

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

DECEMBER 6, 2023

MAYOR’S STATEMENT: Mayor Jubin called the meeting to order at 5:31 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 Revised 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 [Absent] Fischer [P] Marano [P] Abi- Habib [P] Gibbs [Absent]

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Jubin read the following proclamation onto the record.

❖ Month of Giving

Councilman Gibbs arrived at approximately 5:37 P.M.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Administration & Finance – Councilman Fischer noted there were no additions to the submitted written report.
2. Police – Councilman Marano emphasized that the department dedicates itself to training and often trains with Fire, EMS and OEM for live realistic scenarios.
3. Public Works / Buildings and Grounds – Council President Ead took a moment to clarify some of the information that was submitted in the posted Public Works report. She advised that the Phillips sign referred to was at the entrance to Phillips Field and moved for visibility purposes. The signs for God’s Acre and the Blackadar Family are being restored to match the look and field of the Watchung Lake and Best Lake signs.

Mayor Jubin advised that the Ost Family had reached out regarding the signs at the fields and noted this might also be a project for an Eagle Scout. Council President Ead advised that there was a family that put forward a request to donate signs for each of the fields. She mentioned that request was submitted to Administrator Damato to take to the School Board for consideration.

4. Public Affairs:

Environmental – Councilwoman Abi-Habib mentioned that the Green Team and the Environmental Commission each had their recent meetings. The Commission wants to remind residents that the Styrofoam bin is located at the Public Works garage. The Green Team held a pop-up Farmers Market along with an electronic waste collection drive; she advised the Green Team was also working on a Sustainability certification. Lastly, she

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

DECEMBER 6, 2023

reported that Eagle Scout Joshua completed the bird boxes and the location of installation was being finalized.

Recreation – no report.

Historical – Councilman Fischer advised that the Commission met on November 15th and they are working on categorizing, scanning and labeling various items at the Texier House. A call was made for volunteers.

Board of Health – no update provided.

5. Fire – no update provided but a meeting is in the works to finalize details with North Plainfield.
6. Laws/Ordinances – Councilman Gibbs advised the Committee is scheduled to meet in the next week. Mayor Jubin asked if the Committee could look into the framework necessary to allow young volunteers between 16-18 to participate in the various boards/commissions.

REPORTS OF BOROUGH OFFICERS

7. Engineer – Borough Engineer Cline was unable to attend, but provided a written report to Council.
8. Police Chief – Chief Anderle reported on the departments November calls, reported on the motor vehicle inspections conducted, and advised that 49 Hillcrest citations had been issued. Councilman Marano asked Chief Anderle to speak on the benefits of the new vest carrier the department had received.

Councilman Gibbs noted he had reached out to the Department of Transportation Commissioner when he was at the League in November and also inquired on Waze, Google, and Apple map algorithms which route trucks to that area.

9. Fire Chief – no report.
10. Fire Official – Fire Official McNulty was present and reported on the inspections conducted last month. He noted he was working on the annual report and that would be coming soon.
11. Rescue Squad – Councilman Gibbs thanked the Rescue Squad for their continuous dedication and the phenomenal job on the tree lighting ceremony. He summarized the rescue squad's report and highlighted the top responders.
12. Emergency Management – OEM Coordinator Solon was present, but had no update.
13. Attorney – Attorney Sordillo had no update.
14. Finance – CFO Hance reported on the tax lien sale that was held last week and informed Council that the RFP opening was held yesterday and he is reviewing all of the submissions.

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

DECEMBER 6, 2023

15. Clerk – Borough Clerk Gil reported on the progress of the CivicClerk software solution and noted she hopes to implement next month.
16. Administrator – Administrator Damato spoke on the donation by Penyak Construction of the gazebo roofs, he informed all that this was done at their complete expense. Mayor Jubin also thanked Penyak Construction and they both agreed a letter should be sent out
17. Youth Services – no report.
18. Planning Board – Councilman Gibbs advised the Bonnie Burn amended site plan application has been approved with conditions. He discussed two of the most important conditions, first would be to see if the right turn out of the site could be made more of a merge with traffic going East down Bonnie Burn Road. The second condition recommends a flashing beacon on Bonnie Burn Road which was a main recommendation from the State Department of Transportation Commissioner. He also noted our recommendations and conditions are simply recommendations to the Somerset County Planning Board who has complete and full jurisdiction over the remainder of this application. Councilman Gibbs emphasized that the board has attempted to mitigate what was a very dangerous intersection design with the imposed conditions but it is up to Somerset County to accept them or not.

Mayor Jubin further clarified what was sent back to the Planning Board for consideration regarding the traffic signal and ingress and egress. He also provided comments on the request put in at the prior meeting for non condemnation and redevelopment regarding the Drift Road property.

Councilman Gibbs clarified just because the Drift Road property was designated as an area in need of redevelopment doesn't mean there is a designated use for the property.
19. Municipal Alliance – no update.
20. Library Advisory Committee – Councilman Fischer reported on the Committee's luncheon held on November 17th.
21. Traffic and Beautification – Council President Ead also commented on the roof replacement donated by Penyak Construction.

PUBLIC PORTION / AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- No one appeared

NEW BUSINESS

REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE:

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:

Building/ Construction Monthly Report	November 2023
Fire Prevention Bureau Monthly Report	November 2023

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

DECEMBER 6, 2023

Green Team Meeting Minutes	September 27, 2023 October 25, 2023
Historical Committee Minutes	October 18, 2023
Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes	November 2, 2023 November 20, 2023
PARSA Meeting Minutes	November 2, 2023
Rescue Squad Monthly Report	November 2023

#25: Notice of Re-evaluation Study within the Upper Basin of Green Brook Watershed by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and NJDEP, recv'd 11/22/23, cc: M&C, JD, JC.

Motion to Accept the above by Ead/ Second by Fischer

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

CONSENT ITEMS

R1: Authorizing POs over Allowed Threshold – Civic Plus (*Civic Clerk Annual Fee*)
NJ Fire Equipment Co. (*FD- fire turnout gear*)

R2: Authorizing Bill List

R3: Authorizing Budget Insertion for Special Items of Revenue (Chapter 159) For Stormwater, Clean Communities, Alcohol Education, Rehabilitation & Enforcement and Lead Grant Assistance Grants

R4: Authorizing a Grant Application for the NJDCA Resilience Communities Grant Program

Motion to Adopt the above by Ead/ Second by Abi-Habib

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

NON- CONSENT ITEMS

R5: Authorizing Re-Appointment of William Hance as Tax Collector

Motion to Adopt the above by Fischer/ Second by Abi-Habib

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

R6: Authorizing the Appointment of Julian Cartagena-Lopez as Volunteer to the Fire Department

Motion to Adopt the above by Marano/ Second by Fischer

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

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

DECEMBER 6, 2023

PUBLIC PORTION - GENERAL DISCUSSION

- No one appeared

Mayor Jubin highlighted some of the events that had recently taken place; he gave a shout-out to Lawrence Firm which had their ribbon-cutting ceremony for their new location on Mountain Boulevard, he advised Our House also had a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Council President Ead and Council Members Gibbs and Abi-Habib, he thanked Council President Ead for organizing the water lantern event, he thanked the Rescue Squad for the Tree of Lights event, thanked the Little League leadership for working together with the Rescue Squad and invited all to the Hannukah lighting event.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon there being no further business before Council, the meeting ended at 6:11 P.M. to the Call of the Chair. The next meeting of the Mayor and Council will be Thursday, December 21, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Edith G. Gil
Borough Clerk

Approved: December 21, 2023