

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

APRIL 4, 2024

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: Mayor Ronald Jubin called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. and made the following statement: *“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.”*

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD

ROLL CALL

Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [Absent]

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamation onto the record.

- ❖ National Volunteer Month

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- ❖ Board of Education Budget Presentation
Julie Glazer, Ph.D., Superintendent
Karen Bishop-Johnson, Business Administrator

Julie Glazer, Superintendent spoke on the Watchung Schools 2024-2025 Budget. She provided detailed information on the vision of the school district, the financial status of the district and reviewed budget objectives. She mentioned a few key decisions to meet budget objectives such as maintaining the current class sizes and staff levels, prioritizing curriculum, instruction, and assessment and expanding professional learning and collaboration initiatives.

Karen Bishop – Johnson, Business Administrator provided details on the budgeted per pupil analysis. Mrs. Glazer also provided details on what they hope to restore, add and maintain within the budget.

Council President Ead questioned how often curriculum is usually written and the cost. Ms. Bishop advised curriculum writing is on a 5-year cycle and is done at an hourly rate.

Mayor Jubin expressed his thanks to Ms. Glazer and Ms. Bishop-Johnson for providing such a detailed budget presentation and asked them to continue keeping the lines of communication open.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Fischer advised a written report was submitted but mentioned discussions occurred relating to vehicle purchases which will help enhance our Public Works department.
2. Police – Mayor Jubin reported on the successful open house event at the Police Department. He expressed his thanks to the Chief, Police Commissioner, Councilman Dahl and Council President Ead for putting together such a great event.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council President Ead advised a full written report was submitted but provided further details on future plans for the Ness property.

Mayor Jubin expressed his thanks to the Public Works Department for installing the fountains and mentioned the cherry trees on Somerset Street look wonderful.

Councilman Dahl thanked the Public Works Department and Administrator Damato for all their work with cleaning out the catch basins.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental – No report but Mayor Jubin advised the meeting minutes were posted.

Recreation – Councilman Dahl advised the Recreation Commission did not meet but he provided detailed information regarding the 2024 kids summer camp registration.

Historical – Councilman Fischer stated the written report was submitted but mentioned the Committee is working on taking photographs of artifacts in the Texier House for easier viewing purposes.

Board of Health – Councilwoman Abi–Habib advised the Borough website has been updated with Board of Health-related items such as the evite guidelines and Tobacco free community links. She also mentioned they are also in the process of setting up a CPR class and a teen first aide class.

She spoke on the Green Team and provided updates regarding the upcoming Farmers Market starting the first Tuesday in June. She also provided information on the Garden Clubs upcoming plant sale on May 11th and Arbor Day plantings on April 26th. Lastly, she reminded residents about the upcoming Operation Pride event scheduled for April 27th.

5. Fire – Councilman Dahl stated the Committee met and discussions occurred relating to a possible grant with North Plainfield Fire Department for a new pump truck, dead trees to be addressed in the parking lot, possible fundraising ideas, upcoming softball game and a timeline for new replacement apparatus.
6. Laws/Ordinances – Attorney Sordillo advised the Laws and Ordinance Committee met and reviewed a large number of Ordinances and some of them should be finalized and presented for introduction at the next Council meeting.

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REPORTS OF BOROUGH OFFICERS

7. Engineer – No report.
8. Police Chief – Police Chief Anderle provided statistics regarding the March monthly report. He mentioned 85 motor vehicle accidents were investigated, 46 truck citations were issued for Hillcrest Road, 333 hours of in-service training were conducted and advised the speed sign enforcement program and radar posts are still in effect. Chief Anderle also provided comments on the Open House held and thanked the Council for their support.
9. Fire Chief – Councilman Dahl reported there were 15 calls for the month of March. He mentioned Borough events the members attended, replacement equipment being researched, and a motor vehicle accident involving one of our Fire Trucks.
10. Fire Official – Fire Official McNulty reported on the number of inspections done during the month of March.
11. Rescue Squad – Mayor Jubin advised a written report was submitted.
12. Emergency Management – OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon had no report.
13. Attorney – Attorney Sordillo advised the Laws and Ordinance Committee met and reviewed a large number of Ordinances and some of them should be finalized and presented for introduction at the next Council meeting.
14. Tax Assessor – Ed Kerwin provided a detailed summary on the annual reassessment program and its importance. He explained the process and also advised if property assessments go down the tax rates increase. He advised the hand out given to all shows a brief analysis of what was done during the months of October 2023 to February 2024 in terms of completing the reassessment. Mr. Kerwin explained this document in detail and spoke on the percentage increase in the residential assessments.
15. Clerk – Clerk Edith Gil spoke on the various upcoming Election deadlines as well as upcoming Local Government week and its importance. She also mentioned the Mayors office hours will move up to 5:00 P.M next Wednesday and invited residents to stop by Pourtuga Coffee House to have coffee and talk with our Mayor and Council President. Clerk Gil discussed pending bill S-2865 which if passed would allow voters to vote at any polling location in the municipality. Lastly, she reminded government officers who are required to file their financial disclosure forms to please do so as the deadline for filing is April 30th.
16. Administrator – Administrator Damato thanked Chief Anderle for sending over the motor vehicle accident report which was sent to our insurance company for processing. He also thanked Council President Ead, Clerk Edith Gil and Administrative Assistant Colleen Languie who assisted him on a trip to Camp Endeavor to mark out the nature trail. He also mentioned the Borough applied for a grant to do bigger improvements to the Camp Endeavor property and will keep everyone updated on the status of the application.

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Mayor Jubin expressed his excitement to get this property cleaned up and improve the area.

17. Youth Services -Councilman Dahl advised the next meeting is scheduled for April 30th.
18. Planning Board – Mayor Jubin advised the Planning Board held a special meeting this past Tuesday to discuss a litigation matter.
19. Municipal Alliance – No report.
20. Library Advisory Committee – Councilman Fischer had no report.
21. Traffic and Beautification – Council President Ead reminded all about the upcoming Operation Pride event scheduled for Saturday, April 27th from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. She also mentioned thanks to the Traffic and Beautification committee, the Spring plantings will begin on May 8th. Lastly, she thanked the Department of Public Works for their assistance in beautifying the Borough.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- No one appearing

DISCUSSIONS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Motion to open Public Hearing – Second Reading on below by Fischer

OR 24/04: AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK WHEN THE COLA IS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 2.5 PERCENT (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14) FOR CY 2024

Public hearing was opened.

No one appearing.

Motion to close Public Hearing and Adopt above by Fischer, second by Ead

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [Absent]

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

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Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	January 11, 2024
Engineer's Monthly Status Report	March 2024
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	February 26, 2024
Fire Prevention Monthly Report	March 2024
Green Team Advisory Committee Minutes	February 28, 2024
Historical Committee Meeting Minutes	February 21, 2024
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	February 15, 2024 March 21, 2024
Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority Minutes	March 7, 2024

#6: New Jersey American Water, Notice of Public Hearing scheduled for 4/10/2024, Petition for approval of increase tariff rates & charges for water and wastewater service, recv'd 3/22/24, cc: M&C, JD

#7: Dance for the Cure, Req. to Tie the Town Pink in September, recv'd 3/22/24, cc: M&C, JD

Motion to Accept above by Ead/ Second by Dahl

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [Absent]

CONSENT ITEMS

R1: Authorizing Purchases over Allowed Threshold – National Auto Fleet Group (2- 2023 *Ford super duty*)

R2: Authorizing Bill List

R3: Establishing Annual Sewer Rates for 2024

R4: Authorizing a Field & Facility Permit Application from Postpartum Support International for the Use of Mobus Field on October 13, 2024

R5: Authorizing Refund for Overpayment of Food Handler License Application to Circle Convenience Store, LLC

R6: Waiving Delinquent Interest on 40 Vail Lane, Block 7302/ Lot 11

R7: Authorizing Raffle License #679 to Volunteer Lawyers for Justice for Activities on May 14, 2024

R8: Authorizing Raffle License #680 to Mary E Wilson Memorial Union Church for Activities on

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September 28, 2024

R9: Authorizing a Field & Facility Permit Application for the Use of Pillips Field to Watchung Hills Baseball and Softball Association on various dates/times

Council President Ead commented on R4 and thanked the organization for bringing attention and awareness to this topic.

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Dahl

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [Absent]

NON- CONSENT ITEMS

R10: Authorizing an Agreement with Round Top Swim and Tennis Club, Inc. for the Borough's 2024 Summer Camp Program

Council President Ead expressed her thanks to everyone who worked together on this program.

Motion to Adopt above by Abi-Habib/ Second by Fischer

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [Absent]

R11: Authorizing a Professional Services Contract to Potter Architects, LLC for the remainder of Phase 2 and Phases 3 to 6 in Connection with the Rehabilitation of the Watchung Library

Motion to Adopt above by Fischer/ Second by Dahl

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [Absent]

R12: Authorizing a Contract Expansion to Remington & Vernick Engineers for Environmental Services for 666 Mountain Boulevard (Former Ness Farm Site)

Mayor Jubin advised the address will be changed in the near future.

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Fischer

RC: Ead [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Absent] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [Absent]

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

Alice Tyler, Resident, stated she has been trying to get in touch with Borough Engineer Jason Cline to discuss the flooding around her home.

Administrator Damato advised he will come out tomorrow morning and inspect the property and will return on Tuesday for further inspection with the Borough Engineer.

ADJOURNMENT

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Upon there being no further business before Council, the meeting ended at 9:26 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Jubin wished our Muslim community a warm and joyous Eid celebration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina DeLeonibus
Deputy Borough Clerk

Approved: June 6, 2024