

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

FEBRUARY 16, 2022

[THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN-PERSON AND BROADCASTED VIA ZOOM]

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Keith S. Balla called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. and stated the following: *"This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. 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, posted at Borough Hall and on the Borough's website. Public Comments will be accepted in-person, through zoom or by email to the Borough Clerk. For those joining through Zoom, please note that upon arrival you are automatically muted."*

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

ROLL CALL

Jubin [P] Robinson [P] Martino [P] Hayeck [P] Dahl [P] Ead [P]

DISCUSSION

Continued Review of 2022 Budget Requests:

❖ Rescue Squad

Captain Matt King provided an overview of the Rescue Squads services and he noted that procedures implemented in 2020 as a result of the health pandemic have been carried over in order to protect all members. The implementation of these procedures has made a financial impact to their budget.

Mayor Ball asked for an overview of the hours and the Squads' collaboration with Atlantic Health. Captain King noted that the Rescue Squad operates from 6pm to 6am everyday and Atlantic Health provides coverage from 6am to 6pm. Mr. King also provided that they have trained approximately 6 new members this year,

Council Member Martino asked if the Rescue Squad was eligible for reimbursement for covid expenses and inquired if they were looking to replace any items. Captain King noted that they might have to replace a vehicle but noted that was something they were still looking into this.

Council Member Robinson noted the total number of calls in the prior year and mentioned that the Rescue Squad's funding request was minimal in comparison to their services. Mayor and Council thanked the Rescue Squad for their dedication and service to the Borough.

❖ Fire Department

Chief DeSandolo provided an overview of the general operating budget for the fire department and reviewed each budget line in detail. He noted that their capital requests were also previously

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submitted to CFO Bill Hance and the Fire Committee. Chief DeSandolo proceeded to speak on the items that the departments was seeking to replace.

Mayor Balla asked the Fire Chief to go over the use of life of the equipment that the department was looking to replace. Mayor Balla also asked for clarification on the increase of the supplies line from \$17,000 to approximately \$80,000. Chief DeSandolo explained that at the recommendation of the Administration and Finance Committee these items were moved from the capital budget to their operating budget. He also noted that these items included hose replacements, replacement of sets of gear, ice rescue and rope supplies that are outdated.

Mayor and Council proceeded to make their inquiries on the various equipment looking to be replaced and their lifespan. Chief DeSandolo noted that overall, the department tries to space out replacements so that all of the equipment is not outdated at the same time. Council Member Martino suggested that items that do not belong on the operating budget, like the stipends and other long-range items, should be removed.

Chief DeSandolo proceeded to provide an overview of the training that members go through and spoke on all the capital improvements that need to be done. Council Member Martino noted that the last Rodgers report recommended that the agency should adopt NFPA standards and asked that the Borough look into moving forward with that. Chief DeSandolo asked if the borough had looked into the lease for the East End Fire House and the length of the lease with the quarry. He noted that was an important subject, Administrator Damato noted the lease was expired and that the Weldon Family would not renew the lease so the borough has to move out. Mr. Damato further noted that the Fire Committee had just began its meetings and would tackle this issue. It was also recommended that the fire house locking system be added to the budget this year.

Mayor and Council thanked the Fire Department and its members for all of their dedication and service to the Borough.

PUBLIC PORTION

No one appearing

ADJOURNMENT

Upon their being no further business the meeting ended at 8:27 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Edith G. Gil
Borough Clerk