

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

**November 28, 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. Arnetta Dix of Refreshing Spring Community Church to provide the invocation.

Ms. Perazzo then called on Joe Landry to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

At this point, Ms. Perazzo invited Congressman Paul Tonko to introduce Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas to be sworn in by City Court Judge Mark Carusso. Congressman Tonko remarked on Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas' professional experience and community involvement. Council member Kalewski-Wildzunas was then joined by family as she was sworn in by Judge Carusso. She then extended her appreciation to Congressman Tonko, Judge Carusso other colleagues and family for supporting her efforts and candidacy. She added she looks forward to working with fellow elected officials to serve the residents of Schenectady.

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, Vincent Riggi and Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas

Also Present – Deputy City Clerk Chad Putman, Corporation Counsel Carl Falotico & Mayor Gary R. McCarthy

At this point, Ms. Perazzo asked if there were no objections, she would like to take agenda item number 9 out of order. There were no objections.

**Resolution No. 2016-282 – A Resolution Recognizing Alpha-1 Awareness Month.** Richard Lovrich was on hand and he extended his 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:**

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the City Council regarding the **(1) 2017 Upper Union Street Business Improvement District Budget** to come forward. Seeing no speakers come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo declared the public hearing to be closed.

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the City Council regarding the **(2) Regarding the 2017 Downtown Special Assessment District Budget** to come forward. Seeing no speakers come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo declared the public hearing to be closed.

Ms. Perazzo invited all who wished to address the City Council regarding the **(3) Regarding Smoke-Free Cars when Passengers are Under the Age of 16** to come forward. Seeing no speakers come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo declared the public hearing to be closed.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2016 Council meeting as submitted by the City Clerk; Mr. Kosiur made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Riggi seconded the motion.

## **Communications Presented to the City Council for Monday, November 28, 2016**

### **Official:**

From Paul LaFond, Commissioner of General Services, a letter dated November 28th recommending the award of the "Furnishing Supplies and Equipment 2016" contract be awarded to Ferguson Waterworks.

### **General:**

None

### **Petitions:**

None

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Ms. Porterfield, Health & Recreation** - Recognized Richard Patierne, Schenectady County Legislator and Chair of the Recreation Advisory Committee who was in attendance. She then noted that all of the new playground equipment planned for 2016 has been installed. Ongoing work continues on some fences and bench installations. She added the purchase of the new equipment came in \$47.00 under budget.

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

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

**Mary McClaine**, Schenectady - "Item #7 - Rose Garden reimbursement - Tonight City Council will give the Rose Garden Committee \$1,632. Why? Isn't the Central Park Rose Garden artsy enough for you? Isn't the Rose Garden touristy enough for you? Doesn't it have enough history significance to merit more money? During the candidate's forum at the Machesney Library the Council candidates were asked about bringing in new revenue for the city. The new Council woman said it could come from the bed tax. What she didn't tell the voters is that the bed tax already comes with strings attached. Bed tax money can only be used for the arts, tourism and historic preservation. It cannot be used for tax reduction or budget relief. As a Metroplex board member she would have had that information. This year, Proctors received \$200,000 of bed tax money. Proctors is run by a director who earns a 6 figure income while working in an air conditioned building with free-labor and paid employees of which the City Council President is the latter. Conflict of interest is blatant on this body. On the other hand, volunteers work outdoors in the summer heat on the Central Park Rose Garden that was voted naionally as the 3rd most beautiful garden in the country. Proctors gets \$200,000 for the arts. Rose Garden receives \$1,632. I think Council should cut a check for 15,000 to give to the committee to keep the garden beautiful."

## **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. Riggi.

**Consent Agenda –**

- Resolution No. 2016 – 283 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 284 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 285 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 286 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 287 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 288 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – 289 .....Adopted Unanimously
- Resolution No. 2016 – CS - 24 .....Adopted Unanimously

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

Ms. Perazzo 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:

**Marva Isaacs**, Schenectady - Noted the Thanksgiving dinner hosted at the Boys & Girls Club in Hamilton Hill was attended by several members of the Schenectady Police Department and Chief Clifford. She noted her appreciation that police officers packed up dinners and delivered them to neighborhood residents. She added she had never witnessed this before and was very grateful.

**Tony Bounome**, Schenectady – Noted concerns related to whether or not bids are out on the Oak Street Bridge project. He added that he would like to see progress before Spring.

**Mary McClaine**, Schenectady - "There is a famous quote by President Calvin Coolidge, he said, "it is better to keep your mouth shut and let people think you are a fool rather than open it and remove all doubt." Madame President, you have no defense in your case as to how the city budget was handled. The Gazette printed a list of the days and times that Council would be working on the budget. The city also released a list of the days and time for budget work. Since it is legal for Democrats to caucus why wasn't the day and time listed on the public agenda? Council dealt with the city budget in a cunning and devious manner. All who were present in that closed door budget caucus session grew Pinocchio noses. As for the 2017 budget, it's enough to make one regurgitate. Mr. Steck said he sent \$14 million dollars to Schenectady City Schools in 2016. Schenectadians didn't reap the benefit of that money because 90 percent of the school's personnel didn't live in the city. The money went elsewhere. Secondly, according to the new PBA contract, policemen will receive two-percent retro-active pay raises for 2014, 2015 and a two-percent raise in 2017. That is a total of six-percent salary increases for policemen and most of them live elsewhere. Schenectady taxpayers can expect only a 4-percent tax reduction for next year. The only ones who glean from the budget are the people who unanimously passed it. They receive salaries, medical coverage, low-income status for property taxes and the one with eight apartments will get a 16 percent property tax reduction. Nice work if you can't get it. Money is coming into this city from all directions. City officials get a failing grade on this budget. Taxpayers deserved a 10 percent property tax reduction."

**Joy Hall**, Schenectady - Noted there are parking issues when there is an event going on at Proctors. She added it's hard to find parking and something needs to be done. She also noted concerns about speeding on Erie Blvd. and City streets in need of repair. She cautioned that something needs to be done before someone gets hurt.

**Wayne Bombgardner**, Schenectady - Noted that he had an interest in the RFP for the towing contract. He added that he tried to contact the responsible parties regarding submitting an application and his calls were not returned. He noted that he had read through the RFP and noted there were typo's

and inconsistencies. He added that he reached out to the City Council as well and did not receive a return call. He noted that he is aware of three bids that were received in response to the RFP and added that others outside of the City were interested but did not receive notification. He noted that two of the proposals were accepted by the Council and he questioned how the third application did not meet criteria. He noted the RFP should be re-posted to make sure the process is fair.

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** – Noted her appreciation of local sites that offered Thanksgiving meals for residents in the City. She noted the Breathing Lights program is wrapping up but the property that was featured with the program is available. She added there will be a program with information on how to buy a house on December 8 at the Schenectady County Business Center at 920 Albany Street at 6:00 p.m. She noted other topics to be covered include purchasing a fixer-upper, working with Code Enforcement and zoning regulations.

**Mr. Polimeni** - Noted there is a Mayor Summit taking place in Mexico City featuring the Smart City Initiative and reflected on the resolution of support previously passed by the Council regarding the Mayor's initiative. He added that street lighting is part of the City's infrastructure and could help create a network which can help collect data. He noted the smart street lights could help save taxpayer's money and create revenue. He also mentioned the possibility of the program helping with job creation, new business and start-ups. He noted goals related to a reduction of fossil fuels and the potential for more solar power on buildings in the City. He commended the Mayor on his efforts related to Smart Cities. He closed by thanking Congressman Tonko for his response and support related to his outreach on the Oak Street Bridge.

**Mr. Riggi** - Welcomed new City Council member Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas. He also thanked Congressman Paul Tonko for helping make progress on the Oak Street Bridge which remains closed to traffic.

**Mayor McCarthy** - Welcomed new City Council member Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas noting her work on Metroplex and added she will be a good addition to the Council. He then noted he would not be attending the conference in Mexico City but will continue work on using technology to improve the community.

**Ms. Perazzo** – Noted the agenda item related to the towing contract was pulled from tonight's agenda and no bids have been accepted at this time. She then noted Upper Union Street BID will host their Christmas tree lighting on December 4 at 4:00 p.m. She also noted the Stockade will host their Christmas tree lighting on December 4 at 5:30 p.m. and the Bellevue Christmas tree lighting will take place on December 8 at 6:00 p.m. She closed by inviting everyone to the post-Council meeting reception in honor of new City Council member Ms. Zalewski-Wildzunas.

### **Adjourned:**

Seeing further business to come before the City Council, Ms. Perazzo asked for a motion to recess the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Polimeni and seconded by Mr. Mootooveren. The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

**A true record**

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

**By Chad Putman**

**Schenectady Deputy City Clerk**