

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
COMMON COUNCIL  
December 12, 2016**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on December 12, 2016 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 Tim Hendrix of the Bethany Free Evangelical Church and the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Also in attendance were: John Julien with Umbaugh; Tim Hendrix with Bethany Free Evangelical Church. Jasper County Commissioner Kendell Culp; Jasper County Council Member Rein Bontreger; Stace Pickering with C/I; Kevin Kelly with JCEDO, Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures.

The minutes of the November 28, 2016 council meeting were presented and unanimously approved by a motion by Cover and second by Hollerman.

**Citizen Comments and Presentation of Petitions:** There were none.

**Ordinance 24-2016, An Ordinance to Create a Local Road and Bridge Matching Grant Fund:** Bretzinger explained this ordinance is to create a fund to deposit and track the grant funds for the street projects being done with the LOIT Special Distribution funds. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Odle, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously. Barton asked if council could get this information earlier than the day of the council meeting and to not have add-ons to the agenda. He wanted to know why this couldn't wait until the next meeting. Bretzinger said the grant money has to be deposited in a separate fund and since the grant money has already been requested it is possible we could receive the money before the next meeting and by state law we have to deposit the money within twenty-four hours of receiving it.

**Resolution 31-2016, Transfer of Funds:** Bretzinger the transfers requested by the department heads are as follows: \$700.00 for Mayor's Office, \$2,000.00 for the Clerk-Treasurer's Office, \$2,700.00 for the Building Department, \$16,939.00 for the Fire Department, \$6,500.00 for the Police Department, \$10,050.00 for Weston Cemetery, and \$2,400.00 for the Park Department with a total \$41,289.00 transfer for General Fund, \$24,000.00 for MVH and \$401.00 for EDIT Fund. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 32-2016, Gas Tracker:** Carol Lockridge said this reflects a 7¢ increase per 100 cubic feet of gas. There was a motion by Barton, second by Odle, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Rate Analysis and Project Funding:** John Julien with Umbaugh and Associates discussed the study of the Electric Utility. Operating costs are being held steady so we're not varying much. Revenues have increased slightly due to the trackers. We aren't making money and the last couple of years we have been losing money. We need to have some cash on hand. We don't want to fall below \$3.4M and right now it's at \$4.4M so there's only \$1,000,000 of flexibility. One transformer blowing would take \$1.M to replace. We need to be proactive. The last rate study was in 2010. The meat of the study is where are we going and being able to meet our obligations. Do we have money to take care of the new substation project? It will be \$1.9M to \$2M to bond for the Watt Substation. The plan is to weave the 2011 and 2012 bonds in with the 2016 bonds. He presented a ten year capital improvement plan. Some projects may become more of a priority and some may move down. He figures we will spend \$200,000 more than what we are now. We need about \$12.3M to come from rates and charges. That would be about a 6.3% increase. In the proposed increase an average residential electric bill will increase from about \$79.00 to \$84.00 for 700 kWh. The study shows we need about \$730,000 annually so it's time for a rate increase. Odle asked if we need to use a planning tool and review annually or three or five years. Julien said he would like to see that and for us to be proactive. Julien will work with Riley on a rate ordinance and introduce it at the December 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. A public hearing and adoption will probably be scheduled in January. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Cover, to move forward as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Cemetery Deed Requests:** Bretzinger presented cemetery deed requests for Robert Hall, Teresa Alexander, and Russ and Andrea Maienbrook. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Watson, to approve the cemetery deed requests. The motion passed unanimously.

**Committee Reports:** There were none.

**Administrative Comments:**

**Barton** asked about Daniels' promotion to street superintendent. Wood said they are looking at promoting him the first of the year. Barton asked if we spent all of the money for superintendent. Lockridge said not for this year but we did take it out of next year's budget so it would have to be re-appropriated.

**Bretzinger** had nothing.

**Cover** thanked the street dept. for leaf pickup.

**Hollerman** seconded Odle's comment.

**Odle** thanked the street department for cleaning the streets of snow.

**Watson** had nothing.

**Wood** had nothing.

**Claims Approval:** The claims were presented for payment. Barton asked about Riley's bill on reviewing our nepotism policy. He asked what the findings were. Riley said Bowles asked about an employee that they were getting ready to hire. Riley said he would send Barton his findings. There was a motion by Cover, second by Hollerman, to approve the claims. The motion passed unanimously.

**Superintendents Reports:**

**Building Dept.:** Haun had nothing.

**Cemetery Dept.:** Cochran had nothing.

**Electric Dept.:** Larson said they built a new three phase line at the new wet weather plant.

**Fire Dept.:** Haun had nothing.

**Gas Dept.:** Carol Lockridge trying to finish up any underground that they can still get in.

**Legal Dept.:** Riley had nothing.

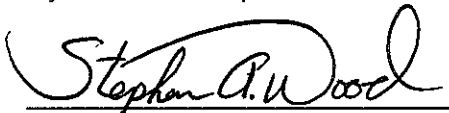
**Park Dept.:** Effinger said they are doing winter maintenance.

**Police Dept.:** Phillips said the Board of Public Works approved the promotion of Sergeant Matt Anderson to Lieutenant. A meeting will be held on Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. in council chambers. The program is called Teen Challenge and it's for addictive counselling and housing.

**Street, Sanitation, Sewage and Water Dept.:** Daniels thanked council for compliment and will pass it on. Lockridge said Bowen is 62.5% complete on the wet weather treatment plant.

Kelly invited everyone to JCEDO's Open House on December 21, 2016 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Barton, second by Odle, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

  
Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:

  
Frieda Bretzinger, Clerk-Treasurer