

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

COUNCIL MINUTES

NOVEMBER 3, 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.

ROLL CALL:

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

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, CFO William Hance, and Clerk Michelle DeRocco. Although not present at Roll Call, Council President Joren arrived at 8:00 P.M.

There was 1 member of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Gibbs said he is in the process of scheduling the next Committee meeting, which would have been November 7th, however, other Borough business had to be scheduled at that time.

2. Police – No report. Administrator Atkins noted the portable message sign on the Agenda for approval tonight, and Councilman Gibbs announced he will be meeting with the PBA on Monday morning to discuss their contract.

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls reported that at the last Committee meeting, the rock wall was discussed, and since the estimate for repair was \$250,000., the Committee instructed Tom Herits to put specs together and we can see how the bids come in. He noted that Bob Burns is also concerned that if there is a collapse, there is a need for an alternate egress for the trucks, equipment, etc. therefore we need to consider an alternate driveway. Councilman Nehls said Bob is still discussing the details of the salt storage with the County and stressed that whatever is agreed upon needs to be in writing. Councilman Nehls said since work will soon begin on the Ness property, he no longer wants it to be used for Public Works storage, and Weldon has agreed to allow for storage if needed, however, additional fencing would have to be installed. He said Engineer Tom Herits has already determined a list of streets for next year's road improvements, and that he will submit to the DOT a grant application for High Tor. Councilman Nehls said quotes are being sought for the deck replacement work at the Shack at Phillips Field. Bill Nehls discussed the insurance money that was received when one of the Public Works trucks burned on the highway. CFO Bill Hance explained that the Borough received \$40,000. for that 1998 truck in insurance money, which went back to surplus. Councilman Nehls said a new replacement truck is almost \$200,000. and since it takes almost 3 months to receive the vehicle from the time the order is placed, we will just about miss snow plow season. Councilman Nehls commended Bob Burns on efforts to substantially reduce the cost to repair to the crosswalk lights at Verona Place. He added that the Council will be approving tonight the purchase of a portable message sign, and reported the gutters were replaced at the Texier House. Councilman Nehls discussed the latest renditions for the Library that were distributed to Mayor and Council and reminded all that with every change or upgrade, while it may look much nicer, will definitely add to the cost. He asked the Council if they would like to continue to move forward and request a proposal from Mr. Iovino and after discussion, it was the unanimous consensus of the Council to move forward and ask Mr. Iovino to prepare a proposal and possibly we can go to bid early next year.

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – Councilman Sopko said the Committee has not met.

Environmental – Councilman Sopko reported the Commission's last meeting was held on October 24th and noted there was a very nice news article focusing on Rachel Funcheon and the Pilgrim Pipeline.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus reported the Harvest Festival was a success, noting they handed out 450 hotdogs. Mayor Pote agreed that the event was a success and commended Linda Monetti and the Public Works Department for their efforts. Councilman Mobus said the Commission is considering changing the hours for next year’s event from 2 pm to 5 pm to 1 pm to 4 pm.

Historical – Councilman Mobus announced that this year’s Veteran’s Day Ceremony will honor Allan Miles.

Board of Health – Councilman Black had nothing to report, however, announced the next meeting date of November 16th at 7:00 P.M.

5. Fire – Councilman Black announced that all are awaiting for the renovation project to go out to bid, as Engineer Tom Herits is in the process of discussing some code regulations with Construction Official Ed Bennett. Administrator Atkins reminded all that the November 9th drill will include hostile work place training provided by JIF Attorney Richard Flaum. Councilman Black also said the Library Advisory Board wants to begin discussing a “drop-off” point for return books, etc., once the construction on the Library begins.

6. Laws/Ordinances – Council President Joren reported the next meeting is scheduled for November 15th so she will have a report after that meeting.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – No report.

8. Police Chief – No report.

9. Fire Department – No report.

10. Rescue Squad – No report.

11. Emergency Management – In Gary Greves’ absence, Administrator Atkins reported that Gary had attended training at the County facility last week.

12. Attorney – Mr. Cruz had nothing to report.

13. Clerk – Mrs. DeRocco reported the County Clerk said the sample ballots should have been delivered Monday or Tuesday, however, she is hearing that residents are just receiving them today. She noted she did post a sample ballot on the webpage. She also said that the County offices will be open on Saturday morning from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, for any last minute “vote by mail” applications. Mrs. DeRocco also announced that the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is scheduled for Friday, December 2nd, at the Forest Lodge and the invitations should be going out in the mail next week.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins reported that he and Bill Hance will be meeting with the FMBA representatives next week. He spoke to Maser Consulting and said the 2 grant applications that are in progress and on schedule. In regard to the Emergency Appropriation, he announced that the DOT informed him that it will be the Borough’s responsibility to mill and pave a section of Route 22 where the emergency occurred. Mr. Atkins also advised that options are being reviewed in regard to Janitorial services.

Mayor Pote said he attended the Trunk or Treat, sponsored by the Watchung Educational Foundation and held at Bayberry School, last Friday. He said it was a great event. He reminded all about the Watchung Hills Municipal Alliance “5K Run” this Saturday. Mayor Pote said he attended a meeting in Trenton at the DEP, with other Mayors who are uniting against the Pilgrim Pipeline. He said the DEP seemed to really listen to their concerns and they appeared truly candid and transparent. He reported that Pilgrim will have a hard time getting any approvals in the Highlands area, and they did learn that Pilgrim has not yet applied for the permits.

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PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

No one from the public desired to be heard.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A Public Hearing of Ordinance OR:16/14 entitled "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER VI, TITLED 'POLICE REGULATIONS' OF THE REVISED GENEREAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, TO ADD A NEW SECTION 6-14, TITLED "PET MILLS PROHIBITED" 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. Councilman Gibbs made a motion to amend this Ordinance to change the wording from "Pet Mills Prohibited" to "Restricting the Sale of Dogs and Cats From Pet Shops" and also to change the date of the submission of the required annual report from "no later than May 1 of each year" to "before the last day of January of each year" and the reason for this is to make the record keeping easier.

Councilman Gibbs moved this Ordinance as amended on first reading and authorized the Clerk to advertise the new date for Public Hearing which will be November 28, 2016. Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye."

R1:11/03/16 Adoption of Ordinance OR:16/14 – Restricting the Sale of Dogs/Cats obtained through Pet Mills within the Borough (CARRIED TO NOVEMBER 28, 2016)

A Public Hearing on Ordinance OR:16/15 entitled: "AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG AMENDING CHAPTER VI, TITLED "POLICE REGULATIONS", TO ADD A NEW SECTION 6-13, TITLED "SALE OF CRIB BUMPER PADS PROHIBITED" WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE BOROUGH." 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. Councilman Gibbs made a motion to carry this Ordinance to the next meeting in an effort to provide more time for public input, and authorized the Clerk to advertise the new date for Public Hearing which will be November 28, 2016. Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye."

R2:11/03/16 Adoption of OR:16/15 – Prohibit Sale of Crib Bumper Pads (CARRIED TO NOVEMBER 28, 2016)

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NEW BUSINESS

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

Approval of the following Council minutes:
October 20, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Board of Health Minutes – June 15, 2016
Recreation Commission Minutes – June 1, September 7, 2016
Environmental Commission Minutes – September 29, 2016

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#37 - JCP&L 10/27/16 Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Rate Increases for Electric Services and 2016 Base Rate Filing c: M&C, TEA, Post

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

- R3:11/01/16 Purchases Over \$2,000. – Power Place, Inc. (PW – Snow Blower)
Lawsoft, Inc. (PW – Fingerprint/Mugshot Software)
Finne Building & Invest. (PW – Emergency Sewer Repair)
Ditschman/Flemington Ford (Construction - 2017 Explorer)
Garden State Hywy Products (Rd Improv. / Ped Crossing
Verona Place)
Everbridge (PD- Nixle 3 year Contract)
Garden State Hywy Products (Emg. Serv.Departs./ Portable
Message Board)
S.E. Rose Trucking & Excavating, Inc. (Mobus Field
Drainage Improvements)
- R4: Authorize Insertion of Special Item of Revenue (Chapt. 159) / State of NJ Body Armor Grant
- R5: Authorize Redemption of Tax Sale Cert. #15-05 – 99 Tuttle Road
- R6: Authorize Professional Service Contract –Affordable Housing Consultant / Mark Healey, PP/AICP
- R7: Appointment to Volunteer Fire Department – Nicholas J. Salvemini

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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.

Councilman Gibbs moved R8, a second was made by Council Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko “aye.”

R8:11/03/16 Emergency Appropriation /Sanitary Sewer Force Main Break

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

No one from the public desired to be heard.

Council President Joren reminded all of the installation of lights along Somerset Street that happened about 5 years ago. She said many residents were unhappy with the brightness of the lights, however, PSE&G advised at the time that it would be very costly to change them, prior to their 5 year anniversary. She said it is now past the 5 years and while it still may cost, the fees are minimal. She asked her colleagues to drive up and down Somerset Street and compare the wattages, as the lights by the bear at Houston Lumber are slightly dimmer. She said the Council should make a decision soon if any changes are to be made. She said if it is the consensus to change them, the Borough will need a letter from Maser Consulting and Somerset County.

Administrator Atkins advised that he has had discussions with the Borough’s rep from PSE&G, Sheridan Balmeo.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M. to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled meeting to be held at 7:30 P.M. on Monday, November 28, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Clerk