

Board of Aldermen Minutes
City of Rutland
Monday, March 17, 2025

Members present: Aldermen Talbott, Davis, Gillam, McClure, Heck, Whitcomb, Clifford, Cupoli, Donahue, Tadio, and Allaire. Also present, Mayor Doenges, Treasurer Markowski, Attorney LaChance, and City Clerk Kapusta.

7:00 PM BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

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

Clerk Kapusta announced the first order of business was swearing in the new Aldermen by Mayor Doenges. Paul Clifford, Larry Cupoli, Tom Donahue, Kiana McClure, and Dave Allaire were all sworn in. After taking their seats, Clerk Kapusta sought nominations for Board President. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Talbott) to nominate Dave Allaire for President of the Board of Aldermen. A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Gillam) to close nominations. Motion passed. Clerk Kapusta then called for the vote of Dave Allaire for Board President. Motion passed.

President Allaire took his seat as President and began with a few comments and a moment of silence for Bob and Roberta West who both passed away over the weekend. Mr. West was a former fire fighter for Rutland City. President Allaire continued with the agenda.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR OTHER MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

President Allaire asked if there were any additions, deletions or other modifications to the agenda. Attorney LaChance removed the executive session relating to a personnel matter from the agenda. There were no other modifications to the agenda.

AMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S) (March 3, 2025)

A motion was made and seconded (Davis, Talbott) approving the minutes from the March 3, 2025, meeting. President Allaire asked if there were any changes or corrections, there were none. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Maggie O'Brien, Rutland Regional Planning Commission: Rutland City 2025 Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Maggie O'Brien explained that public comments for Phase 3 of the plan will be accepted from March 17 to April 21, 2025. The purpose of the plan is to make the City of Rutland more resilient to natural hazards. A physical copy of the plan is available for review at City Hall. A motion was made and seconded (McClure, Davis) to refer documentation for the plan to the Public Safety Committee. Motion passed.

John McCann, Former Alderman

Thanked the voters of Rutland City and congratulated the newest members of the Board of Aldermen. He also offered some documents to the new chair of the Charter & Ordinance committee once that person is decided on.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Doenges congratulated the new members of the Board and thanked those who were not re-elected for their service. The voters have spoken and asked us to work together and maintain the momentum and

work together to make Rutland better every day. The budget passed over whelming, the charter changes and capital improvement bond passed as well.

- Just over the past week, the City has issued permits for 15 housing units.
- The Police Department has seen a trending decline in call volume. This allows the department to be more proactive, with more patrols, getting out on the streets showing a presence and making sure people are obeying the laws.
- Mayor Doenges had an opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. for the National League of Cities City Congress, on behalf of VLCT, and also met with the three delegates from Vermont and the VT State Treasurer.
- Mayor Doenges spoke with the Governor last Thursday about the General Assistance Program. Rather than continue with that program, the Governor wants to invest in our community. The City may see a grant from the State for \$350,000 to \$400,000 for the City of Rutland to distribute to organizations that work on the homeless crisis in the State and community.
- The Mayor would like to ask the Board for a motion to refer to the Finance Committee the potential General Assistance allocation for homelessness. So moved by Alderwoman Davis and seconded by Alderwoman McClure. Motion passed.

CONSIDERATAION OF SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REQUESTS

There were no Special Event Permit Requests.

REPORTS AND LETTERS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND OFFICIALS

Superintendent Peters: Approval of Contract from ARC for the Giorgetti Refrigeration Replacement

Superintendent Peters asked for the Board's approval to have the Mayor sign the ARC contract for the Giorgetti Refrigeration Replacement.

Alderman Clifford asked for the timeline of the project. Director Dahlin advised that if the order is placed in April then the rink should be open for the start of the hockey season in October.

Alderwoman McClure called a point of order, stating that it is very difficult to hear Board members who sit in the far corner as the mics only pick up for PegTV. She asked if those members in that corner could speak up.

Alderwoman Tadio made a motion to suspend the rules. Alderwoman McClure seconded the motion. Motion passed. Alderman Donahue voted no. Alderwoman Tadio made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the contract from ARC for the Giorgetti Refrigeration Replacement. Seconded by Alderwoman McClure.

Alderman Donahue stated that he can't vote on a contract of \$1.7M plus when there hasn't been sufficient time to review, therefore he will vote no on this contract. Director Dahlin explained that the contract was reviewed by the City Attorney for the wording in the contract and the chiller system has been in committee for the past three years. ARC has redone this quote for the City six times and the City can wait but the quote will not come in any better but would most likely go up. There are not many companies that do this work.

Alderman Talbott stated that there has been a considerable amount of time spent vetting this project with Superintendent Peters and Director Dahlin.

Alderman Donahue reiterated that this is the first time that he has seen this document and had only 27 hours to review, not three years like other members.

Alderman Donahue requested a roll call vote.

Alderman Heck	Yes
Alderman Cupoli	Yes
Alderman Clifford	Yes
Alderman Whitcomb	Yes
Alderman Talbott	Yes
Alderwoman Tadio	Yes
Alderman Donahue	No
Alderman Gillam	Yes
Alderwoman McClure	Yes
Alderwoman Davis	Yes

There were nine yes votes and one no vote. Motion passed.

Planning Director Bove: TIF Funding for VEPC Phased filing (Downtown Hotel) and White & Burke Contract

Planning Director Bove introduced the request. The Board of Aldermen, RRA and City Staff have been working on the 1st Phased Filing to VEPC for the Downtown Hotel. This work has included creation of the Letter of Intent with the Hotel Development Team, infrastructure planning with DPW, and preparation for a fall 2025 TIF Bond vote. This work is outside the scope of the TIF District creation, however, is currently underway and needed to meet the deadlines necessary for the Hotel redevelopment project, Center and Wales Street infrastructure (sewer, water, stormwater, and electric utility) projects.

To continue this process, funds need to be allocated to support contracts with MSK Attorneys and White & Burke to complete the Development Agreement, Phased Filing, project management, infrastructure planning, and preparation of a TIF Bond vote. The Mayor, RRA, and Planning & Zoning Department staff are requesting \$60,000 be allocated from funds formerly known as ARPA and signing the contract with White & Burke. This funding and the funding being used for TIF District creation is reimbursable to the City when the TIF Bond is passed this fall.

Alderwoman Tadio made a motion to suspend the rules and Alderwoman McClure seconded. Motion passed. Alderman Donahue voted no. Alderwoman Tadio made a motion to allocate \$60,000 from the funds formerly known as ARPA to support contracts with MSK Attorneys and White & Burke to complete the Development Agreement, Phased Filing, project management, infrastructure planning and preparation of a TIF Bond vote and additionally the signing of the contract with White & Burke. Alderwoman McClure seconded the motion.

Alderman Cupoli asked what the remaining funds in ARPA are. Treasurer Markowski stated that the balance is roughly \$63,000. Alderman Talbott, Alderman Gillam and Alderwoman McClure each expressed their own reasons for the importance of TIF and the need to move forward.

Alderman Donahue pointed out that these projects are just so big and significant that they can't wait until April 3rd which is the next Board meeting. (The date of the next Board of Aldermen meeting is April 7,

2025). Alderman Donahue put everyone on notice that if he is going to vote on these things for the taxpayers of the City of Rutland, he is requesting more time be allowed to review these contracts.

Alderman Clifford asked Director Bove if it was crucial this be passed tonight. Director Bove said that it is as the work is already in progress.

Alderwoman McClure called for a Roll Call vote.

Alderman Heck	Yes
Alderman Cupoli	Yes
Alderman Clifford	Yes
Alderman Whitcomb	Yes
Alderman Talbott	Yes
Alderwoman Tadio	Yes
Alderman Donahue	No
Alderman Gillam	Yes
Alderwoman McClure	Yes
Alderwoman Davis	Yes

There were nine yes votes and one no vote. Motion passed.

Commissioner Protivansky: DPW Committee Referral – 20 Year Evaluation of the Wastewater Treatment & Collection System

Commissioner Protivansky introduced the request. The State of Vermont requires a 20-year evaluation of the wastewater treatment facility and collection system to be performed as part of Rutland City's Wastewater Discharge Permit. The evaluation is expected to take about 6 months to complete and will require hiring a Wastewater Treatment Consultant. The cost to perform the work is estimated at \$75K and a partial subsidy is available through the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Clifford) to refer the 20-year evaluation of the wastewater treatment and collection system, to the Public Works Committee. Motion passed.

Commissioner Protivansky: Referral to Public Works Committee – Terrill Street Utility Replacement

Commissioner Protivansky introduced the request. The water and sewer utilities on Terrill Street, between Main Street and East Street, are in poor condition and maintenance in the form of emergency repairs is required regularly. The existing water main is undersized and dates back to 1880. Public Works recommends scheduling the replacement of these utilities in the near future. A motion was made and seconded (Gillam, Clifford) to refer the replacement of the Terrill Street water and sewer utilities to the Public Works Committee. Motion passed.

Treasurer Markowski: Review of financial reports for February 28, 2025, City and RRA

Treasurer Markowski provided a summary of the February 28, 2025, Treasurer's Reports. In addition, Treasurer Markowski provided some updates:

- Tax sales are planned for early May
- Water sewer shut offs will begin in the Spring
- Working with Auditors to finalize the FY24 Audit
- Bond applications are due in early May for water mains and CIP bond that was recently approved by the voters at the March 4, 2025, Local Election.
- The final ARPA report is due in April

Attorney LaChance: Open Meeting Law

Attorney LaChance gave a brief discussion and refresher on what Open Meeting Law is and what the expectations are for new and incoming members of the Board.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Alderwoman Tadio: Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting from March 13, 2025

Alderwoman Tadio read the Community & Economic Development Committee meeting report that was held on March 13, 2025. The topic was CEDRR and Real Rutland Marketing Initiative update. CEDRR's focus has been on housing, but also a variety of task forces and committees to improve quality of life in Rutland. CEDRR's goal is to bring more people to Rutland and help to create the infrastructure to support people to move here.

Olivia Bucksbaum presented on the Real Rutland Marketing Initiative. Over 230 individuals and over 100 families have moved to Rutland County since 2021. CEDRR's marketing materials reach over half a million people and overall CEDRR has been very successful in bringing and supporting people to live in Rutland.

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

There were no items for the Board of Cannabis Commissioners.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Residential Property Tax Stabilization for Condos 7-12 at 24 Wales Street

Alderman Clifford would like to make a motion to refer this issue back to the Community & Economic Development committee as there are no documents in the packet. Alderman Cupoli seconded the motion.

Alderman Talbott said that he can understand that this is the first time that new aldermen are seeing this, but this developer has already been asked to come to about five meetings. This was brought to the Rutland Redevelopment Authority in January, who vetted it, who also approved it unanimously. Then it was sent to the Board of Aldermen where the developer presented her plan and then was sent to Community & Economic Development committee where it was approved unanimously for the tax stabilization plan. It was then brought back to the Board and when the report was read out initially the motion was not voted on because someone needed to check in with Stephanie with White & Burke on how this would impact the TIF calculations. This is a \$2.3M project that is scheduled to come online in a few months.

Clair Purcell spoke about the project. Alderman Donahue called for a point of order. Alderman Donahue does not have the tax stabilization agreement in his packet. Director Bove stated that this project was pulled from the TIF District because the development is happening before the TIF, and that Ms. Purcell will not see any benefits from TIF.

Assessor Langlois has not seen the tax stabilization documents. She is requesting that it be the value as of April 1, 2025, and Ms. Purcell is also grieving the taxes.

Alderman Donahue stated that he does not believe that the City has approved tax stabilization for residential properties. It's typically commercial and driven by job creation.

Alderman Talbott stated that the tax stabilization agreement that was discussed in committee was a five-year agreement, increasing it 20% every year until it reaches full value after the five years. The new assessed value won't be known until after the City Assessor assesses the property.

Mayor Doenges spoke about tax stabilization for housing specifically. The State did a lot of work in the legislature the last few years to come up with a State program to stabilize housing. The reason for that is in order for developers to come build market level housing the numbers need to work out. With the limits set by these programs, we need to be able to make the math work for these developers. So, anything that the City can do to match what the State is doing for stabilization is very beneficial.

Alderman Gillam stated that the tax stabilization is only on the municipal side not the education side.

Alderman Talbott and Alderwoman Tadio both stated that they would be voting no on sending this back to committee as this was fully vetted by the RRA and approved by the Community & Economic Development Committee.

Alderman Donahue made a motion to call a question. Motion passed.

So again, the motion on the floor is to refer the issue back to the Community & Economic Development committee. Alderwoman McClure called for a Roll Call vote.

Alderman Heck	Yes
Alderman Cupoli	Yes
Alderman Clifford	Yes
Alderman Whitcomb	Yes
Alderman Talbott	No
Alderwoman Tadio	No
Alderman Donahue	Yes
Alderman Gillam	Yes
Alderwoman McClure	No
Alderwoman Davis	Yes

There were seven yes votes and three no votes. Motion passed.

MISCELLANEOUS MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, NEW BUSINESS

President Allaire asked the Mayor to remind him what his ask was for membership. Mayor Doenges started to speak, and Alderman Talbott called a point of order.

Rutland City membership to Otter Creek CUD

Alderman Talbott made a motion to refer to the General committee to discuss removing ourselves from the Otter Creek CUD. Rutland City is fully built out with fiber internet at this point and in the past there has been difficulty appointing a member of this Board to meet when these meetings are held.

Alderwoman McClure seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Rutland Regional Planning Commission Board of Commissioners

The Mayor stated that the Regional Planning Commission requires every year that the City re-appoint the representatives to the commission. In the past it has been the Mayor has the primary seat, and the Board President is the secondary seat. President Allaire stated from his perspective he thought that was a Board of Aldermen appointment. Alderman Talbott said that it is but that the RRPC by-laws state this body vote on the appointments. President Allaire said that the order of events would be, he would suggest who it is and then the Board votes on it at the next meeting.

Representatives to the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

Alderwoman McClure stated that due to scheduling conflicts she would not be able to keep her seat on this committee.

Alderman Heck wanted to discuss appointments; he was not sure by Charter but wanted the City Attorney to follow up as to when Mayoral appointments need to be made after the meeting. Alderman Heck is not sure when the Mayor will be making appointments but that it should be sooner rather than later. Attorney LaChance will get back to the Board with the date before the next meeting.

Alderman Clifford made a motion to refer the JCI contract back to the Finance Committee, for updates for the new aldermen, where the City is in the process, and the cost to date. Alderman Donahue seconded the motion. Mayor Doenges stated that it currently resides in the Finance Committee.

Alderwoman McClure offered to answer any questions on the Social Media Policy if new members had any questions or needed help with their own social media.

At 8:47 PM a motion was made and seconded (Donahue, Davis) to adjourn. Motion passed.

Respectively submitted by,

Tracy L. Kapusta
City Clerk