

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
COMMON COUNCIL  
February 12, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on February 12, 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 Doug Harris 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; City Attorney Todd Sammons; Building Commissioner Joshua Davis, Park Supt. Joe Effinger; Cemetery Caretaker Tony Baltes, Fire Chief Kenny Haun, Police Chief Matt Anderson, Utility Office Manager Heather Smart, Electric Supt. Brett Wilhite, Street/Water/Sewer/Sanitation Supt. Bryce Black, Project Coordinator Jerry Lockridge and Gas Supt. Carol Lockridge

Also in attendance were: Bob Schenk with Rensselaer Adventures, Josh Eldridge, Mason Walker, Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican, Randy Denton, Ron Cox, Cody Heldak, Dave Del Principe, Sarah DeYoung, Ryan LaReau with Commonwealth Engineers, Stace Pickering and Garrett Welker.

The minutes of the January 8, 2024 regular council meeting were presented. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Weishaar, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Citizen Comments and Petitions:** There were none.

**Ratify IMPA Appointment:** Phillips said council was polled to approve appointing him to the IMPA Board of Commissioners. There was a roll-call vote taken to ratify the poll approving the appointment. Rayburn-yes, Watson-yes, Overton-yes, Arnold-yes, Weishaar-yes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Letter of Commendation:** Anderson presented Officer Mason Walker with a letter of commendation for his self-less actions that helped save the life of an individual.

**EDA Resident Project Representative Task Order:** J. Lockridge said the EDA RPR inspection services for the brick streets project has been awarded to Commonwealth, with a not-to-exceed amount of \$110,000.00 that will be paid out of the Water Department. There was a motion by Arnold, seconded by Overton, to approve utilizing Commonwealth Engineers as the RPR. The motion passed unanimously.

**Purchase of Shoring Box Consideration:** Black said he received two quotes. He requested to purchase the badger box through Allen Trench Safety. The cost of \$15,543.00 will be split between the Gas and Street Departments. There was a motion by Watson, seconded by Rayburn, to approve the purchase of the shoring box. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ordinance 04-2024, Salary Ordinance Amendment:** Phillips said this would add superintendent titles to utility departments that did not have that classification, allow for certain superintendents to receive overtime and moved pay for two positions to be in line with what other departments with those same positions are being paid. Arnold asked if this ordinance requires two readings. Phillips said only if there are fines or rates changing. Watson made a comment regarding the overtime rate needing to be changed from 1.5% to 1.5x. The ordinance will be read for a second reading at the next council meeting.

**Resolution 04-2024, Transfer of Funds:** Keys read a transfer of funds request within the Mayor's Office. There was a motion by Weishaar, seconded by Overton, to approve the transfer. The motion passed unanimously.

**Burial Rights Request:** Keys read a request for burial rights for Theresa Wilson, Donald Battleday, and Cindy Briles. There is a motion by Weishaar, second by Rayburn, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure Forms:** Attorney Sammons said there were Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement forms filed by Councilman Kevin Arnold and Councilman Jeff Rayburn for council's consideration. There was a motion Overton, seconded by Watson, to approve the disclosure forms, with Arnold and Rayburn abstaining. The motion passed by majority.

**Resolution 03-2024, February Gas Tracker:** C. Lockridge stated the gas tracker reflects a 6¢ increase per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion by Weishaar, seconded by Arnold, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

**Lead Service Line Inventory:** Black said if awarded the Phase 2 grant from the Indiana Finance Authority, we would enter into a \$10,000.00 agreement with Commonwealth Engineers to develop a replacement plan for the remaining lead service lines within the city. Phase 3 would be a validation grant, and if awarded, the city would receive \$100,000.00 to validate the unknown lines within the city. This would require no matching funds from the city. There was a motion by Overton, seconded by Rayburn, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Front Street Property:** Sammons said at the time of the hearing the court entered an order by agreement of the parties that specified what had to be done with the property and a time line of when it needs to be completed. The Building Commissioner can monitor the clean-up of the property. Substantial completion is April 25<sup>th</sup> and July 24<sup>th</sup> is the final date for clean-up.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Utility Budgets:** Ready for the other utilities to be brought into the discussion.

### Administrative Comments:

**Phillips** said the committee for converting the generator plant into the parks department building will consist of Jeff Rayburn, Joe Effinger, and himself. He will be emailing CSX for their assistance in approving the appearance of the Amtrak station.

**Rayburn** said he was glad to see an award go to Mason Walker.

**Watson** said good job to the electric department with the ice storm we had.

**Keys** had nothing.

**Overton** said everything the city workers are doing is amazing. Thank you and keep it up.

**Arnold** said there are lots of exciting things happening.

**Weishaar** mentioned the groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday, the 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM for the Downtown Brick Street Project. The council made appointments to the various boards being the Advisory Planning Commission, which is Kevin Arnold, Jeff Rayburn and Bryce Black. Next, the Rensselaer Parks Board, being Sue Wing and Rick Williams. For the Redevelopment Commission, it is Jeff Webb and Kevin Smith. Weishaar thanked Black for the tour of the phosphorous building.

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

### Superintendents Reports:

**Police Dept:** Anderson said two candidates were interviewed by the Board of Public Works and Safety. A psychological & physical exam will take place with the chosen candidate. Once that is complete, he will be sworn in. They will be fully staffed once done. Anderson also said they are hosting the Call of a Killer training class out at the fairgrounds and are expecting 100 people.

**Law Dept:** Sammons had nothing.

**Utility Office:** Smart said she is working on year-end reports and the AMI project.

**Building Dept:** Davis said there is a Plan Commission and a BZA meeting Thursday for rezoning. There is also a Redevelopment organizational meeting. New secretary has started.

**Fire Dept:** Haun said the Board of Public Works and Safety approved the wellness package for the firemen. Awards banquet is this weekend. Hosting an academy class on May 1<sup>st</sup> in Rensselaer with 65 students attending. Still waiting on the state to approve the plans for the training tower. Haun asked for approval for town wide yard sale to be on May 4<sup>th</sup>. There was a motion made by Weishaar, seconded by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Electric Dept:** Wilhite said they are working on the Brick Street Project, school's concession stand, and getting power to Foundation Park. He also said they put a bid in on a used piece of equipment.

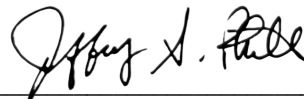
**Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage:** Black said May 20<sup>th</sup> is the start date for the water main. He requested May 6<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> to be clean-up week. Town wide yard sale is on May 4<sup>th</sup>. There was a motion made by Rayburn, second by Overton to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

**Project Coordinator:** J. Lockridge said that the Brick Street project starts February 26<sup>th</sup> and they will start by removing the bricks. The water tower is up and welded in place.

**Gas Dept:** C. Lockridge said they are working with St Joseph's College to get CPR, AED and First Aid classes set up for all employees city-wide.

**Park Dept:** Effinger said they are sprucing up the bathrooms at Brookside

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Weishaar, seconded by Overton, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.



Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:

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Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer