

## BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

### MINUTES

APRIL 8, 2004

**MAYOR'S STATEMENT:** Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 7:40 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 was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, Messenger-Gazette and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall

### SALUTE TO THE FLAG and SILENT PRAYER

### ROLL CALL

Black [P ] Franklin [P ] Otto [A ] Mobus [P ] Joren [P ] Harding [P ]

There were 11 members of the public present.

Also present were Administrator/Clerk Lauren B Fellin, Engineer Richard Moody, and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

### PRESENTATION

Watchung Board of Education: 2004 - 2005 Budget

Dr Catherine Rock, Superintendent of the Watchung Public Schools, presented to the Governing Body the proposed Budget for 2004 - 2005. She explained that the objective is to continue the excellent academic standards and programs during a time of rapid increase in enrollment, while imposing on the taxpayer as little as possible. She said in addition to the current instructional and support staff, purchased goods and services, they are looking for an additional math teacher, an additional resource room teacher who will be shared, an additional basic skills/remedial teacher who will also be shared, an additional half day per week for the speech teacher, and an additional day per week for the school psychologist and child study team secretary. Dr Rock said they would also like to purchase a mobile computer lab for Bayberry, concert chimes, a scroll saw and add an additional bus route for both schools. She added that additional funds for staff training and graduate programs were needed, explaining that the special education obligations continue to grow. She stressed that the emphasis is always on the students, referring to a chart which showed that \$ 70 cents of every dollar will be spent on instruction and student support. She discussed the lack of funding and showed how most of Watchung's revenue must come from the taxpayers and this year's increase comes to \$503 per \$100,000 of assessed value. Reminding all that the polls are open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., she urged everyone to come out and vote.

### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Franklin announced that a budget meeting has been scheduled for April 15th and will be held in the Court Room on Somerset Street. He said he met with Councilmen Mobus and Otto to review the engineering budget this week and on Monday will be meeting to hopefully wrap up Buildings and Grounds. Councilman Franklin also announced that the Library has received a grant from the State in the amount of \$30,000 which will enable them to replace the HVAC system and also add shelving. He said that the Deer Workshop meeting originally scheduled for April 12th has been postponed and a new date will be announced.

2. Police - Councilman Black had nothing to report.

3. Public Works - Councilman Mobus said on April 1st he met with Councilman Franklin and Borough Engineer Richard Moody to discuss easements on Sunbright Drive. He said the Washington Rock Road East project is still being reviewed by the Council

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Public Affairs - Councilman Harding said that he doesn't have a report for the Board of Health or the Open Space Commission as they have not met since the last meeting. In regards to the Environmental Commission, Councilman Harding said they have received a Green Communities Grant from the DEP in the amount of \$2,000 which will help create a Community Forestry Management Plan. This money will be used to hire a consultant to help in creating this plan.

Buildings - In Councilman Otto's absence, there was no report.

5. Fire - Councilman Harding said the Fire Department has submitted a grant application; he has heard from Congressman Ferguson's office and he is optimistic that the Department will get grant funds this year. He said he is waiting on a new date for a meeting to discuss the Rescue Squad building. Mayor Ellis announced that April 17th is opening day for the Little League. Councilman Mobus said that on Saturday Watchung Hills High School will be hosting a baseball tournament for Carl Riccio and this will be the first of many to come.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren said that the Recreation Commission met last night and announced that the Summer Playground program will run from June 28th through August 6th, Mrs. Julie Gunther will be giving CPR training for all of the counselors. She reported that the Memorial Day picnic plans are underway and it is scheduled for May 30th. Councilwoman Joren said the Somerset Youth Commission is working on a grant application. Laws and Ordinances Commission will be meeting on Tuesday.

**REPORTS - OTHER:**

7. Engineer - Mr. Moody said the Police Department rock slope evaluation should be completed soon. He reported that he attended a pre-disaster mitigation plan seminar yesterday and said that Stevens Institute has been called in to do work, however, it is in the raw data stage right now. In regards to the sewers on Sunbright, Mr. Moody said that Lee Titus is putting together an aerial as they are looking for the gravity flow to Corey Lane.

8. Attorney - Mr. Cruz had nothing to report, however, he said he has several items for executive session.

9. Administrator - Mrs. Fellin reported that she attended a JIF meeting and submitted to them an EPL certification from Mr. Cruz. She said JIF will begin focusing on workers compensation costs. Mrs. Fellin also said the newsletter is out and should be received by the residents tomorrow.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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**NEW BUSINESS**

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda listed below was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Franklin.

Approval of the following Council minutes:  
January 22, 2004 - Workshop Meeting  
January 22, 2004

Approval of the following Borough Reports:

Environmental Commission Minutes - February 23, 2004

Building Department Report - March 2004

Tax Collector's Report - March 2004

- #39- Jon Loomar 3/29/04 Requesting the Council to revisit the planned improvements for Rock Road East intersection and E-mail 4/2/04 asking for reconsideration of Plan 3 c: Mayor & Council, LBF, RWM
- #40- Mayor James Williams, Borough of Bernardsville 3/15/04 Asking for support in requesting modifications to the Farmland Assessment Act c: Mayor & Council, RWM, DG, LBF
- #41- State of NJ, Dept. of Community Affairs 3/18/04 Announcing grant award of \$30,000 to the Borough of Watchung for the library's upgrading project c: ASE, TF, GM, SB, LBF, WH, RWM, Library
- #42- Emi Havas 3/31/04 Requesting the Council to revisit the planned improvements for Rock Road East intersection c: Mayor & Council, LBF, RWM
- #43- Joseph E. Murray & Associates 3/22/04 Requesting rezoning of property adjacent to Weldon Quarry c: Mayor & Council, LBF, RWM, Planning Board
- #44- Myasthenia Gravis Foundation 4/1/04 Requesting the Borough proclaim June as Myasthenia Gravis Awareness month c: Mayor and Council, LBF
- #45- Mr & Mrs. Santaniello, Mr. & Mrs. Gold, Ms Fisher, and Mr. & Mrs. Scott 4/5/04 Requesting Plan 2 for Washington Rock Road intersection project be rejected and a new design be considered c: Mayor and Council, LBF, RWM
- #46- Bd. of Chosen Freeholders 4/2/04 Announcing Youth Athletic and Recreation Facility Grant of \$15,000 c: Mayor and Council, LBF, WH, Recreation Dept.
- #47- Senator Kean, Assemblymen Munoz and Brammick 4/5/04 Congratulating Watchung on receipt of funding from Dept. of Community Affairs for the Library c: Mayor and Council, Library
- #48- Dorothy Turse 4/5/04 Invitation to attend annual National Day of Prayer on May 6th C: Mayor and Council, LBF
- #49- A. Addario 4/5/04 Urging the Council to reconsider the pros and cons of the Washington Rock Road intersection project c: Mayor and Council, LBF, RWM

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The resolutions listed below were adopted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Franklin, with all voting in favor.

- R1:04/08/04 Purchases over \$2,000 - Motorola, Ray's Sport Shop, Vespia Tire Center Warner Communications
- R2: Authorize the renewal of contract for Athan A. Efstathiou for Assessment Consulting and Appraisal Services
- R3: Appointment of temporary Electrical Sub code Official

- R4: Authorizing refund for tax overpayments due to appeals: Block 7007, Lot 7; Block 6905, Lot 8; and Block 6802, Lot 1
- R5: Temporary Budget Amendment
- R6: Ratification of authorization for electronic payment program for Tax Dept

**NON-CONSENT AGENDA**

**NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS**

The resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted on roll call with offering and seconding as follows:

	<u>Offered</u>	<u>Second</u>
R7-04/08/04 Accept \$30,000 Grant/Authorize Grant Agreement - Library Improvements	Franklin	Black
R8: Appointment of Assessment Commissioners / Century, Woodledge, Oakwood Project	Mobus	Black
R9: Executive Session: Litigation - MGD Holdings Tax Appeal Litigation - Fuentes Property Acquisition - Block 3.02, Lot 3 Property Acquisition - Block 3 01, Lot 29	Black	Franklin

**PUBLIC PORTION**

John Holland, Washington Rock Road, said that he does not understand why Plan 2 for the Washington Rock Road East intersection project is being revisited. He said Mr Loomar has only one agenda and that is his own and he has no consideration for children and people. Mr Holland said he smells something really rotten and this is a safety issue and the intersection can not be left as it is. He said Plan 3 is the most horrible plan.

Joe DeNicholas, Rock Road East, said, in regards to the Washington Rock Road East intersection project, safety is an issue. He said the day he moved in there was an accident, the accidents have continued, and he himself was involved in an accident. He said these are statistics and they are not just fender-benders. He said every day there are so many "all mosts" when the children board and debark from the school bus. Mr. DeNicholas asked why this project is being revisited and feels it is the former mayor's personal vendetta. He invited the Council to come to his home to look for themselves. Mayor Ellis explained that the reason it is being revisited is because there are new Councilmembers on board and he wants them to review it.

Mr. DiRosa, Rock Road East, thanked the Council for their support. He said the Council consulted with professionals and drew up several plans and had reached an educated decision. He said to revisit this for the 3rd time would be a big political blunder and no one will ever trust our politicians again.

Evelyn Holland, Washington Rock Road, said that Mr Loomar has asked the residents to support Plan 1 and to e-mail against Plan 2 and if residents are not familiar with the plans it can be very deceiving. She said this is a safety issue and should be left up to the Council members. She said the homework is already done. Mayor Ellis explained that Plan 1 was rejected by DOT.

Councilman Black offered R9-4/08/04 authorizing an executive session, with a second by Councilman Franklin and unanimously approved. Upon return to regular session at 9:05 PM all members previously present were again in attendance.

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### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM to the call of the Chair or the next scheduled meeting of Thursday, April 22, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco  
Deputy Clerk