

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
March 9, 2015**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on March 9, 2015 in regular session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Stephen Wood called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by invocation offered by Councilman Overton and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Stephen Wood; Clerk-Treasurer Frieda Bretzinger; Council Members Scott Barton, Bill Hollerman, Russ Overton, George Cover, Ernest Watson, Jr.; City Attorney Mike Riley; Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Cemetery Supt. Ron DeMoss; Building Commissioner and Fire Chief Kenny Haun; Police Chief Jeff Phillips; Utility Office Manager Heather Smart; Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge; Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge; Robert Blankenship with the Rensselaer Republican. Electric Utility Coordinator Donna Cochran; Electric Plant Supt. Claude Grow; and Street Supt. Mike Murphy; were absent.

Also in attendance were; Mayor's Secretary Monica Maienbrook; Rick Williams; Brad Cozza with Jasper County Airport; Mary Brown with Cornerstone Realty; Stace Pickering with C/I; Robert Schenk.

The February 23, 2015 council minutes were presented and approved unanimously with a motion by Overton, second by Barton.

Citizen Comments and Presentation of Petitions: There were none.

Vacation of Alley Public Hearing: There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Barton, to close the regular meeting and open the public hearing. The motion passed unanimously. Haun said this is a public hearing to vacate a portion of an alley in Block 46 in Weston's Addition, City of Rensselaer. Riley said this was done earlier but no resolution was passed. There were no comments from the public. There was a motion by Overton, second by Cover, to close the public hearing and open the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 05-2015, Transfer Dormant Fund Balances: Bretzinger said the resolution is to close the Attendance Officer Fund and transfer the remaining balance of \$1,614.00 to the Drug Free Jasper County Fund which is where the money was originally granted from. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to approve Resolution 05-2015 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 06-2015, Approving the Sale of Personal Property: Bretzinger said the recycling department wants to sell a forklift to White County Recycling. The City must pass a resolution approving the sale and White County Recycling must pass an identical resolution. As long as we do this and the other entity is a governmental unit we can sell the item without an auction or bidding process. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Barton, to approve Resolution 06-2015 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 07-2015, Electric Tracker: Wood said the tracker reflects a \$4.06 decrease for every 1,000 kWh consumed. Assuming the average monthly household usage is 700 kWh the decrease will be about \$2.84 a month. There was a motion by Barton, second by Overton, to approve Resolution 07-2015 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 08-2015, Gas Tracker: Lockridge reported that the tracker did not change. There was a motion by Watson, second by Cover, to approve Resolution 08-2015 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 09-2015, Vacation of Alley: Riley said this is required by the county to vacate a portion of the alley in Block 46 in Weston's Addition in the City of Rensselaer. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to approve Resolution 09-2015 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Conflict of interest Disclosure Statement: Bretzinger said Scott Barton filed this Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement as the company he works for will be doing work for the remodeling project in the utility office. This is required by the state and must be filed with the State Board of Accounts and the Jasper County Clerk. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to approve the disclosure statement. The motion passed by majority, with Barton abstaining.

Public Relations Fund Request: Lockridge said there is a Gas Department Open House in conjunction with the Electric Department's Municipal Government Week. The open house is scheduled for May 1 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. She requested \$500 each for the Electric and Gas Utilities for a total of \$1,000. There was a motion by Barton, second by Hollerman, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Land Acquisition for the Electric Utility: Riley said it is probably in the best interest of the city to purchase some land for a substation that would be an emergency substation mainly for the businesses out at I-65. He said Larson has been negotiating for the property and they are now asking council's approval for him to continue. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Watson, for Larson to continue with negotiations. The motion passed unanimously.

Administrative Comments:

Watson said the police were out in full force working the murder case. The other thing he wanted to discuss was an ordinance passed in 2003 and he passed copies of the ordinance out to council. This ordinance makes the Utility Office Manager a superintendent. If this is the case he is going to recommend that Ordinance 18-2014 be amended to read Utility Office Manager/Superintendent and adjust the pay accordingly. Cover said it also specifies that the classification is an office manager. This position is not a superintendent and the intent was that the wage be changed from hourly to salary only. Therefore he strongly opposes the change. The job doesn't require that it is a superintendent position and doesn't require a \$20,000 raise. Barton asked Riley what the third "Whereas" means. Riley said this is not like legislative intent. It's not like a legislative committee. The ordinance looks like it's a superintendent position. Cover said under Section 1 it is a Utility Office Manager with a salary. It wasn't a superintendent's salary at that time so it's in black and white intent. Cover said if the intent is that this is a superintendent's position he will come back at the next meeting and recommend eliminating the position because it's not a \$60,000 a year job. He said this has been fine for twelve years and now we want to change it to a superintendent's pay. The ordinance is clear that the intent was that it is not a superintendent's position. He felt it needed to go to a committee or come back with another proposal. Barton would like more time to study this and Overton said he was shocked. Bretzinger said there is also two other superintendent's salaries; one for park and one for cemetery along with the utility superintendent pay so which salary are we talking about. Wood said you can't compare park with utilities. Cover said you can't compare this with a utility superintendent; this position doesn't run the utility, it collects. Wood said he was going to form a committee. Watson said he didn't believe that the ordinance was meant to be conflicting. Wood appointed a committee of Hollerman, Cover and Bretzinger. The committee will confer with the attorney. He will also be on the committee.

Bretzinger had nothing.

Wood said about two or three weeks ago he was asked to testify at the Senate utility hearing over the electric territory. He is going down Wednesday to testify in front of the House to testify in its hearing regarding the electric utility. He also attended a meeting regarding the Hoosier Line. The state of Indiana agreed to continue the Hoosier Line and even budgeted \$3M. Now the Federal Railroad Administration told the state that they would have to take over the entire running of the railroad so now the state is not interested. He also commended the police department on great job they did.

Barton thanked the street department for quickly fixing the potholes by the stone quarry.

Hollerman said the snow removal has been fantastic. The police did an excellent job on this murder investigation.

Overton congratulated the police department on an arrest.

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

Supt Reports:

Electric Utility: Larson said they got their first shipment of LED lighting in. They will start putting those in security lights.

Fire Department: Haun said there will be a pre-bid meeting on the new fire station on March 12th at 1:00 p.m. in council chambers.

Gas Department: Lockridge had nothing.

Legal Dept.: Riley had nothing.

Park Dept: Effinger said the park board and corporation will meet next Thursday night at 6:00 p.m.

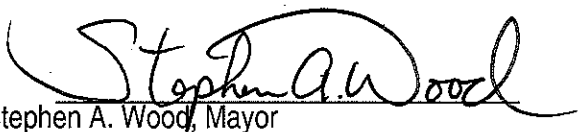
Police Dept.: Phillips said they spent a lot of overtime hours on this investigation. LePard graduates from the academy this Friday.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Wastewater: Lockridge asked council's permission to hire up to five part-time summer employees again this year. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously. They are busy with alleys and potholes.

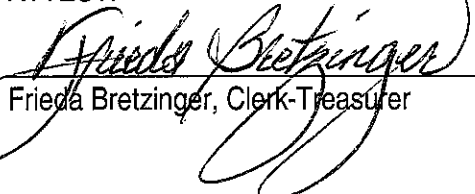
Utility Office: Smart had nothing.

Weston Cemetery: DeMoss said on March 21st they will begin their spring cleanup.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Barton, second by Watson, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

ATTEST:


Frieda Bretzinger, Clerk-Treasurer