



**THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
NEW YORK
SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 19, 2022 6:00 pm Common Council Chambers

Chairwoman Cherry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- I. Welcome
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Public Participation
 - 1. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave.
(submitted written comments)

Before I begin, it's necessary to say that agenda posted for tonight's meeting is shameful, as had more citizens known that they could comment, I think more citizens would have been in the room to do that.

Why do I have prepared comments for tonight? Because I'm familiar with the City Charter—a document that, along with so much else, seems foreign or irrelevant to many Councilmembers. Extracting from Section 2.04 of the City Charter:

Paragraph (b) provides the right to call a special meeting under certain circumstances, and says, specifically: **“No action shall be taken at any special meeting upon any matter not specified in such written notice.”**

Paragraph (d) says, specifically: **“In addition, each regular or special meeting of the common council shall include a period during which any member of the public in attendance may comment upon any aspect of city governance.”**

The notice for tonight's meeting did not specify its purpose in writing, and the posted agenda did not provide for public comments. Any last-minute addition or action tonight will violate not only the City Charter, but also the Open Meetings Law requirement that records to be discussed at a meeting be made available and posted online at least 24-hours before the meeting.

Sarah Salem's resignation has flung wide open a long-recognized, but long-denied window on this Council's dysfunction and internal division, as well as a long overdue opportunity for this Council's members to bring ethics, transparency, democracy and accountability back to this Council's sinking ship. We're about to find out whether this Council loves its power and dysfunction more than its obligation to public service.

While there's not a single member on the current Council who regularly, or even irregularly, informs and consults their constituents before or after Council meetings, or before or after Council decision-making, at least one member has recently taken it upon themselves to leak information about behind-closed-door squabbling regarding selection of a new Council Chair. According to those leaks, published in the Mid Hudson News on September 28, some Council members supported Natasha Cherry's offer to occupy the Council Chair seat through the budget process and the end of 2022, while other members did not support or outright objected. How or why? The master manipulators and puppets on this Council have not yet said, at least not in public.

Looking at the list of applicants printed in a different Mid Hudson News article, I will not mince my words: I don't know, and have never seen or heard of some of those named. But I specially recognize at least two—Chris Petsas and Sakima McClinton—who have previously held seats on this Council. As soon as each one lost their seats of power, they disappeared into the woodwork. Now, Petsas and McClinton—having everything to do with power, and nothing to do with devotion to public service—are each vying for chairmanship. Purely in the interest of their own political greed, even to the extent of opportunistically flip-flopping their political party designations in the most recent election—yet still being resoundingly rejected by the voters of this City—they seek access to power through a path that will flip the bird to the will of the voters. At the last Council meeting, Evan Menist, the Council's own elected Majority leader, demonstrated how even a person in office for a second term was ill-equipped and unsuited to Chair this Council body. If the members of this Council move tonight to fill this vacancy with either of the opportunistic candidates, Petsas or McClinton, or any other person who's avoided or failed at testing themselves with voter approval, they will have committed a grave disservice, if not an outright crime, against the residents of this City.

Section 2.04: Regular and Special Meetings; Minutes; Quorum; Voting; Open Meeting Rule; Vacancy in Office of Chairperson

(a) The common council shall conduct its regular meetings at least twice each calendar month at a time and place to be determined by its rules. The council chair or another person serving as chairperson, the mayor, or any other three councilmembers, may call a special meeting of the common council by written notice served personally upon all its members, or left at their places of residence within the city, at least twenty-four hours prior to the proposed date and time of each such meeting, but service of said notice may be waived by the unanimous consent of all councilmembers. No action shall be taken at any special meeting upon any matter not specified in such written notice. The council chair, or in the event of his or her absence the vice-chairperson, shall set the agenda for, and serve as chairperson at, all meetings of the common council including the organizational meeting pursuant to Section 2.03 of this charter. The city chamberlain, or his or her deputy, shall serve as recording secretary at all meetings of the common council and shall record, transcribe and maintain all minutes of its proceedings, which minutes shall be and remain available for public inspection during all regular business hours of the city chamberlain.

(d) All meetings of the common council and its committees shall be open to the public except those that are closed pursuant to the provisions of the public officers law of the state of New York. Prior to submitting any proposed legislation to a vote of the common council at any regular or special meeting, the person serving as chairperson shall suspend the rules of the meeting upon such conditions as he or she may determine to permit comment upon such proposed legislation by any member of the public in attendance who wishes to be heard. In addition, each regular or special meeting of the common council shall include a period during which any member of the public in attendance may comment upon any aspect of city governance.

Special Informational Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, October 19, 2022

V. Adjournment for Executive Session

Dated: October 20, 2022

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on October 19, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jasmin Nicole Davis
City Chamberlain**