

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE  
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – MAY 22, 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. Emmanuel Adams, New Bethel Community Church of God in Christ, to deliver the Invocation.

Mr. Blanchfield then called upon Catherine McCary 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, Barbara Strangfeld,  
Gary R. McCarthy, Margaret C. King, Barbara Blanchard and  
Mark W. Blanchfield

Absent - Councilmember Frank J. Maurizio

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

At this point in the meeting, Ms. Margaret C. King, Mayor Brian U. Stratton and Ray Gillen introduced Gary Hughes, Bob Iovinella and Bernie Miracle. They presented a check for \$230,000.00 from the sale of Campbell Plastic's which is back on the tax rolls and generating revenue.

Jamie LaHut and Tony Ward presented a check for \$167,000.00 from the IDA. The balance to be paid over the next 4 years.

Rick Lucia presented a check for \$40,000.00 for the first PILOT payment for the Peek Street property.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. McCarthy moved that the minutes of the City Council meeting of May 8, 2006 be approved as submitted by the City Clerk. It was seconded by Ms. King. 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 “Reconstruction of North Jay Street” in the amount of \$727,481.00.

From the Engineering Department, three (3) letters rejecting the bids for the following:  
“Albany Street Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation”;  
“4 x 4 Rubber Tire Backhoe with Diesel Engine”; and  
“4 x 4 Walk Through Service Truck”.

**General –** None.

**PETITIONS:**

With 4 names asking the City Council to approve a resolution allowing local street artists to work and sell without a license within the limits of the City Art District.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Ms. King stated that the City Development & Planning Committee met and she discussed Agenda Item #3.

Ms. Strangfeld stated that the Finance Committee met and she explained Agenda Items #1, #4, #6, #7, #8, #9, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18 and #19.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Public Safety Committee met. The Police and Fire Chief came in and Engine One is one of the most active pieces of fire apparatus in the nation. It shows that we have resources and personnel to respond. The Police Department shows an increase for calls for service, but, arrests are up which shows a greater amount of work being done by that department. Compliments to the men and women in those departments. Also, a report from the Civilian Police Review Board for the first quarter. Bud Mazurek gave an annual report and I think that he should give an annual report on behalf of the board and have them submit quarterly, written reports. Unless something special comes up in the first quarter, there were 14 cases representing 18 complaints which were resolved and reflect well on the department’s personnel that were questioned. It shows the working

relationship that developed between the Police Department and the board. Also, the Public Hearing on our infamous storage of vehicles on city streets is June 26 so we can get proposed legislation out to the neighborhood groups and interested parties, so, we can entertain suggestions and adopt the ordinance.

At this point in the meeting, Ms. Blanchard invited Bill Fyvie, Bob Becker and Hal Gray to come inside the rail to accept Resolution No. 2006-127 observing Monday, May 29, 2006 as “Memorial Day” in the City of Schenectady. They thanked the City Council for the resolution.

**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:

Tony Buonome, Bellevue resident, spoke in regard to Agenda Item #3. The wording of this legislation needs to be changed.

Katherine Delain, Liberty Street, spoke in regard to Agenda Items #4 and #8. What is the solution for Erie Blvd. and Liberty Street? A \$1,000,000.00 for studies, but, no money for pedestrian safety.

Pat Zollinger, 150 Clement Ave., spoke in regard to Agenda Item #2. There should never be storage of trailers on city streets. Enforce the laws we already have.

Dana Swalla, 1017 Phoenix Ave., spoke in regard to Agenda Item #3. The old way did not work; as a property owner, you are responsible. I support this resolution.

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. 2006-05

Adopted Unanimously

Resolution No. 2006-116

Adopted Unanimously

**Consent Agenda (Continued) –**

Resolution No. 2006-117	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-118	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-119	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-120	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-121	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-122	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-123	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-124	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-125	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-126	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-127	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-CS20	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-CS21	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-CS22	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-CS23	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-CS24	Adopted Unanimously
Resolution No. 2006-CS25	Adopted Unanimously

**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:

Vince Riggi, 2138 Campbell Ave., stated that we have some problem areas in the city – the Foster Ave. Garage – it’s disgusting; there are 50 to 60 broken windows – a city owned property and it doesn’t look good. Also, the field on Norwood Ave. is all torn up from the Carnivale this weekend. Who’s going to take care of that? Don Burch and his gang planted a lot of flowers this weekend in the rain and he is to be congratulated. In regard to the pools, since we got this influx of money, we need to discuss our pools again. Our pools should be open.

Barbara Katz, Schenectady resident, stated that we need to bring more retail stores in downtown Schenectady, like discount clothing and a shoe stores so people could come down to shop.

Judy Atchinson, 801 Stanley Street, said – I founded QUEST years ago. Every other Thursday, my kids and I decided to cook and feed everyone who comes to the Jerry Burrell Park. We will also pick up and clean up. We would like to have permission to paint the murals on the “out” buildings. Two Thursdays ago – we were cleaning the park and we picked up those little bags – the ones that hold marijuana, crack cocaine, etc. In 25 minutes, 221 bags were picked up at 4:30 P.M. in the afternoon. This is a kid’s park. Also on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at the corner of Craig and Emmett Streets, everything is free including the parking. Just bring free things to give away to the community.

Pat Zollinger, 150 Clement Ave., stated that Mr. Allen is continuing on his track of only representing the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood. Prostitution, drugs, thefts, assaults and murders happen in other neighborhoods. Crime has no bounds. All children need to have easy access to the parks and pools. The Councilmember-at-large means that every Councilmember is supposed to represent the entire city. One member, acting like a citizen activist instead of a Councilmember and the rest have residents and incomes far better than the average Schenectadian. There’s an in-balance and no genuine representation here. Our budget is far from being balanced. Perhaps we should hang on to Mr. Allen’s insistence and change the Council’s representation back to the Ward System. Maybe Mr. Allen has been sitting there too long –perhaps term limits. Everyone continues with their own “pet projects” and ignoring the process of governing the entire city. We will never be as great a city as we once were, at least not with any of you here.

Katherine Delain, Liberty Street, stated that the security camera in Vale Park has been vandalized. We were told that it wasn’t our camera, it was just an experiment. I turned the problem over to the city. Anyone who is interested in what’s happening in Vale now – ask the Mayor because we have done all we can.

Elaine Willi, 1571 Bradley Street, said – I had a very pleasant surprise this past Saturday morning (May 21<sup>st</sup>) during the Vale Cemetery tour. I met George Gardner, the grandson of the former Mayor Lunn. We had a very nice conversation. He totally agreed with me of the crucial importance in keeping our parkland's preservation intact; that once, even if a section of parkland is open for development, the protection is gone. It could then be so much easier in the future to chip away until there is practically nothing left of our parkland. He thanked me for my respect for his grandfather's hard work and all I've been doing for the parkland. He stated that all it takes is the concerned actions of a person to really make a difference. Many others have said this to me about my efforts towards the parkland, but, I was especially honored hearing it from the grandson of Mayor Lunn, who was instrumental in establishing the accessible parkland for everybody in this city to enjoy! He signed my petition and even though he might be, at this time, a Mayor in Florida, his influential namesake should hold as much weight as the Mayor Lunn himself. Be mindful, this issue to not develop our parkland is still ever present in many minds hoping to continue to keep it preserved and protected of which we should be finding out very soon – at this last Comprehensive Plan Meeting on Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. for all neighborhoods at College Park Hall, the former Ramada Inn on Nott Street. Another announcement to consider – the Central Neighborhood Association meetings are being held the first (1<sup>st</sup>) Thursday of every month at 7:00 P.M. at the Trinity Lutheran Church on Furman Street. The next meeting is Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. Carl Olsen will be speaking. The residents and businesses alike are welcome. Also, we are encouraging Neighborhood Watch participation. On Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> – Roots and Wisdom is holding a Spring Celebration from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. on Fehr Ave. to introduce their first potato planting, in tune with the Umoja Junior Drummers. This section of Fehr Ave. will be a community garden with participation of youths in Schenectady to learn and sell at the Farmer's Market.

Dana Swalla, 1017 Phoenix Ave., stated that anyone who moves to Schenectady is taking a risk – you have to convince them that the battle days are over. Bob Alexson and his business represent everything that is still wrong with Schenectady. Through your action, we feel that you have granted Mr. Alexson a back door variance to operate an adult business in a residential neighborhood. Despite the neighbors asking not to have it, the Comprehensive Zoning Plan will be done shortly – you owe it to us to figure out how this business slipped through the cracks and make sure more don't follow his example. Why is it such a complex issue? Truly dangerous people are attracted to this type of business. It's your job to protect us. You have the opportunity to show everyone that Schenectady's battle days are over.

Sean Kirker, IUOE, spoke in regard to the award to Carver Construction – a few years ago, we asked you to put an Apprenticeship Program in place, which was done. My concern is that Carver doesn't have the appropriate program for the scope of work they are doing. I'm asking you to stick to the Apprenticeship Program.

Mike Kuorta, Norwood Ave., stated that \$200,000.00 is the threshold of the Apprenticeship Program. Kicks in Carver has a program for the Operating Engineers. It decertified in December, 2005 from NYS for the Laborers Program. The next highest bidder, Hudson River Construction – give the contract to a contractor that deserves it.

Carl Olsen spoke in regard to Norwood Ave. The Schenectady Pop Warner was given authority to have a fundraiser for Pop Warner. In the process of removing equipment, they pretty much destroyed the field. The owners of Carnivale will fix what they ruined. If not done, we will do work and bill their insurance.

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

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Mr. Allen spoke in regard to the comments of the Councilmembers being at-large. I am involved in a lot of things. Bob called me and asked me to go up on Sunday, but, that's my Church day. We can't do everything for everybody and every neighborhood. You need to be selective. I would have helped; you need to be selective, particularly, when it comes to Sunday. I go to Church and nothing comes before that unless it's later in the afternoon. It's very disheartening to have people jumping on all the negatives. Some people never say anything positive. There's a fantastic difference in things now than 3 years ago.

Mr. McCarthy stated that Marion Potterfield, Weed and Seed, asked that we tell you that they will host a Juvenile Justice Conference on June 5<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. at the Holiday Inn. It's a no cost conference in collaboration with the Schenectady Police Department and the Probation Department. Also – tomorrow night – there will be a Goose Hill Neighborhood Meeting at the Northside Senior Center on Van Vranken Ave. at 7:00 P.M. The fire at 1679 Van Vranken Ave. will be discussed; the building is still in disrepair. It is a frustrating situation. Can the Mayor review that and possibly expedite it? Those who watch this program – watch it on Channel 16. The residents are asking why, at the end of this program, is the disclaimer – “This is not part of Channel 16”? It's watched through Channel 16. We are all working together.

The difference in the community is just so dramatic now. Those of us who sat on the IDA when we had no money - \$400,000.00 plus in unpaid bills – we had \$30,000.00 in the bank. When we took it over, there was no money to pay the staff. Howard Carpenter volunteered legal services to represent it. It was a disgrace and the public didn't realize that. Some of our actions were criticized. Compliments to the Mayor, staff and Ray Gillen for the dramatic turn around. We are moving in the right direction. The money is coming in – in the manner in which it should. The finances in the city are going in the right direction – as we look to build on those successes and forge new relations with our State Legislature and continue the Economic Development that occurs in downtown every day – it's what a community should be – yes, we will be criticized and no – we are not doing it right, but, we need to persevere and do the right things. In the end, we will all benefit.

Ms. Strangfeld spoke in regard to the Bed and Breakfast. Legislating on social or social problems is difficult. On the Federal level, you have the immigration issues and Medicare. It's hard to reach a solution acceptable to all parties. These laws are often changed – time and time again. These are complex issues. If you want perfection, you want dictatorship. If you want a messy process, then you want democracy – that's what it is. Finally, congratulations to Jim Shottingham who is head of the Antique Reel Association. He headed a National Convention in Lake George which brought in a lot of people who could look at antique fishing reels and auction them off. I hope in a few years, we can bring this to Schenectady.

Ms. King stated that there is a great spirit of volunteerism here in Schenectady. I attended the Rose Garden event and those volunteers have great plans for that Garden. I also toured the Woodlawn Preserve. On June 9<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup>, there will be a "Bioblitz" in the Preserve. It's a 24 hour inventory of biological resources in the Preserve. They are looking for volunteers – call 370-4932; you can get more information. I also attended at Friendship Baptist Church an "Evening of Praise and Song". It was a wonderful event. Lastly, it's very difficult to attend all the neighborhood meetings, although, I am working on it. Any group that doesn't meet on a regular basis, please call me and let me know when you meet.

Ms. Blanchard stated that George Gardner was here and participated in a number of events – a walking tour, which will be on Channel 16. We also taped his speech on Heritage Tourism. Lastly, we will again be having Community Pride Awards. Applications are available at the City Clerk's Office.

The Mayor stated that tomorrow, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will be receiving another set of 8 columns for the clock tower. Somewhere along the manufacturing line, they came up short. Hopefully, they will be into place and the clock tower will be painted.

Mr. Blanchfield said – “Thanks” to all the hard working members of the County. The City IDA is getting them back on track. The most significant check was for Peek Street. Mr. McCarthy spent many hours, unpaid – trying to untangle that knot. The city owes him an incredible debt of gratitude. Lastly regarding the Noise Ordinance, it’s not as complicated as it seems. A Police Officer can witness the violation and write a ticket, make an arrest or citizens can swear out a complaint. With quality of life issues, it’s best to get the police involved. Some of the fastest response time is when the police are involved right from the start. I hope that at the end, both will be in effect.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Mr. Blanchfield declared the meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO  
CITY CLERK**