



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 6:30 p.m. Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the regularly scheduled Meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is March 5, 2024 and the time is 7:33pm

I. ROLL CALL: ALL PRESENT

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Common Council Meeting – February 6, 2024
Common Council Meeting – February 20, 2024

Motion to accept the minutes made by Vice Chair Shook seconded by Councilmember Brown

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

- NONE -

IV. PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- NONE -

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- **Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave***
- **Verner Steger – 12 Parkwood**
- **Sandra Goldberg – 10 Dutton Rd**
- **Sam Finnerman – Ivy Terrace**
- **Andi Ciminello – Wilbur Ave**
- **Ken Stickle – Catharine St.**
- **Keila Mercedes – Raymond Ave**
- **Donna Pistilner - Poughkeepsie**
- **Judy Green – S. Clinton St**
- **Marta Knapp – S. Clinton St**
- **Shlomo Krasner – Whittier Blvd**
- **Kane Bowers – Union St**
- **Janelle Marina Mendez - Poughkeepsie**
- **Neesee Lee -**
- **Jamar Cumminings – 3rd Ward**

***Submitted written comment**

The 45 minute time period allowed for public comment was reached and the remaining speakers on the list were encouraged by Chairman Wilson to submit their comments to the City Chamberlain for inclusion in the official minutes.

Laurie Sandow comments,

City of Poughkeepsie Common Council Meeting, March 5, 2024

Is the First Amendment obsolete in the age of Corporation Counsel Rebecca Valk and Common Council Chair Da’Ron Wilson? It surely looks that way. How about integrity, transparency, accountability?—all words that are entirely missing from the Council’s own rules, despite the rules of so-called decorum having been expanded from one paragraph in 2016, to longer than three pages today.

Autocrats have long sought to silence criticism and undermine knowledge.

In the words of Frederick Douglass:

“Liberty is meaningless where the right to utter one’s thoughts and opinions has ceased to exist. That, of all rights, is the dread of tyrants. It is the right which they first of all strike down. They know its power. Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, founded in injustice and wrong, are sure to tremble, if men are allowed to reason...Equally clear is the right to hear. To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker.”

Mayor Flowers tells me I’m too negative—apparently devoid of recognition that the negative reflection she’s seeing and hearing is a mirror of the Council and Administration itself; and that my comments are focused on nothing other than what’s done and not done, what’s public and not public, and what electeds connive, scheme, and gossip about behind closed doors and among their friends.

It’s funny how frightened this Council is by the words of one single septuagenarian—in case you’re worried that word violates decorum, let me know and I’ll wait while you look it up.

While you’ve got your dictionaries out, why not look up decorum itself—behavior in keeping with good taste and propriety. If propriety was a guidestar for this Council, there would have been no tolerance for Da’Ron Wilson’s lies about the reason for changing Council meeting dates, or his false representation of a document titled “Misuse of Consent Agendas”—focused on abuse of consent agendas—as if it actually supported his abuse and the absence of a written consent agenda policy.

This Council wouldn't be tolerating Wilson's distortion of Open Meetings Law to camouflage his well-documented hostility to public comments, or his fabricated rule and pre-planning used to silence a public commenter. And the Mayor and a certain councilperson, Nedra Thompson, wouldn't get up, cover up, and flat-out lie when I have no opportunity to respond to their lies. In a nutshell, this Council would not and should not be using "decorum" as a velvet glove to conceal their own brass knuckles and iron fist.

Far more significant than this Council's reliance on the fuzzy word "decorum" is this Council's ability to collect a paycheck and benefits at taxpayer expense without actually serving the public. And for those of you who are confused about the meaning of service—another word entirely absent from the Council's rules—it requires actual information delivery and interaction with constituents, and not an endless flow of puffed-up social media selfies.

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wrote "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants". What is the public to do in a city that puts its efforts into consigning residents to live in a city where the sun don't shine?

Official Minutes of the Common Council Meeting of March 5, 2024

Chairman Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm which was seconded by Vice-Chair Shook.

No regular city business was conducted during this meeting.

Dated: March 11, 2024

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024.

**Respectfully submitted,
Donna M. DeLuca
Deputy City Chamberlain**