

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
COMMON COUNCIL  
May 22, 2023**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on May 22, 2023 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 Kenin Smith and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Stephen Wood; Clerk-Treasurer Shelby Keys; Council Members Russ Overton, Bill Hollerman, Noelle Weishaar, George Cover, Ernest Watson, Jr; City Attorney Jacob Ahler; Building Commissioner Josh Davis; Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Cemetery Caretaker Tony Baltes; Fire Chief Kenny Haun; Police Chief Matt Anderson; Utility Office Manager Heather Smart; Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson; Asst. Street Supt. Bryce Black; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge; Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge; Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican.

Also in attendance were Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Kenin Smith, Zyan Miller, Kevin Arnold, Courtney Wilcox, Joel Roper and Stace Pickering.

The minutes of the May 8, 2023 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Overton, second by Hollerman, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Citizen Comments and Petitions:** None.

**Public Hearing, Resolution 19-2023, White Castle Abatement Declaratory Resolution:** There was a motion by Overton, second by Watson, to close the regular meeting and open the public hearing. The motion passed unanimously. Ahler said the declaratory resolution has passed and now is time for comments or objections. The last step to finalize the abatement is to pass the confirmatory resolution. Citizens were asked for comments regarding the resolution. There were none. There was a motion by Overton, second by Cover, to close the public hearing and open the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 20-2023, White Castle Abatement Confirmatory Resolution:** Ahler said the area has been designated as an economic revitalization area and the city has gone through the statutory steps. If the council wants to move forward with the process, this confirmatory resolution will need to be passed. Once it's passed, the resolution will be sent to the County Assessor and County Auditor. There was a motion by Cover, second by Watson, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 21-2023, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Electric Tracking Factor:** Larson said this electric tracker reflects a \$3.55 increase per 1,000 kWh consumed. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Watson, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Update Board Appointments:** Davis said he reviewed several board appointments with Ahler. The council gets three appointments on the Advisory Plan Commission, they must be employees or municipal officials. The three currently serving in those positions were neither. The terms for the new members will expire at the end of this year with the current city council. There was a motion by Watson, second by Weishaar, to appoint Bryce Black, Justin Wilson, and Joe Effinger to the Advisory Plan Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

Cover said there were two applicants for the school board appointment. There was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar, to nominate Courtney Wilcox to the school board. Roll call vote: Cover-yes, Watson-yes, Overton-yes, Hollerman-yes, Weishaar-yes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Bid Award:** Roper said 4 bids were received from 3 bidders. He met with the utility department superintends to discuss the project. Roper recommends awarding the bid to Wesco-Anixter for the first-year amount of \$503,975.00. Watson asked if there are any grants available. Roper said not at this time, there may be some money available in 2024. Watson said there are a lot of projects going on already. Roper said there are about 1,000 electric meters that will need to be changed out over the next year that won't be supported anymore. Roper said this will just be for electric at this point. Water and gas will be phased in. Watson asked if there was a yearly software cost. Roper said a little less than \$20,000.00 annually. Wood said we are in a position where we need to do this project. Watson asked how this will be funded. Smart said the depreciation fund. There was a motion by Cover, second by Watson to approve the recommendation by Roper to approve the bid from Wesco-Anixter. The motion passed unanimously.

**Burial Rights Request:** Keys read a request for burial rights for Sandra Trapp. There was a motion by Hollerman, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Credit Card Statement:** Wood asked council for permission to sign the credit card activity log. There was a motion by Overton, second by Hollerman, to allow the mayor to sign. The motion passed unanimously.

**Baker Tilly Sewage Works Engagement Letter:** J. Lockridge said this is a proposal to assist in the financial portion of the WWTP improvements. He said the work will amount to around \$95,000.00. This has to be done prior to submitting the SRF application. He is requesting permission for the mayor to sign the engagement letter with Baker Tilly. There was a motion by Watson, second by Cover, to allow the mayor to sign. The motion passed unanimously.

**Administrative Comments:**

**Cover** said the mayor heard from the railroad and they will hopefully be here in June or July. Cover asked Effinger if he is still working on plans for his building. Effinger said they have some information, but haven't moved on anything



yet. Cover said keep working on it. J. Lockridge said we are going to try and work it in to the end of the year to utilize funding from both years. Cover asked Effinger is there has been a lot of vandalism at the parks. Effinger said yes and that he has talked with Anderson who has been sending more patrols out. Anderson said they have charged a couple of juveniles.

**Watson** said they put down a new road on Melville and four semis went by. Anderson said the problem with semis is that they aren't local drivers and don't know. They are citing them. Watson said council received a letter about qualifications for the gas department and asked what was being done about it. C. Lockridge said the day it came they started working on it. She said the engineering firm and experts in that field are working on a response.

**Keys** had nothing.

**Wood** asked Davis to discuss the information regarding parking on the brick streets given by the engineering firm. Davis scheduled a meeting with Klockow to discuss why the decision was made on parking. Wood said parking was addressed with the engineering firm after the last meeting. J. Lockridge said this plan started in 2017. There have been several public documented meetings. One reason for the change in the parking deals with turning safety and road travel. There will also be a multi-use path put in to connect the parks. After talking with Kimley Horn, the engineering firm, minor changes at this point are acceptable. But, this would be a major change. There is no guarantee that EDA would allow additional time to make these changes and they could pull funding for the project.

**Overton** congratulated Courtney Wilcox on being appointed to the school board.

**Hollerman** had nothing.

**Weishaar** congratulated Wilcox and thanked Watson for asking about the gas department letter. C. Lockridge added that all of her employees are up to date on qualifications. Gas dept. employees have to do 80 training modules every 3 years, follow-up by practical's and evaluations. Weishaar thanked Davis and J. Lockridge for following-up with the small businesses regarding the brick street improvements. Weishaar asked Effinger how things were going with the pool, as it is scheduled to open June 5<sup>th</sup>. Effinger said they are going to start working on things, they have been busy with the ball fields. There are no issues that he knows of.

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

#### **Superintendents Reports:**

**Police Dept:** Anderson said he just sent an email out reminding his officers to watch for trucks on Melville St.

**Law Dept:** Ahler said there was a request made for the City to waive the tap fees for the new EMS building. He had a discussion with bond counsel at Bose McKinney and Evans to confirm that since the funds are coming from the bonds, the service of that debt is pledged, the city is required to collect all income. The city does have discretion to waive building permit fees and things of that nature, but not tap fees.

**Utility Office:** Smart had nothing.

**Building Dept:** Davis had nothing.

**Fire Dept:** Haun said he is getting ready to test 12,000 feet of hose. June 9<sup>th</sup> a probationary firefighter will be graduating from the academy.

**Electric Dept:** Larson said he's taken a few council members through the light plant. The floor needs reinforced. He reached out to Titan Construction to pour supports in the basement. The price was quoted at \$33,000.00. There was a motion by Cover, second by Watson, to approve the Titan Construction quote. The motion passed unanimously.

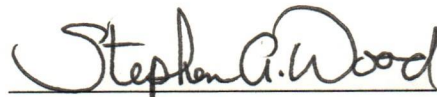
**Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage:** Black said the tunnel on Harrison St. has been removed. Brightspeed and NITCO will be doing boring work starting next week. J. Lockridge said the community crossing grant is going strong. They have been grinding and laying blacktop and are halfway through the list. Replacing storm line on College Ave next week. Substantial completion for the main lift station and unsewered areas was the 15<sup>th</sup> of May.

**Cemetery Dept:** Baltes said Memorial Day is in a week starting at 11:00 AM. He has a full crew working at the cemetery. The whole west side has been repaved. The whole cemetery will be done before Memorial Day. Cover said the cemetery looks beautiful.

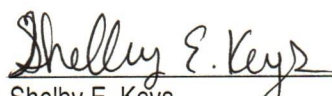
**Gas Dept:** C. Lockridge had nothing.

**Park Dept:** Effinger had nothing. Cover asked if he was getting ready for mosquito season. Effinger said absolutely.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Overton, second by Hollerman, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

  
Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:



Shelby E. Keys  
Clerk-Treasurer