

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Aldermen Minutes
Monday, October 3, 2022

Members present; President Doenges, Aldermen DePoy, Whitcomb, Talbott, Ettori, Tadio, Franco, Savage, Gillam and Davis. Also present, Mayor Allaire, Attorney Bloomer and Deputy City Clerk Kapusta. Alderman Barbagallo was absent.

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

President Doenges called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (September 18, 2022)

A motion was made and seconded (Talbott, Savage) approving the minutes of the previous meeting.

Motion passed.

OUTSIDE THE RAIL

No one spoke from outside the rail.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Allaire; Request for Referral, Parking Garage Issues

Mayor Allaire asked for a referral to the Finance Committee for all the Parking Garage related items. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to refer to the Finance Committee the revised lease with the State, Renewal of Services Agreement with LAZ and proposed 2022-2023 Budget for Garage. **Motion passed.**

Mayor Allaire would like the scoping study for the College of St. Joseph to continue since a main buyer has been disclosed for a portion of the property. He wants the community to know that the City is committed to revitalization of the remaining property.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Alderman Talbott removed his Community & Economic Development report on the discussion of completed Center Street scoping study and pause of College of St. Joseph housing study.

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Treasurer Markowski; Request approval of Lease proposal for the refurbished Fire Ladder #1

Treasurer Markowski asked the Board to wait on the financing for the lease of refurbished Fire Ladder #1, until January or February when she will have more City Financial data in the hopes that the truck can be paid for instead of paying interest. This was for information only and Treasurer Markowski will bring back to the Board when she has a definite answer for funding.

Superintendent Peters; Request to sell 2008 Savannah Van

Tyler Dahlin, Parks and Facilities Director requested permission from the Board to sell their 2008 Savannah Van for \$10,000 from Recreation Department to DPW (Waste Water Department). Money will go into Recreation Maintenance Equipment replacement fund.

A motion was made and seconded (DePoy, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.**

A motion was made and seconded (DePoy, Davis) to authorize the sale of 2008 Savannah Van from Recreation Department to DPW (Waste Water Department). Money will go into Recreation Maintenance Equipment replacement fund. **Motion passed.**

Attorney Bloomer; Courcelle Building Program of Utilization Amendment and Concession Agreement

Attorney Bloomer explained that the Courcelle Building on North Street Extension, which previously housed the Recreation Department's administrative office and continues to house the Recreation Maintenance operations, was a gift from the Federal Government. A proposed amendment to the Program of Utilization ("POU") needs to be submitted to National Park Service ("NPS") to reflect the fact that the administrative offices have moved to the Community Center at the former College of St. Joseph campus. The City would like to include in the proposed amendment a plan to rent the vacant Courcelle office space to Community Care Network, for their AmeriCorps, Seniors and the Volunteer Center programs. These programs had previously cohabitated with the Recreation Department at Dana School. Attorney Bloomer needs the Board's approval for the amended POU and the Concession Agreement (which is equivalent of a lease). The Concession Agreement proposed to lease the front four offices, with shared use of classrooms and storage space for \$700 a month. The initial term would be for three years. All proceeds of the lease would go first towards defraying costs of the Courcelle Building and any excess would go to other recreational programs.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Talbot, Gillam) to authorize the City Attorney to submit the proposed Program of Utilization amendment, substantially the form presented to the National Park's Service on behalf of the City. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Savage) to approve the Concession agreement with Community Care Network, substantially the form presented pending approval from the National Park's Service. **Motion passed.**

Attorney Bloomer; Executive Session regarding a Labor Relations Agreement

This request was moved to the end of the agenda.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Alderman Talbot; Community & Economic Development; Report on Discussion of completed Center St. Scoping Study & Pause of College of St. Joseph housing Study; with no action

This item was removed from the agenda. See additions and deletions to agenda.

Alderman DePoy; Recreation, Main St Park

Alderman DePoy read his report from the Recreation Committee meeting held on September 20, 2022. Superintendent Peters and Parks & Facilities Director Dahlin updated the committee on some ideas about what the Main St. Park renovation could look like. First was to leave the bandstand round the same height and raise the entire walkway up from the southeast corner to the level of the bandstand. Second was to drop the bandstand down to 18"-24" above ground level and have a ramp for handicap access. The third idea dealt with the walkways thought the park. The current roof could possibly be recycled for use on the new bandstand as it was just replaced three years ago. A support building for the electrical infrastructure with bathrooms and storage area would be considered the "control room". No actual motions came out of the meeting and the issue will remain in committee for further discussion.

Alderman Ettori; Public Works, Water Policy Change

Alderman Ettori read his report from the Public Works Committee meeting held on September 21, 2022 to get an update on the water meter installation project that began in 2018. DPW sees the current billing system as reliable and stable. Customer service is also all in-house now. Most of the meters are able to be read in minutes but about 365 accounts require the meter readers to drive by the accounts. There are 44 active accounts that still do not have the new meters installed. Five are commercial and the others residential. DPW staff also discussed another issue, the rising number of delinquencies. The State's program to help residents pay delinquent utility bills was used widely to help keep people current, but others have not or were ineligible. A new water shut off policy was created so DPW could

shut off the water supply to a property with a delinquent account. The policy was developed in accordance with Public Service Board regulations. DPW believes this will be a helpful tool to use in collections before balances get too high. Currently the only mechanism to collect is to tax sale the property. Members of the committee voiced concerns for those who are unable to pay, and for those who may need the water supply for heat in the winter. Because DPW considers this an internal administrative policy, the Board's input is advisory, but the DPW staff agreed to hold off any shutoffs during the winter months and to use the policy judiciously. This report was for information only. Alderwoman Tadio expressed her disappointment in the policy and does not support it.

Alderman Franco; General, Evergreen Cemetery

Alderman Franco read his report from the General Committee meeting that took place on September 26, 2022 regarding Evergreen Cemetery. The Committee met to discuss the ongoing maintenance and financial issues at the cemetery. Annual financial needs range from \$65,000-\$75,000. The annual operating budget sits at \$90,000 with incoming revenue of only \$35,000. Since presenting to the Board of Aldermen at an earlier meeting, a private donor has come forth and funded the new database services that will help organize and store records. President of the Evergreen Cemetery Board, Paula McCann has requested assistance from the City in the form of tree and road maintenance, in addition to historical records. Commissioner Rotondo was not able to commit to maintenance assistance upfront, but would have his team conduct a site visit for more context. Several other sources of fundraising and revenue were proposed by other board members, such as seeking recognition on the historical registry and have the BOA send a resolution to the Vermont congressional delegation to advocate for funding. Rick Bove offered maintenance assistance from the Moose Lodge which has performed similar community service activities in the past. No action was taken by the committee, but Chair Franco will work with President McCann to craft proposed language for a resolution to the VT congressional delegation.

Alderman Whitcomb; Finance, ARPA Requests Fire & PD, Center St Redesign, Wi-Fi Downtown & City Hall Upgrades.

Alderman Whitcomb read his report from the Finance Committee that was held on September 29, 2022.

- A funding request for \$500,000 for a Center Street redesign and scoping study
- A funding request for self-contained breathing apparatuses, or air packs for Fire Department.
- A funding request of \$52,000 for items throughout City Hall in need of repair.
- A funding request for \$300,000 to earmark for downtown city Wi-Fi.

This report was for informational purposes only.

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

There were no select committees reports.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

There were no reports of representatives.

PETITIONS, LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION

There were no petitions, letters, miscellaneous communication.

BOARD OF CONTROL COMMISSIONERS

There was nothing to come before the Board of Control Commissioners.

BOARD OF CANNABIS COMMISSIONERS

There was nothing to come before the Board of Cannabis Commissioners.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to come before the Board.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Franco; Economic Development and Corresponding Structural Changes

Alderman Franco questioned why Rutland Redevelopment Authority (RRA) was not really fulfilling its duties under its contract with the city. Quarterly reports for the RRA show that 90% of the work being done under the grant list and job development is being led by another entity. Seventy-five percent of blighted property remediation efforts were also overseen by other organizations. Alderman Franco did say that the grant administration is doing well and he would want to maintain funding for that function. Alderman Etti and Alderman Whitcomb echoed the same concerns brought forth by Alderman Franco. Mayor Allaire, Alderman DePoy, Alderman Gillam and Alderwoman Davis defended the RRA and the work that has been done for the last decade.

Alderman Franco made a motion to seize the distribution of the budget allocation for the RRA in the amount of \$56,000 per quarter without the allocation for the executive director. No action was done on this motion because the rules needed to be suspended first.

A motion was made and seconded (Franco, Etti) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.**
Alderwoman Davis called for a roll call vote.

Alderman Etti – Yes
Alderman Franco – Yes
Alderwoman Savage – Yes
Alderman Talbott – Yes
Alderwoman Tadio – Yes
Alderman Whitcomb – Yes
Alderman Gillam – No
Alderman DePoy – No
Alderwoman Davis – No

Motion failed 6-3.

A motion was made and seconded (Franco, Tadio) to table the discussion to seize the distribution of the budget allocation for the RRA in the amount of \$56,000 per quarter without the allocation for the executive director. **Motion passed 6-3.**

A motion was made and seconded (Etti, Tadio) to refer to Community & Economic Development committee a discussion for economic development strategy. **Motion passed.**

Motion was made and seconded (Talbott, Davis) to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the negotiation of a labor relations agreement would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion will divulge the Board's position on the agreement provisions to be negotiated. **Motion passed.**

Motion was made and seconded (Talbott, Savage) to enter into executive session (with the inclusion of the Commissioner of Public Works, Human Resources Director, Mayor, Treasurer and City Attorney) to discuss the labor relations agreement as allowed under Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(B). **Motion passed.**

At 8:14 PM the BOA moved into executive session.

At 8:51 PM the BOA moved out of executive session.

Motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to authorize the Mayor, on behalf of the City, to enter into the proposed collective bargaining agreement and MOU with the DPW union, each in substantially the form presented. **Motion passed.**

At 8:52 PM the BOA adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy L. Kapusta
Deputy City Clerk