

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – JANUARY 28, 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. Emmanuel Adams, New Bethel Community Church of God in Christ, to deliver the Invocation.

]

Ms. King then called upon Rev. Robert Smith to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

At this point in the meeting, Neil Harverel from ATF presented the 5th check in the amount of \$6,199,672.62.

At this point, Ms. King asked if there were no objections, she would like to take Agenda Items #11 and #12 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2008-07

Adopted Unanimously

Mr. Allen invited Rev. Emmanuel Adams to come inside the rail to accept a resolution declaring February, 2008 as “Black History Month” in the City of Schenectady. Rev. Adams thanked the City Council for the resolution.

Resolution No. 2008-08

Adopted Unanimously

Mr. Della Sala invited Jena Wyman to come inside the rail to accept a resolution applauding the Boys & Girls Clubs and the Schenectady City School District for their new School-Based Mentoring Program known as PROMISES. Ms. Wyman thanked the City Council for the resolution.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. To consider the acquisition of 838 State Street through Eminent Domain.

Ms. King invited all who wished to speak on Public Hearing #1 to come forward (7:30 P.M.). The following speakers rose to be heard and their remarks are summarized:

Ravi Ramdath, 25 Chestnut Street, asked – Is there an alternate location that should be considered?

Pamela Carter, 205 Furman Street, said – It seems that you are putting Fred Anderson against the Bethesda House. No one is denying that the Bethesda House is unnecessary. All we want is fairness.

Mark Townsend, 315 Salina Street, said – You should have been talking about this for months. You cut off the CDBG funds and not the residents. Because downtown doesn't want it, you want to dump it in another neighborhood. This is part of a national trend to get them out of downtown. Other cities like Orlando have "no feeding grounds" where you can't feed the poor. This is a disgrace. You said that you were going to help out the neighborhood now and what do you do – throw this on them. This proposal may be a detriment to the Vale neighborhood.

Rev. Richard Otty, 3 Catherine Street, stated that the State Street Presbyterian Church has not been brought in on these plans. We have always been in favor of the Bethesda House. If it does come to our area, I hope that the city will be involved with us and other organizations to provide services, playgrounds and green space, including access to Vale Park and the facilities there.

Katherine Delain, 214 Liberty Street, stated that we fought a battle to keep a Health Care Facility away from Vale and now, you want to put the Bethesda House there. We need to go back to the drawing board.

Fred Clark, NAACP, stated that in 1974 – Fred Anderson owned Paige Inn on Hamilton Street. The city gave him \$30,000.00 for the bar and \$10,000.00 relocation expenses. Mr. Anderson said that Frank Popolizio called him and offered him money for his property. The Bethesda House appraised the property at 75,000.00 – sight unseen. Mr. Anderson got his own appraisal at \$150,000.00 and he wants \$20,000.00 relocation expenses. The Council has a copy of the appraisal. I recommend that you all go and look at the apartments. They are very nice. We, at NAACP, are backing Mr. Anderson all the way.

Rev. Robert Smith, 986 Albany Street, BNI, said – Don't resort to Eminent Domain. We worked years with the city on the Vale Project. No one from the city contacted anyone in the neighborhood where you plan to put this. I think that you can deal with this in a better way.

Marva Isaacs, 304 Duane Ave., stated that the people on Hamilton Hill don't have a voice. No one contacted anyone on the hill about this project.

Gretchen Savage, 715 Dunnsville Road, asked – What will this do to the children in this neighborhood? They have a wonderful time at the church every Friday night. This is a real upheaval.

Mary McClaine, Schenectady resident, said – When I first heard of the \$150,000., I didn't think that was too much to pay the owner. Then I hear that the owner has not paid taxes for a year. Mr. Anderson paved my driveway and wanted to be paid before he left the premises. He owns property, receives rental income and “back slides” on his taxes. Such a person doesn't deserve any consideration. Taker the property through Eminent Domain and don't give it a second thought.

Rinaldo & Phyllis DiLegge, 828 State Street, stated that we oppose this because we feel that we haven't been involved at all. We own R & J Auto Repair. Over 6 years ago, my husband told the city that the building at 834 State Street was ready to collapse. He tried to purchase it several times. We put everything we own on the line to build a new building. We did this with no help from the city, even though we asked. We have done our best to clean that area. My husband told the city workers that they were crazy to go into that building. There are a lot of questions to be answered before these proceeds. Now, we know why we couldn't purchase this property.

Debra Rembret stated that all the people in the city matter – you got people coming up here from the city because this is the drug rehabilitation center and you know that. You say that only local people use the Bethesda House – that's a “big lie”. Schenectady houses everyone, all the people need to function better.

Harry Brand, 2108 Van Rensselaer Drive, said – I have known Mr. Anderson for many years. Eminent Domain should be a last resort in any dealings you have. Give the man what he is asking for or leave it alone. Did you every offer him property for \$1.00 or reduced taxes for 10 years. Your going about this is the wrong way.

Jim Livingston asked – What kind of planning went into this when the DiLegge's weren't even a part of it? Everything is about downtown. You need a proper planning process. It's a terribly flawed process and the PR is ridiculous.

Peggy Anderton said – Everyone wants to be part of the process and I appreciate that. I think as we go forward, we need to do this. All I can talk about is what we do and we provide a great service. We are a vital part of the most vulnerable part of our community

Seeing no other speakers, Ms. King declared Public Hearing #1 closed at 8:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Blanchfield moved that the minutes of the City Council meeting of January 14, 2008 is approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Mrs. Brucker. Hearing no objections, Ms. King declared the minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official –

From the Mayor, a list of appointments.

From the Department of Engineering, 13 letters accepting the bids of and awarding the contracts to:

- Malcolm Pirnie for “Emergency Design Services for the Dissolved Air Flotation Thickener Process Area” in the amount of \$36,000.00;
- Vellano Bros., Inc. for “Furnishing Supplies and Equipment” in the amount of \$74,275.45;
- Thatcher Company for “Hydrofluosilicic Acid” in the amount of \$45,040.00;
- Amrex Chemical for “Liquid Chlorine” in the amount of \$29,640.00;
- Albany Dodge for “Five (5) ¾ Ton 4x4 Pick-Ups with Heavy-Duty Plow Packages” in the amount of \$140,388.00;
- Nortrax for “4 Wheel Drive Loader with Diesel Engine” in the amount of \$132,000.00;
- Latham Ford for “Four (4) 1 Ton Cab and Chassis, Multi-Purpose Dump Body and Plow Package with Diesel Engine” in the amount of \$274,532.00;
- Morse Manufacturing, Inc. for an “Aerial Lift and Service Body” in the amount of \$98,270.00;

- Hacker's Packers for a "20 Foot Steel Truck Mount – Five (5) Side Door Unit" in the amount of \$32,119.00;
- Applied Measurement & Control for "Digester Gas Monitoring System Plus Freight" in the amount of \$8,403.00;
- Hacker's Packers for "Two (2) 25 Cubic Yard Rear Loading Refuse Packer Body" in the amount of \$97,650.00;
- ESC Environmental, Inc. for the "Purchase of Ortho Phosphate Corrosion Inhibitor" in the amount of \$57,375.00; and
- JWC Environmental for "Inline Sewage Grinders" and amending Resolution No. 2007-CS30 in the amount of \$32,455.00.

General – None.

PETITIONS: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Allen stated that the Health & Recreation Committee met and discussed the Handicap Accessible Festival on June 27th. We hope that this is more successful than last year. Another event is the plan a foot for a "Winter Festival" in Central Park.

Mr. Blanchfield stated that the Finance Committee met. He explained Agenda Items #8, #9, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19, #20, #21, #22, #23, #24 and #25.

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:

Mary McClaine, Schenectady resident, said – If this agenda passes tonight, the Council will spend a great deal of money, but, nothing for new microphones. Under the ADA, I want the same consideration for the hearing impaired that the physically challenged are receiving for park equipment. Tuesday's meeting was horrendous. We had to make a choice either to stay downstairs for the Bethesda

House meeting or go upstairs for the Public Hearing. I went upstairs – no microphone. I couldn't hear anything and the public was disrupted by the Councilmembers. I hope that we never have to experience that kind of meeting again. Please put the microphones in place.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave., spoke in regard to Agenda Item #4. I don't think that we should be happy that – that many people are defaulting on their taxes. It's not a good sign. Also, how much are we recovering on the \$1.00?

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 –

Local Law #1-2008	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-09	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-10	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-11	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-12	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-13	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-14	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS01	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS02	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS03	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS04	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS05	Adopted Unanimously

Consent Agenda (Continued) –

Resolution No. 2008-CS06	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS07	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS08	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS09	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS10	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS11	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS12	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2008-CS13	Adopted Unanimously

Original Consideration –

Resolution No. 2008-15	Adopted - 6:0:1 Voting Aye – Allen, Brucker, Blanchfield, McCarthy, Della Sala, Blanchard Voting No – None Abstained – King
------------------------	---

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:

Marion Porterfield, Weed and Seed Program, stated that CPTED is an Urban Design Process which integrates crime prevention with neighborhood design and community development and there's a direct relationship between design and the environment. Creating behavioral effects that will reduce the incident and fear of crime and contribute to the improved quality of life. If a building goes up, it would be done in a way that if, for instance, a fence was up, it would be see through – so people wouldn't be afraid to walk by.

CPTED's key partner is the city. We ask that the city also work with us. Also, we are offering our free tax services in the community.

Harry Brand, 2108 Van Rensselaer Drive, stated that the city streets are disheartening and you want to spend millions of dollars on Erie Blvd. I was always proud of this city, but, I have never seen it as bad as it is now. You leave a lot to be desired.

Katherine Delain, 214 Liberty Street, stated that homelessness is the problem. This needs to be eliminated. Where are the jobs? You need to help everyone in this city. Our future isn't downtown.

Elaine Willi, 1571 Bradley Street, stated that there is a public presentation on the City-Wide Plan and the Zoning Ordinance on Wednesday at 6:30 P.M. at Proctor's Theater.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave., spoke in regard to the meeting on the Police Department. What I heard kept me away from the meeting. It wasn't a structured meeting like the one a while back. It was supposed to be last on a very long agenda in Room 110. Then – when I heard it was upstairs, I got a little upset. The Mayor is absolutely right in telling the new hires what's expected of them. Why do people think that this is bad? We are not going to put up with any nonsense; we want you to do your job. We expect them to do their job just like everyone else. If we are going to thank people, thank the Sanitation workers, the City Clerk's Office does a great job and the Crossing Guards do a great job. Thank all of them, not just one group.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Allen stated that there are a lot of lights that are out all over the city. If there's a light out in front of your house, call John Coluccio, Signal Control. We are paying National Grid whether the lights are on or off. We are paying for service that we don't have.

Ms. Blanchard said – Riding the bus is a “very green” thing to do. Last year, there was a 6% reported increase in people taking the bus. It’s \$1.00 a ride or a \$3.00 pass for all day; \$9.50 for a 10 trip pass; and in the Summer, kids can buy an \$18.75 pass that lasts all day. CDTA owns 6 Hybrid buses and they plan to buy 23 more. Bus schedules are in banks, library and on-line. Soon, there will be an on-line service to map out routes according to destination.

Mr. Blanchfield spoke in regard to the Winter Carnival. It’s absolutely great that we are getting that much use out of the park. In regard to the sale of tax liens, when they buy our liens, it increases the interest and penalties. One averages it would be a 10% penalty. We are getting \$.91 on the dollar and we don’t have the hassle. Overall, we would like to see people pay their taxes. Also, a few things came up at announcements that affect the city, one was a proposal to limit property taxes and the Governor’s initiative to rationalize State Aid. Our State Aid is boosted up to about \$11.8 Million Dollars. You can’t talk about limiting property taxes unless you talk about the distribution of State Aid and fairness. We should be subjected to a system of fairness dealing with State Aid. We have done tremendously well in boosting our State Aid, but still lag behind similar municipalities. Utica gets 25% of the city budget funded; Troy – 1/5 of its budget, Niagara Falls – 22% and Schenectady – 16%. Also, how much State Aid do we get per person? Niagara Falls get over \$300.00 per person; Utica gets \$270.00 per person; Troy gets \$250.00 and Schenectady gets \$193.00. Schenectady really isn’t getting their fair share. We also need to require sound management from all the municipalities that get State Aid. We have made so much progress here in the way we do business. Every municipality should be held to the same standard. Poor – public, policy choices shouldn’t be rewarded.

Mrs. Brucker said – I was on Union Street last week doing some errands at about 4:00 P.M. and when I came out, my car had been broken into. Make sure that you lock your doors. I want to thank the Dispatch; they wanted to know if any other damage had been done to my car and if I wanted to do the report over the phone or to send someone. I asked them to send someone because the second person that I want to thank is a Union Street resident who saw two young men walking down the street and rummaging through my car. He came out and just his mere presence probably scared them away. My car was rummaged through, but, nothing was really taken. An officer came and this young man was able to give a description and which way they went. Luckily for me, there was someone out there that witnessed all this, stuck around and didn’t have a problem getting involved. So to Erin Jennings, “Thank You”. If people do a good job, even if they are not paid for it – none of us are acknowledged enough.

Mr. Allen said – I feel bad that we are pitting the Bethesda House against the neighborhood. If you use the alternate site, deal with it, use it. There's a big lot up on Brandywine Ave. that can be used. There are many other places that can be used. I object to the statement that these homeless people are from the Vale neighborhood and Hamilton Hill. Also, I am against Eminent Domain unless someone is totally ridiculous. I just don't like this whole thing. We didn't even do an assessment. It was done by the Bethesda House. We need to do our own.

The Mayor stated that Mr. Blanchfield was right in saying that we have done better with the money that we received from the American Tax Funding since 2004. We have received 123% of what the actual bill was. This is 123% of the actual tax value. We also have to make the County and the School District whole. The American Tax Funding can put together a payment plan where we can't. We are receiving 108% more than 2004 and by 2010, it will be 150%. The municipalities who are already higher than us are also going to benefit from the increases. Nothing has been done to create equity. We are doing a lot here to help our economic situation that – perhaps – the other communities are not. Also, my thanks to Commissioner Carl Olsen and Bill Macejka for organizing our first ever, Winter Carnival – hopefully, the weather cooperates. Also, Agenda Item #6 will make way to Golub Headquarters to move in, which has 800 jobs plus 200 people a day doing business at that site and Agenda Item #3 will get us back the \$750,000.00 UDAG loan which we never received. Center City will be on the tax rolls. “Thanks” to the Council and Metroplex for working with us. Finally, congratulations to Vino Luchamat who won \$3,000,000.00 in a scratch-off ticket. Congratulations to Joyce and Marvin Mondo who won \$1,000,000.00.

Ms. King said – Again, a Reminder, there will be a Public Presentation this Wednesday, January 30, 2008 at 6:30 P.M. at Proctor's Theater on the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. King declared the meeting adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO
CITY CLERK**