

WATCHUNG BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES

JANUARY 1, 2010

12:00 Noon

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Ellis called the Reorganization meeting to order at 12:05 PM and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting has been posted and sent to the Courier News, the Echoes Sentinel, and the Star Ledger by way of annual notice.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND ROLL CALL

Mobus [P] Black [P] Franklin [P] Joren [P] Pote [P] Nehls [P]

Also present were Administrator/Clerk Laureen Fellin, Borough Attorney Albert Cruz, Engineer Thomas Herits, and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

There were 41 members of the public present

Mayor Ellis welcomed the dignitaries who were present: Governor Donald DiFrancesco, Senator Thomas Kean, Freeholders Pat Walsh and Bob Zaborowski.

INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Reverend Barbara Peters, Wilson Memorial Church

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

Debra S. Joren - Councilmember

Senator Thomas Kean administered the Oath of Office to Debra Joren as her daughter Sara Beth held the Bible and her father Jack Penn stood by her side.

Thomas P. Franklin - Councilmember

Senator Thomas Kean administered the Oath of Office to Thomas Franklin as his wife Lynn held the Bible.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

Senator Thomas Kean administered the Oath of Allegiance and Office to the following newly re-elected officials:

Fire Chief - Robert "Skip" Bell

Assistant Fire Chief - Thomas Carlucci, Sr.

Rescue Squad Captain - Melissa Isidro

Rescue Squad First Lieutenant Adam Wexler was not present.

NOMINATION FOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Councilman Thomas Franklin nominated Councilman Gerald Mobus for the position of Council President, with a second by Councilman Black. Nominations were closed and the motion carried unanimously upon roll call.

NOMINATION FOR LIAISON TO PLANNING BOARD

Councilman Gerald Mobus nominated Councilman Stephen Pote for the position of Liaison to the Planning Board, with a second by Councilman Black. Nominations were closed and the motion carried unanimously upon roll call.

RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolutions were unanimously adopted on roll call, with an offering and seconding as indicated:

	<u>Offered</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
R1:1/01/10 - Adoption of Rules of Order	Joren	Mobus	
R2: Designation of Official Newspapers	Nehls	Mobus	
R3: Designation of Depositories	Black	Franklin	
R4: Appointment of Officials - 1-year term / Attorneys	Franklin	Mobus	Joren
R5: Appointment of Officials - 1-year term / Professional Services, Fire Officials	Joren	Nehls	
R6: Appointments - Boards, Committees, Commissions	Mobus	Franklin	
R7: Re-establish Petty Cash Funds	Black	Franklin	
R8: Temporary Budget	Pote	Black	
R9: Payment of Property Taxes	Mobus	Black	
R10: Authorize Borough Attorney to file Tax Appeals and Petitions on behalf of the Borough for 2010	Pote	Black	
R11: Appointment of JIF Commissioner and Alternate	Nehls	Black	
R12: Payment of Bills	Franklin	Mobus	

APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Mayor Ellis announced the following Councilmanic Committees will remain the same as last year's and are as follows:

Administration & Finance: Franklin- Chair, Pote, Joren
 Public Works: Nehls- Chair, Mobus, Franklin
 Laws & Ordinances: Joren- Chair, Black, Franklin
 Buildings & Public Affairs
 Buildings and Grounds: Pote- Chair, Mobus, Nehls
 Public Affairs: Nehls- Chair, Black, Pote
 Police: Mobus – Chair, Joren, Franklin
 Fire: Black – Chair, Mobus, Joren
 Special Liaison to Rescue Squad - Pote

RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Mayor Ellis thanked the following employees for their years of service to the Borough:

THIRTY-ONE YEARS

Kathleen R. Davies, Administrative Assistant

FIFTEEN YEARS

Catherine L. Park, Tax Collector
Charles S. Gunther, Principal Public Works Manager
Edward P. Bennett, Construction Official
Martin D. McMorrow, Electrical Sub-Code Official
Timothy Wenzel, Lieutenant
Timothy Hale, Police Officer
Anthony R. Saccaro, Fire Sub-Code Official
Maria Bachert, Recreation Director

TEN YEARS

Albert S. Ellis, Mayor
Stephen L. Black, Councilperson
Pamela J. Steves, Court Administrator

FIVE YEARS

Maria T. Fittipaldi, Engineering/Public Works Administrative Assistant
Scott E. Anderle, Detective/Police Officer

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

First of all let me congratulate Tom and Deb on their successful election for another three year term. Your hard work, dedication and integrity is recognized by our citizens along with your fellow Council members, Steve Black, Gerry Mobus, Steve Pote and Bill Nehls. It is my privilege to serve with this outstanding Council.

We have made it through very tough year financially and this coming year I expect will be more difficult. However, with the creative help of our outstanding staff, I have no doubt we will be able to maintain our fiscal integrity.

According to our records the Borough of Watchung has received the award of the following grant funds as of December 2009:

<i>State of New Jersey Alcohol Education, Enf. & Rehab. Fund</i>	<i>\$ 1,067.42</i>
<i>State of New Jersey Clean Communities</i>	<i>\$ 11,530.79</i>
<i>State of New Jersey Recycling</i>	<i>\$ 13,084.79</i>
<i>State of New Jersey Body Armor</i>	<i>\$ 2,817.94</i>
<i>Somerset County Youth Services Grants</i>	<i>\$ 8,500.00</i>
<i>State of New Jersey Road Aid – Bayberry Lane</i>	<i>\$112,500.00</i>
<i>State of New Jersey Safe & Secure Communities</i>	<i>\$114,250.00</i>
<i>State of New Jersey Best Lake Dam Restoration Loan</i>	<i>\$750,000.00</i>
<i>Somerset County PARIS</i>	<i>\$ 31,292.00</i>

Total: \$1,045,042.94

Somerset County continues to complete the bridge replacement project on the circle project along with the Somerset Street project and they will add work on Mountain Boulevard and Hillcrest Road this spring. The New Jersey Department of Transportation will begin work on the overpass at Bonnie Burn Rd. and Route 22 this month, with a completion date estimated in March of 2011. At that, point I believe we will be free of outside major projects.

With the new administration in Trenton I'm hopeful we will again have a seat at the table regarding Rt. 78 and Diamond Hill Road. We are making headway reducing the cost benefit analysis that should move the project ahead. The traffic study that was used to stop the project did not take into account the fact that over 14,000 vehicles per day travel Hillcrest Road. We have also secured the cooperation of the landowner along New Providence Road for future widening as a long term DOT solution for the connection between Rt.78 and Rt. 22.

Our COAH plan we submitted last December 31st has been reviewed and we have asked for an extension to the end of March for final approval. Obtaining that final approval will trigger plans for the development of open space and recreation on the Ness property. Two additional elements in the COAH saga are the court challenge from the League of Municipalities and the new Administration's review of the whole COAH process. We will keep you posted.

The Library Committee is nearing the end of the selection process for finalists in the architect search and the council will hear their presentations in the coming months. I'm hopeful we'll have a selection by spring and conceptual drawings by the end of summer.

As you know, we have moved all the offices in the Texier House into this building and the transition is working out well with a few bumps in the road. The Historic Committee is busy at work planning for the use of the house as museum of Watchung history. We are renting the building to the construction company working on the bridge and those funds will help the committee develop their plans.

Regarding our plans to attain a more equitable share of our cost to the High School, we have provided a part of the draft study to the Warren Board of Education for their review to aid them in making a decision. I expect a meeting with them soon and we will discuss plans for any future action.

I want to thank the Rescue Squad for an outstanding Tree Of Lights presentation. You managed to involve the whole town and the fireworks were just spectacular.

We will be celebrating a very special event this year with the 100th anniversary of the Watchung Chemical Engine Company. All the plans are not complete yet however, the ideas I've heard are exciting and the whole town will enjoy being a part of the celebration.

It has been several years since we have had a "welcome newcomers picnic" and I plan to have one this year before school ends. Details will be in the spring news letter.

The Environmental Commission has been busy and through their efforts Watchung has become a candidate to be Sustainable Jersey Certified which allows us to automatically receive updates on new grants, training and events and news about the latest resources.

The Best Lake project is now complete with the addition of the fountains and the lighting of the pine tree at the east end. My thanks to all who made this possible.

Once again our Public Works Department has done an outstanding job during the recent snow storm. A special thanks to Charlie, Reenie and the crew who along with Mark Krane, Warren Township administrator and their Public Works Department, put together the specs for a jet vacuum to clean storm sewers. This joint purchase continues our efforts to share services when ever we can.

Finally, Fran and I wish you all a healthy, happy, peaceful new year.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council President Mobus offered best wishes to all for a safe New Year, and congratulated Debra Joren and Tom Franklin on their re-election. He said he believes they make a great team and are on the right track. As Police Commissioner, Councilman Mobus announced the Police Activity Report for 2009 seems to be similar to the previous year's, even considering the Department has not been at full complement since August. He said he does find it disturbing to report the number of juveniles detained is up considerably from last year and this issue will be discussed at the next Police Committee meeting. He noted in a recent editorial published in the Echoes Sentinel by Denis Kelly, an invitation went out to Governor-Elect Christie to visit the Borough, noting the Borough did support him. Councilman Mobus wished Mayor Ellis on his upcoming knee surgery.

Councilman Black thanked all for coming and wished everyone a Happy New Year. He commended the Fire Department and Rescue Squad for doing a sensational job, and thanked the many volunteers who make up the Boards and Commissions. He said he would like to get the word out to the new residents that volunteers are always needed. He commended Council President Mobus on his leadership, and congratulated Deb and Tom on their re-election. He thanked the residents for allowing him to serve them, and said if anyone has suggestions on how to meet the new residents and get them involved in community affairs, to please come forward.

Councilman Franklin wished all a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year on behalf of him and his wife, Lynn. He said he is looking forward to a better year in 2010, and hopes to see more people back to work. He thanked all the Borough's employees, saying they are all very competent and do a great job, and thanked all the Borough's volunteers. Councilman Franklin said the Borough did very well with grants this year, which are getting more and more difficult to obtain. He said the Borough faced a slight reduction in real estate taxes, and considering the increases in expenses, feels we fared well, and noted we did not defer any pension payments, as offered by the State.

Councilwoman Joren thanked all for coming today, including her daughter Sara Beth who came in from New York City this morning to be here. Saying she never thought she would ever paraphrase Hillary Clinton's "it takes a village", she said it is not just the Governing Body that runs the Borough, but a combination of community servants such as the Administrative Staff, Public Works Department, Fire Department, Rescue Squad, and all of the Boards and Commissions. Councilwoman Joren said prior to her being elected to Council, she spent ten years serving on the Board of Adjustment and the Environmental

Commission, and spent many Saturday mornings looking at trees with Dolores Kresge. She said she is honored to serve the residents as a Councilperson, and that although they don't always agree, this Governing Body works together, each with their own individual strengths, and making compromises when necessary. She said she is always available when needed, and you can find her walking around Watchung Lake every morning, or feel free to reach out to her at her office in Somerville. Happy 2010!

Councilman Pote thanked all for coming wished everyone a happy and healthy New Year on behalf of him and his wife, Gloria. He congratulated Deb and Tom on their re-election, and as Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, commended Charles Gunther and the Department of Public Works for doing a wonderful job in maintaining the Borough's buildings and grounds, resulting in a pristine town. He thanked Building and Grounds co-chairs Gerald Mobus and William Nehls for their assistance. He said, to all members of the Emergency Services, what they do is really, really appreciated, and to Skip Bell, you and your Department do a fantastic job. To Rescue Squad Captain Mel Isidro and her crew, he said they save lives – thank you. He said this year's Tree of Lights was a great tribute to residents Max Weber and Robert Pittinger, Sr. Councilman Pote thanked the Library Committee, and Colleen Mehegan, and said they are making great progress, ensuring the Library has choices. He thanked the Historical Committee, Barbara Diem and Betty Jean Aldrich, for all that they do, and said they are looking forward to moving into the Texier House. He acknowledged the work of the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment, and thanked Reenie Fellin, Michelle DeRocco and the rest of the Borough Staff, and the residents for allowing him to serve them.

Councilman Nehls congratulated Deb and Tom on their re-election, saying it was great to have them back. On behalf of himself, his wife Georgia, and daughters Savannah and Scarlett, he wished all a happy New Year. He thanked all the Chairs and volunteers of all the Committees, saying they make this town as great as it is. As Chair of the Board of Health, he thanked long-time members Harriet Stambaugh and Fran Ellis, and personally thanked the Rescue Squad and Fire Department for the many hours put in at all times during the night. Councilman Nehls said it is an honor to serve the residents of the Borough and is looking forward to continuing to do so in the new year.

PUBLIC PORTION

Harriet Stambaugh, Tuttle Road resident and Vice President of the Watchung Board of Health, commended Health Officer Kevin Sumner for his hard work and dedication, and noted that he was named "Health Officer of the Year."

Pat Walsh, Green Brook resident and Freeholder said Watchung is the "jewel" of Somerset County and has always been known as a good neighbor to Green Brook. She thanked the Governing Body and employees on behalf of the Somerset County Freeholder Board and wished all a happy New Year.

BENEDICTION

The Benediction was given by Father Brian Nolan, St. Mary's Church

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 1:05 P.M. to the next scheduled meeting of January 14, 2010 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Clerk