

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

**SEPTEMBER 7, 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**

**ROLL CALL**

Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

**PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamations onto the record.

- ❖ National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month
- ❖ Hispanic Heritage Month

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Administration & Finance – CFO Bill Hance advised the auditors completed the Borough audit and have one comment regarding the court which will be resolved before the end of the year. He also stated the Council approval of the audit and corrective action plan is scheduled to be on the next meeting agenda.
2. Police – Councilman Marano said the School Resource Officer has been a tremendous success and has played a vital role in communicating back and forth regarding the Board of Education bus issues. He said the Police Department is interviewing several qualified candidates. He commented on the purchase order on tonight’s agenda for vests for our Police Officers.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council President Ead shared a few highlights from the Committee report submitted such as the Mobus Field Improvements and stated there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of those new facilities held at the Harvest Festival. The new parking lot at Mobus Field is now open. Phase 1 of valley road sidewalk project is complete and we are currently in planning mode for phase 2 which is scheduled for next year. She commented on the landscaping improvements throughout the Borough and stated there are many new and exciting projects in the works.
4. Public Affairs:
  - Environmental – Councilwoman Abi -Habib provided some highlights from the Committee report such as the upcoming Harvest Festival date and stated the Famers Market scheduled for the Tuesday before Halloween will have a special treat for the trick or treaters. She mentioned the Green Team is in the process of beginning the sustainable New Jersey

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

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

certification for 2024. She also advised the Commission is working with an eagle scout for six more bird boxes.

Recreation – Councilman Dahl spoke on some highlights from the committee report submitted such as the location of the men's basketball league, the 911 memorial, movies in the park and the Harvest Festival.

Historical – Councilman Fischer mentioned on September 10<sup>th</sup> there will be an open house at the Texier House Museum as well as a school display unveiled and a student essay time capsule. He encouraged all residents to please stop by and attend.

Board of Health – Councilman Marano stated a survey will be sent out to residents gauging their interest in possible CPR classes and discussions occurred about setting a table up to do blood pressure and health screenings at the Harvest Festival.

5. Fire – Councilman Dahl advised the Committee is scheduled to meet next week, but is still working on shared services.
6. Laws/Ordinances – Attorney Sordillo stated he is working on looking into certain ordinances and once completed he will present them to the Committee.

**REPORTS OF BOROUGH OFFICERS**

7. Engineer – Borough Engineer Jason Cline touched on some highlights such as the DOT road project that is currently out to bid and the kickoff meeting was held for the library bridge design project.
8. Police Chief – Police Chief Anderle reported on the numbers for the month of August. He mentioned the speed enforcement signs are located at High Oaks, Somerset Street and Mountain Blvd. He also mentioned the mobile inspection unit was at headquarters and 61 vehicles were inspected.

Council President Ead questioned if there was a way to track truck drivers who are repeat offenders driving down Hillcrest Road.

Chief Anderle advised there are not a lot of repeat offenders driving down Hillcrest Road and said its mostly out of state drivers.

9. Fire Chief – Clerk Edith Gil advised a written report was submitted.
10. Fire Official – Administrator Damato advised he will be conducting the first round of interviews tomorrow for the Fire Official position. He also mentioned the previous Fire Official has agreed to come in and help out if anything Fire Official related comes up. Administrator Damato stated the intent is to have someone in place by October 1<sup>st</sup>.
11. Rescue Squad – Mayor Jubin commented on the North Star training that occurred at the Fire House and thanked the Rescue Squad for everything they do for the Borough.

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

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

12. Emergency Management – OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon provided updates regarding the OEM coordinator meeting and stated next week watching OEC will be conducting a state mandated exercise. She also mentioned if anyone is interested in attending the Watchung Cert class it will be starting on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mrs. Solon also provided updates on Hurricane Lee and safety precautions.

Council President Ead suggested we send out an email to residents in regards to recruiting for the Watchung Cert team.

Mrs. Solon also mentioned an emergency operation plan needs to be in place for the Harvest Festival.

13. Attorney – Attorney Sordillo had no report.
14. Finance - CFO Bill Hance reported on the upcoming Tax Sale, scheduled for November 30<sup>th</sup>.
15. Clerk – Clerk Edith Gil reported on the County Clerk's mobile office hours and their desire to have a table at the Harvest Festival. She also provided an update on the Civic Plus project and noted that the Project Manager assigned had left the company and the Borough was being assigned someone else again. This has slowed down internal progress but noted that she had expressed her frustrations to the company.

Mayor Jubin inquired on any upcoming election timelines and Clerk Gil noted that early voting as well as all important dates were posted online and that they would also be going out via email and social media.

16. Administrator – Administrator Damato provided updates on the construction of the gas main on Hillcrest Road.
17. Youth Services – Councilman Dahl had no report.
18. Planning Board - Councilman Dahl had no report.
19. Municipal Alliance – Councilman Marano had no report.
20. Library Advisory Committee- Councilman Fischer commented on the success of the sweet start event held at the Watchung Library.
21. Traffic and Beautification- Council President Ead stated the Committee will meet next on September 11<sup>th</sup> and thanked them for all their continued efforts and hard work in beautifying the Borough. She provided details on upcoming events such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Scarecrow Stroll Contest as well as the Hometown Hero Banners.

**PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Lynda Goldschein, spoke on the condition of the Camp Endeavor property and asked for a copy of the actual costs to remove the tennis courts. She feels we need professional plans and stated the Best Lake

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

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

fountains are not currently running.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

**OR 23/13**: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING LAND EXCHANGE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12-16 IN CONNECTION WITH THE PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED MOU WITH MAHA AT WATCHUNG, LLC

Public hearing was opened.

Kristy Hartmann, spoke on several of her concerns regarding the above Ordinance. She stated a public asset given away is contrary to public interest. She referenced section 3 of the Ordinance and also stated MAHA now owns the easement and the property the Borough gave to them. Ms. Hartmann does not see how this exchange is more advantageous to the Borough. She also said this is a liability concern and questioned how the Council will address the safety hazard going forward.

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

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

**NEW BUSINESS**

**REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	July 17, 2023
Board of Health Meeting Minutes	January 18, 2023 March 8, 2023 May 17, 2023
Building Department	August 2023
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	June 26, 2023
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	July 13, 2023
Planning Board Meeting Minutes	June 20, 2023
Rescue Squad Monthly Report	August 2023

**#19**: Letter of Resignation from Chris Czuba, Fire Official, effective August 31, 2023; Recv'd 8/15/23, M&C, JD

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

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

**#20:** Notice of Public Hearing and Second Reading on 9/21 from Township of Warren, OR 23-16  
“Establishing New Section 15-9.2 Titled “Grading and Land Disturbance”, Recv’d 9/5/23, cc:  
M&C, JD, TV.

Motion to Accept above by Ead, second by Marano

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

**CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

R1: Authorizing POs over Allowed Threshold – Atlantic Tactical (*30 vest carriers for Patrol Officers*)  
Winner Ford (*2024 Ford Interceptor for PD*)

R2: Authorizing Sewer Bill Adjustment for 813 Somerset Street, block 4501/ lot 1.09

R3: Authorizing Sewer Bill Adjustment for 990 Somerset Street, block 4401/ lot 3

R4: Authorizing Refund for Tax Overpayment to 85 Maple Street, block 2101/ lot 5

R5: Authorizing Refund for Tax Overpayment to 60 Glen Eagles Drive, block 201/ lot 1

R6: Waiving Delinquent Interest for Multiple Properties for Tax Payments

R7: Authorizing a Field and Facility Permit Application to Hold Pumpkin Give-A-Way at Mobus Field on  
October 1

R8: Authorizing Bill List

R9: Authorizing Appointment of Robert Gibbs to the Planning Board as Class III Member

Motion to Adopt above by Ead, second by Fischer

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

**NON-CONSENT RESOLUTIONS**

R10: Awarding Contract to RealAuction.com, LLC for Online Tax Sale Hosting Service

Motion to Adopt above by Ead, second by Dahl

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

R11: Authorizing Professional Services Agreement for Affordable Housing Administrative Agent –  
CGP&H, LLC

Motion to Adopt above by Fischer, second by Ead

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

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

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

R12: Authorizing Final Payout of Accumulated Benefits for Linda Monetti

Motion to Adopt above by Fischer, second by Dahl

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

R13: Authorizing Developers Agreement and Police Services Agreement with Levin Properties, L.P. for 1701 US Route 22, Block 6404/ Lots 2.01, 2.02, 2.03, and 2.04

Motion to Adopt above by Ead, second by Fischer

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

R14: Authorizing Developers Agreement with Seritage SRC Finance, LLC for 1662 US Route 22, Block 6101/ Lot 5

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ second by Abi-Habib

RC: Ead [P] Dahl [P] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [A]

Item Removed      ~~R15: Authorizing the Appointment of an Administrative Assistant~~

**PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION**

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, questioned the cost of moving the tennis courts. Administrator Damato advised Ms. Goldschein to submit an OPRA Request to the Clerk for that information. She questioned the future plans for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the sidewalk

Mayor Jubin explained why the project will be more complex now than in the past.

Ms. Goldschein questioned what products were used to kill the weeds in the islands and suggested a weed barrier be used next time.

Administrator Damato provided those details and confirmed a weed barrier was used before the rocks were placed down.

- 2) Alice Tyler, spoke on her concerns as well as her neighbors regarding the Winner Way Estates. She mentioned her neighbors are concerned with the suffocation of the trees and she spoke on her concerns regarding water line issues and requested a cul de sac be put in.

Engineer Jason Cline stated he has opened a discussion with the developer regarding the possibility of a cul de sac being put in.

- 3) Lynda Goldschein, questioned if pervious pavement was used when Mobus parking lot was paved. Administrator explained in detail why pervious pavement was not used and stated it is not economically adventitious to the town. She also discussed plantings with Administrator Damato.

Councilman Marano asked if there if there is a list of elderly or disabled people in the Borough that can be accessed in case of a bad storm or serious emergency.

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

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

OEM Coordinator, Carolyn Solon explained the two databases managed by the State of New Jersey used for these purposes.

Mayor Jubin commented on the passing of Jim Stout and expressed his condolences to his family.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon there being no further business, the meeting ended to the Call of the Chair at 8:47 P.M. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Regina Angelo  
Deputy Borough Clerk

Approved: October 19, 2023