

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

**JULY 13, 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.*

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG and MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD AND THE FALLEN FIREMEN THAT LOST THEIR LIVES IN A TRAGIC FIRE IN THE CITY OF NEWARK**

**ROLL CALL**

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

**PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamation onto the record.

❖ Social Wellness Month

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Fischer had no further report from what was posted.
2. Police – Councilman Marano mentioned at the last meeting discussions occurred regarding the memorial sign dedicated to fallen officer Malchondeia being approved by the County and ordered, a School Resource Officer in place possibly by September, and finally the Department is looking into purchasing certain cameras for body and car use.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council President Ead stated as noted in her report PSE&G will begin working on the gas line replacement starting on and around July 17<sup>th</sup>. The Borough will get all the exact dates and communicate them to the public going forward. She mentioned this project will be lengthy and run between the hours of 8:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. starting on Hillcrest Road through the fall and most likely into winter. She provided more details on this upcoming project.

Council President Ead also asked for all resident support and patience during the process of all Borough upcoming projects. She advised the Mobus Field improvement project will begin during the last week of July. She mentioned the tennis court area will be renovated to add two pickle ball courts and they are resurfacing two tennis courts. The basketball courts will also undergo repairs and during this time the back of Mobus Field will be closed for about two months.

The 2023 Department of Transportation project is scheduled to begin for early fall and the specific time period will be communicated once confirmed. She provided updates on beautifying the islands around the circle. She reminded residents to dispose of the doggie waste bags properly and to not blow debris or leaves into the catch basins. She mentioned the street sweeper will be coming through

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Watchung over the next two weeks to clear the roads and finally Council President Ead thanked the Public Works Department for all their hard in keeping Watchung beautiful.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental – Mayor Jubin advised the Environmental Minutes have been posted.

Recreation – Councilman Dahl advised the Commission did not meet but thanked Mrs. Monetti for all her hard work and dedication to Watchung.

Historical – Councilman Fischer advised no further report from what was posted.

Board of Health – Councilman Marano advised the Board has not yet met but a meeting is scheduled for next week.

Fire – Councilman Dahl advised no further report from what was posted.

5. Laws/Ordinances – No update provided.

**REPORTS OF BOROUGH OFFICERS**

6. Engineer – Borough Engineer Jason Cline touched on some highlights such as the meeting between the Borough and the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank seeking funding for dredging work, the application has been prepared and filed for the storm water pollution prevention plan, and finally the 2024 Department of Transportation trust fund grant application was submitted and the resolution authorizing the approval is listed on tonight's agenda.

7. Police Chief – Police Chief Anderle reported on the numbers for the month of June. He mentioned the speed enforcement signs are located at Mountain Boulevard, Somerset Street and Stirling Road.

Mayor Jubin inquired on when the cameras will be installed and operational at Mobus Field. Administrator Damato advised we need adequate footing to support the cameras. He mentioned the poles are extra long and have to be installed six to eight feet underground and should be coming in very soon.

8. Fire Chief – No report submitted.

9. Fire Official – No report submitted.

10. Rescue Squad– Written report provided to the Mayor and Council.

11. Emergency Management – OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon reported on last months participation in a required Sate wide Emmit drill. She also reported on an outreach meeting with New Jersey OEM reviewing changes and updates for reimbursement processes moving forward. Lastly, she mentioned the CERT team met and conducted a tabletop exercise practicing the ICS structure and search and rescue. She advised there will be no July or August meeting for CERT.

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Council President Ead thanked Ms. Solon for all her hard work helping with all the additional food pantry donations received. Ms. Solon provided details on the new mobile distribution van targeting families that are food insecure having transportation issues.

12. Attorney – Attorney Sordillo had no report.
13. Finance – CFO Bill Hance reported the auditors are currently reviewing the Boroughs 2022 records and compiling a report. He mentioned Somerset County has certified the tax rate and advised the software company will be loading the rates and new tax bills on Monday. He stated the bills should be available for viewing on Tuesday and there will be an extended grace period provided for residents. Mr. Hance provided an updated report on the overall success of the farmer's market.

Mayor Jubin thanked the Green Team for all their support in organizing the Farmers Market. He also encouraged residents after purchasing their groceries to hang out at the library or stop and enjoy our beautiful lakes.

14. Clerk – Clerk Edith Gil provided updates on the Civic Clerk software and advised the office is still on target for a September release. She said the County Clerks Office reached out and they wish to have mobile hours again this year in Watchung, they are working out dates for October or November at Exempt Hall to offer some of their services to residents. She also mentioned Damaris in the Clerk's Office has been participating in some of the Mayors Wellness webinars and one of the suggestions we are getting ready to implement is a Borough wide survey on what kind of wellness activities residents would like see.
15. Administrator – Administrator Damato provided detailed updates regarding the fire hydrant replacements in town. He stressed the importance of keeping fire safety at its peak. He advised the administration will try to provide as much advance notice of these replacements as possible. He also provided comments on the shared services agreement between Watchung and Somerset County for the street sweeper which provides a big savings for the Borough.
16. Youth Services – Councilman Dahl advised the Commission did not meet.
17. Planning Board – Councilman Dahl stated discussions occurred relating to fence work and upcoming outdoor dining changes. Mayor Jubin advised the Planning Board is proceeding with the Drift Road plan review.
18. Municipal Alliance – Councilman Marano had no report.
19. Library Advisory Committee – Mayor Jubin invited Ms. Miracle, Library Director to say a few words. Ms. Miracle stated she started her career as a Watchung Library Assistant, as Watchung is home for her, and she is looking forward to getting to know everyone. She is looking forward to sharing about all the amazing resources the library offers. She also mentioned the summer reading numbers have surpassed the numbers from last year. She also mentioned as a result of participating in the Farmers market the library received eight new patrons in one day.

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20. Traffic and Beautification – Council President Ead mentioned the Committee met on June 5<sup>th</sup> and discussions occurred relating to beautifying the spruce tree on the village green, improvements and possible fundraising efforts to the gazebos, and upcoming plans to add flowers to the islands. The next meeting is scheduled for September and the exact date will be updated on the Borough website.

**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

- 1) Kristie Hartmann, asked for further clarification on the east end fire house plan. Administrator Damato stated the fire house was placed there by a lease via the Weldon organization. He mentioned Weldon is expanding their quarry and want their property back and need to find another location for the east end fire house.

Ms. Hartmann also asked for further clarification on what the construction term is. Administrator Damato explained the term is for a length of three years. She also inquired on the Valley Road sidewalk project and asked why additional quotes are required.

Administrator Damato explained areas of the sidewalk between Best Lake and the corner at Knightsbridge are dilapidated and very difficult to walk on so that stretch of sidewalk will be replaced.

Ms. Hartmann inquired on the plan for Ness Farm and the costs spent so far on this property.

Administrator Damato stated the Ness Farm property was a contaminated property when purchased and we have been using the escrow fund to remediate the property. The property is now in the process of its final engineering design which is being reviewed by the DEP and once approved remediation will begin.

Engineer Jason Cline explained the use will be for passive recreation purposes but with limitations.

Ms. Hartmann asked for further clarification on the pup fountain.

Administrator Damato advised Clerk Edith Gil has been in touch with the family and waiting for a final decision on the rededication.

Ms. Hartmann again requested a picture of the plaque.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Motion to open Public Hearing – Second Reading on below by Ead, second by Dahl

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

**OR 23/09: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BOROUGH'S ZONING REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 28, LAND DEVELOPMENT, TO REVISE ARTICLE 28-500 REGULATING FENCES AND WALLS**

Public hearing was opened.

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Kristie Hartmann appeared before Council and questioned the Mayors change of heart regarding this Ordinance. Mayor Jubin advised this ordinance is making necessary changes for public safety.

Attorney Sordillo mentioned the above Ordinance arose from comments and concerns coming from the Borough Zoning Officer based on applications filed with inconsistencies.

Motion to close Public Hearing and Adopt above by Ead, second by Fischer

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

Motion to open Public Hearing – Second Reading on below by Ead, second by Dahl

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

**OR 23/11: AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AND AUTHORIZING THE PLACEMENT  
OF A STOP SIGN ON CARRAR DRIVE AT THE INTERSECTION OF GLEN EAGLE  
DRIVE**

Kristie Hartmann appeared before Council and questioned exactly what streets this Ordinance is pertaining to.

Attorney Sordillo provided clarification on the wording of the Ordinance in relation to what streets already have stop signs and which streets are getting stop signs.

Motion to close Public Hearing and Adopt above by Ead, second by Dahl

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

**REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Animal Control Solutions Monthly Report	May 2023 June 2023
Construction Monthly Report	June 2023
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	May 22, 2023
Green Team Meeting Minutes	May 24, 2023
Historical Meeting Minutes	May 17, 2023
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	May 18, 2023 June 1, 2023
Police Department Monthly Activity	June 2023

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Rescue Squad Monthly Report

June 2023

Traffic and Beautification Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2023

**#16:** Watchung Planning Board Review of Proposed Ordinance 23/09, Amending the Borough's Zoning Regulations, Article 28-500, Regulating Fences and Walls; recv'd 6/21/23, cc: M&C, JD.

Motion to Accept above by Ead, second by Dahl

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

**CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

R1: Authorizing Grant Application and Execution for the FY 2024 Road Improvements Project with NJ Department of Transportation

R2: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application for Chai Center for Jewish Life for Use of the Watchung Lake Gazebo

R3: Authorizing Clerk to Issue Raffle Licenses #673 and #674 to The Fathers Club of Mount Mary Academy

R4: Authorizing POs over Allowed Threshold – Setcom Rugged Solutions (*FD-radio apparatus headset*)

R5: Authorizing Bill List

Motion to Adopt above by Ead, second by Marano

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

**NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

R6: Removed

R7: Appointing and Authorizing an Employment Agreement for Scott Anderle as Police Chief Effective August 2023

Mayor and Council Members thanked Captain Anderle for all his dedication to the Borough and welcomed him to his new position. Councilmembers also acknowledged Chief Hart for the time, effort and hard work he has put into the Borough Police Department.

Administrator Damato advised the effective date of the resolution is August 1, 2023. Mayor Jubin announced there would be a swearing in ceremony held at the police station on August 1<sup>st</sup> and he also invited Captain Anderle and his family to attend the next Council meeting in August.

Motion to Adopt above by Marano/ second by Ead

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

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R8: Removed

R10: Awarding a Professional Services Contract to Appraisal Systems, Inc. for Appraisal Inspections and Related Services in Connection with the 2024 Borough-Wide Reassessment Program

Motion to Adopt above by Fischer/ second by Ead

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

R11: Authorizing Consent to the NJDEP Applications for the Properties Identified as Block 7010, Lots 5.01, 5.02, and 5.03 in Connection with the Borough's Easement

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ second by Dahl

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

R12: Authorizing Submission of the NJDEP Application for the Property Identified as Ness Farm, Block 301/ Lot 29

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ second by Dahl

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

Council President Ead provided detailed comments on how important it is to address these environmental concerns and move this project forward.

**INTRODUCED ORDINANCE**

**OR 23/12:** An Ordinance Further Amending OR 23/10, To Fix and Determine Minimum and Maximum Salaries and Compensation to be Paid to Certain Employees

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

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

**PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION**

- 1) Kristie Hartmann, questioned what services David Stires and Associates are providing to the Borough.

Administrator Damato advised Mr. Stires is an Engineer for the Zoning Board.

She also questioned the method in which Officer Corey Spatz was sworn in and questioned the oaths validity.

Mayor Jubin advised he was still learning the process and Attorney Sordillo confirmed that the way the oath of office was administered, although not conventional, was still legally binding and valid.

- 2) Harold Huggins, commented that he had still not heard anything or received a report in two months after addressing the Council regarding his property concerns.

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Engineer Jason Cline advised a summary report was submitted to the Mayor and Council and will be distributed to him as well.

Mr. Huggins spoke his concerns regarding the damage and drainage issues on his property and inquired what could be done. Mayor Jubin assured him the report would be reviewed and someone would get back to him.

Administrator Damato advised Mr. Huggins review the report and suggested he set up a meeting with Borough Engineer Jason Cline. Councilman Marano and Mr. Huggins discussed in detail possible reasons for the drainage issue on his property.

R9: Authorizing Executive Session to Discuss Anticipated Litigation, Contract Negotiations, Attorney-Client Privilege Matters, and Personnel Matters

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ second by Dahl

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

Mayor and Council entered Executive Session at approximately 8:45 P.M and returned to open session at approximately 9:42 P.M.

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

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon there being no further business, the meeting ended to the Call of the Chair at 9:43 P.M. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, August 10, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo  
Deputy Borough Clerk

Approved: 9/7/23