

Board of Aldermen Minutes
City of Rutland
Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Members present: President Talbott, Aldermen Tadio, Whitcomb, Heck, Barbagallo, Davis, McClure, McCann, Adams, and Gillam. Also present, Mayor Doenges, Treasurer Markowski, Attorney LaChance, and City Clerk Kapusta. Absent: Alderwoman Savage.

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

President Talbott called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and started with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR OTHER MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

President Talbott asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda. Attorney LaChance added two (2) executive sessions, one for an update on contract negotiations and one for pending litigation. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderman Gillam. Motion Passed. President Talbott said that the executive sessions would be moved to the end of the agenda.

AMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S) (August 19, 2024)

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) approving the minutes from the previous meeting. President Talbott asked if there were any changes or corrections, there were none. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Adams a Rutland City resident expressed her concerns about the road reconfiguration on Route 7 at North Street Extension. Ms. Adams was in the middle turning lane to take a left-hand turn onto North Street Extension from Route 7. As she was waiting to take the turn, another car came in the opposite direction and entered the middle turning lane to take a left-hand turn into the gas station that is directly opposite where she was turning. This caused her concern as the driver of the other car almost hit her. Ms. Adams is asking that this section on Route 7 be looked at for safety reasons before an accident happens.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Introduction of Homeless Coordinators; Megan Novak and Chris Louras

Mayor Doenges introduced Homeless Coordinators Megan Novak and Chris Louras. Ms. Novak and Mr. Louras have been hired by the City using a State grant in an effort to get the State to build a transitional housing facility in Rutland City. Currently the two are in a fact-finding stage and finding out what data on homelessness exists. A public forum on the subject will be held at the Recreation Community Center on September 17th at 7PM. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, McClure) to refer the discussion of Homelessness Coordinators to the Committee of the Whole. Motion passed.

Last week Mayor Doenges met with vacant property owners about ensuring their properties are secured and not accessible before the release of the hotel voucher participants, which will occur within the coming weeks.

Phase 1 of the road re-configuration was supposed to happen in July but just took place this past week. There is more line painting that needs to take place. There are 3-5 problem areas that will be addressed.

The Governor came down to announce some grants that had taken place in the housing space with Rutland Housing Trust.

CONSIDERTAION OF SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REQUESTS

Special Event Permit: 2X Monster Trucks Show Live; Saturday, September 14, 2024, from 12:00PM-6:00PM, to be held at the Vermont State Fair Grounds

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to approve the Special Event Permit for 2X Monster Trucks Show Live on Saturday, September 14, 2024, from 12:00PM to 6:00PM. Motion passed.

Special Event Permit: Rutland Halloween Parade; Saturday, October 26, 2024, from 6:30PM-9:30PM

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Davis) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McClure) to approve the Special Event Permit for the Rutland Halloween Parade on Saturday, October 26, 2024, from 6:30PM to 9:30PM. Motion passed.

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Director Dahlin: Godnick Adult Center ADA Walking Path Update

Director Dahlin stated that a grant was received about a year ago for this project. Putting in about 1,000 feet by 10-foot-wide ADA accessible compliant walking path behind the Godnick Adult Center. In conjunction with the path a large rain garden structure will be put in place, which is being done with Maintenance Staff. Kurt Hathaway received the bid for the path work which will start tomorrow and should be complete in a month. Conduit will also be run out to the gazebo.

Director Dahlin: Main Street Park Groundbreaking Ceremony; September 9, 2024, at 10:00AM

Director Dahlin stated that Phase 1 of the project will have an official groundbreaking on September 9, 2024, at 10AM.

Treasurer Markowski: Treasurer's Report; City & RRA Financial Reports for period ending 7/31/2024

Treasurer Markowski said that one month in she was not going to analyze a lot of financial information but did have a few updates. Looking at the RRA reports she wanted to note that the RRA does not budget for a surplus, however, due to staffing changing there was excess. Money has been added to assigned funds for capital projects, business development, and working with the DRP with improvement of signage downtown. The biggest thing that was done in July was the setting of the tax rate and mailed 6,600 tax bills to taxpayers. Today was the first installment due date.

There are opioid settlement funds that total \$316,000 that are available. The local option revenue for the year was \$1.6M.

Alderman Heck asked Treasurer Markowski what positions have not been filled with the \$4M budgeted salaries for the Police Department. The taxpayers voted for the budget and are paying on it with taxes and Alderman Heck wants to see if there is any taxpayer relief within that salary line.

Associate Engineer Gillen: USDA Forest Service \$1M Grant Agreement

Associate Engineer Gillen explained the project's scope includes issuing an RFP for design engineering services, constructing a variety of new tree pits throughout downtown, reestablishing green belts in specified neighborhoods, and planting shade trees along the banks of waterways that are deemed thermally impaired by the State of Vermont.

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McClure) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Adams) to authorize the Mayor to sign the USDA Forest Service, One Million Dollar Grant Award Agreement for the Rutland City Urban Tree Canopy Enhancement in Disadvantage Areas, following review by the City Attorney. Motion passed. Alderman McCann abstained from voting.

Ed Bove, RRA: Resolution for VCDP Grant Application; 133 Forest Street

Ed Bove, RRA introduced the request. The city has been asked to apply for a \$650,000 VCDP Implementation Grant on behalf of the Housing Trust of Rutland County (HTRC) to be used with other resources to create 30 new units of affordable housing at 133 Forest Street.

A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Adams) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Adams) for the Aldermen to sign the Resolution for VCDP Grant Application for 133 Forest Street. Motion passed.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Aldерwoman Tadio: Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting from August 20, 2024

Alderwoman Tadio read the committee report from the Community & Economic Development Committee meeting on August 20, 2024. The first topic was should Rutland City formally adopt the Rutland Innovation District Placemaking Plan. The Plan was presented by Lisa Glover both to the committee in July and to the community in August. Adopting the Plan would open up more opportunities for grants and funding for the City.

A motion was made and seconded (Tadio, Davis) to adopt the Rutland Innovation District Placemaking Plan. Motion passed.

The second topic was the possibility of a Rutland Civic Center at the ASA Bloomer building. This center would centralize the location of the City Hall, the Library and some of the State's services. A scoping study would need to be done to assess the costs of remaining in the current City Hall building or the costs associated with moving. Alderwoman Davis and Alderman Adams both suggested that the public should be involved in the decision making. A nonbinding question could be added to the March 2025 ballot to see if City residents are in favor of City Hall moving to the ASA Bloomer building.

Currently City Hall and the Library are not on the historic building registry. Both are eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Mayor Doenges suggested the Board and members of the public check out South Burlington's new Civic Center where the city combined their City Hall and Library.

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES.

Alderwoman McClure: Human Resources Committee Meeting from August 29, 2024

Alderwoman McClure read the committee report from the Human Resources Committee meeting on August 29, 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to revisit the final draft of the Rutland City Alderman Social Media Guidance document. The document contains a guide for social media for elected officials when utilizing one's personal social media for public official business to post on social media.

A motion was made and seconded (McClure, Davis) to pass the Rutland City Alderman Social Media Guidance document as provided. Motion passed.

Board members will need to sign and provide the document to the City Clerk.

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 were no items for the Board of Control Commissioners.

BOARD OF CANNABIS COMMISSIONERS

Natures Gift Alternatives: Application for licensure, Indoor Cultivator Tier 2

A motion was made and seconded (Adams, Gillam) to enter into the Board of Cannabis Commissioners. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Adams) to receive and file the application. Motion

passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to go out of the Board of Cannabis Commissioners. Motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS. ALL QUESTIONS ON PRIORITY WILL BE DECIDED WITHOUT DEBATE

Alderman Heck questioned Mayor Doenges about the “road diet” and the use of side roads and traffic counts. Mayor Doenges stated that traffic data is being collected and will be compared to previous data. Mid-October the first round of reports should be available, and the Mayor will present them to the Board.

Executive Session update on negotiations

Attorney LaChance read the motions. Motion to find that premature public knowledge regarding the negotiation of a contract would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion will divulge the Board’s position on the contract provision to be negotiated. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and Alderman Barbagallo. Motion passed.

Motion to enter into executive session with the inclusion of the Mayor, Treasurer, City Clerk, Police Chief, City Attorney, and Legal Extern to discuss the negotiation of a contract as allowed under Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A). So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderman Barbagallo. Motion passed.

At 8:23 PM the Board went into executive session.

At 8:34 PM a motion was made and seconded (Davis, Barbagallo) to come out of executive session. Motion passed.

Executive Session pending litigation

Attorney LaChance read the motions. Motion to find that premature general public knowledge regarding pending litigation, to which the City is a party, would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion will divulge the City’s strategy in such pending litigation and will include confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the City. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderman Heck. Motion passed.

Motion to enter into executive session with the inclusion of the Mayor, Treasurer, City Clerk, Administrator Strniste, and Legal Extern to discuss pending litigation, as allowed under Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(E) and Title 1, Section 313 (a)(1)(F).

At 8:35 PM the Board went into executive session.

At 8:44 PM a motion was made and seconded (Davis, Adams) to come out of executive session.

At 8:45 PM a motion was made and seconded (Adams, McClure) to adjourn. Motion passed.

Respectively submitted by,

Tracy L. Kapusta
City Clerk