

The following is a new feature to our website. Following each meeting, the Clerk's Office will post a short synopsis of the highlights for the convenience of residents who may be interested. This should not, in any way, shape or form be used as the official minutes of the meeting.

Meeting in Review

3/23/06

Mayor Ellis welcomed Superintendent Dr. Frances Stromsland, Principal Dr. Thomas DiGanci, and Business Administrator Kersti Kolu who were here to present the proposed budget for the 2006 - 2007 year for Watchung Hills Regional High School. Dr. Stromsland cited student population growth as the first factor responsible for the proposed 12% increase and explained that a 6% student population increase is expected for this upcoming school year with projected 50% increase over the next seven years. She said next is the fact that the campus is now larger and the new space will need maintenance and the new classrooms will need teachers and text books. She explained that increases in fixed costs such as health insurance and fuel have also effected the budget. Dr. Stromsland pointed out that, when compared to comparable Regional High Schools in the area, Watchung Hills' 2004 - 2005 per pupil costs were the lowest. Handouts provided outlined budget highlights and showed an estimated tax impact to be \$188.00 for an average home in Watchung assessed at \$722,770; \$91.00 for an average home in Warren assessed at \$636,000; and \$137.00 for an average home in Long Hill assessed at \$384,000. The school administrators answered many questions from the governing body and the members of the public who were present.

****Councilman Franklin** said the Finance Committee is working on a date for a meeting to hear budget requests from the department heads. He noted that the total assessed values for homes has not really fluctuated, and the new construction and add-ons will help the Borough. Mayor Ellis noted that the assessors continue to do inspections.

****Councilman Black** thanked everyone for their participation in the services for Matthew Melchionda. He said it was a moving experience and nice to see the community come together with such magnitude.

****Councilman Mobus** had no report.

****Councilman Nehls** reported the Pancake Breakfast will be held on April 1st and thanked Starbucks for their generous donation of coffee. He announced that the proceeds will be going to the family of Matthew Melchionda. Councilman Nehls said that tickets are available at the door and not in advance. In regard to the Fire Department, Councilman Nehls said he will be attending another drill next week.

****Councilman Pote** said he will be meeting again with the Arts Center to further discuss their lease, and in early April, will be meeting to discuss the results of the Library survey which is available on the Watchung website. Councilman Pote reported spring cleanup has commenced on Borough properties, as well as parking lot striping. He announced that Georgia Glasser has stepped down from her position as President of the Rescue Squad and he thanked her for her service to the residents of the Borough. He announced that the new President is Don Monetti and congratulated him.

****Engineer Herits** reported that all projects have been bid and awarded and should be started shortly. He said the contractor for the Anderson Road project lays his crews off for the first three months of the year, and that project should begin early April, as there is still some utility work that needs to be done. In regard to Joan Drive, the surveyor is laying everything out now. Mr. Herits reported that

the Borough has submitted a Community Development Block Grant application for handicap bathrooms at the Art Center. He said the County has finally approved the revised plans for Hughes Lane and he has met with a consultant to discuss the Spencer/Fawn Lane sewer repairs.

**Administrator Fellin reported that she is discussing shared services with North Plainfield for the temporary use of our court room and with Green Brook for the possible joint purchase of catch basin cleaning equipment. She announced that Borough Hall now has a defibrillator on hand and employees will have a training session. Mrs. Fellin said the aerial survey was done on March 7th, resulting in a count of 270 deer within our borders and another 75 just outside. She explained that this computed to a little more than 44 deer per square mile and the recommended count is 20, so the Borough has an overabundance. Mayor Ellis explained that the Borough continues to use the original method of culling and wants to implement net and bolt next season if possible. He said there is legislation being proposed which would lessen the required number of feet for a culling site from 450' to 150', except by a school. He said representatives from the Fish and Game Commission will be visiting the Borough next week to observe our program.

**Mayor Ellis reminded all that Operation Pride, the annual town-wide clean-up, will be held this Saturday, March 25th, with the sign -up taking place at the Texier House parking lot at 9:00 am.

-A Resolution adopting the temporary budget for the year 2006, was approved.

-A Resolution opposing pending legislation for certain amendments to the Open Public Meetings Act and the Open Public Records Act, was approved

-A Resolution appointing Carolyn Taylor as Administrative Secretary and Planning Board Clerk, was approved

Bond OR:06/03 entitled "BOND ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 1 OF THE BOND ORDINANCE (ORD. OR:03/04) ENTITLED: "ASSESSMENT BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF THE COREY LANE, ORCHARD ROAD, OLD SOMERSET ROAD, EATON ROAD, SUNBRIGHT ROAD AND VALLEY ROAD PUBLIC WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, A LOCAL IMPROVEMENT, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$602,700 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS", ADOPTED MARCH 27, 2003." was adopted after public hearing.

Mayor Ellis read a proclamation designating April 11th as Community Transportation Services Day (see web page www.watchungnj.com for proclamation in full)

Mayor Ellis read a proclamation in honor of Watchung resident Dr. Sudhir M. Parikh (see web page www.watchungnj.com for proclamation in full)

The meeting was opened to the public and a resident discussed property taxes and requested that contact information for our local legislators be put on the web site.