

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
February 26, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on February 26, 2024 in regular session in Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Jeffrey S. Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by an invocation offered by Kenin Smith and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Answering roll call were: Mayor Jeff Phillips; Clerk-Treasurer Shelby Keys; Council Members Russ Overton, Kevin Arnold, Noelle Weishaar, Jeff Rayburn, Ernest Watson, Jr; Building Commissioner Joshua Davis, Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Cemetery Caretaker Tony Baltes, Fire Chief Kenny Haun, Police Chief Matt Anderson, Electric Supt. Brett Wilhite, Street/Water/Sewer/Sanitation Supt. Bryce Black, Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge and Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge. City Attorney Todd Sammons and Utility Office Manager Heather Smart were absent.

Also in attendance were: Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican, Ron Cox, Cody Heldak, Sara DeYoung, Kenin Smith, Stace Pickering and Larisa Parrish, Armelda Chambliss, Maceo Rainey with United Way.

The minutes of the February 12, 2024 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Overton, second by Arnold, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments and Petitions: Maceo Rainey, Vice President of Social Innovation & Strategic Partnerships with the United Way, shared information that residents within the county can utilize such as support for homeownership, soft-skill development, financial training, child care support and transportation. The contact for the area is Larisa Parrish.

JCEDO Fund Request: Sara DeYoung requested the annual contribution of \$10,000.00. She will be back at a later date to give a more formal presentation. Watson asked if the money will go directly towards benefitting the City. DeYoung said it goes towards projects JCEDO has assisted the city with such as tax abatements, site development discussions, facilitating the Façade Grant, ReadI 2.0 grant submissions, administering the Shop N' Stroll, the career fair at the high school and assisting with the murals. There was discussion had. Weishaar made a motion to approve the request of \$10,000.00. There was no second. The motion failed for lack of majority approval.

Ordinance 04-2024, Salary Ordinance Amendment: Phillips said this is the second reading of the ordinance. There was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 05-2024, Flood Damage Protection: Arnold presented the ordinance and said the updates were provided by the DNR and it meets FEMA guidelines. Homes within the flood zone can apply for federal flood insurance. Phillips asked if this was run past DNR and Davis said yes. There was a motion by Overton, second by Watson, to approve the first reading of the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously. Pickering asked if this causes any changes to the flood maps. Arnold said the maps are provided by FEMA.

Ordinance 06-2024, Zone Map Amendment of Sunnyside Addition: Rayburn said this area was previously zoned I-1 and are requesting a rezone to R-2. This was passed unanimously through the Plan Commission. There was a motion by Weishaar, second by Watson, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Sewage Bill Adjustment: Phillips said there was a large leak at a residence while nobody was home and requested that council take a look at her bill to see if they are interested in making an adjustment. The suggested adjustment is \$2,228.82. Discussion was had. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to approve the adjustment of \$2,228.85. The motion passed by majority, with a 3-2 vote.

Credit Card Statement: Phillips asked for council's permission to sign the credit card activity log. There was a motion by Watson, second by Rayburn, to allow Phillips to sign the credit card activity log. The motion passed unanimously.

Ratify Poll to Pay Claims: Keys said council was polled on January 22, 2024 for approval to pay claims. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Overton, to ratify the poll to pay claims. The motion passed unanimously.

USDA-RD Annual Report: Black said council needs to approve allowing Keys to sign off on the USDA-RD report. There was a motion by Watson, second by Weishaar, to allow Keys to sign the report. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Utility Budgets: Gas and Electric have been brought in to the discussion. A presentation will be made to council soon.

Administrative Comments:

Phillips said the committee for the parks department building will meet Thursday. He is also meeting with Amtrak and CSX.

Rayburn said he was at Filson Park today and thanked Gas and Water/Sewer for getting the utilities connected. He also said the lot next door with the snow fence is not looking the greatest. Davis will reach out to the landowner.

Watson said he was in the Electric Dept. building and saw water marks on equipment and trucks and installation falling from the ceiling. Wilhite will work on getting a quote for repairs and report back.

Keys had nothing.

Overton had nothing.

Arnold said thanks to Haun and the Fire Dept. for the banquet. He also mentioned the flags on City Hall are always wrapped around the flag pole. Phillips said he would look for a solution.

Weishaar thanked the Fire Department for hosting the banquet. She also brought up the new city Facebook page and asked if we have a social media policy. **Phillips** said he would look into it.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson had nothing.

Law Dept: Sammons was absent.

Utility Office: Smart was absent.

Building Dept: Davis said there is a Redevelopment Commission meeting on Monday night. He will be attending the AIM training next week regarding festivals and DORA's.

Fire Dept: Haun said concrete will be poured for the training tower starting the week of March 4th.

Electric Dept: Wilhite said he's glad to see the brick street project start.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black had nothing.

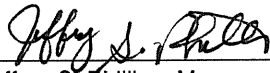
Project Coordinator: J. Lockridge had nothing.

Gas Dept: C. Lockridge had nothing.

Cemetery Dept: Baltes said the cemetery ordinance was last done in 2007. He has had residents ask about different types of burials and would like to establish a committee to review the ordinance. The committee will consist of himself, Rayburn and Watson. Baltes also said he has been working with the RUFC to plant 185 feet of Arborvitae along the south side of the office. He got a quote of \$3,900.00 for 40, 5-foot trees. Arnold said he would like to see specs and a plan before approving. Baltes said he will bring it to the next meeting. Cemetery clean-up is March 11th.

Park Dept: Effinger said the Parks Inc. will meeting Monday at 6:00 pm at City Hall.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by **Overton**, seconded by **Weishaar**, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.



Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:



Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer