

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
August 28, 2017**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on August 28, 2017 in regular session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Stephen Wood called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by invocation offered by Rev. Kenin Smith with the Hope Community Church and the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Also in attendance were: Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Genny Hickman; Stace Pickering with C/I; Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures; Rev. Kenin Smith with the Hope Community Church; Ray Sief with the Jasper County Airport; Alexander Sief; Alexis Sief; Michael Kohlman and Bill Wornhoff.

The minutes of the August 14, 2017 council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Citizen Comments and Presentation of Petitions: Pickering had two street closing requests. The first was for OctoberFest on September 30th. He asked that South Van Rensselaer Street from West Washington to East Harrison be closed for the entire day. The second request is for St. Augustine's Fall Frolic on September 23rd. The requested street closing is Susan Street from Weston Street to McKinley Avenue and this will also be for the entire day. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Watson, to approve the street closing requests. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Ray Sief, Manager of the Jasper County Airport, gave a quick report on the happenings at the airport. He said in May they held an Aviation Career Day and they had over six hundred students in attendance. There were a couple dozen aviation experts in attendance and most everything was volunteer-driven. It was so successful that they are planning another Aviation Career Day for May, 2018. The following week there were another three hundred students at the airport. They had the best July on record for fuel sales. They are also on line to be the second best or best August on record for fuel sales. There is a first responder crash course from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Sep 8. There will be a "Tunes on the Tarmac" charity concert on September 16th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. They are asking for a \$10.00 free will donation but will take whatever. The donations will go to Mercy Flight which is a great organization that helps patients get air transportation to and from medical appointments or a distant medical facility. They are also the only organization that will pay for commercial flights.

Ordinance 14-2017, Policies and Procedures: Wood said there was a superintendent's meeting this morning and there were a few things that brought about discussion and he asked Odle to address them. Odle said this ordinance needs to be postponed until the next meeting. He said there are things that need to be changed in the credit card policy. There are five additional cards that will be coming with just the city's name and department on it. There's also been a change downstate whereas the state will allow reimbursement of sales tax on meals and hotels. The September 2016 Cities and Towns Bulletin says that sales tax would be paid on the receipt. Steve Miller also had an e-mail from Todd Caldwell showing that the same would hold true but there had to be a policy stating so. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to table Ordinance 14-2017 until the next meeting. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent. Wood said another issue is that Phillips said he would like to keep his city provided phone number. Lockridge said half-blood didn't sound right and would like the language changed to half-brother or half-sister. Wood also mentioned the activity log. Odle said instead of just city hall it should say all city departments. Wood said as long as the hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. are covered. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Resolution 22-2017, Transfer of Funds: Bretzinger said this transfer is to cover the mayor's credit card purchase to buy twelve council room chairs and for a paved path at the old football field at Brookside Park. The transfers total \$14,500.00. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to approve the resolution. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Mini-Excavator Purchase: Cochran said he received three quotes for mini-excavators and recommended purchasing the MacAllister Cat for \$53,769.00. It's the most expensive of the three but it's stronger, more stable and the cab is bigger. EDIT funds will be used to purchase the excavator. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Odle, to purchase the mini-excavator from MacAllister Cat. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Cemetery Deed Requests: Bretzinger presented a cemetery deed request for Kenneth Anderson. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Watson, to approve the request. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Salary Discussion from August 7 Meeting: Wood said there were a couple of salary requests that were tabled from previous meetings. Watson said the comparison doesn't show what the cost of living is in the other locations. The last seven years we've given 2%-3% increases each year. Watson said he'd like to give Lockridge \$1.00 plus the 3% everyone else is getting. There was a motion by Watson, second by Odle, to approve an increase of \$1.00 per hour in addition to the 3% everyone else is receiving. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent. Wood said there was also some discussion on salaries for the Deputy Clerk-Treasurers. Bretzinger asked for an additional \$1.00 per hour. Cover said going along with Watson, in terms of community standards, our salaries are competitive if not at the top of the scale. Cover is against the additional \$1.00 raise and was just in favor of the 3%, the same as everyone else, and made that a motion. Odle seconded the motion. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent. Bretzinger asked about an additional classification, that of Chief Deputy Clerk-Treasurer. She has a deputy in her office that has an Associate's Degree in Accounting and has been invaluable, especially with the current software system. Hollerman asked about a job description for this position. Bretzinger said she wasn't going to write up a job description until she knew the position would be approved. The additional requirement for this position is that the person would have to have an Associate's Degree in Accounting. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to add the position of Chief Deputy Clerk-Treasurer with a starting pay of \$22.00 per hour and a base pay of \$23.00 per hour. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent. The longevity pay for the Clerk-Treasurer was not addressed.

Committee Reports:

Equipment Lease to Purchase: Watson said he and Cover feel it would benefit the city if we leased the equipment instead of trying to save money to purchase outright. Odle said we aren't going to get interest rates at the bank than we're being quoted by Republic First National. There was a motion by Odle, second by Hollerman, to use lease to purchase agreement as an option to purchase equipment. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Administrative Comments:

Barton was absent.

Bretzinger had nothing.

Cover thanked the line department for cleaning brush out behind Cover's house.

Hollerman had nothing.

Odle had nothing.

Watson thanked everyone for what they do.

Wood said we've been having trouble with the bathrooms at City Hall. He would like to get an estimate to repair the problem. Wood bought chairs and a podium for council chambers. He has enough for council and clerk and wanted to know who wanted new ones. Bretzinger said they all should be changed out so they were all the same. He provided an activity log which was approved by majority upon a motion by Cover, second by Odle. Barton was absent.

Claims Approval: The claims were presented for payment. There was a motion by Watson, second by Odle, to approve the claims. The motion passed by majority, with Barton absent.

Superintendents Reports:

Building Dept.: Haun had nothing.

Cemetery Dept.: Cochran said the north addition has been seal coated.

Electric Dept.: Miller said work is progressing well at the Watt Substation. Larson had nothing. Grow had nothing.

Fire Dept.: Graves had nothing.

Gas Dept.: Lockridge had nothing.

Legal Dept.: Riley had nothing.

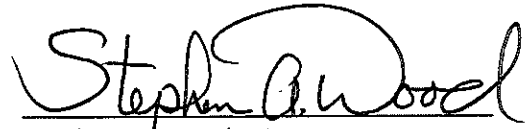
Park Dept.: Effinger said the park board and corporation will meet Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. in council chambers.

Police Dept.: Phillips thanked council and city workers for moving his purchase from St. Joseph's College.

Street, Sanitation, Sewage and Water Dept.: Daniels said they're about half done on the Elm Street Project. Lockridge said tomorrow Town and Country will be in town so we're starting utility patching. He also has a contractor lined up to do sidewalk repair and the Milroy Park sidewalk ends. The state is scheduled to close the Washington Street Bridge after September 1st but decided to wait until sometime after Little Cousin Jasper.

Utility Office: Smart thanked everyone for the flowers sent when her dad died and the fire department did a good job at his funeral.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to adjourn. The motion passed by majority and the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. Barton was absent for the vote.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:


Frieda Bretzinger, Clerk-Treasurer