

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Aldermen Minutes
Monday, August 21, 2023

Members present; President Talbott, Aldermen Cupoli, Barbagallo, Hooker, Gillam, McClure, Tadio, Davis, and Adams. Also present, Mayor Doenges, Attorney LaChance, Treasurer Markowski and City Clerk Kapusta. Alderwoman Savage and Alderman McCann were absent.

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (August 7, 2023)

A motion was made and seconded (Cupoli, Hooker) approving the minutes from the previous meeting.

Motion passed.

OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (Formally called OUTSIDE THE RAIL)

Lyle Jepson and Chrispin White spoke about the 2nd Annual Whoopie Pie Festival to be held on September 16, 2023 from 12PM-5PM. Mr. Jepson asked the City for a donation for the festival. Last year the City gave \$5,000.

Emma Cosgrove a Rutland High School Senior and Gracyn Skaza a West Rutland Senior are student interns at Partners for Prevention in Rutland County. Partners in Prevention is a community network that addresses the risks of alcohol and other drug misuse and promotes healthy lifestyles. Ms. Cosgrove and Ms. Skaza presented data they had collected from thirteen (13) different youth groups in Rutland County. The ages ranged from 10-18 years old. The three (3) questions asked of the youth groups were:

1. What do you want to see in your community?
2. What do you feel you need from your community in order to feel a part of it or to be an active participant?
3. How do you think we could present a 3rd space in the community?

Some ideas that were presented are a safe place to socialize, a teen center, safe transportation, and events that are targeted for teens at community events. Lack of communication was also brought up, that teens do not know when events are happening on social media.

Violet and Laurel Polli, who live on Campbell Road spoke to the Board about the wildlife that are trying to cross Clement Road by the old College of ST. Joes, but end up getting run over or close to run over. They would like to see a wildlife sign and a culvert under the road so the animals can cross safely from the pond to the river where they eat. Alderman Gillam took the girls information and he will set up a meeting with the Public Works Committee and the girls can come and speak about their ideas. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to refer the issue to the Public Works Committee. **Motion passed.**

Ivo Skovic, 105 Robbins Street spoke again about his driveway being blocked by new curbing that was installed on Robbins Street. Alderwoman McClure made a motion to refer Mr. Skovic's complaint to an executive session to be held at a later date. There was no second for the motion. Motion failed.

Larry Walter, 14 Belmont Avenue suggested that the Mayor contact Officer Jason Williams, who has a study that was done on the average speed as it relates to the "Road Diet" on Woodstock Avenue and Route 7. This study was completed two years ago, but Mr. Walter feels that it may help the Board of Highway Commissioners in their decision for any reconfiguration on Woodstock Avenue and Route 7.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Doenges stated he will donate \$5,000 from his contingency fund to the Whoopie Pie Festival.

Mayor Doenges spoke about the three things he will bring to the Board: 1) What we have done for the past week or two; 2) What we are actively doing; and 3) What we are going to do next.

- Mayor Doenges thanked DPW, Police Department, Fire Department and the City Building Department for all their hard work with the recent flooding on August 4th.
- Mayor Doenges thanked Representative Becca Balint for coming down and touring Clover Street where the recent flooding took place. Some people on that street still do not have electricity.
- With the hotel transitional housing plan, the State has reached out and they do think that they have some funding available for this plan. More to come.
- Collected all the department head requests for the Capital Improvement Plan.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Tadio) to refer to the Community and Economic Development Committee the discussion of the Capital Improvement Plan and setting up a Capital Improvement Plan Committee. **Motion passed.**

- The Planning Commission currently has five (5) members and if a member is absent it makes it hard to have a quorum. Mayor Doenges would like to see the members expand from five (5) to seven (7).

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Hooker) to refer this issue to the General Committee. **Motion passed.**

- Mayor Doenges requested that the Board designate him as the assigned voting delegate for our City memberships for VLCT, PACIF, and VERB at the upcoming VLCT Annual Business Meeting on Tuesday, September 26th.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Hooker, Cupoli) to designate Mayor Doenges as the assigned voting delegate for our City memberships for VLCT, PACIF and VERB at the upcoming VLCT Annual Business Meeting on Tuesday, September 26th. **Motion passed.**

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

President Talbott made the request to remove the Executive Session regarding negotiation of Collective Bargaining Agreements from Reports and Letters from Department Heads and Officials, so moved (Davis, Barbagallo). **Motion passed.**

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Barbara Spaulding, RRA; Rutland Housing Initiative I – 120 Maple Street

Ms. Spaulding read her memo. Hale resources decided to apply for project based vouchers at 120 Maple Street for the three units designated for low/mod income renters. Due to this change the Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact and request for release of funds had to be re-noticed in the Rutland Herald to include that information. As a result this changed the construction start date from September 1 to October 1. The Hales wanted the City to be apprised of this change and to continue their transparency with this project.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to receive and place in file the memo for Rutland Housing Initiative I for 120 Maple Street. **Motion passed.**

Fire Chief Bill Lovett; Decontamination Shower

Chief Lovett introduced the request. He has received the first bill for the installation work on the Decontamination Shower at the Fire Station. This shower will be used by Fire, Police, the Building Inspectors and DPW when employees are exposed to undetermined substances, either chemical, pharmacological or biological. Chief Lovett is asking that the matter be referred to the Finance Committee.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to refer the Decontamination Shower to the Finance Committee. **Motion passed.** Alderwoman Davis asked the Clerk to add the Decontamination Shower to the agenda for the Finance Committee meeting that is scheduled for August 23, 2023 at 5:30 PM and resend the meeting notice.

Superintendent Kim Peters; Summer Updates

Superintendent Peters gave an update on the Recreation Departments programs, events and facilities for the summer of 2023. The Recreation Department had a very successful summer.

Superintendent Kim Peters; Proposal for VAC Recreational Programs

Superintendent Peters presented a proposal for recreation programs at VAC. As this proposal was not budgeted, a motion was made and seconded (McClure, Hooker) to refer the proposal to the Recreation Committee. **Motion passed.**

Treasurer Mary Markowski; Pension Meeting

Treasurer Markowski read her Pension Board minutes from August 9, 2023. Erik Schait of Newport Group presented the Plan Valuation of January 1, 2023. Mr. Schait has been involved in the City Pension for over ten (10) years. The valuation is performed annually to calculate the liability in comparison to the activity of the plan. The valuation includes three (3) separate sections; the City employee groups, the School employee groups and the combined City and School groups.

In the City plan, there are currently fifty (50) active participants, 29 terminated/inactive participants and 150 retired participants/beneficiaries in pay status. The average age of active participants is 51.41 with an average service of 19.34 and average future service of 5.71.

In the School plan, there are currently 441 active participants, 239 terminated/inactive participants and 349 retired participants/beneficiaries in pay status. The average age of active participants is 48.35 with an average service of 10.28 and average future service of 7.79. Total plan participants in the School plan were 1,029.

Treasurer Mary Markowski; Request approval of lease proposal for purchase of 2 Police Vehicles

Treasurer Markowski presented the financing proposal for the purchase of two (2) outfitted Chevy Tahoe's. The purchase is part of the Police Departments ongoing plan for vehicle replacement and was approved by the Board of Finance in January. Treasurer Markowski recommends MLC – Municipal Leasing, as this financing can be added to the current master lease and would not need additional legal review.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Adams) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Hooker) to approve the financing proposal submitted by Municipal Financing Consultants for the purchase of two Police Department Chevy Tahoe vehicles to be finance for three years, at the rate of 6.17% with a sales price of \$126,156.50. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McClure) to authorize the Mayor, City Clerk and Treasurer to execute the financing documents on behalf of the City, subject to attorney review. **Motion passed.**

Treasurer Mary Markowski; July Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Markowski updated the Board on the Treasurer's Report for July 31, 2023. This was for information only.

Attorney LaChance; Option to Purchase Lease Agreement with MKF Properties on 107 West Street

Attorney LaChance presented a lease agreement for the lot located at 107 West Street.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Adams) to approve the lease agreement for the lot at 107 West Street with the City of Rutland and MKF Properties, LLC, for a term of two (2) years commencing August 1, 2023 and authorize the Mayor to sign. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Alderman Gillam; Public Works Committee Minutes from August 14, 2023

Alderman Gillam read his report from the Public Works Committee that met on August 14, 2023. Agency of Transportation (VTrans) gave a presentation on repaving and realignment roadway reconfiguration project for 2024 paving. Various members from the public spoke. The final decision will be in the hands of the Rutland city Board of Highway Commissioners. This report was for information only.

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Hooker) to receive and file the report. **Motion passed.**

Present Talbott; Committee of the Whole Minutes from August 15, 2023

President Talbott read his report from the Committee of the Whole that met on August 15, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was for Mayor Doenges to present the transitional housing proposal that he submitted in response to a call from the Department of Children and Families. There are approximately 300 families residing in the region's hotels using the housing vouchers that are available. There is currently a lack of permanent housing for these families.

The proposed transitional housing campus would be comprised of 50 prefabricated housing units and five (5) support staff buildings. The units would be energy efficient and equipped with solar and be able to accommodate up to a six (6) person family. The campus will be gated and drug and alcohol free. The staff buildings would have a common area with resources to support residents as they pursue employment and long-term housing. Every aspect of this project will be funded by State money. Support staff will be filled through partnerships with graduate programs at regional universities. The development, ownership, and management of this project would be handled by partner organizations such as the Housing Trust of Rutland County and the Rutland Housing Authority.

There was no action taken by the committee.

Alderwoman Tadio; Community & Economic Development Minutes from August 17, 2023

Alderwoman Tadio read her report from The Community and Economic Development Committee that met on August 17, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Business Incentive Assistance Program (BIAP) Loan fund to offer assistance to those Rutland businesses that were impacted by the recent flooding. Most of the businesses that were contacted will most likely not need to apply for a loan, but members of the committee decided it would be a good idea to have a policy in place in case flooding should happen again.

A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Davis) for Barbara Spaulding and the City Attorney to review the COVID BIAP loan contract and change the language so that it would be appropriate for emergency flood relief and report back to the Board of Aldermen with a final version to be approved. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

Alderman Cupoli; Pension Deficit Committee Meeting from August 9, 2023

Alderman Cupoli read his report from the Pension Deficit Committee that met on August 9, 2023. Information regarding the City Pension Deficit was provided by Erik Schait. Mr. Schait presented three (3) cash flow proposals and noted that the current asset value is projected out by taking into account the future plan benefits going out of the plan and projected contributions.

There was additional discussion about use of the local option tax. The local option tax was approved by the voters in March and included use for pension debt obligations. The Board of Aldermen would ultimately be making the decisions regarding the use of the local option tax. The local option tax would be only used for the City portion of the pension not the school.

A motion was made and seconded (Cupoli, Davis) to refer to the Finance Committee, using \$75,000 per quarter from the Local Option Tax Fund, to be used to cover future benefits to the Pension Fund. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

Alderwoman Tadio; Environmental Sustainability Minutes from July 26, 2023 & Green Fleet Policy

Alderwoman Tadio read her report from the Environmental Sustainability Committee that met on July 26, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the Green Fleet Policy, finalize the Mission Statement, and get an update on solar plans. The intention of the Green Fleet Policy is to take inventory of all City owned vehicles and equipment and then when vehicles are up for replacement, the department head will consider more fuel efficient or electric alternatives and options.

The City has applied for a \$4,000 Municipal Energy Resilience Program grant and also applied for the Energy Efficiency and Block Grant. Waiting to hear back on these grants.

The mission statement for the Environmental Sustainability committee is complete and will be posted on the website.

A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, McClure) to adopt the Green Fleet Policy. **Motion passed.**

PETITIONS, LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION

There were no Petitions, Letters, Miscellaneous Communications to come before the Board.

BOARD OF CONTROL COMMISSIONERS

There were no items for the Board of Control Commissioners.

BOARD OF CANNABIS COMMISSIONERS

There were no items for the Board of Cannabis Commissioners.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to come before the Board.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Gillam made a motion to refer to the General Committee a process for adding City Agencies and Board report minutes to the City website. Alderman Adams seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

Motion was made and second (Davis, McClure) to adjourn at 8:38 PM. **Motion passed.**

Respectively,

Tracy L. Kapusta
City Clerk