

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

MAY 12, 2005

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 [A] Harding [P] Pote [A]

Councilwoman Joren arrived at 7:40 P.M.

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

There were 5 members of the public present.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Administration & Finance - Councilman Franklin reported that he, the Mayor, and Councilman Pote met with the elected officials from Long Hill and Warren, and then met twice with the Board of Education, before coming to an agreement of all 3 towns to reduce the budget for the Watchung Hills Regional High School, after its recent defeat by the voters on April 19th. He said this resolution is on the agenda this evening. Councilman Franklin also announced that the municipal budget will be introduced this evening

2. Police - Councilman Black said Mayor Ellis will report on the recent installation of metal detectors in the Municipal Court.

3. Public Works - Councilman Mobus reported the water company has finished moving the lines for the Washinton Rock Road/Rock Road East project and Pave King is expected to resume the reconstruction project on Monday. He advised residents to keep in tune to the website or Channel 12 for detour information.

4. Buildings and Public Affairs

Public Affairs - Councilman Harding announced the Environmental Commission has completed and submitted the Forest Management Plan for review by the governing body. He reported that the Board of Health is anxiously waiting for the resident e-mail program to begin, and Mrs. Fellin advised him that it is up and being tested. She said residents will soon be able to register through the website.

Buildings - In Councilman Pote's absence, Councilman Mobus reported that the Buildings and Grounds Committee has met with the heating company to discuss the replacement of the Library's HVAC system which should be underway shortly. Mayor Ellis noted that the replacement of this system is being made possible as a result of a grant.

5. Fire - Councilman Harding reported that the Department responded to 22 calls during the month of April.

6. Laws/Ordinances, and Recreation - Councilwoman Joren said the Laws and Ordinance Committee is waiting for the revision to the Land Use Ordinance which they should have shortly. She said they will need to review this and it will take some time. In regard to Recreation, Councilwoman Joren said the Committee is busy working on the summer programs and the upcoming Community Picnic which will be held on May 29th, with a rain date of May 30th, between noon and 3 PM.

REPORTS - OTHER:

7. Engineer - Councilman Mobus said the Engineering Department has been very busy, as there is a lot going on in the Borough.

8. Attorney - Mr. Cruz announced that he had two items for discussion in Executive Session.

9. Administrator - Mrs. Fellin said she attended a JIF insurance meeting earlier this day and reported they are preparing guidelines for unwarranted use of the internet in the office. She said after the budget is introduced tonight, copies will be available for review in the Somerset County Library, the Watchung Library and Borough Hall. Mayor Ellis said that due to the recent events in Atlanta and here in our own Municipal Court when Watchung's Judge was attacked, there was an urgent need to increase security and metal detectors have been installed. He said also, cameras will be installed in the hallway so the Court Administrator and her Assistant will have full view of who is walking into the building, explaining that right now they can only see the person when they are standing directly in front of the window.

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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:
April 7th, and April 28, 2005

Approval of the following Borough Reports:
Historical Committee - Minutes of November 10th, December 8, 2004 and March 9, 2005
Recreation Minutes - April 6, 2005
Tax Collector - April, 2005
Police - April, 2005

- #62 - Douglas Stahl, All School Council V- President 4/20/05 Thanking Mayor & Council for their assistance in making *Big Hearts, Big Strides Walk for Chris Baldowski* a success
c: M & C
- #63 - Watchung Board of Education 5/3/05 Approving Recreation Commission's request to reconfigure Scotti Field and upgrade the PA address system, with conditions c: M & C, LBF, MB
- #64 - Marc Zampella 4/28/05 Voicing his concerns re: potholes on Washington Rock Road
c: M & C, LBF, CG, Eng.
- #65 - Township of Cranford 5/5/05 Resolution asking for support of "Christopher's Law"
c: M & C, LBF
- #66 - Judge Richard Sasso 5/6/05 Comments regarding the 2005 Annual visitation to Watchung Municipal Court c: M & C

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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 Mobus.

- R1:5/12/05 Cancel Outstanding Checks in Bail Account, Fines and Costs Account
- R2: Authorize Acceptance of Unpaid Sewer User and Connection Fees - Block 2.03, Lot 18
- R3: Authorize Revocable License Agreement for encroachment structures on a Sanitary
- R4: Authorize Budget Submittal in Excess of Time Required by Statute
- R5: Requesting Congress appropriate monies for Green Brook Flood Control Project in their 2006 Budget
- R6: Purchases Over \$2,000. - G-Tech
- R7: Authorize Revocable License Agreement for placement of utilities underground on a Sanitary Sewer Easement - Block 41.01, Lot 9

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NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Introduction of Ordinance OR:05/03 entitled "ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK"

Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered. Mrs. Fellin explained that the cap on the budget is 2 ½ % and this Ordinance gives the Borough the authorization to go to 3 1/2% with any surplus going into a “cap bank” which can be saved for two years. Councilwoman Joren 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 Mobus and unanimously carried on roll call. Public hearing will be held on May 26, 2005.

Introduction of 2005 Municipal Budget - Councilman Franklin moved that this resolution be adopted on first reading, and the Clerk be directed to publish the Budget as required by law. Councilman Black seconded the motion and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Franklin, Mobus, Harding, and Joren, “Yes”. Mrs. Fellin announced the public hearing will be held on June 9, 2005.

Introduction of OR:05/04 entitled “AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG CH.38 THEREOF, “SALARIES,” AND TO FIX AND DETERMINE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES AND COMPENSATIONS TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES” Councilwoman Joren moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered. Councilwoman Joren 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 will be held on May 26, 2005.

Resolution Certifying the General Fund Tax Levy for the Watchung Hills Regional Board of Education for the 2005 and 2006 School Year, by the Governing Body of Watchung, Somerset, State of New Jersey. Councilman Franklin commented that this was not an easy task for anyone involved and the kids were everyone’s main concern. He said although some people wanted more, and some wanted less, this reduction was a consensus of all three towns. Mayor Ellis said that it is by law that this responsibility fell to the governing body. Mayor Ellis opened the meeting to the public for any questions or comments. Dr. Paul Seelig, Reynolds Drive, said his concern was that something would be missing on an educational level and for the future. He referred to a recent plea on the school’s website that said cuts to the school’s budget would result in severe and dire consequences. Mayor Ellis said the Board of Education does not have to make the cuts where the governing body recommended and he believes the staff will rise to the occasion. Mayor Ellis explained that the Board of Education put the budget together in 4 months, and the governing bodies had three weeks to review it and make recommendations. Councilman Franklin said he would like to make something clear, that all new hires were not eliminated, he believed there were still 5 left.

Proclamation: Volunteer Rescue Squad Month

Mayor Ellis read the following proclamation into the minutes (copy attached) and said he can’t say enough about our volunteers. He reminded residents that the Rescue Squad has their signs out and are looking for donations.

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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>
R8:5/12/05	Introduction of OR:05/03 - Establish a “Cap” Bank	Joren	Mobus
R9:	Introduction of 2005 Municipal Budget	Franklin	Black
R10:	Introduction of OR:05/04 - Set Minimum/Maximum Salaries for Employees	Joren	Black
R11:	Certify General Fund 2005 - 2006 Tax Levy-Watchung Hills Regional Board of Education	Franklin	Black
R12:	Executive Session - Litigation: Olive vs Borough of Watchung Property Acquisition: Block 3.01, Lot 29	Black	Franklin

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PUBLIC PORTION

Lynda Goldschein, Sherwood Drive, asked about the status of the fence ordinance and Mayor Ellis said it was still being reviewed. Mrs. Goldschein asked if the Borough would be going forward with the net and bolt method of deer reduction, as a commitment to the company should be made by Au-

gust or they will be too booked to work in Watchung. Mayor Ellis said that the Borough has been in touch with the vendor, however, the governing body has not yet voted to go forward with this method. Mrs. Goldschein said she would like to sign up for the Borough's e-mail program and asked how to do that. Mayor Ellis explained that although it is still in the testing stage, she should check the website and there will be a link to click on.

Councilman Black offered R12:5/12/05 authorizing an executive session, with a second by Councilman Franklin and unanimously approved. Upon return to Regular session at 9:27 PM, with the exception of Councilman Harding, all members previously present were again in attendance.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 P.M. to the call of the Chair or the next regularly scheduled meeting of May 26, 2005 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco
Deputy Clerk