

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE  
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – MAY 11, 2009**

Laura Diehn, Steve Ventresca and Dom Gallo presented Chief Farstad and Commissioner Bennett with a check from Cool Insuring Company for Pak Tracker Locator.

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

Ms. King called upon Rev. Dominic Isopo, St. Luke's Catholic Church to deliver the invocation.

Ms. King called upon Mardy Moore 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 Blanchfield, Gary R. McCarthy, Thomas Della Sala, and Margaret C. King.

Absent – Barbara Blanchard

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

At this point in the meeting, Ms King asked if there were no objections, she would like to take Agenda Item # 7 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2009-63

Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Brucker invited Lois Guest, Wallace Campbell and Donna Boscoe to accept the Resolution.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

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

**COMMUNICATION:**

**Official:**

None

**General:**

The May meeting of the Bellevue Preservation Association will be held on Thursday, May 14, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Hall at 1911 Fairview Ave., at 7:00 P.M. Robert M. Carney, Schenectady District Attorney, will update residents on the efforts and impact of his office activities. Applications for the June 6<sup>th</sup> Bellevue Neighborhood Garage Sale will be available.

Armed Forces Day Flag Raising & Memorial Service will be held Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 AM at Bellevue Veteran's Park Broadway and Guilderland Ave.

Woodlawn Neighborhood Association will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, speakers will be members of the School Board; the Woodlawn Garage Sale is being held on May 16 & 17 – rain or shine.

**Petitions:**

None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None

**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 speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Rev. Phil Grisby, Albany St., Schenectady - Thanks for your reconsideration on the CDBG Grant. The Welfare Grant was increased by the State 10% this year. Also, thanks for adding funds for demolition. Perhaps at some point there can be a meeting to update us in the new policies for CDBG.

Gail VanValkenburgh, Kings Rd., Schenectady –Thank you for re-considering us in the CDBG Block Grant. We invite Council to come to the new pantry on Albany Street.

Mandy Moore, Balltown Rd., Schenectady – Thanks Council for re-considering us in funding for the Free Clinic.

Dr. Arnold B. Ritterband, MD., Northumberland Dr., Niskayuna - We need more than \$15,000 for the Free Clinic.

Bill Spolyar, Slingerland – If more funding isn't given to the Free Clinic it will close and the people will be out in the street.

Cynthia Tepper, Stone Ridge Rd, Schenectady – I know funds are limited but perhaps you can find some place to “squeeze” more money for the clinic.

Dr. Clifford Tepper, Stone Ridge Rd, Schenectady – Please re-consider and give more to the Free Clinic.

Mary Lee Pollard PhD, RN, Stone Creek Court, Ballston Spa – I wish to express my support of the Schenectady Free Clinic. As a Clinic Board member and registered nurse I have witnessed the enormous benefit the clinic has provided the citizens of Schenectady. During my 25 years of employment in a local hospital, I witnessed first-hand, the drain on hospital services that resulted in caring for patients who, because of their lack of insurance coverage, waited too long to seek care and required hospitalization. The Schenectady Free Clinic provides chronic disease management, preventing the need for acute hospitalizations. The Clinic also performs employment physicals, allowing unemployed and underemployed citizens of Schenectady County to seek gainful employment. Please reconsider your decision to eliminate funding for these vital community resources.

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:**

Resolution No. 2009-64	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-65	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-66	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-67	Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2009-68	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-69	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2009-63	Adopted Unanimously

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

Ms. King 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:

Mary McClaine – At the Erie Boulevard Public Hearing, Ms. Brucker stood at the microphone and told the crowd, “We deserve the project.” No senior citizen in this city deserves a \$700, 000 bill to create jobs for union workers. After what I witnessed in that room, it was apparent to me that the project was designed to make work for the unions. In which case, the 5% share expected from the city should be paid for by the county. It is more than likely that many workers will come from outside the city and do not contribute to the city’s tax base. Yet Schenectady’s aging population is expected to help subsidize the project. Some people thought the meeting was funny, I thought it was demeaning and cunning. It certainly was orchestrated. Speakers at the microphone were grand-standing. Others were pumping their arms in the air as if in conquest. Some jockeyed for credit for the project. Union bosses rallied their members, etc. All of this maneuvering at the expense of Schenectady’s aging population. If the Erie Boulevard merchants want this project to proceed, then go to the county for the money and spare the expense for the senior citizens. I also, want to speak to Mr. Della Sala’s comment of April 13, in which he said “we should listen to the children” referring to the high school. His comment was 15 years to late. Every teacher, every administrator, every school board member knew there were problems at Schenectady High but they kept things quiet. Several years ago, school administrators held a meeting to discuss incidences taking place after football games. The speaker said, since the behaviors were happening off campus, the school had no control over the students! Schools need to teach the total person because teachers have in their charge the future neighbors of tomorrow. At Schenectady High due to an act of birth (namely poverty) some students are trapped in a school system that is not healthy for them. Vouchers would change all of that but unions oppose vouchers. Ask the kids, “If they had a choice where would they go?” Unions are driving the city into the ground, and our elected officials are going along for the ride.

Sarah Michener – There was a meeting last week with several of the area businesses concerning the access road. Scott Lewendon and Carl Olsen attended several business were offended to see acquisition of their property would be needed to execute the design. Our concern all along has been displacing businesses. Mr. Palmer is still out in the cold. In conclusion, I am embarrassed as a Schenectadian that Dr's Ritterband and Tepper had to come here and ask for more money.

Al Santoro, Normanskill Place, Slingerlands – I own 30 units on Union Street, we had a severe incident with the shooting up there at 852 Union last year, there was a drug raid. I've had a lot of tenants call very worried. Something needs to be done about the management of the properties, the way they look, the trash. I work hard to keep my properties up. I take pride in my property. I can't get support from codes.

Timothy Hilliard, Mumford Street, Schenectady – On May 6, 2009, I was informed I had a ticket for parking on the sidewalk. I asked why the car was being towed. He said because of past due tickets. I asked why the other car parked just like me wasn't given a ticket. I work nights and I can't always move my car. I would like that ticket, tow charge and fees rescinded and I will pay the past tickets.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Mr.Della Sala – I commend Mariam Cajuste for the stand she's taking in minority contractors it's going to take time to get everything working properly but the way she is doing it is fine. Also, I'd like everyone to be aware of the success of our Schenectady Girls La Cross Team. My daughter was in the team her few years of high school. There final home game is tomorrow at 5:30 and Larry Muluany field. I urge you to attend and support this team.

Mr. Allen – I've noticed lately people are black toping their whole backyards. Someone needs to minter this. Also, we're moving in the right direction regarding monitor hiring.

Mr. Blanchfield – Thanks to those who come down and spoke regarding the Free Clinic. The question to ask is what support does the County give to the Free Clinic. That need's to be answered. Several of us here tried to address that with some success and some failure. I think these folks need to speak to their County Legislators. Tomorrow the County is going to make decisions regarding spending towards Glendale Home which is more than the entire cost of the Consolidated Plan and Fire Department. It's a necessary function but I hope the same scrutiny

is used towards that Facility as was to the consolidated plan. We need to look beyond Schenectady's borders.

Mr. McCarthy – I ask Commissioner Bennett to follow up with Mr. Hilliard so individuals don't think they are selectively enforced. Also, I had forgotten about the hearing in Glendale Home and the debate as to whether we build a courthouse or Glendale home. I personally lobbied the County Legislature to put the money into Glendale Home. Also, channel 16 is having a fund raiser this Thursday morning at Riverstone Manor to get ideas. Also, regarding Assessment, I ask Council to consider the roll and the ability to access it. We've had discussions on what should and shouldn't be done. Some staff members have expressed opinions in what should be accessible and what shouldn't be accessible. I think that's a policy decision Council should make. It can be accessible and usable in a very "user-friendly" format. There's been discussion in the printability and that people might use that for private interest. We are saying we pay the highest property taxes, we compile all this data and we are saying "no" you shouldn't have it. I'd like the Council to discuss this but I think we all agree that the data should be accessed in a more open format. We should formalize that and make it available in the website. In the absence of that if we can't come to a conclusion in two weeks, then I request it be made available to me and I'll post it in a more searchable format that relieves this tension in the community because of ability to search in a user friendly way. Madam President, could you assign this to the appropriate committee so it can be discussed and we can come to a conclusion in two weeks.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. King recessed the meeting for Thursday, May 14, 2009 at 6:00 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO  
CITY CLERK**