

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2015

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Pote called the meeting to order at 7:30 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 [A] Franklin [P] Joren [P] Gibbs [P] Beck-Clemens [A]

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

There were 13 members of the public present.

Mayor Pote reported the Borough received notice from Dianna Beck-Clemens that she has resigned from the Council effective today, September 17, 2015. He said the Borough will be looking for alternative replacements in the near future.

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Pote read the following Proclamation (Copy Attached)

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month / September, 2015

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Franklin reported since he was the only Committee member able to attend the meeting held on Tuesday, September 15th, no decisions made. He said requests for RFP's for new banking services have been sent out by CFO Bill Hance, and other items discussed were the summer hours, job descriptions, and shared service for the Health Department. He said the Capital Budget Bond Ordinance is being reviewed. Administrator Tom Atkins said the item for the County Health Department is strictly exploratory. Council President Nehls questioned if we are allowed to move forward on purchases of vehicles and equipment and Mr. Atkins said if it is the Council's wish to do so, then yes and it would include items for the Police Department, Public Works, and Fire Departments and a few items of lessor cost but very importantly, a bond ordinance had to be authorized.
2. Police – Council President Nehls had no report
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council President Nehls read the monthly report submitted by Public Works Manager Bob Burns. Council President Nehls informed Mr. Atkins that the traffic signal at Valley View is not functioning again. Council President Nehls gave an update on the Library meeting of September 10th and said the architect, Mr. Iovino came in with another suggestion which would retain the newer portion of the library which contains the children's section. It was determined to give Mr. Iovino more time to prepare this other option prior to bringing it to the Council. Council President Nehls said Mr. Iovino will try for October but suggested to give him until November. Both Councilman Franklin and Councilwoman Joren agreed. Council President Nehls noted Resolution R5 on the Agenda is for the replacement of the basketball nets and posts at Mobus Playground.
4. Public Affairs:
Open Space - No report.
Mayor Pote said as the Chair of this Committee, the Recreation, and Historical Committee, and as a member of the Administration and Finance Committee and Police Committee, Councilwoman Beck-Clemens was very dedicated and he commended her service to the Borough, wishing her well going forward.
Environmental – Councilman Gibbs had no report stating the next meeting will be held on September 28th.

Recreation – No report

Historical – No report

Board of Health - No report

5. Fire –Councilman Gibbs reported there was discussion about the fire truck and it was determined to let the Truck Committee complete its analysis. The Fire Committee will then review before bringing it to the Council. Councilman Franklin mentioned the stipend program is being reviewed by the Committee and once complete it will be set under Ordinance. Mr. Atkins said the Fire Department did give this to the Rodgers Group as part of their second study which could possibly be submitted to the Borough within the next two weeks.
6. Laws/Ordinances- Councilwoman Joren had no report.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – Mr. Herits reported the milling and paving at the Texier House has been completed and came in under budget, and the Pole Barns are complete. Mr. Herits said he has two quotes for the Mobus Field drainage and is waiting for one more and he hopes this project will be done after the Harvest Festival. He also reported he would like to award a contract for the Knollwood, Deer Run project either the second meeting of October or the November 5th meeting.
8. Police Chief – Chief Cina reported all members of the department have completed their fire arms qualification, except himself. He also said there is no new information regarding the radios but he has been in contact with Congressman Lance’s office. Chief Cina said there are many questions and concerns about the Body Camera Program and OPRA requests. He said will continue to follow the discussions and concerns. Mayor Pote asked if there would be a pilot program and Chief Cina said possibly. Councilwoman Joren asked if Union County supplied all their Departments with the equipment and if so would Somerset County look into supplying their Departments, and Chief Cina did not know if that would be the case but he recommends waiting to get all questions answered and concerns addressed. Chief Cina then reported he has received some information about workplace security training and he has a proposal from one company and will forward this to the Police Committee. Mr. Atkins noted we would get credit through the JIF. Mr. Atkins said Chief Cina will give the Police Committee some figures regarding the Dispatcher vacancy.
9. Fire Department –Mr. Atkins reported on behalf of Chief Erber and OEM Coordinator Gary Greves said that all is going well and most members are at the Convention right now.
10. Rescue Squad – Denise Wilson gave the monthly statistical report and also said the Squad has 5 new members, 3 cadets and 2 adults. Mayor Pote thanked both the Rescue Squad and Police for responding so quickly to assist with a medical event involving his brother.
11. Emergency Management – No report
12. Attorney – Mr. Cruz reported he will ask that a Resolution be put on the October 1, 2015 agenda to authorize using the same expert that the League of Municipalities is using. He said there would be no additional cost to the Borough. This Resolution would just substitute one expert with the other.
13. Clerk – Mrs. DeRocco reminded everyone to sign the bill list.
14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins had no report.

Mayor Pote congratulated Watchung for being awarded as the 43rd best New Jersey Municipality to live in. Councilman Gibbs said it was nice to have the Borough recognized but the crime rate reported paints an inaccurate picture since most crimes deal with the Route 22 corridor and are non-violent. Mayor Pote thanked Councilman Gibbs for his assistance with the 9/11 Ceremony and Linda Monetti for her work in putting the 9/11 Ceremony together, and for a successful Fishing Derby. Mr. Herits reported that OEM met and they will be signing the Generator Grant Agreement.

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PUBLIC PORTION – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

No one from the Public desired to be heard.

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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, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, “aye”.

Approval of the following Council minutes:
August 20, 2015 Executive Session
September 3, 2015 Regular and Executive Sessions

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Tax Collector Report – May, June, July, and August, 2015
Wildlife Management Advisory Committee – Recommendation for 2015 – 2016
Board of Adjustment Minutes – June 11, July 30, 2015
Historical Committee Minutes – June 10, 2015

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #25- NJ Transit 9/4/15 Public Hearing Notice – Senior and Disabled Citizens Transportation Assistance Programs c: M & C, Post
- #26- Robert Morales 9/14/15 Letter of resignation from his position as Dispatcher, effective October 15, 2015 c: M & C, TEA

Councilwoman Joren wished to be on record that she is not in agreement with the Wildlife Management recommendation.

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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, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, “aye”.

- R1:09/17/15 Certify General Fund 2015 - 2016 Tax Levy: Watchung Board of Education
- R2: Certify General Fund 2015 - 2016 Tax Levy: Watchung Hills Regional Board of Education
- R3: Authorize Return of Escrow – As listed on Resolution
- R4: Authorize Per Diem Expenses - NJ State League of Municipalities Conference

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NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: Council President Nehls moved the following resolution with a second by Councilwoman Joren and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, “aye”.

- R5:09/17/15 Purchases over \$2000. –Assembly Wiz Inc. (Mobus – Replacement of Basketball Nets, Poles, etc.)

Councilman Franklin moved the following resolution with a second by Council President Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Nehls, Franklin, Joren, Gibbs, “aye”.

- R6: Payment of Bills

Discussion - September 11th Memorial / Monument Placement

Mr. Tom Hartmann, Mr. Seth Alexander, Mr. Anthony Ingrassia, and Mr. Andy Baldassarre, members of the 9/11 Memorial Committee were in attendance.

Council President Nehls suggested another possible location for the Memorial would be between the sidewalk and the Gazebo with the falls as a backdrop. Councilwoman Joren thanked the Committee for their continued work to have this completed. She said she loves the design but does not agree with the three proposed sites but she does agree with Council President Nehls suggestion. Councilman Gibbs asked if the Committee had considered that site and Mr. Hartmann said they were told it is a flood zone. Mr. Alexander remarked that he really likes the beach area and said he would like the brush to be cleared from the site suggested to see if it is feasible to locate it there. Mayor suggested Tom Herits get more information on the flooding issue and to find out how much land the Borough owns in that area. Councilwoman Joren asked Mr. Herits if there is a way to look at slope of the land in that area and he said there are old contour maps he can look at. Mayor Pote requested Mr. Herits look at flood area by the spillway, look at the area to be cleared and get this information to the Committee and Council so a final decision can be made at the next meeting.

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PUBLIC PORTION – GENERAL DISCUSSION

Pete Martino, Sunbright Road, said the first report from the Rodgers Group took one of the engines out of service and later it was determined there was nothing wrong with it. He is concerned about the 2nd Phase because many of the members did not receive the questionnaire for their input. Mr. Atkins said there was much input from the Fire Department as there several meetings with the Rodgers Group and the Fire Department leadership. Mr. Martino then voiced his disappointment regarding his offer to replace the tree at the 9/11 Memorial Plaque. Mayor Pote explained the Borough appreciated the offer but here were concerns if there was heavy rain the area could have been damaged by the equipment. He also said the Borough would like some input as to the type of tree to be planted especially from Mr. Ingrassia.

Doris Fine, Johnston Drive, said she has not seen any progress for the 911 Memorial and asked if the Best Lake area had been looked at. Mr. Hartman said it had been but it was not as accessible. Ms. Fine said her family would like this completed this year. Mayor Pote said the Council and Committee are working very hard to make a decision but they want to make sure it is done the right location and they also want it to be completed for September 11, 2016.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 P.M. to the call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council meeting on Thursday, October 1, 2015 at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk