

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

OCTOBER 5, 2023

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: Mayor Ronald Jubin called the meeting to order at 7:31 P.M. and made the following opening statement: *“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 [Absent] Gibbs [P]

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamations onto the record.

- ❖ Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- ❖ Hindu Heritage Month

SPECIAL RESOLUTION

R1: Authorizing Appointment of Jessica Maddox as CERT Volunteer

Council President Ead thanked Ms. Maddox for her desire to be a volunteer and recalled on the importance of having CERT members during critical times, such as was Hurricane Sandy.

Motion to Adopt above by Dahl/ Second by Fischer

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

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Mayor Jubin administered the oath of office to Jessica Maddox.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Fischer reported that the committee met on October 4th and discussed personnel matters, record retention policies, and discussed preparations on upcoming expenses for the purchase of capital equipment. There is a possibility of a bond ordinance that may need to be done, but more information will come as that is developed.
2. Police – Councilman Marano commented on correspondence #21 on tonight’s agenda. He took a moment to provide background on Lieutenant Boyle and commend him for his dedication and his leadership on getting the Police Department accredited. Councilman Marano proceeded to provide his report on the last committee meeting in which promotions were discussed, 5 license plate readers were activated, and safety vests were fitted.

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3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – In addition to the report submitted, Council President Ead reported on the major renovations happening at Mobus Field. She reminded all that the official ribbon cutting ceremony for the pickleball and tennis courts would be done during the Harvest Festival on October 28th. She asked that all be respectful and mindful of others wishing to play. She proceeded to mention that they are contemplating gaga ball, the overall goal is to have something for all age groups. Council President Ead noted that PSE&G work and infrastructure improvements would soon be at the end of October and early November. Communication via all methods is scheduled to go out and she encouraged all to subscribe to these alerts.

4. Public Affairs:

Recreation – Councilman Dahl reported on the two events held by the Commission. Movie in the Park was a success and he thanked all of the volunteers as commended Damaris on the great job she is doing as the new Recreation Coordinator. He also thanked the PBA for their ice-cream donation. Likewise for the Fishing Derby, the weather was great that day and the event was a huge success.

Mayor Jubin also spoke on the greatness of the two events and the impact the pickleball courts have done to surrounding neighbors and thanked all of the volunteers and staff members for their help with both events.

Historical – Councilman Ficher reminded the public about Somerset County's Journey through the Past Historical Committee's event which is scheduled from 10am to 5pm on Saturday and on Sunday from 12-4pm.

Board of Health – Councilman Marano provided an update on the covid vaccine, it is no longer available at no cost. It might be covered under Medicare; however, anyone should check with their provider. Free covid test are still available, up to 4, and can be ordered at covidtests.com, but he did caution against any scammers. Lastly, he alerted that RSV is on the rise.

5. Fire – Committee met this past Tuesday, spoke on apparatus' needed in the future and how fundraising efforts have gone to purchase all prior vehicles. Councilman Marano and Mayor Jubin commended the Fire Volunteers for their fundraising efforts.
6. Laws/Ordinances – Councilman Gibbs noted that an upcoming meeting is being scheduled.

REPORTS OF BOROUGH OFFICERS

7. Engineer – Borough Engineer Jason Cline informed council that there was an upcoming pre-construction meeting and that traffic was anticipated at Washington Rock Road due to the upcoming project, door hangers and resident notices would be distributed.
8. Police Chief – Chief Anderle reported on the September calls totaling 1,659 of which 198 calls were related to crime, 46 summons were issued to overweight trucks and he proceeded to further break down his report.
9. Fire Chief – no report submitted.

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10. Fire Official – no update.

11. Rescue Squad – Member Lynda Goldschein provided the September report. She noted the Rescue Squad was excited for the upcoming fall activities, noted a drill was held on September 16th for probationary member and their usual drill was held on September 26th, and advised that plans for the Tree of Lights are under-way, which is a ceremony is held in remembrance of Pearl Harbor. The calls and top responders for the month of August were reported. The official report was also provided to the Borough Clerk.

Councilman Gibbs commended the Rescue Squad for their participation in all borough events.

12. Emergency Management – no update provided.

13. Attorney – Borough Attorney Sordillo advised that he was working on a update of any pending items and would shortly review those items with Councilman Gibbs as the new Chair of the Laws and Ordinances Committee.

14. Finance – CFO Hance advised that the Best Practices Inventory was scheduled to be reviewed with the Administration and Finance Committee and following that it required a discussion by Mayor and Council. He reminded all that state aid is based on the scoring and Watchung was not in danger of losing any funding.

Mayor Jubin commended Mr. Hance for his dedication to the Green Team and all of the organization that went on for the Farmers Market. CFO Hance advised on the schedule of events that each upcoming Farmers Market was having. Councilman Dahl also thanked all the volunteer who assisted with the Farmers Market and Mr. Bisignano for his donations.

- October 10th Assemblywoman Matsikoudis would have mobile office hours
- October 17th a shredding event was being organized
- October 24th the Watchung Library would be hosting “Letters to Firefighters”
- October 31st would be a Halloween event

15. Clerk – Borough Clerk Gil added that the Tree of Lights ceremony would be held Saturday, December 2nd. She proceeded to report on the new employee, Colleen Lange and how great she has been in such a short time, as well as the following election reminders:

- October 17th is the last day to register to vote for the upcoming General Election
- October 25th sample ballots were being mailed out
- October 28th is the start of the early voting period and Somerset County has 6 locations in which voters can participate. This ends November 5th.
- October 19th Assemblywoman Matsikoudis would be having mobile office hours at Borough Hall from 6pm to 7:30pm
- October 31st was the deadline to apply for mail-in ballots

16. Administrator – Administrator Damato advised that Colleen was an extraordinary addition to the team and proceeded to inform Council that the holiday lights at Borough Hall, the Texier House and the Arts

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Center would be installed tomorrow. The lights are not expected to be turned on until sometime in November. He also advised that residents have reached out to thank the Borough for lighting the cupola saying it is beautiful. He advised that there might be a day or two that the pickleball courts would have to be closed for minor work, but otherwise everyone seems to be enjoying the new courts.

17. Youth Services – no update.
18. Planning Board – Councilman Gibbs reported that at the last meeting of the Planning Board an update on the litigation and the status of the amended application Bonnie Burn application was provided by the Attorney.
19. Municipal Alliance – no update.
20. Library Advisory Committee – Councilman Fischer advised that since the last report, new benches were added to the garden and everyone has been pleased with this addition.
21. Traffic and Beautification – Council President Ead advised the Committee has been very busy meeting regularly and did fall decorations at Texier House, Stratford Park, Borough Hall, the 9/11 Memorial and Village Green. She thanked “Dance for the Cure” who provided some of the pink materials to place around the circle in honor of Breast Cancer month. The deadline was extended for Scarecrow Stroll Contest. Installation will begin on October 14th and High School students will again serve as Judges, Coldwell bankers has donated the prizes to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place and the winners will be announced at the Harvest Festival. T&B will also be selling car magnets in order to raise funds for the repair of the Gazebo.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

1. Lynda Goldschein, Resident, questioned the minutes scheduled to be adopted on today’s meeting. She inquired on the September 7th minutes, what was gaga ball, and noted that most of the dumping was cleaned up at Camp Endeavor, but that signs were still up.

Clerk Gil advised that the September 7th minutes were not done and Council President Ead explained what Gaga Ball is. Administrator Damato mentioned there was no date identified to bring down the signs, but that at some point in the future once the area was safe it would be opened. He also spoke on the possible future plans for that area.

DISCUSSIONS

None held

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Building/ Construction Monthly Report

September 2023

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Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes	August 21, 2023
Green Team Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes	July 26, 2023 August 30, 2023
Historical Committee Meeting Minutes	June 21, 2023
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	August 10, 2023 August 17, 2023 September 21, 2023
Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority Minutes	September 7, 2023
Planning Board Meeting Minutes	August 15, 2023
Police Department Monthly Report	September 2023
Traffic & Beautification Meeting Minutes	September 11, 2023

#21: Notice of Retirement from Lieutenant Boyle, recv'd 9/25/23, cc: M&C, JD, EH,

#22: Notice of Resignation from Louise Lindenmeier, Board of Health Member, recv'd 10/3/23, cc: M&C, BOH,

Motion to Accept above by Ead/ second by Dahl

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

CONSENT ITEMS

R2: Authorizing POs over Allowed Threshold – PARSA (*4" sub trash pump*)
SE Rose Trucking & Excavating (*Scott Dr storm drainage*)

R3: Authorizing Field and Facility Permit Application to Metanoia Coaching for Wounded Warrior 5K Run on November 4, 2023

R4: Authorizing Refund of Tax Duplicate Payment for 615 Mountain Boulevard, Block 501/ Lot 5

R5: Authorizing Purchase of Fuel through the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council

R6: Authorizing the Extension of Added and Omitted Tax Due Date

R7: Authorizing Bill List

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ Second by Fishcer

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

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NON- CONSENT ITEMS

R8: Waiving Chapter 6-2.11 of the Borough Code for the Rescue Squad Tree of Lights Ceremony

Motion to Adopt above by Gibbs/ Second by Ead

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

R9: Authorizing the Appointment of Thomas M. McNulty as Fire Official

Motion to Adopt above by Fischer/ Second by Dahl

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

Members of Council welcomed Mr. McNulty and Administrator Damato was pleased to report that so many applications were received and looks forward to his work here. Mr. McNulty is a retired Fire Chief and comes to the borough with a wealth of information.

Mr. McNulty was present and thanked Mayor and Council for their comments.

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

- 1) Kristy Hartman, Resident, inquired on what “Waiver of Chapter 6-2.11” meant, she inquired on the covid increases reported earlier by Councilman Marano and on the license plate readers.

Administrator Damato explained that this was waiving a section of our ordinances which banned fireworks, Councilman Marano responded to her inquiry and Chief Anderle commented on the license plate readers.

R10: Authorizing Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/ second by Gibbs

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

Mayor and Council entered executive session at approximately 8:34pm and returned to open session at approximately 9:06 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no business before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.

Submitted:

Edith G. Gil, Borough Clerk

Approved: November 20, 2023