

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG  
MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 7, 2022**

*[Approved: May 5, 2022]*

**MAYOR’S STATEMENT:** Mayor 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 Annual 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 to REMEMBER SUPPORT AND HONOR THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE and OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD**

**ROLL CALL**

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

**PROCLAMATIONS**

Mayor Balla read the following proclamation onto the record:

❖ National Autism Awareness

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

1. Administration & Finance: Council President Jubin reported on the committee meeting held on March 11<sup>th</sup> in which Tax Assessor Ed Kerwin provided updates relating to tax rates, revenues, and other tax matters. President Jubin discussed matters relating to the budget review and finalization of it. Funds relating to infrastructure were also discussed and Council Member Dahl expressed his appreciation for all of Council President Jubin’s hard work and dedication to the Committee.
2. Police: Council Member Robinson reported that at the last meeting the Committee reviewed contract matters relating to R10 on tonight’s agenda. Matters discussed include the replacement of patrol cars as well as equipment updates for the Police department.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds: Council Member Ead and Administrator Damato discussed playground updates to Mobus field listed on tonight’s agenda. Infrastructure improvements such as culvert repairs, water line installation, and the prepping of Watchung Circle and Somerset Street for paving purposes were also discussed in detail. Council Member Ead also provided updates relating to FEMA discussions.

Council Member Robinson and Administrator Damato discussed matters relating to the design of Mobus playground.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental: Council Member Robinson reported on the Commission’s March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Matters discussed ranged from Green Acres Program, areas in swampy conditions,

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tree planting efforts, trees removed, Styrofoam collection date, and recommendations of the BOA Annual Report. Council President Jubin expressed his concern relating to the spotted lantern fly and the toxic hemlock weed.

Recreation: Council Member Ead reported on behalf of Councilman Hayeck. She offered comments on the summer camp program, upcoming Borough events such as the Easter Egg hunt, Community Picnic and Operation Pride.

Historical: Council Member Ead reported on Texier House schedule updates, basement cleanup, repairs to the outside of the building, and noted the Legend of Watchung mural is still looking for a permanent home. She also stated that information will soon be released relating to the Journey through the Past event.

Board of Health: Council President Jubin reported on the boards March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to COVID-19 were discussed. Council President Jubin read a statement from Health Officer, Kevin Sumner encouraging all to receive regular health screenings. Different types of Cannabis deliveries were also discussed, updates to the Massage Therapy Ordinance, and updates to the Mayors Wellness Campaign were also discussed. Council Member Martino asked that clarification be obtained in relation to licenses for cannabis trucks.

5. Fire: Council Member Dahl reported on the calls for service during the month of March, noted two new members were sworn into the department and discussed the fire occurring on East Drive-in detail.
6. Laws/ Ordinances: Council Member Martino had no report.

**REPORTS – OTHER:**

7. Engineer: Professional Engineer Jason Cline, RVE, provided comments on various matters. Among them were the Mobus playground, Library bridge now open to pedestrian traffic, the Phillips Field bridge, lowering the lake surfaces on Stirling Road, storm culvert repairs, the Ness Farm scope of services proposal and sanitary sewer improvement repairs. Mr. Cline proceeded to describe other projects being planned.
8. Police Chief: Chief Andrew Hart reported on the departments March figures. He also discussed the speed enforcement program signs and mentioned this is the first he has heard of cannabis trucks.
9. Fire Department: the department provided no further update.
10. Rescue Squad: Council Member Robinson reported on the figures for the month of February and also mentioned that the Rescue Squad is in the process of planning a Spring cleanup/ Open House event.
11. Emergency Management: OEM Coordinator, Carolyn Solon, spoke on updates relating to FEMA inspectors and the Hurricane Ida damage throughout the Borough.

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12. Attorney: Attorney Sordillo had no report.
13. Clerk: Clerk Edith Gil reported on some election updates and reminded everyone that Financial Disclosure forms need to be submitted by April 30<sup>th</sup>.
14. Administrator: Administrator Damato discussed the Borough's approval as a level one / two cyber security and also mentioned in the case of a cyber-attack the Borough would now have enhanced coverage.
15. Youth Services: Council Member Dahl had no report.
16. Planning Board: Council Member Martino reported that the April Planning Board meeting has been cancelled.
17. Municipal Alliance: No report.
18. Library Advisory Board: Council Member Robinson discussed updates relating to the fully operational Friends of the Library Bookstore, the recommendation for our Borough Engineer to review the structural evaluation performed in 2014 to our Library and the generous donation of four outdoor chairs from Ms. Hartmann and her husband.
19. Traffic and Beautification: Council Member Ead reported on the Committee's January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to the upcoming scarecrow stroll, new banners placed on Somerset Street, and areas in need of clean up and plantings throughout the Borough were discussed.

**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, commented on resolution R16 and thanked Mr. Bisignano for his donation. She asked that the Borough consider looking further into how the sewer taxes are billed.
- 2) Bruce Ruck, Lakeview Avenue, commented on the discussion item by Council President Jubin. He explained that "weed trucks" were in the New York area and that they are not selling marijuana, they are providing it for free with the purchase of something else. He reminded Council that the Borough could not regulate the delivery of cannabis.

**DISCUSSION**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Motion to Open Public Hearing by Martino / Second by Robinson

RC Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

Public Hearing of Ordinance# 22/01 entitled "**ORDINANCE RESCINDING AND RENAMING**

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**CHAPTER 20, ENTITLED, “NOISE REGULATIONS” OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG AND ADOPTING THE MODEL NOISE ORDINANCE AUTHORIZED BY THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION”**

R1: Authorizing Adoption of Ordinance# **22/01** – Rescinding and Renaming Chapter 20, Noise Regulations and Adopting the Model Noise Ordinance Authorized by NJDEP

No one present to provide comment.

Motion to Close Public Hearing and Adopt above item by Martino / Second by Robinson

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

Motion to Open Public Hearing on below by Martino / Second by Robinson

RC Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

**Public Hearing of Ordinance# 22/02 entitled “ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 27 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG ENTITLED, “RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTY REGISTRATION”**

R2: Authorizing Adoption of Ordinance# **22/02** – Amending Chapter 27, Residential Rental Property Registration

No one present to provide comment.

Motion to Close Public Hearing and Adopt above item by Martino / Second by Jubin

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

Motion to Open Public Hearing on below by Martino / Second by Ead

RC Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

**Public Hearing of Ordinance# 22/03 entitled “ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 12 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, ENTITLED “FIRE PREVENTION” REQUIRING THE REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF “NON-LIFE HAZARD USES” WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG**

R3: Authorizing Adoption of Ordinance# **22/03** – Amending Chapter 12, Fire Prevention, Requiring the Registration and Inspection of Non-Life Hazard Uses

No one present to provide comment.

Motion to Close Public Hearing and Adopt above item by Martino / Second by Robinson

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

Council Member Martino thanked the Laws and Ordinance Committee as well as those that provided input for their input on getting these ordinances adopted.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

**REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	March 10, 2022
Building Department Monthly Report	March 2021
CERT Meeting Minutes	March 22, 2022
Engineer's Status Report	March 2022
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	February 28, 2022
Green Team Meeting Minutes	February 22, 2022
Mayor and Council Special Meeting Minutes	January 8, 2022 January 15, 2022
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	January 20, 2022 February 3, 2022 February 17, 2022
Police Monthly Activity Report	March 2022
Traffic and Beautification Meeting Minutes	January 17, 2022 February 21, 2022

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #6: Township of Warren, 3/25/22 re: Notice of Introduction, Ordinance No. 22-07 , *“An Ordinance Adopting a Redevelopment Plan for an “Area in Need of Redevelopment” Known as the “Mountainview Redevelopment Plan” Consisting of Block 8, Lots 2 & 3 in the Township of Warren in Accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7, and Supplementing and Amending Chapter XVI of the Revised General Ordinances of the Township of Warren Entitled “Zoning” by the Amendment of Section 16-3 Entitled “ Official Zoning Map and Interpretations”, and by the Amendment of Subsection 16-2.1 Entitled “Districts” by Officially adding the Mountainview Redevelopment District and by Adding New Subsection 16-19.6 Entitled “Mountainview Redevelopment District.”*  
c: M&C, JD, TS
- #7: Borough of Watchung Planning Board, 3/25/22 re: Planning Board Review of 2021 BOA Annual Report c: M&C, JD
- #8: NJ American Water, 3/21/22 re: Petition for Approval of Increased Tariff Rates and Charges meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup> c: M&C, JD

Motion to Accept Above by Jubin/ Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

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**CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

- \*R4: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – Power Place Inc. (*John Deere DPW mower*)  
PuroClean Disaster Response (*PD- Fire & Smoke Cleaning Services*)  
SE Rose Trucking & Excavating Inc. (*Nottingham Rd emergency catch basin repair*)  
Messercola Excavating, Inc. (*Hill Hollow catch basin and culvert repairs*)  
Messercola Excavating Inc. (*Sherwood Drive catch basin and culvert repairs*)  
AquaClear, LLC (*Lake management*)  
Amazon (*Supplies for Mobus Field lost during Hurricane Ida*)  
Coban Technologies, Inc. (*PD- annual cloud subscription, Safe Fleet Azure*)  
State of NJ – Treasurer (*NJPDES – environmental regulations*)
- R5: Certifying Compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Letters
- R6: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application – Mr. B’s Fishing Camp (summer program)
- R7: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application – Mr. B’s Fishing Club (after school program)
- R8: Authorizing Passage of S-330/A3804, Which Shall Restore Energy Tax Receipts to Municipalities
- R9: Authorizing Borough Resources to Assist with Operation Pride – April 23, 2022

Motion to Accept Above by Jubin/ Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

\*R4: Martino [Abstain]

**NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

- R10: Authorizing Agreement with Somerset County Relative to the Use of the Borough’s Police Personnel for Various County Initiatives

Motion to Adopt Above by Robinson/ Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

- R11: Authorizing Extension of Service to Memorandum of Understanding with Somerset County Prosecutor’s Office Relative to the Use of the Borough’s Bureau of Fire Prevention Personnel

Motion to Adopt Above by Dahl/ Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

- R12: [Introduction of 2022 Budget](#)

Council President Jubin provided comments on the hard work everyone put in accomplishing the budgetary goals for 2022. He elaborated on all the meetings held and thanked everyone for providing their input.

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Motion to Adopt Above by Jubin / Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

R13: Authorizing Annual User Charges for Operation and Maintenance of Sewer System – 2022

Motion to Adopt Above by Jubin / Second by Dahl

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

**OR 22/04: “ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK WHEN THE COLA IS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 2.5 PERCENT (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)**

R14: Introducing ordinance **22/04** To Exceed the COLA and Establishing a CAP Bank When COLA is Equal To or Less Than 2.65 Percent

Motion to Adopt Above by Jubin / Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

**OR 22/05: “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING THE ACQUISITION AND INSTALLATION OF PARK EQUIPMENT AND RELATED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND APPROPRIATING \$500,000.00 THEREFOR FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND”**

R15: Introduction ordinance OR 22/05 – Capital Improvement Ordinance for the Acquisition and Installation of Park Equipment and Related Improvements

Motion to Adopt Above by Jubin / Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

R16: Accepting Donation from Bisignano Family to Replace Roof of Borough Property located at 12 Stirling Road

Council Members Robinson and Martino commented on their reason for abstaining on this resolution.

Motion to Adopt Above by Jubin / Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Abstain] Martino [Abstain] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

R17: Authorizing Certification of Local Examination for the 2022 Budget

Motion to Adopt Above by Jubin / Second by Dahl

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

R19: Authorizing Payment of Accumulated Benefits – Police Officer Kelly

Motion to Adopt Above by Robinson/ Second by Jubin

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RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

**PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION**

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, expressed her disappointment regarding a payment made to CME Engineers advising them to draft a plan for a community garden at Camp Endeavor.
- 2) Rachel Funcheon, Cedar Road, commented on the possibility of putting crosswalks at the bottom of Cedar Road and Lakeview Avenue. Mayor Balla advised he will further look into this.

R18: Authorizing Executive Session to discuss: Contract Negotiations and Collective Bargaining Agreement Updates

Motion to Adopt Above by Jubin / Second by Ead

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

Mayor and Council entered executive session at approximately 9:58 P.M. and returned to open session at approximately 11:03 P.M.

Motion to Return to Open Session by Jubin/ Second by Robinson

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Absent] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon there being no further business to come before Council, the meeting adjourned at 11:06 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully,

Regina Angelo  
Deputy Clerk