

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

SPECIAL MEETING OF JUNE 25, 2020 - 7:30 P.M.

(THIS MEETING WAS A VIRTUAL MEETING)

MAYOR'S 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 Special Virtual Meeting was given by way of Special 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 RESIDENTS WHO HAVE DIED FROM COVID 19 COMPLICATIONS, AND OUR FIRST RESPONDERS, DOCTORS, NURSES AND GROCERY STORE WORKERS SERVING IN THIS PANDEMIC.

ROLL CALL:

Robinson [P] Black [P] Goodloe [P] Eisenberg Knegten [P] Jubin [P] Martino [P]

Also present were Administrator James Damato, Attorney Denis Murphy, Clerk Edith G. Gil, CFO Bill Hance, and OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon

There were 20 members present virtually.

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PUBLIC PORTION

None

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DISCUSSION / COVID-19 UPDATES

Mayor Balla asked OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon to give any COVID-19 related updates.

Carolyn Solon said four of the Watchung Cert Team members went through the food donation expiration dates and a small quantity of food was expired and has been discarded. Ms. Solon recommended any food expiring in September or October be donated to the Somerset County Food pantries. She said CFO Bill Hance is working on identifying all expenditures for COVID-19 and once completed will submit the application for reimbursement. She posted an opportunity for a summer camp option for residents to consider on the Borough Facebook page. The Greater YMCA of Somerset has all their approvals and is opening July 6th. She reported the Governor issued an agreement between New Jersey, New York and Connecticut issuing a joint incoming travel advisory. She said she is not sure how this advisory will be enforced. Ms. Solon stated Mr. B would like to offer his fishing program again to the Borough but due to the pandemic there are significant requirements needed such as a written COVID policy. Ms. Solon said his policy has been reviewed by our OEM, Health Department, legal counsel and Borough Administrator. She said he is requesting to start his camp on July 6th. As of right now there is no directive to open the playgrounds from the Governor but they can open the bathroom. She said there will be thorough cleaning procedures and sterilizing procedures involved in this process. She suggested a part time person be hired to be used over the summer for extra man power for sanitation purposes. She is looking to see if FEMA will reimburse hiring COVID related employees.

Administrator Damato said they would like to open the bathrooms on Wednesday and leave them open until 8:00 P.M. Councilman Martino asked if sanitizing the bathrooms three times a day is mandated. Ms. Solon said the State is recommending that bathroom facilities are sanitized frequently.

Councilman Martino asked if the Borough increased the fees for using the lake facilities this year. Administrator Damato stated the same fee was used as last year which was based on the number of children attending the camp.

Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten asked once the guidance is released relating to the playgrounds if the Bayberry playground will also be open. Administrator Damato said that decision would come from the Board of Education. Mayor Balla asked if we had sanitation procedures for the playgrounds in place. Administrator Damato said they are waiting for the guidelines to follow from the Governor on how to re-open the playgrounds.

Councilman Jubin feels the Council should provide the safest environment they can to anyone attending the camp. Councilman Martino asked why the Borough is responsible for sanitation of the parks and bathrooms during privately run events. Councilman Jubin said if Mobus Field playground opens independent of any organized activity, either commercial or otherwise it is going to have to be maintained and cleaned on a regular basis.

Administrator Damato advised everyone since his last report there have been two additional COVID-19 cases in the Borough bringing the total number of cases to 85. He mentioned on the conference call Somerset County was congratulated by the State for having some of the lowest numbers of additional cases.

Mr. Damato also said there were an additional 33,000 unemployment claims filed last week bringing the total to 1.3 million unemployed in New Jersey. He mentioned the DMV will be re-opening on Monday and urged everyone to consult the website as a reference if they have any questions.

Administrator Damato said he anticipates the re-opening of Borough Hall to be on Wednesday July 1st. He said the glass dividers have been installed for protection and areas between employees and the public have been secured. He also said the basketball courts will be re-opening on July 6th.

Councilman Jubin questioned if we had the proper cleaning equipment to sanitize the parks. Administrator Damato said Mr. Gunther has been doing well with securing sanitization equipment.

Council President Robinson asked the possibility of having the Council return to in-person meetings possibly for the July 16th meeting. Mr. Damato explained there would be some adjusting of seating to accommodate social distancing standards and would look into starting this process.

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PUBLIC PORTION

None

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 P.M. to the Call of the Chair.

The next Regularly scheduled Meeting of the Mayor and Council is scheduled to be virtually held on July 16, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo, RMC
Deputy Clerk