

Board of Aldermen Minutes
City of Rutland
Monday, March 3, 2025

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

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.

President Talbott announced that Alderwoman Tadio is participating remote via phone.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR OTHER MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

President Talbott asked if there were any additions, deletions or other modifications to the agenda. Seeing none, President Talbott moved the executive sessions to the end of the meeting. There were no other modifications to the agenda.

AMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S) (February 18, 2025, and Revised Minutes from January 21, 2025)

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) approving the minutes from the February 18, 2025, meeting. President Talbott asked if there were any changes or corrections, there were none. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Barbagallo) approving the revised minutes from the January 21, 2025, meeting. President Talbott asked if there were any changes or corrections, there were none. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Henry, 1 Northeast Drive

Mr. Henry recently had a traffic complaint and was directed to the Traffic Committee that met on February 14th. Mr. Henry's complaint is about the lane merger of Route 7 heading north and it's filed with those meeting minutes. Personally, Mr. Henry feels that the City is lacking some signs that could help with traffic and the new pattern. The City has requested VTrans to fix the issue, but VTrans only has one contractor painting lines. Mr. Henry was told that VTrans was looking to remedy the situation once weather allows. Mr. Henry questions why the City has not put signage in place until the lines can be corrected by VTrans. Alderman McCann said that he was at that meeting of the Traffic Committee and that Engineer Gillen was working on a solution.

Jaime McCullough, 5 Hill Pond Road

Mr. McCullough had a couple of quick questions, upon walking in he noticed that the windows were partially taped off and wanted to know if that was for any valid reason and the other question is why the City Clerk's Office is closed tomorrow. Clerk Kapusta responded that the tape in the windows is because the office is closed tomorrow. Mr. McCullough then asked what the reason was for that. Clerk Kapusta responded that it is election day. Mr. McCullough then asked if that was a normal thing. Clerk Kapusta responded that yes it was, and it was done all of 2024 when there were three separate elections.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Doenges reminded everyone that the polls are open tomorrow from 7AM to 7PM.

CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REQUESTS

Special Event Permit: Spring Sprockets & Walk-its; May 3, 2025, from 10AM-2PM

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to approve Spring Sprockets & Walk Its on May 3, 2025, from 10AM to 2PM. Motion passed.

Special Event Permit: Whoopie Pie Festival; September 13, 2025, from 12PM to 5PM

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McCann) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Adams) to approve the Whoopie Pie Festival on September 13, 2025, from 12PM to 5PM. Motion passed.

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Superintendent Peters: Approval to Sign GASS contract for RTP grant trail remediation at Pine Hill Park

Superintendent Peters asked for the Board's approval of the Global Action Sports Solutions, LLC, 2025 Pine Hill Park Trail Tread Remediation work agreement.

A motion was made and seconded (McCann, Adams) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Mayor signing the Global Action Sports Solutions, LLC, 2025 Pine Hill Park Trail Tread Remediation work agreement. Motion passed.

Planning Director Bove: FY25 Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant Application

Planning Director Bove introduced the request. To apply for a FY25 Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the municipality must adopt a resolution. This resolution will be submitted with the application due March 31, 2025. The City is applying for approximately \$20,000 to hire a consultant to collect and analyze data; create maps; and provide design services to support upcoming planning-related initiatives.

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Savage) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, McCann) to circulate the resolution for Board signatures. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to move to the Finance Committee where the 10% match will come from. Motion passed.

Human Resources Director Coyle: Update on Staffing

Director Coyle updated the Board on staffing for city departments. Director Coyle will provide the Clerk with her staffing report for the official minutes.

Attorney LaChance: Sculpture Agreement with Trinity Episcopal Church and the Carving Studio and Sculpture Center

Attorney LaChance presented the Sculpture agreement for the Board's approval. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to approve and direct the Mayor to sign the Sculpture Agreement between the City of Rutland, Trinity Episcopal Church, and the Carving Studio and Sculpture Center substantially in the form presented. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Heck) to refer sculptures on City property and insurance costs to the General Committee. Motion passed.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Alderman Whitcomb: Finance Committee Meeting from February 24, 2025

Alderman Whitcomb read the Finance Committee meeting report that was held on February 24, 2025. The committee began by discussing the JCI contract. The Mayor provided a summary of events following the City's unsuccessful MERP grant application and the pause in financing. Alderwoman Davis inquired about the contract's opt-out clause and the Mayor stated that the project scope could be amended. Attorney LaChance clarified that even with the signed letter of intent, the opt-out clause remained valid.

Any amended scope of work would be presented to the Board for approval before proceeding. This item will remain in the committee.

Next the committee addressed the remaining fund balance of the account formerly known as ARPA. There is a current balance of \$61,653. Superintendent Peters would like to seek an additional \$40,000 to complete the Main Street Park. Commissioner Protivansky noted a pending request from Public Works to address water meters. Ed Bove clarified that the initial allocation to the TIF project covered the establishment of the TIF district itself, and the remaining funds are designated for Phase 2 costs. This item will remain in the committee.

Lastly the committee proceeded to review the City's financial reports for the period ending December 31, 2024. This item was presented for informational purposes only.

Alderman Gillam: Public Works Committee Meeting, February 26, 2025

Alderman Gillam read the Public Works committee meeting report that was held on February 26, 2025. First the committee discussed the Lead Service Line Inventory that is required to identify the material type of all water lines. To complete the Lead Service Line Inventory, it would cost \$7,022,709.00. Three issues will remain in committee:

- 1) A summary of Phase 1 of the investigation records review Field Observation completed
- 2) The cost implications of Phase 2
- 3) The loan forgiveness that is currently available through the revolving loan fund, part of the EPA process.

Next the committee discussed a proposal for a traffic study for Center and Wales Street. The discussion was on how to handle road closing and traffic patterns of the construction area of the new proposed Hotel and future ideas on the traffic circle on Merchants Row, Evelyn and Center Streets. The issue was sent to the City Engineer for advisement to be considered in any downtown traffic study or design ideas. This issue will remain in committee.

REPORTS OF SELECT COMMITTEES

There were no Reports of Select Committees.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

There were no Reports of Representatives.

PETITIONS, LETTERS, MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION

There were no Petitions, Letters, or Miscellaneous Communication.

BOARD OF CONTROL COMMISSIONERS

There were no items for the Board of Control Commissioners.

Board of Cannabis Commissioners

Retailers Renewal: The Gas Station

A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Savage) to enter into the Board of Cannabis Commissioners. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to approve the retailer's renewal for The Gas Station. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Savage) to go out of the Board of Cannabis Commissioners. Motion passed.

Unfinished Business

Alderman Barbagallo stated that this was his last Board meeting tonight and he wanted to say Thank You to the Board. He further stated that it has been a pleasure and an honor to work with everyone on the Board. There were times when not everyone agreed on everything, but the Board has always been civil, supportive, listened to each other's position and to try and move this city forward. Alderman Barbagallo

appreciates all that and he wished everyone good luck tomorrow in the election and he hopes that he will still be able to bother the Board from outside the rail sometimes,

Alderman Gillam, as one of the senior members, thanked Alderman Barbagallo for his years of service. Alderman Gillam further stated that they may not have agreed on every issue, they do know how to work together to get some stuff done. It has been a pleasure to serve with Alderman Barbagallo and thanked him for his service.

Miscellaneous Motions, Resolutions, New Business

Alderman McCann spoke about campaign finance reporting that the State of Vermont has a requirement and so does the City. Alderman McCann made a referral to the Charter & Ordinance committee to better coordinate both State and local Campaign Finance reporting. Alderwoman McClure seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Alderman Heck said that he was getting some questions from some of his constituents, with the Clerk's Office and there being paper on the windows. He wanted the Clerk to confirm that absentee ballots' outer envelope may have been opened but the inner envelope is still intact. Clerk Kapusta responded yes. Alderman Heck said so as far as that goes nothing has been opened on the inner envelope. Clerk Kapusta responded with a no.

Executive Session Rutland Regional Airport and Rutland Fire Department

Attorney LaChance read the motions for the executive session. A motion to find that general public knowledge regarding the negotiation of a contract specifically relating to a contract between the City and the Rutland Fire Department and Rutland Regional Airport would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion will divulge the Board's position on the contract provisions to be negotiated. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderwoman Savage. Motion passed.

Motion to enter into executive session with the inclusion of Mayor, Treasurer, Clerk, City Attorney, Fire Chief and Scott Mangan, 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 Alderwoman Savage. Motion passed.

The Board entered into executive session at 7:38 PM.

At 7:42 PM a motion was made and seconded (Davis, Adams) to come out of executive session. Motion passed.

Executive Session – Fire Department Union Contract

Attorney LaChance read the motions. Motion to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the negotiation of a labor relations agreement would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion will divulge the Board's position on the agreement provisions to be negotiated. So moved by Alderwoman Savage and Alderwoman McClure. Motion passed.

Motion to enter into executive session with the inclusion of the Mayor, Treasurer, Fire Chief, Scott Mangan, Human Resources Director, City Attorney, and City Clerk to discuss the labor relations agreement as allowed under Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(B). So moved by Alderman Barbagallo and Alderwoman McClure. Motion passed.

The Board entered into executive session at 7:43 PM.

At 7:48 PM a motion was made and seconded (Davis, Adams) to come out of executive session.

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Savage) to ratify the collective bargaining agreement between the City and the International Association of Firefighters, Local 2323 in the form substantially presented. Motion passed.

Executive Session – Police Department Union Negotiations

Attorney LaChance read the motions for the executive session. A motion to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the negotiation of a labor relations agreement would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion will divulge the Board's position on the agreement provisions to be negotiated specifically in terms of the Police Department Union. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderwoman Savage. Motion passed.

Motion to enter into executive session with the inclusion of Mayor, Treasurer, Clerk, City Attorney, Human Resources Director, Chief of Police, Commander Whitehead and Chair of the Police Commission Brougham, to discuss the negotiation of a contract as allowed under Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(B). So moved by Alderwoman Savage and seconded by Alderman Barbagallo. Motion passed.

At 7:51 PM the Board entered into executive session.

At 9:07 PM a motion was made and seconded (Adams, Davis) to come out of executive session. Motion passed.

A motion was made and seconded (McCann, Barbagallo) to suspend the rules. Motion passed. A motion was made and seconded (McCann, Barbagallo) to ratify the collective bargaining agreement between the City, the Fraternal Order of Police and the Rutland City Police Department.

Alderwoman Davis stated that she was voting no on the ratification of the contract because of the first year's cost, which amounts to .06 cents on the tax rate and doesn't feel that it is affordable. When in executive session a couple of weeks ago Alderwoman Davis asked for some give and take. If there was something that could be agreed upon to lower that first-year cost. Obviously there was no discussion to do that. Alderwoman Davis said that she does support the Police Officers and what they do for the community but feels that this first year contract is not affordable.

Alderman Whitcomb stated that he is going to vote against the contract but wanted the Police to know that he genuinely believes that the Police deserve the raise outlined in the contract. Alderman Whitcomb is hung up on the fact as to how does the City pay for this with all the competing things that are going on in the City. He also worries about another component in the contract that must rely on the State of Vermont and what that liability could mean for the municipality.

Alderman McCann said that given everything since sitting in this chair for the past two years, he feels that this contract is something that needs to be approved. That the City has demanded that better policing comes forward and that there is not a lot of turnovers, this contract will do that for the City.

Alderman Gillam stated that he supports the police but will be voting no, not because they aren't doing the job, but the problem is the insurance. He is worried about the State of Vermont and the City cannot trust them. We have been burnt on schools, solid waste disposal, and water by the State. Alderman Gillam is voting no because he has a problem with a piece of the contract.

Alderman McCann said that City pension was not handled well from past administrations and now the City is paying the price for that and now there are concerns that the State pension is also in trouble. But if that is all we have, we must use them.

Alderman Heck stated that he is not sure if the police would want to hear his reason for voting no on this contract. As stated earlier Alderman Heck said that he does not have a great rapport with the Police Department, and he is trying to repair that. But at the same time, he wants to look at his competitor Mike and say if Mike had done a better job and cut some money out of this budget maybe that would have helped the taxpayers. Mike is going to do what he wants to do. So, the board is left with the decision to make. President Talbott spoke up and said that Alderman Heck's comments are bordering on campaigning. Alderman Heck continued that he believes that the community does support the police. It's just a matter of affordability. After this election the make-up of this Board and the leadership will be determined and if he has that opportunity he will work with you people [sic]. He would figure out what would be the best for public safety, recreation, and DPW. But for the taxpayers, we are put in a situation that some of us don't agree with. But again, it's not personal and he hopes that at some point in time he will be able to prove that to the police department. That is his reason for voting no.

President Talbott stated that a roll call vote would take place on the motion since Alderwoman Tadio is remote.

Alderman Heck	No
Alderman Barbagallo	Yes
Alderwoman Savage	Yes
Alderman Whitcomb	No
Alderman McCann	Yes
Alderwoman Tadio	Yes
Alderman Adams	Yes
Alderman Gillam	No
Alderwoman McClure	Yes
Alderwoman Davis	No

There were 6 Yes votes and 4 No votes.

Motion passed.

At 9:19 PM a motion was made and seconded (Davis, Heck) to adjourn. Motion passed.

Respectively submitted by,

Tracy L. Kapusta
City Clerk

Human Resources Director Ellen Coyle, Staffing Report

Hi, All.

The last time I spoke with you was September 16th nearly 6 months ago. I said that I was assessing what needs to be done while trying to determine a strategy for succession planning and retaining institutional knowledge into the future.

In September, I told you we had 155 full-time positions and we were recruiting for 4 positions in our Public Works division and 1 position in the City Attorney's Office. (WWTP, Engineering Tech and Assoc. Engineer). I am happy to share that we have filled the Engineering Tech position internally. We also recently hired an Associate Engineer with a PE (Professional Engineer License). He moved here from California. We have moved staff around in the WWTP, however, we're still trying to fill 1 position. The position has transitioned from a 2nd shift position to a 3rd shift position.

We have paused recruiting for the Admin support position to aid the City Attorney, the Executive Office and also HR. The plan is to resume recruiting once the excitement of the election subsides.

We are now beginning the search for the Business Manager with the DPW due to an impending retirement taking place at the end of April. We will also be filling the position of Assistant Business Manager for the DPW.

We have 2 additional retirements that are in the planning stages and will be finalized in the next month or two.

As we approach the 5th anniversary of the day the world shut down due to the pandemic (March 15, 2020), I thought it would be interesting to share some staffing data with you.

Since that day, we have hired 73 people to come work for the City. This doesn't include the seasonal workers in Parks & Recreation or the seasonal help that is hired in Public Works. We have separated 90 people during that same time. Some of these separations were retirements, some were due to elections and not being re-appointed, some were personal, job changes and moving out of the area.

The breakdown is the following:

Building and Zoning lost 3 people and hired 3 people

Executive Branch lost 2 and replaced 2

Treasurer's Office lost 3 and replaced 3

Clerk's Office lost 1 and replaced 1

Assessor – hired 1 part time

HR – lost 1 and replaced 1

Legal – lost 2 and replaced 1.5

PD – Lost 28 and hired 28

FD – Lost 8 and hired 8

Public Works – 35 and hired 18

Parks & Recreation – lost 4 and hired 6 (created 2 new positions)