

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

APRIL 22, 2010 - 7:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Albert Ellis called the meeting to order at 8:15 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, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG and SILENT PRAYER

ROLL CALL

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

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

There were 7 members of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Franklin reported the governing body continues to work hard on the 2010 Municipal Budget, and spent a Sunday going over it, line by line. He said now, with the defeat of the two School Board budgets, some members of the Council will be working those as well, and he explained the procedure for a defeated school budget

2. Police - Councilman Mobus said two thirds of the municipal tax rate is the schools' budget and voter turnout is always low. This year's turnout of 24%, was higher than usual, however, he said that is still low. In response to a previous inquiry regarding the fees paid for private Police duty, Councilman Mobus explained income for the Borough is actually generated from its use. Mrs. Fellin clarified that the monies generated from private duty cover its cost.

3. Public Works - Councilman Nehls advised of a recent sewer infiltration situation on Somerset Street, which was the result of the recent storms. He explained that manhole covers blew off and PARSA had to be called in. Due to the infiltration of storm water into the sanitary sewers, the manholes will need to be inspected and the lines televised for breaks. Councilman Nehls said the paving of Hillcrest is scheduled to be done between 7:00 PM and 6:00 AM, beginning on Tuesday, April 27th and should be completed by May 4th.

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Buildings - Councilman Pote reported the Planning Board discussed the footprint requirements for homes. He announced the Rescue Squad responded to 31 calls in March, including 6 mutual aid calls to North Plainfield, and that they will be holding their fund drive in May. He thanked Diddy Addario, Lynda Goldschein, and Rob Winston for taking the time to nominate Claire Ohl and Barbara Diem for the Somerset County Office on Aging's "Profiles of Positive Aging Recognition" and happily announced they were chosen. He said the Historical Committee continues to pursue ways to improve the Texier House, and announced the annual Memorial Day ceremony will be held on Monday, May 31st, at approximately 9:30 am, immediately following the Fire Department's ceremony.

Public Affairs - Councilman Nehls reported Mr. Kerwin from the Somerset County Business Partnership was the guest speaker at the Board of Health meeting, and it was very informative. He said Mr. Kerwin advised the Partnership is no longer in the business of promoting shared services, however, the Borough's Shared Service/Consolidation Study Committee is examining sharing the services of the Court, Police Dispatch, Assessor, and others.

5. Fire - Councilman Black had no report, however, said he was happy with the turnout for the school board election.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren reported Recreation's new storage shed, purchased with County grant money, was delivered, and that the Commission is working on the Community Picnic in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the Fire Department, scheduled for Sunday, May 30th. She announced that at 1:00 PM on that day, the new practice field will be dedicated to John Blackadar. Councilwoman Joren said registration for the Summer Playground program will begin on May 1st, more information is available on the website; spring sports are underway; the Junior Valley Players' presentation of Alice and Wonderland on April 9th and 10th was a great success; and the Thorguard lightning system is up and running again. In regard to Laws and Ordinances, the Commission will be meeting to discuss the animal control ordinance, the fire lane ordinance, escrow accounts, and alcoholic beverage use on private property.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer - Engineer Herits reported the curbs on Stanie Glen and Anderson Road are in; the Gateway Project is winding down; the bridge work on the circle is complete; and he is doing the survey work for phase IV of Johnston Drive. He said the Library RFI's are due on April 29th.

8. Police Chief - Lt. Wenzel was present, however, had nothing to report.

9. Fire Department - No report was presented.

10. Rescue Squad - No report was presented.

11. Attorney - Mr. Cruz said he had two items for discussion in Executive Session.

12. Administrator - Mrs. Fellin said, in regard to the recently defeated school budgets, both Boards of Education have dropped off their budget information and she will soon be scheduling meetings.

Mayor Ellis said he attended a "Friends of the Watchung Library" meeting last night and brought them up to date on the findings of the Library Study Committee and advised them that by the fall there should be a tangible view of what the new Library will look like. He reported he attended a NJ American Water breakfast and informed of a pending rate increase of .23 cents per day, however, if this is approved, the Borough may see a 2.9 % reduction in the cost of fire hydrant service. Mayor Ellis said last week's blood drive was attended by 60 people, producing 48 pints of blood.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Hearing on Proposed Ordinance OR:10/08 entitled "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 28-401, TITLED "GENERAL ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS", OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG BY AMENDING SECTION 28-401C, TITLED "PROFESSIONAL RESIDENT HOME OFFICES" TO PROVIDE THAT A PROFESSIONAL RESIDENT HOME OFFICE SHALL NOT EXCEED NINE HUNDRED (900) SQUARE FEET." Councilwoman Joren moved a public hearing be held with a second by Councilman Black and unanimously carried on roll call.

Planning Board Letter Received April 20, 2010 (copy attached)

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, which carried unanimously on roll call.

Public Hearing on Proposed Ordinance OR:10/09 entitled "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, CHAPTER VI, ENTITLED "ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL," SPECIFICALLY SECTION 9-3.7 THEREOF, ENTITLED 'LICENSE FEES; MAXIMUM NUMBER' AS HERETOFORE SUPPLEMENTED AND AMENDED." Councilwoman Joren moved a public hearing be held with a second by 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, the ordinance be adopted, and the Clerk be directed to publish the notice of adoption. Councilman Black seconded the motion, which carried unanimously on roll call.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda listed below was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Mobus and a second by Councilman Black.

Approval of the following Council minutes:

April 8, 2010 - Regular and Executive Sessions

April 8th and April 10, 2010 - Special Budget Workshop Meetings

Approval of the following Borough Reports:

Building Department - March, 2010

Recreation Commission Minutes - March 10, 2010

Tax Collector's Report - March, 2010

Police Activity - March, 2010

Historical Committee Minutes - March 10, 2010

- #30- Alfred L. Eville, Pine Lane, 4/13/10 Thanking and commending Charles Gunther, Andy Baldass
#31 - Residents and Staff of Watchung Ridge Assistant 4/16/10 Expression of gratitude to Brian Cooke and his staff at Roxdane Kennels, and commending the compassion shown during a recent request for their services c: M & C, LBF
#32 - Township of Warren 4/19/10 Notice of Adoption of Ordinance #10-03 - Zoning Violations c: M & C, LBF

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda listed below was unanimously accepted on roll call following a motion by Councilman Mobus and a second by Councilman Black.

R3:04/22/10 Appointment to Shared Service/Consolidation Study Committee - Karen Cassidy

R4: Authorize Reduction Change Order #1 - F & P Contractors / Johnston Drive

R5: Authorize Return of Escrow - As listed

R6: Waive Chapter 2-25.10 of the Borough Code and Authorize Purchase - Shane Taylor

R7: Authorize Implementation of Employee Furlough Program

Councilman Franklin explained that the implementation of a furlough program is a measure the Borough is taking to save salary money amidst the budget crises. He said each employee, except for the Police Department, will be required to take 12 furlough days, which will result in a 4% reduction in their salary. He said it is an unfortunate situation, however the Borough is in dire straights and has no choice.

NON-CONSENT AGENDA: Items listed below will be individually addressed and acted upon accordingly. Council reserves the right to refer an item to Committee for further review and discussion.

NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS The resolutions listed below, with the exception of R17, were unanimously adopted on roll call with offering and seconding as follows:

R1:04/22/10 Adoption of Ordinance OR:10/08 - Professional Joren Black
Resident Home Office Regulations

R2: Adoption of Ordinance OR:10/09 - Amend Joren Black
Code / Alcoholic Beverage Fees

Councilman Mobus recused himself from the following vote (R8):

R8 Appointment to Fire Department - Oliver Salazar: Black Frank-
lin

Upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Black, Franklin, Joren, Pote, Nehls, "Yes".

R9: Payment of Bills Franklin Black
R10: Executive Session: Mobus Black
Potential Litigation -
Objections to Third Round Housing Element and
Fair Share Plan
Potential Litigation - Borough of Watchung vs. Verizon, Inc.

PUBLIC PORTION

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive said the High School offers many unnecessary courses and that she heard the teachers have reopened their contracts. She advised the Council to stand firm during the budget reviews. She said many people fill out volunteer forms and never get called to serve on committees. Mrs. Goldschein asked when the water company will be repairing Valley Road and Mayor Ellis responded that he had spoken to Mike Amorosa from Somerset County who assured him it will be done, noting that it is the County's project.

Councilman Mobus offered R10:04/22/10 authorizing an executive session, with a second by Councilman Franklin and unanimously approved. Upon return to regular session at 9:49 PM, all members previously present with the exception of Mayor Ellis, were again in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 P.M. to the call of the Chair and the scheduled meeting will be held at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday, May 13, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Clerk