall behind both the Department of Public Works Garage, as well the Police Station. While the police station area was immediately re-secured through a reinforcement of the existing netting and metal apron, the falling rock by the Department of Public Works was both significant and damaging to our structures, and posed an on-going danger to our DPW employees if not rectified. With the potential cost in excess of \$1M to secure that area as the town did years ago behind the police station, the Council and I felt we needed to investigate some less costly alternatives. Weldon Materials, Inc., came to our aid, creating both a trench and a berm around the area where rock could fall, all this with minimal cost to the Borough. This represented an outstanding public/private partnership with great monetary savings to our residents and taxpayers.

Speaking of challenges, in 2014 the Borough was made aware of an oil pipeline, called the Pilgrim Pipeline, which potentially could be running through parts of Watchung. This pipeline, being put in by several investors with no previous oil pipeline experience, would be bi-directional, with pipes having a diameter of 16", up to possibly 24". This pipeline would carry crude oil sourced from North Dakota,

through New York and New Jersey where it will be refined in Linden and returned through New Jersey up to New York.

Your Governing Body took the first steps towards refusing permission, by being only the second town in the State to pass a resolution opposing the Pilgrim Pipeline from coming through its town. We held a public forum in November to discuss with the public the potential environmental impact of such a pipeline. In December I also held a Mayors Roundtable, where Mayors or their representatives from 15 of the 30 affected towns came to Watchung, who we invited to discuss this issue with the U.S. Department of Transportation, who manages the safety of these “transportation lines”. It was a great discussion, and our efforts in Watchung I am told have been a catalyst for action now in several other towns since our meeting last month. Public Service Electric and Gas has stated that it is not in favor of putting the pipeline near their power lines, where Pilgrim has originally designed they would go. And several serving us in Trenton, who are with us here today, have publicly stated their opposition to such a pipeline. But I know we will have a lot of work to do in 2015 to maintain this momentum and to ensure that a pipeline does not run through Watchung. In 2015 we will continue to closely manage this pipeline issue.

Another on-going challenge we continue to face is deer management, and based on survey results collected at the end of 2013 – which indicated that a very large majority of responding households feel the Borough should be doing more to manage the deer – I will continue to work with our Council to hopefully find a better solution, to mitigate the deer’s destruction and reduce the chance of injury on the road.

At this time I want to thank my fantastic Borough employee Team who have been through an awful lot this past year and who have achieved a great deal. Whether it be our Administration, Clerk’s Office, Finance, Department of Public Works, Engineering, Construction, Tax Office, etc. all of you have done an incredible job. A special thanks to Tom Atkins our Administrator, and Michelle DeRocco our Borough Clerk, who collectively represent the glue of our Administration. I want to thank Tom Herits, our engineer from Maser Consulting, Albert Cruz our legal counsel from DiFrancesco’s and Bateman’s law firm, and Lee Purcell from L.T. Purcell Associates. These gentlemen not only work for the Borough, they passionately invest of themselves to ensure that the best solutions are reached.

As I stated in my message the night of our Volunteer Dinner in December, all of you who volunteer in our town are making a tremendous difference! The thousands of hours you have put in make Watchung a better place to live and work. We as a community benefit from your love for, and commitment to, the Borough. We cannot do it without you.

And speaking of volunteerism. I want to personally and publicly thank each of you on the Council for your time and efforts this past year. I think we have accomplished a great deal, and have a lot to be proud of. But with winter here, and Spring, Summer and Fall not so far behind, we have a new year upon us that will require our own recommitment to a new year of work, as well the recommitment to each other to make things work effectively and efficiently. I promise to do my part. I look forward to the year ahead with all of you.

In conclusion, I was honored to have been elected at the end of 2013 to finish Gerry Mobus’ term as Mayor through this past December. It was a great opportunity. I feel privileged and humbled to have now been reelected by you for another four years. I strongly believe that with much effort, we the Borough will dig deep to accomplish a great deal more. I look forward to the challenges which lie ahead. I am grateful for all of your continued support, and am privileged to be the Mayor of the great Borough of Watchung. I will continue to work to make you proud.

*God Bless all of you, and to all a Happy, Healthy, and Safe New Year.
Thank you.*

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council President Nehls wished everyone a happy and healthy New Year, and thanked all for coming today. He thanked all volunteers for their continued support and said he is looking forward to a very productive year in the Borough of Watchung. Council President Nehls congratulated Mayor Pote, and Councilmen Black and Gibbs on their re-election.

Councilman Black wished all a healthy and happy New Year and thanked everyone for re-electing him. He said it was nice to see the great attendance at all the Borough functions this year. Councilman Black also thanked the volunteers for their hard work and he looks forward to their continued support to the Borough and our community.

Councilman Franklin wished all a happy and healthy New Year and he thanked all the volunteers and the Borough Staff for all the hard work they do. He said without them the Borough would not run as smoothly as it does. He said the volunteerism is fantastic in the Borough. Councilman Franklin said he has been on the Administration/Finance Committee for 10 years and has tried to do what is best for the community and will continue to do so in the coming year.

Councilwoman Joren wished all a happy New Year and thanked everyone for coming today. She congratulated Mayor Pote and Councilmen Black and Gibbs. She also thanked the staff, Police, Firemen and Rescue Squad.

Councilman Gibbs thanked everyone at the Borough both the volunteers and staff, without them the Borough could not run. He congratulated both Mayor Pote and Councilman Black for being inducted again into a very prestigious club. He also thanked his wonderful family for being so forgiving of the time this takes away from them. He said they know that he loves the town and doing this. Councilman Gibbs wished all a happy New Year.

Councilwoman Beck-Clemens thanked everyone for coming today. She said when she was elected she promised to keep the town viable and control spending and still give residents the quality services they deserve and she will continue to work with this Council to maintain this goal in 2015. She thanked all the volunteers and staff that keep the town running. She also thanked all the committees for their commitment and hard work. She said all members of the Historical Commission except one were present and asked them to stand when she called their name. Councilwoman Beck-Clemens also reminded everyone that she can be contacted at anytime if they have a questions. She then wished everyone a very happy New Year.

Mayor Pote then acknowledged that at some time during the meeting Congressman Leonard Lance came in.

Congressman Lance congratulated Mayor Pote, Councilman Black and Councilman Gibbs and the Governing Body and that he is looking forward to working with them throughout 2015. He said this is a wonderful municipality to represent to the Congress of the United States and of the 75 Municipalities he represents he feels honored to represent Watchung. He wished prosperity for the people and peace across the globe. Congressman Lance said our combat mission in Afghanistan ended at midnight but there are many more men and women in harm's way defending our freedom and our prayers are that they return to this Nation and back to their families safely and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Mayor Pote thanked Congressman Lance for his continued support and responsiveness to everything we ask for when we do. He said we appreciate his being there to represent the Borough of Watchung in Washington.

PUBLIC PORTION

No one from the public wished to be heard.

BENEDICTION

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

Mayor Pote reminded all that Mary Mobus and the Mobus family again cordially invites all for refreshments and to celebrate the reorganization at their home.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council the meeting was adjourned at 1:03 P.M. to the call of the Chair and to the next meeting scheduled to be held on January 15, 2015 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk