

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

AUGUST 17, 2023

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: Mayor Ronald Jubin called the meeting to order at 7:00 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.”*

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

ROLL CALL

Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [P]

RESOLUTIONS

R1S: Authorizing the Appointment of Robert Gibbs to Fill Unexpired Term as Council Member

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ second by Abi-Habib

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y]

Mayor Jubin administered the Oath of Office to Robert Gibbs.

Mayor and Council each took turns congratulating and welcoming Mr. Gibbs and spoke highly on his prior experience being a Council Member.

R2S: Authorizing a Field and Facility Permit Application for the Use of Gazebo for Wedding Ceremony

Motion to Adopt above by Abi-Habib/ second by Dahl

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [Y]

DISCUSSIONS

❖ Safety and Security Updates

Mayor Jubin thanked Interim Superintendent Rovtar and Chief Anderle for being available to speak on the upcoming initiatives as a result of the recent School Resource Officer agreement with the Board of Education.

Chief Anderle provided a brief history on the initiatives and explained what a School Resource Officer (SRO) is. He explained the type of training an SRO receives and noted it focused greatly on the areas of active shooter, mental health, and child trauma. Amongst the key goals of an SRO are developing links with parents of youth groups and community-policing. He noted one of the greatest benefits would be to have a front-row to how the schools conduct their mandatory drills to ensure that the best procedures are being followed.

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Chief Anderle announced that current DARE Officer, Peter Cuevas, who is also a Field Training Officer, fluent in Spanish and has youth experience outside of policing, will be the SRO.

Interim Superintendent Rene Rovtar had previously submitted a letter to the Governing Body, but briefly commented that while the SRO plan was started and set in place before she came on board, she has worked in schools where an SRO made a significant difference in the building and in school operations. She noted the experience they bring and their recommendations are invaluable.

Amber Murad, Board of Education President, congratulated Councilman Gibbs and said she recalled that he coined the term “Gibbs-dollar” to show how your dollar is appropriated. She thanked the community, Mayor, Council, and Mr. Damato for their efforts on the accomplishment of an SRO agreement.

The Mayor opened up the floor to Council comments.

Council President Ead thanked all parties who worked together on the SRO agreement and expressed that security and safety for everyone in the community is paramount.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Interim Superintendent Rene Rovtar was present and spoke, but had previously submitted the following onto the record.

#18: Letter from BOE Interim Superintendent on Shared Services Agreement for the Provision of a School Resource Officer

PUBLIC PORTION

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, welcomed Councilman Gibbs and commented that it was disgraceful to not receive a response back to phone messages and emails to the Attorney and the Administrator.
- 2) Michael Shachter, noted he was present to speak on a safety and nuisance issue. He stated he is a Watchung resident but has been on and off from town for business reasons and commented on construction starting at the end of the road where he lives. He stated the builder advised there is no cul-de-sac coming in due to the fact that the area is private property. He questioned why a permit was issued for a variance done many years ago. He also complained about recycling and asked for guidance on how to get a cul-de-sac put in at the end of the road where he lives. He asked how we can stop the construction going on until notice is given that a cul-de-sac is required for safety issues.

Mayor Jubin expressed his concern with building permits that live in perpetuity and requested the Borough Attorney and Laws and Ordinance Committee take a look at this matter and discuss together what can legally possibly be done.

Mr. Shachter advised his neighbor across the street constantly has a pouring of water coming out through a pipe because of the disturbance done on Upper Drive.

Administrator Damato advised he is aware of the construction and so is our Borough Engineer Jason

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Cline. He requested the opportunity to review this with our Engineer and possibly schedule a site visit. Administrator Damato requested that Mr. Shachter leave his contact information.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:34 PM. The next regular meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Regina Angelo
Deputy Clerk

Approved: October 5, 2023