

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE  
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – JANUARY 14, 2008**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Margaret C. King at 7:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. King called upon Rev. Peter Schofield, Christ Church, to deliver the Invocation.

Ms. King then called upon John Palomeni 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, Denise K. Brucker,  
Mark W. Blanchfield, Gary R. McCarthy, Thomas A.  
Della Sala, Barbara Blanchard and Margaret C. King

Absent – None.

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City Clerk Carolyn  
Friello and Corporation Counsel L. John  
Van Norden, Esq.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. McCarthy moved that the minutes of December 20, 2007 and the Organizational Meeting of the Schenectady City Council on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Mr. Blanchfield. Hearing no objections, Ms. King declared the minutes approved as submitted.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**Official –**

From the Mayor, a list of appointments.

**General – (Public Announcements):**

The Bellevue Neighborhood Association will meet on Thursday evening, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. at the Bellevue Reformed Church, located at the corner of Broadway and Genesee Street. The guest speaker will be Mayor Brian U. Stratton. The Mayor will present budget highlights for 2008. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**PETITIONS:** None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Mr. Allen stated that this Wednesday, January 16, 2008 at 9:00 A.M., we will meet regarding the Handicap Accessible Festival in the Park in June.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Public Safety Committee met. He explained Agenda Item #3. This will be used for police officers to do traffic enforcement.

Mr. Blanchfield said – Even though the calendar year, 2007 has come to a close, the fiscal year remains open. We are on, what's called, a modified accrual basis budgeting. We still have expenses, continually, to be accounted for 2007. As we get more data in, we will make a more detailed report. We are continuing our review in the Finance Committee and hope to have a report in a few weeks, but, the year doesn't officially close until the end of February.

Mr. Van Norden explained Agenda Items #1 and #2

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS):**

Ms. King 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:

Jason Planck, Schenectady resident, stated that the City Council asked that the Golf Course be taken out of the plan and it's still in there – thanks to the Mayor and Councilman Allen for helping us get about \$800,000.00 in grants for handicap, accessible equipment.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave., spoke in regard to Agenda Item #3. I hope some of this money is used for cell phone enforcement.

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

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

**Consent Agenda –**

Resolution No. 2008-04	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-05	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-06	Adopted Unanimously

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

Ms. King 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:

Harry Brand, 2108 Van Rensselaer Drive, spoke in regard to Erie Blvd. You want to make that a one lane street. That's the only street that the traffic moves on. Also, I don't understand why the employees are suspended with pay.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady resident, said – I read the Grand Jury report and the PBA Contract and I thumbed through the Patriot Act at the Library. I know that the Council listens, but, tonight's topic fell through the cracks. A retired friend of mine kept telling me to tell you about the time clocks. Evidently, she knew that the city employees were using time cards to fudge their work hours. About 2 ½ years ago, I urged the Council to install time clocks for the city workers. In the Grand Jury report on Page 16, the "Detectives were permitted to fill out time sheets by placing an "X" to denote that they worked a full shift without regard to the actual time spent". Had there been a follow through to my suggestion to install time clocks, the behavior of the subject in the Grand Jury report would have been detected more than 2 years ago. I don't know if the city has a system, if not, time clocks should be installed city-wide. "Fudgy" hours on time clocks is unacceptable. Also, there may be people thrilled that Golub is moving its store from Sheridan Plaza to the Big N Plaza, but, I don't show the enthusiasm. When Sheridan Plaza closed, it amputated the entire area – Price Chopper let us down.

Alvin Ramsaroop, 902 Maplewood Ave., stated that a house on Division Street had a fire and I was asked to help keep the house standing. I came down here and I was told to get an Engineering report – I got the report, brought it back to

the city and was told that they were going to “break down” the building. The Engineering report says that the building is safe for me to rehabilitate. I made an offer for this property and I was told “No”; they are going to “break it down”. Why would they do this when I offered to rehabilitate it? This makes no sense.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave., spoke in regard to the recent Local Law to regulate the rental property industry. A lot of people were very upset with the letter; it affected a lot of people negatively – the affected people that shouldn’t have been bothered. Also, I don’t agree with the Assessor’s comments about coming around on the weekends.

Robert Rood, 927 State Street, stated that snowplowing is good, but, something has to be done with the sidewalks.

Julia Lewis, 215 – 16<sup>th</sup> Street, stated that this is a good year to look at the snow-plowing rules. Many cars on Campbell Ave. were ticketed and they were never towed. The plowing is done very well – it’s the cars that are not moved. Also since Mr. Mastro took over, the Assessor’s Office is run very professionally.

Seeing no other speakers to come before the City Council, Ms. King declared the Privilege of the Floor on city business closed.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Ms. Blanchard reminded everyone of the Martin Luther King Program on Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. It will be at the First Methodist Church at 2:30 P.M. The speaker will be Neil Yetwin. Also regarding the blood drive which is held tomorrow, January 15<sup>th</sup> – anyone who donates blood between 11:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. will get a coupon for Dunkin Donut coffee and a T-shirt. Also this Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup> is Art Night – John Sayles’ movie, “Honey Dripper” will premier. You can go to the movie for \$10.00. Lastly, packing peanuts – some are biodegradable – UPS will recycle these. All you need to do is drop them off.

Mr. Allen said – I received a call from a Woodlawn resident saying that the residents and businesses on State Street don’t shovel their sidewalks; there is a law that says that you must shovel. Also regarding Erie Blvd., a lot of people don’t know what this is or why it’s being done. City officials need to let people understand this and why they are spending \$14,000,000.00 on it.

Mr. McCarthy invited the residents to the next Committee Meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup> when we will have public input on the Police Department – on ideas of what we want the department to be. Anyone wanting to send in written comments, they can e-mail them to the City Clerk. There are challenges in that department, we all know it. We are not going to lose sight of what we want it to be as opposed to what it is today.

Mr. Blanchfield spoke in regard to the Local Law to regulate the rental property industry that Vince Riggi spoke of. We have had numerous situations here where the buildings were damaged and if people don't take steps to have the financial security themselves to address these catastrophes - then the city has to take care of it. For us to make sure that the people have this coverage is not inappropriate. It may seem somewhat intrusive and maybe the letter can be improved to be more user, friendly. We need to take steps to make sure that people have the financial means to take care of their property so it's not a burden on the taxpayers.

The Mayor spoke in regard to Erie Blvd. I'm very proud of this and there's an interactive display at - [cityofscheneectady.com](http://cityofscheneectady.com). It's a two-way traffic; it's not one-way and it will be a vast improvement from what's there. It's money from the State and Federal Government and a small match from the city. The object is not only to beautify the city, but to make it attractive for redevelopment. This is a public process. There was a Public Hearing in November; we engaged written comment and we will have another public meeting. The entire project is \$14,000,000.00, not just the roundabout. Also, the Governor's State of the State address was decidedly geared towards upstate and increasing a billion dollar development fund that we can certainly benefit from. It was a wonderful State of the State address. Also in his budget presentation later this month, we are on track to continue our progressive steps up in our State Aid. As you know, we have increased our State Aid since 2004 more than 100%. Finally – tomorrow, here at City Hall, I will be swearing in 10 new police officers; 8 will go directly to the Academy and 2 are lateral transfers from New York City.

Ms. King thanked Councilmember Blanchfield for his excellent leadership as Council President for the last 3 years. Also on January 30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a public presentation of the city-wide zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. We hope that everyone will come and hear the presentation. There will be public feedback after that and then a Public Hearing before the plan is approved. Finally, January 29<sup>th</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup> will be "Restaurant Week". All restaurants will have 3 course dinners for \$19.62.

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**ADJOURNMENT:**

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. King declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO  
CITY CLERK**