

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

NOVEMBER 19, 2020 - 7:30 P.M.

(THIS MEETING WAS A VIRTUAL MEETING)

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Keith S. Balla called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM and stated the following: In order to comply with all NJ Executive Orders and to protect members of the public, this meeting will be held virtual for all parties. Public Comments will be accepted through zoom at the designated time or in writing. 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 Special Meeting Notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, the Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall and the Borough's website. If you wish to speak during public portion, you will need to click on the "raise your hand" feature so that we may see you. For those joining us through the conference call line, you will need to press *6 to unmute yourself.

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 Knegten [P] Jubin [P] Martino [P]

REPORT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE

Council President Robinson stated the joint Board of Education Council Shared Services Committee met and had a productive discussion in regards to continuing the lease and potential shared services. She said the administrators will be working on formulating a list of potential shared services and she looks forward continuing to collaborate with the Board of Education.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Council Member Jubin said the Committee met and discussed budget planning. He also said the Committee discussed holding a fundraiser to raise money for new park benches at Phillips Field. He feels holding smaller budget Committee meetings is very useful.
2. Police – Council President Robinson said there is a sign to alert residents of the roadwork starting on Monday into Tuesday. She mentioned that PSE&G needs to eliminate a valve near Best Lake so the traffic will be re-routed. She also said the speed limit sign data is still being analyzed. She said it seems the sign posted showing drivers their speed seems to limit the speeding.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Mayor Balla asked if the Council had any more comments for Public Works Director Charlie Gunther other than what was discussed during the previous meeting. The Council had no further questions.
4. Public Affairs / Traffic and Beautification: Council Member Goodloe reported that the LED snowflakes arrived and they are hoping the Public Works Department can hang them up prior to Thanksgiving. She asked for a consensus of the Council to go forward with the lights in Stratford Park on either one or all three of the flagpoles. Councilmember Eisenberg Knegten asked for a cost estimate for this project. Councilmember Goodloe responded the cost of the project is minimal and ensured the Council that the Committee had enough funds in their budget to cover these costs. There being no objections, Council Member Goodloe said she will advise the Committee to proceed forward.

Environmental – Council President Robinson asked to defer the discussion on the amendments to the tree bank ordinance and the tree permit application until the entire Council has a chance to view these items.

Recreation – Council Member Eisenberg Knegten reported on an idea discussed in light of the holiday season approaching which would unite residents with members of our long-term care facilities in town. She explained that residents would reach out to the two long term care facilities in town to begin a pen pal conversation encouraging our youth to think of others and connect with residents in those types of facilities. She feels this would be very beneficial to the youth of Watchung along with the residents in our long-term care facilities.

Council Member Goodloe added the Recreation Department is trying to recreate the snow sculpture contest and the holiday light contest. She said more information on these two contests will be up on the website shortly.

Historical – Council Member Goodloe had no report.

Board of Health – Council Member Jubin discussed some updates on the second wave of the COVID-19 virus. He reminded everyone to continue to keep their distance and limit interactions especially with the holidays approaching as numbers are continuing to rise.

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Council Member Jubin also updated everyone on some details regarding the future COVID-19 vaccine such as the vaccine will not be available for children on the first round.

Finally, he thanked the schools for doing such a good job protecting the children and keeping them safe during this time. Mayor Balla asked if the local hospitals in our area are equipped with state-of-the-art treatments for COVID-19 patients. Council Member Jubin assured everyone that our closest hospitals are equipped to handle the virus.

5. Fire – Councilman Martino mentioned firefighter Santa will be visiting the children in the Borough on December 12th.
6. Laws/Ordinances – Council Member Eisenberg Knegten had no report.

REPORTS – OTHER:

7. Engineer – Mr. Koch was not present but previously submitted his report to the Mayor and Council.
8. Police Chief – Acting Chief Kelly read the report for the month of October. He said there was a meeting held between members of the Department and the Administrative staff of Bayberry School to develop a better traffic plan for drop off and pick up hours at the school. He also mentioned PSE&G contacted the Police Department regarding the valve system work scheduled to occur in the Borough. He advised everyone that the message board will post alternate traffic routes due to road closures. He also said the Police Department will send out Nixle alerts to all the residents as well.
9. Fire Department – No report.
10. Rescue Squad- Council President Robinson said the tree of lights preparations are underway. She also mentioned in order to protect the health and safety of our residents the event will be held virtually and there will not be any fireworks this year.
11. Emergency Management – OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon was pleased to announce that multiple food donations were received since the last Council meeting. She discussed some new COVID-19 restrictions regarding long term care facilities.
12. Attorney – Attorney Murphy expanded on the Introduction of Ordinance R6 as well as R8 listed on tonight's agenda.
13. Clerk – Clerk Edith Gil advised all that the public hearing for Ordinance 20/06 would be held December 17th.
14. Administrator – Administrator Damato mentioned there are 142 new COVID-19 cases in Somerset County and 7 new deaths. He feels the increase in numbers is a big concern. He also mentioned that the municipal building has gone back to serving the public by appointment only. He said there is a huge need as per the State for Spanish / English contact tracers and if anyone is interested they are able to apply online. Councilmember Eisenberg Knegten asked again if the Borough could release the data relating to the COVID-19 cases to the public as soon as it is received. Councilman Martino asked the status of RFP for the website. Mayor Balla said the RFP is available on the Borough website.
15. Wildlife Committee – Council Member Jubin had no report.
16. Youth Services – Council President Robinson said the schools are waiting to implement this year's programs.
17. Planning Board – Council Member Martino said the Planning Board met twice this week. Mayor Balla asked if the Clerk could check with the secretary of the Planning Board regarding the draft copy of the master plan for distribution to the Council.
18. Board of Education – Council Member Eisenberg Knegten said the Board of Education met on Thursday, November 12th. She mentioned that new member Amber Murad was sworn in to fill a term expiring at the end of the year. Council Woman Knegten also said the Board of Education entered into a shared services agreement with CJ Pride, an organization tasked to implement diverse educators. Council Member Eisenberg Knegten reminded everyone that the BOE is still seeking in house substitutes and encouraged anyone interested to apply. Lastly, she said the next Board of Education meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, December 10th.
19. Municipal Alliance – No report.

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20. Library Advisory Board – Council Member Goodloe confirmed that Library fines are still being waived. She also said the Library just launched a new digital service called press reader which provides free access to news sources on a computer, tablet or phone.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

1. Bruce Ruck, Lakeview Avenue, stated if residents decide to leave the nursing homes and the nursing homes don't have a place for the residents to quarantine in a single room upon return, they cannot take them back into the facility. He also said New Jersey has received a small supply of the Eli Lilly drug which will be for outpatient use only and going to hospitals with outpatient infusion centers. Lastly, Mr. Ruck reminded everyone the positive results being reported on during our daily reports are confirmed PCR COVID-19 positive cases. He said the numbers do not include the rapid tests administered daily which means there are more presumed positive unreported results.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Balla asked if Council President Robinson could defer the tree bank Ordinance discussion until the next meeting in order for everyone to have an opportunity to read it over. She agreed and asked if the Ordinance could also be posted for members of the public.

Councilmember Eisenberg – Knegten asked for clarification on the goal setting workshop meeting date discussed for the Mayor and Council. She encouraged the Council to try and get a date on the calendar for the month of December. Mayor Balla said they will try and coordinate that meeting for a date during the week.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

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

Approval of the following Council Minutes:

October 15, 2020	Regular Meeting
November 5, 2020	Regular Meeting

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Police Activity Report	October 2020
Board of Adjustment Minutes	November 12, 2020
Building Department Monthly Report	October 2020
Recreation Minutes	October 7, 2020
Wildlife Management Advisory Committee Minutes	October 5, 2020

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Resolutions were unanimously adopted following a motion by Council President Robinson, second by Council Member Goodloe, upon roll call the vote were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Member Black was absent.

Council Member Martino said he researched the Borough code and questioned if a variance was needed to do work on a Saturday regarding Resolution R4. Attorney Murphy said he would explain his reasoning behind this further with the Council in Executive Session.

- R1: Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – The Rodgers Group, LLC (PD – Accreditation Software Maint.)
The Rodgers Group, LLC (PD – 2021 Accreditation Training Software)
Winner Ford (PD – 2021 Police SUV)

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ESS Inc. (Radio Tower Installation)

- R2: Authorize Submission of Strategic Plan – Watchung Hills Municipal Alliance Grant 2021/2022
- R3: Authorizing Tax Lien Redemption – Certificate # 18-00002
- R4: Resolution Authorizing Watchung Developers/PSEG to Install Gas Line into Watchung Villas

NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

Introduction of Ordinance OR:20/06 entitled **“AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NOS. OR: 19/05 AND 18/20, ADOPTING A "REDEVELOPMENT PLAN" FOR A NON-CONDEMNATION AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF BLOCK 7402, LOTS 19.01 AND 19.02 AND BLOCK 7403, LOTS 5 AND 10 AND FURTHER IDENTIFIED AS THE "BONNIE BURN ROAD REDEVELOPMENT AREA", AS SHOWN ON THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG TAX MAP IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7.”**
Public Hearing December 17, 2020

- R5: Introduction of Ordinance OR:20/06 – Amending OR 19/05 and 18/20

Council Member Jubin moved the above resolution, second by Council Member Goodloe and upon rollcall the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Member Black was absent.

- R6: Payment of Bills

Council Member Jubin moved the above resolution, second by Council President Robinson and upon rollcall the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, Jubin, Martino ‘aye’, Council Member Black was absent.

- R7: Authorizing Extension of Temporary Outdoor Dining Resolution

Attorney Murphy commented on the proposed legislation in accordance with Resolution R7.

Council Member Eisenberg Knegten moved the above resolution, second by Council Member Goodloe and upon rollcall the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, Jubin, Martino ‘aye’, Council Member Black was absent.

- R8: Authorizing Conditional Designation of Karka Investments Inc. and Phillips Property, Inc. as Redevelopers of the Bonnie Burn Road Property

Council Member Jubin moved the above resolution, second by Council President Robinson and upon rollcall the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, Jubin, Martino ‘aye’, Council Member Black was absent.

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

Bruce Ruck, Lakeview Avenue, questioned the Boroughs obligation for affordable housing beyond the current units and asked if the Council has thought about speaking to other surrounding towns to set up a combined Housing Authority. Mr. Ruck said the towns would decide on the land and the cost would be funded through a Bond Ordinance which would be paid off by the renters of the facilities. He commented that this plan decreases the total number of units the Borough would be responsible to build. Mr. Ruck asked for the Councils thoughts on possibly setting up a housing authority between the four or five towns.

Mayor Balla stated the Council explored and discussed the potential for a combined Housing Authority between towns with a lower housing requirement. Mr. Ruck suggested the Council consider combining with other towns and specified that every town would keep their own specific housing numbers. Mayor Balla also said in regards to the next round of the Boroughs housing authority requirement, he is unsure what that number will be.

Nicole Dory, representing Karka and Phillip Properties, asked if the timeframe change was made to Resolution R8. Attorney Murphy confirmed the timeframe change to the Resolution was made prior to the meeting. He explained in paragraph 2 of Resolution R8, the timeframe to enter into a redevelopment and financial agreement was changed from 90 days to 180 days.

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R9: Authorizing Executive Session: Personnel Matters and Potential Litigation

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

Upon return, Council President moved to return to open session, second by Council Member Jubin and upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Member Black was absent.

Administrator Damato asked if the Mayor and Council would authorize the snow blower attachment purchase referenced earlier by Public Works Supervisor Charlie Gunther. He also said this would be a purchase over \$2,000.00.

Councilmember Goodloe moved the snow blower attachment purchase, seconded by Council President Robinson and upon roll call the votes were as follows: Robinson, Goodloe, Eisenberg Knegten, Jubin, Martino “aye”, Council Member Black was absent.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned to the Call of the Chair at 10:13 P.M. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council is scheduled to be virtually held on December 3, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo
Deputy Clerk