

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

**APRIL 18, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.**

**MAYOR’S STATEMENT:** Mayor Jubin called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM 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.”*

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG and MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD and for COUNCILMAN GIBBS’S MOTHER WHO PASSED AWAY TODAY AFTER A COURAGEOUS BATTLE WITH CANCER**

**ROLL CALL**

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

**PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Jubin started by speaking on Anthony Volpe’s history in Watchung and how he serves as a shining example to each and every one of us to follow your dreams. Mayor Jubin then read the following proclamation onto the record.

❖ Volpe Day

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

R1: Authorizing the Appointment of Patrol Officer Gianmarco Acevedo

Motion to Adopt above by Marano/ Second by Fischer

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

Councilman Dahl thanked Patrol Officer Gianmarco Acevedo for his service.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATH**

Mayor Jubin administered the Oath of Office to Gianmarco Acevedo.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

❖ Mayor’s Achievement Award Presented to Daniel Marko and William Lee

Mayor Jubin discussed with Daniel Marko and William Lee their favorite part of the competition. Mayor Jubin presented Daniel Marko and William Lee with the Mayor’s achievement award.

Daniel Marko and William Lee were also presented with State certificates from the offices

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

**APRIL 18, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.**

of Assemblywoman Matsikoudis and Assemblywoman Munoz.

On behalf of Congressman Kean, Deputy District Director JD Bryden presented Daniel Marko and William Lee with Proclamations on their achievement.

- ❖ Watchung Hills Regional High School Budget 2024/2025  
Elizabeth C. Jewitt, Ph.D., Superintendent  
Timothy M. Stys, Business Administrator

Dr. Jewett thanked the Council for allowing Watchung Hills to make a presentation and proceeded to provide an overview of their programs, the students and staff. She discussed student and district achievements in the community and noted the upcoming budget includes security improvements. She also provided details on a new alternative program implemented in the high school to help students stay on track to graduate in four years and discussed its success so far.

Mr. Stys then discussed the school budget summary in detail and spoke on the referendum project. He also mentioned the tax impact for an average home compared to last year has decreased by \$25.00. He noted that if anyone was interested in additional information, that their website had extensive resources.

Councilman Marano questioned the decrease in population of the children and if that would result in any surplus as well as any other funding opportunities.

Dr. Jewitt advised they are on top of all funding opportunities.

**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

- No one appeared

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

R2: Determining that the 2024 Budget be Read by Title

Motion to Adopt the above by Fischer / Second by Gibbs

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

Council Member Fischer provided a statement noting the procedures taken of the introduced budget.

Mayor Jubin reminded the public that anyone wishing to speak, was limited to speaking on the Borough's budget.

Mayor Jubin opened the public hearing on the 2024 Municipal Budget.

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

**APRIL 18, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.**

**Public Hearing and Adoption of 2024 Municipal Budget**

No one appeared wishing to speak.

Motion to close the public hearing by Gibbs / Second by Fischer

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

R3: Adoption of 2024 Municipal Budget

Councilman Fischer provided some 2024 budget highlights such as the decreased municipal tax rate, increased average house value, increased Borough value and other items.

Mayor Jubin expressed his thanks to everyone worked together on the 2024 budget process.

Motion to Adopt the 2024 Municipal Budget by Fischer/ Second by Marano

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

**REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Animal Control Solutions Monthly Report	March 2024
Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	March 14, 2024 April 11, 2024
Board of Health Meeting Minutes	March 6, 2024
Construction Monthly Report	March 2024
Police Activity Report	March 2024
Rescue Squad Monthly Report	April 2024

Motion to Accept the above by Dahl/ Second by Gibbs

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

**CONSENT ITEMS**

R4: Authorizing Purchases over Allowed Threshold - A & K Equipment Co Inc., (*DPW – Truck Bodies & Equipment*)

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

**APRIL 18, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.**

Motion to Adopt the above by Dahl/ Second by Gibbs

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

**NON- CONSENT ITEMS**

R5: Authorizing Insurance Coverage through Suburban Municipal Joint Insurance Fund for Friends of the

Watchung Library, Inc.

Motion to Adopt the above by Fischer / Second by Marano

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

R6: Authorizing a Use and Occupancy Agreement for the Provision of Temporary Library Space

Mayor Jubin expressed his thanks to the owners of the MAHA property.

Councilman Dahl asked Administrator Damato how much this temporary library space would save our tax payers. Administrator Damato advised the exact figure was reported at the last meeting and Mayor Jubin advised the number was approximately \$47,500.00. Administrator Damato also mentioned Mr. Bisignano offered to cover all the utility costs associated with the temporary Library space.

Motion to Adopt the above by Fischer/ Second by Dahl

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

**ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING**

**OR 24/05:** ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS ON THE PRIVATE STORAGE OF SALT THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH IN COMPLIANCE WITH NJDEP STORMWATER REGULATIONS.

Councilman Gibbs mentioned the above is a state requirement and we have to have uniform treatment of the covered materials.

Motion to Introduce the above by Gibbs/ Second by Fischer

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

**OR 24/06:** ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES TO BE KNOWN AS THE GREEN TEAM

Councilwoman Abi-Habib spoke on how important the Green Team is to the community and expressed her thanks to the team and Bill Hance.

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

**APRIL 18, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.**

Motion to Introduce the above by Dahl/ Second by Gibbs  
Ead [ Absent ] Dahl [Y] Fischer [ Y ] Marano [ Y ] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [ Y ]

**OR 24/07:** ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX A OF THE BOROUGH CODE TO UPDATE AND AMEND THE RULES OF THE COUNCIL WITH REGARD TO COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Motion to Introduce the above by Dahl/ Second by Abi-Habib  
Ead [ Absent ] Dahl [Y] Fischer [ Y ] Marano [ Y ] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [ Y ]

**OR 24/08:** ORDINANCE AMENDING THE RECREATION COMMISSION FEES FOR THE BOROUGH'S SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM.

Motion to Introduce the above by Fischer/ Second by Marano  
Ead [ Absent ] Dahl [Y] Fischer [ Y ] Marano [ Y ] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [ Y ]

**OR 24/09:** ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS ON ILLEGAL DUMPING THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH.

Councilman Gibbs advised the next two Ordinances were meant to close gaps in our Ordinances and intended for the health of the Borough.

Motion to Introduce the above by Gibbs/ Second by Marano  
Ead [ Absent ] Dahl [Y] Fischer [ Y ] Marano [ Y ] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [ Y ]

**OR 24/10:** ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BOROUGH'S REGULATIONS AND PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPORTING AND REMOVAL OF SOIL AND FILL IN THE BOROUGH.

Motion to Introduce the above by Gibbs/ Second by Fischer  
Ead [ Absent ] Dahl [Y] Fischer [ Y ] Marano [ Y ] Abi- Habib [Y] Gibbs [ Y ]

**PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION**

- Dmitry Gukhman, Resident, explained he has water utilities that run underneath his neighbor's property and the water meter sits about 250 meters away from his house and there has been a tremendous leak for several months costing him a lot of money. He mentioned the water company has not been helpful in this process and is requesting guidance from the Council.

Administrator Damato stated he was at the property location with Engineer Jason Cline and explained the situation in detail. He also mentioned the water company has been unresponsive in regards to this issue. He stated they are trying their best to get this situation resolved.

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

**APRIL 18, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.**

Councilwoman Abi-Habib questioned if the resident taps into the new water main will the water company allow that. Administrator Damato advised he is waiting for the water company to provide further clarification to this question.

Councilman Gibbs suggested Mr. Gukhman check if there is a utility easement for the property. Administrator Damato advised the water company stated they are researching this but so far no information has been found. Councilman Gibbs explained adverse possession in detail to Mr. Gukhman and how that could be helpful to his situation. Administrator Damato also advised he'd be in contact as soon as he heard anything from the water company.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon there being no further business, the meeting ended at 8:40 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, May 2, 2024 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Regina DeLeonibus  
Deputy Borough Clerk

*Approved: June 20, 2024*