

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

July 13, 2020

The City Council Meeting was called to order by the City Council President John Mootooveren at 5:32 p.m. by Webex Teleconference.

Mr. Mootooveren asked Council Member John Polimeni to offer the invocation.

Mr. Mootooveren then called on Council Member Carmel Patrick 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, Carmel Patrick, Leesa Perazzo, John Polimeni, Marion Porterfield, Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas, and John Mootooveren.

Also Present – City Clerk Samanta R. Mykoo, Corporation Counsel Andrew Koldin, and Director of Operations Alex Sutherland.

Absent – none.

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Mootooveren asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 22, 2020 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk. Ms. Patrick made a motion to approve the minutes and Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas seconded the motion.

COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Official:

From the Mayor, a list of appointments dated July 13, 2020.

General:

An email from Nicole Giambastiani regarding the City budget and asking that funds be directed away from the Police Department and used towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice, and to mental health workers for the community.

An email from Kaitlin Doolittle regarding the City budget and asking that funds be directed away from the Police Department and used towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice, and to mental health workers for the community.

An email from Emily DeCesare regarding the City budget and asking that funds be directed away from the Police Department and used towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice, and to mental health workers for the community.

An email from Thomas P. Kennedy III requesting a message of “All Lives Matter” be painted on a representative street in the same manner as the “Black Lives Matter” project.

An email from Kur Uop regarding the City budget and asking that funds be directed away from the Police Department and used towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice, and to mental health workers for the community.

An email from Preethi Kumaran regarding the City budget and asking that funds be directed away from the Police Department and used towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice, and to mental health workers for the community

Petitions:

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance – Mr. Polimeni announced that on July 27th we will be holding a public hearing for changes to the CDBG budget as per what HUD has instructed for approval. He asked that any comments for the public hearing be submitted to the City Clerk to be shared with the City Council.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS):

Mr. Mootoveren directed all who wished to discuss any items on the Legislative Agenda to submit their comments to the City Clerk.

INTRODUCTION OF AND ACTION UPON LOCAL LAWS, ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Polimeni made a motion that Council approves the Consent Agenda and the motion was moved by Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas and seconded by Mr. Polimeni.

Consent Agenda

- Resolution No. 2020-099.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-100.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-101.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-102.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-103.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-104.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-105.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-106.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-107.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-108.....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2020-109.....Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2020-CS-05.....Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2020-CS-06.....Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mr. Mootooveren directed all who wished to discuss any items for City Business to submit their comments to the City Clerk.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL:

Ms. Porterfield – Suggested that meetings with the community continue and that Council should begin deliberating legislation regarding police reform.

Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas – Agreed with Ms. Porterfield. Then stated that these are turbulent times that we live in, there is unrest in our country and our city. We need change for sure, but we need mutual respect as well. Our citizens need to understand that the police are here to help and protect our city. Sometimes there is a breakdown and things need to be addressed and changes made. For example, the incident that happened this past week was unfortunate. We ask our police department to protect our city and citizens. They put their lives on the line daily to ensure that we have a safe city to live in. The police are here to help. Yesterday at a meeting with members of the Guyanese community, the Chief of Police, Mayor and others; I had an opportunity to hear from several neighbors of the individual involved in the incident. They have been trying for years to solve issues with this individual. The officer was doing his job. None of us were in the officers' shoes and we do not know what other threats he perceived. There is an ongoing investigation and I am sure that we will have more details soon. I go back to the need to be respectful of each other. I hope we, as a community, can use what we learn from this incident to create the type of City that we all want and need in Schenectady.

Ms. Patrick – Spoke about the meeting with the Guyanese community regarding police matters and the need to have respectful conversations with the rest of our community.

Adjourned:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. Mootooveren asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Ms. Patrick and seconded by Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas. The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

A true record



By Samanta R. Mykoo
Schenectady City Clerk

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: Nicole Giambastiani [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 03, 2020 11:27 AM
Subject: A Step in the Right Direction

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

My name is Nicole Giambastiani and I am writing to demand that the Schenectady City Council adopt a city budget that prioritizes community well-being, and redirects funding away from the police and towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice and mental health workers to help the community.

In the 2020 budget, the City of Schenectady allocated an egregious \$34,368,057 to our police department. I demand that the City Council begin meaningfully defunding the Schenectady Police Department and re-allocate those funds to programs proven to more effectively promote a safe and equitable community. We need funding for community-based mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and affordable housing programs. Police officers are not equipped to—and should not—be the first resource for every crisis. I demand a budget that reflects the actual needs of Schenectady residents.

History has shown that police "reform" is not enough. Policing in America was developed to protect the institution of slavery. More money and training programs will not only not fix our current system, they will cause future lives to be lost to police brutality. We must take a hard look at the way the current system in place fails to serve—and in fact actively harms—our community, and come together to reimagine the role of police in our city.

I am urging you to keep these things in mind for the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and to invest in the people, not the police.

Thank you for your time,
Nicole Giambastiani

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: Kaitlin Doolittle [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 03, 2020 12:15 PM
Subject: DEFUND SCHENECTADY PD NOW!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

My name is Kaitlin and I am a resident of Schenectady. I am writing to demand that the Schenectady City Council adopt a city budget that prioritizes community well-being, and redirects funding away from the police and towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice and mental health workers to help the community.

In the 2020 budget, the City of Schenectady allocated an egregious \$34,368,057 to our police department. I demand that the City Council begin meaningfully defunding the Schenectady Police Department and re-allocate those funds to programs proven to more effectively promote a safe and equitable community. We need funding for community-based mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and affordable housing programs. Police officers are not equipped to—and should not—be the first resource for every crisis. I demand a budget that reflects the actual needs of Schenectady residents.

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I am urging you to keep these things in mind for the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and to invest in the people, not the police.

Thank you for your time,
Kaitlin D.

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: Emily DeCesare [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 04, 2020 3:18 PM
To: Emily DeCesare
Subject: Schenectady Police Budget

My name is Emily and I am a resident of Schenectady. I am writing to demand that the Schenectady City Council adopt a city budget that prioritizes community well-being, and redirects funding away from the police and towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice and mental health workers to help the community.

In the 2020 budget, the City of Schenectady allocated an egregious \$34,368,057 to our police department. I demand that the City Council begin meaningfully defunding the Schenectady Police Department and re-allocate those funds to programs proven to more effectively promote a safe and equitable community. We need funding for community-based mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and affordable housing programs. Police officers are not equipped to—and should not—be the first resource for every crisis. I demand a budget that reflects the actual needs of Schenectady residents.

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I am urging you to keep these things in mind for the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and to invest in the people, not the police.

Thank you for your time,
Emily
Schenectady County resident



SENT VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, FACSIMILE, EMAIL

To: Mayor Gary McCarthy
From: Thomas P. Kennedy III
Date: July 4, 2020
Subject: Request to paint ALL LIVES MATTER on a City Street

Please find the attached request for a painting a project that would celebrate the fact in our diverse society that ALL LIVES MATTER!

Now that the City of Schenectady has made the decision to authorize and publicly fund a political ideology to be painted on a city street; city residents believe every citizen must be afforded the same ability to express themselves in the same manner under the same conditions set forth by their government.

Please be advised, this request is being made in accordance with all the protections and rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution, specifically our Fourteenth Amendment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.



SENT VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, FACSIMILE, EMAIL

July 4, 2020

Mayor Gary R. McCarthy
City of Schenectady
105 Jay Street, Room 111
Schenectady, NY 12305

RE: Request to paint ALL LIVES MATTER on a City Street

Dear Mayor McCarthy,

The City of Schenectady has now made the unprecedented decision to use our city streets as public fora for expressive activity in identifying political ideologies. When "BLACK LIVES MATTER" was painted on Jay Street in front of our City Hall using public funds and without public debate; the city must now guarantee it's citizens the same right of expression in the same manner. Therefore as a long-standing city resident, homeowner and taxpayer, I along with like-minded city residents hereby request the expressive message of "ALL LIVES MATTER" be painted on a representative street in the same manner set forth in the aforementioned project.

ALL LIVES MATTER is a nation-wide movement that recognizes every American citizen is endowed with the same God-given rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. These rights are enshrined and guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence. As City residents and as citizens of the greatest country in the world, the United States of America, we must resist division and divisiveness and strive for unity in all we do. Painting ALL LIVES MATTER will demonstrate the City of Schenectady believes the unity and rights of ALL citizens should be celebrated and protected!

To that end, we ask for your favorable consideration of our request which is being made consistent with the aforementioned painting project and in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. We stand ready to assist in accomplishing this painting project.

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Mayor Gary R. McCarthy
July 4, 2020
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Thank you for time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me anytime.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. Kennedy III

cc: Thomas J. Fitton, Judicial Watch, Inc.
Andrew Koldin, Corporation Counsel
Samanta Mykoo, City Clerk
City Council (7) by Email

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: kur uop [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, July 04, 2020 3:53 PM
To: Samanta R. Mykoo; Karen ZalewskiWildzunas; John Polimeni; Ed Kosiur; John Mootoveren; Leesa Perazzo; Marion Porterfield; Carmel Patrick
Subject: An urgent message to Schenectady.

I am writing to demand that the Schenectady City Council adopt a city budget that prioritizes community well-being, and redirects funding away from the police and towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice and mental health workers to help the community.

In the 2020 budget, the City of Schenectady allocated an egregious \$34,368,057 to our police department. I demand that the City Council begin meaningfully defunding the Schenectady Police Department and re-allocate those funds to programs proven to more effectively promote a safe and equitable community. We need funding for community-based mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and affordable housing programs. Police officers are not equipped to—and should not—be the first resource for every crisis. I demand a budget that reflects the actual needs of Schenectady residents.

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I am urging you to keep these things in mind for the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and to invest in the people, not the police.

Thank you for your time,
A citizen who's tired of seeing violence being taken priority over our community.

Samanta R. Mykoo

From: Preethi Kumaran [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 1:31 PM
To: Samanta R. Mykoo; Karen ZalewskiWildzunas; John Polimeni; Ed Kosior; John Mootoveren; Leesa Perazzo; Marion Porterfield; Carmel Patrick
Subject: Redirect Budget Funds

Hello,

My name is Preethi Kumaran and I am writing to demand that the Schenectady City Council adopt a city budget that prioritizes community well-being, and redirects funding away from the police and towards housing, jobs, youth programs, restorative justice and mental health workers to help the community.

In the 2020 budget, the City of Schenectady allocated a grossly excessive \$34,368,057 to our police department. I demand that the City Council begin defunding the Schenectady Police Department and re-allocating these funds to programs proven to more effectively promote a safe and equitable community. We need funding for community-based mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and affordable housing programs. Police officers are not equipped to—and should not—be the first resource for every crisis. I demand a budget that reflects the actual needs of Schenectady residents.

History has shown that police “reform” is not enough. Policing in America was developed to protect the institution of slavery. More money and training programs will not fix our current system, and they will cause future lives to be lost to police brutality. We must take a hard look at the way the current system in place fails to serve—and in fact actively harms—our community, and come together to reimagine the role of police in our city.

Please keep these things in mind for the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and to invest in the people, not the police.

Thank you for your time,
Preethi Kumaran