

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

September 12, 2016

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President Leesa Perazzo at 7:02 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Perazzo asked Rev. Carlos CaraBallo with the Church of God to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Judge Mark Powers 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

Also Present – City Clerk Charles Thorne, 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 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 & 23 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2016-204 – A Resolution Welcoming the Visitors for Nijerk, Netherlands to Schenectady. Representatives from the Netherlands and the local Nijerk delegation were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Representatives from the Netherlands then presented the Mayor and City Council with gifts from Nijerk including a painting of Nijerk, Netherlands.

Resolution No. 2016-205 – A Resolution Recognizing Labor Day. Representatives from local labor union's were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2016-206 – A Resolution Recognizing September 9 as Stand up to Cancer Day. A representative from Ellis Hospital & Union College's, Colleges Against Cancer were on hand and they extended their gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2016-207 – A Resolution Recognizing September 18 as the Founding of the U.S. Air Force. A Representative from the U.S. Air Force was on hand and he extended his gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2016-208 – A Resolution Recognizing September 17 as Constitution and Citizenship Day. Schenectady County Judge Mark Powers was on hand and he extended his gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2016-209 – A Resolution Recognizing September 6 as National Read a Book Day.

Karen Bradley was on hand and she extended her gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

Resolution No. 2016-210 – A Resolution Recognizing September 22 as American Business

Women's Day. Janet Hutchison, owner of the Open Door Bookstore was on hand and she extended her gratitude for the resolution and recognition by the Mayor and City Council.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2016 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk; Mr. Kosiur made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Riggi seconded the motion.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Regarding the City of Schenectady's Application for Restore New York Funding

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady - Noted she is questioning the efficacy of this resolution. She noted she did not realize the City had anything to do with this funding. She added she thought Metroplex was involved. She said the program has spent \$500 million dollars on advertising and has only created 400 jobs which she added are likely advertising and communication jobs. She said there is nothing in packet that explains the program adding she sees that Mr. Gillian is here, and that she would give him the balance of her time to explain.

Tom O'Connor, Schenectady - Noted he is the Director of Government Relations with Chamber of Schenectady County which is an affiliate of the Capital Region Chamber. He made a point of clarification that this funding is not part of Startup New York. Rather he added this funding is related to Restore New York Initiative. He added the Chamber fully supports the application and the cities community revitalization efforts. He noted that cities face a multitude of issues with regards to community revitalization. He added this application for \$1 million dollars in grant funding can leverage up to \$10 million in investment to help revitalize the City. He added the Chamber knows a vibrant downtown is essential to the City's redevelopment and he looks forward to a continued partnership.

Jim Salengo, Schenectady - Noted he is the Executive Director of the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Cooperation. He then echoed Mr. O'Connor's observations related to the City's redevelopment. He noted the targeted properties are in a concentrated area where we are seeing economic development already happening. He added including places like Nott Terrace with miSci and the new Double Tree. He also noted that Nott Terrace now features a new bicycle lane. He noted development is taking place on Eastern Avenue and Albany Street with the Joe Allen apartments taking shape. He noted with the removal of these blighted properties further development will be assisted and the \$1 million dollars in grant funding will allow for \$10 million dollars in investment. He closed by encouraging the City Council to adopt the resolution.

Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, September 12, 2016

Official:

From the Mayor a list of appointments dated September 12, 2016

From Paul Lafond, Commissioner of General Services dated September 12, 2016 recommending the award of the Electronic Waste Recycling to eLot Electronics Recycling, Inc.

General:

None

Petitions:

Central Park Estates for the paving of streets.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

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

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady - Noted concerns related to agenda item #25 regarding electronic waste recycling. She noted that Taft furniture accepts electronic equipment from household and small commercial environments for recycling. She noted the City should not get involved and the donations to Taft help St. Peters Hospital. She then noted date books for 2017 are now available t the Open Door Bookstore. She also noted she is proud of her Dutch heritage and that when Mary made the trip to Nijerk previously she brought back a package for her with sugars and other items. She then asked people not to steal Mary's plants and to buy plants from the green house plant sale.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady - "Tonight City Council will vote for two people for the Affirmative Action Board. The board exists so that minorities can have job opportunities. Is there a smaller minority than a great-grandmother seeking public office? Holding a City Council seat is a job. It comes with a salary and medical coverage. I am interested in the job because I would like to work for the people of Schenectady. Someone else is also interested in the job but she already has a job. I don't. I am asking this Council through its Affirmative Action program to endorse my candidacy so that I can run for this job. Earlier this year, I changed my party affiliation. Technically I am a Democrat. It becomes official because I initially registered for it. If Council endorses Ms. Wildzunes for the Council job and she wins it. She will work three jobs, her job, with Key Bank, her business job and her Council job. Is that what Affirmative Action means in Schenectady? This endorsement means one thing. Who gets the job? Someone who has a job or someone who doesn't. "

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

Consent Agenda –

- Ordinance No. 2016 – 17Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 18.....Adopted Unanimously
- Ordinance No. 2016 – 19.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 211Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 212Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 213Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 214Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2016 – 215	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2016 – 216	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2016 – 217	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2016 – 218	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2016 – 219	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2016 – 220	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2016 – 221	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2016 – CS - 17	Adopted Unanimously

An Ordinance to Reallocate the 2016 Budget for Payments Pursuant to the Agreement between the City of Schenectady and the Police Benevolent Association. 2016 - 20

The motion was moved by Mr. Kosiur and seconded by Mr. Mootoveren.

5:1:0

Voting AYE: Kosiur, Perazzo, Porterfield, Mootoveren & Riggi

Voting NAY: Polimeni

Ms. Porterfield - Noted she was glad to see the PBA contract is being settled and that she wants speak to on the budget allocation. She noted the originally plan was to take revenue from the casino to pay the PBA contract. In the spirit of full disclosure she added that she originally voted against the casino, but the City is getting it. She then noted a campaign commitment was to reduce taxes with the casino revenue. She added it is important to stick to what was promised. She noted there is a lot of development happening in Schenectady and that residents need to be able to benefit from it as well. She noted she supports settling the PBA contract with money from the general fund.

Mr. Polimeni - Noted when he was campaigning door to door he did not indicate that he wanted to use all of the casino revenue toward a tax cut. Rather he noted that he recommended 50 percent toward tax cuts, 45-48 percent toward infrastructure and the remaining 2 percent toward debt reduction. He added this is a solid plan that would allow for continued growth versus immediate gratification. Furthermore he noted the resolution passed several years ago, when he was not on the council, does not note a time limit such as 5 to 10 years that the City would continue to use casino revenue toward tax cut. He noted the City has infrastructure needs and that no one is more in favor of tax cuts than he is. He added he does not want to see the casino money used for salary increases. If this is the case he noted that the bond rate maybe impacted. He then gave the example using the PBA contract settlement pay off of \$1.6 million dollars, at 6.6 percent interest rate, over 20 years would result in a \$5.75 million dollar pay out. He added with the current plan we might not get a decrease in interest rate due to our bond rating. He noted with a \$1.6 million dollar payoff, a 1/8 reduction in rates to 6.475, could produce a savings of .14 million and a \$5.6 million dollar pay out. He noted with a 1/4 reduction in interest rates to 5.84 the City could save .27 million. He noted when we talk about the money we bond, a million dollars is typically, year after year. He added these are significant savings and relate to a solid financial plan. He noted to use all of the casino revenue toward a tax cut is fiscally irresponsible and political foolishness. He added this proposal is not about long term financial security for the city and that we have a fiduciary responsibility to the residents. He closed by noting his proposal is about long term tax cuts versus immediate gratification.

Mr. Riggi - Noted this is about semantics regarding where the money is coming from to resolve the PBA contract. He added all the money is going into the general fund and that there is not a separate line in the budget for casino revenue. He said we could cut taxes every year and this

year we are looking at a 5 percent tax cut for 2017. He added he is going by what the Mayor has said as recent as June, 2016 regarding a 10 percent tax cut in 2017. He knows a 10 percent tax decrease is better than a 5 percent tax decrease. He noted we can use the casino revenue as we see fit and added the Council will be reviewing the Mayor's proposed budget in October. He noted the revenue from the casino is coming in and we can call it what every we want. Regardless he added the PBA contract has been settled and we need to pay our bills.

Mr. Mootoveren - Noted last year the Council voted for the casino and agreed to use casino revenue to help reduce taxes for residents. He added we have to keep that promise. He noted we must make it clear in the resolution that we are not taking money from the casino to pay off the PBA agreement. He added that he fully supports the PBA agreement and that it took too long to get to this agreement. He noted he supports using the casino revenue toward a tax reduction which could be 5 to 10 percent in 2017. He closed by noting he supports the taxpayers and this resolution.

Mr. Perazzo - Noted tonight's discussion is not about using all of the revenue from the casino toward a tax reduction, rather the question is about using unbudgeted revenue, which is very different than using money in the general fund. She added the Council has made a clear commitment to residents to use casino revenue toward tax cuts. She noted taxes are a very real burden to resident in the City with has some of the highest rates in the country. She noted she is looking at a minimum of a 5 percent tax cut in the 2017 budget. She declared she will work hard for a minimum 5 percent tax cut for residents and added if we can do a realistic 10 percent tax cut we will. She noted when you talk with taxpayers, over and over the concern is focused on the tax burden. She noted veterans, elderly and people in jeopardy of losing their homes are dealing with ongoing tax increases in the City. She closed by noting she supports this resolution.

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:

Mike Oneil, Schenectady – Noted that he own a small taxi company in City which has been an issue lately. He noted when he started the City required a taxi stand to operate a taxi service in the City. He noted in order to comply he used his own money and purchased an abandoned property in the City to turn it into a taxi stand. He added that he invested over \$100,000 dollars in the property. He noted he agrees with the freeze on taxi medallions and added there are only two legal taxi stands in the City. He noted people are running taxi companies out of Scotia and their homes. He noted he is paying school and property taxes and added the City Council needs to come to agreement between the City and taxi owners. He noted small companies like his, could be designated for medallions. Regarding the CDTA program that was recently approved in Albany to manage taxi companies in the capital region he said the City Council and Mayor can opt out. He noted taxi fees will go by a zone rate rather than metered service. He gave the example of taking a cab from City Hall to Nott Terrace with a zone rate would cost \$7.50 rather as a meter rate of \$3.50. He asked how can a small bus person, who invested all this money into a property, expand when others are running illegal operations?

Robert Walton, Schenectady – Noted he is an advocate for Schenectady Empowerment Initiative. He noted the group is looking for voter registration volunteers in an effort to uplift Hamilton Hill, Mont Pleasant and Goose Hill. He noted the group is offering training for youth ages 16-28 through JFR construction who recently purchased a building in Schenectady. He noted the training assist with completing OSHA certification and acquiring employment that pays a living wage. He added the main agenda is to clean up the area in Hamilton Hill and the need volunteers to help clean up Albany Street

and in front of future Joe Allen building. He noted an interest in partnering with the City to help supply equipment and maybe pay people to do these jobs. He added CDTA does not take care of their bus stops and he is asking for help from the City.

Joy Hall, Schenectady - Noted it's good to be back and she is here to talk about safety issues on Albany Street, Nott Terrace and Union Street. She noted vehicles are speeding all the time on Erie Blvd. and that the City needs to do something about it. She added a resident was recently killed on McClellan Street when his wheelchair was hit by a vehicle. She also noted that she sees parents with kids in strollers in the streets and this needs to stop. She closed by noting u-turns are taking place all the time and there a lot of accidents.

Patricia Smith, Schenectady – Noted she is prepared to speak about the playground equipment in Mont Pleasant Parks that was removed back in August. She noted that she recognizes the reasons why the equipment taken out and she is happy Mont Pleasant parks were approved for two new playground installations. She then noted on August 19 she was told the new equipment installation would take place, then the install date moved to August 22. Then she said she was told September 6. When she asked what happened, she was told other park playground installations were taking place first. She then noted she would have preferred to be notified of the delay and that she understands that gliches happen. She noted the Mont Pleasant kids are the ones who suffered without playground equipment for six weeks. She noted lack of communication between the city and its residents. She noted it's important to keep people informed which could have been accomplished with a sign in the park for example. She closed by noting that Mont Pleasant Neighborhood Association would like to thank the Recreation Advisory Committee and Pettinelli Recreation which are responsible for the new playground installation and recommendations.

P.D. Voorhis, Schenectady – Noted the Post Office new City hall hired a landscaper and they recently planted trees and extended custodial service to the exterior of the building. She added the effort is model work and something the City should emulate. She then noted the Jay Street Marketplace is losing all their trees and that area store owners fear the limbs will fall and hurt someone. She noted there are about five trees all together that need to be removed. She then noted a sign near Freemans Bridge Road that indicates you're leaving a scenic route is a puzzle to her. She then wished Safyre Terry a happy birthday, encouraged her to keep a diary, and noted she has some courageous days ahead.

Steve Rau, Schenectady - Noted Guyana Day was a success on September 4th. He then thanked everyone for attending and making it a great event. He thanked Schenectady's Primer Cricket League and Steve Weiss for their service to the community. He also extended his gratitude to City staff and department heads, City Council, the Schenectady Police and Fire Departments for their leadership and attending the event. He thanked Schenectady County Sherriff Dagostino, County Legislator Philip Fields and others for their many contributions and encouraged everyone to look forward to next year.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady - "I am sure all of you saw the article in the paoper about the island garden. I want to thank the Gazette for thier generous coverage. Thank you to Indiana Nash for writing the story and thank you to Mark Schultz for taking the pictures. The piece was very effective. The day after the article appeared in the paper there were people literally on their knees weeding the garden. They had arrived with working equipment, leaf bags, weed killer and water. All strangers working together to beautify the City. Some of the volunteers were from out of town, many thanks to all. I also received an offer for cement runners to use for a board. The best solution would be a curb like the one running parallel to the garden along Grand Blvd. Two years ago, I mentioned a curb to Mr. Wallin. He just smiled. Every year since I started the garden, Mikle Mastriani and his wife would visit me while I was working in it and he always gave me money to buy whatever was needed. I bought quality perennials with the money. One of the first plants I bout, came up every year. This year it bloomed in the spring. By June the plant was gone. That was what prompted me to call the Gazette and the paper

was willing to do the story. I thought the issue was behind me. This week-end more plants were taken. In spite of everything, I will carry on. The garden will be replanted this fall. Mr. Polimeni, did you make your presentation at the bargaining table with the PBA members? Why did they ask for so much?"

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. Kosiur - Noted the New Yorkers approved a referendum to build seven casinos in New York to promote job growth and permit local governments to reduce local taxes. He added this referendum passed in the City of Schenectady with 54 percent of the vote. He noted in a recent poll by the Schenectady Gazette 84 percent of residents support using casino revenue to reduce taxes. He noted during the campaign season Council members knocked on a lot of doors and promised to implement a tax cut in 2017. He added he and other Council members are not opposed to the PBA or SFD contract settlements but that the Council also needs to reduce taxes. He then noted the Community Needs Assessment is ongoing and that he recently attended a community meeting at Mt. Olivet Church for community feedback. He said the event was attended by 50 plus residents and there was good conversation. He added the City needs residents to participate and complete the survey and noted there is a general public and youth surveys which are available in the City Clerk's office and online. He noted the survey responses are confidential. He then noted Schenectady County Senior and Long Term Care Services will host a seniors cafe at Proctors. The event will host CEO David Buicko of the Galesi Group and will feature a presentation on the Mohawk Harbor development and Casino. He closed by thanking former Council member John Ferrari for his service and community and wished him well.

Ms. Porterfield – Noted there will be a community conversation at Mt. Olivet Church on Park Avenue in Schenectady related to the black lives matter movement and police brutality. She added the event will focus on the causes of unrest and explore solutions related to police community relations. She noted the event is open to the public and will feature community leaders and representatives from the Schenectady Police Department and the City. She encouraged residents to call Rev. Sanders with questions at 374-0422. She then announced Jerry Burrell Park will host an event this weekend with family members of the park's namesake who was a well known community member who also did a lot with the Hamilton Hill Arts Center. She added on September 16 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. there will be activities in the park. Then on Sunday family members will host a volunteer work day around the art center from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. She added the event is free and open to public and residents can call the Art Center for more information.

Mr. Riggi - Extended his gratitude to former Council member John Ferrari for his service to the community and added they worked together on the parish council. He then clarified comments by an earlier speaker and added the City Council does not endorse candidates for open City Council seats. He encouraged interested parties to call their party representative for an endorsement. He added the decision is up to the parties and you would not be able to run as an Independent unless you write your name in. He then noted St. Joseph's Church on State is having an Octoberfest in Veterans Parks which will feature German music and food. He ended by wishing Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico a happy birthday.

Mr. Polimeni - Noted there were several activities in downtown Schenectady over the weekend including the Italian Festival, Greek Festival, Wellness Fair and the Stockade Art Show. He added it was good to see so many people out and about. With regards to the appropriation of city

revenue he noted he was not on the City Council at the time the resolution was passed. He added that he did not campaign on the issue of using all casino revenue for tax cuts but rather has advocated 50 percent of the revenue toward tax cuts, 48 percent toward infrastructure and two to five percent toward debt reduction. He added this is a sound financial management plan which could lead to a greater tax cut than what we are talking about tonight. He added with regards to the Cities aging infrastructure without using some of the casino revenue to address improvements the Council will end up increasing taxes down the road to pay for repairs. He closed by noting if the Finance Committee had originally included the Police overtime in the budget the Council would not be having this conversation regarding the casino revenue.

Mr. Mootoveren - Referenced agenda item number nine regarding 1035-1039 Second Avenue transfer back to city from Landbank will assist with making way for Orchard Park renovations. He added there will also be a grant which will go toward equipment and lighting in the park. For those who don't know where Orchard Park is located he noted it is near the fire station in Mt. Pleasant. He then compliment staff and the Recreation Advisory Commission for their work related to the City parks. He then acknowledged the back and forth regarding the casino revenue and added that it's clear the revenue needs to go toward a tax reduction for residents. He added we also care about infrastructure.

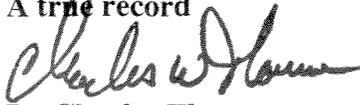
Mayor McCarthy - Noted the City made the first investment in Mont Pleasant three years ago when the City partnered with Love 15 and the Tennis Association on rebuilding the tennis courts in Mont Pleasant. He added the partnership extended to the Central Park tennis courts. All of which he noted has signaled an initial investment in City parks across the City. He asked for continued patience as the improvements continue. He then recognized volunteer efforts across the City including in Jerry Burrell, Steinmetz and Woodlawn parks related to improvements. He noted his appreciation of the City Council moving the money and resolving the police contract. He then advised Council and residents to remember the City tax levy is lower than it was four years ago and that Schenectady is the only City in upstate that has accomplished this. He then added the City tax is just over thirty percent of a residents overall tax bill. He noted the remaining 70 percent is the county and school tax. He then noted we need our partners in state government to appropriately fund the City's municipal and school aid. He also mentioned he was pushed early on to sign a casino-host-benefit agreement, which other communities did, but added if Schenectady had we would have given up this early revenue from sales tax. He then noted he is looking forward to working with the City Council on the 2017 budget. He then noted the City hosted its Fifth annual Wellness Fair over the weekend, which is another way the City is making an effort to address rising health insurance costs. He also noted the Greek, Italian Festivals along with the Stockade Art Show where a great success. He closed by thanking the City Council for an open dialogue and all the volunteers that made the weekend events possible.

Ms. Perazzo – Thanked the Mayor for a history of comprehensive budgets which have improved the Cities ratings while making the City more financially sound. She added the Council was able to give a small tax cut last year while moving in a forward direction. She then noted her excitement about the City starting its Single Stream Recycling program which will allow for more resident participation in recycling. She noted the program starts on September 19 and encouraged residents to watch the paper for more info and noted they could pick up the new single stream stickers at City Hall. She added this program simplifies recycling and allows for more items including pizza boxes and light weight plastics.

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. Kosiur and seconded by Mr. Mootoveren. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

A true record

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

By Charles Thorne

Schenectady City Clerk