

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

**May 9, 2016**

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Leesa Perazzo at 7:05 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Perazzo asked Rev. William Levering to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on a member of the chamber to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

Also Present – Deputy City Clerk Chad Putman, Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico and Mayor Gary R. McCarthy

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 20 & 22 out of order. There were no objections.

**Resolution No. 2016-100 – A Resolution Recognizing the Paint the Town Purple Campaign.**

Representatives from the American Cancer Society 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 Mr. Ferrari. The resolution passed unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2016-101 – A Resolution Recognizing May 6th through May 12th as National Nurses Week.** A representative from nurses union was on hand and she extended her gratitude for the recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Ms. Perazzo then invited Mayor McCarthy and Matthew Daley, Schenectady Municipal Golf Pro to present a check to the American Red Cross. Mr. Daley noted the American Red Cross has provided a great deal of support to the city and this was an opportunity to give back to the organization.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the City Council regarding the following public hearing to come forward:

**1. Regarding Amending Chapter 138, Article IV. Regarding Waiving of Building Permit Fees.**

**Mohamed Hafez**, Schenectady - Noted the proposal seems subjective. He added that he has spoke with landlords and this proposal provides too much power to landlords. He added the proposal only relates to residential properties and he would like to see it extended to commercial property as well. Noted prior proposals have not been acted on by the City Council however he applauded the Council for their efforts attempting to assist landlords with problem tenants.

Seeing no other speakers come forward, Ms. Perazzo declared the public hearing to be closed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 25, 2016 Council meeting as submitted by the Deputy City Clerk; Mr. Riggi made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Kosiur seconded the motion.

**Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, May 9, 2016**

**Official:**

A letter from Jeremy Howard dated May 9, 2016 recommending the contract for the "Sodium Hypochlorite Bulk Liquid" be awarded to Surpass Chemical Company.

**General:**

None

**Petitions:**

None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Mr. Kosiur**, City Development & Planning - Noted a number of properties are being sold through City Council tonight and he thanked the city's development office for their work. This includes properties on Union and Barrett Street. He noted the development department staff followed up on a property being sold to a buyer from out of state and was able to confirm there will be a local property manager in the city. He then noted the Front Street pool will be managed by the Boys and Girls Club this year and there will not be a fee for use by residents. He highlighted the CDBG funding allocations for the 2014 and 2015 action plans includes \$1.3 million being allocated toward the rehabilitation of city streets, ADA improvements, demolition of blighted property and to help fund the summer youth program.

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)**

Ms. Perazzo reminded speakers to be mindful of the guidelines provided at the bottom of the sign in sheets. She stressed the use of inappropriate language would result in expulsion from the chamber.

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

**Jason Planck**, Schenectady - Noted the CDBG funding should not be used for paying off the 108 loan, rather the general fund should cover the debt. He noted the Affirmative Action Officer is unqualified. He added there needs to be a realistic timeline and job description. He referenced \$600,000 allocated toward ADA improvements and then asked where the funds will be moved down the road. He also questioned the \$100,000 for the summer youth jobs program and asked where are these youth.

**Mary McClaine**, Schenectady - "Item #5 - I could not believe the comments made by elected officials as they discussed summer jobs for poor kids during the committee meeting on May 2nd. Everything members said had a "but" to it. "It's a good program, but a tough call." "We must consider the kids (but) it means less money for streets and sidewalks." "We should fund it this year (but) let them find jobs in the public sector next year." In the past, no one said "but" to matching funds for plug-ins. No one said "but" against matching funds for bike paths. No one said "but" against matching funds for bullet proof vests and yet there were reservations by council members about funds for a summer job program for poor kids. What a bunch of cold fish. How insensitive. Every kid who wants a job this summer should have one. You make sure to get the money for them. No "buts" about it. Item #2 - Waiving Building Permit Fees - I am disturbed by this legislation and question the motives of the

councilman who proposed it. He lives in Mt. Pleasant. Crane Street is filthy. Building permit waivers will not correct the problem. Only elbow grease and manual labor will do it. If council was interested in beautifying neighborhoods, you would have done it when I asked the city four times to fix my street right. You would not have approved an industrialized heating installation for the Steinmetz multi-purpose room. You would do something about the 100 feet metal monstrosity Ellis Hospital erected on its property. You would not have spoiled the look of the flower baskets that hung on the light poles downtown every summer. Thanks to you everything and anything is on them now. Nothing is coordinated. Seneca Street near the public works building looks like the city dump and the American flag hangs tattered and torn outside this building. If you pass this legislation, you will be taking care of the councilman's buddies."

**Andrew Leja**, Schenectady - Noted he was in attendance representing National Grid and to express particular concerns related to proposed legislation (agenda #3). He referenced his comments submitted to the City Council on May 2nd and noted the remarks were rushed due to the limited timeframe he had to respond to the proposed legislation which was brought to his attention on April 29th. He then highlighted his particular concerns related to vagueness of the legislation, reasonable anticipated conditions, time period of five years noting it should be closer to two year, and that the standards set forward by the City Council should be consistent with state standards published by the DOT.

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

**Consent Agenda –**

- Local Law No. 2016 – 03 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 09.....Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 10.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 102 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 103 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 104 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 105 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 106 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 107 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 108 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 109 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 110 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 111 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 112 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 113 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 114 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 115 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 116 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 117 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 118 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – CS - 10 .....Adopted 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:

**Gary DeRocter**, Schenectady – Noted that he is a taxi driver and added the taxi business has not experienced a raise related to rates since 2001. He noted the taxi company and its employees need a raise. He also noted concerns related to too many medallions being issued by the city and that other businesses are coming into Schenectady because other cities have capped the number of medallions they will issue. He added with the new casino coming to town the local taxi companies are suffering with the influx of new companies from out of town and he urged the City Council to protect the interests of the taxi companies in Schenectady. He closed by noting the fixed taxi rate dating back to 2001 is significantly stretched due to the cost of insurance and cost of living and minimizes the ability of the company to expand the number of vehicles in service.

**Donnie Birch, Jr.**, Schenectady – Noted that his freedom of speech is protected by the 2nd amendment and that it is unconstitutional to for the Council President to tell him that he cannot speak to his mayor.

*Ms. Perazzo then recessed the meeting following Mr. Birch's repeated use of expletives and inappropriate language. Ms. Perazzo then called the meeting back to order.*

**Commissioner Wayne Bennett** - Apologized and noted that he spoke to Mr. Birch prior to privilege of the floor, but added that his recommendations were disregarded.

**Jason Planck**, Schenectady – Noted concerns related to the city and county sales tax agreement and that we don't have the hard facts. He added more accountability is needed and reflected on 2008 figures. He then called for an ordinance to have the sales tax agreement thrown out and to bring authority back to the city from the county.

**Fred Johnson**, Schenectady – Noted that he is a crossing guard for the city and that he monitors the corner of State Street and Brandywine. He noted that he tries to encourage the kids to walk inside the lines however the crosswalk pattern is so faded that it's hard to see the lines. He added this is also an issue when trying to prevent vehicles from coming inside the lines. He noted that he hopes he is in the right place and that he is out there starting in September. He advised drivers to be careful and to watch for the children and the crossing guards.

Seeing no other speakers 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 Bellevue Preservation Inc. will host its monthly meeting on May 12 at St. Paul Episcopal Church at 7:00 p.m. He added the annual Bellevue garage sale will take place on June 4 and 5th and for permits residents can call 377-4927. He thanked all the volunteers who came out to assist with the Hillhurst Park cleanup and added a lot of work was accomplished. With regards to the concerns raised earlier by a city crossing guard he noted that his wife is also a crossing guard for the city. He noted the city needs to redo the cross walks to ensure the safety of the youth and crossing guards.

**Ms. Porterfield** - Noted the city is looking at making changes related to the Affirmative Action officer. She added the crossing guards provide a valuable service to the community. She noted there will be a Schenectady Youth Summit on May 25 in the city at Proctors organized by the Schenectady Foundation and its partners. She added the Call to Action for Schenectady's Youth

event will bring together 400 people from a variety of fields. She noted the event is free, will help shape the leaders of tomorrow and more information is available by calling 393-9500.

**Mr. Mootooveren** - Noted the building permit fee waiver will be in effect from June 15 to August 1, 2016. Residents who participate in the waiver program will be required to complete the work within a six month window. He added if the work is not complete within the six month window the fee would be required as part of the permit renewal process. He noted the permit waivers apply to outside work including windows, porches, roofs, etc. He added the waiver would apply to work costing \$25,000 or less. He advised residents to speak with the city Assessor's office related to the tax exemption. He added the city will be hosting grievance days and this will be an opportunity for residents to speak with the Assessor.

**Mr. Kosiur** - Thanked Council member Perazzo and the council for their support of the CDBG funding in relation to the summer youth program. He added the program will provide work experience for area youth and is close to its goal of 500 applicants. He noted issue with earlier comments related to the city and county sales tax agreement. He noted Saratoga lost \$2 million dollars in revenue which has been flat for many years. With regards to the city he noted we have seen the same increase along with the county. He then reminded residents the school budget and school board vote is on May 17 from 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. He added there are three candidates, for two seats, up for election and more information related to polling locations can be found by calling the Schenectady County Board of Elections. He also asked for support on the bond proposal to complete roof repairs on the Central Park middle school. He then reported the Woodlawn Neighborhood Association will host its annual neighborhood garage sale on May 14 and 15. He noted permits can be acquired at Lou Grasso's barber shop and the SUNOCO on Albany Street in Woodlawn. He added over 100 permits have already been sold. He then reflected on the Veterans Honor Flight he participated in this past weekend. He noted of the nearly 50 veterans who flow to Washington D.C. to visit the military memorials only seven had been there prior and three of whom were from Schenectady. He added the Schenectady veterans were escorted to the airport by 50 motorcycles and were greeted by supporters at the airport. He then reported that the corner of State Street and Brandywine are in the process of being reconfigured allowing vehicles to turn left from Brandywine onto State Street. He also noted on May 23 at 10:00 a.m. the city's development department will host a HUD panel at Schenectady County Community College. He added there will be an additional panel on June 6 at the Schenectady Public Library covering similar topics.

**Mr. Polimeni** - Noted his appreciation for veterans and mothers following the honor flight and Mother's Day. He noted the youth participating in the summer youth program will have an opportunity to build their work experience and resume. He added they will also be exposed to the interview process which will be helpful for future employment. He then referenced the real property tax law and encouraged residents to take advantage of it. He added this program contributes to neighborhood revitalization in the city. He then thanked city employee Floyd Slater and other city staff for helping with park cleanups in Hillhurst and other city parks. He added neighborhood parks add to the city's quality of life.

**Mayor McCarthy** - Noted his gratitude for the number of volunteers who came out to help on I Love My Parks Day. He noted it was truly a community effort. He noted the State Street and Brandywine intersection is also going through a signal control change and the lanes and curbs are being adjusted as well. He closed by thanking the City Council for their support and work on the CDBG budget process.

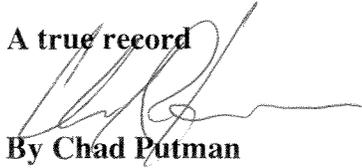
**Ms. Perazzo** - Noted the Schenectady County Human Rights Commission will host its annual awards breakfast on May 19 at 7:00 a.m. and will honor different groups and individuals for their

service to the community. She added tickets are available by calling 377-3823. She then noted the Schenectady Greenmarket has moved outside in front of city hall for the summer season. She also noted a group of volunteers including Schenectady Rotarians participated in I Love My Parks Day at Vale Park. She added that she missed out on the event because she was out of town but added the park looks good and will continue to host monthly cleanups.

**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. Polimeni and seconded by Mr. Mootoveren. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**A true record**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chad Putman', written over the printed name.

**By Chad Putman**

**Schenectady Deputy City Clerk**