# PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Deafness is the physiological loss or absence of hearing that impacts individuals from all walks of life regardless of age, race, gender or social and economic status; and

WHEREAS, 48 million Americans have some degree of deafness or hearing loss; and

WHEREAS, progress in creating access to job opportunities, qualified interpreters and hearing assistive technology has drastically improved quality of life for deaf individuals across the nation and as well as providing more opportunities to contribute to the community; and

WHEREAS, the Borough is grateful to the many agencies such as the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for the resources they provide to our citizens in need and also for the educational training to State agencies and organizations and also to the ASL Club at Watchung Hills Regional High School that helps expose deafness awareness to the students; and

WHEREAS, working together to ensure change happens can begin with a small step such as enacting legislation that would require films be released with open-captioning (OC), and this could be the start of a sea of revolution for both the deaf and hard of hearing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Mayor Keith Balla hereby declare September 29th through October 5th as

DEAF AWARENESS WEEK

in the Borough of Watchung; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that I call upon our residents to create a more "Deaf Friendly" community which can be accomplished by continuing to educate ourselves about the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing and offering support to programs such as the "Deaf Fest" held last month at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Somerset.

Date: October 3, 2019

Keith S. Balla, Mayor