

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL MINUTES

AUGUST 18, 2016

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Acting Mayor Debra Joren 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 William Robertson was present for Mr. Cruz, Chief Finance Officer William Hance, Engineer Tom Herits, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 3 members of the public present

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Gibbs said the Committee met on August 8 and reported discussions have been started with the Dispatchers whose contract is up this year and discussions will begin soon with the PBA. Looking to save money, the Committee is in the process of reviewing health insurance options for employees, noting any changes must be equal to or similar to current coverage. Councilman Gibbs explained Resolution R10 memorializes the consensus of the Council to redirect the unexpended Capital Balance of \$44,000 which was appropriated in 2014 to Fire Department Equipment acquisition. He explained this will not incur additional debt, only move the money from one account to another. Councilman Gibbs said they have started negotiations on the Phillips Field Lease and they just want to make sure the wording regarding sharing 50/50 for Capital improvements is included in the lease. He also said they are discussing the Watchung Arts Center Lease. He said the Committee discussed repurposing the Police Department vehicles and using them for other departments instead of purchasing new ones and long as they are checked out and are mechanically sound. He said the Borough received a grant for an Electric Charging Station and the location is now being decided. It is a level 2 charger which takes approximately 4-6 hours for a full charge. Councilman Gibbs said there was a meeting with Meeker Sharkey, Hurley (JIF) and it is recommended authorizing administration to do another three year commitment. Mr. Atkins said a Resolution will be prepared for the next Council Meeting. The Committee is also looking into the possibility of using Robert Wood Johnson as our daytime Ambulance coverage. Currently Atlantic Health provides coverage but recipients are charged a fee for transport. Councilman Gibbs requested that the Buildings and Grounds Committee review the three conceptual plans for the Ness Property that Maser has submitted.

2. Police – No report.

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls reported the milling of streets on the list for this year has begun. Yesterday a dangerous tree behind the library was removed. The tree contained a large Italian Honey Bee nest and experts from Rutgers came to carefully remove the bees to a beehive which will be taken back to Rutgers for studying and then returned to a resident beekeeper in Watchung. It is estimated that there were approximately 80,000 bees in this colony. The entire process took 5-6 hours. Councilman Nehls reported there was a meeting of the Public Works Committee yesterday and they discussed the salt storage shed to be housed on the Weldon property, noting it is a good location and will be able to store around 1000 tons of salt. The County is interested in sharing and would contribute half the cost (\$45,000) of its construction, the total estimated cost is \$90,000. He said the County would leave a loader onsite which eliminates the Borough having to transport one to the site. Councilman Gibbs asked if there are any permit issues being so close to a stream and Councilman Nehls said there are no permits required and Mr. Herits confirmed this comment. The Committee discussed the poison ivy problem at the Lake and Councilman Nehls said Mr. Burns has reached out to the environmentally friendly company that treats the water in the Lake. He also reported the Ness Property remediation will be moving forward soon but spending of Escrow funds must be approved by the Jewish Federation. The Borough will be getting prices for the demolition of houses and noting there will be additional costs for asbestos removal. Councilman Nehls asked the Council to review the Library information that was emailed earlier today and asked for comments. He said it is possible that the Library renovation could go out to bid by the end of this year and possibly start the project next Spring.

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – Councilman Sopko had no report but said if the Ness Property is going to move forward they may want to meet. Councilman Gibbs recommended that the Public Works - Building and Grounds Committee look at any plans then ask for comments from the Recreation Commission. Councilman Sopko asked if there will be a better timeline in about three months and Councilman Nehls responded that the Escrow monies cannot be spent until the Jewish Federation approves. Council President Joren asked if comments/reviews would be from the Recreation Commission or the Open Space Committee and Councilman Gibbs suggested the possibility of a joint Open Space/Recreation meeting.

Environmental – Councilman Sopko reported the next scheduled meeting is August 22nd. He reported he was present when the tree with the bees was taken down and it was very interesting. Councilman Gibbs mentioned the Queen of The Sun Bee movie which was shown in 2014 and suggested that there may be renewed interest in seeing it again.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus said the next scheduled meeting is September 7th. He then reported on some upcoming events including the combined PTO Ice Cream Social and Recreation Movie night on September 9th; the Fishing Derby on September 17th, starting at 9:30 AM and noted that Blue Ridge Sportsman will be assisting at this event. He said at the Mr. B’s Fishing Camp a 10 lb. catfish was caught. Councilman Mobus said the Recreation Commission needs an alternate member. Mr. Atkins said Council President Joren and Mayor Pote will be reviewing all vacancies.

Historical – Councilman Mobus said there is a meeting scheduled for September 14th and the ladies have been very busy; Chris Vanderfleet continues to work on Reflections of Watchung video.

Board of Health – Councilman Black had no report – the next meeting will be September 14 at 7:00 PM.

5. Fire – Councilman Black reported he attended the first of the month meeting and Committee meeting and they discussed the reimbursement for background checks for new members. Administrator Tom Atkins said this will be handled through petty cash. Discussions regarding stipends was completed and the recommendation is to continue as it was last year.

6. Laws/Ordinances – Council President reported there is a meeting scheduled for September 8th.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer- Mr. Herits reported the Knollwood and Deer Run project is 100% complete. He said milling on other roads has begun and paving will begin on Monday. Mr. Herits said he will be meeting with Bob Weldon tomorrow to discuss the salt shed, the price includes lighting, electric service, paving and the structure itself which will be 50’ x 80’ and this will be raised approximately 2-3” from ground level. The calibration of the new radar units for the Police Department has been tested however Weights and Measures still has to come and certify them.

8. Police Chief – No report.

9. Fire Department – No report

10. Rescue Squad – No report

11. Emergency Management – No report

12. Attorney – No report

13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco thanked Jessica Rutishauser for stepping up and taking over the Farmers Market. Ms. DeRocco reminded everyone about the League of Municipalities conference and said there is no rush but they should start planning soon if they wish to attend. She then wished Councilman Nehls a Happy Birthday.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins reported Mayor Pote texted that he was feeling much better and thanked Don Monetti for his assistance. Mr. Herits clarified that the Brian Levine listed on R6 is not the County Freeholder. He then said he is glad the newer Council members are evaluating the Joint Insurance Fund.

=====
PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY
=====

No one from the Public wished to be heard.

=====

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A Public Hearing on Ordinance OR:16/09 entitled “**AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING A DEED OF ROAD DEDICATION FOR A PORTION OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 183 WASHINGTON ROCK ROAD AND KNOWN ON THE TAX MAPS OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG AS BLOCK 10.02, LOT 6 TO THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG.**” was held.

Councilman Black 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.”

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, asked for someone to explain what this is. Engineer Tom Herits said when a resident requests a land disturbance permit and the road does not meet the right-of-way standards the Borough will ask the property owner to dedicate a piece of their property to bring it to the proper road width.

With no other members from the public wishing to be heard Councilman Black moved the following resolution.

R1: Adoption of Ordinance of Ordinance OR:16/09 – Deed of Road Dedication / 183 Washington
Rock Road

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 Councilman Black 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:
July 21, 2016, Regular and Executive Sessions

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Police Activity Report – June, July, 2016
Building Department Report – June, 2016
Board of Adjustment – June 9, 2016
Tax Collector Report – January, February, March, April, May, 2016
Planning Board Minutes – March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #24 - Township of Warren, Borough of Manville 7/25/16 Resolution in support of H.R.814, known as the “Thin Blue Line Act” c: M&C, TEA
- #25 - JCP&L 7/20/16 Notice of annual Universal Service Fund Compliance Filing c: M&C, TEA
- #26 - PSE&G 7/25/16 6) Notices of Filing and Public Hearings: 1) Annual Compliance Filings for a change in the Statewide Electric and Gas Permanent Universal Service Fund Program, Factors within the Social Benefits charges; 2) Petition for Annual Margin Adjustment Charge 3) Petition for changes in Green Recovery Charges 4) Petition for changes in Solar Pilot Recovery Charges 5) Petition to revise its Weather Normalization Charge 6) Notice of Filing and Public Hearing re: Annual Charge Filing for Periodic Mechanism and Changes in Balancing Charge c: M&C, TEA, Post
- #27 - Somerset County Department of Transportation 8/2/16 Notice of Public Hearing in regard to 2017 Senior and Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program Grant Application C: M&C, TEA, Post

=====

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

R2:08/18/16 Authorize Final Payment of Accumulated Benefits – Arthur Holzheimer

R3: Authorize Refund of Vendor Fee – Pickle Licious

- R4: Purchases Over \$2,000. – East Coast Emergency Lighting / 2 PO#'s (PD / Vehicle Accessories)
 Predator Tree Service (B&G / Dead Tree Removal)
 NJ Fire Equipment Co. (FD / Coats, Pants, Helmets)
 Pinto Brothers (PW / 2016 Bulk Pickup)
 This and That (PD / Uniforms, 2 Officers)
 Finne Building & Investment (B&G / Basin Repair)
 Wayne Boylan Contracting (Capital / Ness Cleanup)
 Pinto Brothers (Capital / Ness Cleanup)
- R5: Authorize Appointment to Board of Health – Diane Logan, Alternate #2
- R6: Appointment of Alternate Attorney / Conflict of Interest - Brian J. Levine, Esq.
- R7: Authorize Return of Duplicate 3rd Qtr. Tax Payment – 353 Johnston Drive
- R8: Authorize Return of Duplicate 3rd Qtr. Tax Payment – 90 Chelsea Court
- R9: Authorize Redemption of Tax Sale Certificate #13-11 – 797 Valley Road
- R10: Cancellation of Unexpended Capital Balance / OR:14/17 – FD Equip Acquisition
- R11: Supporting Proposed Senate Bill S-2478, Expanding the Crime of Bias Intimidation to Include Law Enforcement Officers and Emergency Personnel
- R12: Authorize Insertion of Revenue Items into 2016 Budget – Chapter 159
 State of NJ Recycling Bonus Grant
 Clean Communities
 Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation
 Click It or Ticket
 Somerset County Youth Services Grant
- R13: Waive Chapter 6-2.11 of the Borough Code / Fireworks - Rescue Squad Tree of Lights
- R14: Authorize Return of Escrow – As listed on Resolution
- R15: Authorize Salary Adjustment Part-Time Temporary Laborer / PW – Lane Solan

=====

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 Gibbs introduced Resolution R16, and made the following statement: “I am voting in the affirmative for all items on the Bill List, but recusing myself on the purchase of energy commodity, due to my employment with an energy commodity supplier...” Councilman Nehls second the motion and upon Roll Call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, “aye.”

- R16: Payment of Bills

=====

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

=====

Don Monetti, Beechwood Place, said the old Watchung sign has a broken post and asked if the Department of Public Works would be able to repair it. Council President Joren said Mr. Burns is looking for a Cedar post. Mr. Monetti then mentioned the surface on Hillcrest Road is very smooth and even when dry it is very slippery. He said it is hazardous when the Rescue Squad is responding to calls. Councilman Nehls said the Borough could possibly speak to the County about this.

Pete Martino, Sunbright Road, asked if the Grant covers the cost of the Charging Station. Councilman Gibbs said the cost to the Borough would be less than \$2-\$3 for a full charge and may increase the monthly electric bill about \$10.00. Mr. Martino questioned why the \$44,000 is being moved to the apparatus fund. Councilman Nehls responded that the Borough will be using vehicles from the Police Department once they have been checked mechanically and Councilman Gibbs explained that these vehicles are in good shape, therefore, there is no reason for taxpayers to pay for new autos for various departments. Mr. Martino said volunteers now have to use their own vehicles to attend training and classes and the Chief takes the Fire Department vehicle home. Mr. Atkins responded that the Chief is one of the best employees we have and other Chiefs followed the same procedure, and that he is on-call 24-7.

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, asked who is responsible for maintaining the Borough property? She said the weeping beech tree by Best Lake is covered with vines and there is an “out of control” rose vine on the path she said she has called twice and no one gets back to her. She also said there are dead trees and dead wood on Somerset Street. Mr. Atkins said he will talk to Mr. Burns. Ms.

Goldshein said she just found out last night about the milling and she also wanted to know what if after the road has been milled there is only mud underneath? Mr. Herits said he will look at the area.

=====

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council meeting 7:30 PM, September 1, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk