

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG  
MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 2, 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 CONDOLENCES FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF UVALDE TEXAS AFTER GREAT LOSS OF LIFE**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Mayor Balla removed R10 from the agenda and appointed Carolyn Solon as Emergency Management Coordinator for 3-year term beginning June 2, 2022 accordance with Borough Code 2-46.2

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

1. Administration & Finance: Council President Jubin discussed matters relating to a new Borough phone system, upcoming County mobile office tour, purchase/storage of used tent for the upcoming Recreation summer camp. He also mentioned at the May 27<sup>th</sup> Administration and Finance meeting there were discussions to amend the budget cap law. Council President Jubin spoke on catch basin and drainage maintenance.

Council Member Martino inquired on the transfer of power process during the Mayor’s absence. Mayor Balla advised the transfer of power regulations fall under our Borough Code and State Statutes. Lengthy discussions were held on the incident at Watchung Hills Regional High School lockdown that took place on May 25, 2022 and lack of proper communication to Council Members. Council Member Robinson spoke on additional costs being researched relating to the tent for the Recreation summer camp.

2. Police – Council President Robinson mentioned the upcoming schedule for car inspections conducted at PD Headquarters has been updated on the Borough website and posted at the Police Department. Council Member Ead inquired on a new protocol going forward to notify and better communicate between Council Members relating to the incident at Watchung Hills Regional High School. Council Member Martino asked for this to be a discussion topic at the next Police Committee Meeting. Council Member Robinson commented on new protocols going forward. Council President Jubin also commented on updating our procedures going forward. Council Member Martino suggested the Council as a group or individuals take a Public Information Officer Class.

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG**  
**MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**JUNE 2, 2022**

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council Member Ead discussed how the heavy rain storms have impacted the Borough. She asked all residents to please keep areas on their properties with streams free of debris. She mentioned the 2020-2021 road paving starts on June 17<sup>th</sup> and the cleaning service for Borough Hall, PD and Library buildings will be starting on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Council Member Ead expressed her thanks to the Public Works Department for all their hard work.

Mayor Balla questioned in regards to the paving if any roads will be closed overnight and would require detour signs. Council Member Ead stated there is an action plan that will take place and notifications and public announcements will occur 24 to 48 hours in advance.

Council Member Martino suggested our Borough Engineer re-examine the entire area of Mobus Field and re-design the park to address safety concerns. Mayor Balla expressed agreement with Council Member Martino for the Engineer to take a look at a different potential placement for the Mobus playground.

Borough Engineer Jason Cline, RVE, explained in detail what the DEP will allow within the flood way. Council Member Hayeck thanked the Bisignano family for their generous donation to the Best Lake parking lot.

Mayor Balla questioned Engineer Cline if it's considered impervious to put down water features for kids in the summer time or additional shaded areas. Engineer Cline explained what is considered an impervious area in detail.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental: Council Member Robinson reported on the Commissions May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. She advised there were 8 tree inspections, 94 trees to be removed and 26 to be replaced. She mentioned the new legacy books bin will be located next to the ballot drop box. She advised the Styrofoam collection will be held on Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup> at the Public Works Garage from 9:00 A.M. to 12 P.M. She also discussed upcoming additions to the Farmers Market and provided updates on the Best Lake planting.

Recreation: Council Member Hayeck thanked all for attending the Community picnic as well as the volunteers and the Recreation Commission. He asked Mayor Balla to provide details regarding the upcoming Mayors Regatta event scheduled for June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Historical: Council Member Ead thanked all who came out to support our Veterans on Memorial Day. She reported the Texier House patio is in the works for proposals and more information will be provided at the next Council Meeting. Upcoming dates for the Texier House open house hours and other events will also be posted on the Borough website and the next meeting is scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup> via zoom.

Council Member Martino suggested the Borough purchase a banner for two Watchung Civil War Veterans. He also provided details regarding water in the basement of the Texier House and made suggestions to prevent this in the future. He encouraged further Council discussion regarding the bricks for the Texier House patio. Council

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG**  
**MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**JUNE 2, 2022**

Member Ead provided comments on the process relating to the Veteran Hero Banner Program and also the bricks for the patio. Council Member Martino mentioned anyone making a donation to the Borough should go through the Borough Administrator. Mayor Balla thanked Council Member Martino for his offer and contribution to the Borough.

Board of Health: Council President Jubin reported on the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to the completed 2020 Audit and property maintenance issues were discussed. He also mentioned the upcoming COVID vaccine clinic scheduled to be held at the Warren Middle School on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Council President Jubin also discussed the ongoing formula shortages as well as symptoms of the Monkeypox Virus.

5. Fire: Council President Jubin reported on the Committee's May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to a potential shared fire truck service agreement with North Plainfield and Green brook, and two new applications received for volunteer Fire members were discussed.
6. Laws/ Ordinances: Council Member Martino reported the next meeting is scheduled for June 6<sup>th</sup> and spoke in detail on the property maintenance Ordinance. Attorney Sordillo discussed in detail the process of complying with property maintenance violations in accordance with our Borough Ordinance.

**REPORTS – OTHER:**

7. Engineer: Professional Engineer Jason Cline, RVE, provided comments on various matters. Among them were obtaining a permit to lower the lake surfaces on Stirling Road, the upcoming DOT applications for the 2023 State Aid Program due by July 1<sup>st</sup>, proposals requested for emergency storm culvert repairs, repair work on various roads, the DOT Trust fund program, Ness Farm soil sampling has been completed, other potential locations for the Mobus Park playground, obtaining proposals for the maintenance repair work for the Phillips Field bridge. Mr. Cline proceeded to describe other projects being planned. Council Member Robinson commented on the placement of the hay bales along the Best Lake parking lot.
8. Police Chief: Chief Andrew Hart reported on the departments May figures. He also discussed the speed sign enforcement program signs and clarified in detail the lockdown event occurring at Watchung Hills Regional High School. Mayor and Council Members expressed their gratitude to Chief Hart and the entire Police Department for their dedicated service to the community.
9. Fire Department: No report provided.
10. Rescue Squad: Council Member Robinson reported on the summer emergencies training held on May 24<sup>th</sup> and the figures for the month of April.
11. Emergency Management: OEM Coordinator, Carolyn Solon, reported on matters relating to FEMA reimbursement updates and FEMA funding in regards to Hurricane IDA. She provided the FEMA help-line number and suggested anyone interested call to find out the current status of their FEMA Application.
12. Attorney: Attorney Sordillo had no report.

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG  
MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 2, 2022**

13. Clerk: Clerk Edith Gil reported on matters relating to the upcoming dates for bulky waste collection, the need for more full time/ part time Recreation Camp Counselors, increased participation for Watchung walkers to take the Walker Tracker survey, sample ballots mailed out to all registered voters, `possibility of an upcoming County mobile office tour, early primary voting dates and times as well as important election updates.
14. Administrator: Clerk Edith Gil reported on behalf of Administrator Damato regarding the bulky waste pickup.
15. Youth Services: No report provided.
16. Planning Board: Council Member Martino reported on the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to additional funds allocated to the board attorney in regards to the Bonnie Burn Development and Weldon litigation. He mentioned if there is business to be discussed the next meeting will be held on June 21<sup>st</sup>.
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 on the Committee's May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to the approval of new outdoor patio chairs and recognition to the members who spent their personal time cleaning up the library basement area were discussed.
19. Traffic and Beautification: Council Member Ead reported on the Committee's May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting in which matters relating to beautifying the flag pole area at Best Lake and ongoing discussions regarding improvements to the area at Stratford Park. Council Member Ead mentioned the next meeting will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup> via zoom.

**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

- 1) Barry Burner, Hillside Avenue, commented on an ongoing property maintenance issue in his neighborhood and questioned if the Board of Health will send an exterminator to the property in violation. Council President Jubin advised he will pass along the request to the Board of Health.
- 2) Scott Otto, Watchung, responded on behalf of the paving for Best Lake lot. He explained in detail the reasoning for the missing hay bales mainly caused by the raised portion of that area.
- 3) Tracy DiFrancesco, Templar Drive, questioned Council Members on their sudden concern regarding paving the Best Lake parking lot.  
Council Member Hayeck shared his suggestions to shorten the time spent on the Reports section item of the agenda. Mayor Balla is in agreement with expediting the Reports process for Council Meetings and will work towards streamlining this process going forward.

**DISCUSSION**

- ❖ 2022 Roadway Improvement Projects

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG**  
**MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**JUNE 2, 2022**

Council President Jubin emphasized the importance of expediting the paving of roads especially with the costs increasing. He questioned Professional Engineer Jason Cline on the possibility of including the 2022 roads to this year’s proposal as well as additional roads. Professional Engineer Jason Cline explained the feasibility and the funding process in detail. Mayor Balla expressed his concern in expediting the paving of Corey Lane and Old Somerset Road.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

Board of Health Meeting Minutes	March 16, 2022
Engineers Status Report	May 2022
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	April 25, 2022
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	May 19, 2022
Planning Board Meeting Minutes	March 15, 2022
Traffic and Beautification Meeting Minutes	April 11, 2022

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

#15 – Township of Green Brook, 5/24/22, re: *Amending Land Development Ordinance “Stormwater Control” Public Hearing Scheduled for June 6, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.* c: M&C, JD, TS

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Ead

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

**CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

R1: Authorizing Clerk to Issue Raffle License - Fathers Club of Mount St. Mary Academy

R2: Authorizing Clerk to Issue Raffle License - Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Mid-Atlantic

R3: Authorizing Submission of DMHAS Youth Leadership/ Municipal Alliance Grant Application

R4: Authorizing Appointment of Regular Member to Board of Adjustment – Wayne Hanlon

R5: Urging NJ Legislature to Amend the Budget Cap Law to Appropriate Funds for Increasing Insurance Costs

\*R6: Authorizing Bill List

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG**  
**MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**JUNE 2, 2022**

R7: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application for Use of Mobus Field by Warren Baseball & Softball, Inc.

R8: Waiving Chapter 16, *Recreational Use Prohibitions and Limitations*, Section 1.15 of the Code of the Borough to hold Mayors Regatta at Best Lake on June 11, 2022

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/ Second by Ead

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

\* Martino [Abstain]

**NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

R9: Authorizing Appointment of Recreation Director & Camp Counselors for 2022 Summer Camp

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Hayeck

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

~~R10: Authorizing Interlocal Services Agreement for Emergency Management Services with County of Somerset~~

**PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

R11: Authorizing Executive Session: Contract Negotiations, Anticipated Litigation, and Personnel Matters

Motion to Adopt above by Jubin/Second by Hayeck

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

Mayor and Council entered executive session at approximately 10:15 P.M. and returned to open session at approximately 11:25 P.M.

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

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon there being no further business before Council the meeting ended at 11:26 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, June 16, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo  
Deputy Clerk