

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
March 12, 2018**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on March 12, 2018 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 Russ Overton 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; Building Commissioner Kenny Haun; Fire Chief Bob Graves; Police Chief Matt Anderson; Utility Office Manager Heather Smart; Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge; Electric Manager of Operations Steve Miller; Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson; Electric Plant Supt. Claude Grow; Street Supt. Andy Daniels; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge; Nick Fiala with the Rensselaer Republican.

Also in attendance were: Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures; Stace Pickering with C/I; Jack Alvey with IMPA; John Julien with Umbaugh; Eric Allison with CompTech 21; Russ Overton.

The minutes of the February 26, 2018 council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Barton, second by Odle, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Presentation of Petitions: There were none.

Public Hearing: Economic Revitalization Area: There was a motion by Cover, second by Watson, to close the regular meeting and open the public hearing. There was no council vote on the motion. Wood explained that the public hearing is for the economic revitalization area. Fiala asked if this was approving the tax abatement for the solar farm. Wood told Fiala that we actually have to establish the revitalization area before we can approve tax abatement. Schenk thought we approved the revitalization area last time. Wood said we had a declaratory resolution at the last meeting but we had to advertise and hold a public hearing. Schenk asked when we're doing the tax abatement. Bretzinger said the tax abatement SB-1 is later in the agenda. There was a motion by Odle, second by Hollerman, to close the public hearing and open the regular meeting. There was no council vote on this motion.

Resolution 06-2018, Confirmatory Resolution Designating an Economic Revitalization Area: There was a motion by Cover, second by Watson, to approve the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

IMPA's SB-1, Solar Park Tax Abatement: There was a motion by Odle, second by Hollerman, to approve IMPA's SB-1 Form for a ten year abatement. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 07-2018, Gas Utility Rate Adjustment: Julien addressed council concerning the gas rate analysis by Umbaugh for the gas utility. It's been fourteen years since the base rate has been adjusted. The adjustment they are recommending is broken into two phases. One phase will take care of the shortfall and the second phase will be to fund the proposed expansion of the delivery points for the gas utility. For the last three years there's been more money going out than is coming in. However most of the expenses not including purchased gas are salaries and employee benefits. He said fourteen years ago 82¢ of every \$1.00 went toward purchased gas, 14¢ of every \$1.00 took care of all of the day-to-day expenses, and 4¢ of every \$1.00 took care of capital improvements. Now, about 60¢ of every dollar takes care of purchased gas, 30¢ takes care of operating costs, 8¢ of every dollar would be to take care of the bond issue. So we're talking about an \$11.00 increase, \$7.00 for day-to-day operations and \$4.00 for the proposed expansion. This increase would be over the next two years. With this increase we would be similar to NIPSCO rates. Phase I rate increase would be 16% increase and Phase II is an 8% increase. Cover said fourteen years is a long time to go without an adjustment in base rates. There was a motion by Cover, second by Barton, to pass the ordinance on first reading. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 05-2018, Return Outstanding Warrants: Bretzinger said this ordinance is to return outstanding warrants to their original funds. The total outstanding checks to be canceled are \$100.82 to Water Meter Deposit, \$838.00 to Water Construction, \$147.82 to Sewage Meter Deposit, \$1.08 to Electric Meter Deposit, and \$64.10 to Gas Meter Deposit. There was a motion by Barton, second by Odle, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 06-2018, Establish Interconnection Standards: Miller said this ordinance addresses the interconnection standards for renewable generation facilities to the utility's grid. This is for the safety of the utility, its employees and customers. The customer would have to complete the connection and an application would have to be made. The utility can charge a reasonable application fee to offset the cost for the inspection and other associated costs. If an application is not submitted then the city can impose a fine of not less than \$500.00 and no more than \$2,500.00 for each violation. Bretzinger asked about advertising because of fines. Miller and Riley did not know. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Watson, to approve the ordinance on first reading. The motion passed unanimously.

Hosted PBX Service and Internet Bandwidth: Allison said he's been getting prices for phone lines for the city. He's been talking to Nitco about our phone lines and the internet. Nitco can take over our phone lines and upgrade our internet for \$690.00 per month, \$100.00 less per month than our current carrier, CenturyLink. He said our download would increase 4X and our upload would increase 10X. Allison said what he liked about Nitco is there's someone you can actually reach out and touch. There's a \$750.00 start-up fee and the contract term is 36 months. There was a motion by Cover, second by Barton, to authorize the mayor to sign the agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 04-2018, Transfer of Funds: Bretzinger told council this resolution is the result of a transfer request within the MVH Fund of \$100.00 and within EDIT of \$4,000.00. There was a motion by Odle, second by Watson, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 05-2018, Gas Tracker: Lockridge reported to council that the gas tracker reflects a 10¢ increase per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Barton, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 07-2018, Electric Tracker: Miller said the second quarter tracker reflects a \$7.11 decrease per 1,000kWh used. There was a motion by Barton, second by Hollerman, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Street Closing Request: Wood read the Little Cousin Jasper Festival Committee request for street closures for the festival being held September 7th, 8th and 9th of 2018. The street closures requested are as follows:

Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Van Rensselaer Street from Washington Street to Harrison Street and Harrison Street from Cullen Street to Front Street.

Saturday for the 5-K Run from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Van Rensselaer Street from Harrison Street to Rutsen Street.

Saturday for the Car Show which is new this year, from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Weston Street from Washington Street to Harrison Street and Harrison Street from McKinley Avenue to Cullen Street.

Bretzinger said she already sent this to Chief Anderson and he didn't see any problems. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Odle, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Ratify Council Poll for the Rural Development Budget for the USDA's Annual Report: Bretzinger said Smart e-mailed council the annual budget for council review. Bretzinger polled council and received unanimous approval and needs to ratify that vote. There was a motion by Barton, second by Odle, to ratify the poll. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports: There were none.

Administrative Comments:

Barton had nothing.

Bretzinger said on behalf of the LCJ Festival Committee thank you for the street closures.

Cover thanked the employees for their work on the flooding.

Hollerman had nothing.

Odle had nothing.

Watson had nothing.

Wood had nothing.

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.

Superintendents Reports:

Building Dept.: Haun had nothing.

Cemetery Dept.: Cochran had nothing

Electric Dept.: Miller had nothing. Larson had nothing. Grow had nothing.

Fire Dept.: Graves had nothing.

Gas Dept.: Lockridge had nothing.

Legal Dept.: Riley had nothings.

Park Dept.: Effinger had nothing.

Police Dept.: Anderson gave a progress report on the building renovation. Fifteen police officer applicants were invited to a Saturday interview. After Saturday's testing they have cut that to seven applicants.

Street, Sanitation, Sewage and Water Dept.: Daniels had nothing. Lockridge said the blacktopping will begin the second week of April.

Utility Office: Smart had nothing.

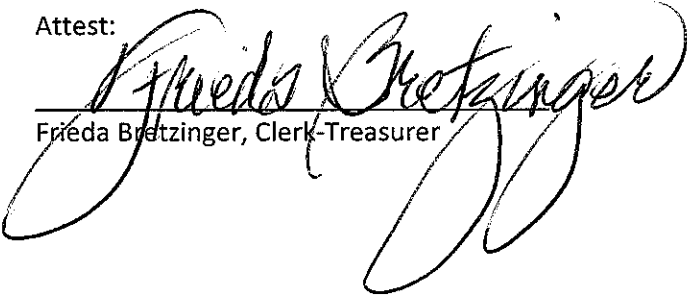
Pickering said the final meeting for Downtown Revitalization Plans will be tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. in City Hall.

Hollerman asked about the picnic and if it was just for employees. Smart said it is for employees, their spouses and children living with them.

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 6:55 p.m.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:


Frieda Bretzinger, Clerk-Treasurer