

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
December 9, 2019**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on December 9, 2019 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 Councilman Scott Barton 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; City Attorney Representative Jacob Ahler; Cemetery Supt. Kevin Cochran; Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Building Commissioner and Fire Chief Kenny Haun; Police Chief Matt Anderson; Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson; Electric Plant Supt. Claude Grow; Street Supt. Andy Daniels; Nick Fiala with the Rensselaer Republican. Absent were: Utility Office Manager Heather Smart; Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge.

Also in attendance were Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures; Council Elect Noelle Weishaar; Vicki Dorris and Linda Miller with Emergency Services Billing Corp.; Randy Denton; Justin Bednar; Marc Eckstrom.

The minutes of the November 25, 2019 council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Hollerman and second by Watson to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Presentation of Petitions: There were none.

Ordinance 12-2019, An Appropriation Reduction Ordinance: Bretzinger said this ordinance is to reduce appropriations in the 2019 budget in order to fund the 2020 budget. Budget reductions include; Clerk-Treasurer's Office-\$2,700.00; Public Works & Safety- \$63,148.00; Fire Dept-\$4,000.00; Police Dept-\$92,000.00; for a total General Fund Reduction of \$161,848.00; MVH Unrestricted Fund of \$425.00 and Redevelopment General Fund reduction of \$350.00. There was a motion by Cover, second by Odle, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 28-2019, Transfer of Funds: Bretzinger read Resolution 28-2019. Transfers were \$420.00 within the Fire Department of General Fund and \$15,000.00 within the Public Safety LOIT Fund. There was a motion by Barton, second by Hollerman, to approve the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 29-2019, Gas Tracker: Wood said the tracker reflects a 4¢ increase per 100 cubic feet of gas. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Watson, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department Billing Discussion: Haun sent council an email regarding the downtown fire. Typically they have 250 runs per year, and 70-75 of those calls are city calls. Because of material and equipment costs he's trying to figure out how to fund the fire department and relieve some of the city's budget. He is looking at a billing company. Vicki Dorris and Linda Miller with Emergency Service Billing were here for a presentation. They have been in business since 2006. We have to advertise within two weeks in two separate papers notifying public of intent to charge for fire runs. She has to notify the insurance company within thirty days that we are submitting a bill. She said if we have an ordinance passed then the bills don't have to be submitted within that thirty day window. ESBC adds its fee to our bill which is 35% so we aren't paying for their service. They can collect for up to two years. They average about a 45% collection rate. The city chooses how to bill. They work with Lowell, Crown Point, Merrillville; some cities in our area. They send out collection checks to fire departments the 10th of each month. The funds go back to the fire department for equipment and gear. Their website is www.esbc. If there is a \$500 insurance limit they take 10% and the rest goes to the fire department. She sends NEFRS papers with the billing to the insurance companies. It doesn't matter whether it's a paid dept., volunteer dept., or fire district. For motor vehicle accidents, she can bill for fire dept. work but can't bill for an EMS run. She adds about 35% for her fees. Haun said the trustee is going to do this and he thought it would be easier for both departments to do. Wood suggested taking this under advisement and let the city attorney look over the paperwork.

Public Relations Request: Larson requested \$200.00 from Public Relations for a retirement party for John Lakin. Lakin is retiring December 31st and they are planning a party December 20th from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. It will be held in Council Chambers. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Odle, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Swearing In: Wood announced swearing in of elected officials at the next council meeting. Bretzinger has already been sworn in and she will be swearing in officials

Committee Reports: There were none.

Administrative Comments:

Cover said the street dept. has done a good job picking up leaves and yard waste.

Watson commended the department on leaf collection.

Hollerman had nothing.

Bretzinger had nothing.

Wood had nothing.

Barton had nothing.

Odle had nothing.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Building Dept.: Haun said he's working with the county on the 2020 Census. They are hiring part-time help for the census.

Cemetery Dept: Cochran asked permission to keep his part-time employee to enter data in the computer. There was a motion by Barton, second by Watson, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Electric Dept.: Larson had nothing. Grow had nothing.

Fire Dept.: Haun said the parts for the aerial did not work. It's out of service for the next 3-4 weeks.

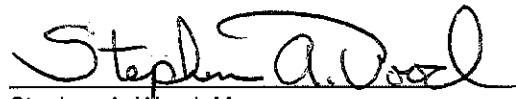
Legal Dept: Ahler had nothing.

Park Dept.: Effinger said the Frosty Fest this weekend was well attended.

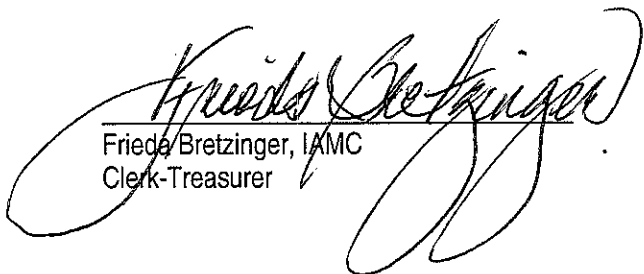
Police Dept.: Anderson said the new squad cars came in last week. Danielle Hitchings requesting a 5K Run/Walk benefit for Sudden Unexplained Death in Children Foundation. It will be held on March 7th. There was a motion by Barton, second by Odle, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Street, Sanitation, Sewage and Water Dept.: Daniels had nothing.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Watson, second by Odle, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:


Frieda Bretzinger, I/MC
Clerk-Treasurer