

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL & RENSSELAER UTILITY BOARD
August 12, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer and Rensselaer Utility Board met on August 12, 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. and Interim Cemetery Caretaker Joe Effinger, Fire Chief Kenny Haun, Police Chief Matt Anderson, Utility Office Manager Heather Smart, Lead Line Foreman Garrett Welker, Street/Water/Sewer/Sanitation Supt. Bryce Black, Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge, and Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge.

Also in attendance were: Bob Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Stace Pickering, Keith Arnett, and Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican.

The minutes of the July 22, 2024 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: Kenin Smith thanked council for allowing a teen mission group to volunteer their time serving the City.

Ordinance 17-2024, Discontinuation of Services: Smart said this will repeal and replace all prior ordinances regarding this topic. This will change what is considered after-hours. Currently it is 3:00 PM, this ordinance will change it to 4:00 PM. The disconnect fee will be \$25.00 prior to 4:00 PM or \$100.00 after 4:00 PM. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Overton, to approve the first reading of this ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 19-2024, Gas Tracker: C. Lockridge stated the gas tracker reflects a .005¢ increase per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Talon System Estimate: C. Lockridge requested to upgrade the pressure recorders at regulator stations. The recorders will be connected to a device that will send an alert if there is an overpressure situation. The estimate is for \$24,100.00. There was a motion by Overton, second by Arnold, to approve the purchase. The motion passed unanimously.

Building Improvement Requests: C. Lockridge said there is a drainage issue with the Gas Dept. building. During heavy rain events, water will get in the building. Portions of the roof also have no downspouts or gutters. A quote for \$40,404.00 was presented to install new gutters and downspouts. Utilizing this company would not void the roof warranty, as it is the same company that installed the roof. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to approve the purchase. The motion passed unanimously.

Community Crossings Matching Grant 2024 Update: J. Lockridge said the application has been submitted. Eight areas are included in the application. The total of the grant application submitted is \$978,164.00. If awarded, the grant would cover \$733,623.00 of the project and the city would contribute \$244,541.00. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Weishaar, to approve moving forward with the CCMG grant application. The motion passed unanimously.

Squad Car Purchase: Anderson said he is asking permission to order a new squad car. Dodge no longer makes Chargers, but some dealerships have over ordered. He has been in touch with a dealership that has two currently available on the lot. He would be trading in two 2016 cars. The total purchase price with the trade-ins is \$53,630.00 for both vehicles. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the purchase. The motion passed unanimously.

Burial Rights Request: Keys read burial rights request Daniel & Lisa Gastineau. There was a motion by Overton, second by Rayburn, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

Administrative Comments:

Phillips said the Eagles are requesting to close the alley behind City Hall for a fish fry on September 7th. They will need blockades, picnic tables, and a dumpster. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Keys had nothing.

Watson asked for an update on the I-65 sewer/water expansion. J. Lockridge said the design work is 11% complete.

Weishaar said there are instances with residents selling homes that are zoned incorrectly, which causes an issue with the buyers getting financing. Currently, they are having those residents go get approval for a variance from the BZA, which can take time. Instead of spot zoning, she spoke with Josh and is recommending to order the Plan Commission to prepare a proposal to amend the subsection on non-conforming situation of the Rensselaer Zoning Ordinance to allow non-conforming residential uses to be continued at a change in ownership of the dwelling. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Arnold, to order the Plan Commission to prepare a proposal. The motion passed unanimously. She also said she would like to allow Davis to suspend the enforcement of the non-conforming change with ownership rule on a nonconforming residential dwelling for 90 days and suspend the issuance of a building permit on any such

property except in the event of damage or destruction of said dwelling. There was a motion by Overton, second by Arnold, to approve that request. The motion passed unanimously.

Weishaar said she has received phone calls regarding solar panels in the buffer zone. She said it is not in the city limits, but we have jurisdiction since it's in the buffer zone. She discovered that area is not actually zoned, it's zoned 'St. Joe', which has no definition. She would like the Plan Commission propose a change to the base district zone map for the district identified as St. Joe on the Zoning Map dated June 2009. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Arnold, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Rayburn asked Davis and Sammons for an update on the Front St. property. Davis said he needs to send a certified letter and do a formal final inspection. Rayburn also asked if any progress has been made on the retail establishment along the river. Davis will add it to his list.

Arnold asked for an update on livestreaming. Davis said it would be around \$10,000.00 for cameras, equipment, and install. He also asked for an update on Laserfiche. Davis said the upgrade was signed-off on today. Lastly, he said a transformer exploded on Saturday and the Line Dept. was there quickly and got the issue resolved.

Overton had nothing.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson requested permission to advertise and hire a school crossing guard. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Law Dept: Sammons said he has been working with Heather on ordinances.

Utility Office: Smart had nothing.

Building Dept: Davis said there is a Redevelopment Commission meeting on Monday. They will be discussing amending a TIF area and starting a residential TIF area.

Fire Dept: Haun had nothing.

Electric Dept: Welker said 4 new lights have been installed around the Courthouse. Once they are able to drive on the bricks, the remaining lights will be put up.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black said out of the 509 services that were identified, 127 are lead.

Project Coordinator: J. Lockridge gave an update on the brick streets project.

Gas Dept: C. Lockridge had nothing.

Cemetery Dept: Effinger said he is getting ready for the cemetery walk.

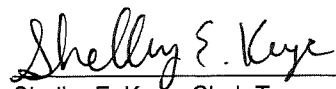
Park Dept: Effinger said mulch will be dropped off this week for some of the parks.

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 6:48 p.m.



Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:



Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer