

# **BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG**

## **MINUTES**

**DECEMBER 28, 2006 - 7:30 P.M.**

**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 ] Pote [ P ] Nehls [ P ]

### **OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OFFICE**

Brian Smith - Probationary Police Officer

Probationary Police Officer Brian Smith took his Oath of Office as his mother Eileen held the Bible. Mayor Ellis said this was a joyous occasion. Councilman Black said Brian is a 25 year resident of Blairstown, who recently completed his Master's degree at Rutgers and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. He said he was chosen from 15 candidates, who were all very good, however, Brian stood out and was very impressive during his interviews.

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

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Franklin said the Personnel Committee met and are finalizing the position of Public Works foreman. He said the Administrative and Finance Committee met to review the Request for Proposals for professional services and said it was a long and tedious process. He explained that the Borough chose to fill the positions of professional services through the “fair and open” process which meant that the positions must be advertised and sealed proposals were received and opened by the Borough Clerk and reviewed by the Committee. Mayor Ellis thanked Councilmen Franklin, Mobus, and Pote for the time they put into this process.

2. Police – Councilman Black had no report, but welcomed probationary Police Officer Brian Smith to the Borough, adding that he will be an asset to the department.

3. Public Works – Councilman Mobus reported the main line sewers on Corey/Sunbright are installed and the testing is 80% complete, with the permanent paving scheduled for the spring. He announced that he met yesterday with the Deputy Fire Chief to review the hydrant plan. He said an artist's rendering of the improvements to Best Lake will be available for public viewing at the January 1<sup>st</sup> re-organization meeting. In regard to the Ness Property, Councilman Mobus reported the cleanup is on-going and he wished to publicly thank Donald Scotti for volunteering his time to oversee the cleanup. He said they are working on plans to demolish the chicken coup and will be having a meeting right after the new year.

#### 4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Buildings – Councilman Pote said he met with Tom Herits to discuss the renovations for the Bonus Room and thanked Maser for their assistance and said he feels this project is off to a good start. He explained that the plan is to move the offices out from the Texier House to this Building, and use the Texier House for something else, to be determined. He commented that Spratford Park is near completion and looks wonderful. He said the Library Study Committee has visited the Long Hill and Warren Libraries and are planning a visit to the Fanwood Library. He explained that the Committee has a clear mission and are accomplishing what they set out to do. Councilman Pote announced that the Historical Committee has hung the placards underneath the pictures in Borough Hall and thanked them and all agreed they looked great. He also reported that he and Councilman Nehls went to Wal-Mart on Saturday morning for a check presentation and thanked Wal-Mart for their donation of \$2,000. to the Fire Department and Rescue Squad.

Public Affairs – Councilman Nehls had nothing to report.

5. Fire – Councilman Nehls reiterated Councilman Pote’s comments in regard to the donation to the Fire Department and said the money will be put to good use, saying that he believes they will be purchasing heavy duty flashlights. He said the department has been very busy and has sponsored a “boot drive” for two weekends at the Watchung Square Mall, and reported the first weekend was very successful. He explained that the money raised will go towards the planning of their 100 year Anniversary Celebration. Councilman Nehls thanked the Fire, Rescue, and Police Departments for their response last week in regard to a report of a missing child. He said the child turned up well and healthy, but commended all who participated in the search for handling it in a very professional manner. Mayor Ellis commented that Watchung has some wonderful corporate partners who step up – such as Wal-Mart.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation – Councilwoman Joren announced that the draft of the Land Development Ordinance is finally here and asked all of the Council members to review it. She said completion of this task will make the Planning Board, the Engineering Office and the Zoning Boards all very happy, and noted that none of the changes are radical, just more user friendly. She said although she wanted to finalize this prior to the end of the year, she hopes that this can now be done by January. In regard to Recreation, Councilwoman Joren reported that, due to unforeseen DEP requirements, the Committee had to postpone their plans for the bike path at Best Lake and divert the grant money for improvements to Ost Field. She said the improvements are already done and look very nice.

**REPORTS - OTHER:**

7. Engineer – Mr. Herits reported that the Johnston Drive and Joan Drive projects are almost completed, except for a few minor punch list items. He said the Ridge Road project went well and bids for the Spencer/Fawn Lane Sanitary Sewer Repair project will be received on January 19<sup>th</sup>. In regard to the Pedestrian Crosswalk project, Mr. Herits said he is waiting on a resolution from the County for the maintenance of the signals. He said he is waiting for the \$200,000. from the DOT and as soon as it is received he will call upon the Morris County Co-op for the paving of Johnston Drive.

8. Attorney – Mr. Cruz said he had no report, and nothing to discuss in Executive Session.

9. Administrator – Mrs. Fellin had no report, however, she thanked the Personnel Committee for the work and hours that went into reviewing the “RFP’s”, explaining they are the Request for Proposals for professional services.

Mayor Ellis congratulated Michelle DeRocco on receiving her Municipal Clerk’s Certification.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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**NEW BUSINESS**

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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:

October 12th and 26th, November 9, 27, 2006, and RFP Opening of December 20, 2006

Approval of the following Borough Reports:

Planning Board Minutes - November 21st and 28th, 2006

#101 - Mark Blumberg, 12/18/06 E-mail regarding global warming and inquiring as to the steps Watchung is taking, if any c: M & C, LBF, Env. Comm.

#102 - Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders 12/22/06 Resolution approving Watchung Recreation Commissions’ amended application and authorizing execution of 2006 Youth Athletic and Recreation Facility Grant program c: M & C, MB

#103 - Robert Van Rensselaer 12/27/06 Letter commending Mr. Cruz’s diligence and work ethics in regard to his efforts to mediate a timely and ongoing conflict c: M & C, LBF, AC

Mayor Ellis read #103 into the minutes: (copy attached)

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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.

- R1:12/28/06 Appointment of Probationary Police Officer - Brian Smith
- R2: Authorize Contract Renewal - Commerce Risk Control
- R3: Award Professional Service Contract - EcolSciences, Inc.
- R4: Authorize Change Order #1 - Nova Crete
- R5: Purchases Over \$2,000. - M.L. Ruberton Construction Co., Fire & Safety Services, Ltd.
- R6: Requesting extension of NJDOT Commissioner's Approval for Temporary Parking
- R7: Acceptance of Anonymous Donation - Eight (8) picnic tables for Phillips Field
- R8: Return of Escrow Balances - Various Accounts
- R9: Appointment of Assessment Commissioner for Will Lane/Brook Drive Assessment Commission - Donald Cox
- R10: Opposing A-3857, Elimination of RCA's as a Tool to Facilitate Municipal Compliance With Mount Laurel
- R11: Opposing S-457 and A-3870, Amending the Time of Decision Rule
- R12: Authorize Mayor to sign CY2007 Municipal Recycling Agreement with Somerset
- R13: Authorizing Payment of a One-time Connection Fee to MCUA - \$3,987.43/Skyline Drive

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**NON-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS**

The resolutions listed below were unanimously adopted on roll call with offering and seconding as follows:

	<u>Offered</u>	<u>Second</u>
R14:12/28/06 Payment of Bills	Franklin	Black

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**PUBLIC PORTION**

Mayor Ellis thanked all of his colleagues for a great year.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM to the Reorganization meeting to be held at 12:00 Noon on January 1, 2007 with the next regular Council meeting scheduled for January 11, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco  
Deputy Clerk