

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL MINUTES

JUNE 2, 2016- 7:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Pote called the meeting to order at 7:34 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 AS WELL AS STEPHEN GUSSIS WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE RESCUE SQUAD AND LONG TIME RESIDENT OF WATCHUNG.

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, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 7 members of the public present

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Gibbs reported the Committee met on May 31, 2016 and discussed the Capital Bond Ordinance totaling \$567,000 which includes, milling and resurfacing seven roads; Fire Department equipment, additional funding for a fire truck, Texier House renovations; recreation fields and includes the professional fees for the Bond Ordinance. He also reported the Borough will be open until 7:00 P.M. on the third Thursday of each month throughout this year. He said the Committee discussed requiring Land Use Board applicants be required to submit approved plans “electronically.” This would require an amendment to the Land Use Ordinance and needs to be referred to the Laws and Ordinance Committee for review. The Committee will also refer to the Public Works Committee for review the possibility of lake dredging and work on the banks of the lake. Council President Joren said there is a major poison ivy issue around the lake which must be dealt with and asked if Public Works could spray. Councilman Gibbs reported interest income has increased since the Borough switched from PNC Bank to Investors.
2. Police – Commissioner Joren had no report.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls had no report for Public Works but reported on a recent meeting held to discuss the current concept plans for the library from Iovino Architects. He added that several representatives from the Somerset County Library were in attendance, as they are key in recommending what is needed for the inside of the Library. It was previously decided to go with plan E, which provided for 2 floors with the “alternate” layout preferred. This current concept would provide 9310 square feet and a cost savings because it would only require one flight of stairs and one flight for elevator. Councilman Nehls described some of the details Mr. Iovino is suggesting, including a glass wall in the rear which will provide spectacular views. Councilman Gibbs was glad to see there will be a meeting space and quiet space and everything is flexible. He said the building will be completely ADA compliant. Councilman Black asked when the Council will be receiving recommendations and Councilman Nehls said he hopes by the next meeting to have a firmer plan and then start getting costs in place over the summer. Mr. Iovino should present the plan at the second meeting in September and then the Borough can prepare the specs and go out to bid, and hopefully start construction by 2017.
4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – No Report

Environmental – Councilman Sopko reported the Committee met on May 23, 2016 and discussion was held on tree cutting issues and how to inform new property owners regarding the Tree Ordinance. Councilman Gibbs said redevelopers and builders should be given this information when they apply for construction permits. Councilman Gibbs would also like the Environmental Commission to look at Ash trees dying and a possible Ash Yellow disease which is what the Department of Agriculture thinks this is what is causing the issue. He would like the Committee to look into and prepare something for the next newsletter. Councilman Sopko said if poison ivy grows up the trees it must also be destroyed for the seedlings fall and grow again. Mayor Pote suggested the possibility of hiring a specialist for this and Councilman Nehls said to speak to Arlene McCoy.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus reported the committee met last evening and evaluated the picnic with approximately 350 attending. The Commission recognized Chris Murphy with a \$100 gift certificate to Water and Wine. Debbie Devine will now be a regular member and Chris Murphy will be an alternate. Councilman Mobus also said there are still tickets to the Yankee Trip on June 24th. They are available on the website, \$65/person and it is Babe Ruth bobble head day. He reported there will be some summer programs run with monies from a grant from the Youth Services Commission.

Historical – No Report

Board of Health – Councilman Black had no report as the next meeting is June 15th at 7:00 pm.

5. Fire – Councilman Black said a meeting scheduled for next Wednesday, June 8th at 8 AM and they will be trying to push forward the stipend. Councilman Gibbs asked that the Committee discuss the fire truck to give the Council some input.

6. Laws/Ordinances – No Report

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – No Report

8. Police Chief – No Report

9. Fire Department – No Report

10. Rescue Squad – No Report

11. Emergency Management – No Report

12. Attorney – No Report – No Executive Session

13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco reminded everyone Tuesday, June 7th is Primary Election Day and polls will be open from 6 AM to 8 PM. She said she has spoken to Chief Cina and police will be on Hillcrest to direct traffic. She also reported the curbside bulk pick up will start next week and permits can be purchased from Maria in the Public Works/Engineering Office.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins mentioned a truck accident on Johnston Drive yesterday which closed the road for approximately twelve hours. He passes out some photos. He also said he must set up a meeting with the Local Affordable Housing Committee by June 13th or 14th. Mr. Atkins asked if he is correct that the Ellison Road project will not have granite block installed and Councilman Nehls said granite block will be installed and there will be discussions with Mr. Cruz regarding future projects. He said Cardinal Road and Redmont Road will be completed first and Ellisen Road will be last. Mr. Atkins said it was important to make some policy decisions on curbing in general and now with Ellisen Road specifically. He said with curbing installed on Ellison Road the timing of roto milling and resurfacing will be pushed back so a decision should be made as soon as possible.

Mayor Pote said the Memorial Service went well with about 90 residents attending. This year the Borough honored World War II Veteran and long-time Watchung resident John T. Toolan. He also reported Somerset County awarded the Watchung Historical Committee the Preservation and Educational award. Mayor Pote said the Borough must continue to watch the Pilgrim Pipeline issue since the Department of Environmental Protection is relaxing the Highlands area regulations. Mr. Atkins said Berkeley Heights may have passed a resolution to join the group.

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PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Anthony Ingrassia, High Oaks Drive, thanked the Mayor, Council, and administration for all their many efforts on the 911 Memorial. He asked if funding for the project was being included in the Bond Ordinance that is being voted on tonight. Councilman Gibbs said it is not included in the Bond but the Council will support the Committee in any fund raising events. Mr. Ingrassia said the Committee is looking forward to formal approval of the design and location for the Memorial.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion: 911 Memorial Committee/Adoption of Design and Location

Mayor Pote said it looks as though there has been a conclusion for the modified design and location of the Memorial and that the Council is supportive of same.

Councilman Gibbs said the decision won't make everyone happy but the revised design is superior to the others and the location is near where the current memorial site is. Councilman Gibbs moved to accept the final modified design and location, with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye."

Councilman Gibbs said the fund raising should come now that the location and design has been approved.

A Public Hearing of Ordinance OR:16/05 entitled: **“AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG CH.5-12-12.76 ET. SEQ., THEREOF AND TO FIX AND DETERMINE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES AND COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES”** was held.

Council President Joren moved a public hearing be held with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko “aye”.

With no one from the public wishing to be heard Council President Joren closed the public hearing and moved the following resolution:

R1:06/02/16 Adoption of Ordinance OR:16/05 - 2016 Salary Min/Max

Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye”.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda items 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:
May 19, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Police Activity – April, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #15 - Rose Anne Barr 5/19/16 Letter of Resignation as a Member of the Traffic and Beautification Commission c: M & C, TEA
- #16 - PSE&G 5/16/16 Notice of Filing of Petition for an Extension of a Solar Generation investment Program and Associated Cost Recovery Mechanism c: M & C, TEA, Post
- #17 - PSE&G 5/16/16 Notice of Petition and Hearing Dates for Electric and Gas Base Rate Adjustment Pursuant to the Energy Strong Program c: M & C, TEA, Post
- #18 - NJ Transit Corporation 5/16/16 FY2016 Request for Federal Financial Assistance c: M & C, TEA, Post
- #19 - Watchung Planning Board 5/17/16 Resolution PB16-R7, Adoption of Master Plan Amendment entitled “Borough of Watchung Quarry Master Plan Amendment” c: M & C, TEA

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.”

Prior to the motion Mayor Pote informed Council R5 was modified to add Bardy Farms as an additional Tower, as their application was approved just after the Agenda had gone out.

Council President Joren commented on R2 and said she is in receipt of a letter sent by the South Brunswick Mayor to the Chair and Urban Affairs Committee. She recommends this Council does the same and she received permission to use the letter. Mr. Atkins said these bills are very important as they relate to the gap period.

R2:06/02/16 Supporting Senate Bill S-2254 and Assembly Bill A-3821, Affirming the Legislative Intent of the Fair Housing Act

R3: Purchases Over \$2,000. – KCG Inc., (PD / Condensing Unit for Air Conditioning)

R4: Authorize Clerk to Issue Raffle License – Sisters of Mercy of The Americas

R5: Authorize Renewals of Towing Licenses / 3 Year – M & W Towing Service
Majestic Towing & Transport, Inc.
Somerset Hills Towing
Bardy Farms Towing & Recovery

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.

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

R6:06/02/16 Endorsing the “Quarry Area Master Plan Amendment”

Introduction of Ordinance OR:16/06 entitled: **”AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO EXTEND THE “QU” QUARRY ZONE AND TO MAKE ASSOCIATED AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE”** Public Hearing to be held on July 21, 2016.

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

R7:06/02/16 Introduction of Ordinance OR:16/06 – Amend Code / Land Development Ordinance
Quarry Zone Expansion

Council President Joren said the Planning Board had worked on this for several years and she thanked Mr. Butler and Mr. Robert Weldon for all their help to finalize the necessary amendments to the Land Development Ordinance.

Mr. Butler thanked the Board and Council and remarked that this is a much better Ordinance.

Introduction of Bond Ordinance OR:16/07 entitled: **“BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAKING OF VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND THE ACQUISITION OF NEW ADDITIONAL OR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY AND A NEW AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLE AND A NEW FIRE TRUCK (PARTIAL FUNDING), INCLUDING ORIGINAL APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT, IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$540,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.”** Public Hearing to be held on June 16, 2016.

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

R8: Introduction of Bond Ordinance OR:16/07 - 2016 Road Resurfacing Program,
Acquisition of Additional or Replacement
Equipment, New Vehicle and Partial
Funding of New Fire Truck

Mr. Atkins said the life of this Ordinance is 9.7 years.

Introduction of Bond Ordinance OR:16/08 entitled: **“BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO PHILLIPS FIELD IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$27,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.”** Public Hearing to be held on June 16, 2016

Mr. Atkins said the life of this Ordinance is 15 years.

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

R9: Introduction of Bond Ordinance OR:16/08– Phillips Field Various Improvements

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

Joe Sharkey, Johnston Drive, said he has concerns about the speeding on Johnston Drive and would like to request the installation of speed bumps. Council President Joren said Councilman Mobus discussed this with her yesterday and she has spoken to Chief Cina who said they will have more police presence there. Mr. Sharkey said it is not possible to have police presence there all the time. Mayor Pote also said although police presence may be helpful there may be some merit to having speed bumps installed. Councilman Black said he would be a proponent of speed bumps and this conversation should be given to the Engineer. Mr. Cruz suggested getting input from the Borough Engineer and possibly the JIF (Joint Insurance Fund.)

Mr. Reddy, Mr. Berardi, also Johnston Drive residents, expressed their concerns about the speeding and would like to see speed bumps on the street.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council meeting to be held at 7:30 PM on June 16, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk