

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Aldermen Minutes
Monday, February 5, 2024

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

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (January 16, 2024)

A motion was made and seconded (Cupoli, Savage) 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)

Rutland/Hanamaki Student Exchange (RISE) Students

The Rutland student delegation spoke about their upcoming trip to its sister school in Hanamaki, Japan. The students spoke about the cost, places they want to visit in Japan, and places in Vermont they would like to take the Hanamaki students when they visit. The Rutland students will visit Japan in June 2024.

Ethan Pepin, Transportation Planner, Rutland Regional Planning Commission; Rutland Regional Plan

Ethan Pepin, Transportation Planner for Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) spoke about RRPC's Rutland Regional Plan, 2026 Online Survey. Mr. Pepin handed out a presentation explaining the survey. Every eight (8) years, the RRPC updates its visionary plan for the future of the region. The Rutland Regional Plan is a collective vision for the future of the region. It guides where homes and businesses go, protects natural resources, and ensures that the community remains a wonderful place to live, work, and play. The online survey can be found at www.rutlandrpc.org/plan2026.

Kathleen Krevetski spoke about fluoridation in the city water. Ms. Krevetski encouraged people to read about a trial that is currently happening regarding fluoridation. Ms. Krevetski asked at the next Board of Aldermen meeting, Board members vote on whether they are for or against fluoride in the water.

Henry Heck spoke to say that he is running for the board of alderman and mentioned all candidates, Michael Talbott, Anna Tadio, Eddie Grove, Sharon Davis, Matt Whitcomb, and Bob Pearo. Mr. Heck stated he was an alderman for three years prior to being the City Clerk for 14.5 years and things that go on in our city today are just not the best. There is a group of people out there and he finds it interesting, back when he was City Clerk, that there is group A, group B, Rutland Forward and non-Rutland forward groups. Mr. Heck commended Michael Talbott for a tremendous site and that he has done a great job with social media out there and people that are part of the Rutland Forward movement. Mr. Heck said it is a great message that is out there but wishes it were a complete message. It is a great presentation when you look at it and it is something to be proud of and it is interesting but when Mr. Heck worked with Matt Whitcomb, he asked him, What is Rutland Forward? What is it all about? Non disrespectful to Mr. Whitcomb but he did not really know. It is a good message, and it is something that Mr. Whitcomb wants to be a part of and that is great. Ms. Krevetski is here passing along a message and information, right, wrong, or indifferent, it is information that we can take and make our own decisions about whether we want fluoride in our water or we do not. Voters are going to get to vote on that, if you do not want

fluoride in the water, that must then go to the Legislature. The Legislature must then approve it as a Charter change and then it will come into law and be enacted. Mr. Heck said people do not know that. They just think that if you vote this is what is going to happen. Michael Talbott is your Board president. He just does not just sit up there with a gavel and run the meeting. Michael Talbott is also a member of the Board of Finance, Michael Talbott is also a member of the Board of Highway. Michael Talbott will run tax appeals or tax abatements if he chooses. It is an important job. Again, this is all part of the process in what people know.

Attorney LaChance interjected and informed Mr. Heck this is not the place for politics in terms of talking points and if he has something to bring before the Board that is of interest to the whole city whether it is....

Mr. Heck interrupted Attorney LaChance. He said what you are telling me is what I am saying is not important to any other person out there.

Attorney LaChance said that is not what she is saying. This is not the time for politics, this is not the time for campaigning, and it is apparent to the Board that's currently what Mr. Heck is trying to do.

Mr. Heck said that he is not campaigning, and this is part of the problem. He went on to say so everyone can witness this right here as far as that goes. You can either be told or can be informed about what is going to happen in your community or you can have people tell you that you cannot speak, and you cannot be informed. He does not think there is anything wrong here about what he is talking about. Not being disrespectful to anybody, he has not said anything to anybody, all he is asking for is information to be distributed the way it should be. The main reason Mr. Heck is here, is to try and get people out to vote. That is the number one thing, we are not voting, and people can sit back and play armchair quarterbacks and be unhappy about what is happening. If people go out and vote that can be changed. Mr. Heck said people will vote. Mr. Heck tells us that in November of this year, 80% of this voting population, which will be close to 8,000 people will come out and vote. It is on a national level but what is going to happen here in our community does not seem to be as important. He continued, there is no reason he cannot talk about what is happening regarding the tax increase, the school increase, what happening at the State, and a reassessment. He said it is his exact right and this is the forum and place for people to come and share their opinions whether you like to hear them or not. It does not always have to be rainbows and puppies, there are a lot of things going on out there that are not good. There are homeless people, there is crime, there are scared people. There are people that cannot afford to live in their homes. These are all the facts. So, we can either work together or we can continue to be separate and pretend what we are doing is best for everybody. Plain and simple that is what his message is about. If you want to know what is going on you need to ask a question and then if you do not believe in that question, then you do not have enough information. He has seen people, throughout his 14 years, come before this board and sit, talk without being interrupted and told they cannot do that because the Chair allowed them to do that. Plain and simple there is no jurisdiction here that states what can and cannot be said. Mr. Heck said that he is not promoting himself, he introduced every candidate that was going to be moving forward or on the ballot. He is disappointed in the fact that you try and come here and do something positive and this is how it turns out to be. Mr. Heck directed his remark to Mayor Doenges that he should be proud as these are his people. Mr. Heck said he will not be silenced. People have questions and they want to know the answers. Mr. Heck continued, you want to know who created the digester [sic] problem when it comes, Michael Talbott, Michael Doenges. Bob Protivansky had a vote, he voted it down. So, when people ask how that happened its Michael Talbott, Michael Doenges. Same thing with taxes it was the Board of Aldermen, they are the ones who approved that budget that was presented by the mayor.

Attorney LaChance said she does not mean to interrupt him again, but the Board has not yet heard anything that it can take up, to act upon. She respects that this Board is a time for people to share their

opinions and what they would like to see happen within the city, but at this point and time all we've heard so far is Mr. Heck discussing certain individuals and their actions and the actions of this board and this is not the forum for that. We respect your right absolutely to express your opinion in the appropriate manner and in a particular time and place. The purpose of these public hearings at the Board and for public comment is to bring to the attention of the Board matters which it can act upon and hear the concerns of the citizens of the city.

Mr. Heck went on; what I heard you say was that unless there is an action that is requested you cannot speak before this board unless there is an action that needs to be derived from that.

Attorney LaChance said not specifically; however, most people bring interest in things to the board that the board could act on. If you don't have a particular action in mind it could be a concern about the city in general, however personal attacks on other people, this is not the forum for that.

Mr. Heck asked, "are you saying that I am personally attacking other people?"

Attorney LaChance said it clearly sounds like that. You are calling out individuals on their actions and this is not the forum for that.

Mr. Heck stated first and foremost any vote that is taken is public information, there is nothing here that has been discussed that's private, deliberative session, nothing. Do you understand? Nothing. He continued you may be an attorney and he respects that fact, but what he did for 14 years, you have no idea what he knows about how things work within this building. He will make that perfectly clear. Mr. Heck referred to the students who came and shared something that was not an action, and nothing was said to them about that. So, let us be clear, what is good for the goose is not necessarily good for anyone else. If you want to hear it, it is fine, but if you do not want to hear it, then you are going to just shut everyone down and not say a word. I'm letting you know right now, that's not how its going to be moving forward and I can attest to you that if I'm sitting in this seat after this next election, I'm going to make sure that questions that need to be asked, will be asked because the people want to know. Plain and simple and that is just how it is going to be. I am disappointed that you are taking this position as a law official, and I can tell you that as well, because Michael (Doenges) you are not getting the precise and right legal counsel as far as that goes, just so you know that too.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

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.

- Ellen Coyle, the new Human Resources Director for Rutland City started today.
- Jim Rotondo retired last Friday and Mayor Doenges publicly thanked him for all his time and all his efforts. Ted Gillen will move to the City Engineer position after he gets his PE certification.
- The Office of Economic Opportunity has approved the grant for the homeless transition housing.
- Mayor Doenges spent a lot of time talking to owners of property within our community and had conversations about what they want to be doing to reinvest in Rutland as we grow.
- Today, Mondays with Mike, was held at Loose Luna and there was a great turn out, lots of conversations from fluoride, traffic safety to public safety, to name a few. The next Mondays with Mike will be on February 26th, the location will be placed on the City's website.
- Mayor Doenges went to Montpelier to speak on House Bill 534, the retail theft bill. The Burlington Mayor and State's Attorney Ian Sullivan also spoke. The bill would combine misdemeanors over a specific period and combine into one case/charge.
- Act 250 will be next on the docket and will give Rutland City the opportunity to give input on what would work for Rutland.

- This past summer there were changes to a crosswalk on Merchants Row. The Mayor handed out a summary graph of vehicle speeds during a period of time a test was conducted. Speeds were 12-13 MPH and after the test, speeds were 25-27 MPH. The City will be working with the Regional Planning Commission to look at what the next steps will be.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

President Talbott made a motion to move up Petitions, Letters, Miscellaneous Communications. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderwoman McClure. **Motion passed.**

PETITIONS, LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION

Special Event Permit; Cold Roll Rutland-Fat Bike Festival; February 11, 2024, from 10AM to 2PM

A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Davis) to approve Cold Roll Rutland-Fat Bike Festival in Pine Hill Park on February 11, 2024, from 10AM to 2PM. **Motion passed.**

Special Event Permit; Shiver Me Shamrocks 5K; March 16, 2024, from 8AM to 4PM

A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Savage) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Savage) to approve Shiver Me Shamrocks on March 16, 2024, from 8AM to 4PM. **Motion passed.**

Special Event Permit; 3rd Annual Whoopie Pie Festival; September 14, 2024, from 12PM to 5PM

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Savage) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Cupoli) to approve the 3rd Annual Whoopie Pie Festival on September 14, 2024, from 12PM to 5PM. **Motion passed.**

Lyle Jepson handed out a two year look back at economic opportunity from CEDRR. Mr. Jepson would like an invitation to the Community and Economic Development Committee (C&ED) to talk about things CEDRR is working on and C&ED. A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Gillam) to refer the request to the Community & Economic Development Committee. **Motion passed.**

Special Event Permit; Wonderfeet Truck or Treat; October 20, 2024, from 12PM to 4PM

A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Savage) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Savage) to approve Wonderfeet Truck or Treat on October 20, 2024, from 12PM to 4PM. **Motion passed.**

Special Event Permit; Wonderfeet Ribbon Cutting & Birthday Celebration; May 11, 2024, from 10AM to 2PM

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Savage) to approve Wonderfeet Ribbon Cutting and Birthday Celebration on May 11, 2024, from 10AM to 2PM. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Barbara Spaulding, RRA; Adoption of Revised Municipal Policies & Codes

Barbara Spaulding introduced the request. In 2019 the Board of Aldermen adopted its Municipal Policies and Codes and since then there have been updates. These policies and codes are required for the City to receive grant funding. The RRA requests that the Aldermen adopt the revised Municipal Policies and Codes (Form MP-1) and circulate for signatures. A motion was made and seconded (Savage, Davis) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Savage, Hooker) to approve the revised Municipal Policies and Codes (Form MP-1) with the changes highlighted and circulate for signatures. **Motion passed.**

Superintendent Peters & Arwen Turner; Come Alive Outside; Winterfest Updates/Schedules

Christian Rudy from Come Alive Outside spoke about Winterfest activities. For more details refer to www.comealiveoutside.com.

Superintendent Peters; Giorgetti Rink Activities and Spring Sports Summary

Superintendent Peters gave an update on the activities at Giorgetti Rink and Spring Sports.

Superintendent Peters; Future Rentals at Rutland Recreation Community Center & Membership Updates

Superintendent Peters gave an update on future rentals at Rutland Recreation Community Center and membership updates.

Chief Kilcullen; Request for Board Approval to Dispose of City-Owned Property

Chief Kilcullen presented the request for approval to dispose of a former patrol vehicle that was converted into a K9 vehicle. The inspection expired and will not pass due to issues with rust under the vehicle. Browns Auto Salvage will pay \$1,200 for it. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) approving the disposal of EQ 414 a 2014 Ford Police Interceptor to Browns Auto Salvage for \$1,200 and the money to go to the Equipment Replacement Fund for the Police Department. **Motion passed.**

Treasurer Markowski; Request for Board Approval & Signatures on the Loan documents for the Service Line Inventory Loan-RF3-513-1

Treasurer Markowski introduced the request for approval of the Loan Agreement and to circulate for signatures. The Service Line Inventory project was reviewed by the Public Works Committee on April 15, 2023, and the loan application was approved by the BOA at the meeting of May 1, 2023. This project is required by federal regulations and involves preparing a service line inventory and lead services line replacement plan prior to October 2024. The Loan Agreement is for \$800,000 and the project description and conditions for the agreement are outlined in the document. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McClure) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Tadio) to approve the loan documents for the Service Line Inventory Loan (RF3-513-1) in the amount of \$800,000 and circulate the documents for BOA and Treasurer signatures, to be attested to by the City Clerk. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

There were no Reports of Standing Committees.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

There were no Reports of Representatives.

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

Alderwoman Tadio; Human Resources Committee Minutes from February 1, 2024

Alderwoman Tadio read the Human Resources committee report from February 1, 2024. The topics of the meeting were the Creation of a Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics, and Social Media policy for the Board of Aldermen members. Draft policies were presented and Alderwoman Tadio will wait for suggestions and then work with the City attorney to draft a new version of these policies to present to the new Human Resources Director and committee to review.

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.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS

Aldерwoman McClure reminded the Board that Project Vision will be meeting on Thursday, February 8th at noon. Meeting to be held at the Calvary Bible Church.

Alderman McCann requested to refer to the Traffic Committee the traffic study that was done on Merchants Row. So moved by Alderwoman Tadio. **Motion passed.**

Alderwoman Tadio stated that Board members should have received an email from Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss about participating in a Municipal Delegation to Japan from October 5-9th, 2024.

Motion was made and second (Davis, McClure to adjourn at 8:20 PM. **Motion passed.**

Respectively,

Tracy L. Kapusta
City Clerk