



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 6, 2020 6:30 p.m.

City Hall

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL- 7 Present- 2 Absent (Councilmember McNamara and Flowers)

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

CCM Minutes 12-16-19 and Re-Org Mtg 1-2-2020						
			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember McNamara	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

III. READING OF ITEMS by the City Chamberlain of any resolutions not listed on the printed agenda.

NONE

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Three (3) minutes per person up to 45 minutes of public comment on any agenda and non-agenda items.

**Ken Stickle-188 Catherine Street
Dwayne A. Ward-159 Thompson Street
Warren Jones-North Clover Street
Shelia Drew-66 Washington Street
Caroline Fenner-Mothers Out Front
Darrett Roberts Franklin Street
Laurie Sandow-South Grand Avenue**

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Laurie Sandow comments, Common Council meeting, January 6, 2020 — Pg. 1 of 2

At the end of September, this Council voted themselves a substantial raise. I also got a raise. As with all City residents, my compensation for attending these meetings, and being actively involved in the life of the City, went from zero to...double zero.

At their last meeting in December, this Council—via last-minute resolutions, not posted to the public—this Council commandeered \$100,000 from the City's contingency fund for their own Council use. No rules, no guidelines, no specifics, no advance notice: commandeered nevertheless—a very sad window into likely behavior from this Council over the next two years. Also sad was that Mayor Rolison did not veto those resolutions, regardless of whether the Council had the ability to override.

At a conference in New Paltz in November, Sarah Salem, this City's new Council chair, gleefully announced their distaste for Republicans. It seems fair to interpret the new seating arrangement at these meetings as a living expression of that distaste. In one news article covering the January 2nd swearing-in ceremony, it was noted that Councilmember Lorraine Johnson refused to take the seat to which she'd been re-assigned. I hope Ms. Johnson will provide the public with more detail about that.

I further note that authority to rearrange seating does not appear in the City's Charter, but appears only in the Council's own self-created, self-serving rules of conduct and procedure. The first sentence of that rule reads: "The presiding officer shall designate the seating arrangement for Councilmembers and staff at Council meetings and the order of voting of Councilmembers on all matters coming before the Council for a vote." Well, first, we can see that the new seating arrangement has been ordered to provide the two Sarahs [Salem and Brannen] with the final votes on any matter, after observing which way the wind is blowing. Second, to the best of my knowledge, the Mayor and the City Administrator are not Council staff, and the Corporation Counsel and the Chamberlain are shared staff, so I request clarification from the Mayor and City Administrator as to whether they were involved in consultation and approval of the new seating arrangement.

Laurie Sandow comments, Common Council meeting, January 6, 2020 — Pg. 2 of 2

While someone on the Council has created a new Facebook page, whose anonymous administrator is busy collecting Email addresses and dishing out propaganda like “in service to our community”, the reality is that the Council’s new rules—repeatedly revised—impose even further limits on public comment. Why—“in service to our community” and transparency—has no redlined version of the rules ever been posted for public scrutiny? Why “in service to our community” do the new rules violate the Charter in the sentence limiting the public to opinions about agenda items only? [Setting aside that such a rule is unconstitutional] such a rule would be comical, if it were not so offensive, especially when certain councilmembers, 1—have a documented track record of adding and deleting agenda items at the last minute; and 2—advantaging members of their private pipelines with advance notice about last-minute agenda items.

Because the public’s comment time is so limited, I will conclude with one more observation about the revised Rules:

We have a Council that imposes no rules, transparency, or penalties on itself regarding attendance, absences, lateness, sobriety, decorum and criminal behavior; and a Council where some members continue willful law-breaking regarding blocked social media, and Freedom of Information requests. I note the irony of a Council that won’t police itself, while hiding behind a Sergeant-at-Arms to police others. Their latest addition to the rules of conduct is a deliberate message of intimidation. Their addition reads, “Said person shall be subject to all civil and criminal penalties that may apply to their conduct.”

Gus Kazolias-47 Noxon Street
Ken Stier-31 Verrazzano Blvd
Carli Fraccavolli-Scenic Hudson
Charles Davenport-Wappingers Falls
Ezra Weissman-Union Street
Andrew Pessucco-Kingston, New York

V. MAYOR’S COMMENTS:

Mayor Rolison: Thank you. I wanted to brief the Council tonight at I believe was the last meeting of 2019. We heard a comment in reference to the crosswalk and a pedestrian accident from the failing partnership building. I just want to report that last week myself, the city administrator, members of DPW, Police Department, Traffic

Division and city engineering staff were at that intersection and that crosswalk and looked at all of the challenges with that particular location. I can tell you that engineering is coming up with a plan on a potential of relocating the crosswalk. We're going to be doing some better signage locations there. Some of these are short term. Some of these are going to be long term. Also, the lighting there, we're going to be looking at that. And one of the things that became evident as we were there for at least a half an hour, there probably were 40 plus individuals who went back and forth and one person used the crosswalk. People coming directly out of the parking lot and walking directly across the street. And vice-versa, and there was one person who came out of the partnership and actually not because we were standing there a little literally when we first got there, came and walked across the actual crosswalk and then came in and walked into the parking lot. So that's a challenge because of the direct line and the fact that curb cuts and other types of things. As far as the bridge over the Fallkill. So we're actively working on it. And I'll give you an update. But we were there and we're going to make changes to make it safer. Thank you.

Councilmember Menist: Point of information Chair. Mr. Mayor, I thank you very much for that update. I greatly appreciate your administration looking into this. I know it's a major concern for many of our constituents. I would just ask. I know you briefly mentioned a few of the concepts that were put out by the administration and other members of the department heads who are looking at the crossing there. I would ask that one of the traffic calming measures that are used in that area to be studied at least are speed tables and speed bumps to slow the rate of traffic regardless of whether or not people are crossing at crosswalks. I believe that our goal should be making the city safer for pedestrians over automobiles. And that means slowing down the rate of speed of vehicles on that street. So I would just ask that you look into that.

Mayor Rolison: And we will. And we are. Thank you very much.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Chair Salem: And so I wanted to make a few brief comments. One being that you may have noticed that I am beginning our meetings with an indigenous land acknowledgement. And I wanted to clarify for people who aren't familiar with that practice that this is a formal statement or an expression of gratitude and appreciation to recognize and offer respect to our indigenous people who have been the traditional stewards of this land and who continue to have a relationship to these traditional territories. And so it's a way for us to understand this longstanding history and the history that brought us to this land here, specifically even here in the city of Poughkeepsie. So I wanted to make that clear. And if anyone has any other questions about how it's traditionally done in and in what settings, please feel free to contact me.

I also in in that way want to talk about communications. You may have noticed, too, that we have started a Poughkeepsie common council Facebook page and a

Poughkeepsie Common Council Instagram. And this is to give all of us an opportunity to put out to the community, not just meeting minutes and agendas and information about important events that are happening in City Hall and throughout the community, but also about what we're doing individually as council members for the community and in service to the community and the city of Poughkeepsie. And so I encourage you to follow us on Facebook and to follow us on Instagram. And so we can open up the channel of communication even further than we have previously.

And, you know, that being said, we are experiencing major back end issues on our city Web site, and that has prevented us from posting materials to the Web site such as the agenda. And so we're working on it. It's an administrative issue in our I.T. department has been working on it tirelessly. And I thank you all for your patience until we find a way to post to the city Web site. I'm individually posting a link to our agendas, which will then be posted on our Facebook page. So, again, I really encourage you to follow that Facebook page. And I know that the city of Poughkeepsie Facebook page is also posting links to the agenda. And I'm sure they will be posting links to the agendas of other meetings and subsequent materials that aren't able to make it to the Web site.

I do also, you know, the next section on the agenda that is forthcoming is called Reports of Committees and Boards. And today, we don't have any material to report under that section. But I did also want to clarify that that this is the portion of our meeting that will provide the public and members of our body with critical updates from the various volunteer boards and committees. And it will also be a way that we can report on the work that our standing legislative committees and boards have been able to accomplish. And so we're actually considering adding a number of different standing committees to our legislative process. In addition to the Finance Committee, such as a committee on economic development in planning, public safety, diversity, equity and inclusion, environmental and community resilience and so on. And we're still as a body we have to go under a number of stages of determination to see which committees we think will be most impactful, but standing committees are critical components in the legislative process and they can help us to better manage the complexity of issues that we confront. And I think that they're going to help us do that in a more efficient way. And so I'm excited to say that we're considering the addition of these different kinds of committees. And with that being said, we will now move on to motions and resolutions.

VII. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

NONE

VIII. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

- 1. A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Lorraine Johnson to receive and print.**

**NYS LOCALITY RESOLUTION EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE
DANSKAMMER POWER PLANT BUILD-OUT PROPOSAL**

Resolution of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council calling on the NY Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment to reject the Danskammer application and related permits

**RESOLUTION
(R20-11)**

RESOLUTION SPONSORED BY CHAIR SALEM

WHEREAS, The State of New York’s current State Energy Plan calls for 50 percent of electricity generation to come from renewable energy sources by 2030 including a 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2030, and Governor Cuomo's new climate goal is to transition the state to 70 percent clean, renewable energy by 2030, and 100 percent by 2040; and

WHEREAS, According to Food and Water Watch, “The Danskammer would be a massive 550 MW fracked gas plant posing huge risks to the air and water of the local community -- and worsening our climate crisis by burning dirty fossil fuels around the clock”; and

WHEREAS, the Danskammer plant will release a significant increase in air pollutants locally and regionally, negatively impacting the health of Poughkeepsie residents; and natural gas-fired power plants can also release radon, a naturally occurring radioactive material that is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Danskammer plant will increase carbon gas emissions, including methane emissions which are the most damaging of greenhouse gasses, and the significant increases in the impacts of climate change globally mean there is great urgency to stop the sources of large-scale greenhouse gas emissions like fossil fuel power plants; and

WHEREAS, Danskammer cannot show that its proposal is in the public interest if it cannot demonstrate a need for a new gas plant, even given the closing of the nearby nuclear Indian Point Energy Center, Danskammer must prove to the public whether increased generation capacity is needed and if so, how much; and this will be very unlikely to be proved, since recent unbiased studies including the 2017 “Synapse” study “Clean Energy for New York: Replacement Energy and Capacity Resources for the Indian Point Energy Center Under New York Clean Energy Standard (CES)” from February 2017, <http://www.synapse-energy.com/sites/default/files/Clean-Energy-for-New-York-16-121.pdf> show that new energy efficiencies and existing renewable energy producers will within two years provide as much output as Indian Point Energy Center would have produced; and

WHEREAS, Building this plant could discourage renewable power generation infrastructure development, which is where our community should be investing our time and money for our future energy needs. Should our region need additional power generation, any such need should not be met with new fossil fuel generation—as Danskammer proposes—but rather through

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renewable non-combustion alternatives (i.e., wind, solar) in line with the state's energy policies; and

WHEREAS, The Danskammer build-out proposal is incompatible with our state energy plan, is wrong for the global needs of climate change, and will negatively impact the quality of our air, water, health, economy, and our environment;

NOW, THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the **City of Poughkeepsie Common Council** call upon the NY Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment to reject the Danskammer application and related permits; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Chamberlain is directed to submit this statement to the NY Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment and to send a copy of this resolution to:

- U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
- U.S. Senator Charles Schumer
- N.Y. Governor Andrew Cuomo
- N.Y. State Senator Sue Serino
- N.Y. State Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson
- Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro
- Dutchess County Legislative Chair A. Gregg Pulver

RESOLUTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER LORRAINE JOHNSON

R20-11						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember McNamara	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

IX. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

X. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

1. **FROM COUNCILMEMBER BRANNEN**, an update regarding the proposed Land Bank.
2. **FROM GREG GATTO**, a notice of property damage sustained on December 12, 2019. **Referred to Corporation Counsel**

- 3. FROM HUDSON POINTE POUGHKEEPSIE HOA, INC.,** a notice of claim from October 7, 2019. **Referred to Corporation Counsel**

X. NEW BUSINESS:

XI. OLD BUSINESS:

XII. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Lorraine Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Dated: January 10, 2019

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, January 6, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

**Deanne L. Flynn
City Chamberlain**