

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
December 26, 2023**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on December 26, 2023 in regular session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Stephen Wood called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Stephen Wood; Clerk-Treasurer Shelby Keys; Council Members Russ Overton, Kevin Arnold, Noelle Weishaar, George Cover, Ernest Watson, Jr; Building Commissioner Josh Davis, Park Supt. Joe Effinger, Fire Chief Kenny Haun, Police Chief Matt Anderson, Utility Office Manager Heather Smart, Electric Line Foreman Garrett Welker, Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge, Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge. City Attorney Jacob Ahler, Cemetery Caretaker Tony Baltes, and Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson were absent. Assistant Street Supt. Bryce Black and Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican arrived after roll call.

Also in attendance were: Jeff and Kris Phillips, Jeff Rayburn, Caleb DeJong, Indiana State Representative Kendell Culp, Regina Cover, Crystal Cover, Wayne Cover and Violet Cover.

The minutes of the December 11, 2023 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Overton, second by Watson, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of the December 7, 2023 executive council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: Indiana State Representative Kendell Culp thanked George Cover and Mayor Wood for their service to the City of Rensselaer. Culp said he was representing the Governor and gave a speech for George Cover outlining his accomplishments. He served 36 years on City Council, was an educator for 57 years and started the 8th grade DC trip. Culp awarded Cover with the Sagamore of Wabash Award. Mayor Wood presented Cover with a key to the city and Mayor Wood was presented with a key to the city.

Resolution 51-2023, Request for Encumbrances: Keys read requests from department heads to encumber 2023 funds to be used in 2024. Requests within the Building Dept. totaled \$19,901.36, Fire Dept. totaled \$1,821.00, Police Dept. totaled \$8,833.72 and Public Safety Lit totaled \$21,000.00. There was a motion by Cover, second by Watson, to approve the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

City Supply Bid Recommendation: J. Lockridge Ceres Solutions is being recommended for Item #1, unleaded gasoline and Item #2, Diesel Fuel. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Watson, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Final Payment and Retainer Release 2023 CCMG: J. Lockridge said the final payment and request for release of retainage has been received. The total is for \$48,834.42. He would like to use the following funds to make the payment: Riverboat \$24,040.16, LIT \$6,082.00, EDIT \$7,781.37, and \$10,930.89 from grant funds. Arnold asked if the retained was 5% and J. Lockridge said yes. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Arnold, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Ratify Council Poll – Public Relations Request: Wood said council was polled on December 18th to approve additional expenditures for employee recognition in the amount of \$350.00. There was a motion by Overton second by Arnold, to ratify the poll. The motion passed unanimously.

Credit Card Statement: Wood asked for council's permission to sign the credit card activity log. There was a motion by Overton, second by Watson, to allow Wood to sign the credit card activity log. The motion passed unanimously.

FMLA Request: Wood said there was an FMLA request. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Cover, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Utility Budgets: Arnold stressed the importance of utility budgets. Smart said she is continuing to work on combining accounts.

Front Street Property: A court date is set for January 12th.

Alley and ROW Ordinance: Davis said an ordinance is needed to vacate the alley. He will work on getting one drafted for the next council meeting.

Administrative Comments:

Cover asked that all superintendents share with their employees how much he appreciated the work they've done over the years and told superintendents it's been a pleasure working with them.

Watson thanked Cover and Wood for the years working together.

Keys thanked Cover and Wood for their years of service.

Wood said he's enjoyed the 16 years as Mayor. He thanked council and staff for getting a lot accomplished.

Overton thanked Cover and Wood for their years of service.

Arnold thanked Cover and Wood for their years of service.

Weishaar thanked Cover and Wood for their years of service. She also thanked J. Lockridge for the road patches on College Ave.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson said he appreciates Cover and Wood for all the help and patience he's been shown since he started as Chief of Police.

Law Dept: Ahler was absent.

Utility Office: Smart thanked Cover, Wood and Kris Phillis for their years of service at the city.

Building Dept: Davis said he will bring amendments to the zoning code to the next meeting. Also rezone requests for Saint Joseph's College and Busy Bee.

Fire Dept: Haun thanked Cover and Wood for all their support. The award ceremony will be December 28th at 6:00 PM at the fire house for the Jaws of Life Award.

Electric Dept: Welker thanked Cover and Wood for their years of service.

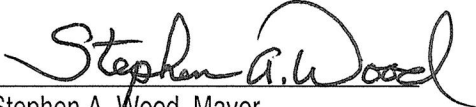
Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black and J. Lockridge thanked Cover and Wood for their years of service.

Cemetery Dept: Baltes was absent.

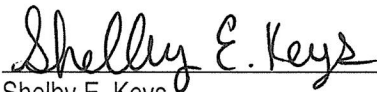
Gas Dept: C. Lockridge Cover and Wood for their years of service.

Park Dept: Effinger Cover and Wood for their years of service.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Overton, second by Cover, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:


Shelby E. Keys
Clerk-Treasurer