

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE  
SCHENECTACY CITY COUNCIL OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2010**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Gary R. McCarthy at 7:05 p.m. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. McCarthy called upon the Rev. Art Hudak, Outreach Coordinator, to deliver the Invocation.

Mr. McCarthy called upon Public Safety Commissioner Bennett to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present – Councilmembers Joseph L. Allen, Denise K. Brucker, Carl Erikson, Margaret C. King, Thomas Della Sala, Barbara J. Blanchard and Gary R. McCarthy.

Absent - None

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City Clerk Eileen M. Versaci and Corporation Counsel Alfred Goldberger, Esq.

At this point in the meeting Mr. McCarthy asked if there were no objections, he would like to take agenda item #6 out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2010-175

Adopted Unanimously

Mr. Erikson invited Greg Salomon, owner of Ambitions Café on Jay Street, to come inside the rail to accept a resolution recognizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Jay Fest. Mr. Salomon thanked the City Council and the Mayor for this resolution.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**Jacquie Hurd**, 1034 Euclid Avenue – I am the President of the Bellevue Presentation, Inc. I have come here tonight along with others, to protest the budget cuts in Public Safety. The Public Safety is an area that does not need to be reduced for the safety of our residents. With these cuts the Police and Fire Departments will not be able to perform their duties in the manner that the taxpayers have come to expect. In 1994, when the Bellevue Fire Station was closed, the residents were made some promises. One of them was that the station in Mt. Pleasant on Third Avenue would always remain open to serve Bellevue. It is the first responder to our area. If that station is closed it puts our residents in jeopardy, with every minute that is lost in response time, a life could be lost. It was promised that the Broadway Hill would always be open. Despite the efforts

of City personal, that has not always happened. Mother Nature has a mind of its own. Realizing that fact, the Bellevue area could be completely cut off from fire protection. Bellevue has also been promised more police presence. But, with the cutting of police staff it will be sporadic at best. Promises are made and promises must be kept. I know your job is extremely tough, but you were elected to solve hard problems. Be creative and find ways to balance the budget. But, please think of the people in Bellevue, and thank you for your time.

**Rev. Ted Ward**, 1330 McClyman Street – I realize that these economic times call for hard decision and the City Council has to make these tough decisions and we do not always agree on these decisions. I'm quite sure that the Mayor and the Council didn't sit down at the table and decide to cut out a position to affect someone's ability to feed their family, or if someone's home is on fire, you don't care. You just have to cut the budget. So I'm saying this in a nutshell. When times are tough, we have to stand up with our leaders, even if we do not agree with our leaders.

**Vickie Hurewitz**, Better Neighborhood, Inc., – I am speaking this evening in response to a recent article in the Daily Gazette that stated Mayor Stratton was giving consideration to the use of CDGB funds as a financial means to maintain the parks or rehire laid-off firefighters. He stated in the article that those who receive annual grants of CDBG funds may be cut off and I took this as serious threat of a funding source for programs administered by Better Neighborhoods, Inc. (BNI). City CDBG funds provide a portion of BNI's Housing Counseling Program - \$44,000.00 for two counselors, one of which provides counseling services to families facing foreclosure action and the second counselor provides services for first time home buyers. In addition, BNI receives a portion of its Administrative funding through city CDBG funds under a separate grant. The loss of CDBG funds will result in the lay off of the two counselors mentioned and a further reduction of administrative staffing, which has been reduced to a thirty two hour work week for five staff members due to a \$34,000.00 cut in our NYS Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPC) Program funding. I trust the Mayor and members of the City Council realize and are aware of the important work BNI provides the City of Schenectady and its community members. Better Neighborhoods, Inc. inability to maintain its services due to a loss of funding will have serious impact on affordable housing, housing rehabilitation, new construction and development, and foreclosure prevention in the City of Schenectady. Thank you.

**Rev. Al Tomplins**, 1840 Albany Street – I am an Associate Minister at Calvary Tabernacle Church. Thank you for your hard work in this City and thank you for the job that you are doing day after day. I appreciate you as leaders. I am here for two things, to thank you for your dedication and service, secondly, for my concern for the budget. Often it is the people that take from areas that are most impressionable. I am a resident of Schenectady and I have been here all my life. I am married with 4 adult children and I understand the importance of family and

children and the important of activities. Growing up, I remember my parents providing for me food and shelter and good experiences. I encourage you to take another look at this budget and ask you to reconsider the children of this City.

**David Orr**, Regent Street – My name is David Orr. I live on Regent Street in Schenectady and I am the President of Schenectady City Firefighters Local 28. I understand that we are facing tough economic times as a City, as a State and Nation. I understand that difficult choices have to be made. I recognize that we are early on in the budget process and my hope is that our presence here tonight will assist you in formulating an intelligent, informed response to the Mayor's proposed budget. I stand before you tonight bewildered, angry, dumbfounded, and amazed. That something that is so simple and obvious to me, to us, to anyone in the fire service, that the decision to lay off 19 firefighters and close a fire station, is dangerous and irresponsible, jeopardizing the safety of the citizens of our city and the firefighters who serve them. You cannot ignore the fact our fire department, your fire department has consistently done more with less. We respond to more calls, with fewer firefighters that any other city of our size in New York State and we compare with many much larger departments across the country. Based on that alone, the idea that we may be reduced further is beyond comprehension. I have had the opportunity to speak with some of you directly, not all, although I hope we can rectify that. One common theme after you have listened to what I have said is that you appreciate the facts that I have given you, you understand that the job is dangerous one. You understand the importance of life safety for the community at large. But times are tough and we can't afford to maintain services at the present levels. As you deliberate the proposed budget, I would like to consider the following: In this year, on January 18, 6 people were rescued from 859 Strong Street, on February 7, 2 people rescued from 893 Emmett Street, on March 14, 2 people were rescued from 18 Grove Place, on August 21, and 2 people were rescued from 763 State Street. Do you think these people question the value of firefighters? The fact is, if this budget proposal remains unchanged, if this body approves the proposed layoffs, calls for help will go unanswered. There will be people needing our help, who have to wait. If you leave here tonight with one thought I hope it would be this: One of your main responsibilities is protect the people of Schenectady. This is the job that you have given us. The layoff of 19 firefighters will severely impact our ability to do that. Thank you.

**Ellie Pepper**, 701 Plymouth Avenue – I live on Plymouth Avenue. And I am in the Eastern Avenue Neighborhood Association. I understand how difficult things are financially for this year and how difficult this budget process is. Putting that aside, I do not know how you can cut Public Safety. You are cutting personal and response time. As far as the Curb Fee goes, you already have a 4% increase and with this fee I may be forced to put my house on the market and leave the City. Thank you.

**Marva Isaacs**, 304 Duane Avenue – I think that closing a fire house in the City of Schenectady is the worst thing you ever want to do. There are so many fires. This year is the worst year we have had. We need the firemen, we do need them. This is a mistake. Another thing is Snap. It is not good to get rid of them. They take care of the houses that are boarded up. That is a mistake Mr. Mayor. Thank you.

**Chris Carroll**, Randolph Rd, - I am a lifelong city resident. I currently live on Randolph Road with my wife and 2 children. I am also a firefighter/paramedic with the Schenectady Fire Department. During the three minutes I'm allotted to make my presentation, I would like for you to try and hold your breath. It will take longer than these three minutes for firefighters to reach parts of the city if you go forward with the proposed layoffs. I would like to present some facts and figures that are important for you to know before you go forward with your budget process. First, a fire in your home, if left unchecked, will double in size every minute. A bedroom will become totally involved in about 2 minutes once a fire has taken hold. The proposed layoffs will increase the time it takes for firefighters to respond to fires. Second, the American Heart Association states that brain death can start to occur in just 4 minutes after a person experiences cardiac arrest. If electrical shock to the heart is provided within a few minutes, normal rhythm can be restored. A victim's chances of survival are reduced by 10 percent with every minute that passes without CPR and defibrillation. Your fire department paramedics are the ones who provide this treatment to city residents. If the proposed layoffs take place, the response time to medical emergencies will increase. Third, the National Trauma Foundation states that in an emergency, medicine the first 60 minutes, referred to as the "golden hour", are most crucial to survival of a victim with multi-system trauma. It is imperative that definitive care be provided in the "golden hour". Your city firefighters/paramedics are an integral part of that definitive care. They provide extrication, on scene stabilization, and advanced life support modalities that contribute to the survival of the victim. Again, if the proposed layoffs take place, the response time to medical emergencies will increase. Lastly, the Schenectady Fire Department is one of the busiest in the State. Last year, we responded to 13,444 calls for help. Engine 1 was the 3<sup>rd</sup> busiest engine company in the entire state. Truck 1 was the 4<sup>th</sup> busiest. If you consider the information I have provide you, you will see that we who are involved in providing these services to the city every day have a difficult time understanding why the Mayor would even consider the cuts he has proposed. Time is crucial to the work that we do. Time plays a major role in the outcome of a fire; to the outcome of a cardiac arrest; to the outcome of a trauma, to the outcome of ANY emergency that we, your fire department, provide services for. Put that together with the fact that we are one of the most productive fire departments n New York State, and the country, you will see the proposed cuts are dangerous and irresponsible. If you don't find a way to restore funding for the fire department, you need to understand the results of your decision. Are you still holding your breath? Why would you ask the people of this city to do something you couldn't?

**Carm Pantalone**, 905 Ten Eyck Avenue – I am a life long resident of Mt. Pleasant, and also President of the Mt. Pleasant Coalition. And I am a Captain in the Fire Department riding in truck number 1 and I was one of the Firefighter's that was laid off in 1996. I have some major concerns regarding the elimination of 19 Firefighters and the closing of a fire house. The thought of a firehouse may be closed is shocking. The chance that it may be in Mt. Pleasant is very disturbing. It has caused me to rethink the way the residents of Mt. Pleasant and the residents of this City will be protected. There are over 50 abandoned houses, vacant and burned out buildings in Mt. Pleasant. This area is densely populated and the houses are close together, not only in Mt. Pleasant but in all areas of the City. Our quality of life is already suffering in Mt. Pleasant. We have worked together with City officials on these issues and our struggles are constant and continuance. The loss of the fire house will only continue this downward spiral, one we may not be able to recover from. The loss of the fire house will also affect our insurance rates, throughout the city. There will be increased response times. The safety of everyone in this room will be affected. We will be jeopardized by the closing of the fire house and the laying off of 19 firefighters. The firefighters are trained to protect property and most of all people. We are doing more with less now. I know the men and women I work with. They are dedicated and willing to give their all. Please reconsider your decisions as you move forward with this budget. Thank you.

**Ron Moslanka**, 901 Norwood Avenue – I am a lifelong resident of the City of Schenectady and Captain in the Fire Department. The Mayor has proposed to cut 19 positions in the fire department. He has also proposed creating five positions at the pretext of making revenue. The same 19 firefighters that he wants to lay off are already proven revenue producers. I ask you the citizens of Schenectady to call the Mayor, call the Council. We need to know how they can justify these cuts. Thank you.

**Anthony Ferrari**, 1254 Congress Street – I am a life long resident of the City of Schenectady. I am also the Vice-President of Local CSEA 886. I am here to discuss the proposed 2011 City proposed budget. We all know the challenges that the City will be facing in the upcoming months. I am here to bring to some attention some flaws in the 2011 budget. My time is limited here but I am willing to meet with each of you to go over this budget. The SNAP Program has been targeted for elimination, if you don't know it. The SNAP Program is probably the most successful program the City has done. Not only is the City employing people and keeping them off of the unemployment rolls, but it has generated over \$205,000 for us. The three Nuisance Inspectors have written over 1800 violations this year. So you are eliminating the workers and the supervisors that do the work and keep our neighborhoods neat and clean. These guys are keeping up our neighborhoods more than our neighbors. I would like to bring to your attention the Fees for Services line. As I went through the budget, I noticed that line has increased from 2010 to 2011. We come up with an estimate of about \$700,000.00 higher. The other thing I would like to mention is Central Park. You're keeping

the Director and the pool open, but you are not keeping the maintenance part. This is the gem of the City. We have a twenty year veteran that has been proposed for elimination. She has no bumping rights because of the Civil Service Unit Law. I hope and pray that you all will make the right decisions when it comes to this budget.

**Zabeeda Pessair**, 893 Emmett Street – My son and his girlfriend almost died in a fire. Please look into saving the fire department. I thank all the firefighters they do a great job.

**Scott Banagan**, Gansevoort, New York – I appreciate the difficult job that is put before you concerning the fire department layoffs. I wanted to take a few minutes to tell you about an incident that made it possible for me to be speaking before you tonight. Two years ago there was an industrial accident at my work place that involves another worker and myself. It only took two minutes for my co-worker to be rendered unconscious and I was soon to follow. Our general manager called 911 and station 4 was dispatched to our work site. They reacted immediately and from what I was told days later, they entered a situation that was unknown to them, only to save my life. I was told later by the doctors that if I had been exposed a minute or two longer I would not have recovered. Unfortunately, my fellow co-worker was exposed those extra few minutes and did not recover. He later passed because of complications. He is missed by his friends, co-workers and family. The men at Station 4 went above and beyond the call of duty on that day and even went as far as following up on my condition after the accident. Because of this, I am here to enjoy my friends, family and life. Please take this into account when you make you decision. You never know when you may need them to save your life someday.

**Walter Thirssen**, 18 Gove Place – I am a home owner and my address was already motioned tonight. The two lives that were saved when there was a fire at my address. I was surprised to see one of the persons that were saved that night. My home was saved and two lives were saved by the acts of these professionals. I would very much hate to see them put at risk and our City put at risk by cutting their numbers. They came to my house rapidly, refreshed and professionally, and that is what the citizens of the City need, rapid response to all their emergencies. Thank you.

**Barbara Pantalone**, 908 Ten Eyck Avenue – In life we must make choices and each choice has a consequence good or bad. Some of the choices are life changing; all of you will be making a choice. If you choose to let go of nineteen firefighters and close one fire station, the safety and lives of the citizens of our city are at stake. You must consider that it should be safety first. Our police and firefighters are the first responders in life threatening situations. Additional time in arriving at life threatening situations will cost lives. The proposed Curb Fee is puzzling. We live on Ten Eyck Avenue, a secondary street. We have lived there for 28 years. It has never been completely paved and therefore, it is a patchwork

quilt of blacktop. We have no sidewalks or curbs. Our street gets plowed after most streets in Mt. Pleasant. I implore all of you to make choices that are equitable and protect the firefighters and police and the residents of our City. Thank you very much.

**Anne Deiber**, 1775 Wendell Avenue – I live on Wendell Avenue and I have a corner lot with over 150 feet of curb space. Your Curb Fee scared me to death. It may make me move out of the City and obviously I am not the only one thinking that way. It is clear that there are tax exempt services that use our police and fire that are paid for by the rest of us. The City could charge the non-profits on the basis of the number of calls that they are protected.

**Rosemary Penetta**, 2018 Wabash Avenue – I am going to begin with my heartfelt thanks to our Schenectady Fire Department. At one time or another they have been at my house and I am proud to say that I have family members and friends that are firefighters and they are proud to be Schenectady Firefighters and for that I thank them. These men and women are second to none, but losing 19 firefighters. Was the Mayor thinking about our safety? I think not. I think he was looking for a quick fix. If the proposal was to close Station 3, how will that affect the people in Bellevue? Our response time will be longer, not to mention that you have already pushed our response time when you closed our station in Bellevue. Our paramedics are professional, kind and go the extra mile for our citizens. I am sure this quick fix could be a remedy if some thoughts were put into the process. The not-for-profits should contribute to our public safety. But please keep our firefighters.

**Vincent Barone**, 2 Spruce Street – I am a life long resident of the City of Schenectady and President of ACTME Local 1037. I am here to talk about the entire SNAP crew program being let go. Parks do not just stand still, they keep on growing. You must remember that there are 17 other parks besides Central Park. We take care of all the island streets. When it snows, we plow the fire stations. The SNAP Program is very important to keep this city together. You have come to me before, President McCarthy and I have worked with you. It is not fair for these departments to take this kind of hit. It is not fair and it is not right. Please take a better look at this budget. Thank you.

**Adam Armour**, 4250 Menga Drive – I am Vice President of Local 1037 City Employee's. I am here tonight to discuss the proposed cuts of city employees in the Park Department and the SNAP Department. I know in the past that the Mayor and the Council have had such concerns over City-owned properties. It has been such a concern that the Federal Government has allowed the City to use Grant money to help fund the SNAP Department. With these budget cuts, your concerns will be renewed. With a deeply depleted or non-existent SNAP Department, these properties will not be maintained. These eyes sores could quickly become liabilities. These properties could quickly become very unsafe causing injuries. Besides the properties, it should be noted that the SNAP

Department clears the street corners making it safety for the school children to cross. And also, it is the SNAP Department that aids the Waste Department in the fall or the leaf pickup. It is the SNAP Department that helps the Parks Department with the snow removal. As far as the Parks Department, that is the same story there. Right now the Parks are being used by City residents more than ever. These cuts will cause the City to take a giant step backwards. I am asking the Mayor and the Council to take a closer look and maybe start cutting closer to the top instead of cutting Local 1037 employees.

**David Keenan**, 12 Elliott Avenue – I am an Assistant Supervisor to the SNAP Program. I came here tonight to try to explain a little bit about the Program. We clean up the City, clean houses and yards. Our Nuisance Officers write over 1800 violation a year and that is on top of the over 200 City-Owned Properties that we maintain. Just from the over growth, dumping of tires, washers, stoves, and the like and just plain garbage. We go into roach infested houses and that is what the SNAP Group does. To shut this department down will be a great loss to the City and its residents. We are federally backed and we produce money for the City. Thank you all and I hope we can work this out.

**Lisa Patierne**, 1935 Oakland Avenue – I am a lifelong resident of the City of Schenectady. And I came here tonight to talk about the proposed cuts in the Fire Department and Police Department. Several years ago, my family had the option of moving out of the City, or putting on an addition which costs many thousand of dollars and staying. We chose the latter and one of the reasons is the Schenectady Fire Department with its quick response time. You see we have a child with Asmatha and food allergies. Have you ever watched a child gasping for air and struggling to breathe, because you may have accidentally cooked something? It's scary to say the least, but fortunately for us, we have the greatest paramedics around. The safety of this city is very important and by cutting the fire department by 19 positions and the police department by 12, you are putting the residents at risk. I understand and appreciate that we are living in difficult economic times. And every year is fiscally daunting. I appreciate your hard work, but good leaders must put the safety of their constituents first. Good leaders are creative and listen to their constituents. You have many professionals here tonight saying that these cuts in safety will be putting our city at risk. Have you considered putting together a Citizens Advisory Budget Committee together? These are that things that can be seen at a fresh perspective and come up with new ideas on fiscal responsibility without risking the health and safety of our citizens. I would like to close in saying that I think that those 19 positions in the fire department should be put back in the budget as well as the police department. Unfortunately, my family home was robbed while my 16 year old daughter was home alone, if not for the quick response of our police department. Mayor, I respectfully as that on behalf of the citizens of Schenectady that you reconsider your budget proposal and do not cut the member of the Fire Department and Police Department. And again, I do appreciate all the work that you do for the

City of Schenectady. But I do hope you do listen to the professionals and the residents of this City. Thank you.

**Gordon Lambert**, Division Street – I am a City Resident. When I read that we were going to lose 19 members of the fire department and a fire station was going to close. As a young boy I respected firefighters and do to this day. The Schenectady Fire Department is one of the best I have seen. The firefighters are very well trained. If you let 19 members of the Fire Department go, this City will not be safe and this is the busiest department in the State with the most fire calls. To that, I would like to say thank you to all the firefighters in the room and I hope you reconsider cutting the jobs of the firefighters. Thank you.

**Dominic Bagnato**, 1206 Webster Street – I came here to tell you that I was born in 1921. I am 89 years old. I am one of the last two of Hose 7 in Mt. Pleasant. The other is a framer and is disabled because he was injured in a fire. I have seen the days come and go; this is a very different environment. I feel, from my past experience, that closing the Fire Station would put a vast area of the City at risk, because of my experience. The Boys here have been doing a terrific job. They are as professional as they come. If someone has a heart attack, they know exactly what to do. The paramedics are number one. I feel that this is something we deserve. We the people out there need this protection out there so we can live as long as I have. Thank you.

**Mary Jane Foley**, 2310 Campbell Avenue – I am a resident of Bellevue in the City of Schenectady and I am here tonight for several reasons, first for the layoffs of our firemen. We should all have faith in our homes in the City, but with all the fires that have happened lately, leave the firemen alone. The second reason I'm here is the increase of taxes and the Curb Fees. Those of us who are on Social Security have not had a raise in a couple of years. Everything keeps going up. Where do you think we are going to get the money? I read in the newspaper the other day in the editorial. Mr. Mayor, are you going to tax us for the oxygen that we use? The City Council should think twice before voting on this budget. Listen to the opinion of others, don't just sit there and keep us safe, and no layoffs. Thank you.

**Richard Brandt**, 793 State Street – I work for the Mohawk Ambulance Service and I am involved in EMS, and am involved in paramedic for more than 30 years. I have had the privilege of coming down here before although it had been many years since I have stood at this rail. I understand that like most of America, the City of Schenectady is facing some very economically changeling times and you are faced with extremely difficult decisions. There is alot on the table and I certainly don't have all the answers. But after 30 years in EMS, there are certain times when Fire Department and Mohawk Ambulance work side by side to provide the people of Schenectady with a first rate system. It is a system that works twenty four hours a day providing emergency care for the people of Schenectady and that is more than 10,000 of your citizen every year. Our

response time is one of the best in New York State. I am here tonight to strongly suggest that you please do not make cuts to Public Safety. Thank you.

**Katherine Delain**, 12 Huron Court – I had the honor of sitting next to Fire Chief Farstad and he got called out of the meeting to an emergency. I got this little pamphlet on my way in tonight. It should be required reading. The fire department has saved 15 lives in this year. Let's put a personal face on this. Last Saturday, I watch the paramedics working on a man that was comatose, they gave him CPR, medication and when they took him to the hospital he was conscious. What is one life worth? I don't know who the Mayor could even think of laying off 19 firefighters. We need our fire department, don't do this. Thank you.

**Tony Buonome**, 2110 Hugh Street – I thought it was station 3 that you people were closing and from what I hear tonight it is. In the short block of Hugh Street, there are three people with cardiac conditions, myself included. Just in that one block, if any of us has a cardiac arrest, if you close station 3 we are dead. Like we said before, when you closed Bellevue, you promised that Mt. Pleasant would take care of us. Is this what is happening, we are being abandoned. Now the Curb Tax, I call it a tax, you call it a fee. Well, we are people that have corner lots, are they going to be penalized or is it just going to be for the frontage? I don't see why they should be penalized for having a corner lot. Are the City School District going to pay a curb tax and how about the building that they rent? They rent from the Churches, who will pay the curb tax? That is something else you have to look into. This may not go over very well, but cut these people back. Everyone in the City give back their raises, from you Mr. Mayor on down to the sweepers. No raises for the next three years, let's see if we can get through this without a raise. I don't know if it is going to work, but the Unions are going to have to work with the City. Another thing, they are hiring someone to check on the people that dig up the streets, water lines and such. I thought that was what our Code Enforcement is supposed to do that. They ride around in their cars; you have to get the building permit form the Building Department. Why not give them that to check on once in awhile. You check on everything else that's going on in the City. A year ago, a house on the street had grass three foot high and I stopped a Code Enforcer and his answer was "I don't do that" with Code Enforcement. Whatever is wrong, Check it. Thank you.

**Maria Mazzuco**, 1616 Foster Avenue – I am here as a citizen about the paramedics, the police officers and the firemen. We need them. Not just me, but all of you too. If you cut all these firemen and one of your houses is burning and you become very ill and they don't get there on time. What are you going to think "I shouldn't of have done it." Why don't you eliminate the 5 positions on the second floor or the police station? That is a \$100,000 each. They just push pencils. What do they do for 8 hours every day? I don't mind paying taxes, but those people have been there for many years and I never heard what they did. I want you to have time sheets for a week to look into what the higher ups do. We pay them their salary. We need, are paramedics, our police and our firemen. They

are important to all of us. If you are short on money, I understand. This comes from Washington to our Governor and then you. I understand, but do not cut our fire or police.

**Father Carlino**, 830 Union Street – For the past 20 years I have served as Chaplain for the Fire Department. It has been a privilege and honor to do this since 1989. I have served as Pastor to five churches in Schenectady. A Pastor wears many hats, one of them is that of a Shepard offering spiritual care and another is that of an administrator. Having served in both rolls for the past 22 years, I can only imagine the fiscal challenges that face local governments, like Mayor Stratton and the City Council as well as other City Officials. At present being an administrator to two churches and a school I face some of the challenges you are almost everyday. Virtually almost every speaker before me tonight has noted that the challenges you face. Whether running a City or a Church all to offer we have to make decisions that do not please our constituents. Be that as it may, our leaders have to consider what is important. In 1991, there were about 8,000 calls and in 2011 there is an expected 14,000 calls they are doing more with less now. The department had 155 members in 1989 and now they will have only 105 in 2011 that is 50 less men and 6,000 more calls. In conclusion, I ask the Mayor and the City Council to please consider the safety of the Firefighters. Like the Schenectady Police Department they put their lives on the front line day to day and this has to be considered. Thank you.

**Rev. Van Stuart**, 930 Albany Street – I am from SCIM and seeing all these people her tonight that have concerns about the cuts that are being make and notice that theses folks are all hands on people. The ones in the trenches, how can you cut what they are doing, because if you do you automatically alter the image of Schenectady and I agree. Do you need more speakers to talk to tell you the value of the fire department, the value of SNAP and the value of parks, I agree. You know I agree about the parks because of the work that we did this summer. This past summer SCIM served almost 30,000 free lunches. We thank the City for all the help that they gave us. What we had was a coalition of business that was how you get things done. We believe that talking and communicating is how we get things done. What you are hearing tonight, do people want to know what you came to the conclusion of cutting in the fire and police department. They want your explanation. If you start understanding the people out here, it does not mean you can not come to an agreement and some compromise that makes sense. When you just dump this on people, you can't change the name on a tax and call it a Curb Fee, when it is a tax. We want the parks to get better. We need these parks. What are the children going to do with only one swimming pool, play hide and seek in the tall grass. You need to think out of the box for this one and get some help. Thank you.

**Rev. Phillip Grisby**, 930 Albany Street – In terms of the process I appreciate that the budget has been put on line. New era of transparency, so I commend the Finance Department that's an important step so we all can be informed. Having

said that, I believe that there is time for a second hearing, because very few of us can talk about the Curb Fee, because we know nothing about it. There is a need for a follow up hearing. There are things in the budget about CDBG, it is listed in the budget but it is not very clear. What are you deciding about CDBG in October? Many of us feel that they should be decided in April or May. There seems to be an unclear implication maybe there should be an impact statement. I want to speak for those who are not here. The people here have spoken very eloquently, but I want to speak for those not here, the children, any community has to say, "How are the children," and this budget leave some children out as we have heard. Not only the parks and the pools as we have heard, but also the summer jobs have been cut. Music Haven has been cut out which is largely a venue that children enjoy. I commend to you that your decisions are difficult, but how are the children? How are the children? Thank you.

**Gerald Plant**, 227 Front Street – First of all, my hats off to the Fire Department, I have been here 21 years and I have never heard bad things or scandal about them. Last Thursday, I was sitting at a traffic light by the Stuarts on Erie Blvd., and there is a traffic light there and I counted six cars that went through the light. I'm just bringing this up to mention this could bring a lot of money if we had a camera at some of these lights. I heard they cost \$100,000, maybe our Senators in Washington can send us some. If our parks are not attended to and our buildings by the SNAP crew this City will be a mess. I am a member of CSEA with the State and if the local CSEA can't step up to the plate to save the City money, they should do that. Don't cut the parks and don't cut the fire department. We all have to pull together including the Unions.

**Rev. Diana Fletcher**, 842 Strong Street – I have a house with an assessed value that is way above what the property is worth. Now you come up with this, I call it a mess. Curb Fee, what is that? The curb in front of my house is broken, the sidewalk is broken and there is a large pot hole in the road. That was left there by the City Workers approximately a month ago. Any car coming down that street that hits that hole would cause damage to their car. Guess what? It could be me. That needs to be taken care of before you talk about curb fee. Mayor, I am 77 years old. I live in this City and I am on a very fixed income. Don't take my money to fix other people's problems. There must be some other way that you can get the money that you say you need to do what you have to do. Please do not close the fire house. Please do not lay off our firemen, so I ask you dig back to wherever you have to go, because I often here the term, we found some money. So find some money and fix this thing you call Curb Tax. Thank you.

**Wayne Harper**, Schenectady, NY - I don't mind being unpopular and the reality is these are hard time. If I were one of the 19 losing their jobs, I wouldn't be happy, but this City is a bottomless pit. When it comes to taxes whether it is City, County, State or Federal, when is enough, enough? 60%, 70% and 80% add up your total taxes. Take what you actually earn, what is taken out immediately, than

all the other taxes, see what you actually live on. I had a chat with Mr. Maurizio, by the way is he coming back, Gary. I have not heard his name lately. That's the way it goes a few year down the road and suddenly there is Frank Maurizio. But in honor of Frank Maurizio, I once said here that I can't give in three minutes, I can't give the problem and solution. He said, "Why don't you just give the solution." So here are just some thoughts. If we took all the collective minds in the fire department, I just bet they would come up with some great ideas to save 19 jobs. It always been talked about that the fire department should be re-staffed. There are things that should be changed within. If we are going to layoff 19, let's start with the top paying 19. Let's start with those at the top. How about we get 19 volunteers, get with Al Goldberger, the brilliant attorney for the City to sign on 19 volunteers to come join with them and partner with them, and maybe sign a waiver of insurance. But the fire department has never welcomed that kind of help. We used to have auxiliary police men. I don't know if you remember that? Maybe that something to think about! Also, I think you guys should get together with Metroplex, and have they put aside one dollar for the residents for every dollar they spend on business. They could use it for sidewalks and curbs. Lastly, I have to say thank you to Susan Savage for the air, the water. I don't know, did she claim to have discovered Schenectady or what? I would like to say thank you Susan.

**Pat Zollinger**, 150 Clement Avenue, I am an over taxed under appreciated tax pay of Schenectady. This budget is criminal and this city council is disgraceful. The curb tax is a swindle and for too long, this council and the Stratton administration have been sucking the blood out of every taxpayer in this city. This curb tax is a coward's way out! This city council doesn't want to do the right thing so you stick it to us. The Mayor gives us a Power Point fantasy show telling us how bad it could be. It's already bad. We've had enough of the excuses! Enough of the lame brain ideas coming from this council! We've had enough of this city council just sitting there collecting your paychecks and giving us the shaft! Mayor Stratton is quoted recently saying, "There's not a whole lot of choice here beyond raising taxes through the roof." You've already raised our taxes through the roof. In six short years – under this city council and the Stratton Administration – you've raised the budget 42%. This council has raised parking fees, permit fee, water fees, and sewer fees and created the garbage tax. Now you want to stomp us harder into the ground! I videotaped the first budget meeting and I was astonished at what I heard. Mr. Erikson wants to save the taxpayers THE GRAND TOTAL OF five thousand dollars by not taking a grant for the golf course. Hello? Five grand doesn't even pay half of a family medical package that every member of the city council gets. And this city council sand the finance commissioner can sit around and joke with the Mayor saying that you're doing nothing illegal? I heard that and I was appalled. I was appalled at this city council's and this Mayor arrogant attitude toward all of us who pay your salaries. This curb tax is going to kill us and we're already half dead. Not one council member thinks about the seniors, who have to lower their heat to 60 degrees just to pay their bills. It's called "fixed incomes" a concept obviously no one here

knows about! Now seniors, veterans and everyone struggling to stay in their houses have to pay a curb tax! You say that it will be around \$2.50 a foot? I heard from very good sources that it's going to be close to nine dollars a foot! There are people working two and three jobs just to make ends meet. Not in Schenectady mind you because we don't have jobs here. The time has come for you the council, the Mayor, every department head and every city employee to take a good look at yourselves and what you've done to trash the taxpayers. It's time for all of you to step up to the plate and give back to us. Mr. Erikson wants to save us five grand? I say that a ten percent across the board Pay-cut for very city employee will save us over three and half million dollars. Knock off the health insurance you give yourselves and save us another hundred and fifty grand! We don't need a Public Safety Commissioner; we don't want city employees taking home over 35 cars anymore and the Mayor doesn't need one either. Get rid of them. Get rid of the cell phones. The Mayor should not be texting while he is participating at a Council Meeting, anyway. Better yet, all of you resign, especially Mr. McCarthy, the Mayor and Sharon Jordan, and give us a financial control board. They couldn't be any worse for us, than you've already been.

**Helga A. Schroeder**, 1436 Lowell Road – I am here about my concern for the children and the City Parks. Many years ago my family moved from the suburbs of Schenectady County, moved to the City because we really liked City life and we have never regretted it. In many ways the City has come a long way, now is time to do something about our neighborhoods as well. In my work last summer, have noticed that there has been a great improvement in our parks and I commend the city for all these efforts these last few years because our park are a beautiful facilities. They make an excellent location for the summer lunch programs and give the children an opportunity to play. Like most residents, I know that the City has fiscal problems for the coming year and perhaps years ahead. You and the Council are in a very difficult position to make wise decision to close a huge budget gap. I am here tonight to urge you to keep in mind the parks serve a large percentage of our citizens, whose children can get relief from the summer heat at the pools. While there families are not in the position to take them on family outings to exotic places. It is also a public safety issue to keep kids in a safe environment during the summer months, this need to be saved. Do it for the safety of our children.

**Harry Brand**, Schenectady, NY – I have missed a few meeting down here and now I am sorry that I had. I sure had plenty to say. The biggest disappointment I had in the City with our Mayor and City Council. It is a shame the way you have let our city deteriorate. Susan Savage redid downtown Schenectady, I know you people did it, but she is getting a lot of publicity for it. You sit there like dead wood. I don't know who to believe. This paving you just did around 890, you took care of High Bridge, and you took care of Marcella, what about Broadway up in Bellevue, that is a washboard. It is a disgrace the way you are running our City. Curb tax, any way you can grab money. You never cut back. It has been four or five years we have had hard times and you have done nothing. You have done

nothing with the contracts; you have done nothing in changing the salaries. You have hired lawyers, advisors, what is this? It is a give away program here. You gave yourself a raise, and people can't keep paying these taxes. Like they said they have to keep the heat at 60 degrees, can't pay their medical bills and you're having a heck of a nice time. Thank you.

**Marion Porterfield**, 842 Strong Street – I am here to talk about the budget cuts and in particular about the police department, fire department and SNAP. I wouldn't think that you would want to cut our most essential services first. I live on Strong Street and in the last 10 months there has been two fires there and fortunately no one lost their life. Back in 2007, unfortunately some children lost the lives in a fire, not because the fire department didn't get there, it was just so involved so quickly. We certainly need these services in our City. I can't even image what it would be like in our City. Mr. Mayor there must be other places to cut the budget, other than public safety. Thank you.

**Jason Planck**, Schenectady, NY – You really can not talk on this budget in three minutes. The Mayor's Office really benefited from this budget. The Mayor's appointee was started at \$30,000 and in few short years she was up to \$45,000. In the Mayor's discretion fund stated at \$10,000, then it went to \$20,000 and now this year it is at \$50,000 for discretionary income. Take a look at the police department, in one department you have laid off, except two chiefs, three secretaries and a lieutenant. I guess you need a secretary for each one. You completely eliminated the positions in SNAP and the only person you left is the manager. What is the manager going to manage? What are you doing? You have not accountability; you now want a curb fee. Well the fee is a tax and there is no way around it. We have had nothing but tax and spend and this has costs us in the financing our police department and fire department. We need complete accountability of all these economic projects. This curb fee is not going to fly. When looking though the budget you have a lot of fees for services. Why are these so high? To summarize we need to create jobs.

**Mr. McCarthy** – This concludes the Public Hearing on the 2011 Budget. I want to thank everyone that took the time to come down here to speak tonight. This year the city is in the most dire financial state that I have ever seen, since I have been here. This budget is in no way complete and we are looking for suggestions and any answer you may have will be greatly appreciated. The Unions and members of the Unions have any ideas to help minimized the impact.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. McCarthy moved the minutes of the Meeting of September 27, 2010 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Mr. Della Sala. Hearing no objections, Mr. McCarthy declared the minutes approved as submitted.

## COMMUNICATIONS:

**Official:** None

**General:** The Bellevue Perseveration Inc. will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 7pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1911 Fairview Avenue. It will host a debate between Carl Erikson and Pat Zollinger, Candidates for Schenectady City Council. All questions for the candidates will be in writing from those in attendance and submitted to the Monitor that evening. There will also be short presentations by Rick Killeen and Vincent Versaci, Candidates for Surrogate Judge. The Public is invited.

**Petitions:** None

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Mr. Della Sala** – Just want to remind everybody that the Finance Committee is meeting on every Monday and every Thursday to work on the Budget, as you have heard tonight. We have our work cut out for us. Thank you.

**Mr. Erikson** – Basically, I wanted to give a little update. In light of the long discussions we had tonight, we had a lot of ideas that I have been working on here. We have a lack of revenue coming from taxes. We have alot of homes in the City that are burnt out, abandoned houses, and alot of those houses nobody is paying taxes on. So, I think it would be helpful to find ways to get those houses back on the tax rolls quickly and efficiently. Think back in the summer, the list of 200 houses, which I think was a number that was put out there. When we look at those houses, we try to figure out what is wrong with them and how to fix them and get them back on the tax rolls. This is to streamline a system to get this accomplished. The concept here is to have a data base with all these houses and what has to be done to them. Some may be that, the owner passed away and there is no next of kin, it maybe an absentee landlord, where the house may have some minor issues and we have to contact the landlord and say “you need to pay your taxes.” To develop procedures that would be followed in a consistent manner, so that things don't sit and linger. I have been working with legal and some people in codes and we are putting together some ideas on this.

## PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS)

Mr. McCarthy invited all who wished to address the City Council on any item on the Legislative Agenda to come forward.

**Pat Zollinger**, 150 Clement Avenue –Item #5, obviously you have the ability to authorize agreements between our Police Department and the Sheriff's Department. You're doing just that with this resolution. So why doesn't this City

Council prepare the paperwork needed to consolidate the city's Police Department with the county? Perhaps your Legal Department can look up on the State Attorney General's website all the procedures that are listed for dissolving or consolidating local government. Now I see we have a short agenda tonight and I see that this council is calling for a public hearing for that curb tax. You call it a fee but it's a tax. It's another way of robbing the taxpayers of this City. Just like that garbage tax Mayor Stratton and this City Council stuck us with. You got this curb tax idea from Rochester? A nearly bankrupt city that since 2001 has lost over 27,000 manufacturing jobs. That is quiet a model city to follow, isn't it Mayor? Well, you also got that padlock law from Rochester too and that was shown to be a crock. Rochester, New York is a loser. Mayor, I suggest that you and this council try to emulate a winner of a city, like Jacksonville, Florida, where taxes are 4.6%. Or even Las Vegas at 5.4%. Or, for that matter, look at the cities nearby Rochester. Most cities within Allegany and Cattaraugus County pay between \$1,950.00 and \$2,500.00, total property tax per year. Is this the way the City Council represents the taxpayers? Mayor Stratton wants to keep up his image and the taxpayers get slammed? And Mayor Stratton thinks there's no other choice than to give us a curb tax? He should resign! We have vacant houses throughout the City. Mt. Pleasant is the third most vacant neighborhood in the State of New York! Broadway and middle State Street look like a war zones, but you're all so concentrating on downtown. That's right, downtown with its hundred million dollar makeover of nearly all empty buildings. There are no jobs here! GE is constantly taking the city to court over its assessment. GE has the money for that, we don't! The Assessor, who this council allowed to retire on the incentive, nearly killed us financially last year which is fabricated and bogus re-assessments. In six short years, this council has borrowed upwards of a hundred million dollars that taxpayers have to pay back! This council allowed a new public works garage to be built on borrowed money without any planning. What about increased insurance, increased heating and cooling costs and less tax base because a bunch of houses were taken by eminent domain to build this monstrosity? Oh, but the buzz phrase is "Build it and they'll come?" Well I got news for you. They are leaving! Everyone who CAN LEAVE is leaving. No one can pay these ridiculous taxes now so they're leaving! Empty houses, boarded up houses, vacant business! That's the City of Schenectady and that is what Mayor Stratton and this City Council have given to the taxpayers. Our churches can't afford a curb tax and they shouldn't have to pay! They're already paying for them. It is obvious that not one member of this City Council knows anything about how the taxpayers are struggling here just to survive. Do yourselves a favor and trash this curb fee before you hold that public hearing. This Council had to provide a two week notice of that hearing and you're hearing plenty right now. Do the right thing and trash it!

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

At this point in the meeting, President McCarthy asked that the Consent Agenda be adopted, moved by Councilmember Blanchard and seconded by Councilmember King.

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

**Consent Agenda –**

Resolution No. 2010-175	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010-176	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010-177	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010-178	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010-179	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2010-180	Adopted Unanimously

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

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:

**Joy Hall**, Schenectady, New York – You got two big things you can not cut. You can't the cops. You can't cut a fire station and you can't cut firemen. If something big happens who is going to take care of it? You got to have the safety, all the way. The fire and police is the most important thing that I know.

**Marion Porterfield**, Strong Street, Schenectady – I am here again. I want to talk about writing grants, for the support of Weed & Seed. Several months ago you said if you wrote grants for this much, you would write it back in the budget. Just let me be clear on this. We have written grants beyond what you said, and we have looked other places. You have not refunded my salary. I understand that this is a fiscal crisis. What I want to understand is that there was one grant for \$300,000 or \$25,000 depending on which one we choose. I asked the representative to come and also the grant writer came and they looked at what we were proposing and they looked at what we had done so far. I had really done alot of work on this and it looked like a strong possible. But, give us a couple of weeks and we'll get back to you. In a couple of days, they got back and they said the grant that they had chosen was the \$300,000 over a three year period. And the response was; we think you should go for the planning grant which was for \$25,000 that was over a three year period. This looks like a shell game. If we are not in the budget that is understandable. If we want to write the grant for \$300,000, not the \$25,000 because we were not asking you to choose. We were asking you to write the grant. So we would like some help in writing this grant. We think we have a strong chance in getting it based on what we have already done in the community. It's based around Hunger, and I should have said that. There commendation was for the Planning Grant. Well, there has already bee a

planning grant that's been written for \$100,000, so we don't need to write for a Planning Grant. We would like some assistance on writing this Grant. We would like to move forward on it and we think we have an excellent chance of getting this grant. Thank you.

**Mary McClaine**, Schenectady, New York – Last month, Schenectady held a primary. A primary vote should have been the deciding factor for the council vacancy. Instead, the selection was made behind closed doors. Goodness was nowhere to be found. Evidently, for the politicians, goodness has no place in the electoral process. Goodness only applies to people who return cancelled checks. Getting back to the Residency Law. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood meeting. The speakers included Mayor Stratton, Council President McCarthy and several department heads. The Mayor mentioned that the 2011 budget would contain a \$1.3 million short-fall. He also said much of the budget revenue goes to pay for workers insurance programs and retirement programs and that Council was looking for ways to increase income. Mr. McCarthy told the group that Schenectady needs to come up with a program to fill the housing stock with owner-occupied people. Landlords reduced the quality of life. One of the department heads stated that renters take and give nothing back. If we were to attach a clothesline from that wall to this wall and clipped a card this size on the line guaranteed there would be more than a hundreds cards hanging on it. And those cards would be a small representation of the number of people who work in Schenectady but do not live here including the Police Chief. Consequently, their taxes go with them. The numbers indicate Council is responsible for the budget shortfall because they continuously approve the hiring of non-residents for city jobs. Mr. Riggi deserved the mechanics job. He did not receive any representation from the five members of City Council who voted for the outsider. By their votes, Councilmembers violated their oaths of office. Until the residency issue is properly addressed, the City will continue to have a budget shortfall. The housing stock will be sold to slum landlords and those who live elsewhere will take and give nothing back.

**Jason Planck**, City of Schenectady, NY – A lot of the stuff in this budget requires that you amend the Community Block Grant. That Block Grant goes from July 1<sup>st</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup>. The things you are changing January 1<sup>st</sup> will require a Public Hearing and a reason why you are changing the grant in the middle of the term. This is the problem that you got the Affirmative Action Contract is off at the end of this year. You told the Council tonight that the contract started in April. Well that's four months after the contract was re-upped again. We need jobs. We need to start looking at additional revenue sources and even Councilman Erikson stated that we have a 25% vacancy rate in Mt. Pleasant and Hamilton Hill, as I have been saying all along. You need to get these houses back on the rolls. You need accountability of the multimillions you have given to developers, with tax break after tax break. We need to take a look at what you are doing. Again, October is Disability Employment Awareness Month. Schenectady

County is the worst county in the State in creating jobs for persons with disabilities. Again, you are going to need to schedule a Public Hearing on the Community Block Amendment, before you approve the Budget.

**Pat Zollinger**, 150 Clement Avenue, Schenectady, NY – With the new state law requiring elected and appointed officials to submit valid work record estimates, came a surprising submission by this City Council to the State Comptroller's Office for our City Councilmember. Mr. Della Sala sponsored this resolution, number 2010-2011 and Mr. Erikson seconded it. It was adopted unanimously by all Councilmembers on June 28, 2010 and it was approved by the Mayor two days later. By law, the Council had to post it on its website and submit an affidavit to that effect. Part of this resolution reads as follows: The City Council hereby establishes the following as standard work days for elected and appointed officials and will report the following days worked to the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System... Council Member, the standard work day is SEVEN (7) HOURS and the number of days worked per month is 15.10. FIFTEEN FULL TIME DAYS PER MONTH! Do you really work 15.10 full-time days per month? Do you really expect the taxpayers of this City to believe that? What happened to the four meetings this Council took off in the summer? What happened to this body shortchanging the taxpayers last December? Whatever happened to those 200 "worst houses in the city" that each member of this Council was supposed to look at? In addition, the COUNCIL PRESIDENT takes FIVE POINT SIX more days per month making Mr. McCarthy's job equivalent to TWENTY POINT SEVEN – seven hour days of each and every month. Twenty days per month is FOUR WEEKS. That's Full Time Employment. My, my, where does he find time to go to his REAL job, where he is paid very close to a HUNDRED GRAND a year? This is called CREATIVE PENSION PADDING. Our cops do it, sewer supervisors do it and this City Council does it too. This Council had added THREE WEEKS worth of employment for each and every Council member to the RETIREMENT SYSTEM, for each and every month and there's no way that any of you put that time into this part-time elected position. That's more than creative pension padding, that's criminal. This Council is stealing from the taxpayers of this City. You expect us to believe your fabrications. You expect us to pay for it. At a time where Schenectady Taxpayers have to pay these pension plans, I think it's despicable that this City Council has taken such measures to burden us even more. At a time where Schenectady Taxpayers have to pay these pension plans, I think it's despicable that this City Council has taken such measures to stick it to us even more. Taxpayers are sick to death of being robbed by our own representatives. Your work hours schedule was requested by FOIL a month ago and it seems to have been forgotten. It will be my pleasure to expose the lies and the cheating that appear to be coming from this City Council, all at taxpayer's expense. This City Council is a racket. SHAME ON YOU!

**Wayne Harper**, Schenectady, NY – I hardly have the energy for it tonight, but I will do the best I can. Now Pat's gone, she pulled a Paladino, that where you shot

yourself in the head, politically. Roll Back, when you go though Wal-mart's you see all these little sings, "Roll Back" they are rolling back the prices because they know we are in a tough time. When we talk about the tough times out here, I see a little grin on Brian's face and Gary's too. Are you folks feeling the pain yet, let's do some roll back about 30,000, because in a City where the median income is about thirty thousand. We shouldn't be paying more than half of that for part time employment. So if you really love our City and you feel our pain, let's see you show it. Give up your salaries, I wanted to do it when we ran as "write in contract back in 05" but Vince said we had to get paid. I told Vince we go to the Committee and Council Meetings anyway and we don't get paid now. I believe in being a volunteer, I volunteered for the draft, by the way. So I want to thank you my fellow veterans for being able to be here.

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

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

**Ms. King** - First of all I want to thank all who spoke tonight and to assure you that we are listening. A couple of events this weekend, Jay Street on Saturday and also the Upper Union Street Fall Harvest, they are fun things to go to. I would also like to congratulate our colleague Denis Brucker, as you may have heard the Schenectady Community College received a financial grant of over 11 Million Dollars to move us in the direction of some of the health careers. Mrs. Brucker is the person who wrote that grant and I think she deserve some congratulation for that. Lastly, my annual reminder, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and as a survivor I am very aware of early detection and getting the appropriate treatment, mammograms and such. If you catch it early you can survive, mine was in '94.' Anyone who need to talk to me on this please call me. Thank you.

**Mr. Della Sala** – I just want to applaud anyone who is still sitting here, you have great endurance and I appreciate your interest in our City. I don't think it needs to be said, but no one on this side of the rail is looking to cut anyone's job. We are going to keep looking to find other ways to solve our budget problems. These problems are real and we heard a lot of people tonight say what we should not take out of the budget. Then we have to figure out how to pay for them if we don't take some things out of the budget. Again, thank you all for coming and I appreciate all of you who are still here.

**Ms. Brucker** – To the firefighters and their families and the Unions and anyone that came down tonight, concerned citizens, as my colleagues already said we heard you loud and clear. And as Mr. Della Sala said, there is not anyone here in this chamber tonight that want to see any of the cuts happen. We are going to work very hard to see that the cuts do not happen. I do want to say when we talk about the revenue coming into the City that there are much fewer resident taxpayers that there were years ago. It is kind of a catch 22 that we find ourselves

in. Taxes are so high. People don't want to live in the City and one of the reason is the taxes are so high. We don't have taxpayers living in the City of Schenectady, that being said we do face a lot of difficult decisions, but again we heard what you said and I personally appreciate what our public safety people do and their families and all the people that support them. As well as the other employees in the City of Schenectady, we have heard you and we will be keeping all of you folks in mind as well. Thank you for bring here tonight and thank you for the courtesy most of you showed us tonight. Thank you.

**Mayor Stratton** – I appreciate hearing from all who spoke this evening. I know this is a very difficult budget year, and the proposals I have put forward reflect that and are not popular one. I also want the citizens of Schenectady to know that this is not a situation that is unique to our city. Throughout the Capital Region, and across Upstate New York, cities and communities like Schenectady are feeling the pain and reality of the economic times. The City of Albany has proposed a budget with a 7.5 percent residential property tax hike, is reducing its city workforce by 155 positions, including 12 police officers through attrition. In Troy, the Mayor has proposed a 4.3 percent tax hike, and is eliminating funding there for vacant various positions including a police officer. In Syracuse, the current budget enacted June 1st of this year cut 21 positions from its Fire Department through layoffs and attrition and 20 uniformed Police Officers. In Binghamton, there is a 3.7 percent tax hike proposed. Effective this year, one fire station will close by eliminating 10 Firefighters positions through attrition and 12 police officer positions through attrition. In Albany County, there is a 15 percent tax hike proposed and the elimination of 20 percent of the County workforce through layoffs, attrition and early retirement. The City of Rome, which receives significantly more state aid, that Schenectady has proposed a 2 percent tax hike and will cut 20 positions out of the workforce with wage and step freezes are not adopted by their public employees. Local governments are also balancing budgets by depleting fund balances: The budget I have proposed uses \$6.8 million for 2011. Albany County will use \$15 million. The City of Albany will use \$6.1 million. The City of Niagara will use \$5 million; Rochester will use \$12 million. According to a survey released last week by the National League of Cities.. Read stats. Meanwhile, Pension costs and Employee Health Insurance Costs are up significantly. Retirement costs rising almost 200 percent, from \$1.8 million in 2003 to \$5.5 million in 2010. Health Insurance for employees up 94 percent from \$6.9 million in 2003 to \$13.5 million in 2010, even with our EPO savings!!

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. McCarthy declared the meeting adjourned at 10:05 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

**BY EILEEN M. VERSACI  
CITY CLERK**