

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

AUGUST 12, 2021 | 7:30 P.M.

[THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY FOR ALL PARTIES]

MAYOR'S 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 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]

Mayor Balla commented that the Ad-Hoc Committee on Camp Endeavor has formulated a survey that will be sent out to residents and/or posted online for resident input.

Council Member Hayeck motioned to re-vote on item R8 from the July meeting, which he explained involved a payment to the Rescue Squad and he has historically abstained from anything to Rescue or Fire Department to avoid conflict. Council Member Jubin second motion.

Council Member Martino also commented on the short time allowed to review the Bill List. CFO Bill Hance advised that he had removed payment to the Rescue Squad upon receiving concerns from Council, so that payment was not issued.

Attorney Denis Murphy clarified then that a motion to rescind R8, Authorizing Bill List from July 15, 2021 was required and explained the steps to take.

Motion to rescind R8 from July 15, 2021 by Hayeck/ second by Jubin.

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

Motion to adopt R8 as revised from July 15, 2021 by Jubin/ second by Robinson

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

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration & Finance: Council Member Jubin reported on the last committee meeting and noted that the salary ordinance, affordable housing management agreements, a grants checklist and future dates for budget sessions were discussed.

Council Member Martino summarized his findings on prior grant information and CFO Hance provided a detailed explanation of what these funds could surplus funds could be appropriated.

2. Police: Council President Robinson reported on the departments June activity report, noted that as of today the white vehicles for the Police Department were put into place, and spoke on promotions. CP Robinson provided a small bio on those being promoted today.

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3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds: Council Member Eisenberg Knegten reported on the matters discussed by the committee, they recently met on the library bridge, the fence being worked on by the department of public works, the obstacles faced to pursue a current grant opportunity, potential sidewalk repairs and the beautification of certain projects within the medians. She also suggested that if a survey would be conducted on Camp Endeavor, that we allow residents to also provide input on the Ness property.

CM Martino inquired on the status of the retaining wall by the library, Administrator Damato provided a response on the testing done to the pool and reported on the challenges faced to bring the wall down. He noted that Engineer Koch of CME Associates had been there on several occasions with his structural team and the library bridge is being evaluated.

Malay Patel from CME Associates provide a status on the Elsinore culvert, he noted CME did the design for the repairs and submitted requests to NJDOT.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental: Council President Robinson referenced R2 on tonight's agenda and explained that it was necessary to re-adopt for Sustainable Jersey certification. She also commented on the new vendors at the Farmers Market. Concerns were also raised on the spotted lantern fly and the steps required to mitigate the situation.

Recreation: no report provided by Council Member Hayeck; however, Administrator Damato provide a brief update on the summer camp, which is in its last days. He thanked all the parents for participating and the staff for running a successful camp.

Historical: Council Member Martino spoke on the open house dates for Texier House and noted that some historical sites need to have their signs updated. Council Members offered comments on other historical sites and future programs.

Board of Health: no update provided

5. Fire: no update provided
6. Laws/Ordinances: Council Member Martino spoke on Planning's Board review of recent applications and the ordinances currently under review by the committee like the noise ordinance and the fire prevention ordinance. He also spoke on the current situation regarding fire lanes and noted that updates to the maps were being completed and once that was done, changes to the current ordinance would follow. CM Martino also reported that an ordinance would be in the works to offer guidance on overnight vehicles that remain in borough owned parking lots and suggested that the Administrator reach out to the Board of Education to confirm if they wanted to participate.

REPORTS – OTHER:

7. Engineer: Malay Patel from CME Associates reported on their submission to NJDOT and noted that upon approval CME would then notify the borough when they could go out to bid for these projects. He also noted other approvals from NJDOT on the 2020 state aid grant application were expected to be received in November and provided an update on the Stormwater Management Plan.
8. Police Chief: Chief Hart provided an update on the departments July activities. He noted that the speed signs are moved around where they note the most activity and invited the public to the "Open House" event scheduled for September 18th after the fishing derby. Chief Hart also reported on recent car thefts that resulted from residents leaving keys inside their cars, he asked everyone to be cautious with this.

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9. Fire Department: no update provided.
10. Rescue Squad: Council President Robinson reported on the Squad's July activity.
11. Emergency Management: no update provided.
12. Attorney: Attorney Denis Murphy followed up on the Planning Boards recommendation for the ordinance scheduled tonight, he read the Planning Boards requested amendment. Mr. Murphy also followed up on the Councils prior request regarding the ballot drop box and noted that there are 2 current bills at the state level that would expressly prohibit the placement of the ballot drop box near a police station unless that is where the municipal building is located.

Council President Robinson motioned to place the ballot drop box behind Exempt Hall/ second by Hayeck
RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]
13. Clerk: no updated provided.
14. Administrator: Administrator Damato provided an update on the Delta variant and vaccination statistics. He also spoke on the current mask policy at borough hall and other municipal buildings.
15. Youth Services: no update provided.
16. Planning Board: Council Member Martino briefly spoke on the applications before the board, their approval of the borough ordinance, and the special meetings to hear the bonnie burn applications. He encouraged all residents to listen in on the board's special meetings.
17. Municipal Alliance: Council Member spoke on the National Night Out event in Green Brook and noted the Municipal Alliance had a table at that event.
18. Library Advisory Board: Council Member Goodloe spoke about the library's upcoming events and the recent donation of a rocking chair from a family whose child recently passed away, Council sends their deepest condolences.
19. Traffic and Beautification: Council Member Goodloe thanked the Garden Club and the T&B Commission for their recent assistance to DPW on the recent plantings.

Mayor Balla asked Administrator Damato to provide a brief update on the recent meeting held for the various boards/committees. Mr. Damato went on to speak about the successful meeting for all volunteers.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

1. Debra Joren, Stirling Road, commented on the Echoes-Sentinel recent article regarding covid vaccinations and asked if the borough was doing something to mandate employees to get vaccinated. Administrator Damato noted that internal conversations have take place but that a decision has not yet been reached.
2. Charlie Niess, Dogwood Lane, commented on resolution R-2 and noted that this was something already in the books. He also commented on recent CERT activities to assist a call from the Green Brook CERT Team to assist Central Jersey on a water emergency.

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3. Frank Bisignano, Jared Court, commented that on at least 3 occasions he has offered to pave the parking lot and has noted that the Borough has refused to accept this assistance. He noted that he has also offered to restore the barn to its original design and that the borough has on multiple occasions said no. He also commented that when the Mayor asked if a sidewalk could be placed on his property to the lake, he said yes. Mr. Bisignano asked Council Members to provide input on his prior offers.

Council Member Martino noted that no offers have been dismissed and that there is a process to everything. He welcomed this offer in writing as there would surely have to be an agreement of sorts from both parties as there are several other factors that need to be considered.

4. Christine Ead, Washington Drive, requested that the rules, the placement, etc. be placed on the website to ensure full transparency.
5. Marianne Candiloros, Nottingham Drive, inquired on the attendance of Council Member's Eisenberg Knegten and Goodloe at an event regarding the history of Watchung.

DISCUSSION

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Hearing of Ordinance **OR: 21/06** entitled an **“ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 28 ENTITLED, “LAND DEVELOPMENT CHAPTER OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG”, TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF “IMPERVIOUS SURFACE,” OF SECTION 28-203, ENTITLED “DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS,” TO EXCLUDE DECKS IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.”**

Council Member Martino moved to amend the above matter to incorporate the language suggested by the Planning Board and the Laws and Ordinance Committee/ Second by Robinson
RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

Council Member Martino moved to adopt the amendment/ second by Eisenberg Knegten
RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

Ordinance 21/06 will be advertised as amended and scheduled for a public hearing.

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Approval of the following Council Meeting Minutes:
Regular Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2021
June 17, 2021

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Watchung Library Advisory Board Minutes
Planning Board Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2021
June 15, 2021

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Green Team Meeting Minutes	June 21, 2021
Planning Board Special Meeting Transcript	June 29, 2021
Building Department	July 2021
Tax Collector Report	Second Quarter 2021

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#38- Borough of North Plainfield, 7/26/21 re: Notice of Introduction, Ordinance No. 21-11 “*An Ordinance to Amend, Revise and Supplement Chapter 4, “General Licensing”, Most Notably by Adding a New Section 4-17, Enacting a Transfer and Use Tax on Certain Classes of Cannabis Businesses within the Geographical Boundaries of the Borough of North Plainfield.*” c: M&C, PB, JD

Council President Robinson motioned to Adopt the above / second by Eisenberg Knegten
RC: Robinson [Y] Goodloe [Y] Eisenberg Knegten [Y] Jubin [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y]

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS:

- R1: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – CSM (*PD-Lenovo Workstation, Desktop*)
S.E. Rose Trucking & Excavation (*Manhole replacement*)
Absolute Fire Protection (*FD – apparatus service & parts*)
Coban Technologies, Inc. (*PD-body worn camera pkg*)
- R2: Supporting the Adoption of Strong Anti-Idling Policies
- R3: Authorizing Extension of Grace Period / Third Quarter Tax Payments
- R4: Authorizing Budget Insertion of Special Item of Revenue (Chapter 159): 2021 Budget
American Rescue Plan Grant
- R5: Authorizing Budget Insertion of Special Item of Revenue (Chapter 159) 2021 Budget
Recycling Tonnage Grant
- R6: Authorizing Budget Insertion of Special Item of Revenue (Chapter 159) 2021 Budget
Alcohol Education, Rehabilitation & Enforcement Fund
- R7: Authorizing Budget Insertion of Special Item of Revenue (Chapter 159) 2021 Budget
State of NJ Body Armor Grant
- R8: Authorizing Budget Insertion of Special Item of Revenue (Chapter 159) 2021 Budget
Clean Communities Grant
- R9: Authorizing Refund of Tax Overpayment - 380 Johnston Drive., Block 5201/ Lot 9
- R10: Authorizing Sale of Surplus Property No Longer Needed for Public Use on Online Auction Website

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R11: Authorizing Bill List

R12: Authorizing the Waiving of Delinquent Interest on Special Assessment Projects

R13: Authorizing and Appointing the Health Officer or Designee as Enforcing Agency of Chapter 18

Council Member Martino inquired on resolution R12 and asked if some residents would receive a refund if they had already paid the fees. CFO Hance reported that he would proceed as directed by Mayor and Council. Council debated proceeding with R12 and suggested that CM Martinos' request be reviewed separately.

Council President Robinson motioned to Adopt the above / second by Goodloe

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

NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

Introduction of Proposed Ordinance OR:21/09 entitled **“AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG CH. 5-12.76 ET SEQ., THEREOF, AN TO FIX AND DETERMINE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES AND COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES.”** Public Hearing to be held on September 9, 2021.

R14: Introduction of Ordinance OR: 21/09 - Min/Max Salary Ordinance

Motion to Introduce and Adopt above by Jubin/ second by Eisenberg Knegten

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

R15: Authorizing Professional Service Contract for Affordable Housing Administrative Agent – CGP&H

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ second by Robinson

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

R16: Authorizing a Shared Services Agreement with the County of Somerset for the Construction and Use of a Salt Storage Building

Motion to Adopt above by Eisenberg Knegten / second by Goodloe

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

R17: Adopting Policies and Procedures Manuals - CGP&H: Accessory Apartment Manual

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ second by Robinson

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

R18: Authorizing Side Bar Agreement with PBA Watchung Local #193

Motion to Adopt above by Robinson / second by Eisenberg Knegten

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

R19: Authorizing Appointments to Police Department – Lieutenants Boyle and Zaiton

Motion to Adopt above by Robinson / second by Jubin

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

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R20: Authorizing Appointment of Executive Assistant/IT Coordinator – Brian Townley

Motion to Adopt above by Robinson / second by Hayeck

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

R21: Authorizing Salary Adjustment of Administrative Assistant – Maria Fittipaldi

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin / second by Robinson

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

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Frank Bisignano, Jared Court, commented on his offer to pave and spoke on the beautification of the borough and called upon Council Members to provide their input regarding his offer.
2. Christine Ead, Washington Drive, inquired on what the funds could be used from the grant monies discussed earlier. Administrator Damato responded that stormwater and waste water was a permitted use, but that the full use of the funds came from the federal guidelines issued.

R22: ~~Authorizing Executive Session: Personnel Matters~~

The above resolution was not considered by Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business the meeting ended 10:20 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 September 9, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.

Submitted by:

Edith G. Gil
Borough Clerk