

# BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

## MINUTES

### WORKSHOP MEETING OF MARCH 29, 2008 8:30 A.M.

**MAYOR'S STATEMENT:** Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM 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 [ P ] Nehls [ P ]

Also present were Administrator/Clerk Laureen Fellin, CFO William Hance, and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

There were no members of the public present.

#### **REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**Court** – Pam Steves said her budget is basically the same as last year, in fact it is about \$100.00 less.

**Police** – Bruce Egnasko presented the department's capital budget requests, and he and Chief Whelan who was also present, discussed with the Governing Body a five-year plan.

**Public Works** – Charles Gunther discussed his capital requests and regular budgets for both the Buildings and Grounds Department and the Road Department. Also discussed was the possibility of sharing more services with neighboring towns.

**Recreation** – Maria Bachert, Chris Blackadar, and Bob Butkocy were present and discussed current programs as well as ideas for the future, and said their budget is pretty much the same as last year's.

**Construction** – Ed Bennett said his budget is substantially the same with an increase in utilities. He reported the Construction office's volume has gone down but level of activity is the same. Mr. Bennett explained that alterations replace the construction of new homes in times of bad economy, and that shopping centers have a 10 year lifecycle and Blue Star is approaching that time.

**Board of Health** – Kevin Sumner said the increase in his budget is due to the registrar's line item and the need for increased security measures, training, paper, and increase in volume of certified documents due to drivers license renewals. He said the Commission underwent a time study being given to each municipality and Watchung's up a little. Mr. Sumner also cited an increase in advertising for 3 ordinances, and additional food service establishments at Watchung Square Mall.

**Tax Assessor/Collector** – Ed Kerwin said he is trying to decrease his budget, not increase, by trying to take on more responsibility, and not hire as many consultants. He said he'll do inspections for \$30 per home vs \$40 from consultants.

**Fire Department** – Chief Jim DiPaolo and Assistant Chief Skip Bell were present and reported no increase in this year's budget request and advised that they are working on the stipend program, which was briefly discussed, along with training requirements.

**Fire Safety** - Fire Official Gary Greves was present and explained that Fire Prevention is self-supportive, money comes in and money goes out. He said the money is collected from fees, however, due to the slump in the real estate market there are less home inspections.

**Rescue Squad** – Captain Adam Wexler advised the Governing Body that their budget does request an increase and noted that there is a detailed letter of explanation attached. He reported that the squad currently has 54 active members which include the "core" group. He said volunteerism is dropping with the newer generation and changing demographics. He announced that long-time treasurer Claire Ohl has been wonderful and residents have been generous with their donations. He said they will be breaking ground next month on the building's renovation.

Traffic & Beautification - Sue Forton and Bob Butkocy were present and spoke about the completion of Spratford Park and the planting when Best Lake is completed. Mrs. Forton said their budget stands at \$3,500. and they never use it all.

Finance – CFO William Hance said his budget is basically the same as last year. Mayor Ellis discussed the potential loss of \$202,000. in State aid.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of April 10, 2008 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco  
Deputy Clerk