



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 5, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the regularly scheduled Meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is Tuesday, September 5, 2023, and the time is 7:42 pm.

I. ROLL CALL: 7 Present, 2 Absent (Councilmember Long & Councilmember Johnson absent.)

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

-NONE-

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

-NONE-

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 1. Paul Brenner – 184 South Grand Ave.**
- 2. Daniel Attona – 116 College Ave (For the Many)**
- 3. Suprina**
- 4. Gus (Constantine) Kazolias**
- 5. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave ***
- 6. Diamond Mima, Executive Director Charlia Frank Inc.**
- 7. Kadera Parks, Founder Charlia Frank Inc.**

***Submitted written comments**

Laurie Sandow comments, City of Poughkeepsie Common Council meeting, September 5, 2023:

I hope the council members who were absent at the last meeting [August 30, 2023] listened to my comments at that meeting. And I'll add to those comments:

The Common Council's 2023 schedule was set in January 2023, perhaps even before. The schedule extended the CC's summer break, which break has been amplified by the pathetic agendas posted to meetings both preceding and following the break, tonight included.

And even with all this, three councilmembers did not attend the August 30th meeting and supposedly had "excused" absences. Excuses that are never revealed to the public. And yet these council members get paid even when they don't show up.

Did the Council Chair already know that she wasn't going to attend the August 30 meeting when she urged the Mayor's presentation to be delayed? And aren't all City residents and taxpayers concerned by Chair Brown's statement, quoting directly from the sorry transcript posted to that webcast in which Chair Brown says—and excuse me, I'm reading from the transcript:

"I just said yeah, but it's just so it's just several of us are more familiar with finance than others.

"And so that's why I feel like it's better if more if the finance commissioner was here as well. Yeah [speaking to Yvonne Flowers], you have a finance background. So, you know, I mean, you have [an advantage, you have a finance background] and I have a [finance] background with some people want have some serious questions and they have some concerns and since it's been on the agenda, you know, probably wants to know what's going on. So I just want to make sure that we are equipped to understand. Okay.

"So we're going to just move this to Donna. We're just going to move the communication to Wednesday."

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So, when Wednesday rolled around, did all CC members show up for a caucus [that Natasha Brown had scheduled, and didn't show up for herself? with Natasha Brown saying:

"it's just so it's just several of us are more familiar with finance than others. And so that's why I feel that it's better if more if the finance commissioner was here as well. Yeah.

(Speaking to Yvonne Flowers), you have a finance background. So, you know, I mean, you

have an (advantage), you have a finance background and I have a finance background with some people want to have some serious questions and they have some concerns. And since it's been on the agenda, you know, probably wants to know what's going on. So I just want to make sure that we are equipped to understand.

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As Popeye used to say]

So, when Wednesday rolled around, did all CC members show up for a caucus to get edumacated about finances? No, they did not.

And when they took a private training with Finance Commissioner Brian Martinez in January of this year, did they walk away edumacated about finances? Apparently not. Because when Dr. Martinez showed up at the Wednesday meeting, did a single councilmember ask him a question? No, they did not.

We also had the Council chair lecturing the public about their reflexive laughter in response to certain absurd council statements, and the Council Chair lecturing the Mayor about taking too much time in his comments—ghost of Sarah Salem much. I have plenty of differences with Marc Nelson, and whether the pictures he paints are trustworthy, or are as false as those painted by several Councilmembers, but as a concerned resident of this city, I want to hear him speak.

Ms. Valk did not answer my question about whether she flagged her correspondence about litigation to the council members or contacted them when nobody responded to her. [The Bar Association's Rules of Professional Conduct include, among other things, this statement: "A lawyer should maintain communication with a client concerning the representation."] And not a single person eever once told me that my FOIL request was being delayed because Mr. Gernhardt was busy with an I.T. upgrade.

In fact, the corporation Counsel's office, I'm blanking on his name right now (Asst. Corporation Counsel John Evans), gave me several excuses about delays. He had a toothache. He had to see the dentist. He was sick. He went on and on. And I'll finish with this, which I should have included in my questions.

At which point I was prevented from speaking further, with Council Chair Brown going so far as to instruct the police that were present to "Remove her". See webcast and transcript: <https://totalwebcasting.com/view/?func=VIEW&id=cop&date=2023-09-05&seq=2>

V. CHAIRWOMAN'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Chairwoman Brown: So my comments are going to be brief today. First off, I want to congratulate Council Member Lorraine Johnson and Council Member Grant on two very successful events this week. I did have an opportunity to attend Council Member Grant's a little later. I missed you all because it was kind of hot outside. So great job.

And school starts this Thursday, September 9th. I know there was like some false statements going that the school wasn't starting. We are starting on Thursday, so please use caution when you're driving if you can. Most schools start around eight between eight and 830. If you're not working, come out on your porch and say hello. Watch our beautiful babies walk to school. You know, we want to welcome them and with open arms.

Also this Saturday, the community is invited, is our back-to-school bash, our biggest ever will be at the Poughkeepsie High School track field. The Rally will be from 12 to 3. We made a little bit later this year so we are in conflict with other events. So please come out and we will be giving our backpacks, school supplies. There's free food, fun and games. Please come to that.

And that concludes, Oh, I could not make it, but congratulations to Council Member Flowers, as she had a very nice event last week, I did have a ticket.

And to answer your question, did I know I was going to be absent on Wednesday? No, I did not. But I have a four-year-old daughter, so things happen and I'm not explaining myself. I've served almost eight years. I've done it with dignity. I was elected four different times. So it is what it is. So I take it that more people respect and like me, that don't. So it is what it is.

And that turns us to mayor's comments.

VI. MAYOR'S COMMENTS:

Mayor Nelson: Thank you, Chairwoman Brown. First of all, I wish we had a minute of silence. And I just want to echo the concern and pass my personal condolences along to Mae Parker Harris's family and to everybody. I didn't know her well, but she is a legend in the city of Poughkeepsie. And I know others here will also tell us more about the memorial service that is planned. But our condolences like to remind everybody to please attend the 911 memorial on Monday, which will be, again, as it is every year held outside here at our memorial excuse me, on city hall grounds. That is occurring at 10 a.m. And I'm really looking forward to that, particularly since it will be my last one.

Following up on some issues that were raised about a construction project happening up on Innis Avenue, I did find out that was a county project. Councilmembers had asked to get a timeline on that November, Thanksgiving. This is outside the city of Poughkeepsie, but it's a sidewalk construction project on the west side of us. And I understand the county is putting up a new bus shelter there as well. So anticipated completion is the end of November.

Lastly, I am going to just put on the record we've been a lot of conversations about policing and all of the challenges that we've had. My administration has put in front of this council a memorandum of understanding that would potentially make some changes to our collective bargaining agreement with the PBA. That's the Police Benevolent Association, the union that represents our cops. I just want the minutes to show that I'm urging my council colleagues to get that item on the agenda. I plan on bringing it up tomorrow in a leadership meeting I have with leaders of the Council.

But it is important that we do everything we can, and I want the public to know that I, until I leave office at the end of December, will continue to work every single day to resolve the biggest problems or at least help resolve them, mitigate them. One of the things that needs to be acted on is the PBA MOA that this council has.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

VII. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

VIII. ~~REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:~~

CONSENT AGENDA:

IX. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

X. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

A motion to move O-23-04 from the Action Agenda to the Consent Agenda was made by Vice Chair Shook and seconded by Councilmember Deichler.

- 1. O-23-04, Ordinance Regarding Handicapped Signage on South Avenue**

**ORDINANCE AMENDING §13-269
OF CHAPTER 13 OF THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED "MOTOR VEHICLES
AND TRAFFIC"**

(O-23-04)

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER SHOOK:

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie, as follows:

SECTION 1: §13-269 is hereby amended by the following addition:

Section 13-269 -Handicapped parking areas designated.

Upon the erection of signs giving due notice thereof, the following areas shall be designated as handicapped parking areas and are to be utilized only for the purpose set forth in this Article:

SOUTH AVE., West side, beginning 150 feet North of its intersection with Reade PL., and continuing North for a distance of 15 feet, for one parking space.

SECTION 2: This Ordinance shall take effect immediately.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER DEICHLER _____:

ADDITIONS denoted by **Underlining and Bold**

0-23-04			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled	Councilmember Grant	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Long	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Deichler	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Thompson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Johnson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Shook	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chairwoman Brown	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

ACTION AGENDA:

XI. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

XII. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

1. O-23-04, Ordinance Regarding Handicapped Signage on South Avenue

XIII. PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

XIV. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Councilmember Thompson and seconded by Councilmember Flowers to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Dated: September 12, 2023

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Tuesday, September 5, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmin Nicole Davis
City Chamberlain