

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
AUGUST 16, 2018 - 7:30 P.M.**

**OPENING STATEMENT:** Mayor Stephen K. Pote called the meeting to order at 7:34 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 MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD.**

**ROLL CALL**

Gibbs [ P ] Black [ P ] Nehls [ P ] Mobus [ P ] Sopko [ P ] Alberto [ P ]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, CFO William Hance, Engineer Tom Herits, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance

There were 30 members of the public present.

Prior to the reports of standing committees, Mayor Pote requested Attorney Joseph Baumann of the McManimon, Scotland, and Baumann law firm come forward on behalf of resident Mr. Gulshan Chhabra. Mr. Baumann explained that after meeting with members of the Council Sub-Committee to discuss Mr. Chhabra's offer to build a library for Watchung and the request that a hotel be built on the site the library is currently on, it was determined by all that this plan is not feasible as it is not acceptable to the Borough. The Council Sub-Committee said they could not support a large hotel on that site and suggested Mr. Chhabra look at other alternatives. Council President Gibbs thanked Mr. Baumann and Mr. Chhabra and said there will be continuing discussions on the concept but the location was problematic.

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**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Mobus reported there is an Ordinance for the electric sign on the Agenda tonight for Public Hearing and once approved it will take 4-6 weeks to install. He also reported talks are continuing with the Exempt Firemen and all are very optimistic for a plan and agreement with them for a Community Center. Councilman Mobus said R5 extends the date tax payments are due to September 5, 2018.
2. Police – Council President Gibbs reported the Police Committee met on August 7<sup>th</sup> and discussed shared services for communications for dispatch and 911 equipment and hand-held radios with Warren. However, the Borough would still require some equipment so there would be no savings. The cost for new equipment with, dual band which will be required, is approximately \$500,000. The Committee will recommend this be put in the budget next year. Council President Gibbs also said discussions with the County for shared dispatch services are ongoing. He also said the Committee discussed disciplinary matters which are scheduled for September/October and the Deer Management program to make sure all the rules and regulations will be followed. Council President Gibbs also said additional security measures are being instituted in the schools.

Mayor Pote questioned if the cost for the radio equipment is all Capital Funds. Mr. Atkins said Chief Cina had this in his Capital Budget request for the last 2 years.

3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Councilman Nehls reported the Public Works Department continues to do pothole repairs and catch basins are being repaired on the roads that are scheduled for milling and paving. The Department also continues to deliver wood chips, clean catch basins and stone and debris from intersections after the heavy rains; new street signs were installed at Knollwood and Deer Run and dead trees removed on Pine Lane, Rock Avenue and Valley Drive. Councilman Nehls also reported the Department of Public Works dug the trenches for the new electric charging station, and Bold Electric is doing the wiring. All fountains have been cleaned and are working, branches have been trimmed back on roads scheduled for overlay; and the air conditioning unit at Police Headquarters was repaired.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental – Councilwoman Alberto reported a meeting is scheduled for August 27<sup>th</sup>.

Recreation – Councilman Mobus reported the trip to see the Yankees on Sunday had 34 people attend, it was a nice day and the Yankees won! He also reported that tomorrow, August 17<sup>th</sup> is the last day of camp. He said the camp was well attended and there were many trips due to the many rain days. The Director and Counselors, and Brook Hill Swim Club were all great.

Historical – Councilman Mobus said the Commission received a \$4,000 matching Grant for the Mural. The first phase will be \$8,000. The task now is to find a place to install it. Seth Alexander is looking at possibly two locations, behind the dais in the Council Chambers, which would require removing some of the trim and elevating ceiling tiles; and the second location would be at the Watchung Hills Regional High School outside the auditorium area.

Board of Health – Next meeting is scheduled for September 19, 2018

5. Fire – Councilman Black reported the statistics for June and the top responders for the Month of July were Adrian Klige, Gary Greves, Don Scotti, and Jonathan Erber. He also reported that he is still working on reducing the cost of the new fire truck and they will be contributing something toward the purchase. Councilman Black said the hood is up but there is further work to be completed on this. Engineer Tom Herits said the suppression system needs additional plumbing and electrical which was not part of the original bid. There is a change order for Cypreco to do that work.
6. Laws/Ordinances – Councilman Black reported Resolution #11 on the Agenda this evening will be tabled for further review.

#### **REPORTS – OTHER:**

7. Engineer- Tom Herits reported the co-op road projects with Tilcon are behind schedule due to the amount of rain we have been having; he said once he receives an answer from Tilcon the Council will be the first to know. He said Weldon also confirmed all contractors are behind schedule. Mr. Atkins said Tilcon as a co-op contractor gave the Borough very good prices and Weldon confirmed they are having many issues with materials. Mr. Herits said he received the High Tor Drive plans this morning and he will review them and get them to Michelle and will go out to bid shortly. He also reported the trees have been trimmed around the area for the salt storage shed, Weldon is storing bin blocks for us and the area will be graded. Mr. Herits reported on Ross Pond and he thinks the only thing the Borough will have to do is notify people who surround the Pond and do an advertisement in the newspapers. He further explained if there are no comments to the Department of Environmental Protection, they will allow the Borough to do the work without requiring a permit. Mr. Herits said the DOT will be accepting applications in October for 2018 and requested the Council's input on roads that should be done so he can bundle them in the application. He said he does not want to be the one who decides which roads should be done. Councilman Nehls asked Mr. Herits to inform the schools as soon as possible regarding the road project timeline and Mr. Herits said they always schedule a pre-con meeting with the schools before the projects commence.

Mayor Pote asked about the 9/11 pavers and Councilman Mobus said they are waiting for Seth Alexander's plan and he hopes to have it by the next Council meeting. They should have a rendering but it won't be done this year. Mr. Herits said it is important to get the plan and he will try his best to get it done by September 11<sup>th</sup>.

8. Police Chief – No report was submitted.
9. Fire Department – Previously reported by Councilman Black.
10. Rescue Squad – No report.
11. Emergency Management – Mr. Atkins reported Gary Greves has been at County meetings this past month and he is also working with a person to assist with modifying the OEM plan. Mr. Atkins also said getting the electronic sign is a top priority and Mayor Pote was the major advocate for this. Mr. Herits reported that all annexes and public outreach is finished and accepted by the County.
12. Attorney – Albert Cruz reported Mayor Pote, Councilwoman Alberto, and Administrator Tom Atkins attended the August 9, 2018 Settlement and Fair Share Housing hearing. There were no public in attendance. Mr. Cruz said that Judge Miller approved the plan and the next step will be to begin implementation on the agreement. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on August 21, 2018 and hold the public hearing and notice to determine if the Bonnie Burn Road property is an area in need of re-development. Mr. Cruz also reported on the August 2, 2018 Judge Miller held a Case Management Conference on the Keep a Library in Watchung vs The Borough of Watchung Litigation. The purpose of this Conference was to schedule events that are to take place. Part of what was discussed were agreements reached between the Defendants and the Plaintiffs in regards to exhibits to be submitted to the Court and discovery to be exchanged with the Plaintiffs by September 1, 2018. There will be no answers to the interrogatories by the Defendants at this time. Mr. Cruz said the Judge set a trial briefing schedule for the Plaintiffs to submit their initial Brief on October 19, 2018 and the Defendants to reply on November 20, 2018 with the Plaintiffs following with a reply on the Brief December 5, 2018. Thereafter, the case will be scheduled for a trial and the Judge will hold another Case Management Conference to see the progress that is being made at the beginning of September.

Mayor Pote thanked Mr. Cruz for his help with the Fair Share Housing hearing and said Marcia Shiffman did an excellent job summarizing the situation and representing Watchung. He said although Judge Miller is very fair and cordial he does expect progress.

13. Clerk – Ms. DeRocco reported the newsletters are about ready to go to print and should be going out in the next week or so.

14. Administrator – Mr. Atkins commented on the Affordable Housing session on August 9<sup>th</sup>. He thought Mr. Cruz and Ms. Shiffman did an excellent job and he thanked Mayor Pote and Councilwoman Alberto for being there to observe and see what is happening and participate first hand in the process.

Mayor Pote asked Mr. Hance if he had a report and Mr. Hance informed the Council the electric charging station should be ready in about one week.

Mayor Pote said Debra Joren is being appointed this evening to the Planning Board as an Alternate #1, Class IV member.

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**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

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Virginia Hartmann, Ellisen Road, said she disagrees with the purchase of the electric sign especially at a cost of \$25,000 and she questioned how much a wooden sign would cost. Mayor Pote responded this sign will pay for itself by allowing the Borough to remotely change the information which is extremely important to have that ability in any emergency. Ms. Hartmann thanked the Mayor for his explanation. Mayor Pote added that it was a top priority of the OEM team.

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, said the location for the sign is not a good spot. Mayor Pote said the Council would welcome any input on locations. Ms. Goldshein said this is the first time she has heard Councilman Nehls mention the number of service calls and work orders the Public Works Department does and asked what the difference is between the two. Councilman Nehls said he has always reported both and said a service call is for a particular call do something and a work order would be for storm drain repairs, etc. Ms. Goldshein said she had filled out an OPRA request for work orders and she said a lot of the work orders from April to June had to do with the \$70.00 bulk pick up and wanted to know why since this is done by an outside company. Mr. Atkins said Councilman Nehls should ask Mr. Burns about the bulky waste information. Ms. Goldshein said there should be some type of annual maintenance schedule for the Public Works Department.

Keith Balla, Shawnee Drive, asked if there is a cost impact report prepared for the proposed development on Bonnie Burn Road that details the additional equipment for fire, police staff, road work and the school impact that would cost the Borough? Mr. Cruz explained at this time what is in front of the Planning Board is to determine whether or not the property is declared an area in need of re-development, which is the first step in the process. Once that is determined then the items Mr. Balla questioned would be finalized and complete and include the details. Councilman Black also said the property is about 41 acres and approximately 27% of that is considered wetlands and cannot be used for buildings and there are also set backs.

Rachel Funcheon, Cedar Road, questioned why the R11 resolution is being tabled this evening and wanted to know what the issue is. Ms. Funcheon said one year ago the Environmental Commission voted to increase the fee for the tree bank to deter people from just cutting trees down. Councilman Black said it is a cost factor that is being addressed, the Council wants to make sure residents don't just decide to cut a tree down without a permit because of the cost for a permit. She said this is not a fine, the money goes into the tree bank. Councilwoman Alberto asked if Councilman Black would come to the next Environmental meeting and he said he would attend.

Sandy Fechtner, Cardinal Drive, said in reviewing the Resolutions which were passed at the last Council meeting regarding the library that it is her understanding the Borough will not be maintaining a physical branch of the library. However, Ms. Fechtner asked that the Council make sure there is a budget line next year to at least paint the building and make sure there are funds for maintenance.

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, asked what will happen if the Planning Board denies that the Bonnie Burn property is in need of re-development. Mr. Cruz said it is not if it needs re-development, it is to determine if it is an area in need of re-development and meets the criteria of the re-development Statute. If the Planning Board makes that determination it will then refer to the Council and they would have to review and either agree or disagree. If the Council agrees then a redevelopment plan is prepared. If the Planning Board does not agree that it is an area in need of re-development then we would have to revisit what the plan is.

Ms. Goldshein said in regard to the original tree ordinance, the Commission felt penalties were not enough to deter builders from cutting down all the trees in a development. Mr. Cruz explained that fines are controlled by State law not the municipality and the fines are maximum. Fines for violations are set by the Judge.

Ms. Funcheon said the \$200.00 is not a fine, it is the replacement fee per tree if the person does not opt to plant, they can pay into the tree bank.

Margaret Ellis, Valley Road, said if the Borough got matching funds for a new library it would be a great location for the Mural.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A Public Hearing on Ordinance OR:18/14 – entitled “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE INSTALLATION AND ACQUISITION OF AN ELECTRONIC SIGN AT BOROUGH HALL FOR THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND APPROPRIATING \$25,000.00 THEREFOR FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND.” was held.

Councilman Black moved a public hearing be held with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, Alberto “aye.”

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, suggested the Council consider a different location for the sign.

Margaret Ellis, Valley Road, questioned why the cost is so high. Councilman Mobus responded that the Borough had received several quotes and all were much higher.

With no other public wishing to be heard Councilman Black closed the public hearing and moved the following resolution:

R1:08/16/18 Adoption of Ordinance OR:18/14 – Purchase of Electronic Sign

Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, Alberto “aye.”

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**NEW BUSINESS**

**CONSENT AGENDA:** The Consent Agenda Items listed below were unanimously accepted, as amended through item #26 following a motion by Council President Gibbs and a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, Alberto, “aye.”

Prior to the vote Council President Gibbs asked for item #27 to be pulled for separate vote .

Approval of the following Council minutes:

- July 19, 2018 – Regular Session
- July 19, 2018 – Special Meeting and Executive Session

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

- Planning Board Minutes – June 19, 2018
- Building Department Report - July 2018
- Recreation Minutes - June 2018
- Bd. of Adjustment Minutes – July 12, 2018

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

- #25 - Township of Bridgewater 7/23/18 Notice of Adoption on July 16, 2018 of Land Use Amendment Ordinance No 18-12 Entitled “An Ordinance of the Township of Bridgewater Amending Section 126-349, Cluster Development, to Comply with the Recommendations of the Bridgewater Township Planning Board Pursuant to a Periodic Examination Report to Bring Development Regulations in Harmony with the 1900 Master Plan c: M & C, TEA, Pl. Bd.
- #26- Township of Green Brook 7/30/18 Notice of Public Hearing and Re-Adoption due to procedural clarification – Ordinance 2018-842 – “An Ordinance to Adopt an Affordable Housing Ordinance Known as the AHD 2 District” c: M & C, TEA, Pl. Bd.

Prior to the motion for #27 Council President Gibbs recused himself and stepped down from the dais.

Councilman Nehls moved to accept Item#27 with a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, Alberto, "aye."

#27- PSE&G 5/21/18 Notice of (4) four Public Hearings: Change in the Statewide Electric and Gas Permanent Universal Service Fund Program Factors; Change in Green Programs & Cost Recovery Charges; Changes in Electric Solar Pilot Recovery Charges & Loan Programs; and Annual BGSS Commodity Charge Filing for Residential Customers c: M & C, TEA, Post

Council President Gibbs returned to the dais after the vote was completed.

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**CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS**

Council President Gibbs moved the following resolutions as amended with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, Alberto, "aye."

?? Prior to the Vote Councilman Mobus requested R10 be tabled for further discussion.

R2:08/16/18 Purchases Over \$2,000 – L-3 Communications Mobile-Vision Inc. (PD- Light Package for new vehicle)

- CSM (PD-ToughBook Docks)
Applied Concepts, Inc. ( Radar System)
Lawmen Supply CO. of N.J. ( PD – Ammo, Supplies)
Somerset County Clerk (Clk. – Primary Ballot Printing)
Gates Flag & Banner (M&C – Banners for Light Poles)

- R3: Authorizing Revocable License Agreement – 404 Johnston Drive
R4: Appointment to Traffic and Beautification Commission – Gail Bennett Tafaro O'Donnell
R5: Authorize Extension of Grace Period to September 4, 2018 – 2018 3rd Qtr. Tax Payments
R6: Insertion of Special Items of Revenue / Chapter 159 – Alcohol Education Grant
Somerset County Historic Grant
Clean Communities Grant
R7: Purchase Over \$2,000 - Materials Conservation
R8: Appointment of PT Building Maintenance Worker – Anthony Nappe
R9: Authorize Tax Collector to Cancel Curb Assessment – 30 Lakeview Terrace
R10: ~~Authorize Forest Health Evaluation – Raritan Valley Community College~~ TABLED

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**NON CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilman Black requested this Ordinance/Resolution be tabled for further discussion.

Introduction of Ordinance OR:18/15 entitled: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING SECTION 24-6 ENTITLED "APPLICATION AND TREE REMOVAL/REPLACEMENT" OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG THROUGH THE AMENDMENT OF PARAGRAPH (4) OF SUBSECTION (B) ENTITLED "TREE REMOVAL/REPLACEMENT PLAN: GENERAL REGULATIONS."** Public Hearing to be held on September 6, 2018.

~~R11:08/16/18 Introduction of OR:18/15 – Amend Code / Increase Tree Replacement/Removal Fee~~ TABLED

It was suggested that Councilman Black and Councilwoman Alberto meet with members of the Environmental Committee to further discuss this Ordinance.

Councilman Mobus moved the following resolution with a second by Councilman Black and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Gibbs, Black, Nehls, Mobus, Sopko, Alberto, "aye."

R12:08/16/18 Payment of Bills

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**PUBLIC PORTION-GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Jennifer Pote, Wildwood Terrace, said tomorrow is the last day to get a Referendum on the Ballot – why not put it on and prove us wrong? Its non-binding and the Council has nothing to lose.

Mike Colucci, Johanna Lane, said it is a bad mistake to close the Library. He said libraries are an institution of learning, why would you want to close it. If the Borough is going to spend any kind of money this would be the place to spend it.

Margaret Ellis, Valley Road, said she seconds Ms. Pote's remarks and put the referendum on the ballot and use the one the coalition wrote.

Lindsay Goodloe, Upper Drive, suggested the Council pay more attention to the residents and have a referendum on the ballot in November. Ms. Goodloe then read a letter from Angela Della Ventura.

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, asked if the Councilmembers running for re-election will be participating in the debate being held by the League of Women Voters on October 11<sup>th</sup>. She said the Democratic candidates will be attending. Councilmen Mobus and Black and Councilwoman Alberto all responded they would not be attending.

Ms. Goldshein then said that Camp Endeavor is in terrible condition and said Green Acres said the Borough has thirty days to come up with a plan and there will be money available in the fall if we do have a plan. She said we must clean the property up.

Mayor Pote asked if this would be a grant through the Park Commission? Mr. Herits said it would be through the Department of Environmental Protection. Council President Gibbs suggested the Environmental Commission should take this up and ask Mr. Herits to look into grant monies.

Mr. Atkins said he has been trying to reach Ms. Patterson who is Green Acres representative for Somerset County about Camp Endeavor. He said we are concerned about the property.

Council President Gibbs asked if the Borough has received a notice of violation and Mr. Atkins said there has been no written violation. Council President Gibbs said without a written notice this cannot be brought to the Environmental Commission.

Mr. Cruz said to contact the person in administration and the Department of Environmental Protection representative. There is no formal notice.

Hans Juette, Elsinore Drive, asked why a referendum is bad and why closing the library is a good thing. He also said real estate is selling under assessed values. Mr. Cruz explained that assessment value and market value are two different items. He also explained that assessment is the responsibility of the Tax Assessor and not the Council. Mr. Hance said the ratio is 98% assessed value to market value.

Paul Fiorello, Washington Drive, said there is growth in housing – people want to live where there are available amenities locally. Other towns are adding libraries, community centers, etc. The Council should look long term and make Watchung attractive to buyers.

Victor Garber, Scott Drive, said he is still frustrated and Council should look at the facts, and asked why they are not supportive of a referendum.

Tom Franklin, Wildwood Terrace, asked if it is the Council's intention to divert funds to go toward improving athletic facilities? Council said no to this question. Mr. Franklin said the cost to residents to build a library would be approximately \$72 per household annually.

Virginia Hartmann, Ellisen Road, asked the Council for an answer why they will not have a referendum. Councilman Mobus said he is in favor of a referendum.

Mr. Cruz explained to the audience that the public comment section should be closed and the matter can then be discussed by the Council.

Victor Garbor, Scott Drive, asked if there was a gag order and if not, then why not answer the question.

Mr. Cruz again reiterated there could be discussion among the Council once the public comment is closed.

Virginia Hartman then questioned how the Council would discuss this and was told they could discuss in open session among themselves if they chose to do so.

Patricia Dunner, Johnston Drive, thanked the Council for not allowing a hotel in the location where the library is but said we still need a library in town. She asked if there are any development plans for that location or any thoughts. She also said the Council should discuss in public what their decisions are regarding the library.

Lynda Goldshein, Sherwood Drive, asked Mr. Herits about the pond he mentioned in his report. Mr. Herits said it is referred to as Ross Pond located off Washington Drive. He said the outlet failed and the Department of Environmental Protection has ordered the Borough to eliminate it.

At this point the public portion was closed.

Mayor Pote said we are at another crossroads tonight and decisions need to be made on going forward on how to motivate the Council to understand what residents want. He said a non-binding referendum should be put on the ballot by tomorrow. He said there is pressure from the residents with petitions and also hundreds of emails which tell him most residents want a library, noting that if we do not have a facility in Watchung the Borough will continue to pay the County in excess of \$800,000 per year for library services,

Councilman Black said he is the liaison for the Library Advisory Committee and he has passed on to them that the Borough has been negotiating and there are mechanisms in place as we are trying to create a facility at the Exempt Hall, something that would be a multipurpose facility to include a library and community center. He said this is a great site and is hoping this will happen soon. Councilman Black also said it is not the intention to close down the library where it is located now until another facility is established.

Councilman Nehls said he has always been a proponent of shared services, and with Warren we can share their Library. He said he has been saying this for a long time. He is not in favor of a referendum.

Council President Gibbs said he is not in favor of a referendum especially at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour with a question that he has not seen nor been able to look at to understand what the impacts to the residents who are going to read it on election day and material that would be created and mailed out to residents on what the yes or no vote means. He does not like it being dropped on him at the last second and the decision of the Council was to move forward even though he did not agree with it. The Council was to move forward with solutions to mitigate the loss of library but to read a potential statement at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour is inappropriate and does not give anyone the chance to understand the impacts.

Councilman Black said comments made by residents about the Republican Chairman were not accurate. He said the comments he has made this evening are not always in agreement with all Council members and he does feel the plan that he suggested this evening is a viable one and would help the community to move forward.

Councilman Mobus said he agrees with Council President Gibbs that it is difficult to do a referendum for tomorrow but he would have been in favor of one if it were not so late. He also feels utilizing the Exempt Hall is a smart thing for the town to do. The building would be maintained and could build a community center. Councilman Mobus said he is not in favor of spending money on a new library when we can share with Warren.

Councilman Sopko agrees with the Council comments to get the Exempt Hall done.

Councilman Black asked if he is correct that the Borough would not be closing the current library until there is another location and Councilman Mobus said that would be correct and also said not until adequate space is available in the Exempt Hall.

Councilwoman Alberto said she is not in favor of a referendum but is in favor of shared services. She also said money should go toward a community center for all residents and a lot of the funding could go toward the Ness Property for bike trails, walking trails and beautifying our town. She said all the current services at the library could be at a beautiful renovated community center.

Councilman Black questioned the concept of a hotel and where this will go from here, what would be the next step for Mr. Chhabra. Council President Gibbs said the sub-committee has asked Mr. Chhabra to go back to explore a different proposal which he would like to present that would include a free library to the municipality. Both Mr. Chhabra and his attorney have agreed to do that and the sub-committee is hopeful that they will come back with a plan. Councilman Black asked if they would be exploring other sites? Council President Gibbs explained they have asked Mr. Chhabra to explore other types of construction he might propose at the circle in line with the character of the community at that site in particular. The sub-committee did not feel a five story, one hundred twenty room hotel fit the character of our community.

He said it is not a negative comment against Mr. Chhabra. If an alternate proposal is presented for that location on the circle or if Mr. Chhabra identifies another site in Watchung that is practical for the Borough to consider than the sub-committee is more than willing to entertain and further discuss any subsequent proposal he would present. Councilman Black asked if there is any time line? Council President Gibbs said it is now in the hands of Mr. Chhabra and he does understand the desire of the residents who have expressed their desire for a library and has heard arguments from both sides and understands where the Council is in the process. He also said the sub-committee will continue to keep in touch with Mr. Chhabra if he has something of value and interest to the Borough and until that time there is not much for the sub-committee to look at.

Mayor Pote said there is still the issue of the maintenance of the library as it exists today. He also said that sometime in the fall the application template for the State in regards to the matching funding will become available. This will be a very important decision regarding the library, not the Exempt Hall, because the application is for a full library with library services. The Council would have to act very quickly when this application becomes available since it is on a first come first serve basis. He also said if the Council decides not to apply for this it will come with consequences. But if they do decide to apply they need to do it quickly. Councilman Black asked if the Council were to come up with a new rendering for a building would that be enough? Mayor Pote said we already have plans and then we would have to answer a litany of questions on how we will be servicing the community, what the requirements are for a library, what the needs are. All he is saying is this Council needs to be thinking about this now because once the application becomes available all other towns will be applying.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council the meeting was adjourned at 10:13 P.M. to the Call of the Chair and to the next scheduled Council meeting Thursday, September 6, 2018 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

MaryAnn Hance  
Deputy Clerk