

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
AUGUST 7, 2017**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on August 7, 2017 in special session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Stephen Wood called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Stephen Wood; Clerk-Treasurer Frieda Bretzinger; Council Members Scott Barton, Rick Odle, Ernest Watson, Jr; Cemetery Supt. Kevin Cochran; Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Fire Chief Bob Graves; Building Commissioner Kenny Haun; Police Chief Jeff Phillips; Electric Manager of Operations Steve Miller; Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson; Street Supt. Andy Daniels. Absent were: Council Member Bill Hollerman, Council Member George Cover, City Attorney Mike Riley, Utility Office Manager Heather Smart, Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge; Electric Plant Supt. Claude Grow; Caitlin Sievers with the Rensselaer Republican. Electric Plant Supt. Claude Grow arrived at 4:06 p.m. after roll call.

Also in attendance were Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Linda DeMoss and Angie Haun, Gas Department Secretary.

Wood said he didn't feel comfortable having the meeting, but there was a quorum so he moved on.

2018 Salaries: Mayor Wood said he had everyone look at a three percent increase. Woods suggestion was a three percent increase across the board. Odle asked if they should just vote on the three percent and then look at the other proposals. Barton suggested taking them one at a time. Odle made the motion to give three percent across the board, second by Barton. The motion passed by majority, with Hollerman and Cover absent.

Police Dept.: Phillips said he was happy with the three percent, but asked for them to consider increasing the longevity. The longevity has been that way since 1986. Watson said he understood, but this is an older group and the longevity would affect the city. Odle agreed, but said they could look at it and find an in-between. Watson said no one knows how the closing of Saint Joseph College will affect the city. Phillips said he was happy with the three percent increase.

Electric Dept.: Miller said he requested the three percent across the board presently because of the email from Wood, with Saint Joseph College closing and with the recent rate increase. Miller asked that maybe in the upcoming year or six months the mayor and council could look at individual adjustments. Miller said he has experienced this in his previous employment. Barton asked if the Electric Department is less than the surrounding areas, because in the last four years they have gotten around \$15.00 in raises. Miller said he wasn't just talking about the Line Department, but Secretarial, Power Plant. Grow said they are happy with the three percent raise, but back in January, they checked the power plants in the area and they are \$9.00 to \$10.00 more than Rensselaer's and Grow would like to see \$5.00 more to Rensselaer's. Wood said maybe down the line. They can look at raises after the new substation is done and see where things are.

Park Dept.: Effinger said he figured three percent across the board.

Weston Cemetery: Cochran thanked the council for the three percent.

Building Dept.: Haun said he was happy with the three percent.

Fire Dept.: Haun said he had done the fire budget. Currently the firemen are making \$7.50 per run and he had increased it by \$8,000.00 to make it \$10.00 per run. Haun said he spoke to the trustee about the increase and a new contract but the trustee has since passed away and nothing was decided. The contract hasn't been renewed since the 90's with the township. Graves said since he just took office and this being his first meeting, he would let Haun handle it.

Gas Dept.: Angie Haun said she was representing Superintendent Carol Lockridge and Lockridge had figured the three percent.

MVH/Water/Sewage/Sanitation: Daniels thanked the council for the three percent. Daniels said the longevity had also been on their list. The Wastewater Plant Operator and the Distribution Technicians are about three to five dollars behind comparable cities. Odle said that if the average comparison for the Plant Operator was \$27.57 and the department is requesting \$26.50, which is a dollar less, he felt it was reasonable. Daniels said that one is a class 3 operator and three are class 2 operators. Barton asked if they were done hiring outside help with the reports. Daniels said yes, since the first of the year. Daniels said the Distribution Technicians are the ones that go out and repair water leaks, sewer lines, hydrants. Odle said they are basically asking for fifty cents more. Daniels said there are only two employees this would affect. The other two are working foremen. Barton made the motion to approve the Wastewater Treatment Plant Certified Operator 3 to increase to \$26.50 per hour and the Distribution Technicians for Water and Wastewater to increase to \$24.00 per hour. The motion was seconded by Odle. The motion passed by majority, with Hollerman and Cover absent. Project Coordinator Lockridge's raise was

deferred until later. Watson said he is a little leery with any other increases. There was a motion by Odle to table Lockridge's raise until the next meeting, second by Watson. The motion passed by majority, with Hollerman and Cover absent.

Clerk-Treasurer's Office: Bretzinger thanked the council for the three percent also. She said that in her proposal she asked for a dollar more an hour for her deputies and a new classification for Chief Deputy Clerk-Treasurer. Bretzinger said she has a deputy that has an associate's degree in accounting and has saved the city a lot of money with the problems of the new software. The software is more accounting software than finance software. Bretzinger would also like to see longevity added for the Mayor and the Clerk-Treasurer's position. She said the Mayor did not ask her to ask for that, but she was because those two positions do not get longevity. Odle asked if the raises come out of taxation. Bretzinger said one deputy does, the other two are utilities. Clerk-Treasurer's longevity would come out of water. Barton asked if the raises were covered by the budget. Bretzinger said it is calculated in the budget. Odle asked what the percentage was for the employee's raises. Bretzinger said she hadn't calculated it. Odle said there needs to be a comparison. There was a motion by Watson to table the Clerk-Treasurer's proposal till comparisons are brought forward, second by Odle. The motion passed by majority, with Hollerman and Cover absent.

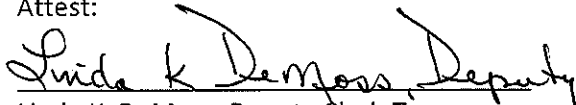
2018 Budget Discussion: Wood said that he and Bretzinger discussed the 2018 budget and feels the budget can be funded with a few cuts. Phillips asked if the capital projects were being cut. Bretzinger said there are only two cuts at this time; the street sweeper and street reconstruction. These total \$350,000.00. If the 1782 notice shows we need to cut more, then the police car will be cut. Bretzinger said they have to have it to us by February 15th. Bretzinger feels we will get it at the beginning of February. Phillips said he is looking at a new building. Phillips said the proposals will come in on August 9 and Board of Works will pick one and then negotiate the price. Phillips said they will probably not know the price till October.

Contributions to HSA for 2018: Watson made the motion to put \$1,500.00 into each employee's HSA through AIM Medical Trust. Barton asked how the insurance was looking. Wood said it was 5.5% increase. Bretzinger said that is a conservative average figure. Bretzinger said she expects it to be less since our claims are down, but she figured the 5.5% increase. The motion was second by Odle. The motion passed by majority, with Hollerman and Cover absent

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Watson, second by Barton, to adjourn. The motion passed by majority, with Hollerman and Cover absent and the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:


Linda K. DeMoss, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer