

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – AUGUST 14, 2006**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Mark W. Blanchfield at 6:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. Blanchfield called upon Rev. Stanley Skinner, Municipal Housing Authority, to deliver the Invocation.

Mr. Blanchfield then called upon Fred Bartz to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

The City Clerk called the roll and the following members of the City Council answered to being present:

Present – Councilmembers Joseph L. Allen, Frank J. Maurizio,
Barbara Strangfeld, Gary R. McCarthy, Margaret C. King,
Barbara Blanchard and Mark W. Blanchfield

Absent - None.

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City Clerk Carolyn Friello and
Corporation Counsel Alfred L. Goldberger

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Blanchfield asked if there were no objections, he would like to take Agenda Items #12 and #6 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2006-180 Adopted Unanimously

Mr. Blanchfield invited Charles Randall and his family to come inside the rail to accept a resolution declaring Monday, August 14, 2006 as “Charles A. Randall Day” in the City of Schenectady. He thanked the City Council for the resolution.

Resolution No. 2006-179 Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Strangfeld invited the Sierra Club – John Vanderloo to come inside the rail to accept a resolution urging the President and Congress of the U.S. to adopt the Kyoto Protocol. He thanked the City Council for the resolution.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Regarding an amendment to the Capital Budget for the City of Schenectady for the year 2006.

Mr. Blanchfield invited all who wished to speak on Public Hearing #1 to come forward (6:30 P.M.). The following speaker rose to be heard and her remarks are summarized:

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P.D. Voris, Schenectady resident, stated that she is opposed to the work order.

Seeing no other speakers, Mr. Blanchfield declared the Public Hearing closed (6:31 P.M.).

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official –

From the Mayor, a list of appointments.

From the Department of Engineering, two (2) letters accepting the bids of and awarding the contracts to:

- Carver Construction, Inc. of Altamont, NY for the “Guilderland Ave., Cleveland Ave. and Austin Place – Phase I” in the amount of \$1,435,825.00; and

- Carver Construction, Inc. of Altamont, NY for the “Delaware Ave. Pump Station Replacement” in the amount of \$236,503.00.

General – None.

PETITIONS: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Maurizio explained Agenda Items #1, #3, #4 and #10.

Ms. King stated that between Erie Blvd. and Liberty Street, signs have been installed, the vehicles must “Yield to Pedestrians” and the materials are ordered to delineate the crosswalk.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Public Safety Committee entertained several issues – one being administrative changes to the Civilian Police Review Board which has come before the Council; now, we need to receive input from the

PBA and the Police Department. We will entertain this again in the near future.

Ms. Strangfeld explained Agenda Items #2, #5, #7, #8, #11, #13 and #14.

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PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS):

Mr. Blanchfield invited all who wished to address the City Council on any item of the Legislative Agenda to come forward. The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Katherine Delain, 214 Liberty Street, spoke in regard to Agenda Item #10. I am happy to see something happening to the Robinson Building and also – please protect the Silver Diner.

Tina Messick, 1021 Spry Lane, spoke in regard to Agenda Item #1. Diego's is in the process of working out the kinks. In regard to the fight that took away the liquor license, the fight was outside. The police didn't order them closed – the management suggested it. There isn't any bar that hasn't had a problem with noise or fights. The way this happened doesn't look good for future businesses coming in.

Seeing no other speakers to come before the City Council, Mr. Blanchfield declared the Privilege of the Floor on the Legislative Agenda closed.

INTRODUCTION OF AND ACTION UPON LOCAL LAWS, ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:

Consent Agenda –

Ordinance No. 2006-09	Adopted Unanimously
Ordinance No. 2006-10	Adopted Unanimously
Ordinance No. 2006-11	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-181	Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-182	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-183	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-184	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-185	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-CS30	Adopted Unanimously City Council Mtg. 8/14/06 4

Consent Agenda (Continued) –

Resolution No. 2006-CS31	Adopted Unanimously
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Final Consideration –

Ordinance No. 2006-07	Adopted 6:1 Voting Aye – Allen, Maurizio, Strangfeld, McCarthy, King, Blanchfield Voting No – Blanchard
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Resolution No. 2006-186	(Roll Call Vote) – 7:0 Voting Aye – Allen, Maurizio, Strangfeld, McCarthy, King, Blanchard, Blanchfield
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PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mr. Blanchfield invited all who wished to address the City Council on any matter of city business to come forward. The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Gary Grumuli, YMCA, 13 State Street, supports SICM and the lunch program at Jerry Burrell Park.

Jennifer Jahoda, YMCA, 13 State Street, stated that there's a great need in the Jerry Burrell Park for this need. Thanks to SICM for supplying the lunches.

Crystal Hamelink, SICM, 930 Albany Street, said – It’s the statistics that bring the SICM Summer Lunch Program to Schenectady. Over 66% of the district’s students qualify for free or reduced lunch in school. At some schools, that number is over 90%. Many of these kids don’t have regular lunches when school is not in session. So we began our free Summer Lunch Program about a decade ago, with volunteers serving lunches in a couple parks in the beginning. The program met a strong need, and has mushroomed in size. Last Summer, we served over 16,000 lunches; this year, we exceeded 22,000. We were feeding about 850 kids a day by mid-summer, and we served our all time high, 904 kids, on July 20th. The numbers alone show that the Summer Lunch Program meets a substantial need in the city. We served these meals at 11 sites in Schenectady,

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and one in Scotia. Most kids were from low income areas – Hamilton Hill, Vale, and Mont Pleasant. In Hamilton Hill alone, we served over 9,000 meals – about 240 kids a day. A complete listing of the sites is included in the handout. The program provides the kids with much more than food. Every day, volunteers also offered their time, attention and care to these kids who are often hungry in those areas as well. Volunteers brought coloring books, bubbles, face paint and sidewalk chalk. Children stayed at some sites for the whole serving time to play with the toys and hang out with the volunteers. One Girl Scout, Carrie Trant, organized a Summer Reading Program to work in conjunction with our summer lunch. She invited folks such as Assemblymen Tonko and Tedisco to read to the kids, and gave out books to the kids. The volunteers themselves were essential for the program’s success, and we had up to 400 volunteers. They came from SICM member church congregations, and other organizations from the Schenectady area. ARC groups covered a few weeks, and their consumers were so proud to help out. GE employees joined us this year with 8 teams of volunteers. The kids were very well-behaved when the 109th Air Force National Guard gave out lunches in their crisp uniforms. The children met adults of all different careers and backgrounds, and realized that all of these people cared enough to serve them lunches. A listing of the volunteer groups is included on your handout. Volunteers were busy with the heavy turnout of hungry kids, but were also happy to talk about their experiences. They had served free SICM lunches in Jerry Burrell Park for 6 years, and found it to be rewarding. One noted: “In a country like this, we simply should not be having our kids go hungry. Meanwhile, since we do have hungry kids, this is our church’s contribution to help feed them. But the larger issue of hunger in our community still needs to be addressed”.

Rachel Curtis, SICM, 930 Albany Street, said – I will be a Junior at Union College this Fall and I have had the pleasure of being an intern for SICM for the Summer. I was the Site Supervisor at the Yates Summer Lunch Program and I wrote a story based on my experiences there. I would now like to share an excerpt from my story with you all.

Dear Journal:

As the Summer Lunch Program at Yates draws near dusk, it has grown into something noticeably different than how it stood at its dawning. Then, 18 kids came and went. Now, an upwards of usually 70 show and reluctantly leave. The Summer Lunch Program at Yates has practically transformed into a safe haven full of comrades and contentment. Each day, as I approach the building, which is thankfully air-conditioned, I am struck by an assortment of colors ranging from the lightest of skin pigment to the very darkest. These children may be poles

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apart in terms of outward appearances, but one factor amicably unites them all in a surprisingly bittersweet fashion: Hunger. Sitting outside on the stoop, accompanied by my eager associates, I take pleasure in befriending the children and getting to know the story behind their juvenile faces. One such story features Mickey. With his tiny toes hanging over the end of his sandals, Mickey follows the lead to get to the other side. Only the double-lined steamy pavement divides Mickey and his big brother, Jonathan, from the bright star of their day. As they approach, in intense anticipation of the answer to “What’s for lunch?” – a smile begins to spread across my face. Mickey is two. His budding curls, spaced out teeth and diapered behind never cease to trigger the most motherly of instincts within me. A few weeks ago, as I was hanging the large “FREE SUMMER MEALS HERE” banner across the fence, Jonathan came up and extended a helping hand. The conversation that took place during this activity was utterly moving. “Ever since we’ve been coming here, we eat good,” he offered. “Mom just bought some peanut butter and jelly, but, it gets old after awhile.” “Oh ya,” I responded, “What do you normally have for dinner?” “We don’t.”

Unfortunately, Mickey and his brother are anything but alone when it comes to sailing in this boat. And Mickey, well – he’s far from being the only tiny tot struggling to get his food out of its packages and into his mouth. Even with the aid of summer lunch, I realize that at the end of the day, the societal issues that face Schenectady still remain, but wishing for their disappearance isn’t feasible. What one can hope for and strive toward is accomplishing the simple act of elementary kindness. The rest will follow with strong-willed tenacity.

J.R. Hotaling, 1836 Campbell Ave., stated that we had a few issues in Bellevue and we had quick responses from the Police. The Bellevue Preservation Association Picnic was also a great success.

Tony Buonome, Bellevue resident, said – On behalf of the Bellevue Preservation Association, he thanked everyone for making their picnic such a success.

Robert Sanders, 2821 Halsey Drive, submitted a petition. I would like a Skateboard Park in Woodlawn Park. I need the Skate Park in the Comprehensive Plan. It's up to the Comprehensive Plan to make Woodlawn Park a Skate Park.

Katherine Delain, 214 Liberty Street, said – Please join the Vale Cemetery Association and Friends of Vale, Inc. as we host our first annual “Vale Cemetery Civil War Commemoration Day”. The date is Saturday, September 16, 2006, the time is 2:00 P.M., the location is the Historic Vale Cemetery, 907 State Street, Schenectady, N.Y. Help us honor the brave men and women who lived during the War between the States by participating in the following ceremonies:

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1. Introduction to the Historic Vale Cemetery.
1. Discussion of the Civil War's effect on Schenectady.
2. Flag Raising at the Veterans' and Grand Army of the Republic Burial Sites.
3. Presentations at the Graves of:
 - a. Jared Jackson, a black veteran wrongly accused of allowing a prison break.
 - b. Lewis Cohen, a Jewish veteran who enlisted at age 16 and who later became commander of the local Grand Army of the Republic.
 - c. Isaac Groot Duryee, Abolitionist Minister who created the first black church in Schenectady and became a Chaplain during the War and died shortly afterward.
 - d. Samuel Swales and Jacob Trask, both shot on the first day of Gettysburg and buried together.
5. Presentation by the Sons of Union Veterans.
6. Taps.
1. Light Refreshments.

Vale Cemetery, located in the heart of the City of Schenectady, is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and is known for its Historic significance and rural beauty. Dedicated volunteers help preserve and protect this remarkable site. For further information, please call (518) 346-0423 or

A. Thank you for your interest in Vale Cemetery.

Harry Brand, 2108 Van Rensselaer Drive, spoke about the power outage on Union Street; the businesses had to close. NiMo shut down a substation on Balltown Road. I think the city needs to work with NiMo when things like this are done. All negotiations should be done through the city. Also, residents of Lexington Ave. and Plum Street has called 382-5096 – 5 times about a tree. No one has returned the call. There must be someone taking messages. Also, don't narrow Erie Blvd.

Dana Swalla, 1017 Phoenix Ave., stated that she is concerned about the increase in crime in her neighborhood. There has been a rash of burglaries on Eastern Ave. I hope you put funding in place to increase our police presence.

Randy Egnaczyk, 14 Elbert Street, stated that there was a dangerous situation on 14 Albert Street with bricks falling off the house. I called Code Enforcement several times; they even came down here – Nothing. Finally, I called the Fire Department and Code Enforcement. The Law Department gave the authorization to remove the bricks. It was a dangerous situation and no one did anything about it. Don Moreno from the Fire Department got this resolved. The Code violations need to be addressed more timely.

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Seeing no other speakers to come before the City Council, Mr. Blanchfield declared the Privilege of the Floor closed.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Ms. King stated that this Thursday, August 17th, the Schenectady Day Nursery will sponsor its Lobster Festival from 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. The day nursery is one of the oldest in the State. It's a wonderful program and an asset to our community. Also a good day for the Schenectady County Community College, Super Power and Union College who signed an agreement for grant funding from NYS to develop a new program for Super Power to achieve its goal of manufacturing HGS wire. This will give the people an opportunity to be trained in high-tech operations. Also, we will have a street festival in Little Italy on July 9th from 1:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Jay Street.

Mr. Maurizio commended the YMCA. It's a first class operation. They didn't have to put that Summer Program at the Burrell Park, but, they did. It's at their

own expense. We are blessed to have them here. We are blessed to have them here. In regard to the Silver Diner and the Robinson Building – these folks were not interested in developing the diner or that property. We can possibly preserve it or move it to capitalize on its historic nature. We are all committed to doing the right thing with that, but, there are a lot of challenges. We are going to work hard to save it. Finally, the city’s new website is a real “step up”. I have been operating a “blog” to talk about the city’s information – schenectadypov.blogspot.com. It’s another way to open up to government.

Mr. McCarthy stated that at the Public Safety Committee Meeting, Mr. Maurizio talked about calls coming in about Central Park and what was considered a slow response. We, on the Council, understand that – we know that they are not necessarily responding as quickly as we would like. Tonight, we adopted the first step in solving a major problem up in Bellevue – Guilderland Ave. and Cleveland Ave. That’s the first step of a multi-fazed project. The problems are here; we don’t have the money to do everything that we would like to. We have many problems. We can’t raise the property taxes and shift this burden locally. Again, our State funding – we requested roughly \$4,000,000.00 from the State – very conservative. We got \$900,000.00 from the Governor in his budget – amended at the State Assembly and added \$1,000,000.00. That went to a Conference Committee, Chaired by Senator Hugh Farley, who added nothing. It set up a perfect envelope where the Governor put some money in, the Assembly did and the Senate could have put money on the table to equalize that funding formula to make Schenectady competitive with other communities. We could have used more money, but, that would have been

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our fair share so when people ask for quicker police response – house fixed, streets paved – we still have a limited budget to work from. We juggle that money well. There’s a lot happening here; we are going in the right direction. We want to build on that, but, we need full cooperation from the State and Federal Government.

Ms. Strangfeld stated that the work in Bellevue is sorely needed and I want to thank the Council for amending the budget for that project. I am delighted with the Robinson sale. Thanks also to SICM for the Lunch Program. It’s a great program. Thanks to everyone who did the Summer Program.

Mr. Allen said – I was really encouraged to hear of some of the problems that SICM had at the Jerry Burrell Park. I heard of an event, a picnic at Jerry

Burrell Park and was told that there was a lot of drug dealing going on in the park. Also, the parks are supposed to close at 9:00 P.M. – this is when the dealers show up. I would appreciate our police giving that park some extra attention.

The Mayor stated that over the weekend, we had visitors from Queens – the Guyanese. We hosted 40 visitors. After a brief tour of the city, it was off to Central Park for “Guyana Day”. There were about 3,000 people there. We hope that this program continues and that they actually move here. I do not want to promote absentee landlords. Also, Senator Hillary Clinton was here today at Quackenbush Park. She got to see first hand – a model program of the Boys and Girl’s Club helping out with the Quackenbush Pool. Senator Clinton was very impressed. In regard to the pools – the pool usage through July 23 – 444 swam at Central Park; Hillhurst Park – 953 and at Quackenbush Park – 4,429. On Friday, August 18th, Quackenbush Park closes; Hillhurst Park will close on August 26; the Front Street will close on September 3rd and Central Park will close on September 3rd. Finally, praises to the partnership that will hopefully save the Robinson Building. We were looking at \$1,000,000.00 to tear it down. Hopefully, it can be saved.

Mr. Blanchfield spoke in regard to the Robinson Building. I can’t be more pleased. It’s a great opportunity for that corner and that whole stretch of State Street. Thanks to our city staff who have spent numerous hours over the years stabilizing that building. The end is in site.

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ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. Blanchfield declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO
CITY CLERK**