

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

JANUARY 25, 2007 - 7:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. 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

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

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

There were 42 people present from the public and after the Police Commendations there were 3 people remaining.

POLICE COMMENDATIONS

Civilian Recognition - Presentation of Plaque

Chief Frosoni began the ceremony by introducing a representative from Target's Corporate Investigation Team, Lou Mola, who presented a check to the Chief and Councilman Franklin in the amount of \$2,000. for the Department. Mr. Mola said not a week goes by that he does not hear a good story in regard to the security provided to Target by the Watchung Police Department and he would personally like to thank all of the Officers for their hard work and diligence. He said he would especially like to thank Detectives Hart and Kelly. Councilman Franklin thanked Mr. Mola on behalf of the Borough and said it was gratifying to hear the nice comments. He said this money is already earmarked for special equipment.

Letters of Commendation

Chief Frosoni then called forward Officers Jason Moberly and Richard Lyons, Sergeant Jeffrey Skibenes, Detectives Andrew Hart and William Kelly, and Detective Sgt. Timothy Wenzel, all who received Letters of Commendation. Officer Moberly was commended for his actions taken during an investigation and subsequent arrests in an aggravated assault and theft of a motor vehicle at Crystal Ridge. Officer Lyons was commended for his outstanding arrest subsequent to a motor vehicle stop that resulted in numerous charges including possession of handguns and possession of CDS with intent to distribute. Sergeant Skibenes was commended for his outstanding performance while handling the families and victims of extremely difficult investigations, including an unattended death and suicide. Detectives Hart, Kelly and Det. Sgt. Wenzel were commended for their roles in an extensive narcotics investigation, which resulted in 18 arrests and the removal of a narcotics distribution network based in the Borough.

Life Saving Awards

Chief Frosoni then presented the following Officers with the Lifesaving Award: Richard Lyons, Brian Emerick, and Kenneth Boyle, for responding to a call at a resident's home for a 62 year old person not breathing, and administering CPR until EMS and paramedics were able to transport the victim to the hospital. Their response aided in the victim's survival. Officers Richard Lyons, Dan Lorimor, and James Kimock responded to a call for an unresponsive 82 year old female on which they performed CPR until the paramedics arrived, also resulting in this individual's life being saved. Officers David Melchionda, Eduardo DeOliveira and Sergeant Gene McAllister responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Watchung Circle to find the vehicle had crashed into the guardrail and the 78 year old driver was in cardiac distress. The Officers performed CPR until the paramedics arrived and their efforts aided in the survival of this victim.

Commendation Medals

Detective Sgt. Timothy Wenzel, and Detectives William Kelly and Andrew Hart were presented with a Commendation Bar for their outstanding efforts in the successful investigation of a robbery at the Ulta Store.

Excellent Police Service Medal

Officer David Melchionda was awarded the Exceptional Police Service Medal for the arrest of a violent suspected shoplifter at Target. The suspect was charged with 2nd degree robbery and assault and Officer Melchionda sustained several injuries during the arrest.

Chief's Recognition Award

Detective Bill Kelly received the Chief's Recognition Award for his daily dedication, motivation and productivity day after day, and his ability to demonstrate these attitudes and abilities which best define the highest ideas and standards of the Watchung Police Service. Detective Kelly handled over 100 criminal investigations last year, which resulted in over fifty criminal arrests.

Retirement of Badge 11 - Reading of Resolution R2, Matthew Mechionda

In an emotional moment, Council President Thomas Franklin read aloud Resolution R2, forever retiring Badge Number Eleven worn by Officer Matthew Melchionda who lost his life in the line of duty on March 8, 2006.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Black reported the Finance Department has closed out 2006 and is awaiting the audit scheduled to begin next week. He announced that the Borough was the recipient of many grants in the year 2006 and noted that it was important to recognize that the Borough is aggressive in pursuing any available funds which reduce the amount the residents have to pay in their taxes. Mayor Ellis also noted that the Borough's tax collection rate is 99.57% which is marvelous.

2. Police - Councilman Franklin said he met with Captain Sean Whelan this week and Sean is helping him "learn the ropes". He said they talked about the Police Department and moving forward in 2007. He announced that he was in receipt of the crime statistic report and was happy to see most categories had decreases from the previous year. Councilman Franklin said he received his first call as Commissioner last Monday when there was a fatality on Route 22 and he was able to experience the Department in action and said they were extremely efficient and professional and he was very proud of them.

3. Public Works - Councilman Mobus said the bid for the trenchless sewer repair for Spencer/Fawn Lane is on the agenda this evening to be awarded to D & D Utility. He reported bids were also received for the Rock Slope Remediation project and are currently being reviewed by the consulting engineer. In regard to the Corey/Sunbright sewer project, Councilman Mobus reported all mainline sewers and laterals have been installed and manhole testing is scheduled to start tomorrow. He said permanent paving and restoration will be performed in the spring. He commented that this has been a great project.

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Buildings - No Report.

Public Affairs - Councilman Nehls announced the Board of Health held their meeting on the 17th and are moving forward with a tanning salon ordinance. He said they are reviewing the Board's rights in regard to dogs being quarantined after a reported incident. He reported that both the Environmental Commission and the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission meetings are scheduled for January 29th.

5. Fire - Councilman Nehls announced the shared services grant application has been filed with the State. He announced that the Watchung Fire Department will be holding a mutual aid meeting with Green Brook and North Plainfield. He explained that the Department had a busy couple of days, as they responded to a mutual aid call in Plainfield, after a large fire at Charlie Browns in Scotch Plains depleted the various Union County Fire Department's manpower.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren said the Laws and Ordinance Committee will be meeting on February 6th to pick up on several unfinished issues. In regard to Recreation, she reported that Maria Bachert is working with Bill Hance to get the on-line registration to accept credit cards. She said the basketball social and the safety clinic will be held in March, and reported that the Commission is still waiting for approval from the Board of Education for the grant modification.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer - Tom Herits said he has forwarded a list of inquiries from the County to Charles Gunther and the Public Works Committee in regard to the Somerset Street Gateway project, for their review and input. He reported the LOI (Letter of Interpretation) application for the Ness property is ready for signature and the Hughes Lane sanitary sewer repair project will be going out to bid shortly. Mr. Herits said the revised plans for the Bonus Room have been given to Mrs. Fellin and he advised Mr. Cruz that he would like to discuss property acquisition in Executive Session. Mr. Cruz asked that the agenda be amended to add an Executive Session.

8. Attorney - Mr. Cruz said he will not be able to attend the February 5th meeting, as he has a conflict.

9. Administrator - Mrs. Fellin had no report.

Mayor Ellis said he is excited to hear the County is moving along with the Somerset Street project. Councilman Black asked Mr. Herits if he had a timeline for this project and Mr. Herits said he did not. Mayor Ellis also reminded residents that the deadline to register their dogs is January 31st and after that they will have to pay a late fee.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Hearing of Ordinance OR:07/01 entitled "AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING A SANITARY SEWER EASEMENT FROM SHOBIN/TOWNSEND TO THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG" Councilwoman Joren called for a second and final reading of the ordinance. The Clerk read the ordinance and unanimously carried on roll call.

With no one from the public desiring to be heard, Councilwoman Joren moved the public hearing be closed, the ordinance be adopted, and the Clerk be directed to publish the notice of adoption. Councilman Black seconded the motion, and upon roll call, unanimously adopted.

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NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda listed below, was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Franklin and a second by Councilman Black. Mayor Ellis said he wished to comment on Correspondence #6.

Approval of the following Council minutes:
December 14, 2007; Bid Opening January 19, 2007

Approval of the following Borough Reports:
Recreation Commission Minutes - December 6, 2006
Police Activity - December, 2006
Tax Collector's Report - December, 2006; Annual Summary, 2006
Planning Board Minutes - December 19, 2006 and January 9, 2007
Board of Health - November 29, 2006
Finance - Revenue 2006 Year End
Finance - Treasurer's Cash Report December, 2006

- #3 - Township of Warren 1/9/07 Notice of Public Hearing for Revision to Land Use Procedures And Development, on January 25, 2007 c: M & C
- #4 - Borough of Manville 1/10/07 Resolution supporting "Grace's Law" (hearing aid insurance legislation)
- #5 - Borough of Manville 1/10/07 Resolution supporting legislation for Increased Penalties for Possession in School Zones c: M & C
- #6 - Anthony Addario 1/16/07 Urging the Council to review the matter of regional school funding c: M & C, AC

Mayor Ellis said #6 is a letter regarding school funding and announced that he has been in touch with Attorney Vito Gagliardi and invited him to a Council meeting in February to speak to the Council so that they have first hand information to help make a decision if the Borough decides to enter into the joint law suit. Mayor Ellis said he is waiting a response.

- #7 - NJ Dept. of Transportation 1/12/07 Approval of Ordinance 04/07 providing handicapped parking

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The resolutions listed below, were adopted unanimously upon roll call following a motion by Councilman Franklin and a second by Councilman Black.

- R3 : Ratify Motion to Accept and Support Modification to the 2006 Youth Athletic Grant
- R4: Appointment of Community Development Block Grant Representatives - Tom Herits, Lauren Fellin (Alternate)
- R5: Award of Bid - Spencer/Fawn Lane, Sanitary Sewer Repair Project - D & D Utility
- R6: Waive Chapter 2-25.10 of the Code of the Borough - MTS Consulting Services

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Proclamation - Radon Action Week (week of January 29th, 2007) Mayor Ellis read this proclamation into the minutes (copy attached).

Proclamation - National Wear Red Day (February 2, 2007) Mayor Ellis read this proclamation into the minutes (copy attached). Mayor Ellis said he was not aware of how many lives are taken each year by this disease and its effect on women until three men he golfs with said their wives have had problems. Mayor Ellis is hoping for 100% participation in regard to wearing red on Friday, February 2nd.

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NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

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

R1:1/25/07	Adoption of Ordinance OR:07/01 - Accepting a Sanitary Sewer Easement, Block 68.01, Lot 6	Joren	Black
R2:	Retirement of Badge Number Eleven - Matthew Melchionda	Franklin	Black
R7:	Payment of Bills	Black	Franklin

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PUBLIC PORTION

Anthony Addario, Rock Avenue, said it has been two years since he has been badgering the governing body and said it is time the Borough gets on board with the other towns who are already fighting the State in regard to the school funding formula such as Haledon, Seaside Park, and Long Branch Township. The former Mayor said he feels if the Borough spends \$100,000. and tries and loses, the residents will still commend the governing body for the attempt. He said the Borough has little to lose and everything to gain. He explained that the other towns in the Regional system are paying \$11,000, \$12,000, and \$15,000 per pupil and Watchung is paying \$20,000 per pupil. In regard to Exit 43 and Diamond Hill Road, he asked what ever happened to the improvements proposed 5 or 6 years ago and Councilman Mobus said the Borough has met several times over the past two years and there has been talk about adding a lane.

Mayor Ellis announced that a letter and a petition has been received from Senator Robert Singer from the 30th District urging all to join in a statewide effort to make the voice of the people heard in Trenton. He explained the petition demands the Governor make every effort to revise the school funding formula as soon as possible. Mayor Ellis said petitions will be available to sign at the Texier House, Library, and Borough Hall.

Councilman Franklin offered R8:1/25/07: Executive Session: Property Acquisition authorizing an executive session, with a second by Councilman Black and unanimously approved.

Upon return to regular session at 8:33 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 8:35 PM to the call of the Chair to the next meeting to be held at 7:30 PM on February 5, 2007, originally scheduled for February 8, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Borough Clerk