

## WATCHUNG BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES

JANUARY 1, 2005

12:00 Noon

**MAYOR'S STATEMENT:** Mayor Ellis called the Reorganization meeting to order at 12:00 noon 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, The Reporter and the Star Ledger by way of annual notice.

### SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND ROLL CALL

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

Also present were Administrator/Clerk Lauren Fellin, Borough Engineer Richard Moody and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco. Mayor Ellis welcomed former Governor Donald DiFrancesco who was standing in for Borough Attorney Albert Cruz who was unable to attend today's meeting.

There were approximately 45 people in the audience.

### INVOCATION - Rev. Barbara Peters

After the Invocation, Mayor Ellis welcomed dignitaries who were in the audience: Sheriff Frank Provenzano, Assemblyman Eric Munoz, Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, and Senator Thomas Kean.

### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE

Municipal Judge Richard Sasso administered the Oath of Allegiance and Office to Councilman Harding. He was sworn into office and renewed his Oath. His colleagues wished him well and congratulated him on his reelection.

Judge Sasso administered the Oath of Allegiance and Office to newly elected Councilman Pote as his daughter Jenny held the Bible. His colleagues wished him well and congratulated him on his election.

Judge Sasso swore Steve Peterson into office as Fire Chief, as Robert Pittenger, Jr. held the Bible. Assistant Fire Chief Robert A. Pittenger was also sworn into office, with his 3 daughters and son standing by his side. Both men received the congratulations and best wishes of the governing body.

Judge Sasso administered the Oath of Office as Rescue Squad Captain to Paul Sosman as Helder Piexoto held the Bible. Helder Piexoto was sworn in as First Lieutenant while Paul Sosman held the Bible. The governing body congratulated both of the men and wished them the best.

### NOMINATION FOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Councilman Mobus nominated Councilman Black for the position of Council President, with a second by Councilman Franklin. The motion carried unanimously on roll call.

### NOMINATION FOR LIAISON TO PLANNING BOARD

Councilman Franklin nominated Councilman Mobus for the position of Council Liaison to the Planning Board, with a second by Councilman Black. The motion carried unanimously on roll call.

## RESOLUTIONS

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

	<u>Offered</u>	<u>Seconded</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
R1:1/01/05 - Adoption of Rules of Order	Joren	Black	
R2. Designation of Official Newspapers	Pote	Black	
R3: Designation of Depositories	Franklin	Mobus	
R4: Appointment of Officials - 1-yr. Term	Joren	Black	
R5: Appointment of Officials - 1-yr. Term	Harding	Black	Joren
R6: Appointments	Mobus	Franklin	
R7. Re-establish Petty Cash Funds	Black	Franklin	
R8: Temporary Budget	Franklin	Black	
R9: Payment of Property Taxes	Pote	Franklin	
R10: Appointment of JIF Commissioner and Alternate	Harding	Black	

## APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Mayor Ellis designated the following Councilmanic Committees:  
Administration and Finance: Chairman Franklin, Mobus, Pote  
Public Works: Chairman Mobus, Franklin, Pote  
Laws and Ordinances: Chairman Joren, Black, Franklin  
Buildings and Grounds: Chairman Pote, Mobus, Harding  
Public Affairs: Chairman Harding, Black, Franklin  
Police: Chairman Black, Joren, Mobus  
Fire: Chairman Harding, Black, Joren  
Mayor Ellis also announced that he is appointing Councilman Pote as liaison to the Rescue Squad, which is a new position this year.

## RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Council President Black read into the record the following list of employee service anniversaries occurring during 2004:

### TEN YEARS

Marita Bachert, Recreation  
Veronica Bannon, Tax  
Ed Bennett, Construction  
Dorothy Figel, Secretary/Planning Board  
Charles Gunther, Public Works  
Timothy Hale, Police  
Martin McMorrow, Electrical Inspector  
Richard Moody, Engineer  
Catherine Park, Tax Collector  
Tony Saccaro, Fire Official  
Tim Wenzel, Police

### FIVE YEARS

Maria Hamlin, Police  
Matthew Melchionda, Police  
Pamela Steves, Court Administrator

## MAYOR'S ADDRESS

### MAYORS ADDRESS

*We have had a productive year and the state of our Borough is good. Several projects have been completed as well as specifications for projects that will go out for bid to begin this spring. Work will begin on Corey Lane, Orchard Road, Old Somerset Road, Eaton Road and Sunbright Road. We will also begin sewer repair and overlays on Philip, Spencer and Fawn Lanes. Anderson Road storm water repair and overlay will be started. A drainage problem at Parlin Lane and Ridge Road has turned into a rather large solution and I'm asking the Public Works Committee to expedite the evaluation of the plans. Work has begun on Washington Rock Road and the actual road work will begin this spring.*

*Best Lake: We have had Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis completed and submitted to NJDEP. This study recommends that the dam be classified as a Class III - Low Hazard structure with the 100- year event as the Spillway Design Flood. Best Lake Dam is currently classified as a Class II - Significant Hazard Structure by the Bureau of Dam Safety Control. Our consultant is currently working on a Dredging Feasibility Report and conceptual design alternatives. We submitted a Dam Restoration loan application to NJDEP in September of 2004.*

*Buildings and Grounds: We have revised plans for the new room here at Borough Hall and will proceed with its completion this year. Ed Bennett has completed his report on the Santucci House. We need the Engineering report and I foresee moving our historic items beginning this fall. We will complete our "Pocket Park" on Somerset Street this year and the plans are available for review in the foyer. We are referring to this as "Spratford Park" named after Elmer Spratford, a longtime resident, former Council President, and a truly great gentleman.*

*Grants: I'm pleased to announce we have received over \$637,000. this past year for body armor, safe and secure communities, clean communities, stormwater management, green communities planning, youth services and recreation from the County, road overlays, sidewalks for Stirling Road which will begin this spring and computer programs which will give us the latest recreational enrollment software.*

*Speaking of computers, we have a volunteer to redesign our web site and I look forward to that happening this month. We will also have in place "reverse e-mail" for those of you who wish to sign up for special announcements from the Borough. I'm sure our Borough schools may find this service helpful. Remember to check our web site the day after council meetings for the Mayor's recap of the meeting.*

*Ness Farm: In 1988 the Borough received "substantive certification" from COAH. In that certification the Ness Farm was designated R-M-L-VI Senior Citizen Affordable Housing. This zone could yield up to 200 units based on 10 units per acre. Talks with Mr. Ness were ongoing in later years and as Mayor I had several meetings with him discussing the great need the Borough had in developing the property into several recreational fields including hiking and biking trails. Mr. Ness was pleased with the concept and I suggested we could call his property the Ness Recreation Area. He liked that idea. Unfortunately, he passed away before any form of an agreement could be reached. We are currently working with the trustees of the estate and we have hired a multi-disciplined firm known and respected for municipal engineering and professional planning, and site development including environmental engineering services to evaluate a plan the trustees have had developed. We asked for a three month review of the plan and the trustees have agreed. We will keep you informed as our discussions continue.*

*The Library Advisory Board is preparing a report on the status of their building.*

*Greenbrook Flood Control is developing a plan for the upper basin and the Army Corp of Engineers has been directed to keep us informed of each step along the way. Our representatives are doing a great job keeping us informed.*

*The Fish and Game Commission approved our deer management application again this year.*

*We have added several new events this year. One was the "New Residents Family Picnic" and all who attended were pleased to meet and make new friends. We will continue this event again. The other highlight was the "Mayor's Regatta" held early in September and it was a smashing success. The Recreation Commission will take over this event and it is again scheduled for September. There will only be one change, the Mayor wins!!*

*I have asked Police Commissioner Steve Black, Fire Commissioner Mike Harding, and newly appointed Rescue Squad liaison Steve Pote to get together and plan a Watching Family Pancake Breakfast to be served by our emergency services people on a cold Saturday morning in March. It has been quite a while since we have had one.*

*Once again, the Rescue Squad did a wonderful job in presenting the Tree of Lights program and I want to thank the Watching Hills Youth Benevolent Association for providing the great fireworks display.*

*I want to thank all of our staff and professionals for their service, dedication, and enthusiasm. You ensure our success. And to our volunteers who always rise to the occasion, my sincere thanks. You truly make this a winning team. To my fellow Council people, I know each of you and your families. I know how important family values are to each of you and I have watched you bring those values to this job. It is my pleasure to work with you and serve this great community.*

*Fran and I wish all of you a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year!*

#### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Black said that it was a pleasure to work with Mayor Ellis. He added that this has been an incredible year for the Police Department and assured residents that they are truly getting their money's worth from this department. Councilman Black noted that this is the first time that he is aware of the Borough having 5 lifetime residents serve as Councilmen at the same time. He said the position of Councilperson takes a lot of dedication and devotion.

Councilman Franklin said that it was a pleasure to work with Mayor Ellis and he wished everyone a happy and healthy New Year. He said although he is not a lifelong resident, he has resided in the Borough since the early 90's and considers Watchung his home town. Councilman Franklin thanked the residents for their confidence and said he will do his very best to represent them. In regard to the Administration and Finance Committee, he said the Personnel Policy has been revised and he can truly say it is a good, fair guideline. He said it should be approved at the January 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting and distributed to employees shortly afterwards. Councilman Franklin said that the 2005 budget will be a challenge, due to the change in the cap laws and the Council will have to be creative. He said they will work together, and work hard on the upcoming budget.

Councilman Mobus said it was a pleasure to serve with all of the governing body, and said the team wins when you have a good coach. In regard to Public Works, he said the boys did a remarkable job, considering it was the winter from hell and they went right from plowing into grass cutting, under the direction of Charles Gunther. He announced that the Engineering Department underwent a little rearranging, moving Maria Fitapaldi downstairs as secretary, adding that she is doing a great job, as is Rich Moody and Arlene McCoy. Councilman Mobus advised residents of the following project updates: Best Lake: an analysis has been submitted to the NJDEP, as well as a Dam Restoration Loan Application; Rock Slope Remediation at the Police Station: the Borough is waiting for a final revision of the drawings and specifications and plan to have it ready to go out to bid soon. Councilman Mobus said, along with issuing 76 Land Disturbance, 58 Street and ROW Opening, 132 Tree Removal, 13 Sewer Connection, 4 Driveway and 1 Soil Removal permits, the Department of Engineering was able to obtain grants for the Washington Rock Road/Rock Road East Intersection Project, the Anderson Road Section I and II projects, and the Johnston Drive Section II project.

Councilwoman Joren said, as Recreation Commission Liaison, the department had a very good year and said the members do a great job. In regard to Laws and Ordinances, she said they are always busy. Councilwoman Joren welcomed Councilman Pote and said she is looking forward to working with him.

Councilman Harding wished all a happy New Year and said this last year has been great for him. He said he always talks about how much he loves the Borough of Watchung and the reason why Watchung works so well is because of the many volunteers who work their hearts out.

Councilman Harding said that when he first came aboard, he fell in love with Reenie Fellin and said it is an honor to work with her. He said that Mayor Ellis has put together a great staff. He thanked Councilmen Mobus and Franklin for all of the countless hours they put in, Councilman Black for always keeping the governing body well informed and updated, Councilwoman Joren for chairing the thankless job of the Laws and Ordinances Committee. He said he has enjoyed working with the Board of Health and the Environmental Commission whose efforts to save Borough trees should be applauded. He said the Open Space Committee is a wonderful committee and announced that he is working out more this year to get ready for the Mayor's Regatta. He thanked the many members of the Fire Department and reported that they went out on 245 calls last year. Councilman Harding reported that there will be a trailer parked down in the Police Department parking lot which will be used if needed for Urban Search and Rescue. He explained that it is just a cautionary measure in the event of any structural damage to the Northeast Corridor and we are fortunate to have it here in our Borough. He said he is looking forward to working with Councilman Pote, as he has always known him to be a professional and he is looking forward to serving the residents of Watchung for the next three years.

Councilman Pote wished everyone a happy New Year thanked all for their trust and encouragement. He said he believes in the dynamics of working together and promises open communication, adding that everyone will always know where he stands. He said he will always do what he truly believes is in the best interest of the residents.

#### **PUBLIC PORTION**

Mayor Ellis opened the meeting to the public.

Former Councilman and resident Bruce McCumber, Hillcrest Road, thanked the Mayor for holding the reorganization meeting on January 1<sup>st</sup>, as it has always been tradition and a special day. He wished the governing body a happy New Year.

Councilman Franklin said that he also would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Laureen Fellin, adding that she is the heart of this Borough and makes it run. He said she also makes the governing body look good. Councilman Franklin said she wears her two hats as if they were separate, and does a marvelous job.

Mayor Ellis closed the meeting to the public.

**BENEDICTION** - Rev. Barbara Peters

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of January 13, 2005 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle DeRocco  
Deputy Borough Clerk

