

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

NOVEMBER 20, 2023

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: Mayor Jubin called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and made the following 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 [P] Gibbs [P]

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamations on the record and highlighted the upcoming Peach Throughout the World event scheduled for November 29th.

- ❖ Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month
- ❖ National Family Week

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- ❖ Dr. Julie Glazer
Superintendent of Watchung Borough School District

Dr. Julie Glazer was present and formally introduced herself before the Governing Body. While she had separately met the Mayor and some Council Members, she wanted to formally do so before all and noted she looked forward to working together for the betterment of Watchung. Dr. Glazer also congratulated Lieutenant Zaiton and noted he was one of the first persons he met from the Watchung Police Department when she first started and was very proud of his

Councilman Gibbs thanked Dr. Glazer for being present and recalled that he met her during trunk-or-treat. He recalled a time, in 2006/2007, when Watchung was amongst the top schools and looks forward to her time here given her experience and qualifications.

Mayor Jubin commented that while the Borough and the School District were separate legal entities, there was no reason why we could not work together and support each other where possible. He looked forward to the schools participating in getting the word out to parents about upcoming events and bridging the communications between each other.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION

Councilman Marano read a brief biography on Sherif Zaiton, who started with the Watchung Police Department in 2009 after having graduated from Somerset County Police Academy in 2008. Zaiton was assigned to the Detective Bureau in June of 2013 and in 2018 he became the DARE instructor where he had

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the privilege of teaching the fifth graders at Valley View School. He was later promoted to Sergeant of the Patrol Division in March of 2020 and became Lieutenant in August of 2021; where he currently was the Patrol Commander. Zaiton serves as Deputy Coordinator of the Office of Emergency Management.

R1: Authorizing Appointment of Sherif Zaiton as Captain of the Police Department

Motion to Adopt R1 by Marano/ second by Ead

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

Mayor and Council each commended Captain Zaiton for his dedication and congratulated him.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH

Mayor Jubin administered the Oath of Office to Captain Zaiton alongside his family.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, Resident, provided comments on the resolution allowing expenditures over the allowable threshold. She asked for an explanation on this item as it appeared as though it was a way to get around the legalities of purchases and that it seemed to always go to the same organizations.

Administrator Damato clarified the confusion and explained that the allowable threshold is set by the State of New Jersey each year for all municipalities. In Watchung there is an additional layer of oversight, which requires any bills over a certain percentage of that threshold to be approved by Council; that number is currently \$6,600. Mr. Damato explained that we are required to get 2 quotes and that was always done.

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Animal Control Solutions	October 2023
Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes	October 12, 2023
Construction Monthly Report	October 2023
Planning Board Meeting Minutes	October 17, 2023
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	October 5, 2023 October 19, 2023
Mayor and Council Executive Session Minutes	May 4, 2023

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Recreation Commission Minutes

May 10, 2023

August 16, 2023

September 6, 2023

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

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

CONSENT ITEMS

R2: Authorizing POs over Allowed Threshold – ASL Group, Inc. (*Landscape Island by borough*)
Lawsoft, Inc. (*PD – DOT interface migration & updates*)

R3: Authorizing Watchung to Enter into the NJ EdgeMarket Cooperative Pricing System

R4: Authorizing Appointments to Youth Services Commission

Motion to Adopt above by Ead/second by Marano

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

NON- CONSENT ITEMS

R5: Authorizing Agreement with Safe and Sound Somerset for 2024 Domestic Violence Response Team Affiliation

Councilman Marano provided a brief description of what R5 was authorizing.

Motion to Adopt above by Marano/second by Ead

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

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

- 1) Lynda Goldschein, Resident, inquired on the process in which committee and other department reports are submitted. The Rescue Squad is unable to collect the data and submit everything on time for the first meeting, she suggested that Council might consider switching reports to the second meeting of the month so that the community could be aware of their activity.

Mayor Jubin noted we would take this under consideration if other committees experienced similar issues; he also invited members of the Rescue Squad to appear before Council for an oral report.

- 2) Harold Huggins, Resident, appeared before Council as a follow-up to his prior appearance and communication between him and the Borough Engineer on the issues with flood water management that he is experiencing on this property. He implored the Council to take action to remediate this issue.

Administrator Damato advised that the borough was being guided by the recommendations of the Borough Engineer, who had already gone out to inspect the area and had already provided his

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recommendation that the Borough had not faulted and therefor it was not up to the borough to remediate this. Unfortunately, the responsibility fell on the property owner.

This upset Mr. Huggins and a further discussion took place between the Mayor and Administrator on where the responsibility fell.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Jubin wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and asked Council President Ead to comment on the upcoming Peace Throughout the World event scheduled for Wednesday, November 29th at 6pm.

Upon there being no further business, the meeting adjourned to the Call of the Chair at 8:10 P.M. Mayor Jubin announced that the next meeting of the Mayor and Council had been switched to Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.

Submitted by:

Edith G. Gil
Borough Clerk

Approved: December 6, 2023