

## BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

### MINUTES

JANUARY 27, 2005

**MAYOR'S STATEMENT:** Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 7:35 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 ] Mobus [ P ] Joren [ A ] Harding [ P ] Pote [ P ]

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

There were 7 people in the audience.

### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Franklin said the Administration and Finance Committee met with a representative from Delta Dental and discussed how the Borough may be able to save on premiums without cutting employee benefits. He said he is waiting for Delta to get back to him with some figures. He also announced that budget meetings will probably begin the first Saturday in March.
2. Police – Councilman Black said the Police Committee had their first meeting last week and they welcomed Councilman Mobus aboard. He said Chief Frosoni presented an outline of the goals he hopes to accomplish this year. Mayor Ellis asked if the Police Department has begun to implement the ID Card program and Councilman Black said they have, however, at this time he was unsure as to the protocol for local organizations.
3. Public Works - Councilman Mobus reported that last weekend the Public Works Department had to deal with the first snow storm of the year and if any residents ventured out of the Borough, they realized how lucky they were to live in Watchung because the men did an excellent job clearing our streets and keeping them clean throughout the storm. Mayor Ellis commented that the Department takes great pride in the work they do and they should be commended. Councilman Mobus said the Public Works Committee has been busy in the process of interviewing for a new engineer.

### 4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Public Affairs – Councilman Harding said the Board of Health met last week for their reorganization meeting and reelected William Nehls as President and Harriet Stambaugh as Vice President. There was concern over an increase in Hepatitis B and Lyme Disease cases, however, Health Officer Kevin Sumner said it may be due to an improvement in reporting. Mr. Sumner said he will monitor it closer. Councilman Harding reported that the Environmental Commission will be meeting next week and will be sure to be discussing recent law introduced by the NJ Legislature which would repeal the Fast Track Act, and referred to a sample resolution sent to the Borough by ANJEC asking for support in opposing the Fast Track Law. Councilman Harding also said that the Pancake Breakfast is in the planning stages and he will have more information at the next Council meeting.

Buildings – Councilman Pote said Buildings and Grounds have been put on hold for the moment as so they can concentrate on filling the engineer position. He said he met with Georgia Glasser to review the Rescue Squad's plans and goals. Councilman Pote said he asked her for a business plan to justify a requested expansion to the Rescue Squad building. He also said he is working with Borough Attorney Albert Cruz to review the Borough's agreement with Atlantic. Councilman Pote said he has been trying to meet with the Historical Committee, however, due to various illnesses they have been unable to get together and said they apologize for not being able to put together their schedule of meetings for 2005. He said he would like to meet with them and discuss the report Construction Official Ed Bennett prepared on the Santucci House.

5. Fire – Councilman Harding said that things have been quiet for the Fire Department and reported that their air packs are on order and the new compressor is due in March. He said with all of the tragic fires on the news lately, he thanks God the Borough has a good department on call if needed. Mayor Ellis reminded residents that if they have an emergency to call 911 and said they are there if anyone needs them.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation – In Councilwoman Joren’s absence, Mayor Ellis said he asked Superintendent of Public Works Charles Gunther to check out the ice on Best Lake. He reported that although it does meet the 4” thickness requirement, Mr. Gunther said it is extremely bumpy. Mayor Ellis said he will ask Mr. Gunther to work on the ice rink at Mobus Field.

**REPORTS - OTHER:**

- 7. Engineer
- 8. Attorney – Mr. Cruz said he has one item for Executive Session.
- 9. Administrator – Mrs. Fellin reported that she recently attended a GIS Seminar at Somerset County and found it to be very informative. She said she brought back a disk that can be used to create buffer lists around Borough properties. Mayor Ellis said he also attended this meeting, along with CFO Bill Hance and explained this to be a big step because as technology evolves, this will bring us up to speed. Councilman Pote said this will be a big help because a lot of paperwork will be able to be digitized. Councilman Mobus said Cathy Hammel and Bill Hance went to Bernards Twp. and were able to see the program in progress and said it was great.

Mayor Ellis said he attended a Legislative Day in Trenton yesterday and the topic of discussion was property taxes. He said there is talk of holding a Constitutional Convention although that will not be able to happen until 2007. Mayor Ellis explained that there seemed to be three positions,  
a) Constitutional Convention to reduce taxes with out spending, b) Constitutional Convention to reduce taxes with spending, c) or have the legislation solve the problem itself without a Constitutional Convention. Another option they discussed was taking the whole month of July and dedicating it solely to this discussion.

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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:

Executive Session - September 9, 2004

Approval of the following Borough Reports:

Building Department - December, 2004

Planning Board Minutes - December 14, 2004, January 11, 2005

Tax Collector - November, 2004

- #9- Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation 1/18/05 Thanking the Borough for the donation generated by the 2004 Cancer Walk c: Mayor & Council, WH, Recreation
- #10- Mary Ann Walker Martinez 1/18/05 Requesting additional deer management around the Valley View School Area c: Mayor & Council, LBF
- #11- Cablevision 1/20/05 Remittance of Borough’s Franchise fee payment c: ASE, LBF
- #12- NJ Transit Public Hearing Notice 1/20/05 Proposed Fare Change c: Mayor & Council, Post
- #13- Hon. Richard Sasso 1/20/05 Thanking Governing Body for use of Courtroom for Moot Trial for Watchung Hills Regional High School Students c: Mayor & Council, LBF
- #14- NJEA 1/20/05 Requesting Support of the *Read Across America* - NJ Program c: Mayor & Council, LBF

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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.

- R1:1/27/05 Award of Professional Services Contract - Appraisal Services - Kerwin & Sudano
- R2: Purchases over \$2,000. - Archonix Systems LLC
- R3: Appointment of Bd. of Adjustment Member, Alternate #2 - D. Sampson
- R4: Award of Professional Services Contract - Planning Consultants to the Board of Adjustment - Kimball & Kimball

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## NON-CONSENT AGENDA

~~Introduction of OR:05/01 entitled, AN ORDINANCE REPEALING SECTION 6-2.10 ENTITLED- DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS, DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES, WEAPONS OR CAPS PROHIBITED, DISCHARGE OF BOWS AND ARROWS RESTRICTED, AND REPLACING IT WITH A NEW SECTION 6-2.10 BEARING THE SAME HEADING OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, ADOPTED 2004 WITHDRAWN~~

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## 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>  |
|------------|---|----------------|
| R5:1/27/05 | Introduction of OR:05/01 - Repealing Section 6-2.10 of the Borough Code and replacing it with a New Section 6-2.10 bearing the same heading allowing bow hunting with certain restrictions <b>WITHDRAWN</b> |                |
| R6:        | Payment of Bills  | Franklin Mobus |
| R7:        | Executive Session:<br>Potential Litigation: Tax Appeals   | Black Franklin |

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## PUBLIC PORTION

Lee Ehrenworth, Canterbury Lane, asked if it was mandatory for all school children and Borough personnel to be vaccinated against Hepatitis B and Mayor Ellis replied that he believes it is for school children, however, he advised Mr. Ehrenworth to check with the school. Mrs. Fellin said that all emergency personnel are given the vaccines, however, if they refuse they need to sign a waiver.

Walter Niegisch, Tuttle Road, asked if Atlantic Ambulance is giving the Borough a yearly report. Mayor Ellis said the Borough will be looking into it. Mr. Niegisch said he was disappointed that the Borough is not proceeding with the net and bolt process, as the current plan will not benefit his side of the town. Mayor Ellis said the Borough explored the possibility and as far as he knows, the only organization that does this is White Buffalo and they are all booked already. He said the Wildlife Committee will review this procedure for the next application. Mr. Niegisch said when he moved to Watchung over 30 years ago, Watchung had very low taxes, and now we have one of the highest, which doesn't make sense considering all of the businesses we have along Route 22 and all of the new homes being built. Mr. Niegisch asked if the Borough has an ordinance against the feeding of wildlife. Mayor Ellis said we do and requested that the residents do not feed deer on their property.

Maria Perez, Hill Hollow Road, said residents are unaware of where the shooting of deer is taking place as the word is not getting out. Mayor Ellis said the Borough is following the protocol of the application.

Councilman Black offered R7:1/27/05 authorizing an executive session, with a second by Councilman Franklin and unanimously approved. Mayor Ellis called for a 5 minute recess at 8:10 PM.

Upon return to regular session at 8:49 PM, all member 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 8:50 PM to the call of the Chair or the next scheduled meeting of Thursday, February 10, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle DeRocco  
Deputy Borough Clerk