

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL AGENDA

MAY 5, 2016 - 7:30 P.M.

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:

Joren [P] Black [P] Nehls [P] Gibbs [P] Mobus [P] Sopko [P]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, CFO Bill Hance, and Executive Assistant Shelini Parikh. Mrs. DeRocco asked to be excused at 8:10 P.M. for medical reasons and Shelini Parikh sat in as Acting Clerk.

There were 16 members of the public present, and after the Scout Troop presentation, one member of the Public remained.

PROCLAMATION:

Click It or Ticket / May 23 through June 5, 2016

Mayor Pote read the Proclamation (copy attached.)

REQUEST:

Brownie Troop #65306 – “Flowering” Trees

Brownie Troop 65306 came forward to discuss their request. Each of the 8 Girl Scouts discussed a portion of their proposed project, explaining that they would like address air pollution and global warming by planting trees in the Borough. It was noted that Environmental Commission member Sody Epstein had met with the Scouts and discussed trees and the environment. To date, the Troop has collected \$27 to spend on trees that they would like to plant at Spratford Park and intend on hosting a bike-athon to raise additional funds. The Governing Body thanked the troop for their efforts and offered support and assistance. Councilman Black offered to donate a tree from Gray's Florist shop. Councilman Nehls said that Public Works would assist in digging the hole for the tree. Clerk, Michelle DeRocco suggested that the troop work with the Assistant Engineer, Arlene McCoy, regarding placement of the tree so that it can coincide with the Borough's tree plan.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Gibbs stated that an Administration & Finance meeting was held on 5/2/16. Councilman Gibbs reported that the Minimum/Maximum Salary Ordinance, Re-assessment Program, Personnel Policy changes, Comp Time, Time Off & Whistleblower Policy, Watchung Arts Center lease, annual sewer fee of \$445, and extended hours were all discussed at the meeting. He also stated that the Committee would like the Borough's Sexual Harassment Policy to be reviewed to ensure that it is current and all employees, including volunteers, should be provided training to ensure compliance. A DPW request for a new vehicle to serve Code Enforcement/DPW/Engineering was discussed and the need for both departments to coordinate maintenance for this vehicle. Councilman Gibbs also reported that the Committee discussed the option of utilizing retired police vehicles for Borough use which would alleviate the expenditure of capital dollars on vehicles for Borough use. Councilman Gibbs announced the Capital Improvement Bond and urged the Governing Body to meet with their Committees to finalize their capital requests so that they can be included in the next Bond Ordinance (June 2nd Introduction) rather than incurring additional expenses for another Bond Ordinance. Councilman Nehls notified Councilman Gibbs that the Fire Department's capital requests have been finalized and stated that the Buildings & Grounds Committee still needs to meet to discuss the capital needs, particularly the roads. Administrator Atkins notified the Governing Body that the proposed ordinance includes emergent capital work repairs that are necessary for the Texier House. He concluded the meeting with discussing the 911 Memorial and suggested that the Borough consider providing funding up front so that the project can be completed and afterwards the 911 Committee can reimburse the Borough with donations that they have received. The Governing Body agreed that at this point they would like to see the projected costs of supplies and donations offered (i.e. services/funds) and would like to move forward with this project.

2. Police- No Report

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds- Councilman Nehls reported an incident in which the Police Department responded to regarding 6 ducklings stranded in a sewer and that the collaboration with DPW and PD allowed their successful rescue. Councilman Nehls provided an update regarding the Library and requested that Administrator Atkins coordinate a meeting with Architect Iovino and the Buildings and Grounds Committee. He asked that the County representatives also be included as their input will be key.

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space- No Report

Environmental- Councilman Sopko said that the Environmental Commission held a meeting on April 25th which he was unable to attend since he had attended a Warren Township Planning Board meeting regarding an application for a major subdivision. He reported approval was granted to Old Church Associates LLC., and authorization for a 10 residential lot subdivision of the northern part of the Ness property was approved. He also briefly referenced the draft ordinance regarding Weldon Quarry, and also noted that 15 of the 28 towns where the Pilgrim Pipeline would run through have agreed to contribute funds towards legal services to fight the proposed pipeline. Councilman Sopko reported that the Green Fair held on April 30th was a successful event. CFO, Bill Hance reported on the Green Fair and provided tonnage data. Mayor Pote thanked all the volunteers and DPW staff for their efforts and time that went into planning and hosting the event.

Recreation- Councilman Mobus advised that there was no report and that the next Recreation Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 1, 2016.

Historical –Councilman Mobus reported that the Historical Committee will be the recipient of the Somerset County Historic Preservation and History Recognition Award, and will be honored on May 25th at 7:00 PM at the Brook Arts Center in Bound Brook. He encouraged the Governing Body to attend.

Board of Health-Councilman Black advised that there is no report as he was out of town for the last meeting. He expressed his concerns over the quality of drinking water and said this was a topic of discussion at the last Board of Health meeting.

5. Fire- Councilman Black reported that a Fire Committee meeting was held on Monday evening and that it was interrupted by a fire call. He stated that the Stipend Committee would be coming forward with recommendations for the Law & Ordinances Committee to consider. Councilman Black advised that there are 6 new applicants to the Fire Department which is an unprecedented number the Department has not seen in years. Councilman Gibbs requested that the Fire Committee provide a report for the new truck they are requesting so that the Administrative & Finance Committee can better ascertain how much funding is necessary for the FEMA AFG Grant. Councilman Black reported on the Library Advisory Committee meeting he attended and inquired if the cleaning company could reach out to the Director Hannah Kerwin to discuss concerns. Administrator Atkins advised that efforts are being made to coordinate a meeting with the cleaning company, the Library Director and our Department of Public Works. Councilman Black reported that the Library was very satisfied with the DPW's assistance that they have received recently.

6. Laws/Ordinances- Councilwoman Joren advised that there is no report as she is waiting on draft ordinances from the Borough Attorney.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer- Tom Herits, was not present, however, Mr. Atkins did reported progress on the Knollwood/Deer Run project and ongoing dialogue with the residents. He also advised the Governing Body that the residents of Ellison Road have been contacted regarding proposed work and currently in the process of receiving responses.

8. Police Chief- No Report

9. Fire Department – No Report

10. Rescue Squad- Mayor Pote announced that the Rescue Squad is hosting their Awards Dinner Friday, May 13th. Councilman Black took a moment to express sympathy to the Ohl family regarding their loss.

11. Emergency Management- No Report, however Mr. Atkins stated that Gary Greves would be pleased that Resolution R1 is on the agenda for tonight and that Gary will be coordinating the efforts with the County and Borough for First Responders.

12. Attorney- No Report

13. Clerk- No Report

14. Administrator- Mr. Atkins encouraged the Governing Body to stay alert for articles discussing inability of some Counties in the State to make an effort to have their ratio of assessed value to market value at an acceptable level. He stated that Somerset County is one of the best Counties in the State that do a great job with keeping the ratio at acceptable levels.

The Mayor reported on the following items prior to proceeding with the public portion:

Mayor Pote said he will be meeting with Pilgrim Pipeline Mayors on May 7th and reported that 14 of the Mayors of the 28 have agreed to pass a resolution authorizing them to contribute funds for legal costs associated with battling the proposed pipeline. Mayor Pote also noted the invitation to Valley View School's Narratives of Courage and encouraged the Governing Body to attend on May 18th.

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PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

No one from the public wished to be heard.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

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NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda Resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Joren and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye."

Approval of the following Council minutes:
April 21, 2016 Special Meeting and Regular Meeting

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Board of Health Minutes – March 16, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

None

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda Resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Joren and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye."

- R1:05/05/16 Authorizing Execution of MOU (Memo of Understanding) with Somerset County – Certification of Emergency Responders
- R2: Purchases Over \$2,000. – Solitude Lake Management (Best Lake Fountains)
- R3: Return of Escrow – Various Residents, as Listed on Resolution
- R4: Appointment to Volunteer Fire Department – Jason Perez
- R5: Establish 2016 Sewer Fees
- R6: Authorize Clerk to Advertise for Bids – Valley Drive Road Improvements
- R7: Authorize On-line Auction of Surplus Vehicles - GovDeals
- R8: Authorize Special Assessor for Reassessment Inspections – Robert Gabrish, Assessor Services, LLC

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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.

None

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

No one from the public wished to be heard.

Councilman Mobus reminded the Governing Body about the Governing Officials meeting and the Community Picnic on May 21st, 2016.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, this meeting was adjourned at 8:39 P.M. to the Call of the Chair and to the next meeting scheduled to be held on Thursday, May 19, 2016, at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Clerk