

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
AUGUST 15, 2019 - 7:30 P.M.**

**OPENING STATEMENT:** Mayor Keith S. Balla 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 MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD.**

**ROLL CALL**

Gibbs [ P ] Black [ P ] Nehls [ A ] Sopko [ P ] Goodloe [ P ] Eisenberg Knegten [ P ]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, CFO William Hance, Engineer Tom Herits, Attorney William Robertson, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 25 members of the public present.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:**

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

Mayor Balla presented the framed copy of the resolution to Mr. Atkins.

R1: Thanking Tom Atkins for Years of Service

Remarks by Councilmembers and the Clerk were made after the presentation to Mr. Atkins.

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

Each member of the Council expressed their thanks for Mr. Bennett's many years of professional service and dedication to both the Borough and its residents.

R2: Thanking Ed Bennett for his Years of Service

Watchung Hills Regional High School / Special School District Election – September 24, 2019

Dr. Elizabeth Juette and Business Administrator Tim Stys gave a short presentation about the Special Referendum Election to be held on September 24, 2019. Dr. Juette explained the only way for the school to obtain State Debt Service Aid, (up to 40%) for a capital project is through a referendum, which requires the issuance of debt and in this case would be short-term. She also explained this will include funding for expansion of the current Media Center and electrical upgrades to replace outdated operational systems and systems for increased safety. She said there would be no impact to the taxes.

Mr. Stys further explained the finances of this referendum.

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**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Sopko reported there was a meeting on August 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the appointment of the Tax Collector R10; the Interim Administrator, R12; and the new Administrator, R16 all of which are on this evening's agenda. The Committee also discussed webpage upgrade, and security upgrades at Borough Hall. The Borough will be looking at the possibility of sharing the security upgrades with the schools possibly utilizing the same vendors to save costs.
2. Police – Council President Gibbs had no report.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – In the absence of Councilman Nehls, Councilman Black reported paving has started as of August 12<sup>th</sup> with many roads already completed. He also said Public Works Department completed repairs to catch basins on the roads being paved; repairs to the roadway on Johnston Drive due to damage caused by a power line falling; stone debris caused by heavy rains on July 22<sup>nd</sup> was cleared from numerous streets; and new street signs were installed on Mountain Boulevard starting at Wildwood Terrace (more to come). A new handicap sidewalk was installed at the library and window sills were replaced or repaired at the library in preparation of the painting. Councilman Black also reported when Mr. Burns was checking the roads that were milled there was an issue found on Fox Chase Drive, the subgrade was soft and failing. Both he and Mr.

Herits called in contractors to remedy the situation by removing the subgrade, replacing with clean stone and recycled concrete aggregate and installing a French drain in the cull de sac and piped to the catch basin. The funds for this were available in the road bond. Council President Gibbs stated this has been the largest number of roads paved in the last several years and all will be done before school starts and some of the cost will be shared by the schools. Mr. Herits said there are at least 5-6 more streets and the Bayberry lot to be completed.

Council President Gibbs reported the HVAC at the Police Department was replaced with new equipment as the old system was running too hot.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental – Councilwoman Goodloe reported there will be a meeting on Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 P.M. She said there is an ongoing shoe drive fund raiser for “gently” used shoes and sneakers. There are bins in Borough Hall for anyone wishing to donate.

Councilwoman Goodloe also reported the Environmental Committee and Traffic and Beautification met over the summer to further discuss designs for new signs at the entrances to our town, and they will report back on a final decision soon, to Mayor and Council.

Recreation – Councilman Black said there was no meeting over the summer. He reported the Summer Camp program was very successful. He said some of the upcoming events for the Borough include the 9-11 Service being held at 5:30 P.M. on the Village Green with a rain location at Valley View School; Music in the Park is scheduled for September 21 with a rain date September 22<sup>nd</sup>; the Jerry Mobus Fishing Derby is September 28<sup>th</sup>, 9 A.M. to Noon, rain date September 29<sup>th</sup> and the Harvest Festival, Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1-4:00 P.M., rain date October 20<sup>th</sup>.

Historical - Councilman Black said there was no meeting held but stated the bricks for the 9-11 walkway have been ordered.

Board of Health – Councilman Sopko reported the next meeting will be held on September 18 at 7:00 P.M.

5. Fire – Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten reported the statistics for June and July. She also congratulated Watchung resident Enzo Ruta who is the recipient of the Watchung Fire Department Scholarship. She said he will be attending Rutgers Business School in New Brunswick in the fall. Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten said the Watchung Fire Committee meeting was held on August 13<sup>th</sup> at which time they discussed the East End Fire House and the antenna on the Weldon property and the time line for the next apparatus purchase. She also said the Fire Department has requested a permit for a fire pit at their annual pig roast scheduled for early November and said Councilman Nehls suggested bringing this to the Mayor and Council for discussion and input from the entire Council, possibly at the next Council meeting.
6. Laws and Ordinances – Councilman Black reported a meeting was held Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> and the Committee discussed if a referendum regarding the deer management program should be placed on the ballot and after reviewing it was decided that the Borough would not moving forward with this. Council President Gibbs said this was discussed at the Council meeting on July 18<sup>th</sup> at which time there was an informal consensus to have the Laws and Ordinance Committee review and based on their review they recommend not having on the November 5<sup>th</sup> ballot. Councilman Black said they Committee discussed fences for rear and side yards at six foot; and they will also be looking at signs, such as real estate, and the sizes.

**REPORTS – OTHER:**

7. Engineer- Tom Herits reported the 2020 DOT grant application has been submitted. He also said he is preparing the bid package for the 2019 grant projects for Glen Eagles, Carrar and Wildwood Terrace. The permit for Ross Pond should be received shortly. Mr. Herits also said there will have to be applications for variances for the new tower location. Also, the salt shed storage is almost completed and should be operating for the coming winter. Mr. Herits reported he, along with Chief Cina and two other members of the police department attended a County meeting to discuss safety improvements to Hillcrest Road. The County is preparing a conceptual plan and will present it to both Watchung and Warren.
8. Police Chief – No report.
9. Fire Department – No report.
10. Rescue Squad – No report.
11. Emergency Management – No report.
12. Attorney – Mr. Robertson reported Judge Miller will be holding the final compliance Judgement hearing on August 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 A.M. Notice was provided by legal notice published in three newspapers and by mail to interested parties. The public has until August 19<sup>th</sup> to provide comments whether the Borough’s affordable housing plan is compliant with the settlement agreement and final judgement as proposed. The judgement will protect the Borough from any Builders Remedy lawsuits

until July 2025. Mr. Robertson also said there is on item on the agenda for Executive Session this evening.

13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco said today we said good-bye to our high school intern, Christina Tillinghast. Christina volunteered for about ten weeks this summer and worked mostly in the Building Department, and work she did! Ms. DeRocco said that Christina told her really enjoyed her experience here, and she is hoping to study law when she goes to college. Ms. DeRocco said it was wonderful to have her here, and that she is an amazing young lady with a bright future. She added that if Christina is representative of the up and coming generation, that we all need to feel better of what is on the horizon.

Ms. DeRocco then reported she discussed the November 21<sup>st</sup> Council meeting with Mayor Balla since it overlaps with the League of Municipalities Conference. Mayor Balla agreed that the meeting is to be rescheduled for Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup> and of course, Clerk DeRocco will properly notice the papers. She also reminded the Council members to her know if they will be attending the conference.

Ms. DeRocco welcomed the new Administrator, Jim Damato and said she is looking forward to working with him.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins first thanked members in the audience who have or are still serving the community. He then thanked each member of the Council, the Mayor, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, Engineer Tom Herits, CFO Bill Hance and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance and all members of the Borough Staff.

Wildlife Management Advisory Committee – Council President Gibbs reported there is a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at 10 A.M. It was suggested to have representatives from both companies who conducted the deer density surveys come to a meeting in September to provide an overview on their methodology.

Youth Services – No report was submitted.

Planning Board – Councilman Sopko reported there will be a meeting on August 20<sup>th</sup>. He said on August 13<sup>th</sup> he attended the second NJDOT Connected Communities Complete Streets seminar sponsored by Somerset County. He explained it entailed options for bike, walking, path initiatives connective system that is being discussed for roads in the County to increase the pathways for bike trails that could either be on roads or public lands.

Board of Education – Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten reported meetings were held on July 24<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>. There were 3 resignations from the Board and there have been seven applicants for the vacancies and the Board will be scheduling interviews as soon as possible. The Board is also continuing the search for a Superintendent and Principal for Valley View School. The next meeting will be held on August 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten said she has had weekly calls and the new STEM lab at Valley View is slated for on-time completion with curriculum being written by a TCNJ professor. Board of Education member Joe Barbella has been appointed to serve as their Council liaison.

Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten said she will be bringing her suggestion of sharing services for school security to the schools, and Councilman Sopko interjected that it was this was his suggestion as discussed at the last Administration and Finance Committee meeting.

Municipal Alliance – Councilwoman Goodloe reported there was no meeting and that the next meeting will be held September 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 P.M. at the High School.

Library Advisory Board – Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten reported the Library Ad Hoc Committee has met twice and they have reviewed plans from the architect, Mr. Iovino. Mayor Balla has been compiling the feedback from both the Council members and the Ad Hoc members. The next Library Advisory Board meeting will be held September 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 P.M.

Mayor Balla said the Library Ad Hoc Committee still has some vacancies and anyone interested should let him know. He said the Committee has been reviewing the State regulations and what the requirements will be for the new library. The Ad Hoc Committee will present recommendations to the Council and then consolidate all of them and send to the architect. After this process there will be two sessions with the public to get their feedback.

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**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, said he had worked with both Ed Bennett and Tom Atkins for many years and he said Ed was very professional and a real gentleman. He also said he would meet with Tom during the day to discuss issues regarding the Borough and said he had a wealth of knowledge and always very professional.

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, asked when Mr. Damato would be starting and Mr. Atkins said he will start September 4<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Goldschein that explains why Michelle has been appointed as interim Administrator. Ms. Goldschein also questioned the RETS Partners for rezoning and asked where this is

located. Mr. Atkins explained this is located at 833 Mountain Boulevard which is at the Warren Township border. He said the property owner would like a rezoning considered and this will be referred to the Planning Board for study and evaluation. Ms. Goldschein asked if there was any way to know what property acquisition is in Executive Session, and Mr. Atkins said this will be discussed in Executive Session and if there is any progress it will be divulged to the public at the appropriate time.

Amber Murad, Glen Eagles Drive, thanked Mr. Atkins for all the help and support he has given her. Ms. Murad also mentioned the submission of the grant for the Mural Restoration and she also said residents should visit the go fund me page if they wish to donate for this project. Currently there are donations of \$900.00. Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten asked what the goal is. Ms. Murad said \$8,000.00 with the cost to complete the project at \$19,500. She also said they are looking at alternate restoration companies to compare and see if this could be done at a lower price.

Virginia Hartmann, Ellisen Road, said the Borough receives a stipend of \$6,788.00 from the Somerset County Library every year and asked where this money goes and why this does not go directly to the Library fund. Mr. Hance explained this is unanticipated income and it goes into the general fund. She then questioned how much money is in the library 501C3 account? Mr. Hance responded there is \$3,216.50 in the account at this time which are donations. Ms. Hartmann said she was under the impression that one donation was \$5,000.00. Mr. Hance responded the person who donated that amount requested a refund since the Borough did not build a library.

Councilman Black asked where the \$6,788.00 goes, and Mr. Hance said when the money comes in it goes in as miscellaneous revenue not anticipated since we don't have the amount when the budget is prepared so it cannot be anticipated income.

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, questioned Andrea's resignation and whether there was a typo on the dates listed. Ms. DeRocco said it was a typo the date should be July 15<sup>th</sup> effective August 1<sup>st</sup>.

With no further public wishing to speak the public portion was closed.

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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A Public Hearing of Ordinance OR:19/16 entitled: "AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG MAYOR AND CLERK TO SIGN A LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BOROUGH AND WELDON MATERIALS, INC., FOR A PORTION OF LOT 9.01 BLOCK 76.01 TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A NEW COMMUNICATIONS TOWER" was held.

R3:08/15/19 Adoption of OR:19/16 - Authorize Lease between Borough and Weldon Materials

Councilman Black moved a public hearing be held with a second by Council President Gibbs and upon Roll Call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, "aye."

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, questioned if this will improve the radio communications in the Borough. Councilman Black said the altitude of the new location will be lower than the current one and that is why the tower needs to be higher. Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten said the tower is currently in a location where Weldon will be using the area for blasting.

Engineer Tom Herits explained that this tower will be 50 feet higher than the old one, however it will basically be the same height since the new location is lower than the current location but it should help with the communications. Mayor Balla said this is being tested and it is hoped it will help with communications.

With no further public wishing to be heard Councilman Black closed the public hearing with a second by Council President Gibbs and upon Roll Call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, "aye."

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## NEW BUSINESS

**CONSENT AGENDA:** The Consent Agenda Items listed below were unanimously accepted as amended through item #29, following a motion by Council President Gibbs and a second by Councilman Black and upon Roll Call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, "aye."

Prior to the vote Council President Gibbs requested Item #30 be pulled for a separate vote due to a conflict he has.

Approval of the following Council minutes:

June 20, 2019 – Regular Meeting  
July 10, 2019 – Special Meeting Executive Session

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Fire Prevention Bureau Report – June, July 2019  
Building Department – July 2019  
Police Activity Report – June 2019  
Environmental Commission Minutes – January 29, February 28, March 25, May 20, 2019

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #27 - Andrea Meyer 8/15/19 (correction – notice dated 7/15/19) Letter of Retirement from Police Department, Effective 8/1/19 c: M & C
- #28- Township of Franklin 7/29/19 Resolution #19-337 Resolution Supporting a Moratorium on Fossil Fuel Projects in New Jersey Adopted July 9, 2019 c: M & C, TEA,
- #29- JCP&L 7/25/19 Notices of Two Public Hearings re: (1) Proposed Increase to Recover Costs Incurred for Environmental Remediation of Manufactured Gas Plant Sites (2) Proposed Decrease in the Universal Service Fund C: M & C, TEA

Prior to the vote on item #30 Council President Gibbs stepped down from the dais.

Councilman Black moved item #30 with a second by Councilman Sopko and upon Roll Call the vote was as follows: Black, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, “aye.”

- #30- PSE&G 2/25/19 Four Notices of Public Hearings re: (1) Proposed Increase for Gas Rate Changes (2) Petition to Reset the Company’s Electric and Gas Green Programs Recovery Charge (3) Petition to Decrease its Basic Gas Supply Service Commodity charge to Residential Service Customers (4) Compliance Filing for changes in the Universal Service Fund C: M & C

Council President Gibbs returned to the dais after the vote.

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### CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

Council President Gibbs moved the following resolutions, with a second by Councilman Black and upon Roll Call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, “aye.”

Prior to voting Council President Gibbs said he wanted to discuss R9 in conjunction with the Resolution on are Agenda and noted that Warren is passing a similar Resolution authorizing Watchung residents to use their Park and Ride Program they currently have. In order to utilize their Warren’s Park and Ride there will not be limit to the number of Watchung residents to participate in the program which was a request from this Council and they agreed to this. Watchung residents must go to the Warren Municipal Building beginning August 19<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30 to apply for the permit and they must show proof of residence. Once approved the resident will receive a decal. Council President Gibbs also said the Borough would continue looking for other options in the future.

Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten noted Warren approved the Resolution as of 7:30 a.m. this morning.

Councilwoman Goodloe said she is pleased that the Borough now has an additional transit option and as Council President Gibbs said hopefully it is not the last option we have. She also requested a correction on the Resolution prior to voting changing the dates to correctly read September 3, 2019 through February 29, 2020.

Council President Gibbs explained why the agreement is only through February 29, 2020. He stated Warren has an agreement with the Corporate Park owner is only through the end of February. Warren will be looking for a new location and at that time they will contact the Borough to see if we wish to continue the arrangement in the new location but there may be contributions required from the Borough.

R4:08/15/19 Purchases Over \$2,000 –Emergency Reporting (FD- CAD Software)  
Atlantic Tactical (PD - Firearms)  
Fundraising Brick LLC (911 Memorial Walkway)  
Lawmen Supply Co. (PD - Ammunition)  
Somerset County Clerk (Elections/ Ballot Printing, Mailing)  
King George Plumbing (PD - AC Unit / Radio Room)  
Foveonics Document Solutions (Cap–Doc Imaging/Archiving)  
Finne Building & Investment (2019 Road Improvement Project)

R5: Authorize Tax Collector to extend 2019 Third Quarter Tax Payment Grace Period

R6: Resolution Authorizing TAPinto Watchung be designated as an Electronic News Source  
for the year 2019

- R7: Resolution Authorizing MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) / OEM & Red Cross
- R8: Authorize Towing License (3 Year) – JVD Towing Service
- R9: Authorizing Residents to Participate in Park and Ride Program with Warren
- R10: Appointment of Tax Collector- William Hance
- R11: Authorize 2-year Contract /Borough of Watchung and Police Chief
- R12: Appointment of Interim Administrator – Michelle DeRocco
- R13: Authorize Payment of Accumulated Benefits – Andrea Meyer
- R14: Authorize Payment of Accumulated Benefits – Thomas Atkins
- R15: Authorize Submission of Grant / County History Partnership Program-Historical  
Committee

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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.

Council President Gibbs read and moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knechten, “aye”

Council President Gibbs explained to the residents that Mr. Atkins has served more than ably as our part time Administrator for the last eight years but he thinks with the additions of a full time Administrator is something the Borough needs going forward and will add a lot of value to the residents in regard to dollars spent and services provided. The position of Administrator is really the day-to-day operation of the Borough subject to the policy that the Mayor and Council set. Council President Gibbs said he is looking forward to working with Mr. Damato and the depth of his experience in many different venues.

Councilman Sopko said he is looking forward to working with Mr. Damato. Councilwoman Goodloe and Councilwoman Eisenberg Knechten welcomed Mr. Damato and said they are looking forward to working with him..

Mayor Balla explained the process of selecting the new Administrator. There were 21 applicants and nine interviews with three finalists who were all great and it was narrowed down to Mr. Damato who is an attorney as well and has an extensive background in public administration, a wealth of construction experience. He also has experience with budget controls working with staff, dealing with grievance issues, contract negotiations and working for the benefit of the community.

R16:08/15/19 Authorize Appointment of Borough Administrator – James J. Damato

Mayor Balla gave the OATH of office to Mr. Damato as his wife Laura held the Bible.

Mr. Damato asked to say a few words. He thanked the Borough for this opportunity and the interview process brought forth many thought provoking questions by both the Mayor and Council as well as all the Department heads. He also said he is very impressed by the amount of enthusiasm everyone has for the Borough. He will be very pleased to work with all the Department heads who are very good qualified people and said that Tom is a very tough act to follow and he knows the town was very well managed. He said he looks forward to working with everyone and to get all the goals and aspirations for the Borough fulfilled and accomplished and hope to develop great relationships with other government agencies.

Councilman Sopko moved the following resolution with a second by Council President Gibbs and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knechten, “aye”; Black, “Abstain.”

R17: Waive Chapter 2-25.10 of the Code – Grays Florist

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

R18: Payment of Bills

**Request:**

RETS Partners, LLC to Rezone Block 201, Lot 17; Block 92, Lot 1  
from R-R Zone to allow for multi-family

Councilman Sopko recommended that this request be forwarded to the Planning Board for their review and recommendation and also said that RETS Partners, LLC is to post an escrow with the Planning Board in the sum of \$7,500.00 for all professional fees associated with this requested rezoning because the Planning Board will need the services of Mark Healey, PP., and others to review this request.

The Planning Board should not proceed until the escrow is posted. It was the consensus of the Council to move this to the Planning Board.

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## **PUBLIC PORTION-GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Carol Bianchi, JCP&L Regional External Affairs Consultant was here this evening to introduce herself and advise residents to visit the website as there is a lot of information. She explained the website is updated every fifteen minutes so it is a great resource, and reminded residents if you are out of power report it to 888-lightss or text the information, which is also listed on the website.

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, questioned Councilman Black about his report for the Laws and Ordinance Committee on fencing. She asked why it is being considered to lower the requirement from 8' foot to 6' foot? Councilman Black said they are looking at the entire Ordinance. Councilman Sopko stated the code does not allow for 8' feet. Ms. Goldschein said she is very familiar with this Ordinance and Councilman Black suggested that she could possibly attend the next L&O meeting to provide input. Ms. Goldschein then asked about the air conditioning system in the dispatch area of the Police Department. Council President Gibbs said it is not the entire system it is only a portion that services and the cost will be less than \$10,000.

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, said there was a consensus to control the deer population and there is no non-lethal way to do this. He said the herd can grow out of control very quickly if nothing is done.

Ray Barratt, Valley Road, said DiNicole, who is an expert on non-lethal means said they do have long term results but it takes at least 5 years to work. Only 20% of the deer population is done each year and costs are competitive at \$400-\$500 per year.

Phyllis Juette, Elsinore Drive, said she is concerned with saving Watchung's woods and lakes. She said if the erosion is not controlled the lakes will become "mud holes". Deer are everywhere and they do eat the new growth. She also stated deer do not have any natural enemies and the only option is the culling of the herd. Mrs. Juette stressed everyone should read the reports and don't go on emotions, they need make decisions based on the facts.

Rachel Funcheon, Cedar Road, said she sent letters to the Mayor and Council and also has other information forthcoming. She said there is so much overdevelopment in the Borough and property owners clearing their property of trees has had a tremendous effect causing erosion. Ms. Funcheon asked when the two companies who did the surveys will attend a Council meeting. Council President Gibbs replied that possibly they will attend the second meeting in September; he has asked Mr. Juette to reach out to them to see if they will be available and if they are, he said there will be an announcement of the Borough website in advance. Ms. Funcheon asked if the public will be able to ask questions. Council President Gibbs stated it will be determined on how to structure the meeting with discussion from both the public and the Council.

Mayor Balla recommended that anyone wishing to ask questions when the companies come to the meeting to put them in writing and these will be forwarded to the vendors so they may thoroughly respond to the questions.

Hans Juette, Elsinore Drive, made a few comments about the deer surveys but he also would suggest after hearing comments just heard that it would be nice to get factual information. He said regarding the number of trees cut down in Watchung that he has never heard a chain saw in his area. Mr. Juette than said the Borough has had four surveys done in and in 2014 an aerial survey done at a cost of \$10,000 and additional ground count and health study done in 2018 which cost approximately \$4,000 and two drone studies done this year (the second one was done because there were allegations of bias from the first vendor). The results were the same for both surveys. Mr. Juette also read a brief explanation of the Ordinance, Section 2 regarding wildlife and the responsibilities of the Wildlife Advisory Committee.

Councilman Black suggested having a program that would include both lethal and non-lethal control for a limited time to see which is more effective.

Linda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, said the big culvert on Elsinore Drive collapsed. She said this was previously repaired and now it has collapsed again and she wanted to know who did the repairs the first time and if we have any recourse. Mr. Herits said it did collapse again and the Public Works Department filled in with stone. This will be discussed at the next Public Works Committee meeting. Mr. Herits stated the first repair was done by Mike Finnie and there is something else going on there that has nothing to do with the work Finnie did. There are other issues that must be looked at. Ms. Goldschein then stated the Borough does need to continue with the deer hunt but have to find a better system than Blue Ridge.

Ray Barratt, Valley Road, reminded everyone when talking about safety that when the hunt was being held a year and a half ago there was an incident by the swim club with a hunter being in the trees when he should not have been. He said he called police to take care of the situation. He said safety is a real concern.

Hans Juette, Elsinore Drive, said the Borough has an unusual position not to allow bow hunting and it should be considered at this time then the safety of guns disappears. Bow hunting is a most effective way to hunt in an urban environment. Mr. Juette said the person Mr. Barratt was referring to who was doing the hunting was not from Blue Ridge. Blue Ridge has followed all the rules and their people are all certified.

Diana Canellis, Timberline Way, said if the surveys are correct the Borough must do something to control the herd and bow hunting may be the answer. She also suggested speaking with Bob Corbet to get a better bus route for Watchung, and working with Scotch Plains to share information. She suggested the Connell area as a pick-up/drop-off site.

Councilman Black said he is opposed to cross-bow hunting.

Rachel Funcheon, Cedar Road, said when deer are shot with arrows they do not always die. She also questioned the recent survey costs and why one was \$600. and the second one was \$8500.

Hans Juette explained that one was done by a Raritan Valley Community College student and the other was done by Stuart Green who is a professional service.

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, commented about the non-lethal means about sterilization this is only good for one year and you would have to use darts and then darts would have to be retrieved. Vets will not do either type of non-lethal type at the cost stated. Mr. Franklin also stated that cross-bows are very accurate.

Ray Barratt, Valley Road, suggests having someone come to a meeting who is totally neutral to go through the experiments for non-lethal controls. He said Humane Societies offers vet services and possible financial support.

Hans Juette said Ray Miller is on the Wildlife Committee and he did a thorough investigation last year please look at his results.

Rachel Funcheon suggested the revamping of the Wildlife Advisory Committee to have a more balanced pro and con view.

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Council President Gibbs moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Sopko, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, "aye,"

R19:08/15/19 Executive Session: Property Acquisition

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 at 11:42 P.M. all Councilmembers previously present were still in attendance.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council the meeting was adjourned at 11:44 P.M. to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council meeting Thursday, September 5, 2019 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

MaryAnn Hance  
Deputy Clerk