

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
October 23, 2023**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on October 23, 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 Debbie Voss with the Burr Oak Community Church and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Stephen Wood; Clerk-Treasurer Shelby Keys; Council Members Russ Overton, Kevin Arnold, 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, Genny Daniels, Stace Pickering with Consolidated Insurance, Garrett Welker, Jeff Rayburn and Debbie Voss with Burr Oak Community Church.

The minutes of the October 09, 2023 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Overton, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: There were none.

Ordinance 21-2023, Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Ahler said the Plan Commission passed a resolution in September to approve sending this ordinance to Council. Weishaar brought up an issue she had with paragraph 12, section 2. That paragraph added an architectural standard for all districts to the ordinance, which required matching or complementary building styles and materials to be used. Weishaar was concerned with how the standard would be enforced and that it would hinder infill development and property improvements. She expressed concern that in order to enforce this more building permits would be necessary and that would require additional staff in the Building Dept. Ahler and Davis explained the language was used to address not only barndominiums, but also other drastically different building styles such as tiny homes. The Plan Commission did not want to have to pass an amendment for every new building style that might come in the future. Davis also expressed that requiring more building permits was a separate issue that already needs to be addressed. He agreed that we needed to determine when a permit would be required but that we currently have a lot of remodeling being done not to Indiana building codes, especially roofs. After much discussion, there was a motion by Weishaar, second by Watson, to send Ordinance 21-2023 back to the Plan Commission with concerns about section 2, paragraph 12. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 22-2023, Amend 03-2014, 11-2008 Alarm Contract: Anderson said the fee for alarm monitoring has increased \$2.00 a month per account. This ordinance is to increase the fee and pass it on to the customer. There was a motion by Cover, second by Arnold, to approve Ordinance 22-2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 23-2023, 2024 Salary Ordinance: Arnold read off the recommended changes suggested by the Salary Ordinance Committee. Keys said those suggested changes are incorporated in Ordinance 23-2023. There was a motion made by Cover, second by Weishaar to approve Ordinance 23-2023. Roll call vote: Cover-yes, Watson-yes, Overton-yes, Arnold-yes, Weishaar-yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 45-2023, Transfer of Funds: Keys read requests for transfer of funds. There was a motion made by Arnold, second by Watson to approve Resolution 45-2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Burial Rights Request: Keys read a request for burial rights for Gregory and Lorene Sutton. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Watson to approve the burial rights. 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 Cover, to allow the mayor to sign the credit card statement. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Front Street Property: Ahler said a summons has been sent. Resident has 20 days from filing to respond. A court date shortly thereafter.

Utility Budget Update: Arnold said Alex Hilt is coming November 13th to present a Utility Financial Report.

Administrative Comments:

Cover had nothing.

Watson had nothing.

Keys had nothing.

Wood had nothing.

Overton had nothing.

Weishaar had nothing.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson had nothing.

Law Dept: Ahler had nothing.

Utility Office: Smart had nothing.

Building Dept: Davis had nothing.

Fire Dept: Haun said they have a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday at 5:00 PM.

Electric Dept: Larson thanked the council for the 3% salary increase.

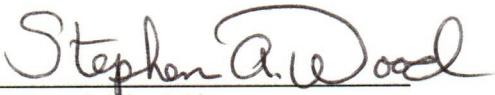
Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black said he and two apprentices attended a conference. While there, the apprentices participated in a challenge and won. An Indiana Finance Authority regional meeting will be hosted at the Fire Station on November 1st. Lockridge said that Weston Street is done and they are now working on Front Street. The patchwork on Van Rensselaer and Weston Street is almost complete.

Cemetery Dept: Baltes had nothing.

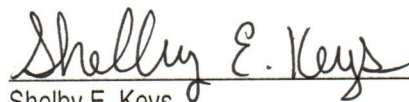
Gas Dept: C. Lockridge thanked council for the salary increase.

Park Dept: Effinger said the tractor they use is 20 years old and they need a new one. Effinger had a quote for \$31,975.00, and it is in stock. There was a motion by Cover, second by Weishaar, to approve the purchase of a tractor for \$31,975.00. The motion passed unanimously.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.


Stephen A. Wood, Mayor

Attest:


Shelby E. Keys
Clerk-Treasurer