

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
COMMON COUNCIL  
September 23, 2019**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on September 23, 2019 in regular session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Stephen Wood called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed invocation offered by Rev. Debbie Voss with the Burr Oak Mennonite Church and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Stephen Wood; Clerk-Treasurer Frieda Bretzinger; Council Members Scott Barton, Bill Hollerman, Rick Odle, George Cover; Ernest Watson, Jr; Cemetery Supt. Kevin Cochran; Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Building Commissioner and Fire Chief Kenny Haun; Police Chief Matt Anderson; Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge; Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson; Electric Plant Superintendent Claude Grow; Street Supt. Andy Daniels; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge; Utility Office Manager Heather Smart was present but was running an errand at the time of roll call. City Attorney Mike Riley and Nick Fiala with the Rensselaer Republican arrived after roll call.

Also in attendance were: Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures; Council Elect Russ Overton and Council Elect Noelle Wishaar.

The minutes of the September 9, 2019 council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Barton and second by Odle to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Citizen Comments and Presentation of Petitions:** There were none.

**Ordinance 08-2019, 2020 Budget:** Bretzinger read the 2020 Budget and it is as follows: Riverboat Fund budget of \$90,000 with no tax levy; Rainy Day Fund budget of \$50,000 with no tax levy; LOIT Special Distribution Fund budget of \$1,553 with no tax levy; General Fund budget of \$3,751,345 with a tax levy of \$1,359,278; Debt Service Fund budget of \$105,269 with a tax levy of \$86,922; Public Safety LOIT Fund budget of \$364,550 with no tax levy; Local Road and Street Fund budget of \$56,624 with no tax levy; Motor Vehicle Highway Fund budget of \$604,677 with a tax levy of \$248,099; Law Enforcement Continuing Education Fund budget of \$5,500 with no tax levy; Cumulative Capital Improvement Fund budget of \$51,608 with no tax levy; Cumulative Capital Development budget of \$350,000 with a tax levy of \$106,615; Economic Development Income Tax Fund budget of \$417,663 with no tax levy. Redevelopment General budget of \$27,800 with a tax levy of \$4,000. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Odle, to adopt Ordinance 08-2019 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 19-2019, Transfer of Funds:** Bretzinger said this resolution was prepared at the request of the department head. This resolution is transferring \$1,500.00 within the park department. There was a motion by Barton, second by Hollerman, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 20-2019, Vacation of an Easement:** Haun said this resolution was prepared to vacate an easement on Drexel Park. Barton asked if the resolution could be e-mailed to council. Haun said he didn't receive it until 3:57 p.m. today. Riley said his wife had some health issues. There was a motion by Barton, second by Watson, to vacate the easement. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 21-2019, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Electric Tracker:** Larson said this tracker reflects a \$1.06 increase per 1,000 kWh. He said the average household uses 700 kWh per month so this would be about a 74¢ per month increase. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 22-2019, Consolidation of TIF Districts:** Wood said this resolution also came in late. Haun said this was approved by the Redevelopment Commission. Haun said this resolution is combining Drexel TIF and Fairground TIF. Barton asked what the advantage is of consolidating the two districts. Haun said there are two different pots of money and by combining the two pots there is now more money to spend. There was a motion by Cover, second by Watson, to approve the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**2020 Salary Discussion:** Wood said he and Bretzinger have come up with a 3% increase. Watson asked what the increase was on the health insurance. Bretzinger said it was 1%. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to approve a 3% increase. The motion passed unanimously.

**2020 City Contribution to Employee H.S.A:** Bretzinger told council for the last five or six years council has approved \$1,500.00 for each employee that chooses to sign up for the H.S.A. insurance plan. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to approve the \$1,500.00 H.S.A. contribution for employees.

**Cemetery Deed Request:** Bretzinger read a cemetery deed request for Thomas VanWienen, Keith VanWienen, Jerry VanWienen. There was a motion by Barton, second by Watson, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Relations Request for Flowers:** There were several requests for Public Relations Fund money. The first was for flowers for employee losses of mother-in-law and father. The request was for \$100.00 each. There was a motion by Barton, second by Hollerman, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously. **Public Relations Request for Scare Crow Trail:** The second was from Smart for the utility office to participate in the Scarecrow Trail. Smart asked for \$50.00 for the entry fee and miscellaneous expenses. There was a motion by Barton, second by Watson, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously. **Public Relations Request for American Legion Thanksgiving Dinner:** The last request is to donate money to the American Legion for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. They asked for \$250.00. There was a motion by Watson, second by Barton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Halloween Date and Hours for Trick-or-Treating:** Haun said last year council unanimously approved Trick-or-Treat to be on the last Sunday in October (27<sup>th</sup>) for 2019. He said in the past it has been 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for Trick or Treat and Trunk or Treat is 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Haun said if anyone wants to donate candy it can be dropped off at the police station. Volunteers are badly needed. Rev Voss suggested that the churches would probably help. There was a motion by Cover, second by Barton, to approve the times and date. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ratification of Council Poll for the Purchase of Land.** Wood said back in August he polled council to get permission to make an offer on a house on Clark Street. He made an offer. Riley said you don't make an offer until it's made in writing. There was a motion by Cover, second by Odle, to ratify the poll and purchase the property and allow the mayor to sign the papers. Barton asked if the agreed price was the price that was discussed on the phone when he called council. Wood said yes it was the same amount. Wood said we've found financing. Bretzinger said the money will have to be transferred so that won't come before council until the October 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Barton asked about disposal. Wood said he and Bretzinger discussed that. Bretzinger said there was no discussion of where the money would come from to tear the house down and she was not given a cost for that. Wood asked Lockridge if he could answer that. Lockridge said it probably wouldn't happen until next year and we would be in a new budget. He thought it would be around \$10,000.00 to tear it down. Wood said if we got the house purchased and the equipment is still there they may tear the house down for us. The motion passed unanimously.

**Committee Reports:** Colonial Life Committee. Cover said after giving this a lot of thought, and talking to the city employees involved, the committee decided there was no advantage and we are not going to pursue it. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, not to pursue the company. The motion passed unanimously.

**Administrative Comments:**

**Cover** thanked city employees for picking up grass and limbs.

**Watson** said staying healthy pays off for the city. With the employees staying healthy we are only getting a 1% premium increase for next year.

**Bretzinger** had nothing.

**Wood** had nothing.

**Barton** thanked Cochran for the appearance of the cemetery and for the Memories Alive put on by the Historical Society at the cemetery this weekend.

**Hollerman** had nothing.

**Odle** had nothing.

**Claims Approval:** The claims were presented for payment. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Watson, to approve the claims as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Superintendents Reports:**

**Building Dept.:** Haun said they are working on several violations and some yard cleanup.

**Cemetery Dept.:** Cochran had nothing. Bretzinger told Cochran how nice the cemetery walk was. It was very informative. She also thanked Bob Schenk. Schenk said next year's cemetery walk will be September 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 2:00 p.m.

**Electric Dept.:** Larson thanked council for the raise. Grow had nothing.

**Fire Dept.:** Haun said they are having problems with the aerial fire truck. There's a build time of two years and maybe we need to look around. There was a motion by Barton, second by Watson, to look in to possible truck replacement. The motion passed unanimously.

**Gas Dept.:** Lockridge thanked council for the raise and H S A contribution.

**Legal Dept.:** Riley had nothing.

**Park Dept.:** Effinger said they are finishing up at Staddon Field. Odle asked if they can put walk through gates at the tennis court. Effinger said he would ask. Bretzinger said she knew the bathrooms were open during the soccer games but was wondering what time they were locked. Effinger said around 8:00 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. She said her daughter had her grandsons were at the park and around 4:00 p.m. They had to use the bathroom and they were locked. She had to take them home so they stayed home. He was going to do some checking.


**Police Dept.:** Anderson said the physical and written testing is finished and are moving forward with the background investigation. The RCHS Homecoming parade is this Thursday at 7:00 p.m. The dispatch software company will be here sometime in November for a county council meeting.

**Street, Sanitation, Sewage and Water Dept.:** Daniels thanked council for the raise. He said Town and Country has been working in the city for about a week said they started on Scott Street. That will be 4-6 weeks. Lockridge thanked council for the raise and H S A contribution.

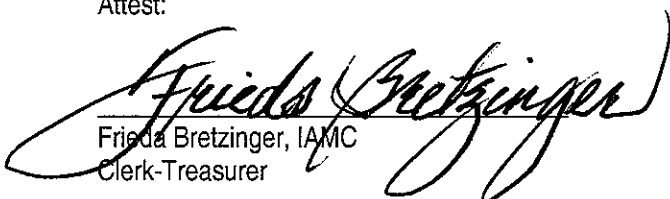
**Utilities:** Smart thanked council for letting them do the Scare Crow Trail.

Odle asked Wood if he was going to talk to Riley about the problem on Cullen Street. He said they cleaned it up but it is back to the way it was. Riley said the next step is to file suit.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Barton, second by Hollerman, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

  
Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:

  
Frieda Bretzinger, IAMC  
Clerk-Treasurer