

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

JULY 14, 2022

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

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Balla called the meeting to order at 7:31 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]

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance: Council President Jubin provided an overview of items listed on tonight's agenda and discussed R4 more in depth, which authorizes the Borough's participation in the pooled loan financing program of the Somerset County Improvement Authority.
2. Police: Council Member Robinson discussed the ongoing recruitment process and the lack of applicants. She reported one of our Traffic Unit Officers took a training class and is now able to conduct a car seat class for traffic safety for Borough residents. Other matters discussed were school security, crosswalk lighting and signals and the roof replacement at Police Department Headquarters.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds: Council Member Ead discussed road paving in the Borough and advised the 2020-2021 J.A. Alexander road project is almost to completion and also mentioned the 2022 and 2023 road projects have been submitted to the NJDOT. She discussed many Borough improvements such as the sidewalks, sprinkler repairs on Somerset Street and Spratford Park, repairs made to the light posts on Somerset Street, and the ongoing efforts to maintain catch basins and culverts. She also mentioned the Tree of lights was evaluated and suggestions were made to improve its overall health. Council Member Ead discussed upcoming projects in detail such as the Best Lake fountains, Gazebo lighting, playground updates and others.

Council President Jubin commended Council Member Ead on all her dedicated efforts in keeping everyone informed. Council Member Martino commented on the DPW equipment purchased. He mentioned in the future the Council could opt to invest in more multi-functional equipment. Council President Jubin recommended that any comments or suggestions on agenda items be made ahead of time.

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4. Public Affairs:

Environmental: Council Member Robinson reported on the Commissions May 23rd meeting. She advised there were 84 trees to be removed and 2 to be replaced. She mentioned what books are acceptable/ not acceptable for the new legacy books donation bin. She also stated the Styrofoam collection was very successful and the next collection will be on September 17th. Council Member Robinson provided further updates on the Best Lake planting and the spotted lantern fly.

Recreation: Council Member Hayeck stated the Commission has not yet met but mentioned the summer camp program is running successfully.

Historical: Council Member Ead encouraged everyone to visit the Texier House to see all the exciting updates. She mentioned the next big event will be Journey through the past scheduled for October 8th and 9th with more information to follow. She also provided updates on the Hero Banner Program. She mentioned the next meeting is scheduled for August 17th at 7:00 P.M.

Board of Health: Council President Jubin advised the next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for July 20th but provided comments relating to the prevention of drowning and a new virus that could potentially be fatal to infants.

5. Fire: Council Member Dahl reported on the departments June figures. He mentioned a new lock system was installed on the fire house doors and advised two members are currently attending the Fire Academy.
6. Laws/ Ordinances: Council Member Martino discussed moving forward the electric vehicle ordinance, permanent outdoor dining ordinance, and also the Borough wide feeding of wildlife. He mentioned the Committee is reviewing the process of a trash receptacle dumpster and also discussions were held and tabled relating to a vehicle ordinance in public parking lots.

REPORTS – OTHER:

7. Engineer: Professional Engineer Jason Cline, RVE, provided comments on various matters. Among them were updates relating to PSE&G gas main installations, Corey Lane and Old Somerset Road are scheduled to be milled and paved under the Morris County Co-Op pricing Council program, relocation of Mobus Field playground equipment, grant applications for 2023 DOT road projects were submitted, remedial action work plan addendum for the Ness Farm soil sampling has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of July. Borough Engineer Jason Cline also provided updates on the Michael Stein Memorial bench and the Phillips Field Bridge.
8. Police Chief: Police Chief Hart reported on the departments June figures. He also discussed the speed sign enforcement program and the car seat safety class the Borough will be offering in further detail.

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9. Fire Department: Fire report filed with and reviewed by Council Member Dahl.
10. Rescue Squad: Council Member Robinson reported on the departments June figures and new member updates to the Department.
11. Emergency Management: OEM Coordinator, Carolyn Solon, reported on matters relating to the Borough's weekly FEMA meetings and expressed her appreciation regarding the Resolution on tonight's agenda appointing two new Deputy OEM Coordinators. She also mentioned the Borough passed the last two EOC drills with flying colors.
12. Attorney: Attorney Sordillo had no report.
13. Finance: CFO Bill Hance mentioned the County certified tax rate has been received and tax bills will be printed and mailed out within the next two weeks. He also advised there will be an extended grace period for taxes through the end of August.
14. Clerk: Clerk Edith Gil reported the August 11th Council meeting date has been changed to August 18th.
15. Administrator: Administrator Damato provided updates on the Mobus Field playground equipment delivery date. He also congratulated and welcomed the Borough's new Department of Public Works Director, William McClave. He provided updates on discussions with Weldon Materials regarding the relocation of the East End Fire House.
16. Youth Services: Council Member Dahl had no report.
17. Planning Board: Council Member Martino had no report.
18. Municipal Alliance: No report provided.
19. Library Advisory Board: Council Member Robinson had no report but advised the board is scheduled to meet next week.
20. Traffic and Beautification: Council Member Ead reported on the Committees June 13th meeting and provided updates on different projects the Commission has been working on. She provided details on upcoming events such as the Scarecrow Stroll and advised the next meeting will be held on September 19th.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

1. Helen Biviano, Century Lane, proposed questions relating to the Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc. listed on the agenda for approval. Attorney Sordillo provided detailed responses to all questions.

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2. Diana Churchill, High Tor Drive, questioned if the Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc. could be limited to a maximum of six bedrooms and also limited to a maximum of six residents excluding anyone under the age of 18. Attorney Sordillo responded in detail why the Borough is not able to limit the number of bedrooms to six as this puts a zoning regulation on the Group Home. He also mentioned the Resolution and agreement does limit the occupants to adults ages 18 and older.
3. Debra Downs, High Tor Drive, expressed her concern relating to inconsistencies with the Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc. Attorney Sordillo expressed his disagreement relating to any inconsistencies within the document.
4. Janine Reidinger, High Tor Drive, expressed her concerns relating to the Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc. Attorney Sordillo asked Michele Del Corsano, CEO of Group Homes, Inc. to provide a response regarding the ratio of care givers to adults, the location of parking and the decision of choosing this property and State inspection. Ms. Corsano provided answers to all questions and advised other locations of Our House Group Homes and assured they are well maintained to match the neighborhood.
5. Diana Churchill, High Tor Drive, questioned if the process for Our House, Inc. will be the same as anyone else in regards to obtaining permits for cutting down trees down and replanting them. She also expressed safety concerns for the employees rotating shifts in regards to the location of the Group Home in the winter weather.
6. Barry Burner, Hillside Avenue, expressed his concerns regarding the ongoing property maintenance issue in his neighborhood. Attorney Sordillo advised a violation letter has gone out to the property owner.
7. Debra Downs, High Tor Drive, expressed further concerns regarding the Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House Inc. such as maintaining the residential zoning and the complexity of the neighborhood.
8. Colleen Monaco, submitted written public comments regarding the Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc.
9. Gus Lijo, submitted written public comments regarding the Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc.

Attorney Sordillo expanded on details of the tax status of the Group Home. Mayor Balla asked Attorney Sordillo to provide comments in reference to a letter submitted to Mayor and Council Members by James T Clemens.

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DISCUSSION

- ❖ Participation in Somerset County’s Urban County Cooperation Agreement: 2023 -2025 Program

Mayor Balla asked for Council Comments in regards to going forward with the Somerset County’s Urban County Cooperation Agreement. Clerk Edith Gil gave some background information on R24 and advised Somerset County is in need of a response if the Council wishes to move this forward.

CFO Bill Hance provided clarification to Council regarding this Agreement. Administrator Damato felt there is no cost risk to the Borough. Attorney Sordillo expanded on the financial aspects of entering into this agreement and Council discussions took place with OEM Coordinator, Carolyn Solon regarding the process and benefits of renewing the Co-Op Agreement. Council President Jubin does not feel he has enough information on this matter to make a clear decision. Mayor Balla requested R24 be pulled from the agenda.

Council Member Ead suggested listing the State hotline number or a web address alerting residents that State funding is available on the Borough website.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Motion Open Public Hearing by Jubin/ Second by Hayeck

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

Council Member Martino inquired on the process of the employee salary steps. Administrator Damato explained what the steps were designed to accomplish. Mayor Balla suggested to add a laborer/mechanic position in next year’s salary Ordinance. Administrator Damato confirmed he will work with the Committee on this request.

Public Hearing of Ordinance# 22/06: “AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, CH. 5-12.76 ET SEQ. THEREOF, AND TO, FIX AND DETERMINE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES AND COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES.”

R1: Adopting Ordinance 22/06 Establishing Min / Max Salary Ordinance

Motion Close Public Hearing & Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Ead

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

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Building Department Monthly Report

June 2022

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| CERT Meeting Minutes | June 28, 2022 |
| Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes | May 23, 2022 |
| Fire Prevention Bureau Monthly Report | May 2022 June 2022 |
| Green Team Meeting Minutes | May 16, 2022 |
| Historical Committee Meeting Minutes | April 20, 2022 May 18, 2022 |
| Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes | June 2, 2022 June 23, 2022 |
| Police Department Activity Report | June 2022 |
| Traffic and Beautification Meeting Minutes | May 9, 2022 |

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#17 – Township of Scotch Plains, 6/27/22, re: *Notice of Introduced Ordinances 2022-16 and 2022-17, ORD 2022-16 Amends Chapter XVIII entitled “Zoning” to Permit Crushing of Recyclable Materials, ORD 2022-17 Amends the Current Cannabis Zoning to Remove the Industrial Zone from Permissible Zoned Areas (All Introduced on June 21, 2022) c: M&C, JD, TS*

#18 – NJ Transit Corporation, 6/29/22, re: Notice of FY 2022 Request for Federal Assistance, public comments due by August 15, 2022.

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Ead

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

CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R2: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – Sparta Discount Tire, Inc. (PD tires)
Claris (PD remote access for CAD)
Uline Ship Supply Specialist (Picnic tables for best lake)
Lawsoft, Inc. (PD online data backup 3yr)
ESO Solutions, Inc. (FD cad integration & fire package)
Chatham Lawnmower Service (PW 52” lawnmower)
Woods Machinery (PW 72” Lexmark lawnmower)
Tilcon New York (Paving of Old Somerset St & Corey Ln)

R3: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application for Use of Gazebo – Chai Center for Jewish Life

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- R4: Authorizing Watchung's Participation in the Pooled Loan Financing Program of the Somerset County Improvement Authority
- R5: Authorizing Appointment of Camp Counselors for 2022 Summer Camp
- R6: Directing the Planning Board to Review Bill A-1294 and Make Recommendations for the Borough
- R7: Authorizing Professional Services Agreement for Affordable Housing Administrative Agent - CGP&H, LLC
- R8: Authorizing Clerk to Issue Raffle Licenses #666, 667, and 668 – Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Mid-Atlantic
- *R9: Authorizing Bill List
- R10: Waiving Delinquent Interest of 2021 Sewer Bill – 60 Stirling Road, Block
- R11: Authorizing Submission of Grant Application and Execution of Grant Contract with NJ Department of Transportation for 2023 Road Improvements Project
- R12: Authorizing Shared Services Agreement with the County of Somerset for the Provision of Emergency Management Services
- R13: Authorizing and Amending Prior Resolution Appointing Electrical Sub-Code Official
- R14: Authorizing Renewal of Plenary Retail Consumption License – Miller's Ale House / Inactive License

Council Member Martino asked for further clarification from Attorney Sordillo regarding the Consent Resolution process. Council President Jubin commented on R6 and suggested residents write to their State legislators expressing their concerns. Attorney Sordillo discussed the process of R6 in further detail and expanded on the State mandated zoning process.

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Dahl

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

*R9 Martino [Abstain] Ead [Abstain]

NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

- R15: Authorizing Appointment of Fire Sub-Code Official for a four-year term – Len Young

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Ead

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

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R16: Authorizing Appointment of Fire Department Volunteers – Tom Taillon and Asad Ali

Motion to Adopt above by Dahl/ Second by Jubin

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

R17: Authorizing Donation of Fire Department Vehicle to the City of La Vega, Dominican Republican

Motion to Adopt above by Dahl/ Second by Jubin

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

R18: Authorizing Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc. in Connection with the Operation of an Affordable Housing Group Home

Council Members each expressed their individual concerns if this Affordable Housing agreement with Our House, Inc. was to moved forward in Watchung.

Motion to Table above by Jubin/ Second by Hayeck

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

R19: Authorizing Appointment of Principal Public Works Manager/Director of Public Works – William J. McClave

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Jubin

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

R20: Authorizing Appointment of Tax Clerk – Katherine A. Vilarino

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Dahl

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

R21: Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement for Appraisal Services – ARD Appraisal Company

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Jubin

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

R23: Authorizing Appointment of OEM Deputies

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Dahl

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

R24: ~~Acknowledging Automatic Renewal of 2023-2025 Urban County Cooperation Agreement for Participation in Somerset County's Community Development Block Grant and Home Investment Partnership Program Activities~~

This item was not considered by Council.

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

No one appearing to speak.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

R22: Authorizing Executive Session: Contract Negotiations, Anticipated Litigation, Personnel Matters and Attorney-Client Privilege Matters

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Hayeck.

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

Mayor and Council entered executive session at approximately 10:45 P.M. and returned to open session at approximately 12:19 A.M.

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

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

R18: Authorizing Affordable Housing Agreement with Our House, Inc. in Connection with the Operation of an Affordable Housing Group Home

Motion to untable above by Hayeck/ Second by Robinson

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

Motion to Adopt R18 by Jubin/ Second by Robinson

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

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business before Council the meeting ended at 12:24 A.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, August 18, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo
Deputy Clerk