

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

MAY 5, 2022

[Approved May 19, 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 OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD

ROLL CALL

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

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Balla read the following proclamations onto the record:

- ❖ Mental Health Awareness
- ❖ Falun Dafa Day

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- ❖ Watchung Hills Regional High School 2022 Budget
Presentation by Timothy Stys, Business Administrator

In attendance was also Ms. Elizabeth C. Jewett, Superintendent and was introduced by Mr. Stys. Ms. Jewett thanked the Council for allowing them to make a presentation and proceeded to provide an overview of WHRHS, their programs, their students and staff. Mr. Stys then discussed the school budget summary in detail and spoke on what an improvement program will include. He also discussed the long-term budget projections and the student and district achievements in the community. He noted that if anyone was interested in additional information, that their website had extensive resources.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance: Council President Jubin reported on the committee meeting held on April 29th in which matters relating to employment updates and the purchase of a new phone system and security cameras were discussed. He also spoke on the importance of the special

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recognition item added to the agenda and proposed the idea of Mayor and Council shirts to wear at Borough events.

2. Police: Council Member Robinson reported the Police are moving ahead with the hiring process to replace Officer Kelly and also mentioned the replacement and addition of signage is underway on Hillcrest Road. She also expressed her gratitude to the PBA for inviting the Mayor and Council to be a part of their awards ceremony dinner.

Council Member Martino suggested truck route signs be placed at certain locations on Route 78. Council Member Robinson discussed in detail all the safety efforts made so far. Mayor Balla advised the County is currently taking care of Hillcrest Road and the NJ DOT is responsible for Route 78.

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds: Council Member Ead reported in detail on status updates and completed projects throughout the Borough such as the Baseball Fields, pothole repairs, upcoming road projects, fountain and pump repairs for our lakes, and culvert repairs and catch basin cleanup. Council Member Ead also noted that potholes had been filled and noted there were road projects around the circle, she also noted that on June 17 major road work would commence and door hangers would be placed regarding the road closures. She proceeded to report on the fountains that have been in the shop for over 3 months, they were damaged heavily and it would take another 2 months to be evaluated.

Mayor and Council Members expressed their concerns and offered comments relating to the fountains and pump replacements. All Council Members were in favor of moving forward with the purchase of new pumps. A purchase that would be approximately \$16,000.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental: Council Member Robinson reported on the Commission's March 28th meeting. Matters discussed ranged from a special guest speaker summarizing the details of the new plastic bag ban and the updated tree report. She discussed upcoming events such as the cancellation of the Spring Green Fair, the June 4th Styrofoam collection date and the upcoming June 7th Farmers Market. She also discussed in detail the process of seedlings planted during Operation Pride.

Recreation: Council Member Hayeck expressed his apologies for not mentioning Opening Day for Little League at the last Council Meeting. He reported on upcoming events such as the Community Picnic, registration for the Summer Camp as well as the proposal for a tent to provide shade during camp hours and asked the Administration and Finance committee to review.

Historical: Council Member Ead reported on the Committee's April 20th meeting in which matters relating to Texier House schedule updates, the May 30th Veterans Day ceremony, and the report relating to the restoration and preservation of the Legend of Watchung mural were discussed. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18th.

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Board of Health: Council President Jubin reported the next meeting is scheduled for May 18th but expressed his thanks to Board of Health members, Bruce Ruck and Kimberly Brown and Borough employees for their assistance with setting up the Watchung Walks event. He also discussed possible future locations for these walks.

5. Fire: Council Member Dahl reported on the calls for service during the month of April and a possible shared service agreement with the Green Brook and North Plainfield Fire Department.
6. Laws/ Ordinances: Council Member Martino had no report but discussed with Administrator Damato the implementation status of the three ordinances recently passed.

REPORTS – OTHER:

7. Engineer: Professional Engineer Jason Cline, RVE, provided comments on various matters. Among them were possibly obtaining a permit to lower the lake surfaces on Stirling Road, storm culvert repairs, the 2022 DOT Trust fund program, Ness Farm scope of services proposal, sanitary sewer infiltration work, Mobus Field playground improvements and the library bridge now open to pedestrian traffic. Mr. Cline proceeded to describe other projects being planned.
8. Police Chief: Chief Andrew Hart reported on the departments April figures. He also discussed the speed enforcement program signs and congratulated Officer Cuevas on being the Boroughs future DARE officer.
9. Fire Department: the department provided no further update.
10. Rescue Squad: Council Member Robinson reported on a possible upcoming Open House event and the figures for the month of April.
11. Emergency Management: OEM Coordinator, Carolyn Solon, provided no update.
12. Attorney: Attorney Sordillo had no report.
13. Clerk: Clerk Edith Gil mentioned the first draft of the Borough Newsletter was submitted and also advised the Clerk's Office will be working with the County Clerk's Office to help coordinate a mobile office tour to provide services to our residents such as passport applications, notary oath administration, etc. She also mentioned Exempt Hall as a possible location for these services.
14. Administrator: Administrator Damato discussed possibly setting up electric lights inside the Gazebo and also thanked everyone who came out and helped make Operation Pride Day a success.

Council Member Martino spoke on making sure the Borough website is constantly updated for our residents and suggested possible Department head meetings. Mayor Balla advised individuals need to share any event information occurring in town with Borough employees in order for them to update our website updated.

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15. Youth Services: Council Member Dahl had no report but stated the next meeting will be held on May 25th.
16. Planning Board: Board: Council Member Martino had no report.
17. Municipal Alliance: Council Member Hayeck reported on the Committees last meeting in which matters relating to project graduation and educational programs for students were discussed.
18. Library Advisory Board: Council Member Robinson reported the next Library Advisory Board meeting will be held on May 18th at 5:30 P.M.
19. Traffic and Beautification: Council Member Ead reported on the Committee's March 14th meeting in which matters relating to the upcoming scarecrow stroll, new banners placed on Somerset Street, and areas in need of clean up and plantings throughout the Borough were discussed. She also mentioned the upcoming plant sale scheduled for Saturday, May 14th at the Best Lake parking lot from 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 9th.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- 1) Janine Riedinger, High Tor Drive, thanked the Mayor and Council for all the beautiful work being done in the town. She asked Clerk Edith Gil to confirm the Borough Newsletter is being sent to the residents at Apple Tree Road and Berkley Square. She also inquired on the idea of dredging the Watchung Lakes. Engineer Jason Cline responded they are currently looking into this as a future project.
- 2) Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, questioned if there should be a resolution and a vote amongst Council approving the purchase of new pumps for the fountains. Attorney Sordillo advised the discussion was just an authorization to look into the purchase. Ms. Goldschein also questioned why the Police Department did not notify the public of the motor vehicle inspection station on Somerset Street. Chief Hart responded he will look into this further with the DMV. She requested the front of her property be repaired as a result of the culvert replacement on Sherwood Drive.

Administrator Damato asked for clarification regarding authorization for the purchase order of the pumps for the fountains in the lake. Attorney Sordillo suggested R3 be moved off the Consent Agenda resolutions, and amended to add the Aqua Master purchase order and voted on under the Non Consent agenda resolutions. Mayor and Council Members all agreed to go forward with the above recommendation.

DISCUSSIONS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

R1: Determining Budget be Read by Title

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Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Dahl

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

Motion to Open Public Hearing on below by Jubin/Second by Hayeck

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

Public Hearing was held; no one appearing to provide comment.

Public Hearing on Adoption of 2022 Municipal Budget: [Link to 2022 Budget](#)

R2: Adoption of 2022 Municipal Budget

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Hayeck

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

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Building Department Monthly Report	April 2022
Community Emergency Response Team Minutes	April 26, 2022
Engineer's Monthly Status Report	April 2022
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	March 28, 2022
Historical Committee Meeting Minutes	February 16, 2022 March 16, 2022
Library Advisory Committee Special Meeting Minutes	March 21, 2022
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	April 7, 2022 April 21, 2022
Mayor and Council Executive Session Minutes	April 21, 2022
Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority Minutes	April 7, 2022
Traffic and Beautification Meeting Minutes	March 14, 2022

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#9 - Resignation Letter from Dr. Joel S. Cohen, Board of Health Member, 4/27/22, c: M&C, JD

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#10 - Resignation Letter from Danielle Gaebele, Tax Clerk, 4/29/22, c: M&C, JD

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Hayeck

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

CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R3: ~~Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – NJ Fire Equipment Co., (*FD various breathing equipment*)
Nickerson (*replacing bleachers lost in flood*)
Weldon Materials (*Tower Construction Agreement*)
Game Time (*Mobus playground and surfacing*)
MP Overhead Doors (*DPW garage door repair*)~~

R4: Authorizing Hold Harmless Agreement for Historical Committee to Participate in Somerset County's Journey Through the Past Program

R5: Authorizing Re-Appointment of Volunteer to Green Team – Margaret Ponzio

R6: Authorizing Participation in a Cooperative Pricing System – Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

*R3 removed from Consent Agenda

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Hayeck

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

NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R3: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – NJ Fire Equipment Co., (*FD- various breathing equipment*)
Nickerson (*replacing bleachers lost in flood*)
Weldon Materials (*Tower Construction Agreement*)
Game Time (*Mobus playground and surfacing*)
MP Overhead Doors (*DPW garage door repair*)
Solitude Lake Management (*lake fountains*)

Motion to Amend and Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Hayeck

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

R7: Authorizing Appointment of Interim Fire Sub-Code Official – Jeffrey Heiss

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Ead

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

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R8: Authorizing Contract Expansion for Environmental Services by Remington & Vernick Engineers for the Ness Property, 666 Mountain Boulevard, Block 3.01/ Lot 29.

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/Second by Jubin

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

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, asked the status of the survey submitted relating to Camp Endeavor and also mentioned how lovely the stones placed at the bottom of the library bridge look. She questioned how the ness farm got so contaminated.

Council President Jubin discussed bringing back the office hours for members of the public to come speak with Council Members and the Mayor on a rotating schedule. The details of the times and dates will be discussed and posted on the Borough website.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

R9: Authorizing Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations: Affordable Housing Proposal and TWA Application and Sewer Connection.

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Robinson

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

Mayor and Council entered executive session at approximately 9:45 P.M. and returned to open session at approximately 10:13 P.M.

Motion to Return to Open Session by Jubin/Second by Robinson

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

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business before Council the meeting ended at 10:15 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, May 19, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo
Deputy Clerk