

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL JULY 19, 2010**

The Council President, Gary R. McCarthy called the Meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. McCarthy called upon Father Paul Panos, of St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 107 Clinton St., Schenectady to deliver the invocation.

Mr. McCarthy called upon Ms. Blanchard to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present – Council members Joseph L. Allen, Denise K. Brucker, Carl Erikson, Gary R. McCarthy, Thomas Della Sala, Barbara Blanchard and Margaret C. King.
Absent – None

Also Present – Ismat Alam Commissioner of Finance, Deputy Clerk Charles W. Thorne and Acting Corporation Counsel Al Goldbergerer.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. King moved the minutes of the City Council Meeting of June 14 and June 28 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. Ms. Blanchard seconded it. Hearing no objections, Mr. McCarthy declared the minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official:

From the Office of the Mayor a list of appointments. (dated July 19, 2010)

From the Department of Finance, a letter recommending the acceptance of the lowest responsible bid for the “Ready Mix Concrete”.

From the Department of Engineering, a letter recommending the award of the “Furnishing Manhole Frames and Covers and Catch – 2010” to Syracuse Castings as the lowest responsible bidder in the amount of \$61,375.60.

General:

None

Petitions:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Della Sala – Explained that items two and three on the agenda have been budgeted for and the City was waiting for the grant to come through and now is able to accept the grant.

At this point in the Meeting Mr. McCarty asked, if there were no objections, to take item numbers 6 and 7 out of order.

Resolution No. 2010-124 Passed Unanimously
Ms. King invited Dr. Michele Paludi inside the rail to accept a resolution. Dr. Paludi thanked the Mayor and the Council for the recognition.

Resolution No. 2010-125 Passed Unanimously
Carl Erikson invited Jason Planck, Alan Anderson and Reverend Van Stuart to accept a Mr. Planck thanked the Mayor and Council for their support and recognition.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

Mr. McCarthy invited all who wished to address the Legislative Agenda to come forward.

Marion Porterfield, Director Schenectady Weed and Seed – Spoke against the Firetree and said she has a petition she will file with the City Clerk’s Office.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave. - Spoke in support of item number 11 on the agenda. He said there are already major problems in Schenectady and a residential re-entry program anywhere in Schenectady would only add to the problems. He added that there is already an over saturation of residential programs in the city.

Rev. Van Stuart, SICM – Commended the Council for opposing the re-entry facility on State Street, but encouraged more effort in developing business in the vacant building. He stated that the Council needs to take the lead in economic development and others will follow. They need to start looking at better ways of economic development in the neighborhoods.

Vickie Hurewitz, Board President, BNI - stated she is working with the Development Department on developing a market on State Street. She stated that empty space on State Street needs to be available for economic expansion.

Mary McClaine, 1505 Unadilla Street I am going to speak on items 7 & 11 tonight’s agenda. Back in the mid-70s, I was a member of a group called “Mobility on Wheels.” The goal of the group was to eliminate architectural barriers from public buildings. It was a new concept. At that time, there were no

handicap parking spaces, wide doorways, curb cuts, low water fountains, etc. a woman from Virginia Beach started the movement because she used a wheel chair. When I first met her, she asked me to help the group. I began speaking on the issue at city council meetings, reviewed plans for new buildings reduced the cost of license plates with handicap logos and got the attention of the state legislators. From that early beginning in Virginia Beach “the Americans with Disabilities Act” was eventually passed. I never imagined at the time that I was helping others tat some day I would have need for such a law. Almost two years ago, I wrote to the Mayor twice, with copies going to the Council members. The letters requested under The Americans with Disabilities Act to put a system in place so that those of us who are hearing impaired can hear what is being said at public meetings. Since the time of my request council approved the Tiny tot project for the physically challenged children. Passed an ordinance for a smoking ban in the park and elsewhere and city hall even dispenses Spanish literature for those who do not speak English but a system for the hearing impaired has not been satisfactorily addressed. Last week’s committee meeting was dreadful. I doubt that anyone in Room 101 could hear anything. My patience is exhausted. I am left with no choice but to seek assistance to bring a federal Law suit against the City. Schenectady is not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Item 11 – I too, attended the Firetree Community Meeting. If I can be there, council should have been there too, especially Mr. Erikson. He didn’t take the time to listen to the Vale neighbors but he’ll go back later to ask for their vote. Man speaks with fork tongue. This proposal will pass because citizens did their homework while most elected officials stayed home.

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

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

Consent Agenda –

Mr. Della Sala moved the items be adopted, seconded by Ms. Blanchard.

Ordinance No. 2010 –126	Adopted Unanimously
Ordinance No. 2010 –127	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 –128	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 –129	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 –130	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 –131	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 –132	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 – CS -13	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010 – CS-14	Adopted Unanimously

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – City Business

Mr. McCarthy 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:

Barbara Katz, City Resident – Complained about the litter around downtown bus stops. The area is littered with cigarette butts, soda bottles and beer bottles.

Jason Planck – Spoke regarding the Mayor's recent remarks on the City's financial situation and being \$12.8 million in the hole. He questioned the benefit of pilot programs that grant tax breaks to developing businesses saying that it has cost the city \$4 to \$5 million over the last 20 years. The programs were not approved by the Council and did not create the new jobs they claimed. Pilot programs need to be accountable. He also said unions are receiving pay raises while seniors and the disabled are not and developers are realizing 15 to 20 percent return on investment while our taxes go up. He added that all Planning and Zoning decisions should come before the Council.

Marva Isaacs – Presented the Council with a petition regarding 309 Duane Ave. regarding open sexual acts, solicitation by prostitutes. She demanded immediate action be taken by the City to stop these activities.

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave. - Complained about ice cream truck vending in on Campbell Ave. He asked Mr. Goldberger to check with the company and let them know they should not vend on main streets. He also stated that street conditions on Broadway are terrible between Genesee and Ontario Streets. He felt the vibrations when in his barber's chair when receiving a haircut. He thanked Council for keeping to 7:00 start time for summer meetings but was not happy about only one cycle a month.

Harry Brand, City Resident - Complained about sudden budget deficit, noted waste and lack of oversight by city. He cited the new social services building, employee use of cars and labor contracts.

Pat Zolinger – Stated the Mayor announced a pending \$12 million deficit in next year's budget. She was surprised it isn't more; the City has been spending money without restraint. She criticized the Mayor and the Council for not accepting responsibility for the City's fiscal situation. She also criticized the city officers for living outside of the City.

P.D. Voorhis, City resident - Denied making fun of the Police Department and said she complained about lack of response from the Police Department when calling to report stealing federal food commodities.

Tanyette Jackson, 125 Poplar Street – Stated, she thinks city is doing a good job, overall. She purchased a house a year and a half ago and a tree fell on her property hitting her shed. She has called at least 15 times, for over a year and a half and finally it took a call to the Mayor's office to remove the tree. There are still other trees posing a threat to her property and her children.

Christopher Dixon, Schenectady resident – Stated, he attended a community day in Jerry Burrelle Park. When running for ice to the Price Chopper he claimed to be harassed by a Police Officer, the officer wouldn't tell him why he was stopped, but ordered him to not speak and threatened to handcuff him if he didn't remain silent. When he continued to ask why he had been pulled over he was handcuffed and placed in the back of the Police car. Mr. Dixon continued to speak, asking why he had been stopped, and the officer threatened to arrest him. The officer claimed to have stopped him for driving with a missing license plate. When he checked later there was a plate on the car. the process was dehumanizing.

Mary McClaine – I can understand why Mr. Erikson votes to appoint Ms. Pritchard to the Assessment Review Board. She does live on Wendell Ave. but his vote to float a bond for streets and sidewalks is puzzling. Unless he was familiar with the Siemens contract, the 20-year mortgage on the Foster Avenue Project, knew the contents of the P.B.A. contract and the diminished revenue to the City over the next five years. He should have recused himself and not voted to put the city further into debt. There went his promise to hold down taxes. Man speaks with fork tongue. Further more, two important informational meetings were held from the time Mr. Erikson was nominated to fill a Council vacancy and the time of his first Council Meeting. They were the Firetree Community Meeting and the June Woodlawn Meeting. He missed both of them. When he did show up for a neighborhood meeting he told the group he works for GE whoopi. Metroplex gave General Electric \$5 million tax dollars. That will help the cause, by golly. Does Mr. Erikson know there is a new problem in Woodlawn? Man Speaks with fork tongue. The Democratic Chairman made a tactical error when he did not return my phone calls. If he thinks that people can just show up and say “run me” without having sat in these seats regularly attended Committee meetings spoken at public hearings do not know the City’s geography, its neighborhood or does not have name recognition in the community then the chairman is very much mistaken. The best was not selected for the vacancy and the opposition was ignored. Mr. Erikson is a party player who was rewarded for being a good soldier, but those credentials are not good enough for Schenectady’s citizens.

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

Miscellaneous Business of the Council

Mr. Allen – Criticized the raid on McClellan St, headed up by the DEA the raid was at the wrong address. The Commissioner indicated that drugs and money were found, but Mr. Allen said they were not. If an investigation was not conducted, there should be one regarding conduct of the raid. The residents were mistreated - worse than criminals. This is the type of thing that should not happen in a free society. People should not be abused by any law enforcement agency. Mr. Allen requested answers from the Chief, Commissioner or the Mayor and asked for assurances that it not happen again. He also stated that the way Mr. Dixon, a law abiding citizen, was treated makes no sense to him.

Adjourn:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, at 8:12 p.m. Mr. McCarthy adjourned the meeting.

A true record

**By Charles W. Thorne
Deputy City Clerk**