

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

**SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2022 – 8:30 A.M.**

[THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON & BROADCASTED VIA ZOOM]

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Keith S. Balla called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and made the following statement: *“In order to comply with all NJ Executive Orders and to protect members of the public, this meeting will be held in person and 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 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 a MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD.

ROLL CALL:

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

DISCUSSION

❖ 2022 Budget Requests from Various Departments.

CFO Bill Hance started by discussing the Fire Prevention budget. Mayor Balla asked Administrator James Damato to explain the functions of the Fire Prevention unit. Councilmember Martino also elaborated on other functions of the Fire Prevention unit. Council Member Ead inquired on the breakdown of the Fire Prevention revenues. CFO Hance provided an explanation and noted how the different revenues are allocated in the budget.

OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon provided an overview of line items from the Office of Emergency Management budget. She informed Council that the CERT budget is mainly used to purchase supplies and to provide professional training. Ms. Solon expressed the need to purchase a vehicle for OEM. Administrator Damato mentioned possibly replacing a police pickup truck to filter down for OEM to use. Council President Jubin questioned the potential liability of Ms. Solon using her personal vehicle for Borough business. Administrator Damato offered comments and noted that the Borough provides no insurance coverage on the use of private vehicles. Council Member Martino requested an inventory of all Borough vehicles showing mileage and longevity. Council Member Robinson inquired on the possibility of new training classes and asked if there are any active recruiting efforts for new CERT members in place. Ms. Solon noted that due to COVID-19, there are no training classes occurring and advised they are always trying to recruit new members.

CFO Hance proceeded to give an overview of line items of the Tax Collector and Tax Assessor budgets. Mayor Balla questioned how many properties were up for a tax sale, CFO Hance noted that two properties were sold using an online auction. Mr. Hance discussed the Tax Assessor’s request to hire a replacement assistant. Councilmember Martino requested a list of all the properties reassessed in Watchung and the outcome of all Tax Appeals.

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CFO Hance proceeded to discuss line items of the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board budgets. He mentioned the Planning Board is requesting additional funds due to two lawsuits. Councilmember Martino asked if anything has been put into the budget to maintain the zoom technology. CFO Hance noted that the technology expenses are being absorbed by the Council's budget.

Council President Jubin explained in detail the Boroughs relationship with the Middle Brook Regional Health Commission. CFO Hance then proceeded to discuss the line items of the Board of Health budget.

Mr. Hance moved on to the Historical and Environmental budgets. Council President Jubin inquired what the other contracted services were for 2020 and 2021 regarding the Historical budget. Councilmember Martino suggested the Borough purchase hardware and software for purposes of digitizing records. CFO Hance went through line items of the Environmental Budget in detail. Council President Jubin asked if a Borough employee could be trained on tree matters; Administrator Damato commented on this process.

CFO Hance discussed line items of Receptions budget. He referenced a handout provided by Recreation Coordinator, Linda Monetti detailing the different events. Administrator Damato discussed summer camp options for this upcoming year. He also gave a detailed summary regarding possible updates relating to the playground equipment at Mobus Field through FEMA funding.

CFO Hance proceeded to discuss line items of the Traffic and Beautification budget. Administrator Damato suggested adding the expenditure of taking down and putting up the holiday lights to this budget. Council member Martino suggested sending a letter go to the County to find out exactly what happened during the construction project.

PUBLIC PORTION

1. Rachael Funcheon, Cedar Road, questioned what was discussed regarding the Environmental Commission budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be a Regular Meeting held on Thursday, January 20, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.

Submitted by:

Regina Angelo
Deputy Clerk