

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

MARCH 17, 2022

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

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: Mayor Balla called the meeting to order at 7:30 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 Annual 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 BRUCE McCUMBER WHO PASSED AWAY IN HIS SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY and OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD

ROLL CALL

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

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Balla read the following proclamation onto the record:

❖ Vera Wright Stine Day

Ms. Stine expressed her thanks for the Proclamation and spoke on what an honor it has been to serve the Watchung Rescue Squad as a volunteer for 30 years.

Mayor Balla read the following proclamation onto the record:

❖ Charles Aubrey Eaton Day

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, questioned if R6 and R7 listed on tonight’s agenda have anything to do with the roads getting paved. Administrator James Damato confirmed the upcoming roads to be paved. She also inquired on any plans to clean up the Ness property and Camp Endeavor. Administrator Damato discussed in detail the cleanup plans relating to the Ness Property.

DISCUSSIONS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

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REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Annual Financial Statement	2021
Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	February 10, 2022
Environmental Commission Minutes	January 24, 2022
Recreation Commission Minutes	February 2, 2022
Planning Board Reorganizational Meeting	January 18, 2022
Police Department Activity Report	February 2022

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#5: Letter from Kaleidoscope of Hope Foundation, received 3/14/22, requesting permission to place teal ribbons during September 2022 c: M&C, JD

Motion to Accept above by Jubin/ Second by Robinson

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

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

R1: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – J H Reid Recycling (*Tub grinder rental for Ness recyc.*)
Absolute Fire Protection (*FD-2003 pierce pumper*)
Zetron (*PD-911 system replacement*)
Wireless Com (*PD-installation of 911 system*)
Craig Zaikov (*Referee reimbursements & trophies*)
Deegan Roofing Co. (*Police dept roof*)
S.E. Rose Trucking & Excavating (*Emergency catch basin repair*)

R2: Authorizing Agreement with Somerset County for Certified Recycling Professional

R3: Authorizing Appointment of Volunteer to Green Team – Alison A. Cabrera

R4: Authorizing Bill List

R5: Waiving Delinquent Interest on Certain Properties – Deer Run, Glen Eagles Drive, Oakwood Road West

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Robinson

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

NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R6: Authorizing Contract to Remington & Vernick Engineers for Contract Administration and

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Construction Observation Services for the FY 2020 & 2021 NJDOT Municipal Aid Improvements to Various Roadways Project

Council Member Robinson asked for clarification on what this resolution was seeking to authorize. Administrator Damato clarified the amount in the proposal is a not to exceed amount and explained in detail what the contract to RVE authorizes. Mayor Balla asked Administrator Damato to give a rough estimate of the number of days the projects will take to complete. Administrator Damato could not give a definitive answer but advised it could take up to 4- or 5-weeks weather permitting.

Council Member Robinson asked for clarification on the 2022 observation cost relating to R7. Borough Engineer, Jason Cline was not present to respond therefore no definitive answer was given.

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Dahl

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

R7: Authorizing Contract to Remington & Vernick Engineers for Contract Administration and Construction Observation Services for the FY 2022 NJDOT Municipal Aid Improvements to Various Roadways Project

Mayor Balla directed Clerk Gil to post the map relating to this Resolution on our Borough website. Council Member Martino requested in the future the linear footage of these roads be mentioned instead of just the road name.

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Jubin

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

R8: Authorizing Appointment of Volunteer Firefighters – Richard Engman and Andy Zwirko

Council Members welcomed the new members and expressed gratitude for their service.

Motion to Adopt above by Dahl/ Second by Jubin

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

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

Introduction of Ordinance: **OR 22/01 “ORDINANCE RESCINDING AND RENAMING CHAPTER 20, ENTITLED, “NOISE REGULATIONS” OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG AND ADOPTING THE MODEL NOISE ORDINANCE AUTHORIZED BY THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION”** (Public Hearing to be held on April 7, 2022)

R9: Introducing ordinance OR 22/01 – Rescinding and Renaming Chapter 20, Noise Regulations and Adopting the Model Noise Ordinance Authorized by NJDEP

Council Member Martino advised this Ordinance brings our noise ordinance up to State standard making it enforceable.

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Motion to Adopt above by Martino/ Second by Robinson

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

Introduction of Ordinance: OR 22/02 ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 27 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG ENTITLED, “RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTY REGISTRATION” (Public Hearing to be held on April 7, 2022)

R10: Introducing ordinance OR 22/02 – Amending Chapter 27, Residential Rental Property Registration

Council Member Martino mentioned this Ordinance increases resident safety by giving the Borough authority to conduct an annual inspection every time the occupancy changes. Mayor Balla stated the above Ordinance authorizes the Borough Clerk to prepare a form used for registrations and suggested the form include name, address, phone number and email address for all tenants. Mayor Balla also stated this form will need to be resubmitted every time a tenant change occurs.

Motion to adopt above by Martino/ Second by Robinson

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

OR 22/03: ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 12 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, ENTITLED “FIRE PREVENTION” REQUIRING THE REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF “NON-LIFE HAZARD USES” WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

R11: Introducing ordinance OR 22/03 – Amending Chapter 12, Fire Prevention, Requiring the Registration and Inspection of Non-Life Hazard Uses

Attorney Sordillo advised on a revision to the above Ordinance under section 12-1.6. He stated the revision would apply specifically to paragraph A which should read, appointment by the Mayor with advice and consent of the Council, paragraph C should also read, the Mayor with advice and consent of the Council shall appoint and section D should read, Mayor or Council can remove from office.

Motion to Adopt above as amended by Attorney Sordillo by Martino/ Second by Ead

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

R12: Authorizing Shared Services Agreement with Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority for Licensed Operator of Record

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Jubin

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

R13: Accepting Donation of Concrete Table “Mike’s Table” To Be Placed at Watchung Lake

Council Members express their gratitude for the donation. Administrator Damato advised the bench part of the project will be approved after plans are received.

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Hayeck

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, questioned if in the Noise Ordinance listed on tonight's agenda for introduction there is language limiting commercial companies from using blowers at specific times of day. She also asked if the Rental Property Ordinance covers Air B&B rentals or is it just for permanent rentals. Attorney Sordillo advised the Borough already has a separate ordinance addressing short term rentals.
- 2) Bruce Ruck, Lakeview Avenue, asked for clarification regarding the residential Property rental Ordinance. Attorney Sordillo advised this Ordinance covers any residential rentals not covered by the short-term residential Ordinance. Mr. Ruck questioned if there is anything in the registration process requiring the home owner to have a lead safe and well water inspection done prior to rental. Attorney Sordillo advised those inspections are not required. Mr. Ruck suggested these two inspections be considered.
- 3) Virginia Hartmann, Ellisen Road, commented on having to test her well water prior to renting out her home. She also requested an update of the roof repairs of the Watchung Library. Council Member Ead replied that a number of companies will be submitting quotes and once received they will be shared with the public.
- 4) Catherine Leigh, Guinard Drive, thanked the Mayor and Council for taking care of Hillcrest Road.
- 5) Maria Alberto, submitted written public comments regarding the sidewalk project on the former Valley Furniture property that were read onto the record.
- 6) Lana Ho, submitted written public comments regarding Mobus Playground that were read onto the record.
- 7) Neil Shroff, submitted written public comments regarding the sidewalk project on the former Valley Furniture property that were read onto the record.
- 8) Tina Mehta Khanna, submitted written public comments regarding the sidewalk project on the former Valley Furniture property that were read onto the record.
- 9) Michelle Desiano, submitted written public comments regarding Mobus Playground that were read onto the record.
- 10) Suzanne Aldrich, submitted written public comments regarding Mobus Playground that were read onto the record.

After public portion, Council Member Ead confirmed the fire hydrant on Valley Drive has already been reported to NJ American Water however our Fire Department confirmed it is functioning. She also commented on how challenging it has been working with the Federal Government regarding the playground repairs at Mobus Field. She also stated due to safety concerns the equipment at the

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playground cannot be used at this time but everyone is working very hard on this project in hopes of a June or July opening date.

Council Member Martino inquired with Administrator Damato on what the Borough pays the water company on a yearly basis. He advised the Borough cannot use the fire hydrant if the ring displays it is out of service as the Borough will be held liable if someone gets hurt. He strongly suggested this issue be looked into as soon as possible. Administrator Damato stated it was suggested to the water company if they don't have the parts to repair the hydrant it should be replaced in order to resolve this issue. Council Member Martino questioned if there is a letter of condemnation for Mobus playground. Administrator Damato responded in detail regarding the condition of the playground equipment.

Council Member Martino and Administrator Damato discussed the timeline and process of restoring Mobus playground. Council Members all concurred on the importance of repairing the playground.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business before Council the meeting ended at 8:55 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo
Deputy Clerk