

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
COMMON COUNCIL  
June 26, 2023**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on June 26, 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; Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Linda DeMoss; Council Members Russ Overton, Bill Hollerman, Noelle Weishaar, Ernest Watson, Jr; George Cover; Building Commissioner Josh Davis; Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Fire Chief Kenny Haun; Police Sargent Dan White; Asst. Street Supt. Bryce Black; Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge; Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge; Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican. Utility Office Manager Heather Smart, Electric Lead Line Foreman Lenny Larson were absent.

City Attorney Jacob Ahler came in at this time.

Also in attendance were Kenin Smith, Robert Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Sharon Colee, Kevin Arnold, Diane Hollerman, Brandon Schreeg, Cales de Jous, Michelle Lindstrand and Cody Heldak.

The minutes of the June 12, 2023 regular council meeting and June 14, 2023 special meeting were presented. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Hollerman, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Citizen Comments and Petitions:** None.

**Budget Support of Jasper County Community Services Transit:** Colee said that 75-85% of the community services transportation takes place in Rensselaer. A mini-van that the community services had ordered has arrived and is being painted. The van cost \$57,393.60 from the capital grant, but the cash match for the community services was \$7,000.00. Back in 2021 they also ordered two small transit vans which holds 8 passengers plus one wheelchair. The community service expects the two vans to be delivered late fall, possibly January. When the vans were ordered back in 2021 they cost \$67,830.00 per vehicle. From that time in 2021 until now in 2023, the cost for the very same vehicle is \$122,884.00. The cash match on those two vehicles is between \$7,000.00 to \$10,000.00 per vehicle. Back during COVID the charge to ride the Jasper County Community Service bus was one dollar per one-way trip. This cost was used for the cash match.

The Jasper County Community Services supports the transit coordination through a transportation director and also an assistant director for Trans. They do the dispatch coordination of drivers. Currently there are six drivers that provide transportation here in the cities area. Each is trained. We require each driver to go through a cumulative amount of training, whether it is onboard training, passenger assistance; classes and training in order to receive their master driver certification.

Cover said he supports the Community Service Transportation as Rensselaer needs it. Watson asked if the \$12,000.00 would just be for Rensselaer and for 2024 budget with each year after to be determined. Colee said yes, absolutely. Overton agreed it was important for the community and the county. Weishaar said she had talked to the clerk-treasurer about where we could pull those funds and it could come out of Public Works and Safety. Weishaar made the motion to support the public transportation within the city of Rensselaer provided by the Jasper County Community Service for the year 2024 with \$12,000.00, second by Overton. The motion passed unanimously.

**Status of Brick Streets Project Bids:** Ahler said the city needs to reject the bids that they have already received. State Statute allows for the city to be able to do that. There would need to be a motion to reject those bids and then to rebid. Lockridge agreed. There was a motion by Cover, second by Overton, to reject the bids for the Brick Street Project. The motion passed unanimously.

Lockridge said they were now asking Council's permission to rebid the Brick Street Project. It would set the project back six to seven weeks but it needed to be done. Watson made the motion to rebid, second by Weishaar. The motion passed unanimously.

**BZA Approval Process for Filson Park:** Ahler said the park board would be petitioning for a variance with the BZA for a conditional use. Council would ratify the decision. Davis talked to Manis and Manis was trying to get everything ready to present at the July meeting. If not, it may have to be tabled until later. Effinger would talk to Manis to call a special park board meeting in July to prepare for the BZA approval.

**Update Regarding St. Joseph's College Annexation:** Wood said that he talked to the Clerk-Treasurer and everything has been sent out to all the various agencies, and she is just waiting to hear back from the state. She is sure it is forthcoming. Mayor said he thinks St. Joseph College annexation is 99% completed,

**Pools, Permits and Fencing Requirements:** Davis said that right now the policy is that permits must be obtained for any pool installation, whether it is an inground or above ground pool and 18 inches or taller. Every swimming pool 18 inches or deeper must be surrounded by a fence at least 5 feet tall and 6 feet away from the pool. Davis is suggesting changing the policy so that a permit must be obtained when installing any permanent swimming pool regardless of depth. Temporary or seasonal pools would not require a permit. Every pool that is left unattended, regardless of depth, must be surrounded by a security fence. The fence would be deemed impenetrable at the discretion of the Building Commissioner. Cover asked if this included the kiddy pools when you are talking about depth. Davis said yes, if left in the yard with water in them and left unattended. If the water is dumped out when not in use, then it is not. This is a state statute Davis said. The amendments Davis is suggesting would go before the Plan Commission first, but you need to approve the policies for permits and fences. Watson made a motion to amend the requirements of the building departments policy regarding fences and permits for pools, second by Cover. The motion passed unanimously.

**Credit Card Activity Log:** Wood asked for Councils authorization to allow him to sign the Credit Card Activity Log. There was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar second. The motion passed unanimously.

Wood stated that Council Member Hollerman was resigning July 1<sup>st</sup> and this meeting is his last. Hollerman said he is 92 years old and not ashamed of it. He deserved a break. Hollerman received a standing ovation. Cover said Hollerman was the nicest person he has ever served with.

Mayor's holiday is September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

**Committee Reports:** there are none.

**Administrative Comments:**

**Cover** asked Lockridge if they were still working on the railroad tracks. Lockridge said they were starting in the next few weeks. Cover also stated that he has had citizens concerned about fireworks being set off with everything being dry. Sargent White said due to state law they can't stop them during the designated time, but encourage them not to set them off. Ahler said there is no state statute to stop them, but if they cause a fire then they can be billed for the fire.

**Watson** thanked Colee for the information on the transportation and appreciates what they do for the community.

**DeMoss** had nothing.

**Wood** had nothing.

**Overton** thanked Hollerman for his years of service and advise over the years.

**Hollerman** said to start traveling as soon as you can.

**Weishaar** thanked Hollerman for his years of service and read a quote out of the Declaration of Independence that is very important. The quote is just a good reminder Weishaar said and she is very thankful to live in the country we do.

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

**Superintendents Reports:**

**Police Dept:** Sargent White had nothing.

**Law Dept:** Ahler had nothing.

**Building Dept:** Davis said the next meeting he would be proposing an amendment for Plan Commission to consider and then bring to council to allow residential dwellings down town or in the business district. Davis also wanted to make council aware that Michelle Lindstrand had contacted the building department that she had damage done to her building from where a truck had come through the alley and hit the side of her building causing damage and it is a structural wall. The options to prevent this is to put up a removable safety ballard to be able to allow the utilities access to the alley but keep other large trucks out.

**Fire Dept:** Haun thanked Hollerman for his service and asked for prayers for rain.

**Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage:** Black said they are extending the road closure on North College Avenue for two more weeks until July 17<sup>th</sup>. The city auction is set for August 18<sup>th</sup>. Lockridge said they received two quotes for seal coat with Town & County and Kaufman Seal Coating and they want to hire Kaufman to do the seal coating with each department paying for their own areas. The areas are the High Rate Treatment Plant with the walking path next to it, parking lot at Front Street and Washington Street (crack seal only), parking lot number 2 at Kellner Street and Front Street, Fire Department, Brookside Park and parking lot of City Hall. Motion was made by Cover, second by Watson. The motion passed unanimously.

**Cemetery Dept:** Baltes had nothing.

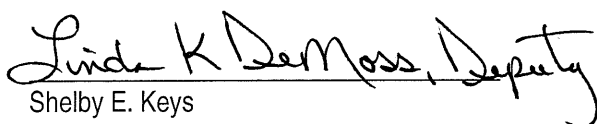
**Gas Dept:** C. Lockridge had nothing, but thanked Hollerman.

**Park Dept:** Effinger had nothing. Effinger stated they had a 25-team tournament this past weekend and a 16-team tournament this coming weekend.

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

  
Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:

  
Shelby E. Keys  
Clerk-Treasurer