

# BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

## MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 2012 - 7:30 P.M.

**MAYOR'S STATEMENT:** Mayor Gerald Mobus called the meeting to order at 7:35 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 a MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD**

#### **ROLL CALL**

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

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, and Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

There were 2 members of the public present.

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

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Franklin advised the Administration and Finance Committee met last Saturday and discussed several personnel issues. He said Departments have begun to pull budget figures together, and the December revenue report shows figures "in the black." Councilman Franklin reported the Borough has received a check from FEMA in the amount of \$36,839.00 for damage sustained during Hurricane Irene, and there is no word yet if the Borough will get any funds for the October snow event.

2. Police - Police Commissioner Joren reported the Committee met last week and discussed the 2012 budget. She said Chief Wenzel will be holding a mandatory department meeting at the end of this month to discuss the upcoming year. Council President Joren announced an increase in vehicle thefts in both Watchung and Warren, and noted the department is still feeling the effects of the two officers still on light duty because of injuries sustained during a stolen vehicle arrest.

3. Public Works - Councilman Nehls said, in regard to branch pick-up, the Department is finishing up on Washington Rock Road, which is the last street and will complete the storm clean-up effort from the Halloween weekend snow event.

4. Buildings and Grounds; Recreation - Councilwoman Cassidy reported Bob Burns is acquiring quotes to construct the shelving for the Texier House, which will enable an area for file storage. She announced the Recreation Commission has begun working on their budget, and have decided to begin to advertise sign-ups for the Summer Park program. Councilwoman Cassidy explained that the response to early sign-ups will help ascertain the viability of this program and assist in future planning.

5. Public Affairs - Councilman Pote said his Committees under Public Affairs have not yet met this year so he will have a report at the next Council meeting. He advised that he will report on the Library Study Group's meetings under Public Affairs and announced the Library Study Group met yesterday. He reported first a meeting was held with Library personnel, the Somerset County Library Director and Assistant, and representatives from the Foreman Group. He said the Librarians did a wonderful job of providing feedback to the Architects, and afterwards the Library Advisory Group met to discuss the earlier input and possible changes to the preliminary plan. Councilman Pote reported significant progress is being made.

6. Fire - Councilman Black said he and Councilman Nehls attended the Department's 1st meeting of the month, and Councilwoman Cassidy attended the Officer's meeting. He said 2011 was a busy year for the Department, announcing they responded to a total of 361 calls. Councilman Black said this is a good crew, and he hopes the Department continues to move forward. Councilwoman Cassidy said the tone at the Officer's meeting was good, and that they intend to focus on needs and training. She said she feels it is going to be a good year.

7. Laws/Ordinances - Councilman Pote announced the Laws and Ordinance Committee is meeting soon and he will have a report at the next Council meeting.

#### **REPORTS - OTHER:**

8. Engineer - No report presented.

9. Police Chief - No report presented.

10. Fire Department - No report presented.

11. Rescue Squad - Vice President Don Monetti reported 2011 was a successful year for the Squad. He said they gained 11 new members, and 10 of those successfully completed EMT school. He said thanks to Captain Rob Winston and many of the new members, the Squad was able to provide full coverage during Hurricane Irene, the October Nor'easter, and the large scale search and rescue call in November. Mr. Monetti said the Squad is excited to have attained an improved relationship with the Fire Department and looks forward to continuing it in the new year. He announced the 2011 statistics: 427 calls, 55 mutual aid, and top responders for the year - Adam Wexler, 173; Lysandra Plotkin, 109; and Scott Otto, 106.

12. Attorney - Mr. Cruz said he has one item for discussion in Executive Session.

13. Clerk - Mrs. DeRocco said she had nothing to report, however, asked the Mayor for his and the Governing Body's support of the staff's request to participate in "Wear Red for Women Day" on February 3rd. She explained that every year employees who wish to participate make a donation to the American Cancer Society and on February 3rd all wear "red" to join the national effort to raise awareness of the #1 killer of women - heart disease. Mayor Mobus said he would be glad to offer a proclamation in support at the next Council meeting.

14. Administrator - Mr. Atkins announced that after much research and discussion the Borough will be authorizing a 3 year agreement with the Plainfield Area Humane Society for animal control services.

Mr. Atkins also reported he attended a JIF meeting this morning, and noted that Bernards had been shopping around for a better insurance deal, and after much research has concluded that there is no better available option than the JIF. Mr. Atkins said he will ask Bernards for a copy of their findings for our review and information.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS
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NEW BUSINESS
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CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda items listed below were unanimously accepted, following a motion by Councilwoman Joren, a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, Cassidy, "aye".

Approval of the following Council minutes:
December 8, 2011, Regular and Executive Sessions
September 22nd and November 28, 2011 Executive Sessions

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:
Police Activity Report - November, 2011
Recreation Minutes - October 12, 2011
Historical Minutes - November 9, 2011
Building Department Monthly Report - December, 2011

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #1 - JCP&L 12/12/11 Notice of Filing and Public Hearing to request an increase in their Remediation Adjustment Clause c: M & C, Post
#2 - Township of Readington 12/22/11 Resolution opposing S1954/A4358 - Forest Harvesting on State Lands c: M & C, TEA, Env. Commission
#3 - Bob Bzik, Somerset County Planning Board 1/5/12 Requesting feedback on the State's Strategic Plan and New Jersey's Development and Redevelopment Plan, prior to their attendance at the February 27th public hearing c: M & C, TH, DS

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS: The Consent Agenda resolutions listed below, with the exception of R6, were unanimously accepted, following a motion by Councilwoman Joren, a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, Cassidy, "aye".

- R1:01/12/12 Purchases Over \$2,000. - NJ Fire Equipment Co. (2), Atlantic Salt Company
R2: Authorize Change Order #1 and Final Payment - Ridge Road Improvements - Phase II / F & P
R3: Authorize Tax Sale Redemption - Certificate #142010

R4: Authorize Tax Sale Redemption - Certificate #132010

R5: Authorize Tax Sale Redemption - Certificate #6-2011

Mayor Mobus explained that R6 will be removed from tonight's agenda, as it is an item for discussion at the Green Team's next meeting, and the Governing Body will await their recommendation.

~~R6: Supporting, in Concept, the Sustainable Raritan River Initiative~~ WITHDRAWN

R7: Authorize Execution of Shared Service Agreement for the Resale of Commodities and Other Related Services with the Somerset County Department of Public Works

R8: Authorize Appointments - Trong Tronco / Traffic and Beautification Commission

R9: Authorized Execution of Contract for Board of Health Services - MiddleBrook

R10: Award of Contract for Animal Control Services - Plainfield Area Humane Society

R11: Authorize Clerk to Issue Raffle Licenses - St. Mary's Stony-Hill

R12: Authorize Tax Collector to Credit Tax Payment Interest - 35 Parlin Lane  
22 Sequoia Dr.

R13: Authorize 2012 Recycling Agreement - Somerset County

R14A: Authorize Professional Service Contracts - Borough Engineer, Auditor, Labor Attorney, Bond Counsel

Councilman Pote modified R14 to allow for a separate vote as follows:

R14B: Authorize Professional Service Contracts - Borough Attorney, Municipal Prosecutor

Councilman Pote moved R14B, a second was made by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, Cassidy, "aye;" Joren, "abstain."

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**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.

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**NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS**

R15:01/12/12 Waive Chapter 2-25 of the Code of the Borough - Gray's Florist & Greenhouse

Councilman Franklin moved R15, a second was made by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, Cassidy, "aye;" Black, "abstain."

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**PUBLIC PORTION**

No one from the Public desired to be heard.

R16:01/12/12 Executive Session: Litigation - Melchionda v. Borough of Watchung

Councilwoman Joren moved R16, a second was made by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, Cassidy, "aye".

Upon return to regular session, all Council members previously in attendance were again in attendance.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M. to the call of the Chair and the next scheduled meeting will be held at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday, January 26, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC  
Clerk