

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

**SEPTEMBER 1, 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]

**PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Balla read the following proclamation unto the record:

❖ Suicide Prevention Week

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

1. Administration & Finance: Council President Jubin reported on the Committees August 26<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to the review of the annual audit, and renewal of the Suburban Municipal Joint Insurance Fund were discussed. He also reported on discussions with our Tax Assessor regarding appraisals.
2. Police: Council Member Robinson stated the Committee had not yet met, but mentioned the K-8 school district was unable to secure bus routes for the entirety of Watchung and as a result the district arranged for supervision at the schools for parents wishing to drop off their children. She also stated extra officers were stationed at the schools for the first day of school. She provided an update on the recruitment process for the department.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds: Council Member Ead provided detailed updates on various matters. Among them were updates relating to the fountains at Watchung Lake and Best Lake, the new Mobus playground construction and fencing options as well as the new flag pole at Best Lake. She also mentioned the Committee is in the process of receiving quotes for asphalt paving in various parking lots throughout the Borough, as well as discussions relating to putting a plan together to address the disrepair of the asphalt sidewalk and pathway along Valley Road.

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Council Member Martino submitted an estimate to Council Member Ead from a resident in regards to a gazebo purchased for the Borough.

Council Member Ead advised she will present this at the next Committee meeting.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental: Council Member Robinson advised the Committee has not met but reminded residents of the upcoming Styrofoam Collection event scheduled for September 17<sup>th</sup>.

Recreation: Council Member Hayeck stated the Commissions next meeting is scheduled for September 7<sup>th</sup>. He also mentioned upcoming events such as the Movie in the Park event scheduled for September 9<sup>th</sup>, fishing derby scheduled for September 17<sup>th</sup> and the Harvest Festival scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Historical: Council Member Ead mentioned the Historical Committee newsletter is finally out and reminded all the Texier House Museum is open the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. She also mentioned Mr. Chris Vander Fliet is working on short videos about Watchung. She reminded everyone the Hometown Hero banner program will be back for the month of November. She also discussed new updates and repairs coming soon to the Texier House. She mentioned the upcoming Journey Through the Past event scheduled for October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> and advised the next meeting is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Board of Health: Council President Jubin mentioned the next meeting is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>. He encouraged everyone to participate in the Monday night Watchung Walks program. He also expressed his thanks to Julie Gunther for all her dedicated years of service.

5. Fire: Council Member Dahl reported on the departments August figures and mentioned shared services with the North Plainfield Fire Department will be discussed at the next meeting.
6. Laws/ Ordinances: Council Member Martino had no report and advised the August 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting was cancelled.

**REPORTS – OTHER:**

7. Engineer: Professional Engineer Jason Cline, RVE, provided comments on various matters. Among them were updates relating to the lake lowering scheduled to occur sometime in early October, various storm culvert updates, paving executed relating to the Morris County Co-Op pricing Council program, contractor meeting scheduled in regards to J.A. Alexander for the 2022 Roadway Improvements Project, updates relating to Ness Farm and other projects were discussed.

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Council President Jubin questioned what portions of the park will be closed while construction is taking place for the new playground.

Administrator Damato responded only the portion where the construction activities will be taking place will be closed.

8. Police Chief: Chief Hart discussed traffic patterns regarding the first day of school. He also provided updates on the Executive Officer who attended active shooter training class.
9. Fire Department: No report.
10. Rescue Squad: Council Member Robinson had no report.
11. Emergency Management: No report.
12. Attorney: Attorney Sordillo had no report.
13. Finance: CFO Bill Hance had no report. Administrator Damato stated if there are any questions on the Audit to please reach out for answers or explanations. He also thanked the entire staff for their dedicated time and effort on the Audit.
14. Clerk: Deputy Clerk Regina Angelo had no report.
15. Administrator: Administrator Damato provided comments on various matters. Among them were a detailed explanation on the requirements for advertising regarding affordable housing on the Borough website and reports of individuals fishing in the lakes and taking home the fish. He advised the lake is a catch and release only.
16. Youth Services: Council Member Dahl had no report.
17. Planning Board: Council Member Martino had no report but advised the next meeting is scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup>.
18. Municipal Alliance: No report provided.
19. Library Advisory Board: Council Member Robinson commented in detail on the successful Friends of the Library sponsored ice cream social event. She mentioned new families in town received Library cards and toured the library. She advised the next meeting is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>.
20. Traffic and Beautification: Council Member Ead reported on the upcoming new plantings, banner concept ideas and provided details on upcoming events such as the Scarecrow Stroll. She advised the next meeting will be held on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

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**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

1. Janine Reidenger, High Tor Drive, expressed her thanks for the American Flag placed at Best Lake. She asked Administrator Damato to verify the type of oil the Watchung Lake fountains run on and if the oil is dangerous to our environment. Administrator Damato responded the lake fountains run on vegetable oil and are not an environmental threat.
2. Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, submitted written public comments regarding the results of the Camp Endeavor Survey.

**DISCUSSION**

❖ Beach Volleyball, Bocce, and Horseshoe

Council President Jubin expressed his desire to include beach volleyball as an activity on Mobus Playground. He also feels having activities for residents such as Bocce and Horseshoe would be beneficial to all age groups in the Borough.

Council Member Ead discussed her concerns with the beach volleyball idea. She discussed the importance of having a good sub-base for the Volleyball court.

Administrator Damato suggested doing a concept plan for the park to incorporate the ideas discussed and also come up with a budget so the Council can make a better decision about which direction they want to proceed. He advised once the concept plan is complete it will be presented to the Council for further consideration. Council Members were in agreement with having further discussions after reviewing the concept plan.

Administrator Damato commented on resurfacing the basketball and tennis courts as a separate project but stated a concept plan for this was not necessary. Council Member Robinson requested the costs of the projects being considered. Borough Engineer Jason Cline, RVE, concluded with detailed comments relating to the impervious surface discussions and different design ideas based off the location for these activities.

❖ Results of Camp Endeavor Survey

Council Members discussed in detail their thoughts on the results of the Camp Endeavor survey. Council Member Hayeck suggested finishing up Mobus Field first before moving onto another project. Council Member Martino suggested using volunteers to help with Borough projects.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

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**NEW BUSINESS**

Council President Jubin stated that a recent matter, that was previously a subject of executive session, led to the following. He proceeded to read and introduce resolution R14 and he followed with a statement he prepared.

Council Member Ead provided comments and noted that this matter was not initiated by Council. Council Member Martino proceeded to provide a statement he had prepared on the timeline of events and his account of what occurred. Council Member Robinson also provided comments and advised she was not in support of this resolution. Council Member Martino concluded and noted that to admit to doing something that is not wrong, would open the Borough up to massive liability.

R14: Resolution Censuring Council Member Martino for Release of Confidential Information

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Ead

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

**REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Annual Audit                                | 2021            |
| Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes    | June 20, 2022   |
| Municipal Council Meeting Minutes           | July 14, 2022   |
| Municipal Council Executive Session Minutes | August 18, 2022 |

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#21 – Letter of Resignation from Julia Gunther, Board of Health Member, 8/22/22, c: M&C, JD

#22- Township of Bridgewater, 8/29/2022, Notice of Introduced Ordinance #22-17 entitled “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER TO CREATE THE RMDU-26 MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONE AT THE SITE OF THE HYATT HOUSE, BLOCK 400, LOT 7 LOCATED AT 530 ROUTE 22” c: M&C, JD, TS

Council Member Ead expressed her thanks to those who worked on the Borough Audit.

Council Members expressed their thanks to Julie Gunther for her time and dedicated service to the Board of Health and service as a resident.

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Dahl

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

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**CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

- R1: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – Round Top Swim & Tennis Club (*summer camp*)  
Round Top Swim & Tennis Club (*final installment*)  
Messercola Excavating (*911 Memorial Landscape*)
  
- R2: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application for the Use of Watchung Lake Gazebo for a Wedding Ceremony – October 23<sup>rd</sup>
  
- R3: Removed prior to meeting
  
- R4: Removed prior to meeting
  
- R5: Opposing [A-1294/ S-2103](#) and Urging That Such Legislation Not Advance Further
  
- R6: Authorizing Bill List
  
- R7: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application for the Use of Watchung Lake to Hold Wounded Warriors 5k Run – November 5<sup>th</sup>

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Robinson

RC: Jubin [Y] Robinson [Y] Martino [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Ead [Y]  
●Martino [*Abstain*]

Mayor Balla inquired on the sample letter from Attorney Sordillo. He requested the sample letter to oppose the legislation be made available for residents on the Borough website. Council Member Martino inquired on the workers compensation insurance relating to the Field Use Permit Applications.

**NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

R8: Governing Body’s Certification of Review of the 2021 Annual Audit

Council Member Martino expressed his concern that the Audit was not reviewed as a group with the Auditor. Council President Jubin clarified the council vote was only based on the review of the comments and recommendations page of the Audit. CFO Bill Hance further explained what the Council would be voting on regarding the above resolution. Council Member Robinson suggested there be a motion to change the Resolution title of R8 if necessary. Administrator Damato advised the Resolution title as listed is standard resolution wording for every audit in every Municipality.

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Ead

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

R9: Approving the 2021 Corrective Action Plan

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Robinson

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

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R10: Accepting Proposed Service Project by Girl Scout Troop 65036 – Creation of a Hummingbird Garden at Watchung Library

Motion to Adopt above by Robinson/ Second by Jubin

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

R11: Authorizing Agreement to Renew Membership in the Suburban Municipal Joint Insurance Fund 2023-2025

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Hayeck

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

R12: Authorize Historical Committee Fundraiser / Book Sale at Harvest Festival & Weekend Journey Through the Past

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Dahl

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

R13: Waiving Borough Fees for PBA Sponsored Ice Cream Truck at Movie Night Event

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Hayeck

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

**PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION**

No one appearing to speak.

Mayor Balla reminded all Council Members to please communicate all questions and or concerns through Business Administrator James Damato.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon there being no further business before Council the meeting ended at 9:45 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo  
Deputy Clerk  
Approved: October 6, 2022