

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

MARCH 16, 2023

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: Mayor Ronald Jubin called the meeting to order at 7:31 P.M. and 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 [Absent] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P]

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamation onto the record.

- ❖ Woman’s History Month
- ❖ Irish American Heritage Month

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

No comments

DISCUSSIONS

- ❖ Food Drive Challenge

Council President Ead thanked Councilman Fischer for bringing this challenge to the Borough. She proceeded to speak about the Food Challenge and noted that it was a friendly competition between Watchung, Millstone, Rocky Hill, Peapack Gladstone, Greenbrook, and South Boundbrook. The winner is determined by the actual weight of the food collected and tallied by Foodstock, and the program kicks off March 20th through April 28th. She advised that Watchung will up the stakes and the winner will provide the other municipalities with t-shirts for Mayor and Council to wear for one Council meeting stating “Watchung Won the Food Bank Challenge!”

Councilman Fischer noted that he has worked in the past with prior organizations that have donated to the Somerset County Food Bank and presented them with a check. He advocated for more residents to donate as there is a serious need in Somerset County.

Councilman Marano inquired if there is a way for residents in-need to remain anonymous and receive assistance. Council President Ead noted that OEM is working on a way to help out residents

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in need and confidentially drop off food. She advised that anyone in need of food could always call the Borough and we would certainly attempt to provide assistance.

❖ **Painting of Snack Shack at Phillips Field**

Council President Ead spoke of all the upcoming improvements to the Snack Shack in addition to the scheduled painting. She noted that the Borough is working with the Little League and the Board of Education to move this forward. She asked that anyone wishing to volunteer to help fix the Shake Shack could contact Councilman Dahl.

Councilman Dahl advocated for the need to repair the snack shack and noted that we could not let it deteriorate again.

❖ **Proposed Banners by Traffic & Beautification Commission**

Council President Ead advised that the Traffic and Beautification Commission intends on purchasing additional American Flag banners that would go in between some of the banners of Watchung Veterans.

❖ **Welcome to Watchung Signs**

Council President Ead noted that all Welcome to Watchung signs would have the “Stigma Free” sign added to them as part of the initiative.

She also advised that new signs would go up on both Lakes that would mirror the Welcome to Watchung signs.

❖ **Women’s History Event**

Councilwoman Abi-Habib spoke about the first upcoming women’s event and briefly mentioned the 4 women who would be honored at the event on Monday, March 27th at the Watchung Arts Center: Jeralyn Lawrence who is an Attorney and President of the NJ State Bar Association, Anita Nappa who has been a Dispatcher for Watchung Police for 30 years, Marianne Candiloros who is a woman owned business enterprise, D’Amico Certified Reporting, and Lisa D. Gambacorto who is the Directress of Mount Saint Mary Academy. She invited all to come out and join in the celebration on March 27th at 7pm in the Watchung Arts Center.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Animal Control Solutions Monthly Report

February 2023

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Board of Adjustment Annual Report	Annual Report / 2022
CERT Meeting Minutes	February 28, 2023
Engineers Monthly Status Report	February 2023
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	January 23, 2023
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	March 2, 2023
Traffic & Beautification Commission Minutes	January 30, 2023

#3: Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission, Notice of Adopted Budget, Resolution 2023-06, recv'd 3/8/23, cc: M&C, JD, WH, BOH

#4: Notice of Resignation from Watchung Library Advisory Committee for B. Leigh, recv'd 3/13/23, cc: M&C, JD

#5: Riparian Restoration Proposal from Environmental Commission, recv'd 3/14/23, cc: M&C, JD

Council President Ead and Mayor Jubin thanked Mr. Leigh for his dedication and service to the Borough. Mayor Jubin also thanked the Environmental Commission for their work last year and asked Volunteers to come out and help this year. He commended the Commission for their proposal on riparian restoration.

Motion to Accept above by Ead/ second by Dahl

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

CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R1: Certifying Compliance with the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964"

R2: Authorizing Bill List

R3: Accepting Donation of 2021 CarMate Trailer for Watchung CERT Team from the NJ Office of Emergency Management

R4: Authorizing Payment of Final Benefits to Casey L. Breese

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ second by Dahl

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

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NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS

R5: Authorizing Appointment of Francesco Taddeo as Municipal Judge to Fill Unexpired Vacancy

Motion to Adopt above by Marano/ second by Ead

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

INTRODUCED ORDINANCE

OR 23/01: “ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK WHEN THE COLA IS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 2.5 PERCENT (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)

R6: Introducing ordinance 23/01 To Exceed the COLA and Establishing a CAP Bank When COLA is Equal to or Less Than 2.5 Percent

Motion to Introduce and Adopt above by Hayeck/ second by Ead

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

R7: [Introduction of 2023 Budget](#)

Hyperlink to Budget - Public Hearing on April 20, 2023

Motion to Adopt above by Fischer/ second by Ead

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

Council President Ead thanked everyone involved in the Budget process for their hard work
Councilman Fischer commented on some details of the Budget including the Municipal Tax Levy percent, Tax Rate and the average house value.

Council President Ead asked CFO Hance to elaborate on the breakdown of the Municipal Budget.

Mayor Jubin commented on the dedicated work on all aspects of the Budget from the Administration and Finance Committee as well as CFO Hance and Administrator Damato.

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

No comments

R8: Authorizing Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters

Motion to Adopt above by Ead / second by Dahl

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

Councilman Fischer read a statement, prepared by Administrator Damato, on the fall of the Silicon Valley and Signature Bank prior to going onto executive session. He also elaborated on the Governmental Unit Deposit Protection Act , GUDPA Program and how it protects our Municipal funds.

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Administrator Damato stated he is 100 percent confident our Municipal funds are safe with the GUDPA Insurance.

Mayor and Council entered Executive Session at approximately 8:19 P.M. and returned to open session at approximately 9:34 P.M.

Motion to return to open Session by Ead / second by Fischer

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

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business, the meeting ended to the Call of the Chair at 9:35 P.M. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, April 6, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo
Deputy Borough Clerk

Approved: April 20, 2023