

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 2006

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

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

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

There were 5 people in the audience

At this time, Mayor Ellis regretfully read a letter of resignation from Councilman Michael Harding, explaining that due to a recent promotion at his job he is unable to dedicate the time needed to serve the Borough to capacity. Mayor Ellis said that Michael is a true son of the Borough and values his input and plans to call on him in the future. Mayor Ellis explained that he will be contacting the Chairman of the Republican party, who will have to provide the names of 3 potential replacements who will be interviewed at a special meeting on January 23rd. This person would have to run in the General Election in November, and if elected, continue to serve Michael's unexpired term.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Franklin announced that the 2006 Budget process is in full swing and feels this will be a tough year with mandated caps and costs going up. He said Michael Harding is a wonderful young man and he hopes he will be back.

2. Police – Councilman Black said he was very impressed that the governing body was in full attendance this morning at a special meeting at the High School where the January 24th referendum was discussed. He said he looks forward to working with Michael Harding when he comes back.

3. Public Works – Councilman Mobus said the Committee met with residents of Corey/Orchard/Old Somerset/Eaton/Sunbright and Valley Roads in regard to their upcoming project and 37 of the 39 residents were in attendance. He said the two biggest factors for residents are mud and dust, however, when a project is in progress, it rains – you get mud, and if it doesn't – you get dirt. Councilman Mobus said he anticipates approximately nine projects getting done in 2006 and residents should be tolerant of the conditions. He said the Borough is getting requests for sewers along skyline Drive. In regard to Michael Harding's resignation, Councilman Mobus said he has played with him and against him for many years and he has always done a great job. He added that he served the Planning Board well when he was a member. He said he will be missed.

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Public Affairs – No report

Buildings – Councilman Pote announced that repairs to the bridge behind the Library will soon be underway, weather permitting, and the Library Board is working on a presentation to the governing body which they hope will be ready in February. He said the interior renovations to the Rescue Squad building are done, and thanked volunteers such as Lynda Goldschein for her assistance in the design. He reported the Rescue Squad received 627 calls for assistance in 2005, and was able to respond to 476 of them. He said the Borough reached out for mutual aid on 3 occasions, however, responded to 12 mutual aid call from other towns. Councilman Pote said this reflects an incredible amount of volunteerism. He said he also appreciated the discussion this morning at the high school. He thanked Michael Harding for his time served and said he will miss his running mate.

5. Fire – Mayor Ellis announced that Councilman Mobus has volunteered to be the liaison to Fire Department until we have a replacement.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation – Councilwoman Joren said the Recreation Commission is working on a tennis program for the Spring, and the volleyball program will be moved to Bayberry School in February. She said the Commission is also planning a Chess Tournament for the Spring to advertise and announce the improvements being done to Best Lake, such as the installation of chess tables. In regard to Laws and Ordinances, the Committee will be bringing the grease trap ordinance to a close soon; they are working on adoption of the federal “NIMS” plan for emergency situations; and will continue to work on the land development ordinance. In regard to Michael Harding’s resignation, Councilwoman Joren said you don’t realize how much time goes into serving as a Council person until you are in this position; it is much more than two times a month. She said it was always fun that 5 of the 6 Council people were Watchung-born and raised and she will miss him.

Mayor Ellis said he has spoken with Chris Blackadar in regard to the lights at the Little League field and it seems as though other neighbors in that area also have complained about the lights. Councilman Mobus suggested a timer.

Councilman Mobus said the grease trap ordinance may seem insignificant, however, this has been going back and forth for four years now and the Borough has major issues with it, especially with taking over the pump station at Watchung Square.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer – No report

8. Attorney – No report

9. Administrator – Mrs. Fellin had no report, however, she said she was disappointed that she was unable to attend the meeting this morning at the high school due to a conflict with a JIF meeting at the same time. Mayor Ellis said that he heard Mrs. Fellin has been elected as Chairperson of the JIF this morning and congratulated her.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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NEW BUSINESS

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

Approval of the following Council minutes:

Approval of the following Borough Reports:

- Recreation Minutes - December 7, 2005
- Historical Committee Minutes - October 5, 2005, November 9, 2005 & December 14, 2005
- Historical Committee - 2005 Strategic Plan and Annual Report
- Building Department - December, 2005

- #1 - Township of Warren 12/28/05 Notice of adoption of non-substantial amendment to their Zoning
- #2 - Township of Monroe 1/3/06 Resolution supporting the “NJ Smart Homestead Act” which would reform the inequitable use of Property Taxes to fund schools c: M & C
- #3 - Gary Meier 1/4/06 Requesting municipal support for the choice and competition in NJ’s Cable

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

- R1:1/12/06 Authorize Borough Attorney to file Tax Appeals and Petitions on behalf of the Borough for 2006
- R2: Authorizing the execution of agreement for the services of James F. Hurley Insurance Agency Corp.. as Professional Risk Management Consultants
- R3: Return of Performance Bond - Watchung Square
- R4: Return of Performance Bond - Wal*Mart
- R5: Authorize Participation in the PARIS County Share Services Demonstration Grant
- R6: Awarding contract to Commerce National Risk Control Services for CDL Random Drug and Alcohol Testing

- R7: Requesting NJDOT Commissioner's Approval for Temporary Parking Prohibition along Park Place
- R8: Purchases over \$2,000. - VE Ralph & Sons, Davis Aviation
- R9: Authorize 2006 contract with Plainfield Area Humane Society
- R10: Authorize Sanitary Sewer Connection - Block 44.05, Lot 4
- R11: Appointment Corrections/Board of Health - Sachariah, Alt. #1; Savulich, Alt. #2

Introduction of Ordinance OR:06/01 entitled "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER VI ENTITLED 'POLICE REGULATIONS,' SPECIFICALLY SECTION 6-2.10 ENTITLED "DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS, DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES, WEAPONS OR CAPS PROHIBITED; DISCHARGE OF BOWS AND ARROW RESTRICTED" OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, ADOPTED 2003, AS HERETOFORE SUPPLEMENTED AND AMENDED" Councilman Franklin moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered. Councilman Franklin moved the ordinance be adopted on first reading and the Clerk be directed to publish the ordinance and notice of public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilman Black and unanimously carried on roll call. Public Hearing to be held on January 26, 2006.

- R12:1/12/06 Amending Borough Code, Section 6-2.10, entitled "Police Regulations" to include Bow Hunting by Permit Franklin Black
- R13: Appointment of Assistant Zoning Officer - Catherine Hammel Franklin Black

PUBLIC PORTION

Hans Juette, Elsinore Drive, asked how the "bow and arrow" plan will work, and what the requirements are for obtaining sites? Councilman Franklin explained that it is the same as it is for the culling with firearms method that the Borough has been using and will continue to use; permission is needed from the surrounding property owners, the 450' radius rule applies, hunters must display their permits on their vests and vehicles. Councilman Franklin said the interested hunters must obtain a permit from the Watchung Police Department and there are 50 permits available.

Frank Costanino, Watchung Square, thanked the governing body for the release of his bonds, and in particular, Mrs. Fellin and Mr. Cruz for their assistance.

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, asked if there is a time frame for the "bow and arrow" plan and Councilman Franklin said he did not know the exact dates right now, however, it is the same as the official hunting season. Mrs. Goldschein asked if the governing body is taking a stand on the school referendum issue and Mayor Ellis said the meeting this morning was very informative, however, the governing body is not taking a formal position.

Mr. Juette said that in regard to the school referendum, the people need to be better informed and need to know all of the details.

Mrs. Goldschein asked if any of the referendum monies would go to legal costs and Mr. Cruz said that it cannot. Councilman Franklin explained that the public needs to know that if the referendum fails, the project will not be boarded up and forgotten about, it will get done one way or another, and maybe cost more in the long run. Mr. Juette said that was a sad testimony in American Democracy, that the school can ignore what the voters say and still get what they want.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of January 26, 2006 at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco
Deputy Borough Clerk