

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 24, 2006**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Mark W. Blanchfield at 7:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mr. Blanchfield called upon Rev. Dominic Isopo, St. Luke’s Catholic Church, to deliver the Invocation.

Mr. Blanchfield then called upon Tony Buonome to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present – Councilmembers Joseph L. Allen, Frank J. Maurizio,
Barbara Strangfeld, Gary R. McCarthy, Margaret C. King,
Barbara Blanchard and Mark W. Blanchfield

Absent - None

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City Clerk Carolyn Friello and
Corporation Counsel Alfred L. Goldberger

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Blanchfield asked if there were no objections, he would like to take Agenda Items #14, #16, #17, #18, #18A and #18B out of order. There were no objections.

Resolution No. 2006-86 Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Blanchard invited Betsy Henry, Mike Tomasi and Mary Wallenger to come inside the rail to accept a resolution proclaiming Friday, April 28, 2006 as “Arbor Day” in the City of Schenectady. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

Resolution No. 2006-87 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-88 Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-89 Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Strangfeld invited Brad Lewis to come inside the rail to accept the resolutions recognizing the Rev. Dr. Dan C. West, Erin Kane and George Woodzell for their outstanding achievements and service to Union College and the City of Schenectady. Mr. Lewis thanked the City Council for the resolutions.

Resolution No. 2006-90

Adopted Unanimously

Mr. McCarthy invited Vince Versaci, Tina Mazucko and Pat Goya to come inside the rail to accept a resolution proclaiming the week of April 23 through April 29, 2006 as "Crime Victim's Week". They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

Resolution No. 2006-91

Adopted Unanimously

Ms. King invited Janet Hutchison to come inside the rail to accept a resolution congratulating John & Janet and the Open Door Bookstore on 35 years of service in the City of Schenectady. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. King moved that the minutes of the City Council meeting of April 10, 2006 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Mr. Allen. Hearing no objections, Mr. Blanchfield declared the minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Official –

From the Mayor, a list of appointments.

From the Engineering Department, a letter accepting the bid of and awarding the contract to Carver Construction, Inc. for the "Repairs to Mont Pleasant Infrastructure (Phase II)" in the amount of \$797,285.00.

General –

From the Van Curler Post 1485 American Legion, a letter thanking the City Council for rental monies;

From the Polish American Veterans, a letter thanking the City Council for rental monies;
and

From the Veterans of Foreign Wars – Schenectady Post 357, a letter thanking the City Council for rental monies.

General – (Public Announcement) –

The public is invited to attend the Summer Fun Fair at the Carver Community Center on Saturday, May 6, 2006 from 12:00 Noon until 4:00 P.M. The Youth Service Providers and the Youth Activity Coordinators will have brochures and personnel there to assist youths and families with making plans for Summer activities. This event is sponsored by the Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Sub-Committee of Schenectady Weed and Seed.

PETITIONS: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Allen stated that the Health & Recreation Committee met. In regard to the Golf Course, Brian Damian is very enthusiastic and I am really impressed with with everything happening there. It's a class Golf Course and staff.

Ms. Strangfeld stated that the Finance Committee met. She reviewed Agenda Items #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #12, #13, #18C and #19.

Mr. Maurizio stated that the City Development & Planning Committee met. We had our annual CDBG Public Hearing on Thursday. We will take the suggestion and discuss it further on Monday. Also, we met with the Union Street area who are concerned about the Bed and Breakfast. We talked about a general ban on adult entertainment establishments. Also, I encourage everyone to appreciate Jazz as we recognize April as "Jazz Appreciation Month".

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (LEGISLATIVE ITEMS):

Mr. Blanchfield 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:

Mark Townsend, 315 Sullivan Road, stated that he was glad to see that Agenda Item #1 was being repealed. The people will be hesitant to buy in the city if there is no off-street parking.

Mary McClaine, a Schenectady resident, spoke in regard to Agenda Item #6. In regard to the contracts, the rank and file gave themselves a raise, accepted bonuses and approved a free Medical Insurance Plan. The cost for paying Medical Insurance was passed to others – yet to be employees. The Coiffures will continue to be depleted. Not paying something toward insurance is a repugnant as what’s taking place in the Bed and Breakfast on Union Street. Fire Chief Farstad said that he likes visiting the City Council – “Why not – that’s where the gravy is” – he said. There may be 2 positions next year due to disabilities. Curious – if you are disabled, it would be now. He also said that a fireman can move out of the city after one year – it’s in the contract. Also, I heard the Chief say that firemen are paid overtime when they are in class. The Council can find more money from the city if they look in the right places. No one should get free medical insurance. Is it any wonder that the city is broke. When the workers reach 65 years of age, G.E. no longer pays medical coverage. The Council can hold down the cost of business if they want.

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

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

Consent Agenda –

Ordinance No. 2006-04	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-92	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-93	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-94	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-95	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-96	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-97	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-98	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-99	Adopted Unanimously

Consent Agenda (Continued)

Resolution No. 2006-100	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-101	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-102	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-103	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-104	Adopted Unanimously

With Unanimous Consent –

Resolution No. 2006-105	Adopted Unanimously
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PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mr. Blanchfield 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:

Marvin Ling, Landon Terrace, spoke of the gang activity on Linden Street. The gangs hang out on Windsor Terrace. The problem is worsening.

Craig Trotman, 1319 State Street, said – I purchased property from Collar City auctions. The sewer lines worked. Then in 2005, I began having sewer problems. The problem has gotten worse. It's becoming an environment issue.

Eunice Chouffi, 1154 Phoenix Ave., said – I hope a viable plan is underway to recruit for the Fire Department. I believe that this plan should be written with oral reports. A Public Safety course at Schenectady High School is a great idea. Also, have the Paramedic courses at the High School or the Community College.

Robert Sanders, 2821 Halsey Drive, stated that we are planning a Woodlawn Cleanup on April 29th. The kids will come back if the park is cleaned.

Lisa Sanders, 2821 Halsey Drive, said – On behalf of the children in Woodlawn, we are having a cleanup on April 29th at 9:30 P.M. Help from anyone would be appreciated.

Joe Berlant, 836 Londonderry Road, spoke in regard to the CDBG process. About 8-10 years ago, an Outcome Funding Model was discussed. We have not used that model to allocate funds. The Mayor and the Council need to be commended on getting the city out of fiscal difficulties. Seven years ago, we received over \$7,000,000.00 in CDBG funding. We don't have a unified plan for use of funds to improve the city. Not-for-profits need to collaborate with the city. I hope you follow the procedure established and have more community involvement.

Tony Buonome, Bellevue resident, stated that our rating is good – let's hope that it stays that way. The Police and Fire contracts are coming due; I hope that this doesn't affect the rating.

Katherine Delain, 214 Liberty Street, stated that we are involved in doing a Comprehensive Plan in the Old Dutch Section. We are looking for volunteers. Also, we have a Vale cleanup on Saturday.

Barbara Katz, Schenectady resident, stated that we need more shoe department stores and clothing stores near Erie Blvd. We don't need anymore restaurants in the city.

Julia Lewis, 215 – 16th Street, said – I commend the City Council and the Mayor for a solution which will not lower the firefighter standards.

Bill Drake, 1548 Union Street, stated that it takes time planning and due diligence from everyone to lower the debt. We need the same resolved from our School Board to eliminate that debt. With positive energy and hard work, the School System can become debt-free. It's important to vote on May 16th.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

Ms. Strangfeld stated that we are now a Re-Tree City and I thank Re-Tree for that. Compliments to all who will participate in a city-wide cleanup on Saturday. There will be a Steinmetz Cleanup from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., Mt. Pleasant at the Golf Course and Vale Park. Also, I am thrilled about our Moody's Bond rating. It was a combined effort by all. Keep it coming.

Ms. King said – I also add my congratulations to all involved in the Bond rating. Also, I have started to get involved in the Cable Franchise and I will hold a Public Hearing with Niskayuna, the City and Glenville on Thursday, May 11th in Room 101 at the Schenectady County Community College. To hear regarding the Cable Franchise renewals, Time Warner is our current operator and they are seeking the renewal of their franchise. The Public Hearing will focus on review and performance and future cable needs. I encourage anyone who is interested to attend the Schenectady Day Nursery who is having its annual Jazz Party at the Schenectady County Community College. This is a major fundraiser for the Nursery. It begins at 5:30 P.M. The cost is \$50.00 per person.

Mr. McCarthy spoke in regard to Ms. McClaine’s comments. The Firefighter’s residency is controlled by the State Law, not by the local contract.

Ms. Blanchard stated that there will be a “Parents and Students rights in the School” Meeting this Tuesday in the Library. Two prominent local attorneys will be in attendance.

The Mayor said – “Thanks” to all my colleagues here at City Hall for working with us to achieve all the things we did. The results of the 2005 Audit shows the first of all funds surplus in many years. We should know that much of the surplus has been recommitted in other areas. We will make every effort in our 2006 budget to minimize any tax increase in 2007. We need to heed the words of Moody’s and continue to do the hard things that we have already done. Finally, my best to Firefighter Klaus who is recovering from a serious motorcycle accident.

Mr. Blanchfield said – I did ask the Fire Chief to set down goals and standards with measuring points to make some progress in diversifying people taking tests in 2007. It wasn’t implied that – that be spoken or oral, but, it be written down so we can check milestones to see if they are being met. That will happen. The Chief is very receptive to that proposal. Also, I am as thrilled as anyone that we turned the corner financially with our investment grade. We have had a wonderful relationship with the City Council, employees and the Mayor’s Office. We are not out of the woods yet. We still need to be vigilant in our finances. In 2007, we don’t need to do any short-term borrowing and that’s a positive thing. There’s a lot of safety measures in the budget for the upcoming years. This means lower interest rates and more “wiggle” room.

City Council Mtg.
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8

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. Blanchfield declared the meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO
CITY CLERK**