

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL & RENSSELAER UTILITY BOARD
May 28, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer and Rensselaer Utility Board met on May 28, 2024 in regular session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Jeffrey S. Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by an invocation offered by Kenin Smith and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Jeff Phillips; Clerk-Treasurer Shelby Keys; Council Members Russ Overton, Kevin Arnold, Noelle Weishaar, Jeff Rayburn, Ernest Watson, Jr; City Attorney Todd Sammons; Building Commissioner Josh Davis, Park Supt. Joe Effinger, Fire Chief Kenny Haun, Police Chief Matt Anderson, Lead Line Foreman Garrett Welker, Street/Water/Sewer/Sanitation Supt. Bryce Black, Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge, and Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge. Cemetery Caretaker Tony Baltus and Utility Office Manager Heather Smart were absent.

Also in attendance were: Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican, Bob Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Stace Pickering, Sara DeYoung with JCEDO, Stacy DeYoung and Ryan Preston.

The minutes of the May 13, 2024 regular council meeting and were presented, along with Executive minutes from April 22, 2024 and May 22, 2024. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Weishaar, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: Stacy DeYoung stated she was walking her leashed dogs on May 2nd when they were attacked by a dog. She has talked with both Chief Anderson and Animal Control. It is not clear who has jurisdiction over what. Discussion was had on what next steps should be taken. Phillips encouraged DeYoung to meet with him to discuss a solution.

Rensselaer Central School Board Appointment: Weishaar said four applicants were interviewed. There was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to nominate George Cover as the school board appointment. Roll call vote: Weishaar-yes, Arnold-no, Overton-yes, Watson-yes, Rayburn-yes. The motion passed with a 4-1 vote.

Ordinance 12-2024, Establishing Redevelopment Non-Reverting Fund, 1st Reading: Arnold gave an introduction and summary of the ordinance. This fund will be use to deposit revenues including grants funds or sale of property, but excluding TIF revenues.

Ordinance 13-2024, Establishing Plan Commission Non-Reverting Fund, 1st Reading: Arnold said this would establish a fund for the Plan Commission, which they currently do not have. Fees collected for the Plan Commission can be receipted into this fund. Watson asked if currently any fees were being collected? Davis said yes, but that those funds are being receipted into the general fund. This would allow the Plan Commission to keep those funds separate.

Ordinance 14-2024, Zone Map Amendment (9610 W 460 S): Rayburn said on March 19th the Plan Commission heard a rezone request for 124 acres from B2 to A1, which is what it has historically been used for. The Plan Commission voted unanimously in favor of the recommendation. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

IFA Type III Funding Acceptance: Black said the Indiana Finance Authority is providing \$50,000.00 in funding. This will be used to identify 550 lead line services, which needs to be done by October. There was a motion by Watson, second by Arnold, to accept the funding. The motion passed unanimously.

Sewer and Water Agreement: J. Lockridge said Commonwealth will be doing the design work. The agreement is between the City and the Jasper County Regional Water Sewer District and covers design work and construction costs. The County will be covering 100% of the costs. He said a grinder station will be placed at each property, rather than a lift station. Weishaar asked if this will affect any of the water supply at hotels or restaurants. Lockridge said they have been told it will not. Watson asked if the City will be responsible for the infrastructure and was told yes. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Arnold, to give the Mayor authority to sign the agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Phillips said they will be moving forward with concrete in the generator plant.

Administrative Comments:

Phillips had Sara DeYoung discuss putting a mural on the new water tower. It would be completely funded by the tourism commission. Discussion was had on maintenance, upkeep and the design. This item will be added to next meetings agenda for further discussion. Phillips said he asked Joe Effinger to step in as interim cemetery Caretaker. He said a committee of Weishaar, Keys, Jessica Call and himself will meet to discuss salaries.

Keys had nothing.

Watson said he noticed the Street Dept. cleaned up a ditch and did a great job.

Rayburn said he spoke with a citizen concerned with the state of a neighbor's roof. Davis said he would look into it.

Weishaar said she was approached by a business regarding garbage pickup on Holidays' when the business is closed. She will speak with Black about the issue.

Overton had nothing.

Arnold said he agreed with Watson that council should not be appointing school board members. He questioned what the process would be to switch from appointed members to elected. Phillips said he has a contact at the Indiana

Election Division. Arnold also brought up the flag pole in front of City Hall. J. Lockridge said it would be a good idea to work on it now before the sidewalks are poured.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson had nothing.

Law Dept: Sammons had nothing.

Utility Office: Smart was absent.

Building Dept: Davis had nothing.

Fire Dept: Haun said firefighter graduation is June 7th in Valparaiso. Construction of the tower has been pushed back 10-12 weeks.

Electric Dept: Welker said two linemen went to Washington, IN for mutual aid assistance. Arnold asked if we get reimbursed for their time and expenses. Welker said yes.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black said 812 feet of water main was installed and the hydrant was set for the fire training tower.

Project Coordinator: J. Lockridge said they have started cutting sidewalks and lining the sewer for the brick street project. The gas and electric conduits are in the water tower and the generator has been set. SRF has approved Change Order 2.

Gas Dept: C. Lockridge had nothing.

Cemetery Dept: Baltus was absent.

Park Dept: Effinger said the Park Board and Corporation will be meeting Monday night.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:



Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer