

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

MAY 24, 2007 - 7:30 P.M.

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

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

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

There were 27 members of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Black said that the budget will be voted on tonight, and commended CFO William Hance for a great job.

2. Police - In Councilman Franklin's absence, Councilman Black spoke about the Unity Bike Tour, which made a stop on May 8th at Watchung Police Headquarters on their way to Washington, DC in which over 1700 police men and women went to honor their fallen brothers and sisters. Mayor Ellis said 400 cyclists drove through the Borough and it was quite a sight to see. He explained that while in Watchung a monument was dedicated in honor of Matthew Melchionda.

3. Public Works - Councilman Mobus reported that on tonight's agenda is the award of bid to Jo Med Contracting for the Park Place/Hughes Lane project, as well as an award of contract to Melick-Tully for the subsurface investigation of the Skyline Drive sewer project. He also reported that the Corey/Sunbright project is just about complete, short of the overlay. Councilman Mobus said the final design for Best Lake should be received from Civil Dynamics tomorrow and anticipates being able to go to bid in June. He announced that he will be attending a meeting tomorrow to discuss the Somerset Boulevard Gateway project, sponsored by the County.

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Buildings - Councilman Pote reminded all that the Historical Committee's Memorial Day Service will be held on Monday, May 28th, beginning at 9:30 am, immediately following the 9:00 am services at the Exempt Hall. He announced that members of the Rescue Squad were the recipients of three awards – Don Monetti received the Somerset County United Way and Courier News Star Award and Ross Innocenti, a WHRHS senior and full member of the squad, received the Overlook Hospital EMS Excellence Award. Councilman Pote was very proud to announce that yesterday, Rescue Squad member Walt Niegisch was at Drumthwacket for a lovely ceremony where he was one of eleven recipients of the Governor's Award for outstanding volunteer service. Councilman Pote said these are very well deserved awards. Councilman Pote said the Library Study Committee will be presenting their report tonight to the governing body and thanked all who were involved for their hard work.

Public Affairs - Councilman Nehls said he was unable to attend the Environmental Commission meeting, however, the tree removal request by Mt. St. Mary's was discussed and he will report on that discussion at the next Council meeting. He announced the next Board of Health meeting will be held in June on the 20th.

5. Fire - Councilman Nehls reported the Fire Department will meet on June 5th and reminded all that the annual Fire Department Steak Dinner will be held on June 2nd.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren said she hopes all will attend the annual Community Picnic on Sunday, May 27th (rain date May 28th), from 12:noon to 3:00 pm. She reported it is a busy time for the Recreation Commission who are preparing for the Summer Playground program, as well as working on a feasible solution for the tennis courts at Camp Endeavor. She said the next meeting is scheduled for June 6th. In regard to Laws and Ordinances, Councilwoman Joren reported the Committee met yesterday and resumed work on the fence ordinance. She explained it needs a final review before it goes to Zoning Official Ed Bennett for his review. In regard to the tree ordinance, Mrs. Joren said she has given a draft to Assistant Engineer Arlene McCoy for her input, and the sidewalk maintenance ordinance should be ready for introduction at the next meeting.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer - Mr. Herits announced the Rock Slope Remediation project at the Police facility has begun; the pipe repairs on Spencer/Fawn will begin on Tuesday; he met with the County to finalize the traffic lighting system at Brookdale and Verona Place at Stirling Road; he is looking at options for the repair of the tennis courts; and the Skyline Drive project will be underway after the acquisition of a few more easements.

8. Attorney - Mr. Cruz had nothing to report this evening.

9. Administrator - Mrs. Fellin announced that the local Cable Channel 22 will change to Channel 15 at the end of June. She also announced that Warren will be hosting a big fundraising event on Saturday, June 2nd which will begin in the afternoon and go into the evening and anticipates that Watchung will be affected by the traffic. Mrs. Fellin said she met with Sue Zitzman of Maser Consulting to discuss the long awaited implementation of the GIS system, and she thanked the Public Works Committee and Engineer Tom Herits for moving so many projects along.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Hearing - 2007 Municipal Budget

R1A: Resolution determining the budget shall be read by title
Resolution determining the budget shall be read by title was read by Councilman Black and moved for adoption. Councilman Mobus seconded the motion and upon roll call vote, unanimously carried.

R1B: Authorize Budget Self-Examination
Resolution to Authorize Budget Self-Examination, was read into the minutes by Councilman Pote and moved for adoption. Councilman Black seconded the motion and upon roll call vote, unanimously carried.

Adoption of 2007 Municipal Budget

R1C: Resolution of Adoption
Councilman Black called for a second and final reading of the budget. The Clerk produced an affidavit of Anthony Addario, Rock Avenue, asked what the total increase in the budget amounted to for the taxpayers and Mr. Hance and Mrs. Fellin explained that the numbers from the school and county budgets are not yet available.

Councilman Black moved the Public Hearing be closed and offered Resolution R1C, Resolution of Adoption. Councilman Mobus seconded the motion which upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Black, Mobus, Joren, Pote, and Nehls, "YES".

Public Hearing of OR:07/10 entitled "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES AND COMPENSATIONS TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES" Councilwoman Joren called for a second and final reading of the ordinance. The Councilman Black and unanimously carried on roll call.

With no one from the public desiring to be heard, Councilwoman Joren moved the public hearing be closed,

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NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda listed below, with the exception of #42, was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Mobus.

Approval of the following Council minutes:
March 24, 2007; April 26, 2007

Approval of the following Borough Reports:
Planning Board Minutes - April 17, 2007
Recreation Minutes - February 7, March 7, 2007

#38 - Watchung Associates, L.L.C. 5/10/07 Requesting an adjustment be made to sewer bill for 2007, due to demolition c: M & C, LBF

#39 - Robert Rusignola 5/10/07 Letter of Resignation as Planning Board Attorney c: M & C, LBF, DS

#40 - Township of Warren 5/14/07 Notice of Public Hearing on proposed Land Use revision Regarding Cul-de-sacs/Design Standards, to be held on May 31, 2007

- #41 - Charles Galanaugh 5/11/07 E-mail thanking the Borough for the ceremony on May 9, 2007 in Matthew Melchionda's honor c: M & C
- #42 - Marie Murphy 5/15/07 Requesting an increase in the Borough's annual stipend for the Watchung Senior Club c: M & C
- #43 - Tony Addario 5/15/07 Urging involvement supporting Rt. 78 and Diamond Hill Road interchange improvements by the DOT c: M & C, LBF, DS

Mayor Ellis asked that #42, a request from Senior Club member Marie Murphy to increase the stipend the Club receives from the Borough from \$2,500. to \$3,000., be removed from the consent agenda and discussed. Mayor Ellis read the letter and after discussion, the governing body concurred that the request is justified. Councilman Black made a motion to increase the annual stipend to the Senior Citizen Club from \$2,500. to \$3,000. The motion was seconded by Councilman Mobus and unanimously adopted upon roll call.

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CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda listed below, with the exception of R3 and R6, was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Black and a second by Councilman Mobus.

R3:05/24/07 Honoring John Gausz for his Years of Service to the Borough

Mayor Ellis asked that R3 be pulled from the Consent Agenda and read R3 into the minutes (copy attached). A motion to accept R3 was made by Councilman Black seconded by Councilman Mobus, and unanimously adopted upon roll call. Mayor Ellis said he and John have had some great moments together. John said relocating to Pennsylvania was not an easy decision for him and Peg, however, people "gotta do what they gotta do". He recalled many memories he had over the years, one being the time a former Mayor threatened to put him in jail over a discussion regarding the tennis courts, and another being camping with the Boy Scouts and Walter Niegisch. He said these are memories he will never forget and that he has always had good luck. He said all things, including life, have a beginning and an end. Mayor Ellis presented Mr. Gausz with a copy of the Resolution.

Mayor Ellis said he has worked with John on the Green Brook Flood Control Commission and the Assessment Commissions. He wished John and Peggy "godspeed" and said he will look forward to a visit or two.

Anthony Addario wished John and Peggy good luck, adding that he was not the Mayor who threatened to put him in jail. He said he went to high school with Peggy and thanked John for all that he has done over the years.

Don Pote said he has know John for 30 years and they have served on many committees together. He said they both have engineering degrees and at times they have been at each other's necks, however, they always worked well together. He said he will miss the arguments, and the making up.

Councilman Mobus said over the years he and John have had their arguments, but have always left them at the Fire House. He said he personally appreciates all that John has done - he has made Watchung a better place. Councilman Mobus wished John and Peggy all the best.

R4: Reappointment of Borough Clerk - Lauren B. Fellin

Councilman Mobus commented that in Mrs. Fellin's report this evening, she spoke about the board in her office which lists the pending Borough projects and thanked the Public Works Committee and Engineer Tom Herits for reducing that list. Councilman Mobus said these projects would not have been completed without Reenie's hard work and thanked her for her efforts and determination. He said Reenie is a great asset to the Borough. Mayor Ellis agreed with Councilman Mobus' comments and said most residents do not realize that Reenie has been leading the changes in the Borough and she is doing a marvelous job.

R5: Authorize Amendment to St. Mary's Stony Hill Raffle Application - Prize Change

R6: Officially Dedicating "Spratford Park" in the memory of Elmer Spratford
 Mayor Ellis asked that R3 be pulled from the Consent Agenda and Councilman Mobus read R6 into the minutes (copy attached). A motion to accept R6 was made by Councilman Mobus, seconded by Councilman Black, and unanimously adopted upon roll call. Councilman Mobus said it was truly and honor to read this Resolution, and an honor to have known Elmer Spratford and his family. Mayor Ellis presented Mrs. Spratford a copy of the Resolution.

R7: Purchases Over \$2,000. - Supreme Heating & A/C, Archonix Systems, LLC

R8: Award of Professional Services Contract - Melick-Tully and Associates, P.C. - Subsurface Investigation/Skyline Drive/Johnston Drive

R9: Authorized Professional Service Contract - Planning Board Attorney

R10: Acceptance of 2006 Annual Audit Report

- R11: Appointment of Seasonal Laborer to DPW - Caleb Bain
- R12: Requesting extension of NJDOT Commissioner's Approval for Temporary Parking
- R13: Authorizing the Continuance of the Youth Services Commission, as established on December 18, 2003
- R14: Resolution Opposing A4251 Requiring All government records to be made available on the Internet
- R15: Award of Bid - Park Place/Hughes Lane Drainage Improvements - Jo Med Contracting

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Library Study Committee Presentation -

Mayor Ellis thanked the members of the Library Study Committee for coming this evening and for all of their time and hard work. Chairperson Debra Downs, provided a power point presentation on their research and recommendation, (copy of power point presentation attached). After the presentation, Ms. Downs answered questions from the governing body and members of the public.

Councilman Mobus said he wished to express his gratitude to the members of the Committee and said he has been involved in many groups and none have worked harder than this group.

Councilman Pote said he was proud to be a part of this very diverse, skillful group. He added that he felt the field studies were invaluable. He thanked Debra Downs and the Committee.

Grace Bell, Valley View Road, inquired as to how the recommendation will affect the Senior Club and Committee member Dorothy Addario explained that there will be meeting rooms and that will be able to accommodate the Seniors as well as other needs. She explained that the Committee looked at the Library as more than just a Library, and if it were to be books only, than it could probably stay as is. She said the Library of the future needs to fill other needs for residents.

Walter Niegisch, Tuttle Road, asked if the Committee considered the future needs and Committee member Gary Schmidt said the future is a great opportunity and one of the "soon to be" sub-committees will need to work the Library's future into the Master Plan. He added that it was his pleasure to work with this Committee and added that they put in a lot of effort into this final presentation.

Jim Hecht, Somerset County Libraries, thanked the members for their hard work and said he was very pleased with the results and the recommendation. He explained that Watchung has been a part of the County Library system for 25 years and Somerset County leads the state in library usage. He said in order to provide good services, good resources must be provided. He offered his assistance when the Borough moves forward.

Rosemary Lisa, Vail Lane, said she has been hearing about a new library since she moved here 10 years ago and agrees that the Borough should move forward quickly.

Saul Seltzer, Committee member and resident said the Committee would be remiss if it did not thank the Mayor and Council for their insight and Debra Downs for collecting all of the comments.

The Library Study Committee asked the governing body for support of their recommendation to expand and renovate the existing facility or do a total building replacement, with a facility at the same location encompassing approximately 10,000 to 12,000 sq. feet of space. The governing body unanimously agreed to accept this recommendation and Councilman Pote made a motion to do so. Mayor Ellis asked all members to contact Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco if they would like to continue on a future committee.

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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>	<u>Ab-</u>
<u>stain</u>			
R1A:05/24/07 Determining Budget to be Read by Title	Mobus	Black	
R1B: Authorize Budget Self-Examination	Pote	Mobus	
R1C: Adoption of 2007 Municipal Budget	Black	Mobus	
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R2:	Adoption of OR:07/10 - Set Minimum/Maximum Salaries for Employees	Joren	Black
R16:	Waive Chapter 2-25.10 of the Borough Code - Gray's Florist	Pote	Mobus Black
R17:	Payment of Bills	Black	Mobus

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PUBLIC PORTION

Anthony Addario, Rock Road, asked about the responsibility of the maintenance of the Arts Center. Mr. Cruz explained that the Borough would be responsible for ordinary maintenance, but the Arts Center will provide an escrow account for major repairs.

Mr. Addario asked for an update on the school funding issue and for an update and said the money we may be able to save on schools could go to fund the Library. Mayor Ellis explained that he has received a quote of \$50,000.00 from Vito Gagliardi to study the options for the school funding problem; however, he said he is looking for ways to approach Warren and a favorable reason to gain their support. Mr. Addario said the voters would reject a referendum and feels the Borough should go to court, like other towns do. Mayor Ellis said that Councilwoman Joren has provided to him information from the State Education Commission indicating that they are revisiting agreements throughout the state. Mr. Addario said he is in the process of writing letters to all of the legislators.

Mr. Addario asked for a status update on the DOT's Diamond Hill Road project and Mayor Ellis said he has been in contact with the project manager for the Diamond Hill Road interchange project and has requested to be kept informed of its status, as it is getting strong opposition from Berkeley Heights. Mayor Ellis said he has also discussed this with the Mayor of Berkeley Heights.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of June 14, 2007 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Clerk