

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 27TH, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Margaret C. King at &7:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. King called upon Rev. Paul Panos of St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

Ms. King called on Ms. Sarah Michener 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 – Councilmembers Joseph L. Allen, Denise K. Brucker, Mark W. Blanchfield, Gary R. McCarthy, Thomas Della Sala, Barbara Blanchard and Margaret C. King.

Absent – None

Also Present- Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City Clerk Carolyn Friello and Corporation Counsel L. John Van Norden.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. McCarthy moved the minutes of the City Council meeting of April 27, 2009 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Ms. Brucker. Hearing no objections, Ms. King declared the minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official –

From the Mayor a list of appointments.

General – None

Petitions: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Joseph Allen stated he went to the Golf Course last week and it was “booming”. The Golf Course looks beautiful; however, Brian Damon had some concerns that we will hopefully rectify. Hopefully we will have Brian at our next committee meeting.

Ms. Blanchard stated Government Operation met and Affirmative Action was discussed. The Affirmative Action Office works both for the city and county. The city pays \$50,000 towards her salary. Miriam is working with Corporation Counsel to update the Affirmative Action requirements.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

Ms King invited all who wished to address the City Council on any item on the Legislative Agenda to come forward. The following speaker's rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Vince Riggi- Campbell Ave, Schenectady spoke on Agenda #6; unfortunately re-assessment has not been right from the start. I was going to print out some assessments to do some comparables, it's locked. That's wrong, we pay for that. How can this be 1% of perfection? The review board has to be an independent body. If you don't agree with your assessment make sure you grieve it. Mr. Mastor has been "bullying" people from the start.

Jason Planck – Schenectady resident spoke on Agenda #1 Affirmative Action and Disabilities is not in compliance. How can you be in compliance when you don't have 503 Bifiling for this grant you say you're in compliance and your not.

Seeing no speakers to come before the City Council, Ms. King declared the Privilege of the Floor on the Legislative Agenda closed.

INTRODUCTION OF AND ACTION UPON LOCAL LAWS, ORDINANCES & RESOLUTION:

Consent Agenda –

Resolution No. 2009-57	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-58	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-59	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-60	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-61	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-62	Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

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

Jason Planck – Schenectady resident, states 16 people showed up Saturday to clean the fitness trail.

Vince Riggi – Campbell Ave - Lets make the process easy regarding crossing guards. There is a guard who is having problems; people are not stopping, flipping her the bird. They are not protected enough. The guards need help. For our officer's to go the other way when a guard is having trouble is wrong. Lastly, these crossing guards really deserve more money; get a grant to pay them more.

Donna Boettner – Millard St. Schenectady, I have been a crossing guard at Van Corlear school for 2 years. I've had nothing but problems. I complained and complained and nothing is being done. Last Thursday a cop was there for a radar check. A woman stopped in front of me and swore at me. The cop pulled her over, her husband came by later and got in my face, the cop went the other way. We get paid \$8.50 an hour for what we put up with.

Audra Angerami – Melrose St. Schenectady, Crossing guard at Brandywine and Albany Street, the city could make a lot of money if you put a camera up for all the people who go thru red lights.

Sarah Michener – Erie Blvd, Schenectady, You got rid of the round-about and we should be happy but we are not. You're taking private property from Walberg & Buhrmaster. Last weeks meeting was a "dog and pony show". We will direct future efforts towards legal issues not the least of which the Environment Review Process. The process will continue.

Rev. Phillip Grigsby - Albany St. Schenectady, I'd like the graffiti issue back on an Agenda. Crop Walk, Philip Grigsby organized locally, the Schenectady CROP Hunger Walk has set a goal of 750 Walkers and hopes to raise \$60,000 to help stop hunger and poverty here in our community and around the world, through self-help initiatives. A portion of the funds raised here will go to local hunger-fighting efforts including several food pantries (SICM, St. Luke's, Sacred Heart/St. Columba's), the Community Crisis Network and the Senior Meals Program of Catholic Charities of Schenectady County. The Schenectady Crop Walk is a celebration to fight hunger here and overseas. People from all walks of life and all communities gather together in common cause to provide direct assistance with the hungry and to witness to that day when all shall be fed and none shall hunger anymore. Last year, 700 Walkers raised more than \$56,000 in the CROP Hunger Walk. Last year, Schenectady's effort was in the top 20 walks in the country; near by Albany's has been in the top ten. This year Schenectady and some 2,000 cities and towns nationwide are joining together in interfaith community CROP Hunger Walks around the theme "We walk because they walk." Many the CROP Walkers will be wearing "We walk because they walk" t-shirts, proclaiming their solidarity with the millions of neighbors around the world who have to walk to live – as well as with the millions served by local food pantries, food banks, and meal sites here in the U.S. These local ministries share in the funds raised by CROP Hunger Walks. This year's 5K route will be a different one from recently. Participants will start and end from Emmanuel Friedens Church on Nott Terrace. The route will go through several neighborhoods and downtown, past the Greenmarket which will be outside for the first time of the season. A "Golden Mile" option is available. Participants seek their own sponsor's, including a "Walk on the

Web” option for internet teams. Donors can contribute to a range of faith based and secular hunger fighting agencies. All gifts are fully tax deductible. For more information about the Schenectady CROP Hunger Walk, contact Rev. Phillip N. Grigsby at (518) 374-2683 or revphil@sicm.us. CROP stand for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Van Norden – I seldom like to speak like this during a Council Meeting. It troubles me to speak like this. The public is hearing allegations about Affirmative Action. As I said that’s a very broad sweeping term to cover a whole host of legal principals that fill computers. They are statutes that are interpreted by courts. It’s another thing to understand it and apply it. I’ve had the pleasure of working during my tenure with very gifted employees. The Affirmative Action people you have today are the most active, pro-active that I have dealt with in my years. This is a very broad area of law when credible facts are brought forth, we respond to them. This city is in compliance.

Ms. Blanchard – In a couple days a grievance forms will be available off the web site. Also, you can download the instructions. You can also, go into the assessor’s office and pay 50 cents for the forms and a \$1.00 for the directions because the state is not supplying them free anymore. The comparables are also available in the assessor’s office. If you want to fill out a grievance it has to be done May 1st thru the 26th. Appointments will be made on May 26th. You don’t need an appointment you can submit forms and the board will review them. The assessment was done differently this time. There were no comparables; also, the “green market” is going out doors Sunday. It will be here at City Hall. The Mayor will cut the ribbon at 11:00. We will have more produce and more vendors. There will be Morris Dancers and a Blacksmith Demo station.

Mr. Allen – There’s been a lot of discussion on Affirmative Action. We’ve had successes and failures. Tracey Chance wasn’t allowed to attend our meetings. Over the year’s Schenectady has not been good with Affirmative Action. Our Fire Department has one minority. We have a long way to go. I commend Mr. Planck for keeping this on the front burner. Let’s not sweep this under the rug.

Mr. McCarthy – Regarding crossing guards, city employees should not be afraid to go to work. They shouldn’t be subject to harassment or intimidation. This is wrong for employees to be intimidated. Hopefully this can be resolved internally; if not perhaps a meeting can be scheduled.

Mayor Stratton – We certainly want to support our crossing guards. We want to encourage our guards to be vigilant and get all the information they can. Get plate numbers so we can follow up on that. We will do all we can. Also, I am looking forward to cutting the ribbon on Sunday as the Green Market moves outside. Also, I take exception to the comment of “bullying” regarding assessments. This is a tedious comprehensive process. I support the work our assessor is doing; they’ve been commended for it by the state. They are doing it with less staff. Anyone unhappy with

their assessments can grieve it. The auditors said that even in challenging times we did well. Finally, thanks to everyone who came out to the Erie Boulevard information Meeting, about 180 people. We have listened, learned and have come up with a good plan that we will work with.

Ms. King – The Chamber this week is having a “Good News Luncheon” to present awards to Schenectady businesses who have celebrated growth, ups and downs, community support or success stories. The Luncheon is this Thursday at Riverstone Manor.

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. King declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

A TRUE RECORDED

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO
CITY CLERK**