

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

DECEMBER 2, 2021 | 7:30 P.M.

[THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON & BROADCASTED VIA ZOOM]

MAYOR'S OPENING STATEMENT: Mayor Keith S. Balla called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. 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 in person and virtually for all parties. Public Comments will be accepted through zoom or by email to the Borough Clerk. For those joining through Zoom, please note that upon arrival you are automatically muted. If you wish to speak during the public portion, you will need to click on the “raise your hand” feature. For those joining us through the conference call line, you will need to press *6 to unmute yourself. 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 Revised Annual Meeting Notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, the Star Ledger, posted at Borough Hall and on the Borough’s website.”*

SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD.

ROLL CALL:

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

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Balla read the following proclamation: Michael Stein

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration & Finance – No update provided.
2. Police – Council President Robinson reported that the Police Department and the PBA are holding a Toys for Tots fundraiser this weekend at Police Headquarters. She informed of the police department’s purchase of 5 fast water vests to assist officers who may have to rescue stranded motorists or pedestrians from flood waters and they expect to purchase an additional 5 vests next year. She also noted that Police is in the process of completing the paperwork to receive full reimbursement for the body worn cameras. She also spoke on the truck accident that occurred today on Hillcrest Road. Council President Robinson noted that unauthorized trucks are still coming down Hillcrest Road but is hopeful that the County will finally take action. Councilmember Hayeck thanked all first responders for their assistance relating to the accident today on Hillcrest Road.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds - Councilmember Eisenberg Knegten stated the process of asbestos removal at the Ness farm is underway. She also mentioned that bollards were successfully installed at the library bridge and also at Mobus Field. Councilmember Eisenberg Knegten also advised the Borough received the second quote relating to the repairs at Mobus playground. Lastly, she stated the Borough has 800 tons of salt on hand for any winter weather.
4. Public Affairs:
 - Environmental – Council President Robinson reported on the legacy book and the Styrofoam recycling Borough programs. She also said a policy was drafted for governing the Styrofoam program and a fact sheet for residents is available on the Borough website. Council President

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Robinson commended the Green Team for achieving sustainable New Jersey bronze level status.

Recreation – No update provided.

Historical – No update provided.

Board of Health – Councilmember Jubin reported that the Board of Health last met on November 17th and discussed the upcoming 2022 budget. He also mentioned new topics discussed were future grant opportunities and the Mayor’s wellness campaign. Councilmember Jubin emphasized the importance of educating our youth on the use and different types of cannabis. He also discussed formally honoring the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission for their dedicated years of service to Watchung for the past 50 years.

5. Fire – Councilmember Goodloe mentioned that on Saturday, December 11th Santa will visit the children of Watchung on a fire truck. She also advised anyone interested please send a direct Facebook message to the Watchung Fire Department including your street name.
6. Laws/Ordinances – No update provided.

REPORTS – OTHER:

7. Engineer – No update provided.
8. Police Chief – Chief Hart provided an update on police activity for the month of November. He also commented on the truck accident occurring on Hillcrest Road. He said as a result of the accident four people were transferred to the Hospital but thankfully none with serious injuries. He commended the first responders for their assistance in tending to the victims and cleaning up the roadway. Chief Hart also reminded everyone to be conscious of not leaving keys in their vehicles and discussed the process of the speed sign program.
9. Fire Department - No update provided
10. Rescue Squad – Council President Robinson encouraged everyone to attend the Tree Lighting Ceremony this Saturday at 5:30 P.M.
11. Emergency Management – Carolyn Solon stated all COVID-19 plans submitted for the Borough Recreation programs have been reviewed and approved. She also said the Office of Emergency Management will continue to closely monitor the Boroughs COVID activity report and work with the local Health Department.
12. Attorney – Attorney Murphy reported on Resolution R8 and Ordinance 21/12 listed for approval on tonight’s agenda. He explained that the financial agreement listed is required to be passed via Ordinance. He also pointed out a typographical error in the Ordinance needing correction. He advised the Ordinance currently reads 13 percent through years 1 through 10 but should read 13 percent through years 1 through 15. He asked the Council to please consider this amendment to the Ordinance when approving it tonight on first reading. Attorney Murphy also stated the next step in this process is for

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the Council to consider the approval of the redevelopment agreement anticipated to be listed by resolution at the next Council meeting.

13. CFO – CFO Hance advised he completed a first draft of the 2022 budget and will be reaching out to schedule department meetings.
14. Clerk – Clerk Gil said she received notification regarding the Special School Board Election and advised all voting districts will be consolidated to the Fireman’s Exempt Hall. She also stated the vote by mail deadline is December 7th and reminded residents the Borough ballot drop box location is still open. She mentioned this weekend the Middle-brook Regional Health Commission is offering a free rabies clinic at the Watchung Fire House from 9 to 10 A.M. and also encouraged all residents to renew their pet licenses through the online portal. Lastly, Clerk Gil stated emails were sent out regarding reappointment to all our chairs and secretaries of various boards and committees. She asked if anyone wishes to be reappointed to please submit their volunteer forms before the end of December.

Councilmember Hayeck questioned the process of receiving a vote by mail ballot. Clerk Gil confirmed if you signed up to receive vote by mail ballots you will receive one for every election.

15. Administrator – Administrator Damato was happy to inform the Council and public of a \$5,300 dollar rebate received from our Joint Insurance Fund representing a refund of premium dollars previously paid. He also mentioned the culvert repair work began on Monday at Elsinore Drive and is proceeding very well. He commended the Department of Public Works and the Traffic and Beautification Committee for doing a fabulous job getting the village green ready for the tree lighting.
16. Youth Services – No update provided.
17. Planning Board – No update provided.
18. Municipal Alliance – No update provided.
19. Library Advisory Board – Councilmember Goodloe reported on some of the upcoming exciting library events. She also mentioned the Friends of the Watchung Library bookstore has reopened and they are also accepting donations of used books.
20. Traffic and Beautification – Councilmember Goodloe thanked the Traffic and Beautification Committee and volunteers for completing their annual holiday decorating and also thanked the Public Works Department for their assistance with this process.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- 1) Christine Ead, Washington Drive, questioned if the volunteer forms are available online. Clerk Gil replied the forms are available on our Borough website listed under the Clerk’s department.
- 2) Catherine Leigh, Guinard Drive, thanked the Mayor and Council for going back to in person meetings but advised she unfortunately has pneumonia and couldn’t attend this evening. She also thanked Council President Robinson for discussing the truck accident immediately in her Police Committee report and thanked the Police Commissioner for all the tickets the department has been issuing to

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truck drivers for driving down Hillcrest Road. Ms. Leigh questioned how we relay this information to Somerset County.

Mayor Balla advised they are in the process of putting information together to meet with the NJ Department of Transportation and Somerset County to see if they can assemble a resolution regarding the dangers of trucks traveling down Hillcrest Road. Ms. Leigh thanked Mayor Balla for being on top of this issue. Councilmember Martino feels the community should gather their voices in force to try and make a difference.

Councilmember Hayeck agreed with Councilmember Martino's comments and thanked the nurse on scene today who cared for the young child in the accident. He also thanked Ms. Leigh for constantly expressing her safety concerns.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	November 4, 2021
Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes	September 1, 2021
Traffic and Beautification Meeting Minutes	November 10, 2021
Police Department Monthly Activity Report	October 2021
Engineer Capital Project Status Report	November 2021

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#46- Township of Warren, 11/22/21 re: Notice of Introduction, Ordinance No. 21-24 “ *An Ordinance to Amend Section 16-5 Entitled General Regulations of Chapter 16 Entitled Zoning of the Revised General Ordinances of the Township of Warren by the Addition of New Subsection 16-5.38 Entitled Electric Vehicle Supply / Service and Make-Ready Parking Spaces and also Amending Section 7-3 Entitled Parking of Chapter 7 Entitled Traffic by Amending Subsection 7-16.12 Entitled Public Parking Spaces for Electric Charging Stations.* ” c: M&C, JD

Motion to Adopt above by Robinson/ Second by Eisenberg Knegten

RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The resolutions listed below were adopted by one motion.

- R1: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – Idemia (*PD- LiveScan maintenance & support*)
Northeast Communications Group (*Improvements to network infrastructure*)
Lawsoft, Inc. (*PD-support & maintenance for CAD/NIBRS Interface*)
Shack Shine (*Texier House Holiday Lights*)
- R2: Authorizing and Establishing an Internet Usage, Communications/Social Media and Phone Policy to Borough’s Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual
- R3: Authorizing Winter Holiday Display Application – St. Mary-Stony Hill Church
- R4: Authorizing Extension of Grace Period for 2021 Added and Omitted Assessment Bills
- R5: Waiving Delinquent Interest for Property at 633 Valley Road, Block 7100/ Lot 1.01
- R6: Waiving Delinquent Interest for Property at 437 Johnston Drive, Block 6501/ Lot 4
- R7: Authorizing Styrofoam Collection

Motion to Adopt by Robinson / Second by Jubin

RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

Council President Robinson thanked Councilmember Martino for his helpful input on the Styrofoam Collection policy.

NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

- R8: Approving the Amended and Restated Application for a Financial Agreement for Long Term Tax Exemption Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:20-1, et. seq. for Inclusionary Housing Project on Property Known As 291 Bonnie Burn Road, Block 7403/ Lots 5 and 10, and Block 7402/ Lots 19.01 and 19.02 – Filed by Bonnie Burn Redevelopers Urban Renewal, LLC.

Motion to Adopt by Martino / Second by Robinson

RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

Introduction of Ordinance **OR:21/12** ***“AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE FINANCIAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG AND BONNIE BURN REDEVELOPERS URBAN RENEWAL, LLC (formerly STERLING WATCHUNG, LLC) UNDER THE LONG-TERM TAX EXEMPTION LAW (N.J.S.A. 40A:20-1, ET SEQ.) FOR AN INCLUSIONARY HOUSING PROJECT ON PROPERTY KNOWN AS 291 BONNIE BURN ROAD IDENTIFIED AS BLOCK 7403, LOTS 5 AND 10 AND BLOCK 7402, LOTS 19.01 AND 19.02 ON THE TAX MAP OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG***

(Public Hearing to be held on December 16, 2021)

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R9: Introduction of Ordinance OR: 21/12 –An Ordinance Approving and Authorizing the Execution of the Financial Agreement with Bonnie Burn Redevelopers Urban Renewal, LLC.

Attorney Denis Murphy noted a typographical error on the first sentence of paragraph 2 on page 7 of the proposed ordinance. The sentence currently references years 1 through 10 which is a typographical error and should read years 1 through 15.

Motion to Adopt by Martino / Second by Robinson

RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

R10: Authorizing Salary Adjustment for Deputy Clerk – Regina Angelo

Motion to Adopt by Jubin / Second by Robinson

RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

Councilmember Jubin thanked Ms. Angelo for her hard work and dedication.

R11: Authorizing Shared Service Agreement for Resale of Commodities / Related Services with County Department of Public Works

Motion to Adopt by Eisenberg Knegten / Second by Jubin

RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

R12: Authorizing Borough Clerk to Forward Mayor and Council Meeting Agendas & Supporting Documentation to Councilmembers Elect

Motion to Adopt by Jubin/second by Eisenberg Knegten

RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

No one appearing

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business before Council, the meeting ended at 8:25 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council is a regular meeting scheduled to be held on December 16, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo
Deputy Clerk