

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

**September 26, 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. Margret O'Neill with the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Jason Lecuyer 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 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 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17 out of order. There were no objections.

**Resolution No. 2016-222 – A Resolution Recognizing the Fight for Education and Equity in Schenectady.** Representatives from the Fight for Equity in Education 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. Riggi and seconded by Mr. Mootooveren. The resolution passed unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2016-223 – A Resolution Recognizing September as National Suicide Prevention Month.** A survivor was on hand and she extended her gratitude for the resolution and effort to create more awareness about suicide and depression by the Mayor and City Council.

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

**Resolution No. 2016-224 – A Resolution Recognizing September as Little League Month.** The current and incoming President of Schenectady Little League 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. 2016-225 – A Resolution Recognizing September 28 as National Women's Health and Fitness Day.** Local women business owners 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 Ms. Porterfield. The resolution passed unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2016-226 – A Resolution Recognizing Commemorating VFW Day on September 29.** A representative from the VFW 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. 2016-227 – A Resolution Recognizing September as Classical Music Month.**

Representatives from the Schenectady Sympathy 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. 2016-228 – A Resolution Recognizing September as Hispanic Heritage Month.** Rev. Carlos CaraBallo 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. Mootooveren and seconded by Mr. Polimeni. The resolution passed unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2016-229 – A Resolution Honoring Deryck Singh.** Deryck Singh 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. Mootooveren and seconded by Ms. Porterfield. The resolution passed unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2016-230 – A Resolution Recognizing the Restaurants who Participated in the SICM Mac and Cheese Throw-Down.** A SICM and Aperitivo representative along with Chuck Steiner, President of the Capital Region Chamber 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.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2016 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk; Mr. Riggi made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Polimeni seconded the motion.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None

**Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, September 26, 2016**

**Official:**

From the Mayor a list of appointments dated September 26, 2016

From Paul Lafond, Commissioner of General Services dated September 26, 2016 recommending the award of the Water Valve Maintenance Trailer to H. H. Wachs.

From Paul Lafond, Commissioner of General Services dated September 26, 2016 recommending the award of four (4) contracts for the WRRF Disinfection Project to Jersen Construction Group, Collett Mechanical, Inc, J & K Plumbing & Heating Co. and

**General:**

None

**Petitions:**

None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**John Polimeni**, Administrative Efficiency - Noted the resolution entitled, *Supporting the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the City of Schenectady* is a public health initiative focused on preventing premature death and other health related issues.

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

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

**Mary McClaine**, Schenectady - "Item #9 - Recognizing the fight for education and equity in Schenectady. The only way taxpayers will have equity in Schenectady is to let the 90 percent non-residents go and fill the slots with City residents. Right now most of the City school staff earn their bread in Schenectady and eat it elsewhere. Furthermore, if the union members had to pay for their own demands, maybe they wouldn't ask for so much. At this time Schenectady taxpayers pay for everything. People who work in the City should live here, period. On another note; tonight there are 11 items on the agenda that honor people or recognize special events. The recognition brings people to the Council chamber. Unfortunately, they leave right after the presentation. On some occasions, Council Presidents have recessed meetings so that the public could leave the room in an orderly manner. Can Council reverse the process and hand out the recognitions after the "privilege of the floor" segment of the agenda. Is it asking too much of City residents to attend a City Council meeting once in a life time? It would be nice for people to stay and fill this room with warmth."

**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 –**

- Resolution No. 2016 – 231 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 232 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 233 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 234 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 235 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 236 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 237 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – CS - 18 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – CS - 19 .....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:

**Donald Birch**, Schenectady – Noted concerns about a leak that occurred at Knolls Atomic Lab that was not reported to local residents. He then talked about a media filter and a friend who was murdered in Mt. Pleasant. He noted unrest in the community and that there is no accountability. He added he lost 60 lbs. while in custody and that his freedom of speech has been impeded. He noted his bail was set for \$100,000 which he said is illegal. He closed by stressing the need to take the man down.

**Anthony Carota**, Schenectady – Noted there was a recent shooting in Hamilton Hill and that he stood with residents at a recent rally. He noted organizations like Quest and YMCA are needed when residents don't have family to turn to as an alternative to gangs. He noted that he is stepping down from Neighborhood Watch due to medical issues. He then noted no mother should ever burry their child and that it's time we do something for youth. He suggested a mentorship program.

**Marva Isaacs**, Schenectady - Noted 241 Schenectady Street smells like sewage and it's one of the City's Breathing Lights houses. She noted the neighbors have complained about the smell which needs to be fixed.

**Deborah Reynolds**, Schenectady – Noted she has been helping an elderly woman in Schenectady who has been living in deplorable housing. She noted the City needs to do more around affordable housing for the poor and holding landlords accountable. She added that she is the President of the Schenectady Tenant Landlord Association which is in need of donations to support the groups work. She closed by noting residents on the hill need quality housing and not shacks on the hill.

**Carmella Ruscitto**, Schenectady - Noted her affiliation with the East Front Street Neighborhood Association and concerns about absentee landlords related to apartment buildings at 313, 315 and 317 Front Street. She added there are many children that living in the apartments and they are causing damage to the other surrounding properties. She noted concerned residents have called child protective and they meet with the family and then leave. She also noted there is a garage lot in the neighborhood and when the owner purchased the property they were instructed not to repair cars but now it looks like a used car lot. She closed by noting that a neighborhood meeting related to these concerns will be held on September 28 on the third floor of 1482 Erie Blvd.

**Joy Hall**, Schenectady - Noted concerns about kids playing in the road and pushing strollers down the street. She added the violence needs to stop and parents need to watch their children. She added cars are speeding in the city and the kids and elderly walking down the street will get hurt.

**Patty Smith**, Schenectady - Noted concerns about the cricket league which is playing on the Mont Pleasant fields behind the middle school. She noted the cheering section plays loud music and openly drinks beer and left a mess for the City personnel to clean up. She noted there were 75-100 cars parked along the road, participants were cooking food and urinating in public. She added that she expects the event organizers did not secure necessary permits and she is looking for the City to address the situation.

**Dave Monty**, Schenectady - Noted he walked around the cricket league field on Sunday and videotaped the activities and attempted to play some of the videos for the council on a laptop. He said participants were playing loud music, cooking food on gas grills and that this happens every Sunday. He noted this has a negative impact on his quality of life as he tries to relax on the weekends and can't with all the activity and noise. He added that he called dispatch and was later told the call for police intervention did not go out. He is looking for the City to address the situation.

**Tony Buonome**, Schenectady - Noted he has not been able to attend a Council meeting for the last month but that he is back again to address the inaction on Oak Street Bridge repairs. He noted he

was last told the paperwork is on the desk of Amtrak and that he has been waiting for these repairs for three years. He added that he is willing to pick up the papers from Amtrak if it meant the repairs to the bridge could get underway. He then noted the ceremonial resolution for Little League should have been presented in August around the 60th anniversary of the Schenectady Little League World Series Championship.

**Kanema Haynes**, Schenectady - Extended her appreciation to Council members and others who attended the Stop the Violence rally which took place in Hamilton Hill the prior week. She also extended appreciation to Pierre Thompson and others young leaders who helped to organize the event. She noted the event was put together to save youth in the community from violence. She added the City needs to step in and help stop the violence by funding a community center. She questioned why the City uses CDBG funds to pay for Code Enforcement when Hamilton Hill is in need of a center for youth. She closed by noting as a mother it is important for her children to have a place to go.

**Stephanie Bandosik**, Schenectady - Noted she is a local business owner and participates in the Bellevue Farmers Market. She noted she attended the Stop the Violence rally on Schenectady Street. She noted the condition of the street is deplorable. She added the street is dark, buildings are abandoned and boarded up and the children have no place to go. She acknowledged the young leaders who organized the event and the benefit of the Hamilton Hill Arts Center to the community. She added she is glad to see the street lights are back on she hopes they stay on. She noted the importance of funding to increase community spirit and pride. She added it's important to work together for area youth.

**Mary McClaine**, Schenectady - "I am going to address three issues tonight. Issue #1 - I suggest every City official go take a look at the corner of State Street and Nott Terrace. That area is competing for 1st place in filth. Everyday there is no let up with the litter and when you go, bring Mr. Salengo with you. Point #2 - No Council member who owns eight apartment houses in Schenectady, should vote to lower taxes. It's a blatant case of conflict of interest. He should have recused himself. Furthermore, if the city doesn't have a law that bans city officials who are privy to city property from buying real estate while in office please draft such a law. The law should also ban relatives of the official from buying property and the ban should last for 5 years after leaving office. Lastly, I want to respond to Mr. Riggi's comment, "we don't make endorsements here. City Chairmen do it." Of course Council doesn't make endorsements here. They do their dirty deeds elsewhere. When Mr. Riggi ran for Council the first time, I wanted to force a primary on the republican candidates he went to the City chairman and said, "Can't you stop her? Can't you stop her?" and I was thrown off the ballot, a 29 year member of the party. Now the Republicans are running babies. When the gospel said, "a child shall lead us," it didn't mean someone barely out of pampers. Senior citizens have the best voting records but they are the least represented group in government. The bottom line is that Council had the opportunity to select a qualified candidate, who doesn't have a job, to fill a City Council seat but you don't do it. That is not Affirmative Action. You don't even believe in your own legislation. Mr. Riggi, in case you are interested, City Chairman don't return calls or respond to letters. Only Roger Hull does. Always the gentleman."

**Chris Gibbs**, Schenectady – Noted a lot needs to be done in the City to improve neighborhoods but also recognized it will take time. He added it's important for the community to work side-by-side with the City on these improvements. He then recognized the efforts of young leaders including those working on #SaveourStreets and the Miracle on Craig Street. He added he believes the efforts are headed in the right directions.

**Pierre Thompson**, Schenectady - Noted he is among other young leaders in the City that organized the Light the Street rally which took place in Hamilton Hill. He noted it was the darkest street in the City and it was a small victory to get the lights back on. He then questioned why the lights were off to begin with. He added that he represents concerns on Hamilton Hill and noted there are significant

quality of life issues in the neighborhood. He added the vacant properties sit there for years and they become drug dens. He added calls to the City go unheard and it feels like the City does not care about the neighborhood. He noted that the City holds homeowners accountable for their properties and it's important for the City be held to the same level of accountability for property they own. He closed by noting the residents of Hamilton Hill are often in survival mode and the condition and mind-set needs to be addressed.

**Colleen Dawson**, Schenectady - Noted she is in attendance on behalf of a victim she meet when she was 13. She noted there has been lots of struggle including homelessness. She added that she contacted the County Legislature because the family needs help. She noted that she continues to receive calls from the family and added she will always be there. She then questioned who is going to protect the child now and that she is tired of the violence. She is looking for the City to create a taskforce to protect the children.

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**

**Ms. Porterfield** – Extended her appreciation to the speakers for coming out and the ongoing work of organizations in the community. She noted attending the Schenectady County Community College forum featuring Wes Moore, author of *The Other Wes Moore* - murder vs. scholar. She encouraged residents to read the book. She then noted there will be a Hughes William Helping Hands benefit at Hibernian Hall on October 8 at 7:00 p.m. She added Mr. Williams was always investing in the community and this event allows his family to continue his work.

**Mr. Polimeni** - Extended his appreciation to tonight's speakers and those who participated in the recent *Stop the Violence* vigil in Hamilton Hill. He noted that he was able to work with Mayor McCarthy and National Grid to get the street lights back on. He added he witnessed an altercation while at the vigil on Schenectady Street and heard someone calling out, "snitches" and added this attitude is not helpful. He pointed out the vigil was a great event and communication goes both ways. He then noted he attended the Gold Star Mothers event recently and presented a proclamation on behalf of the Mayor. He then noted a recent letter he sent to Congressman Paul Tonko regarding the delays on the Oak Street Bridge repairs. He noted perhaps federal representatives working with Corporation Council can help speed up the process. He then noted an effort to collect mittens and hats for area youth. He noted a partnership with the Mayor, County Sherriff and added donation drop off locations include the City Clerk's office in City Hall.

**Mayor McCarthy** - Noted he also appreciates the comments and feedback from residents tonight. He added, with regards to street lights that are out, it's important for residents to report them to the City and National Grid. He noted the City has signed the contract related to repairs to the Oak Street Bridge and hopes Amtrak will move forward. He thanked everyone for their patience and acknowledged it's been a slow process. He closed by reminding everyone to register to vote.

**Ms. Perazzo** – Congratulated St. Luke's on a recent groundbreaking. She then reminded residents the City has transitioned to single stream recycling and new stickers can be picked up at City Hall. She added this allows residents to put all their recycling material into one container along with additional items like light weight plastic and pizza boxes. She also thanked speakers for coming out tonight and added the City Council is responsive and committed to working together with residents.

**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 9:46 p.m.

**A true record**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Putman', written over the text 'A true record'.

**By Chad Putman**

**Schenectady Deputy City Clerk**