

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 2, 2023

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: This meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM and Mayor Ronald Jubin stated the following *“This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. 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 the Annual Meeting Notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, the Star Ledger, posted at Borough Hall and on the Borough’s website. No public comment shall be allowed to be made virtually or accepted in writing and read into the record. All writings received shall be acknowledged and accepted by the Council as regular correspondence. The Borough may broadcast its meetings virtually for public viewing as a courtesy.”*

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG and MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN,
SERVING HOME AND ABROAD**

ROLL CALL

Ead [P] Hayeck [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P]

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamation and encouraged all residents to wear red tomorrow:

❖ National Wear Red Day – American Heart Association

Mayor Jubin informed the public of the new steps taken to improve the flow of council meetings. To further improve and increase transparency, Standing Committee reports would be provided ahead of time and released with the council agenda of the prior month’s activities. The intent here is to allow the public to review items ahead of time and ask any pertinent questions at the council meetings.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Fisher noted the most important discussion was establishing dates for future budget hearings, those dates should be confirmed soon.
2. Police – Councilman Marano reviewed his posted report and commended the Police Department for their operations. He noted Watchung has a top-notch department.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds: Council President Ead advised that the total amount reimbursed in FEMA grants was \$1.2M, there are numerous projects underway that were listed in the committee report released with this agenda. The Borough continues to work on various culverts and roads projects.
4. Public Affairs:

Environmental: Councilwoman Abi-Habib advised that the Commission met on January 23rd where Mayor Jubin administered the oath of offices. In January they held a Styrofoam collection, this was the largest collection thus far, she commended the commission for all their work. The Commission had also requested a recycling bin, which has been approved,

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she thanked DPW for assisting, and advised that it will be DPW who will be maintaining the bin and collecting the Styrofoam and taking over to Long Hill. There are many exciting projects that the Commission is looking forward to in the year, as they are discussed and approved more information will come.

Recreation: Councilman Dahl reported the commission met last night; primary discussions were held on the harvest festival. Last year about 700 people attended, he commended Ms. Monetti for her hard work.

Historical: no report

Board of Health: Councilman Marano reported the Board met on the 18th of January, they held their reorganization meeting and the Board is to bring ideas on the Mayor's wellness campaign for the next meeting.

5. Fire: In addition to the report enclosed with the agenda, Councilman Dahl commended Robert Nagpaul for joining the Fire Department as the newest junior member.
6. Laws/Ordinances: no report

REPORTS OF BOROUGH OFFICERS

7. Engineer: Borough Engineer Jason Cline advised that they are pursuing funding options for the much-needed work on dredging of both lakes, and the sanitary sewer I&I improvements, he spoke about the improvements being planned for the courts at Mobus Field, the work to be done on storm culverts, and informed that they are preparing scopes for projects at the library bridge and the Phillips field bridge.
8. Police Chief – Police Chief Hart reported 1,912 calls occurred in January requiring police response, there were 22 trucks stopped in Hillcrest, and noted speed signs were located on Stirling and Hill Hallow. The sign was previously on a dead-end street, but he noted that if residents called regarding the sign, the department will gladly place the sign back on that road.
9. Fire Chief – Fire Chief Pivinsky advised his departments report was on file and added that there were 19 calls in January. More exciting was the news of the graduates of the fire academy.
10. Fire Official – Fire Official Czuba noted that the month of January had 41 inspections in total, he followed up on compliance issues, and noted smoke alarm carbon monoxide inspections reduced in January, with 3 life hazard use violations occurring.
11. Rescue Squad – Councilman Hayeck reported on their reorganization meeting, in December there were 41 calls, along with new EMTs and Drivers, and congratulated the Rescue Squad for their services.
12. Emergency Management – OEM Coordinator Solon reported that January 27th they conducted the last FEMA call, it has been a long rough road but she thanked Council President Ead for everything. To date we have been approved for federal share funding \$1,251,956.73; will be filing extension for repair

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of culverts, library bridge and Philips field project. Hosted a 4 CERT get together conducted with other municipalities. New CERT class opening up which will begin April 25th

13. Attorney: no report
14. Finance: CFO Hance advised he provided copies of the tax collection report to all, he reminded residents that taxes were due yesterday, there is a grace period through next Friday. He also reported that he has been working on the annual debt statement, copies were also provided in everyone's mailbox; he noted that going back to 2000 the debt ceiling has never been this low.
15. Clerk – Borough Clerk Gil advised that her office received approval from the State's Department of Environmental Protection for reimbursement of radon kits. Yesterday the 3rd quote was received and the office will be moving forward with purchasing 50 radon kits. Once everything is received, we will send out email and social media blasts to our residents to pick up radon kits. These will be on a first come first serve basis, so she encouraged everyone to be sure that they are signed up to receive email announcements from the borough.

She also reported that this year the office was more aggressive with dog license renewals. There were several residents that had not renewed their licenses since 2019 and some that needed to be removed. Emails and renewal letters were sent out; she noted that in 2022 only 152 dog licenses were issued, this year so far the department has renewed 140 licenses. She reminded residents that cat licenses were set to expire on May 31st.
16. Administrator – Administrator Damato mentioned we are partners of the Suburban Municipal Joint Insurance Fund, Watchung was one of only two towns that had no lost time accidents for the year of 2022. He congratulated all Departments on this and thanked staff for doing an excellent job and maintaining a safe work place.
17. Youth Services: no report
18. Planning Board: Met on January 17th, no business conducted.
19. Municipal Alliance: Marano – no report
20. Library Advisory Committee: Met on January 18th, thanked DPW for refreshing the bicentennial room.
21. Traffic and Beautification: Committee met on January 30th the operation pride is April 22nd, poster contest for students, next meeting in March.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, questioned what sidewalk the Committee report was referencing on Valley Road? She also asked for further clarification regarding the Police Officer receiving the County grant. Ms. Goldschein also commented on the electrical system in the Library requiring updates.

Administrator Damato provided further clarification and explained the project must be done in stages.

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DISCUSSION

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Board of Adjustment Annual Report	2022
Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	December 8, 2022
Board of Health Meeting Minutes	November 16, 2022
Construction Code Department Monthly Report	January 2023
Engineers Status Report	January 2023
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	December 5, 2022
Fire Prevention Bureau Monthly Report	January 2023
Library Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes	November 16, 2022
Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority Mins.	January 5, 2023
Planning Board Meeting Minutes	December 13, 2022
Police Department Activity Report	January 2023
Mayor and Council Regular Meeting Minutes	November 21, 2022 January 19, 2023
Traffic & Beautification Commission Minutes	December 5, 2022

#1: Notice of Resignation from Brian Levine, Municipal Court Judge, recv'd 1/27/23,
cc: M&C, JD

Motion to Accept above by Council President Ead, Second by Dahl
RC Ead [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Y] Abi- Habib [Y]

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CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R1: Authorizing Purchase Orders over \$2,000 – Everbridge (*PD nixle annual subscription*)
All American Auto Old Bridge (*DPW 2022 ford transit connect*)

R2: Authorizing 2023 Recycling Agreement with Somerset County

R3: Authorizing Appointments to Volunteer Boards and Committees

R4: Waiving Delinquent Interest of Various Properties for Tax Appeal Judgements

Motion to Adopt above by Council President Ead, Second by Hayeck

RC Ead [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Y] Abi- Habib [Y]

NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R5: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application for Mr. B's Fishing Sports Camp dba B-Active, LLC for Use of Watchung and/or Best Lake from June 19, 2023 through August 25, 2023

Council President Ead & Council Member Dahl thanked Mr. B for running such a wonderful program.

Motion to Adopt above by Council Member Abi-Habib, Second by Hayeck

RC Ead [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Y] Abi- Habib [Y]

R6: Designating Watchung a Stigma Free Community

Motion to Adopt above by Council Member Marano, Second by Hayeck

RC Ead [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Y] Abi- Habib [Y]

R7: Authorizing and Accepting Grant from NJ Dept. of Public Safety for the "Safe and Secure Grant" in the amount of \$32,400

Motion to Adopt above by Council Member Marano, Second by Hayeck

RC Ead [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Y] Abi- Habib [Y]

R9: Awarding Bid Contract to CMS Construction, Inc. for Repairs to Various Storm Culverts

Motion to Adopt above by Council President Ead, Second by Hayeck

RC Ead [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Y] Abi- Habib [Y]

R10: Authorizing and Accepting Temporary Construction License Agreements from Private Property Owners for Repairs to Various Storm Culverts Through FEMA Funding

Motion to Adopt above by Council President Ead, Second by Hayeck

RC Ead [Y] Hayeck [Y] Dahl [Y] Fischer [Y] Marano [Y] Abi- Habib [Y]

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PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

- 1) Stewart Homer, asked for further clarification on the definition of stigma free.

Administrator Damato provided further clarification on what it takes to be a stigma free town.

- 2) Linda Goldschein, asked for further clarification on R9 and questioned if we took the lowest bidder? She also requested the property survey for Camp Endeavor and was disappointed to see the use of plastic water bottles on the dais.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business, the meeting ended to the Call of the Chair at 8:34 P.M. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo
Deputy Borough Clerk
Approved: February 16, 2023