

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
August 13, 2020**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on August 13, 2020 in Council Chambers of City Hall, 124 S. Van Rensselaer Street, Rensselaer, Indiana. Mayor Stephen Wood called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. followed by invocation offered by Council Member Russ Overton and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Stephen Wood; Clerk-Treasurer Frieda Bretzinger; Council Members Russ Overton, Bill Hollerman, Noelle Weishaar, George Cover, Ernest Watson, Jr; City Attorney Jacob Ahler; Cemetery Supt. Kevin Cochran; Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Building Commissioner and Fire Chief Kenny Haun; Police Chief Matt Anderson; Street Supt. Andy Daniels; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge; Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge. Utility Office Manager Heather Smart; Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson; Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican. Electric Plant Supt. Claude Grow was absent.

Also in attendance were Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Marcia Mathew, Haley Mathew, Violet Cloud and Alice Smith.

The minutes of the July 27, 2020 council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Hollerman and second by Watson to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: Alice Smith said the Safe Halloween Event Committee has decided to cancel the Safe Halloween Event this year. She added that for the safety of everyone it was a good decision. She said several seniors told her they don't want kids coming to their houses on Halloween because of the virus going around and said council may want to think about Halloween and the safety of all.

Resolution 15-2020, Gas Tracker: Lockridge told council that the gas tracker is a 10¢ decrease per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion by Cover, second by Overton, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 16-2020, Council Meeting Time Change: This resolution is to establish a starting time of the regular council meetings at 6:00 p.m. (CST). There was a motion by Overton, second by Hollerman, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 17-2020, Transfer of Funds: Bretzinger said this transfer resolution authorizes the transfer of \$10,479.66 within the Public Works and Safety Department of General Fund, \$15,000.00 within the LR&S Fund and \$50.00 within the Law Enforcement Continuing Education Fund. There was a motion by Watson and second by Cover to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

20 Year Award for Marcia Mathew: Bretzinger announced that Marcia Mathew has been Deputy Clerk-Treasurer for the City of Rensselaer for over twenty years, starting November 29, 1999. She has been an asset to the city doing payrolls and handling human resources. She added that Marcia is the contact for all employees and has been helpful to many and is a backup for banking. Bretzinger thanked Mathew for her dedication to the office and the city.

IMPA Contract Extension: Ahler told council that the agreement between IMPA and the city will extend this contract to the year 2050 with a thirty-year notice if the city wants to cancel the contract. He added that if council signed the contract and in 2050 decided to cancel the contract that would put them at the year 2080 for the cancellation. Ahler said in talking with their attorney the reason for this is IMPA's commitment to bonding for solar farms. He said IMPA already has 30% of its members signing their contracts. Cover would like to see Ahler go back and negotiate. He said he could see a ten-year cancellation but thought that thirty years was ridiculous. Ahler asked if council had an idea of negotiation. Wood said they are building solar farms and they are wanting a commitment for bonds. Wood said council serves as the utility board and can act on this contract. Watson wants to look at the old contract and negotiate between the two. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to go back to IMPA and negotiate the contract. The motion passed unanimously.

Oktoberfest Street Closing Request: The Oktoberfest celebration is scheduled for September 26, 2020. The committee is requesting that Van Rensselaer Street be closed from Washington Street to Harrison Street on the bricks in front of City Hall. Wood wants to wait until a committee member can attend the meeting and make the request. There was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar, to table the request until a committee member can attend the meeting to discuss this. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports: There were none.

Administrative Comments:

Overton had nothing.

Hollerman had nothing.

Weishaar thanked the street department for the cleanup and electric department for getting the power back on.

Cover thanked the street department for all of the cleanup of debris they have been doing across the city.

Watson had nothing.

Bretzinger had nothing.

Wood said the guys have done a good job cleaning up the streets.

Claims Approval: The claims were presented to council for its approval. There was a motion by Overton, second by Cover, to approve the claims. The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendents Reports:

Building Department: Haun had nothing.

Cemetery Department: Cochran had nothing.

Electric Department: Larson had nothing.

Fire Department: Haun said the aerial went down after the NIPSCO fire. The sling-gear went out. That is what runs the hydraulic system. They can't do anything with it because they can't find parts. He said he was told if they keep it full of oil that could help them run it until it gets repaired but he's worried about having it on scene and getting firefighters stranded in the basket at a fire. He said there is a demo aerial truck that will be here Tuesday night around 6:00 p.m. He added that the 1997 pumper, the only other fire truck the city owns is older and if we decide to purchase an aerial we're looking at eleven years to get a now 23 year-old truck through that time. Overton asked if the township would be willing to help with the cost. Haun said he didn't think we wanted to go down that road. Bretzinger said most of the trucks at the fire station have been purchased by the township. Haun said during the downtown fire all of the township trucks were on-site for thirty-two hours and the city was not billed a penny for that.

Gas Department: Carol Lockridge had nothing.

Legal Department: Ahler had nothing.

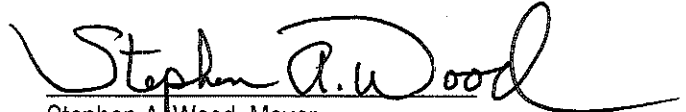
Park Department: Effinger had nothing.

Police Department: Anderson had nothing.

Street, Sanitation, Sewage and Water Departments: Daniels said the US 231 project is about 60% done. They've got most of the base down. Lockridge is asking permission to finish the removal of the other trees. It will cost \$29,350.00 for the remaining 38 trees. There was a motion by Watson, second by Cover, to finish the tree removal. The motion passed unanimously. Wood said we also need to look at removing some of those trees in Weston Cemetery. Watson asked about an estimate. Lockridge said he talked to Cochran today about that. He said they can make a list and come back with a cost estimate.

Utility Office: Smart said the governor's moratorium on disconnects ends Friday. She said the council voted to suspend penalties. She wants guidance on penalties. Wood said his opinion is that we should start penalizing but can make payment arrangements for some. Smart said the system won't let them pick and choose who to penalize. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to wait until October 1 to start penalizing. Roll call vote: Overton-yes, Hollerman-yes, Weishaar-yes, Cover-yes, Watson-yes. The motion passed unanimously.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Watson, second by Cover, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:


Frieda Bretzinger, IAMC
Clerk-Treasurer