

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
COMMON COUNCIL
March 11, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer met on March 11, 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, 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. Fire Chief Kenny Haun was absent.

Also in attendance were: Harley Tomlinson with the Rensselaer Republican, Bob Schenk with Rensselaer, Garrett Welker, Jim Miller, Jason Dobson, Cody Heldak, Sara DeYoung, Rein Bontreger, and Stace Pickering.

The minutes of the February 26, 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: None.

JCEDO Presentation: Sara DeYoung gave a presentation discussing JCEDO and the Tourism commission and how those entities work with the city to get different things accomplished.

There was a motion by Arnold, second by Weishaar, to approve a contribution of \$10,000.00 for JCEDO. The motion passed unanimously.

Utility Budgets: Arnold said operating budgets for city utilities have been in the works for months. Accounts have been consolidated and each utility has budgeted line items. Smart asked where the superintendents should go if they are needing to move money around or if they will be short within a line item. Watson said this year will be a practice run. Phillips said he sat down with each utility superintendent and they will use the budgets as a management tool. There was a motion by Overton, second by Rayburn, to move forward with utility budgets. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 05-2024, Gas Tracker: C. Lockridge stated the gas tracker reflects a 10¢ decrease per 100 cubic feet. There was a motion by Weishaar, seconded by Arnold, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 05-2024, Flood Damage Prevention: This was the second reading of the ordinance. Arnold said he was asked last meeting if this causes any changes to the flood maps. The firm map is created by FEMA and that map doesn't cover every water way. The DNR best available map includes small waterway such as county ditches. There was a motion by Overton, second by Rayburn, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 07-2024, Zone Map Amendment: Arnold said the plan commission is recommending to council the approval of the zone map amendment. The property is located at 403 N. McKinley. This would change the property from R2 to B1. The owners would like to sell the property, and this would allow more opportunity for what the property could be used for. There was a motion by Rayburn, second by Overton, to approve the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Burial Rights Requests: Keys read burial rights requests for Stephen Brandenburg and Jack & Cleota Warne. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Weishaar, to approve the burial rights. The motion passed unanimously.

Natural Gas Management Agreement: C. Lockridge said the city uses Utility Gas Management to manage and purchase gas, and has done so since June of 1993. They are increasing their management cost fee from 6¢ /dekatherm to 8¢/dekatherm. This is the first time they have increased that price. C. Lockridge requested permission for Mayor Phillips to sign the amendment to the agreement. There was a motion by Watson, second by Overton, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Parks Department Building: Phillips said they will be looking at costs for pouring concrete in the light plant.

Administrative Comments:

Phillips said Baker-Tilly will be doing the Gateway reporting for TIF. Once the report is completed, council will get a copy.

Rayburn said he's talked with Davis regarding properties around town that need cleaned up. Davis said he is working with Mayor Phillips to update the property management code. He will send out letters to property owners with information about clean-up week.

Watson told superintendents they need to get updated job descriptions to the Clerk-Treasurer's office by the first meeting of April.

Keys had nothing.

Overton had nothing.

Arnold thanked everyone that's worked on the utility budgets. He said he received a call from a concerned citizen regarding the subcontractors working for Brightspeed around town.

Weishaar had nothing.

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

Superintendents Reports:

Police Dept: Anderson said the training they are hosting at the fairgrounds takes place over the next two days. The new police hire is done with his psychological and physical tests, he should be sworn in soon.

Law Dept: Sammons said if the Parks Dept. does move forward with utilizing the light plant for their new office, DLGF would need an interdepartmental agreement. He has also been working with Davis on zoning issues.

Utility Office: Smart said year-end adjusting entries for utilities from Baker-Tilly will be done by the first meeting in April. The AMI meter changeout started today.

Building Dept: Davis said the Plan Commission and BZA will meet next Tuesday instead of Thursday. The BZA will hear three variance requests.

Fire Dept: Haun was absent.

Electric Dept: Wilhite said they are working on a pole changeout tomorrow for the brick streets project.

Street, Sanitation, Water and Sewage: Black asked to put a committee together for education and outreach. The committee will consist of Phillips, McAdow, Weishaar, Black and Eldridge. He also requested to start hiring for summer help. There was a motion by Arnold, second by Watson, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously. Black said Ryan Ritter has completed his apprenticeship program.

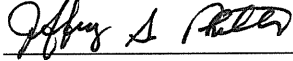
Project Coordinator: J. Lockridge said the main lift station project is almost closed out. Erection of the water tower tank is complete. Once the weather is better, it will be sand blasted and painted. Grimmer has started removing the sidewalk and the water main installation will start this week.

Gas Dept: C. Lockridge requested permission to hire 2 part-time summer helpers to help with the corrosion-control plan. There was a motion by Overton, second by Rayburn, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Cemetery Dept: Baltes reminded everyone that cemetery clean-up is this week. He also requested to hire one summer helper. There was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar, to approve the request. Baltes said the tree type he is wanting to plant has changed. The price is \$2,868.00. The cemetery crew will be planting the trees themselves. There was a motion by Overton, second by Weishaar, to approve the purchase of trees. The motion passed unanimously.

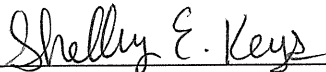
Park Dept: Effinger said the egg hunt is in two weeks. Watson asked Effinger if he needed another person within his department. Effinger said no.

There being nothing more to come before council, there was a motion by Watson, seconded by Rayburn, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.



Jeffrey S. Phillips, Mayor

Attest:



Shelby E. Keys, Clerk-Treasurer