

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING
OF THE SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL**

January 25, 2016

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Leesa Perazzo at 7:03 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Perazzo asked Rev. Carlos Caraballo of Better Life Empowerment Church to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Floyd Slater to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

The City Clerk called the roll and the following members of the City Council answered to be present:

Present – Council members, Edward Kosiur, John Mootooveren, Leesa Perazzo, John Polimeni, Marion Porterfield, and Vincent Riggi

Excused - Council member John Ferrari

Also Present – City Clerk Charles Thorne, Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico and Public Safety Commissioner Wayne Bennett

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 10 & 12 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2016-7 – A Resolution Recognizing 23 years of service to the City by Philip Dodge.

Mr. Dodge was on hand via Skype from Tennessee along with his colleagues and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

The resolution was moved by Mr. Riggi and seconded by Mr. Mootooveren. The resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 2016-8 – A Resolution Recognizing City Waste & Recycling Collection Crews as 1st Responders. Members of the City Waste & Recycling Collection Crew were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

The resolution was moved by Mr. Polimeni and seconded by Ms. Porterfield. The resolution passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2016 Council meetings as submitted by the City Clerk; Mr. Riggi made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Mootooveren seconded the motion.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, January 25, 2016

Official:

None

General:

None

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Porterfield - Health & Recreation - Noted the Recreation Advisory Commission has started to meet again. She noted the commission is looking at new funding in the 2016 budget and is interested in funding the redevelopment of six other city parks depending on the needed investment and allocation of funding. She noted the commission is hosting monthly meetings and residents can submit neighborhood parks for consideration. She added that Orchard Park recently received \$354,000 in funding for planned redevelopment. She noted the total renovation cost for Orchard Park is approximately 1.2 million dollars.

Mr. Polimeni, Administrative Efficiency - Noted continued effort on developing an employee recognition program. He noted city employees do tremendous work for the city and the public. He added he is working with the Human Resources department to finalize the process and related documents. He hopes to have something further for review in the next few weeks.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the Legislative Agenda to come forward:

Jason Planck, Schenectady – Noted the purchasing policy should have been pulled and discussed as well. He noted that best value is back and it needs to be discussed further in relation to the Affirmative Action Committee recommendations. He noted the definition of professional services needs to be further developed. He added the term is used as a backdoor process to not bid contracts. He noted the city needs to tighten up the policy. He then noted staff has come out with Request For Proposals (RFP's) and listed some examples. He noted the RFP's should come back to City Council to do follow up review. He closed by noting a public hearing should have been offered as well.

Seeing no other speakers come forward, Ms. Perazzo declared the Privilege of the Floor on the Legislative Agenda closed.

INTRODUCTION OF AND ACTION UPON LOCAL LAWS, ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Kosiur made a motion that Council approves the Consent Agenda and the motion was seconded by Mr. Mootoveren.

Consent Agenda –

- Ordinance No. 2016 – 1Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 2Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 9Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 10Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 11Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 12Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 13Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 14Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 15Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Ms. Perazzo then invited all who wished to address the City Council on any matter of City business to come forward. The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Anthony Carota, Schenectady – Extended his condolences to Mayor McCarthy on the passing of his mother. He then shared a recent experience he had at Ellis Hospital's emergency room where he was from 4:00 p.m. till 11:30 p.m. He noted he sought care due to lower back issue and had x-rays around 10:30 p.m. He added at one time the city had two hospitals and now we have one mega hospital. He noted in Albany there are four to five hospitals. He asked why is there only one emergency room in the city of Schenectady? He added with more than 60,000 people in the city we need another ER in the city to help ease the burden. He closed by noting we have elderly and people with chronic illness who are in need of care.

Jason Planck, Schenectady – Noted residents have just four weeks to turn in their Star applications to the City Assessor's office. He encouraged city home owners to utilize the claims that have been approved by the City Council over the last four years to get their property taxes lowered. He added developers are seeing 25 to 40 percent reductions in their assessed property values following claims. He added this will help force the city to do a city wide reassessment. He suggested dividing the city into five re-assessment sections and to do this over a five-year period which he said would be feasible. He then spoke on competitive bidding and reminded the Council to look at minority and person with disability hiring rates. Regarding the roundabout he noted the contracts were not awarded to minority or persons with disability contractors. He noted that he tried to FOIL information related to Affirmative Action reports and was denied. He added parties need to be able to see what the policies are and added the Governor recently vetoed attorney fees related to claims against the state. He noted the Council needs to force the issue related to these agreements and the casino development which includes a 30 percent hiring rate.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady – “I am outraged that the Mayor would parade a General Electric CEO in front of this community after that company took away the medical coverage from its retired veterans - my husband included. After the company made the announcement, I wondered why Council did not take a position in support of its constituency. Now I know why, you had this man in the wings waiting to make the city smart. Mr. Mayor, I will match my husband's brains with your CEO's anytime. My family made a lot of sacrifices for the General Electric Company. My husband always held secret clearance. As such, the company sent him everywhere and anywhere. When he left the house his plane ticket was re-routed so that I would not know where he was. A young mother at home with two toddlers without the companionship of her husband and no father to tuck his children into bed at night and read them a bedtime story because they company needed his brains. One of his projects is on exhibit in the Smithsonian Institution and now in our twilight years when insulin is my lifeline. General Electric took away his medical coverage a veteran who made G.E's profits possible. Folks, greed in corporate America is vulgar.”

Joy Hall, Schenectady – Suggested the Council work to re-open St. Claire's Hospital again. She noted people on this side of town need to go over to the other side of town to access care. She noted it's too much for one hospital to handle. She added patients are waiting too long and she has experienced this first hand. She closed by reiterating the city needs to re-open St. Clare's emergency room.

Seeing no other speakers to come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo declared the Privilege of the floor closed regarding City Business.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

Mr. Riggi– Noted the Berger Commission closed St. Clare's hospital and unfortunately this is not something the City Council can change at this time. He added that he has also experienced long wait times in the ER, but regarding the closure, it was a state commission that made that recommendation. He noted he has two announcements including Schenectady Little League hosting an open registration on February 27 from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at Boulevard Bowl on Erie Blvd. He added this is the only little league in the city. He then announced the Jack Falvo Foundation will be hosting another benefit for Jack's Place which will include a breakfast buffet on February 7 at the Guilderland Elks from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He noted tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for kids.

Ms. Porterfield – Extended her condolences to Mayor McCarthy on the loss of his mother and Council member John Ferrari on the loss of his grandmother. She then noted on January 27th the Schenectady Gazette will host an Open Government forum at Schenectady County Community College. She added the event starts at 7:00 p.m. is free and open to the public. She then reported ongoing efforts related to increasing awareness on disproportionate state education funding awarded to the Schenectady city school district. She noted there is a petition going around with the goal of collecting 50,000 signatures to advocate for equitable funding for the school district. She noted the additional \$62 million the district should receive from the state, but doesn't through Foundation Aid, would not only cover school programs but could help lower taxes. She then announced on January 30 Tony Nathan will be in town for the screening of *Woodlawn* at Bow Tie Cinema. She added this film is based on the true story of Tony Nathan and his experience on a newly integrated football team in the south. She added the film provides a positive message, is sponsored by Mallozi's and proceeds will benefit the Boys & Girls Club.

Ms. Mootooveren– Spoke on the convenience fee related to residence paying property taxes with credit cards. He noted there has been questions related to the fee charged to residents which range from 50 cents for an e-check to 2.4 percent or more with a credit card payment. He added more information related to these fees are available on the city website. He noted the city is planning to make this information available on the front of the tax bill in addition to the back to help avoid confusion. He closed by noting this fee is collected by the credit card company and that historically the city has covered the expense.

Mr. Polimeni – Noted the Bridge Christian Church will host a *Sleep Out* for the homeless with parishioners in an effort to raise an additional \$50,000 to complete a homeless shelter. He added the event is intended to collect donations from the public. He then noted the Council recognized the garbage crew tonight, but their actions are reflective of their regular service to the community. He noted the city has hard working employees who do a tremendous amount of good work and we should be proud.

Commissioner Bennett - Noted that Mayor McCarthy has had a memorable recent experience related to his recent trip to Washington D.C. for the Conference of Mayors. He added winter weather ended the conference early and prevented the mayor from returning back to Schenectady. He noted the Mayor is back in town after delayed travel and is resting.

Ms. Perazzo – Shared an update related to the young women who spoke during the Ceremonial Resolution presented on Epilepsy Awareness Month. She noted after she spoke they encourage her to apply and she was chosen to be the child spokes person for the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York. She then noted according to a recent Gazette article home sales are up 17 percent in Schenectady. She also added Center City is celebrating its fifth anniversary. She then shared some facts related to the building including the original investment of \$30 million by the Galesi Group. She then listed multiple building tenants including Rush Street Gaming, SCCC, CVS, AAA, Assembly member Santabarbara's office and others. She added more than

250 people work in the building and the YMCA also located in the building has over 5,200 members. Lastly she added the building pays \$300,000 in taxes. She closed by noting there is much to celebrate.

Adjourned:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Riggi and seconded by Mr. Mootoveren and the meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

A true record

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Thorne".

By Charles Thorne

Schenectady City Clerk