

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
COMMON COUNCIL & RENSSELAER UTILITY BOARD  
January 13, 2025**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer and Rensselaer Utility Board met on January 13, 2025 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 Russ Overton 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, Park Supt Heather Hall, Street/Water/Sewer/Sanitation Supt. Bryce Black, Gas Supt. Todd Wilson, and Assistant Superintendent Josh Eldridge.

Also, in attendance were: Katelynn Shail with Peerless Midwest, Attorney Avery Walker, Stace Pickering and Harley Tomlinson.

The minutes of the December 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:** None.

**2025 Council President:** There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to nominate Weishaar as Council President. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 01-2025, Gas Tracker:** Wilson stated the gas tracker reflects a 1¢ increase per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Rayburn, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ordinance 01-2025, Lintner Park TIF Fund:** Keys said a comment mentioned during the audit was to separate the TIF areas into their own fund. This ordinance would create a new fund to track Lintner Park TIF expenses and revenues. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to suspend the rules and waive the second reading. The motion passed unanimously. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

**Brick Street Grimmer Pay Request #9:** Black said this pay request is for \$56,691.33 and covers sign installation, landscaping and change order #3. There was a motion by Watson, second by Arnold, to approve the pay request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Determination of the Petitions to Vacate Portions off Prairie St. and Unnamed Rd:** Davis said there was a public meeting held on this item in December and a decision needs to be made whether to proceed with the vacation or to terminate it. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Overton, to terminate the petition. Phillips asked if there was any discussion. Weishaar said the area needs to be maintained and cleaned up. Arnold asked if there was a property ownership dispute. Watson said he would have wanted something in writing from the party that did not show up to the meeting showing their comments against the vacation. The motion to terminate the petition failed by a vote of 2 for (Weishaar and Overton) and 3 opposed (Arnold, Watson and Rayburn). Attorney Walker will work with the Building Dept. to put together an ordinance.

**2020 Census Redistricting:** The new state code gives the Council until June 30, 2025 to redistrict the 4 city wards based on the 2020 census numbers. Davis put together two ward map options with updated populations and asked what council's preference was between the two. The first option kept the wards in the same general layout as they are now. The second option had the wards closer in population deviation and tried to more evenly spread them out as North, South, East and West. Maintaining the wards as closely to their 2010 layout was preferred. Arnold said in the past the city would vote by ward you reside in, now citizens vote for all wards. He questioned if it was an option to go back to only voting for the ward you live in. The council passed a resolution in the early 90's to allow the "At-Large" voting method for all council members and state code allows that method to continue, so long as the City's total population stays under 7,000.

**Peerless Midwest:** Katelynn Shail with Peerless Midwest spoke about the IDEM required update for a 5-year well head protection plan. They would like to put together a local planning team to meet annually to discuss well head protection and identify any potential additions to the protect area. Whether that be residential, commercial or industrial.

**Jasper County Community Service Contribution:** Phillips said a contribution to JCCS for 2025 has already been approved and a claim will be submitted for the next council meeting.

**Digger Truck Pre-Payment Request:** Welker said the digger truck is ahead of schedule. They are requested \$97,668.00 be paid for the chase. Delivery of the truck will be in early 2026. The remaining balance will be paid after that. There was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to approve the down payment request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Burial Rights Request:** Keys read burial rights requests for Marilyn Miller. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Arnold, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Nepotism Forms:** Keys said all elected officials have signed the annual nepotism policies.

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

**Administrative Comments:**

**Phillips** said tonight was the first for livestreaming meetings. He gave thanks to Linemen from the city who assisted in Henderson, Kentucky. A meeting was had with Baker Tilly to look at spending from a holistic approach.

**Keys** had nothing.

**Watson** told the Water Dept. to put something out about having your faucets drip during extreme weather events.

**Weishaar** had nothing.

**Rayburn** gave kudos to Chief Haun for his assistance with helping a woman on the interstate.

**Arnold** asked if there was any progress on a mass notification system. He also received a complain this morning regarding a bus utilizing an alleyway. The street superintendent will look into it.

**Overton** had nothing.

**Superintendents Reports:**

**Police Dept:** Anderson had nothing.

**Law Dept:** Sammons had nothing.

**Utility Office:** Smart had nothing.

**Building Dept:** Davis gave a meeting schedule update. There is a special plan commission meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> at 5:30. Next council meeting there will be a hearing to vacate an alley on the North side of Vine Street.

**Fire Dept:** Haun said the awards banquet is coming up and fire school is starting February 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Electric Dept:** Welker had nothing.

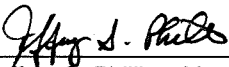
**Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage:** Black said plans for water and sewer extension will be received this week. Commonwealth will be here the 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss bidding the project. Eldridge said they are now in possession of the new recycling truck.

**Gas Dept:** Wilson said he will be conducting three interviews this week to fill a position within the department.

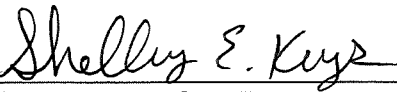
**Cemetery Dept:** Effinger had nothing.

**Park Dept:** Hall said she is meeting with an architect later this week to discuss conceptual designs for the light plant. A disc golf tournament has been scheduled for February 1<sup>st</sup>.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Rayburn, second by Weishaar, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

  
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Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:

  
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Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer

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