

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL & RENSSELAER UTILITY BOARD
October 14, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer and Rensselaer Utility Board met on October 14, 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 Sean Johnson 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, 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. Park Supt Heather Hall was absent.

Also in attendance were: Bob Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Angie Haun, Heath Malone, Josh Eldridge, Ryan Ritter, Sharon Colee, Caleb DeJong, Butch Claussen, Tracie Anderson, Cody Heldak, Stace Pickering and Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican.

The minutes of the September 23, 2024 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Weishaar, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: Tracie Anderson voiced her concerns regarding unimproved alleys and the lack of clear rules and regulations.

Public Hearing, Scott Street Railroad Crossing Closure: There was a motion Rayburn, second by Overton, to close the regular meeting and open a public hearing. The motion passed unanimously.

Butch Claussen asked if the closure was required. Phillips said no. Claussen asked what would be gained from closing the crossing. Phillips said there is a monetary incentive and a safety factor. Claussen asked why Scott St. and not Jefferson St. Phillips said there are no safety arms on Scott St. and it would be less of an inconvenience to others. Claussen asked if the crossing is closed can it ever be reopened. Phillips said it would be a permanent closure. There was no other public comment.

There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to close the public hearing and open the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Jasper County Community Services (JCCS): Sharon Colee with JCCS presented resources available to Rensselaer residents. She requested a contribution of \$12,000.00 and asked that it be an on-going budgeted line item. No action was taken.

Tree Removal Bids: Josh Eldridge, Assistant Superintendent, recommended Timber Tree Service for the removal of 29 trees. The quote for the tree removal was \$22,715.00. Arnold questioned if we could do the work ourselves. Phillips stated it was more efficient to hire the work out. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Overton, to approve the quote from Timber Tree Service. The motion passed unanimously.

Golf Cart Ordinance Discussion: Chief Anderson said he is seeing more registrations for UTV's. The current ordinance is open-ended and he is suggesting an amendment to limit the registrations to just golf carts.

AMI Update: Heath Malone said 3,181 electric meters and 2,238 water meters are reporting. Gas does not currently have any meters online.

Brick Street Pay Application: J. Lockridge said this pay request is for \$211,504.50 and covers the install of reclaimed bricks, permeable pavers, pedestrian crossings and street light wiring. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to approve the pay request. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 19-2024, 2025 City Budget: Keys conducted the 2nd reading for the 2025 City Budget. There was a motion made by Rayburn, second by Overton, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 20-2024, Transfer to Rainy Day Fund: Keys conducted the 1st and 2nd reading for a transfer to the Rainy Day Fund in the amount of \$74,000.00. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to suspend the rules and waive the second reading. There was a motion made by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 21-2024, 2025 Salary Ordinance: Weishaar said they are still looking at procedures for on-call pay. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Overton, to table the conversation until the next meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 24-2024, Gas Tracker: C. Lockridge stated the gas tracker reflects a 1.5¢ decrease per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion made by Weishaar, second by Rayburn, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 25-2024, Transfer of Funds: Keys read a transfer of funds within the General Fund for \$92,807.00 and MVH Unrestricted for \$4,818.00. There was a motion made by Weishaar, second by Rayburn, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Burial Rights Request: Keys read a burial rights request for Kathy Towler. There was a motion made by Weishaar, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Administrative Comments:

Phillips said fantastic job on the Brick Street Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Customer Appreciation Day. Phillips made a Public Relations request for Filson Park for up to \$250.00. There was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar to approve the request. The motion pass unanimously.

Keys said city supply bids will be opened at the next meeting.

Watson said the Water Department truck is embarrassing, and hopes the department is looking for a new vehicle. Watson also thanked the Electric Department for helping with the disaster relief in Florida.

Weishaar thanked all city departments.

Rayburn showed appreciation for the Street Department and Building Department for the work completed on South Front Street.

Arnold heard from 2 Front Street residents they are happy with the work completed.

Overton thanked the Electric Department for helping with the disaster relief in Florida.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson said the new cars have been delivered.

Law Dept: Sammons had nothing.

Utility Office: Smart had nothing.

Building Dept: Davis said there was a Plan Commission meeting on Thursday.

Fire Dept: Haun said there were 400 plus people at the Open House. He said the training tower is complete and the ribbon cutting is on the 24th at 7:00 pm. Haun also stated the burn ban has been extended.

Electric Dept: Welker had nothing.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black said the leaf vac was put together today. He also said mailings were being sent out today to notify customers of lead lines.

Project Coordinator: J. Lockridge said that 37% of the I-65 design is complete.

Gas Dept: C. Lockridge had nothing.

Cemetery Dept: Effinger said he was working with Claussen Equipment to budget for a new mower next year. As of now, the price is \$24,930.00 for two mowers. He asked for permission to lock that pricing in. There was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to approve the purchase of 2 mowers out of the 2025 budget.

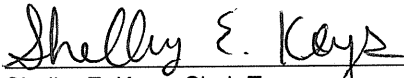
Park Dept: Hall was absent..

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.



Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:



Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer