

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

**SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 14, 2021 – 7:30 P.M.**

[THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUAL FOR ALL PARTIES]

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Keith S. Balla called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM and made the following statement: In order to comply with all the NJ executive orders and protect members of the public this meeting will be held virtually for all parties. Public comments will be accepted through zoom or via email to the Borough Clerk and there were instructions published with this agenda. I'd like to welcome everybody, 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 a Special Meeting Notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, the Star Ledger, posted at Borough Hall and the Borough's website. In order to comply with all NJ Executive Orders and to protect members of the public, this meeting will be held virtual for all parties. Public Comments will be accepted through zoom at the designated time or in writing. For those joining through Zoom, please note that upon arrival you are automatically muted. If you wish to speak during public portion, you will need to click on the "raise your hand" feature so that we may see you. For those joining us through conference call line, you will need to press *6 to unmute yourself.

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]

DISCUSSION

Long range planning and budget items for the Department of Police

Present were Chief of Police, William Kelly, Brian Townley, and Lt. Andrew Hart and Lt. Scott Anderle.

The Mayor asked Chief Kelly to begin by providing background and organization structure for the Police Department so that everyone could have a better understanding of the department.

Chief Kelly stated the department is comprised of a Chief, 3 Lieutenants and 6 sergeants for a total of 30 sworn officers. 1 Lieutenant is a Patrol Commander and 1 Lieutenant is an Executive Officers/ Administrative Officer and 1 Lieutenant of Investigations, there are other branches, for patrol they have 4 Sargent's with squad members attached, the administrative and executive officer is in charge of accreditation, service records and other functions. The Investigative Lieutenant is in charge of investigations for the borough and other functions, there are also 4 civilian dispatchers and 2 civilian employees at this point.

Chief Kelly went on to describe the seniority status of each officer and the working shifts of the different units. He also described the dispatch center and reviewed how calls are processed. He explained that 911 calls are received by the County Dispatch center in Somerville and are then routed if the call is not an emergency service call.

Chief Kelly and Brian Townley reviewed the departments operating budget and reviewed their anticipated expenses within that budget and went down all budget lines in great detail. The department is looking to replace 2 patrol vehicles and tries to be proactive in replacing their computer equipment every 5-7 years.

Council Member Jubin inquired on the covid over expenditures and CFO Bill Hance confirmed that any covid related expenses were submitted to the State and FEMA for reimbursement.

Council President Robinson inquired on the copy machines and phone line expenditures from Police Department.

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Council Member Martino asked for a table of organization and a list of vacancies and suggested consolidating some budget lines.

Mayor Balla inquired on the Rogers Group; Chief Kelly explained that the Rogers Group is a leading organization in accreditation and assists the Police Department in following all the necessary procedures in order to maintain their accreditations every 3 years. This certification comes from the NJ Chief's Association.

Brian Townley proceeded to give the breakdown of the department's capital budget. Mayor Balla asked if there were grants available for the body cameras that will be required. Chief Kelly gave an overview of the legislation recently signed by the Governor requiring body cameras be implemented by June, however guidance is still forthcoming.

Council Member Jubin inquired on the budget amount for body worn cameras, to ensure that the appropriated amount is sufficient to meet the needs of the Borough. He also inquired on the breathalyzer since it is 15 years old; Chief Kelly mentioned that the State Police comes onsite to certify the machine.

Council President Robinson inquired on the UPS system; Brian Townley explained it is a battery back up system for the building so that computer servers remain powered on in case the power goes out, while the generators kick in. She also inquired on the 1 vehicle listed on the capital budget that will need to be replaced.

Council Member Jubin inquired on a running list of grants that Police has previously received and/or applied to. Chief Kelly gave an overview of the grants that are typically received and informed Council of a new grant recently approved.

Council Member Hayeck inquired on the new duty weapons and Chief Kelly gave a short background history on the current weapons used and the state's recommendations and reports released to switch onto different weapons. Council Member Eisenberg Knegten followed up by inquiring on additional expenditures as a result of switching weapons; Chief Kelly explained that when the switch was made it would result in a greater cost savings to the Borough and most places offered some type of credit when switching out weapons.

Council Member Martino inquired on the process of assigned bodycam cameras and replacing certain equipment ahead of its due time, in order to properly budget.

Council Member Goodloe inquired on data available showing the number of times a weapon has been discharged. Chief Kelly explained that they've only done it to put an animal down; none of the officers have ever discharged a weapon for deadly force. Using a weapon is a use of deadly force and that must be documented; Watchung has none.

Mayor Balla inquired on any necessary changes on their facilities; Chief Kelly said there were no major known issues.

Council Member Eisenberg Knegten inquired on the table of organization received and asked Chief Kelly to give an overview of the difference between traffic patrol and the 4 different squads of patrol men and their day-to-day duties. Chief Kelly gave a detailed breakdown of the table of organization as he envisions it, pending the approval of future promotions.

Council Members thanked Chief Kelly and the Police Department for coming before the council to help answer their questions.

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PUBLIC PORTION

No one from the public wished to be heard

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM to the Call of the Chair; the next regular meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, January 21, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.