

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Aldermen Minutes
Monday, March 18, 2024

Members present; Aldermen Talbott, Heck, Barbagallo, Davis, McCann, McClure, Gillam, Tadio, Savage, Adams, and Whitcomb. Also present, Mayor Doenges, Treasurer Markowski, Attorney LaChance, Barbara Spaulding, Andrew Strniste, Ted Gillen, and City Clerk Kapusta.

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

Clerk Kapusta called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Clerk Kapusta announced the first order of business was swearing in the new Aldermen by Mayor Doenges. Michael Talbott, Sharon Davis, Anna Tadio, Matt Whitcomb and Henry Heck were all sworn in. After taking their seats, Clerk Kapusta sought nominations for Board President. A motion was made by Alderman Barbagallo, to nominate Michael Talbott for President of the Board of Aldermen. Alderwoman Savage seconded the nomination. Alderman Heck made a motion to nominate Sharon Davis for President of the Board of Aldermen. Alderman Gillam seconded the nomination. Alderwoman Davis appreciated the nomination but withdrew her name. Alderman Whitcomb moved to close the nominations and it was seconded by Alderwoman Davis. **Motion passed.** Clerk Kapusta then called for the vote of Michael Talbott for Board President. **Motion passed.** Alderman Heck voted no.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (March 04, 2024)

A motion was made and seconded (McClure, 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

There were no members of the public to address the Board on matters not on the agenda.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayoral Appointments: Nominations – Planning Commission

For Board consideration the following nomination for appointment to the Planning Commission is Aaron Hildebrand. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Savage) to table the nomination to the next Board of Aldermen meeting on April 1, 2024. **Motion passed.**

- Mayor Doenges introduced Ellen Coyle as the New Human Resources Director.
- Mayor Doenges thanked the Clerk's Office, election officials, and workers for a successful election.
- There was a legislative breakfast at the Dismas House that members of the BOA attended along with members of the Rutland delegation. They learned about what recovery means and the challenges faced.
- Attended a meeting of the Stafford Technical Center Regional Advisory Board. There is a waiting list for some programs that have 20 plus students on a waitlist.
- Today was the start of a series of Department Head meetings that will be held at area businesses and facilities. This is an opportunity to hear about what is going on and learn about these businesses. The first meeting was held at Wonderfeet Kids Museum.
- The transition from the hotel voucher program resulted in only 2-3 people staying in the emergency shelter.
- Mayor Doenges will be going to Montpelier on Wednesday and Thursday this week to talk about the hotel voucher program. It appears that the program will end in June.

- Mayor Doenges thanked the Police Department, Fire Department, Building & Zoning, National Guard and the State Agencies for their efforts with dealing with the hotel transition program and assisting the homeless with temporary housing and shelter.

Mayor Doenges asked the Board to refer to the Finance Committee the discussion of water and wastewater reduction incentive for new housing. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderwoman McClure. **Motion passed.**

- Mayor Doenges will be discussing potential changes to Act 250 in Montpelier about how Rutland City can benefit from these changes.
- Mondays with Mike will be at Loose Luna on March 25th.

Mayor Doenges asked the Board to refer the topic of Center Street design to the Community & Economic Development Committee. Alderman McCann so moved, and Alderwoman Savage seconded. **Motion passed.**

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Alderman McCann made a motion to move up Petitions, Letters, Miscellaneous Communication. So moved by Alderwoman Savage. **Motion passed.**

PETITIONS, LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION

Special Event Permit: Rave Car Show at the Rutland Fairgrounds July 13-14, 2024, from 9AM-5PM

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to approve the Special Event Permit for the Rave Car Show at the Fairgrounds on July 13-14, 2024, 9AM to 5PM. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Barbara Spaulding, RRA: Resolution – East Creek Commons Vermont Community Development Program implementation Grant

Barbara Spaulding, RRA introduced the request. On behalf of the Housing Trust of Rutland County, the City is applying for a Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) Implementation Grant for \$500,000. Other resources will also be used to create 35 affordable housing units in Rutland and Castleton. Those earning 60% Area Median Income (AMI) or less will qualify. Four (4) units will be designated to house homeless veterans and another four (4) for the chronically homeless. The Community & Economic Development Committee met with Mary Cohen and Dan Caputo on March 14th to discuss the application. The RRA requests that the Board of Aldermen sign a resolution in support of the application. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to circulate the resolution for Board members signatures in support of the East Creek Commons application. **Motion passed.**

Barbara Spaulding, RRA: Resolution – Housing Trust of Rutland County Vermont Community Development Program Planning Grant

Barbara Spaulding, RRA introduced the request. The City is applying for a VCDP planning grant on behalf of HTRC for \$60,000 to assist in the merger of HTRC and NeighborWorks of Western Vermont (NWWVT). The Community & Economic Development Committee met with Mary Cohen and Dan Caputo on March 14th to discuss the application. The RRA requests that the Board of Aldermen sign a resolution in support of the application. A motion was made and seconded (McClure, Davis) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (McClure, Davis) to circulate the resolution for Board members signatures in support of the merger of HTRC and NWWVT application. **Motion passed.**

Barbara Spaulding, RRA: Environmental Review – Forest Street

Barbara Spaulding, RRA introduced the request. HTRC is preparing to apply for a VCDP grant in September for their project at 133 Forest Street. Mary Cohen has asked that the City open the Environmental Review application in GEARS so they may begin the process in preparation for the fall application. The RRA requests permission to open an Environmental Review in GEARS for 133 Forest Street. A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Gillam) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Davis) to authorize the RRA to open an Environmental Review in GEARS for 133 Forest Street on behalf of the HTRC. **Motion passed.**

Barbara Spaulding, RRA: RRA Recommendation for Business Incentive Assistance Program Loan Kaleidoscope, LLC

Barbara Spaulding, RRA introduced the request. The RRA board met to review the Business Incentive Assistance Program (BIAP) application for Kaleidoscope, LLC, an art, and paper store that will be located on the second floor at 37 Center Street. The applicant Raven Crispino is requesting a \$10,000 BIAP Forgivable Loan. The RRA Board recommends approval of the \$10,000 BIAP Forgivable Loan. A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Savage) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Savage) approving the \$10,000 BIAP Forgivable Loan to Kaleidoscope, LLC. **Motion passed.** Alderman Whitcomb voted no.

Assistant Engineer Gillen: Request Authorization to Sign MS4 Grant Agreement

Assistant Engineer Gillen introduced the request. The State of VT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulates permissible discharges to the State's waterways through Individual Permit for Stormwater Discharges from the City of Rutland's MS4 and Certain Developed Lands. As part of the permit, the City is required to develop and implement a Phosphorus Control Plan. The City's consultant completed the Phosphorus Control Plan 2022, and the plan outlines potential projects that would enable the City to reach specific phosphorus reduction goals. The City was awarded an MS4 Grant for \$488,533 for these projects and the local match is \$122,138.25. The intention is to pay for the local match through in-kind efforts put forth by DPW personnel. The projects must be completed by the grant award end date of September 30, 2026. The next step is to work with DEC to determine which project(s) outlined in our Phosphorus Control Plan are grant eligible. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McClure) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McClure) to authorize the Mayor to sign the MS4 Grant Agreement with the State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. **Motion passed.**

Administrator Strniste: City Owned Property Development Plan Amendment Relating to 18 Gay Street

Administrator Strniste introduced request. The buyer for 18 Gay Street, a City-owned property, is requesting to extend the timeline to complete the Development Plan due to the following reasons: The detached garage sustained damage and subsequently collapsed during a windstorm over the winter, requiring a complete rebuild. Due to when the closing occurred, the exterior, renovations, which included the painting of the structure and the installation of a new roof have not yet been completed. The buyer has advised that much progress has been made to the interior of the building and that the dwelling will be ready to be occupied in the coming weeks. The original anticipation completion date was prior to April 1, 2024. The buyer is requesting an extension to complete the remaining tasks with a new completion date through October 2024. A motion was made and seconded (McCann, Adams) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (McCann, Whitcomb) to approve the amended Development plan for 18 Gay Street through October. **Motion passed.**

Treasurer Markowski: Treasurers Report for City and RRA period ending February 29, 2024

Treasurer Markowski provided a summary of the February 29, 2024, Treasurer's Reports. Tax sales are scheduled for April and plans for water/sewer shut offs this spring. There is continued work with the Auditors to finalize the FY23 Audit. Treasurer Markowski asked that updated financial policies that are

being worked on be referred to the Finance Committee. So moved by Alderman Gillam and seconded by Alderwoman Savage. **Motion passed.**

Clerk Kapusta: Election Recap

Clerk Kapusta gave a recap of the election on March 5, 2024. Clerk Kapusta thanked her staff, DPW, elected ward officials, and ward workers for all their hard work, dedication, and long hours that were put in. For the Presidential Primary 28.5% of registered voters cast votes and for the local election 30% of registered voters cast votes. There were a few issues relating to the tabulators and a problem with the checklist relating to residents on Kendall Avenue for Ward 1 Godnick Adult Center. All these issues were able to be resolved with little interruption to voters and the issues experienced were not unique to Rutland City but were Statewide.

Attorney LaChance: Emergency Mutual Aid Agreement

Attorney LaChance presented the Rutland Regional planning Commission Emergency Mutual Aid Agreement for the Public Works Departments of its Member Municipalities. Attorney LaChance has reviewed the agreement and seeks Board approval for the President of the Board to sign as the representative for the City of Rutland. A motion was made and seconded (McCann, Savage) to suspend the rules. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (McClure, Davis) to authorize the Board President to sign the agreement as presented on behalf of the City of Rutland. **Motion passed.**

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Alderman Gillam: Public Works Committee Minutes from March 11, 2024

Alderman Gillam read the Public Works Committee minutes from March 11, 2024. The first issue was Septic/Sludge Fees for Wastewater Treatment Department. The committee was briefed on the rising cost of transportation for sludge and septic removal after the treatment process. The contract with Casella increased by 8% from last year and it is anticipated that there will be an increase next year as well due to the lack of landfills in Vermont and out of state landfills. The Wastewater Treatment Department treated 3.335 million gallons of sludge and 5.2 million gallons of septage in 2023. Alderman Gillam moved the following motion, the committee recommends to the full Board for approval, that the City of Rutland Wastewater Treatment Department is authorized to raise the sludge fee 1.5 cent per gallon, which will bring the new fee to \$.12 per gallon, the effective date is May 1, 2024, except for the Town of Brandon with an effective date of July 1, 2024. So moved by Alderwoman McClure. **Motion passed.** Alderman Gillam moved the following motion, the committee recommends to the full Board for approval, that the City of Rutland Wastewater Treatment Department is authorized to raise the septic fee 1.5 cent per gallon, which brings the new fee to \$.11 per gallon, the effective date is May 1, 2024, except for the Town of Brandon the effective date is July 1, 2024. So moved by Alderwoman McClure. **Motion passed.**

Next the committee discussed the Water Main Bond issue and lack of funding options. The cost for improving the old water line has surpassed the \$2.5 million Water Bond that the voters passed in March 2023. The City also needs to prepare for the VTrans repaving projects of Route 4 and 7. Work needs to be done before the paving on Business Route 4, Cottage Street, State Street, and Columbian Avenue. Alderman Gillam moved the following motion to authorize the DPW additional funding of \$300,000 from ARPA, plus \$100,000 from the Water Capital Fund and table the request of \$200,000 from the 1% option tax for infrastructure improvement. So moved by Alderwoman Davis. **Motion passed.** Alderman Heck voted no. Please refer to the committee report for further information.

Alderwoman Tadio: Community & Economic Development Minutes from March 14, 2024

Alderwoman Tadio read the Community & Economic Development Committee minutes from March 14, 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to receive a presentation from HTRC on two ongoing projects. Mary Cohen from HTRC gave an update on the East Creek Commons Project and the pending merger

between HTRC and NWWVT. This update was for information only. Please refer to the committee report for further information.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

There were no Reports of Representatives.

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

Alderman Barbagallo: Parking Committee Minutes from March 7, 2024

Alderman Barbagallo read the Parking Committee minutes from March 7, 2024. Merchants from the downtown area expressed concerns about the increase in street parking prices. Complaints have been received about the cost of parking and the use of the Park Mobile App. Complaints should be brought to the Treasurer's office. Early studies indicate that the use of Park Mobile has increased, and meter usage has decreased. Parking in the parking deck is only \$3.00 per day with the first 30 minutes free of charge. Safety concerns were expressed about using the parking deck. A Police Officer is now stationed downtown all day and any problems can be addressed quickly. Parking fines were raised to \$30 for the first violation at the last Parking Committee meeting, but these rates have not gone into effect. A motion was made to refer the overall parking rates to Charter and Ordinance Committee to review and Alderman Barbagallo so moved. Alderwoman Savage seconded the motion. **Motion passed.** 205 new meters have been installed downtown and 53 meters have been retrofitted and are also in service. There still are some problems with the kiosks and new internal workings for these units are on back order. Language for a broken meter and a "Fine forgiveness program" were referred to the City Attorney.

BOARD OF CONTROL COMMISSIONERS

There were no items for the Board of Control Commissioners.

BOARD OF CANNABIS COMMISSIONERS

Cannabis Retailer Renewal: The Gas Station Alternatives

A motion was made and seconded (McClure, Savage) to enter into the Board of Cannabis Commissioners. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to approve the renewal application of The Gas Station Alternatives license. **Motion passed.** A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to go out of the Board of Cannabis Commissioners. **Motion passed.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Alderwoman Davis expressed her concerns with the lack of knowledge at the local level regarding cannabis.

Alderman McCann asked about the status of the creation of a cheat sheet for parking that will be shared with the Downtown Rutland Partnership. Mayor Doenges indicated that it is in the works.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS

Alderwoman Davis would like to refer to the Finance Committee what the impact of the municipal and school budget has on the tax rate as well as the social service agencies. So moved by Alderman McCann. **Motion passed.**

Alderman Gillam would like to refer to the General Committee the special event permit policy on parking. So moved by Alderman Whitcomb. **Motion passed.**

Alderman Barbagallo expressed concern that he visited two stores that are not capturing the 1% option tax.

Alderman McCann would like to refer to the Traffic Committee regarding pedestrian safety at Rutland Northwest primary and intermediate School around drop off and pick up times. So moved by Alderwoman Davis. **Motion passed.**

Alderman McCann would like to refer to Charter and Ordinance proposed amended rules and regulations from The Vermont House Committee on Transportation, House Bill H685, relating to cyclist, pedestrians, and other vulnerable road users. So moved by Alderwoman Tadio. **Motion passed.**

Motion was made and second (Davis, McCann) to adjourn at 8:42 PM. **Motion passed.**

Respectively,

Tracy L. Kapusta
City Clerk