

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
MAYOR & COUNCIL MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 17, 2020 - 7:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Keith S. Balla called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and stated the following: 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 the Annual Meeting 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:

Robinson [P] Black [A] Goodloe [P] Eisenberg Knechten [A] Jubin [P] Martino [P]

Mayor Balla expressed appreciation to all employees, volunteers, residents and attendees of the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.

REPORT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE

Council President Robinson stated that the date of the final WIDER Committee meeting was changed to October 14th at 7:30 PM in order to allow more time to residents to be aware of the final date. President Robinson reported on upcoming legislation by the Governor in relation to diversity matters and that on October 1st Alfred Bundy would be presenting the Council on cultural awareness.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Council Member Jubin reported on the topics covered at the last meeting, primarily dealing with cost reductions, capital equipment, the proposed salary ordinance and grants. He reported on software for fleet management that is being discussed for the Department of Public Works. He called upon members of this committee to work with other committees to be vigilant and review expenditures with regards to the impact of covid.

Council Member Martino put forth a motion to freeze all expenditures (except revolving purchases) and have everything be reviewed by the Administration and Finance Committee. Council President second the motion. Upon a roll call, the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Jubin, Martino “aye”; Council Members Black and Eisenberg Knechten were absent.

CFO Hance mentioned this would not be a hinderance to Borough operations as the Borough would typically do this in November, in this case it would just be done earlier.

2. Police – Council President Robinson reported that there was a meeting this morning but these matters would be further discussed in executive session.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council Member Martino reported that PSE&G provided the Borough with a plan to replace all the gas meters. As part of this this, PSE&G may have to pave some roads, it would be beneficial to the Borough to coordinate their paving schedule with PSE&G. All of the information received from PSE&G was sent to all Council Members. Interviews for DPW are still ongoing, there was work done at the 9/11 memorial. They are coordinating with Traffic & Beautification coordinating on adding more trees. There was water flow that had to be cleaned up from the installation of the rain garden.
4. Public Affairs: - Council Member Goodloe spoke on the shared services marketplace hosted by the County. There is a meeting next week at which more information would be forthcoming.

Environmental – Council President Robinson had no report

Recreation – Council Member Goodloe reported that the movie night that was originally discussed would not proceed as it would be difficult to carry out. However, the Commission was carrying out the planning for the pumpkin decorating event. They are also having discussions on possibly purchasing items for the playgrounds at Mobus Field and Phillips Field from unspent monies.

Historical – Council Member Goodloe reported that the Committee is doing a virtual book release for Bob Mayer’s book on the History of Watchung from which a portion of the sale of the book will be donated to the Historical Committee. The details on this are still being worked on and might possibly be coordinated with the County in order to reach a larger audience. The Committee is also brainstorming other social activities at the Teixer House Museum for when it re-opens. Council Member Goodloe thanked members of the Historical Committee and the Department of Public Works for their work on the 9/11 Memorial.

Board of Health – Council Member Jubin read a statement from Health Officer Kevin Sumner on the recent increase of covid cases and practices that should still be followed by all. The Board is in constant communications with the Board of Education and several entities in relation to the ongoing health emergency.

5. Fire – Council Member Martino reported that there will be a workshop meeting with the Fire Department on September 26th at Borough Hall at 10am. This would be the first of several workshop sessions to start the budget process for 2021. Council Member Martino also noted a section of the Borough’s code, the noise ordinance 20:1.6, and noted that the Borough needs to review this section for work done on weekends and thanked first responders and invitees of the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.
6. Laws/Ordinances – no report

REPORTS – OTHER:

7. Engineer – Engineer Koch reported no new updates since the last council meeting.
8. Police Chief – no report
9. Fire Department – Fire Chief DeSandolo had no report; Fire Official Chris Czuba reported that the number of periodic fire inspections in August was 63, the number of smoke alarm, carbon monoxide alarm and portable fire extinguisher compliance was 10. Additionally, fire safety inspections of Valley View and Bayberry Schools were completed and both issued certificates of compliance prior to opening. Fire Official Czuba reminded everyone that October 4th thru October 10th is fire prevention week and the theme is “Serve Up Fire Safety in The Kitchen.” He also reported on an emergency evacuation drill at Brandywine and an inspection at Cinemark Theater for re-opening and the business object program is progressing.
10. Rescue Squad – President Robinson reported that the 2020 fund drive is coming to an end. Congratulations went to Sara Wilson was commended for becoming a full active member and other members for completing the National Registry EMT exam, the squads September training will take place on September 19th and 20th, and they accepted two new volunteer members. The total calls for last month were 19.
11. Emergency Management – OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon reported that food donations went to the Somerset County Food Bank on September 10th, the Borough recently received donated school supplies that are being forwarded to the Board of Education. The Borough was asked to help deliver lunches to the students that are entitled to free or reduced lunches from the four sending districts to Watchung Hills Regional High School. OEM Coordinator Solon reported and the approval of the covid plan for Mr. B’s volleyball camp and is currently working with the Watchung PTO on the ice cream social event.
12. Attorney – no report
13. Clerk – Clerk Edith G. Gil reminded residents on the vote-by-mail process for the upcoming election.
14. Administrator – Administrator James J. Damato reported on 7 new covid cases since the last council meeting and reminded all residents to keep taking all precautions. He also reported on an upcoming meeting to obtain grant information for a handicapped playground and possibly other grant opportunities.
15. Wildlife Committee – Council Member Jubin reported on the continued progress of this Committee and their hard work to bring forth a recommendation to the Governing Body on deer culling. At their last meeting the Committee spoke on having more deer signage, the different hunt alternatives, different type of contraceptive methods. The Committee also discussed installing bat houses and having an educational outreach in conjunction with the Environmental Commission on other wildlife matters. Council Member Jubin also reported on an update from the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Council Member Martino recommended that the deer hunt be put on for the October 15th meeting, hopefully by then a good report from the committee would have arrived. He

also suggested to bringing the Boys Scouts onto the bat house plans. He also suggested that the Laws & Ordinance Committee may want to be involved with revising the ordinances, since there might be conflicting information on the Borough's code and the responsibilities of the Wildlife Management Advisory Committee.

Council Member Jubin responded that incorporating youth members is a good idea as they are the ones to take care of the environment in the future. Council President advised that the Environmental Commission has for some time been working on bat houses and have in the past taken the initiative to engaged the scouts on some activities.

16. Youth Services – Council President Robinson reported that the Commission met today and discussed the use of the funds from 2019. The current ongoing programs were decided to be continued as they have been helpful during this pandemic.
17. Planning Board – Council Member Martino reported that the Board met on September 15th and only have one project pending, a child care facility. The Board has also had discussions on finalizing the master plan to be submitted to Council.
18. Board of Education – President of the Board of Education, Dorie Harvey reported that the next meeting is set for September 24th.
19. Municipal Alliance – no report
20. Library Advisory Board – Council Member Goodloe reported that the Board met on Wednesday, and chrome books are now available for residents. The Library has now started to get a steady stream of patrons, book fines are still suspended and to date there is no date for in-person programs. However, online programs are still going strong and residents can digitally borrow books.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

1. Ray Barratt, Valley Road, inquired on the application submitted by a resident of the Borough to join the Wildlife Management Advisory Committee as this would be advantageous to move forward with appointing new member. The Mayor advised that several applications are being reviewed and considered for appointment.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Fleet Maintenance Software – Administrator Damato informed the Governing Body that the Administration and Finance committee had previously met regarding this software, which was previously used by Public Works Manager Gunther years ago, and wanted to bring forth to the Council for their consideration on moving forward with this software. The Governing Body chose to move forward with purchasing
- ❖ Police Vehicle Purchase/ Lease – Council Member Jubin informed the Governing Body on the discussions held by the Administration and Finance Committee on this matter and the costs associated with this. CFO Hance spoke on the two options for acquiring new vehicles, whether to lease or to purchase. Additional information from the Police Department is pending and Police was invited to the next Administration and Finance Committee meeting for their input.
- ❖ Consideration of Changes to Council Rules – Clerk Gil recommended that the revision of the Council Rules be forwarded to the Laws and Ordinances Committee for their review. Current council rules have an outdated process on the adoption of ordinances that is not needed as there are statutory guidelines in place on the formal adoption of an ordinance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Music in the Park – Council Member Jubin expressed several health recommendations and those of emergency management for large group gatherings. The Borough will be doing a sign-up of those interested in attending to assist with contact tracing efforts. The Borough assured that no personal information would be shared, this would only be for contact tracing purposes. Several precautions will be place in order to have a successful event on September 26th. Council Member Goodloe commended the groups effort in bringing this program together.

Council President Robinson motioned to approve this event, second by Council Member Jubin, upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Members Black and Eisenberg Kneigten, were absent.

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NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: Matters listed within the Consent Agenda were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Robinson, second by Jubin, upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Members Black and Eisenberg Knegten, were absent.

All Council Members expressed their appreciation for Chief Cina and expressed their thanks of service for both Chief Cina and Volunteer Harriet Stambaugh.

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Recreation Regular Meeting Minutes, Special Meeting	June 10, 2020, July 8, 2020
Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	August 13, 2020

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #27- Jersey Central Power & Light Company 9/10/20 Notice of Filing for Basic Generation Service Charges for the Period Beginning June 1, 2021, Telephonic Public Hearing scheduled for 9/21/20 c: M&C, JD, Post
- #28- #28- Township of Bernards 9/15/20 R#2020-0295 Resolution Strongly Encouraging the Right of In-Person Machine Voting for the November 3, 2020 General Election c: M & C, JD

Acknowledgment and Acceptance of the following letter of Resignation:

- #29- Harriet Stambaugh 09/3/20 Letter of Resignation as Board of Health Member, effective December 15, 2020 c: M & C, JD
- #30- Joseph R. Cina 09/16/20 Letter of Resignation as Chief of Police, effective October 1, 2020 c: M & C, JD

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The consent resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Robinson, second by Goodloe, upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Members Black and Eisenberg Knegten, were absent

- R1: Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – Foveonics Document Solutions (Document Imaging Project)
Communications Specialists (PD – Annual Radio Maintenance)
State of NJ Treasurer (NJDEP Discharge Permit)
- R2: Authorizing Professional Service Contract – Online Tax Sale Hosting Services /
Realauction.com LLC
- R3: Authorizing Professional Service Contract – Special Counsel /
Souder, Shabazz & Woolridge, LLP
- R4: Appointments to the Municipal Youth Services Commission

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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 any Committee for further review and discussion.

- R5: Commending Police Chief Cina

Council President Robinson moved the above resolution, second by Council Member Jubin and upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Members Black and Eisenberg Knegten, were absent

- R6: Authorizing renewal of Liquor License 2020-2021 – Miller’s Ale House of Watchung LLC

Council Member Jubin moved the above resolution, second by Council President Robinson and upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Members Black and Eisenberg Knegten, were absent

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1. Joseph J. Bell IV, Attorney representing Watchung Fire Company, inquired and spoke on the status of a complaint previously issued by members of the Fire Department against Council Member Martino.
2. Nina Leach, Nottingham Drive (formerly), spoke on the comments made by Attorney Joseph J. Bell, IV and on the events that occurred during the night in question.

Council President Robinson moved the above resolution, second by Council Member Jubin and upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Members Black and Eisenberg Knegten, were absent

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned to the Call of the Chair at 12:30 A.M. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council is a Special Meeting scheduled to be held on September 26, 2020 at 10:00 A.M.

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