

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE  
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 9, 2007**

The meeting was called to order by Acting President Joseph L. Allen at 7:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. Allen called upon Rev. David Heise, Albany Street Methodist Church, to deliver the Invocation.

Mr. Allen then called upon Robert Sanders to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present – Councilmembers Frank J. Maurizio, Margaret C. King,  
Gary R. McCarthy, Denise K. Brucker, Barbara Blanchard  
and Joseph L. Allen

Absent - Council President Mark W. Blanchfield

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, Deputy City Clerk Eileen M.  
Versaci and Corporation Counsel L. John Van Norden, Esq.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Allen asked if there were no objections, he would like to take Agenda Items #8, #6, #7 and #9 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2007-73 Adopted Unanimously

Mr. McCarthy invited members of the Police and Fire Departments and the Dispatchers to come inside the rail to accept a resolution declaring the week of April 8<sup>th</sup> through April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007 as “National Public-Safety Telecommunications Week” in the City of Schenectady. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

Resolution No. 2007-74 Adopted Unanimously

Mrs. Brucker invited the Producers of “Winter of Frozen Dreams” to come inside the rail to accept a resolution thanking them for filming their movie in the City and County of Schenectady. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

Resolution No. 2007-75 Adopted Unanimously

Mrs. Blanchard invited Don Rittner and Nick Barber to come inside the rail to accept a resolution honoring and encouraging the Schenectady Film Alliance to continue their support of local film makers. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

Resolution No. 2007-76

Adopted Unanimously

Ms. King invited the members of “Dreamspun” Recording Studio to come inside the rail to accept a resolution honoring it. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. McCarthy moved that the minutes of the City Council Meeting of March 26, 2007 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Mr. Maurizio. Hearing no objections, Mr. Allen declared the minutes approved as submitted.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**Official –**

From the Mayor, a list of appointments.

From the Department of Finance, a letter accepting the bid of and awarding the contract to UAP Distribution, Inc., Harrell’s Turf Specialty and Lesco, Inc. for the purchase of “Fertilizer, Pesticides and Turf Supplies” in the total amount of \$43,301.80.

From the Department of Engineering, a letter recommending the amendment of the contract for the “2007 Street Paving Program” to Carver Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$49,105.00 and a revised total amount of \$3,608,561.90.

From the Department of Engineering, a letter accepting the bid of and awarding the contract to Satch Sales, Inc. for the purchase of a “2007 – 4 x 4 Utility Vehicle with Diesel Engine” in the amount of \$17,503.00.

**General: (Public Announcement) –**

The Bellevue Preservation Association will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 7:00 P.M. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (Courtyard Entrance) on Fairview Ave. The Guest Speaker will be Police Chief Michael Geraci.

**PETITIONS:** None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Mr. Maurizio stated that the City Development & Planning Committee met and at the last meeting, we asked for a Public Hearing on the Jay Street Historic District. It is Number 3 on tonight's Agenda which is set for April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Previous to this meeting, the Council received an overview of this year's Consolidated Plan Summary. The Public Hearing has been set for Thursday, April 26, 2007 at 6:00 P.M. in Room 110.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Finance Committee met; Number 1 on the Agenda is an Ordinance amending the budget to purchase a Priority Dispatch System – this is over \$163,000.00 to upgrade our Dispatch Center for faster response.

Mrs. Blanchard stated that the Government Operations met. Agenda Item #10 which is a resolution to televise committee meetings – this is for a Pilot Program for only 4 meetings and they will be televised up in Room 110 and it will be voted on later at this meeting.

Mr. Allen stated that the Health & Recreation Committee met. The plan is to open the Golf Course on this Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. There will be a cleanup at the Golf Course on Saturday. Anyone interested, please meet up at the Golf Course at 8:00 A.M. I am looking forward to seeing you on Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.

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

Mr. Allen 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:

Robert Sanders, 2821 Halsey Drive, spoke on Agenda Item #3, making Jay Street a historic district. What I want to see is that the City Council take a look at Kings Road instead of always looking at downtown and reach out to the neighborhoods. Kings Road is a historic highway and it could be made better.

Katherine Delain, 214 Liberty Street, said – I am looking forward to seeing the Committee Meetings televised. A few years ago – when my husband and I tried to televise these meetings, we were asked to leave. I hope that it works out because this is needed. Many people are not able to come down to these meetings so if it is televised, they can watch it on TV.

Mary McClaine, Unadilla Street, spoke on Agenda Item #10. I am also very much in favor of televising the Committee Meetings. There is an advantage of

being able to see the Committee Meetings at home without going out in the sleet, snow and very cold weather. I remember that last month when a meeting lasted 4 hours, you could be at home making cookies and such and watch these meetings and still be learning about your government.

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

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

**Consent Agenda –**

|                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Ordinance No. 2007-08    | Adopted Unanimously |
| Ordinance No. 2007-09    | Adopted Unanimously |
| Resolution No. 2007-77   | Adopted Unanimously |
| Resolution No. 2007-78   | Adopted Unanimously |
| Resolution No. 2007-CS13 | Adopted Unanimously |
| Resolution No. 2007-CS14 | Adopted Unanimously |
| Resolution No. 2007-CS15 | Adopted Unanimously |

**With Unanimous Consent –**

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Resolution No. 2007-79 | Adopted Unanimously |
|------------------------|---------------------|

**Original Consideration –**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Resolution No. 2007-80 | <b>(Roll Call Vote)</b><br><b>Defeated – 3:3</b><br>Voting Aye – King,<br>McCarthy, Blanchard<br>Voting No – Maurizio,<br>Brucker, Allen<br>Absent – Blanchfield |
|------------------------|--|

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

Mr. Allen 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:

Katherine Delain, 214 Liberty Street, said – I’m sorry – I could not hear – what was the vote? It was defeated, what a shame. I thank Ms. King for coming around in trying to televise the Committee Meetings. Now, back to the Agenda, today is “National Day to honor Prisoners of War”. I wonder why no one took the time to honor them? Where are the veterans? Also, I am concerned about this Council – there is a lack of communication, do you return phone calls? I think that you should listen more.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave., said – I was at home watching the last City Council Meeting – there was Chief Geraci and a Police Officer standing in the back of the room, why? That officer should have been out on the street and maybe that would help with the response time; this is what I observe. I believe that you are losing a veteran of 13 or 14 years being a Crossing Guard because of not responding to her call when she was in need of help.

Jason Planck, Schenectady resident, said – I want you to know that the Department of Justice came out with a legal suit against a City in Mississippi for lack of access to public facilities, very similar to the problems that we have in Schenectady. Again, this City Council has tried to get Tracy Chance to appear before this Council and again she was told not to appear. I would like to know the reason why, and it is totally inappropriate. The city is in need of an Affirmative Action Officer and if she cannot perform these duties for the city, the Mayor needs to appoint someone who can.

Mark DeChiro, 38 Fairfax Ave., Niskayuna, NY, said – I would like to thank the members of the Council for sponsoring the Wednesday event – the screening of “An Inconvenient Truth” at the McChesney Room at the Library on 99 Clinton Street. As Regional Coordinator of the Capital/Saratoga Energy Smart Communities on our efforts throughout the region, I want to thank you for letting me speak tonight.

Mary Ann Ruscitto, 205 Front Street, stated that last year, I called the NYS Health Department about 203 Front Street; that is the house that smells and it has toxic mold. They told me to call the County Health Department and I did. They told me that the city takes care of their own health problems; it has been 5 years – my problem is that it is not just a dilapidated building – my problem

is that I have asthma – I cannot breath. My sister has the same problems. Last year, we could not sit in our back yard because of the smell and mosquitoes. I thought that it was from the river, then I found out that the mosquitoes do not travel more than 1000 feet from where they are hatched – it was from the house next door. The person from the NYS Health Department told me that if I didn't get results from the City or County Health Department, I was to call them back because there is definitely a health problem there.

Al Jurczynski, 906 Londonderry Court, said – I would like to start by commending the 3 members of the Council for voting on televising the Committee Meetings very commendable. I plan to attend all the meetings of this Council; the last few years, the position I held with the State did not allow me to attend; now, I am able to do so. The other thing I would like to speak about is the editorial in the Gazette this morning – it said that Schenectady should keep encouraging immigration. This city is one of the few that has increased its population and that is wonderful, but, we have to improve other areas in the city besides downtown, so that we keep encouraging immigration to these areas.

Patricia Rush, 1177 Oxford Place, stated that I am here to present this button that says "Step It Up". It is to ask Congress to "Step It Up" in regard to making legislation on Global Warming. We are having a march on Saturday, April 14, 2007 that will end on the steps of City Hall; this is a rally to save the Planet. I hope that all of you can join us.

Pat Zollinger, 150 Clement Ave., said – I am in favor of educating the public on our City Government. That is why it is so important that these City Council meetings and the Committee meetings are televised so that the public will be informed. I wonder how many people missed the deadline for the Star Program because they didn't know that the deadline was March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Elaine Willi, 1571 Bradley Street, said – I attended the Committee Meeting where the raises in salary had been discussed. As a matter of fact, I attended all of these circus meetings every week. If it wasn't for Councilman McCarthy, the 20% contribution for medical insurance would not even have been mentioned. All that was discussed was comparison salaries of how much everyone else was making. The taxpayers were not in the least bit present in your minds except the usual tactics of evading the issues. It is all such a pitiful joke as to what we taxpayers think. As one example, when taxpayers are paying \$800.00 a month towards the Council President's family, of which the wife is a doctor, with the 20% only knocked down to \$600.00 with a hefty pay raise, when so many hard working taxpayers in this city can afford absolutely no insurance for themselves and have to depend on a free clinic that depends on volunteers and donations.

Last week, this clinic had to start turning down new patients because they are running out of funds. It is downright pitiful! It surpasses all logic on how you people sleep at night. I want to thank Barbara Blanchard, (Gary McCarthy and Peggy King for their vote of support, just now) for trying to bring about a test run of these meetings being considered to be temporarily televised on Channel 16 for the public viewing, many of which who are unable to make these meetings. (I differ with Denise Brucker's statement about active participation. Of the few who attend these meetings, there is very little active participation – we are not always encouraged to speak – I have felt pressure by Frank Maurizio to “hurry up, we have to get on with this meeting” or “we don't have enough time to hear from everyone” about certain issues). What a raucous was raised – of course, this Council hardly wants them televised – the conniving tactics would be exposed and unable to be used. Before this tie vote, the discussion on whether to agree to this had gone private. That truly makes a lot of sense; a private discussion to agree on what to expose to the public. Oh, the usual tactics just never end. The pitiful circus must go on by all means. As a common courtesy says – have a good evening, but, I seriously don't know how you do.

Mary McClaine, Unadilla Street, said – I understand that in 2004, there was a \$1,000,000.00 surplus left in the city budget – that figure was never mentioned in the Mayor's annual address. This administration stated that it was possible to turn the debt around when there was a surplus.

Harry Brand stated that the County does not want to talk to the City. I'm not surprised – what do you have to offer, what do you people do here? Nothing that I can see – you vote yourself a raise and benefits and the people have nothing to say about it.

Police Chief Michael Geraci said – I just would like to remind the people that I will be speaking at the April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Bellevue Preservation Association at 7:00 P.M. at the St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Fairview Ave. This is the first of many meetings with the different neighborhoods.

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

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Mr. McCarthy said – I would like to bring up the matter under debate on Tracy Chance. I believe that Rev. Emmanuel Adams and Ms. Chance are trying to put together a program and they have not had the time to complete this program. Although we have some disagreement with our colleagues on the County level,

we should not interfere with her ability to do her job. Give Tracy Chance a “Chance”.

Ms. King said – I would like to tell Mr. Sanders that on the Public Service & Utilities Committee on this coming Monday night, a discussion will be on “Kings Road”. Also, I read in the times Union that Metroplex will be having “free” parking in the Garage for performances at Proctor’s and I think that it is good news for all of us.

Mrs. Blanchard said – I want to thank Mr. DeChiro for coming down to our meeting tonight and reminding everyone of the event being held on Wednesday at the Library in the McChesney Room. We will all be there and we hope that you will be also. This is our small part to help educate the public on a big issue – “Global Warming”.

Mr. Allen stated that last Sunday, there was a great evening of Jazz at the Holiday Inn; it was really outstanding. It was the Capital District Union of Musicians, and they are going to do the same thing next year. It was a well-attended event and it was free. The other thing that disturbs me very much is that I attended a wake this afternoon - that young man who was shot in Jerry Burrell Park – there was wall to wall people. I did not know the young man, but, I knew his father. If any of you have any ideas on how we can prevent some of what is going on with the drugs and guns and how to stop our young people from getting involved, please contact me. This young man came from a “nice” family; I met his grandmother, she is a nice lady and his grandfather was a minister. Being a product of World War II, we did not have the drugs and guns coming into this country, like today, the war stopped it. The worst part about the drugs coming into our city is that with the drugs – comes the guns and a lot of our young people are dying. I am open to any suggestions – if anyone has a solution of any kind, I will listen.

Mayor Stratton said – Ms. McClaine, I do not know where your figures are coming from, but when I took office, there were 3 years of incomplete audits, 2001, 2002 and 2003. All these audits were incomplete – wherever that \$1,000,000.00 surplus was, that someone told you about, I can assure you that was not here. I can tell you that in 2004, the budget that went to the City Council projected a \$10.2 Million Dollar deficit and we finished out 2004 with a \$1.4 Million Dollar deficit. Mr. McCarthy, I am fond of charts and I will be delighted to put together a chart on our rise and fall of our bond rating. I would like to announce, if I may, that there will be a walk for Cystic Fibrosis and this will be on May 12<sup>th</sup> in Central Park.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. Allen declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

**BY EILEEN M. VERSACI  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK**