



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, December 19, 2022 5:30 p.m.

Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the scheduled meeting of the Public Hearing in the City of Poughkeepsie. The date is December 19, 2022 and the time is 5:30 pm.

THIS HEARING IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING COMMENTS ON THE on the rise in crime in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Chairwoman Brown called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Five (5) minutes per person public comment.

- 1. Nick Kalogris – Maryland Ave.**
- 2. Marta Knapp – S. Clinton St.**
- 3. Brian Robinson – Montgomery St.**
- 4. Darrett Roberts – Franklin St.**
- 5. Laurie Sadow, S. Grand Ave. (submitted written comments)**
- 6. Daniel Hyatt (Ethics Board) – S. Hamilton**

Police Chief Pape and Captain Wilson addressed the audience in attendance and responded to citizens comments and questions from the Common Council.

In August 2021, Sarah Salem held a long-delayed meeting on Gun Violence, Homelessness, and Crime.

Which councilmember publicly protested the delay? None.

What came out of that meeting? Nothing.

Which current councilmembers were absent from that meeting? Approximately half, just like tonight. At least one councilmember claimed they didn't attend because they weren't yet on the Council. Need I point out that being a council member is not a requisite to showing up? Or that this city is plagued by electeds and vacancy-fillers who have no track record for participation or diligence, yet wield the power to make law for all City residents.

In June 2022, Lt. Governor Delgado came to the City to attend a closed-door, so-called "summit" to discuss ways to combat violence in the city. Who attended that meeting, hosted by Rev. Bottoms at Beulah Baptist Church? It's a mystery; attendance is still a secret. What was proposed, and what came out of that meeting? Nothing made public.

Tonight's public hearing is staged "for the purpose of receiving comments on the rise in crime in the City of Poughkeepsie". Therefore, I will address the rise in crime, rogue behavior, and lawbreaking by City Administration and Councilmembers alike—behavior that sets a bad example for our youth, and which threatens and undermines the public's right to know.

With Sarah Salem's resignation, this council was given an opportunity to reverse the former Chair's self-serving control of Council agendas. Instead the Council's chosen to embrace and amplify Salem's behavior. Reports of Committees and Boards have been included on the Council agenda since at least 2020. When has a single Committee or Board made a report—not a presentation, but a report? To my memory, never.

Which councilmembers actually attend Board and Committee meetings, even when agenda items relate to developments in their own Wards? Never to almost never. Yet these same absent, lack of diligence Councilmembers get on their high horses, complaining they weren't informed or consulted. Somehow, members of the public take the time and effort to keep themselves informed, show up and deliver public comments, yet Councilmembers hold tight to their privilege to claim ignorance. Or even to say that they don't have time to visit the City website. How and why does someone hold a seat of power in this City when they don't have the time or inclination to stay on top of City business? Why do Councilmembers get to express outrage and surprise about such things as out-of-state corporate registrations, tax benefits, or zoning subcommittee members only after a member of the public brings those issues to their attention? And what have they done since? Nothing.

Salem introduced Council consent agendas in approximately February 2022. Every current councilmember signed onto that. What has the Council hidden from the public since that time? The answer: Councilmember ignorance, lack of diligence and backroom collusion. Consent agendas are very clearly intended for routine business and not for evasion of Open Meetings Law. Yet Consent agendas are being used and abused to keep councilmember ignorance and backroom jockeying hidden from the public, defeating the public's business, which must be discussed and voted upon publicly.

At the December 5 CC meeting, two different people—Marc Nelson and Evan Menist—both used the word collaboration. Consent agendas are the opposite of collaboration and the embodiment of self-service.

—We have a City Administrator, soon-to-be Mayor, who defends delays in producing documents requested under Freedom of Information Law, even though the law prohibits those delays. Marc Nelson also defends the use of a private Email address for his transition team.

—We have the City Corporation Counsel and Councilmembers, as well as department heads like Natalie Quinn, who violate the State law requiring that records to be discussed at a meeting be made available at least 24-hours before that meeting.

—We have Councilmembers who regularly leak information to an online outlet, but are entirely non-responsive to Freedom of Information requests. We have Dr. Martinez, the FOIL Appeals Officer, who seems to either have no teeth, or to apply no teeth, in obtaining requested FOIL documents that have been withheld. We have Councilmembers who are busy meeting with lobbyists, at the same time they won't answer constituent Emails. Councilmembers who use public monies designated for their Wards without ever disclosing receipt of those funds, consulting or gathering input from their constituents, or disclosing distribution of those funds.

—We have a Corporation Counsel who gives aid and protection to councilmember violations, whether in possession of clear-cut documentation of evidence tampering, or fully aware of Council violations of the City Charter. What has the Corporation Counsel done to enforce the Charter mandate regarding redistricting, including the requirement for Councilmembers to provide written comments in response to Redistricting Commission maps? Nothing to my knowledge, and silence in response to FOIL. Instead, for illegalities large and small, the Corporation Counsel puts the burden on the public to file an Article 78.

—We have Councilmembers who care so little about public involvement and knowledge that they don't even post a meeting agenda until after they're tagged by a member of the public.

—Do the concerned people speaking at this public hearing know that the Council has already agreed to pass the City Budget tonight via consent agenda? Have they seen the amendments the Council made to the budget, entirely behind closed doors, and without ever speaking about these issues and amendments on the record?

In five minutes, I've only begun to touch on the tip of this City's iceberg of the rise in crime, rogue behavior, and lawbreaking by Administration and Councilmembers alike.

*Official Minutes of the Public Hearing of December 19, 2022 for the purpose of receiving comments
on the rise in crime in the City of Poughkeepsie*

At 6:34 pm the Public Hearing was adjourned.

Dated: December 29, 2022

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Public Hearing held on December 19, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jasmin N. Davis
City Chamberlain**