

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

MINUTES

APRIL 20, 2017

7:30 PM

OPENING STATEMENT: Mayor Stephen K. Pote called the meeting to order at 7:37 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, CFO Bill Hance, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 8 members of the public present

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:

Councilman Black moved R1 and asked Mayor Pote to read the Resolution (copy attached.)

R1:04/20/17 Resolution In Memory of Mayor Anthony Addario

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

Mayor Pote presented a framed copy of the resolution to Mayor Addario's wife, Diddy (Dorothy), who thanked everyone for their support and said Tony always said if he did not have at least 50% of the people mad at him at one time he was not doing his job. He would always go with what was best for the greatest number of people.

Councilman Black said he served with Tony as a Councilman and learned much from him- he was all about Watchung.

Councilman Nehls said he thanks Tony for his help when he and his wife Georgia were trying to adopt their two girls from China. He said you can't hear a story about Watchung without Tony's name being mentioned.

Mr. Atkins said he had experiences working with Mayor Addario through Scotch Plains. He said Tony was instrumental in getting the town into the JIF Insurance fund saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars and he helped in having towns become full partners in PARSAs with voting rights.

Mayor Pote said Tony loved Watchung and he was always thinking ahead long term of what was in best interests to the residents and the town of Watchung. He said that is Tony's legacy and he made such a difference in this town.

Councilman Gibbs said it should also be mentioned that we lost another resident, John Shpunder, the night of our last meeting. Even though he and John did not agree on many things, he was alert and acted as a watchdog for residents.

Watchung Hills Regional High School – Budget Presentation

Superintendent Elizabeth Jewett and Business Administrator, Tim Stys presented the 2017/2018 Budget and explained some of the details of the budget. They said they used tax levy waivers to increase the tax levy above the 2%. This is mainly due to increases in health care, out of district special education expenses and lack of state support. Ms. Jewett said the impact on the average home in Watchung will be an annual increase of \$16.00/home.

Councilman Black asked what the District debt is now. Mr. Stys said there are three bonds outstanding which will be due 2024, 2026 and 2028. Mr. Hance said the debt is \$36,900,000. Councilman Black also questioned the \$500,000 kitchen and Ms. Jewett said they are planning to utilize this for culinary art programs which would be a valuable learning experience for students. Mr. Stys also explained the

kitchen had to be redone due to mold behind the cabinets and asbestos under the tiles, both of these issues had to be abated. Councilman Nehls asked if they need a referendum to go over the 2% and Mr. Stys said they do not since they used waivers to bring the amount down to 4%. Councilman Mobus questioned the surplus amounts and Mr. Stys explained what they are allowed to have. Councilman Black asked about the lead level in the water at the High School. Mr. Stys said all were tested in January and there were nine areas that had higher than recommended levels. These have been retested in March and they are waiting for those results. Councilman Black also asked if anyone on the premises has training to administer Narcan. Ms. Jewett said there is an officer onsite at all times to do this. Mayor Pote asked for an estimate of the number of students for the next two years. Ms. Jewett said 2017/18 there will be approximately 2046 enrolled and the next two years there will be around 1900.

Ms. Jewett added that they will be upgrading their technology. They will have Chrome Books with a life span of 4-5 years and students will be required to pay insurance on this. They will be forming a long range planning committee to identify areas for possible cuts. Councilman Nehls asked if there will be representatives from each town on this committee and Ms. Juette said she will mention this.

Mayor Pote thanked them for attending.

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REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Gibbs had no report, but said the next meeting is May 1st.

2. Police – Commissioner Joren reported Chief Cina said the two new officers are 5 weeks into their field training and will soon be on their own and all officers are currently doing their spring Fire Arms Qualification. She said the Department passed the accreditation process and they are good for the next three years. Also on April 11th the Division of Motor Vehicles used the Departments parking lot as a check point for random inspections and the State will send the Borough a portion of the money collected for fines. Commission Joren also reported the Department will be holding an unused medication event on April 29th.

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls reported that PSE&G Direct Install program will be installing LED lighting in the Texier House in May. Spring leaf bag removal started on April 3rd and will continue through April 28th and the fountains at both lakes are scheduled to be installed next Tuesday, April 25th. All salt has been moved to Somerset County for storage and the salt spreaders have been removed from the trucks. He also reported the hazardous tree was removed on Verona Place, blacktop berms were replaced and installed on Wetumpka Lane, Glen Eagle Drive, and Robin Glen Road, potholes were filled on Crestwood Drive and Watchung Crest and the catch basin on Lakeview Terrace was repaired. Councilman Nehls also reported the new A/C unit was installed at the Police Department, all HVAC duct work was cleaned and sanitized at the library. He said per Engineer McCoy’s request the sluice gates tested at both lakes

4. Public Affairs:

Open Space – No Report

Environmental – Councilman Sopko said the next meeting is scheduled for Monday April 24th. At the March 27th meeting they had discussed the Ness property plans. He said the Recreation Commission has some concerns regarding the proposed community garden and a potential building. Councilman Nehls said once they have decided on suggestions they should bring to the Public Works Buildings and Grounds Committee for review, after which they will give to the Mayor and Council prior to discussing with the County. Councilman Sopko said the Green Fair is this Saturday in Warren from 10 am to 1 pm and Operation Pride is April 29th at 9 AM, Arbor Day is April 28th.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus said the Commission had some questions regarding the building for a teen center that is included on Concept “C” plan and would like an answer before the next Recreation meeting which is scheduled for May 3rd. He also reported the Easter Egg Hunt was a huge success and there has been progress in the summer camp program. They have presented an offer to someone for Director and once she is hired have her involved in the hiring of counselors. They will have a ratio of 6 to 1. The program will now be opened up to other towns starting tomorrow.

Historical – Councilman Mobus reported the Committee has been very busy and they are all excited about the lighting and painting. The Committee will be part of the Weekend Journey Through the Past, October 14 and 15th this will be the third year. He also reported Richard Stomber is working on WWI posters and they are hoping to have the display ready for the Weekend Journey Through the Past. The committee is working on a project to determine the history of the street names in Watchung.

Board of Health – Councilman Black reported there was a meeting last evening and he covered all during the Board of Education Budget report. The next meeting is scheduled for June 21st at 7 PM.

5. Fire – No report.

6. Laws/Ordinances – Council President Joren had no report – there will be a meeting on May 4th at 6:30 PM.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – Councilman Nehls reported Mr. Herits is working on the bid documents for Washington Drive - curb repair and milling and paving. He also said the Firehouse renovation project has been advertised and there is a pre-bid meeting scheduled for April 28th, and bids will be received on May 12th. Mr. Herits is waiting for the contracts from the Contractor, Stilo, for the Valley Drive project. He is also waiting on a decision with the Library in order to finalize the cost of site improvements. The Borough Attorney has issued a claim letter to responsible parties of Liccardi force main break and he is waiting for a response. Mr. Herits said he and the Department of Public Works have been looking at options to irrigate the center island across from Spratford Park and also at drainage for Lakeview Terrace.

8. Police Chief – No report.

9. Fire Department – No report.

10. Rescue Squad – Diddy Addario read the report for Denise Wilson on activities of the squad and statistics for the month. She also said all EMT’s on the Squad are trained to administer NARCAN.

11. Emergency Management – No report.

12. Attorney – Mr. Cruz had no report but stated there is one item for Executive Session this evening.

13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco reported she emailed everyone the information for their financial disclosure submission and if anyone needs help to contact her. She also wished Mayor Pote a Happy Birthday.

CFO Bill Hance reported the Green Fair is this Saturday and they will again have Rizzo’s Reptiles there.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins reported three council members have completed the JIF MEL training and reminded everyone else to do this. He also mentioned R4 – Sewer Fees and said there is no change. Mr. Atkins said the Budget Hearing is tonight and the State has approved it for adoption.

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PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Margaret Ellis, Valley Road, asked if there has been any discussion on the “tiny Houses” to fill the Borough’s affordable housing needs, and Council President Joren said they would have to see if these would be acceptable, where they could be placed, and zoning. Ms. Ellis then asked if the developer who is working with the Planning Board on the Sears property would consider providing some affordable housing units, and Mayor Pote suggested Ms. Ellis attend the Planning Board Meetings.

Diddy Addario, Rock Avenue, said the Historical Committee has concerns about taking money from their operating account and the Community Foundation for painting the Texier House. She said it is the Borough’s responsibility to maintain the building. Councilman Nehls said this was bonded for last year and both Mr. Atkins and Mr. Hance explained that you cannot bond for painting. The cost to paint the building is \$13,000 and Councilman Gibbs suggested letting the Finance/Administration Committee discuss this.

Betsy Titus, Schmidt Circle, said Tony Addario was instrumental in obtaining her husband’s paintings for the Borough. She said the originals are at Police Headquarters and copies are here in the Council Chambers.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2017 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Councilman Gibbs 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.”

R2A:04/20/17 Determining Budget to be Read by Title

Councilman Gibbs moved that the public hearing on the 2017 municipal budget be opened with a second by Council President Joren.

He said this budget was introduced on March 16th. Councilman Gibbs said the total appropriations for 2017 are \$14,535,000 compared to \$14,227,449 in 2016 which is an increase of \$307,551 or 2.16%, with a 2017 tax rate for local government purposes (Borough) of \$0.5861 per \$100 of assessed valuation which is an increase of 1.98%. Councilman Gibbs thanked the Mayor and Council for their sup-

port, cooperation and diligence in addition to recognizing the efforts of Councilmen Mobus and Sopko who serve on the Administration/Finance/Personnel Committee with him. The Committee spent many hours reviewing the recommended budget and were tireless in their deliberations and are pleased with the 2017 budget. He also thanked Administrator Atkins, and CFO Bill Hance for all the hard work.

Discussion was open to the public.

With no one from the Public wishing to speak Councilman Gibbs closed the public hearing and 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."

R2B: Adoption of 2017 Municipal Budget

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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:

April 6, 2017 Regular and Executive Sessions

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Recreation Commission Minutes – March 1, 2017

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."

R3:04/20/17 Purchases Over \$2,000. – PowerDMC (PD – Annual Training Software)
Flaherty & Burke, LLC (B&G – Texier House Painting)

R4: Establish 2017 Sewer Fees

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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.

Introduction of Ordinance OR:17/07 entitled: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG AMENDING SECTION 2-43, TITLED “HISTORICAL COMMITTEE”, OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, SUBSECTIONS 2-43.1 TITLED “ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE; MEMBERS; APPOINTMENTS”, 2-43.2 TITLED “TERMS OF OFFICE” AND 2-43.3 TITLED “ORGANIZATION” TO ADD TWO (2) ALTERNATE MEMBERS, ALTERNATE NO. 1 AND ALTERNATE NO. 2, AND TO DESCRIBE THE ALTERNATES’ AUTHORIZATION.”**

Council President Joren moved Ordinance OR:17/07 be given its first reading. So ordered. Council President Joren moved the Ordinance be adopted on first reading and the Clerk be directed to publish the ordinance and notice of public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Nehls, Gibbs, Mobus, Sopko, "aye." Public Hearing to be held on May 4, 2017.

R5: Introduction of OR:17/07 – Amend Code / Addition of 2 Alternate Members to the Historical Committee

Councilman Gibbs 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: Payment of Bills

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

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Tom Sicola, Stirling Road, thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing the Courthouse to be opened to the fifth grade gifted and talented students to hold their mock trial. Mr. Sicola then commented on the Valley View/Stirling Road intersection near the Valley View School. He said the sidewalks do not match up and it is very dangerous for children to cross. Council President Joren said she knows exactly what he means and said the situation is potentially problematic. Councilman Nehls said Bob Burns is talking to the County to possibly have a light placed there. Councilman Black questioned if there are school crossing guards and Councilman Nehls said there are none but if there were the Borough Police Department would have to provide them and it would come out of the Police Budget. Councilman Gibbs suggested looking at the light near Lord and Taylor in Westfield which seems to work well. Mayor Pote said the Borough will have to discuss with the County.

Pete Martino, Sunbright Road, asked about the Rodgers report and the long range plan for the Fire Department. He said the Department is losing members and many are older which could become a safety issue; fire inspections are not being done; lack of sufficient coverage early morning; and during the day for the Rescue Squad. Mr. Martino then said even though Mr. Shpunder is no longer with us he hopes his input to the Borough did not fall on "deaf ears."

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

R7:04/20/17 Executive Session: Litigation – In the Matter of the Borough of
Watchung for a Judgment of Compliance of
its Third Round Housing Element and Fair
Share Plan, Docket No. SOM-L-902-15

The Borough Council may take official action on those items discussed in executive session upon completion of the executive session.

Upon return to regular session, Mayor Pote, and Council members Joren, Nehls, Mobus, and Sopko were in attendance.

(Councilman Gibbs asked to be excused at 10:30 PM and Councilman Black asked to be excused at 11:10 PM.)

Mr. Cruz said the affordable housing litigation was discussed including an update on the expert reports on the GAP period that have been issued within the last week. He said there was also discussion on potential settlement options of the declaratory judgement action that is pending.

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ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:57 PM to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Council to be held on Thursday, May 4, 2017 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryAnn Hance
Deputy Clerk