

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

WORKSHOP MEETING OF APRIL 18, 2009 10:30 A.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 10:35 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, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and SILENT PRAYER

ROLL CALL

Mobus [P] Black [A] Franklin [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 – Administrator Pam Steves was ill and did not attend.

Public Works – Charles Gunther was present, along with Foreman Bob Burns. Mr. Gunther discussed the operating budget for Roads, Building and Grounds, and Sewers. Mr. Gunther said he was able to reduce the B & G and Roads budgets by 6%, even with the cost of salt rising by 11%, however, he explained the chemicals needed to run the pump station make up more than half of the budget. Mayor Ellis commented that he would like to discuss an agreement with PARSA for the operation of the pump station. In regard to the Capital budget, Mr. Gunther said he is still waiting the arrival of the joint-purchased catch basin cleaner, and would like the Governing Body to discuss the possibility of a joint-purchase of a hot box. His request includes chainsaws, weedwackers, and wall panels for the Violations Bureau. In addition to his request to upgrade his high band communications equipment, he advised the Governing Body that he believes repairs to the 1998 International may be more fiscally responsible than replacing it at this time.

Police – Chief Whelan and Lt. Bruce Egnasko presented the department's operating budget request, noting some fixed expenses that could not be changed. In regard to the Capital budget, the Chief said the body armor needs to be replaced and said this is a contractual requirement. Among the items the Department is requesting is the replacement of 3 radar units, replacement vehicles, and maintenance for a new computer system.

Recreation – Director Maria Bachert and Chairperson Chris Blackadar were present and Mrs. Bachert explained the budget they are proposing will enable them to maintain all programs for residents. She also explained the background check procedure for all coaches.

Construction – Ed Bennett, was unable to attend, but submitted a status report for the Building Department, explaining a decline in revenue due to the economical situation and lack of commercial projects; however, he said the workload is about the same, as the Department is following up on older open files.

Environmental - Lynn Franklin advised the Governing Body that the Environmental Commission has been invited to participate by Green Brook in their "Green Day" festivities in October, and not being quite sure what this will entail, she is requesting that the proposed cut to her budget be reinstated with at least \$500.00 in unclassified expenses.

Board of Health – Kevin Sumner said the increase in his budget is due to mandated increases such as pensions, and the other lines are either flat or decreased. The Governing Body agreed that it is a benefit to the residents to be a part of the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission and invited Mr. Sumner to speak at a Council meeting in regard to resident services.

Historical - Councilman Pote, liaison to the Historical Committee, spoke on behalf of the Committee, and requested an additional \$1,000.00, as the move to the Texier House was not in the picture when the budget request was prepared and the House is in need of some cosmetic improvements.

Administration - Mrs. Fellin answered questions from the Governing Body, in particular in regard to the large amount of money spent on "printing and binding" and she explained that the codification of the revised LDO was a good part of that money. Councilman Nehls said things should be looked at more closely and believes that subscriptions, books and other things that could be available on-line should be eliminated, as well as the computer line items in each department's budgets should be combined. Councilman Nehls and Councilman Mobus also agreed that classes and seminars should be more closely scrutinized.

Art Center - Joan Plasner, President, was unable to attend, however, submitted a letter outlining their activities and goals for the year, as well as grants received and insurance costs.

Mayor and Council - Mayor Ellis said he would like to implement the reverse e-mail system as a better way to communicate with residents, and all agreed the newsletter is an important resource and should be continued to be printed.

Planning Board - Chairman Don Speeney said the Planning Board's budget is about the same as last year, and after discussion, it was decided that this budget can be reduced.

Fire Department – Chief Skip Bell and Assistant Chief Tom Carlucci were present and Chief Bell explained the Department's need for an upgrade on the hydraulic tools for the truck donated to them from the Rescue Squad, an increase in the stipend, and turnout gear for approximately 10 new members. He said they would also like to replace the car with a truck. The Council asked the Chief to come back with some "harder" numbers.

Fire Safety/OEM - Fire Official Gary Greves was present and explained that Fire Prevention is self-supportive. He said this year they are implementing a new Uniform Fire Code (UFC), and upgrading their computers. He said they are discussing having their own uniforms and/or patches, and said he is involved in of community relations, such as talking to kids at the schools. In regard to OEM, Mr. Greves said they've experienced some new events, such as the Triathlon, Hurricane Hannah, several water main breaks, and the preparation of an emergency plan for elections.

Rescue Squad – Captain Mel Isidro said other than a slight increase in the stipend, their budget remains the same.

General - A short discussion ensued in regard to increases for non-union employees and Councilman Franklin commented that he believes all of the Departments did their jobs as far as keeping expenses at a minimum.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of April 30, 2009 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Clerk