



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE  
NEW YORK  
SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES

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| Tuesday, March 5, 2024 | 6:00 pm | Common Council Chambers |
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**Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.**

- I. Welcome
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. ~~Roll Call~~

**Attendance:** all Common Council members were present and seated in the audience.

**City Hall Department Heads in attendance on the dais:**

Donna DeLuca (Deputy Chamberlain/Vital Statistics), Joseph Donat, (Interim Development Director) Chief Joe Franco (Fire Department), Chris Gent (Department of Public Works), Ron Knapp (Interim City Administrator), Dr. Brian Martinez (Commissioner of Finance/ IT), Chief Tom Pape (Police Department), Regina Pittman (Human Resources), John Taylor (Assessor), Rebecca Valk (Corporation Counsel), Da’Ron Wilson (Chairman of the Common Council), Captain Rich Wilson (Police Department).

IV. Public Participation

- 1. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave.  
(submitted written comments)
- 2. Karen Hochhauser -
- 3. Ken Stickle – Catharine St.
- 4. Judy Green – 6<sup>th</sup> Ward
- 5. Marta Knapp – 6<sup>th</sup> Ward
- 6. Keila Mercedes – Raymond Ave
- 7. Mark Klein –
- 8. Daniel Atonna – College Ave
- 9. Alex Faison – College Ave

**Laurie Sandow comments and questions,**  
**City of Poughkeepsie Informational Meeting, March 5, 2024**

There is nothing so ironic as the illegal curtailment of public participation at tonight's Charter-mandated Informational Meeting, short days before the annual celebration of Sunshine Week that protects democracy and promotes transparent government. Not only was the Charter violated in the failure to timely post this meeting to the City website [see §2.05, <https://ecode360.com/attachment/PO1408/PO1408-CHA.pdf>], but the so-called "special" rules being applied to tonight's Informational Meeting are drawn from Charter §2.04, an entirely different section of the Charter. This willfully countermands the Charter's text about Informational Meetings and defeats the public's opportunity to inquire and obtain answers from any member of the common council, the mayor, the city administrator and the heads of all city departments and offices with regard to any aspect of city governance.

Also ironic is that this strategy has been lifted straight from the playbook of reviled former Council Chair Sarah Salem. In the same way that Rebecca Valk seeks to accomplish censorship through her phony claims of fear for safety, the time limitation imposed by Da'Ron Wilson on tonight's Informational Meeting is the latest "clever" and illegal effort to censor and inhibit public questioning, knowledge and opinion. Only two months into office, the Flowers Administration is well on its way to being remembered for tyranny, and not transparency.

A person who attends and speaks during the public comment period at every Common Council meeting would be provided a total of only 72 minutes annually [3 minutes per meeting x 24 scheduled meetings]—a cumulative total of barely more than an hour. With tonight's illegal limitations, a whopping 5 minutes tonight, 10 minutes annually, have been "gifted" by the same people who don't hold Ward meetings, don't operate in the light of day, don't communicate with constituents about important issues, operate without any written consent agenda policy, and use closed-door caucus meetings and consent agendas to avoid committing their knowledge, ignorance or scheming to the public record.

But no surprise—what we're witnessing here stems directly from Corporation Counsel Rebecca Valks's silence, collusion and effective sanction in the face of multiple Charter violations, including their delays and manipulations in filling vacancies, and creating and populating various committees; their failure to submit written comments when they rejected the Redistricting Commission's proposed plan [§2.10 "Should the common council fail to approve

such plan, it shall return it to the redistricting commission with its specific objections and those of individual members of the council stated in writing”]; and their subsequent multiple redistricting violations, including the Voting Rights Act violation committed by this Council to defeat a Hispanic community of interest, protect the seats of incumbents, delay their own map submission to the Board of Elections, and increase the odds of putting Yvonne Flowers and her friends into elected office.

*Question 1:* Yvonne Flowers, Da’Ron Wilson, Terriciana Brown—why was there no mention of your Exempt Firemen’s membership on any one of your palm cards? Don’t you think the public has the right to know when multiple members of a private membership club are taking seats in public office?

*Question 2:* Da’Ron Wilson—please explain why your affiliation with the Five Percent Nation wasn’t included on your palm card along with all your other affiliations.

*No answer from Da’Ron Wilson.*

*Question 3:* Terriciana Brown—why did Chamberlain DeLuca have to remind you to change your vote after you first voted yes in a matter that was a clear conflict of interest.

*No answer from Terriciana Brown.*

*Question 4:* Da’Ron Wilson—as a school district employee, please explain why your recent consent agenda resolution regarding a district program was not a conflict of interest.

*Question 5:* Da’Ron Wilson—at the last Council meeting you manufactured a non-existent Council rule, and then—with obvious advance planning—arranged for the Chamberlain to break the law by silencing the public microphone and for the police department to assist in executing your personal fabrication. What is price that Councilmembers such as yourself must pay when you disrupt a meeting and violate decorum?

*No answer from Da’Ron Wilson.*

*Question 6:* Da’Ron Wilson—you’ve claimed that Monday Council meetings were changed to avoid conflict with County Legislature meetings. Please identify the actual dates of conflict. Also, please identify the fellow councilmember, if any, who asked you to change dates because they had their own personal conflict with Monday meetings.

*No answer from Da’Ron Wilson.*

*Question 7:* Any Councilmember: How is it that the Council pretends to worry about conflict with County meetings when most of its members have never attended a County Legislature meeting, when most Councilmembers don't attend meetings of other City boards and commissions, and also when the few councilmembers who actually do hold ward meetings often schedule them in conflict with City board meetings?

*No answer from any Councilmember.*

*Question 8:* Yvonne Flowers, Da'Ron Wilson, Terricena Brown, Ondie James, Nedra Thompson and Nathan Shook: you all showed up at a County meeting about changed bus routes, and except for Nathan who left early, each of you confessed your ignorance about impending changes. Chris Grant, Megan Deichler, Evan Menist and Ernest Henry—none of you attended that County meeting. Which of you, if any, has held a ward meeting to discuss route changes with constituents.

*Question 9:* Why does this City continue to violate the Americans with Disabilities Act by failing to place a required post on its website, and—despite this issue being raised repeatedly—by the continued use of webcasts that are barely audible and without closed captioning.

*No answer from any member of the Common Council, the Mayor, the City Administrator and/or the heads of any city department or office.*

*Question 10:* Nedra Thompson, you falsely advertised a Ward meeting this past weekend as informational: “Leaping into Black History 366 days; On the history of Voting”, while its actual purpose was a pre-planned, organizational training for attendees to knock on doors and register voters. I’m fully in favor of voter registration. I’m not in favor of lying to the public.

*Question 11:* Megan Deichler, Chris Grant and Nedra Thompson: the three of you had your names on a ceasefire resolution in December 2023. The Council rules provide you the right to walk it on. Why didn't you?

*No answer from any Councilmember.*

**Note:** Though I had many more questions—questions that could have been asked, and which should have received answers if a time limitation had not been placed on the public—the five-minute limitation prevented me from even speaking those questions into the record.

**From:** Naomi Brooks <naomizbrooks@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, March 4, 2024 2:30 PM

**To:** Donna DeLuca <DDeLuca@cityofpoughkeepsie.com>

**Subject:** questions for the Information Session March 5, 2024

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Donna - I am submitting the questions below for the Information Session March 5, 2024. I think they can be answered by John Taylor, Brian Martinez, or both.

The Common Council agenda for the meeting that follows this session includes an item to set a public hearing about tax exemptions for limited-income seniors; I know this data I am questioning must have been explored but I don't have the answers. I want to speak at the upcoming public hearing, and I am hoping this information is easy to access and can be answered right at the information session instead of waiting, since time is of the essence.

I don't think I'll be attending the information session, so I'd like these questions read during the meeting.

1 - roughly how many taxable properties are there in the city?

2- what is the average property tax this year for a single family residence?

3- the 2024 budget report has 3 line items on its S495 Exemption Impact sheet of page 14 (page 27 of the PDF document) that all say Persons Age 65 or Over. Is only one of those lines for the limited income tax exemption? Which one? What are the other two lines?

4- **currently**, on average how much do remaining property owners pay in additional yearly property taxes to cover the amount not collected for limited-income senior tax exemptions?

5- with the **proposed** income limit increases, how much will other owners pay in additional taxes?

Thank you so much!

-Naomi Brooks

Special Informational Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, March 5, 2024

- 10. Peter Van Aken – Wilbur Blvd
- 11. Cooper Miller – Frank St.
- 12. Florence Nielson – Hammersley Ave
- 13. Naomi Brooks – S. Grand Ave  
(submitted written questions prior to meeting)

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

**Dated: March 11, 2024**

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Special Informational Meeting held on March 5, 2024

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Donna M. DeLuca**  
**Deputy City Chamberlain**