

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Aldermen Minutes
Monday, November 6, 2023

Members present; President Talbott, Aldermen Cupoli, Barbagallo, McCann, McClure, Gillam, Davis, and Hooker. Also present, Mayor Doenges, Treasurer Markowski, and City Clerk Kapusta. Alderman Adams arrived at 7:32 PM. Alderwomen Savage and Tadio were absent.

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (October 16, 2023)

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) 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)

Sarah Cosgove from Partners for Prevention and the Rutland Youth Coalition spoke about some of the need's teens would like to have, such as safe transportation, Youth Center and a resource hub. To help achieve these goals, Partners for Prevention would like to refer to a committee the discussion of a youth center and using some of the opioid settlement money to help fund a center. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to refer the issue to the Recreation Committee. **Motion passed.**

Kelley Cross, Bob Pearo, Melissa West, Rob Towle, Rich Card, Nancy Greenwood, Liam, and Mark Currier all spoke about crime in Rutland City.

Henry Heck made a statement directed to the Board of Aldermen regarding the \$1.8M in the Police Budget for FY25. Mr. Heck wants someone from the Board to make a motion that if the money is not spent it will go back to the taxpayers. No action was taken by the Board.

Kim Heck questioned how a surplus in the Police Department had been reallocated.

Henry Heck asked that Elected and Appointed Officials be referred to Charter and Ordinance Committee. So moved Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderman Gillam. **Motion failed.**

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Executive Session; Police Employment

Mayor Doenges requested that the Executive Session be moved to the end of the agenda as is customary.

Un-table Mayoral Nominations; Board of Health and Rutland Redevelopment Authority

Mayor Doenges introduced the item. Alderwoman Davis and Alderman Gillam so moved and seconded the removal of nominations from the table for the Board of Health and Rutland

Redevelopment Authority. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to circulate the ballot box for Matt Whitcomb's nomination to the Board of Health. **Motion passed.**

The Mayor placed the FY 2025 Budget on each Aldermen's desk and requested that it be referred to the appropriate committees. President Talbot introduced the request, a motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to refer budgets to the appropriate committees for review. **Motion passed.**

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Hooker) to circulate the ballot box for Sheena Fisher's nomination to the Board of Health. **Motion passed.**

The nomination of Matt Whitcomb to the Board of Health was confirmed by a vote of 6-Yes votes and 3-No votes.

The Mayor thanked everyone from the City and the State who attended and participated in the public safety Town Hall. Special thank you to Governor Scott for taking time out to come to Rutland for this town hall.

Mayor Doenges spoke about legislatively, what laws can we make and what things can we change. In the bail reform law, changing one sentence back to failure to appear will make a huge difference. We also need to look at what we can do administratively. There are things that can be done in the short term. Asking the Department of Corrections, State's Attorney Office, Governor's Office and Judiciary to all look deeply at how they can take faster action on things that need to be processed.

The nomination of Sheena Fisher to the Board of Health was confirmed by a vote of 9-Yes and zero-No votes.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Hooker) to circulate the ballot box for Richard Courcelle's nomination to the Rutland Redevelopment Authority Board. **Motion passed.**

The nomination of Richard Courcelle to the Rutland Redevelopment Authority Board was confirmed by a vote of 9-Yes and zero-No votes.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Present Talbott requested to add Disposal of City Property to Reports and Letters from Department Heads and Officials, to move the Executive Session to the end of the meeting and to add update on the Traffic Committee to Reports of Representatives. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderman Gillam. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Administrator Strniste; Disposition of two City-Owned Properties 63 Forest Street
Administrator Strniste introduced the request. The City-Owned Properties Committee recommends the disposition of 63 Forest Street to Mount St. Joseph Academy.

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Cupoli) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McClure) to authorize the sale of 63 Forest Street to Mount St. Joseph Academy for the purchase price of \$1.00 pursuant to Section 6.2 of the Rutland City Charter and to further authorize the Mayor to sign all purchase and sale related documents. **Motion passed.**

Administrator Strniste introduced the request. The City-Owned Properties Committee recommends the disposition of 18 Gay Street to Mike Wetherby.

A motion was made and seconded (Hooker, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to authorize the sale of 18 Gay Street to Mike Wetherby for the purchase price of \$7,500 pursuant to Section 6.2 of the Rutland City Charter and to further authorize the Mayor to sign all purchase and sale related documents. **Motion passed.**

Administrator Strniste; Amending the Development Plan for 157 State Street.

Administrator Strniste introduced the request. 157 State Street was a City-Owned property prior to acquisition, and it is being recommend to amend Jesse Bilodeau's Development Plan for the property. As a result of the Home Act in July 2023, the property is now allowed up to four (4) dwelling units, and Mr. Bilodeau is now proposing to convert the building from three (3) dwelling units to four (4) dwelling units. Mr. Bilodeau is also seeking to occupy the units with tenants as they are completed.

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Cupoli) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Adams) to approve the amended Development Plan for 157 State Street, as presented. **Motion passed.**

Treasurer Markowski; Pension update and minutes of the meeting from October 12, 2023

Treasurer Markowski gave an overview of the Pension Board meeting that took place on October 12, 2023. This was for informational purposes only.

Clerk Tracy Kapusta; Referral to Charter and Ordinance; Elections

Clerk Kapusta read a memo to the Board seeking a referral to Charter and Ordinance Committee for the discussion of location for elections. So moved by Alderman Barbagallo and seconded by Alderwoman McClure. **Motion passed.**

Attorney LaChance; Request for Proposal; Outside Legal Services

Attorney LaChance introduced the item. The City of Rutland is requesting proposals from qualified law firms to provide general legal services to the City related to a variety of practice areas. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to approve the request for proposal for outside legal services for general legal services related to a variety of practice areas. **Motion passed.**

Chief Kilcullen; Disposal of City owned property

Chief Kilcullen introduced the request. The Police Department is looking to dispose of a 2014 Ford Police Interceptor. The vehicle needs a new steering rack. The vehicle is currently not assigned to any officer or division, and it has been replaced by a 2023 Toyota RAV4. Brown's Auto Salvage gave an offer of \$500 for the vehicle. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Adams) to approve the disposal of a 2014 Ford Police Interceptor to Brown's Auto Salvage and the money to be returned to the equipment replacement fund. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Alderwoman Davis; Public Safety Meeting; October 25, 2023

Alderwoman Davis read the Public Safety Committee report from October 25, 2023. The discussion of the meeting was squatters, garbage, furniture, and unregistered/uninspected vehicles. The committee felt that enforcement was necessary to maintain the quality of life in the neighborhoods to deter crime. The Building and Zoning Department stated their frustration of being unable at times to locate the property owners as they are absentee landlords. A discussion was held as to how we obtain more information/contacts when closing occurs. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to refer to the City Attorney to research means to seek and mandate contact information from property owners during real estate transactions. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

Alderman McCann gave an update from the Traffic Committee that met on October 20, 2023. The issue of the winter parking ban was discussed. The committee agreed there is room for improvement related to how on-street parking is managed during the winter. Other municipalities will be contacted to find out how they manage alternate parking issues and weather-related parking bans. This issue will be discussed further.

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

Alderman Barbagallo; Parking Committee; November 1, 2023

Alderman Barbagallo read the Parking Committee report from November 1, 2023. The discussion was about replacing the parking meters and kiosks. There are 9 kiosks and 279 meters servicing the city. All need replacement or retrofitting. After discussion it was recommended to go with retrofitting the existing equipment instead of purchasing new.

A motion was made and seconded (Barbagallo, Davis) to authorize the retrofit of 2 (two) kiosks at a cost not to exceed \$5,000 each and all kiosks to be updated with the new parking rates. One will be installed on Merchants Row and one on Center Street. ARPA funds will be used for the purchase. **Motion passed.**

A motion was made and seconded (Barbagallo, Gillam) to purchase 201 or more meters and purchase spare parts, and to go to the Board of Finance using proper purchasing requirements. **Motion passed.**

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Barbagallo) to refer to the Parking Committee the discussion of free parking, the timeframe to be decided during the upcoming holidays and to invite the Downtown Partnership and merchants to this meeting. **Motion passed.**

PETITIONS, LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION

Casella; Christmas Truck Parade Route hand out

This was for informational purposes only.

BOARD OF CONTROL COMMISSIONERS

There were no items for the Board of Control Commissioners.

BOARD OF CANNABIS COMMISSIONERS

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Hooker) to enter into Board of Cannabis Commissioners. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Hooker) to approve the cannabis license renewal for Mountain Girl Cannabis, Inc. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to come out of the Board of Cannabis Commissioners. **Motion passed.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Alderwoman McClure asked to have Project VISION meetings added to the City Calendar.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Davis received a message from a constituent who would like to see some adjustments at the traffic light on Woodstock Avenue by Beauchamp & O'Rourke Pharmacy. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McCann) to refer to the Traffic Committee. **Motion passed.**

Alderman Gillam referred to the Traffic Committee the traffic light at South Main Street and Park Street. When the train is crossing, the light remains red for anyone turning right onto South Main Street from Park Street. The light should be a green arrow when the train is crossing to turn right. Seconded by Alderman Adams. **Motion passed.**

Alderman McCann suggested holding a meeting about Neighborhood Watch. Alderwoman McClure asked that Chair of Public Safety, Alderwoman Davis, to attend one of the Project VISION meetings to hear what they are doing before scheduling a meeting in committee.

Alderwoman Hooker gave praise for the successful and fun Halloween Parade.

A motion was made and seconded (McCann, Cupoli) to enter Executive Session for wage increases for sworn officers. **Motion passed.**

A motion to find that premature general public knowledge regarding a negotiation of a contract would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion will divulge the Boards position on the agreement provisions to be negotiated. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderwoman McClure. **Motion passed.**

A motion to enter Executive Session with the inclusion of Mayor, Police Chief, Treasurer, Attorney and City Clerk to discuss the labor relations agreement as allowed under Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(B). This language was so moved and seconded (Davis, McClure). **Motion passed.**

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to come out of Executive Session. **Motion passed.**

Motion was made and second (Hooker, Cupoli) to adjourn at 9:55 PM. **Motion passed.**

Respectively,

Tracy L. Kapusta
City Clerk