

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL & RENSSELAER UTILITY BOARD
May 27, 2025**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer and Rensselaer Utility Board met on May 27, 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 Lisa Ulrich and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Jeff Phillips, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Jessica Call, Council Members Russ Overton, Noelle Weishaar, Jeff Rayburn, Ernest Watson, Jr; City Attorney Todd Sammons, Cemetery Caretaker Joe Effinger, Fire Chief Kenny Haun, Police Chief Matt Anderson, 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. Absent: Clerk-Treasurer Shelby Keys, Council Member Kevin Arnold, Building Commissioner Josh Davis and Utility Office Manager Heather Smart.

Also in attendance were: Emily Lyons, Carol Lockridge, Ryan LaReau with Commonwealth and Harley Tomlinson.

The minutes of the May 12, 2025 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed by majority, with Arnold absent.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: LaReau briefly discussed the opening bid results from last Tuesday. Commonwealth made the recommendation to proceed with divisions A and C, with no risk of adjustment scoring from Baker Tilly or loss of funding.

School Board Appointment: Weishaar said two individuals were interviewed for the appointed school board position, which will be a 4-year term, beginning on July 1, 2025. There was a motion made by Weishaar, second by Rayburn, to appoint Emily Lyons as school board member. The motion passed by the majority, with Arnold absent.

Ordinance 09-2025, NITCO Pole Rental Amendment: Welker requested the Council President's signature for the amendment to the current NITCO Pole Rental Agreement, which will increase the pole rental fee from \$9 to \$13 per month and will allow fiber to be ran to Filson Park. There was a motion made by Rayburn, second by Watson, to approve the amendment. The motion passed by majority, with Arnold absent.

Ordinance 10-2025, Zone Map Amendment (Towne + Country Acres): Rayburn said Timothy Ventrello petitioned the Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission to rezone his property on N McKinley. In 2009, his property was zoned improperly as B-2. The APC is requesting the approval of the rezone and reimbursement of Ventrello's \$180 rezone fee. There was a motion made by Weishaar, second by Watson, to approve the rezone from B-2 to A-2 and reimbursement. The motion was passed by the majority, with Arnold absent.

Lead Service Line Replacement Project Bid Authorization: Black said easement paperwork was circulated to residents and now it's time to send off for bids for the Lead Service Line Replacement Project. Contingency money left over from the Water Tower Project will be used for this project. There was a motion made by Weishaar, second by Rayburn, for the approval to send off for bids. The motion passed by majority, with Arnold absent.

N Scott St Road Acceptance: Eldridge said there was 0.06 miles of unfinished road at Merritt St and Scott that was half asphalt and half gravel. He requested approval for the acceptance of N Scott St, so the City could pave the entire road. There was a motion made by Watson, second by Rayburn, to approve the acceptance of N Scott St. The motion passed by the majority, with Arnold absent.

Public Relations Request: Phillips requested \$2500.00 for the City's annual picnic, which is scheduled for July 25, 2025. There was a motion made by Rayburn, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed by majority, with Arnold absent.

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

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 by majority, with Arnold absent.

Unfinished Business: Phillips said that utilities to the new subdivision behind St Joe would be discussed at the June 9, 2025 meeting.

Administrative Comments:

Phillips thanked the Police Department for tagging cars during clean-up week.

Call had nothing.

Watson had nothing.

Weishaar had nothing.

Rayburn said since the dust storm last weekend, Reach Alert now has 890 subscribers and thanked all departments for working together.

Arnold absent.

Overton had nothing.

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson thanked Kevin Moore and Rick Owens for spending hours in the dark to repair the police generator during the power outage. With over 1600 homes without power, RPD put out another Reach Alert notice on their Facebook page.

Law Dept: Sammons thanked the departments for keeping him busy.

Utility Office: Smart absent.

Building Dept: Davis absent.

Fire Dept: Haun said training with Donaldson's employees is set to begin in the weeks to come and looking at the Fire Academy starting in August this year and graduation tentatively being in March of 2026. There will be a max of 55 students who can apply and applicants must be at least 19 years of age.

Electric Dept: Welker said the Memorial Day flags will come down tomorrow.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black requests the approval for the mayor to sign the Voluntary Commitment Agreement Letter, since our ADA and Title VI plans are out of date. This letter is to show that the City is committed to updating those plans and bringing them into compliance. Phillips stated that the City signed a contract with HWC to update those plans last November. There was a motion made by Overton, second by Watson, to allow the mayor to sign the Voluntary Commitment Agreement Letter to INDOT. The motion passed by majority, with Arnold absent.

I-65 project is progressing on track. New trash and recycling receptacles have been ordered and they should be delivered by July.


Eldridge said Amtrak has been graded and paving will be tomorrow with weather permitting. The Front St and College Ave project will be a little longer until completion and yard waste and brush will be picked up soon.

Gas Dept: Wilson said the new boring machine should be there within two weeks, the new sign on the Gas Department building was installed and they will be working on a new main extension on Sparling Ave.

Cemetery Dept: Effinger said Weston Cemetery had between 75-100 visitors at the Memorial Day service and work will begin on headstone foundations soon.

Park Dept: Hall said pool water samples came back from the lab and the pool will open May 30th. Other updates include pool house partitions have been installed, more deck improvements will begin in the coming weeks as the Rotary Club donated a generous grant, pollinator paths are complete, Park Summer League starts tonight and summer camp will be two weeks from today. Next week there will be a public meeting regarding the Park's 5-year Comprehensive Plan.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Rayburn, second by Overton, to adjourn. The motion passed by majority, with Arnold absent, and the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.



Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:



Jessica Call, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer