



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 27, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Virtual / Zoom

Welcome to the regularly scheduled meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is September 27, 2021, and the time is 7:09 pm.

I'd like to acknowledge that we are gathered, wherever we are, on the traditional territory of the Lenape people and this territory was a critical resting place along a popular trade route for people of the Lenape Nation and other cultures as is evidenced in the earliest derivation of the name 'Poughkeepsie' with an indigenous string of words, U-puku-ipi-sing, that, when translated, means 'reed-covered lodge by the little water place' or resting place.

Let's all recite the pledge of allegiance.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL - Seven present, two absent at time of roll call (Absent: Councilmember Cherry and Councilmember L. Johnson)

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

**Common Council Meeting August 23, 2021
Special Meeting August 25, 2021
Public Hearing Meeting August 30, 2021
Common Council Meeting August 30, 2021**

**Motion to accept the minutes: Councilmember Brannen
2nd: Councilmember Menist**

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

ADD:

VIII. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

R-21-73

IDA APPOINTMENT OF COLBY CREEDON

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Three (3) minutes per person up to 45 minutes of public comment on any agenda and non-agenda items.

- 1. Brian Robinson, Equitable Future, Inc.**
- 2. Jeff Salmonese – Hooker Ave.**
- 3. Katherine Raynor – Forbus**
- 4. Lydia Hatfield – Union St.**
- 5. Sven Thiessen - 364 Main St. Apt. 2**
- 6. Jairo Perez, For the Many**
- 7. Brahvan Ranga**
- 8. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand**

Laurie Sandow, South Grand Avenue. I'd like to note that tonight's informational meeting just concluded and the Common Council meeting taking place right now were originally scheduled for September 20th, 2021. They've been on the council calendar since the council's January organizational meeting, yet tonight's meeting was rescheduled purely at the whim and for the benefit of Sarah Salem's schedule, apparently without consultation and approval of all other council members.

It was just announced that a resolution was added to tonight's agenda. Has that resolution been posted to the city website? The answer is no. As so often happens with this council agenda, items are added and deleted at the last minute, giving the public no chance to read, educate themselves, consider the resolution in advance and comment knowledgeably at the council meeting.

I insist that the council post a link to the document and post the document itself in the chat of tonight's Zoom. Because virtual viewers and attendees at the meeting at these meetings are not made public, all those in attendance have no idea who or

how many are in attendance at any given virtual meeting. Sarah Salem has denied the opportunity to put public commenters on camera when they're speaking so that the public can see the people that they know and love in the community.

Sarah Brannen at the end of the informational meeting asked corporation counsel, whether the informational meetings could be made more productive. Sarah Brannen, of course, never showed up at an informational meeting before she got into office. Oddly, rather than Brannen throw shade on people who spoke and the questions that were asked at the informational meeting.

Why has this council not examine what efforts they made or didn't make to inform their ward residents about the informational meeting? Did a single council member send notice to their ward residents about the scheduling and purpose of the twice yearly special informational meetings and tonight's meeting in particular? Did they send notice of how to navigate the new city website, which makes these meetings and registration less, not more, user friendly? I asked a series of questions at the informational meeting, and in the time that I have left, I'm going to run through some of them.

Why are public speakers not on camera? Why is adherence to the City of Poughkeepsie charter when in service to the Common Council for litigation, why is the charter observed but not observed when service to the public? Salem delays in filling vacancies in the 8th Ward vacancy and the IDA and the Redistricting vacancy? Brannen sent a letter, an email to fellow council members stating that I had not submitted a resume.

Chair Salem: If you could wrap in a sentence, that's your time.

Laurie Sadow: My resume was sent on May 26. Brannen's claim that my resignation was not submitted was written on June 3rd. Brannen in the previous meeting just lied to the public. I will reserve the rest of my comments.

9. Naomi Brooks – S. Grand Ave.

I have been actively interested in the future use of 36 North Clover Street, the former Poughkeepsie Day Nursery at the Pelton Mansion. The future plans for the property and building are in a holding pattern right now while the potential developers are in litigation with various entities in our city. But a property and a

building cannot also be in a holding pattern – they need care and upkeep or they will decay.

Our city is underfunded and our maintenance department has a huge workload. It is impossible to give any park or city-owned parcel the full attention it deserves with our current resources. 36 North Clover, which for years has been empty of park amenities and the building unused, does not get the highest priority for our hard working Department of Public Works.

I am here to urge you to explore the possibilities of temporary use of this city owned property for whatever period of time the litigation takes. Why not allow an entity to make use of the building and take some of the burden off the city? A property guardian who understands that it is a temporary arrangement can provide the kind of daily upkeep that the city cannot. The simple fact of a daily presence with activity in the building and on the grounds makes the property less apt to degrade, and changes the perception of the property from vacant and vandalized to attractive and useful.

A building being used is less likely to have the problems that a building with its utilities shut off could have. A temporary tenant could pay the bills for those utilities.

The best part of this proposal is that the funding for getting the building to a code-compliant state - not a large amount as estimated by a city resident who is an engineer - could be obtained through historic preservation resources, eliminating any cost to the city.

I am sure that offering this temporary solution would generate a lot of interest, and the city could quickly select an appropriate entity to help take care of an important site until its fate is determined.

V. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

I want to keep it brief because we did get started a little later than expected.

I do want to note that over the last few weeks and in between our last session and now, there have been an increasing number of violent fights across the county, actually, not just here in the City of Poughkeepsie. I know the City of Poughkeepsie High School had a very large fight where a number of responders had to be called in, in order to break it up and students had to be locked in. There was a fight at FDR High School and then subsequently a fight at Arlington High School that ended with 16 year old student dying, being stabbed by a former student City of Poughkeepsie resident. I have to say it's very upsetting to read that news. I was asked by a member of

the Arlington community.

I'm an Arlington graduate myself, and it was very upsetting to read about a student, any student in any high school situation or environment getting killed and going to a game with their parents and that parent not coming home with their child or going out to go to the store and not coming home. Any of the scenarios absolutely horrible.

I just want to share as I was asked to share for Quraan Smith, there will be visitation held tomorrow, Tuesday, September 28th from 10:00am to 12:00pm at the Bethel Church at 91 Hooker Avenue in Poughkeepsie.

That will be followed by a funeral service that will be held from 12:00pm at the same location, so that's Bethel Church at 91 Hooker Ave, and then a burial will be held following that from 1:00pm to 2:00pm at the Poughkeepsie Cemetery. Again, I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the family and to any of his friends and the entire community, the greater Poughkeepsie community and the Arlington community. And I really hope that we are all able to put our heads together to come up with a solution to stop the violence among our youth. I know part of the answer has to do with a lot of proposed legislation.

For instance, tonight, investing in our City of Poughkeepsie youth, making changes and investment in the youth across the county, giving them a reason to trust their elders and giving them an outlet for their energy and giving them an outlet for if they're experiencing any issues so they can go to someone and talk to them about it and feel like they can trust that person so that maybe we can see these numbers and these violent scenarios diminish.

I also do want to mention that we are accepting applications for the IDA, and we're going to be making appointments on a rolling basis, starting with an appointment tonight.

Resumes will be accepted until October 1st for the Industrial Development Agency of the City of Poughkeepsie. I encourage anyone who's interested to apply up until that date. That concludes my comments. Thank you. And with that, we can move to Mayor's comments.

VI. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

First, I just wanted to direct that apology to Laurie Sandow. Laurie, I may have been a bit passionate before and speaking about Malcolm X Park and all the work that we have had in the drawing board and now trying to implement.

So please, I want to apologize to you if I offended you in any way by my discourse there. Chair, you started off your comments tonight on the loss of a young man at

Arlington High School. That is obviously a loss that the entire Arlington community and the greater community of Poughkeepsie and the Town of Poughkeepsie and LaGrange are feeling. And the other night there was a school board meeting that was held in the high school auditorium attended by, I dare say, approximately 200 people. There were quite a few folks there. I wanted to acknowledge that Councilperson Flowers was there and Councilmember Menist was there. If I'm missing somebody, I apologize. But there were a lot of comments, criticisms, worry expressed by everyone that spoke, including myself. I essentially spoke on behalf of all of us here in city government. There were individual concerns. There were broader concerns on safety, on educational plans, on many things. It really was a good several hours and everyone had the chance to speak. It was good to hear those comments and those concerns.

We have been working closely with the school district since before school opened and obviously since that time with helping them and creating a safe environment not only outside the school buildings, but within the school buildings. And one of the points that you made, and I'm going to just expand upon a little bit, if I can, is that there are conversations that are happening within the school district with the students, with staff, with teachers, with crisis intervention counselors on the challenges that many students are facing and facing now, more say this year than back in 2019, because we know last year they were not together. And the school district, through resolution, a couple of meetings ago, had committed \$200,000 to a citywide comprehensive youth strategy. And many of the things that we heard the other night and what we need to do, but what the school district is doing is listening to the students on what they need. I had spoke at the meeting and saying, you know, we will do the same thing.

We will be able to say match those funds with an infusion of up to \$200,000 of ARP money, which is critical right now. These are immediate needs. And right now, tonight, we don't know what those exact needs are, but those conversations are taking place with the school district. And then obviously we're going to have these conversations here within the council, because we want to understand also what you may be hearing from your constituents and members of the school community in your respective wards. That is something that we can do and we should do and we will do.

The other part of this is also the 80/20 statistic of 80 percent of a child's life is spent outside the school and 20 percent is spent inside the school. We've all talked about that for the past year or two because we've had these discussions, especially in the Children's Cabinet, as it relates to the things that the community based organizations, along with the school leadership and city government can do. We spend a lot of time and we spent a lot of effort on our park system and we had the open house, I guess you could call it, and community engagement two weekends ago at Malcolm X Park, which was, you know, fairly well attended. Always wish that there may have been more people there. But I can tell you that the people that were

there from a cross-section of the community were engaged in the plans and goals of transforming Malcolm X Park to a park that needs a lot of TLC to a park that we can all be proud of.

There are moneys that have been committed from our partners, obviously Scenic Hudson, City Parks, the City of Poughkeepsie itself, EFC and I could go right on down the list, but that is a great collaboration. Pershing Avenue Park, very similar situation with multiple collaborators. These are million dollar investments. We have 18 city parks. We need to make improvements and upgrades to all of them and so I've talked a lot about this with all of you for the past several years on what can we do and how can we do it? And there was a point in time where we talked about borrowing a significant amount of money, and that is not necessarily the best option. And it probably wasn't then, but it was a critical need.

And now with the American Rescue Plan dollars and the federal government has approved park expenses to be part of the ARP monies. We've asked that question specifically along with other communities. We're going to make those commitments to our parks with with upgrades to them and creating safer spaces for all of our community members and up to 4 million dollars we're going to commit over the next two years. We've had the Engineering Department has relooked again at the engineering reports and they've updated it, which we will be sending to all of you tomorrow, so you can see the specific upgrades, replacements and enhancements that will be made specifically in the different parks. We'll also put that on our website so the public can see what the plans are. These are things that have been spoken about for a long time. And now that we have the ability to do that, we want to do that.

One of the concerns that we have is that the supply chain issues when it comes to so many things right now throughout the entire economy, but we're having challenges right now. We ordered parks equipment back in August that originally was supposed to be 6 weeks. It may now be up to 8 months for some of these things. Timing is of the essence. And obviously, we're going to have to go out to bid and do all the things for procurement. We need to move that process along.

I want to thank the partners, thank the council for telling us what you see and what you need in your individual wards and parks that you go to with the DPW folks. Our engineering are also been weighing in and reviewing all of this, along with our partners in Scenic Hudson, New City Parks and other collaborators around the park system.

Off-Road Vehicles, which is still a concern and is still a challenge throughout the city. I appreciated the council being able to pass that new ordinance with the upgrades in it. That went into effect on September 12th, which will give us the ability, I hope, to take further measures that will keep these vehicles off the roads. We're going to do some public outreach on that now that that law is in effect. And I can tell you, I spoke to two

individuals who have these types of vehicles who did not know and I generally believe they did not know that they could not be riding them on the street. And one of them, particularly where I talked to this individual, that vehicle is nowhere around anymore and that person has not been riding it. He's finding alternate ways to get to and from his place of employment.

Discussion tonight on the housing situation in the city and in the pending legislation that you have on evictions. There has been the ongoing study being conducted by Progress on housing needs in the city. There is a in-person meeting. There's been two virtual. There's an in-person meeting Thursday night at 5:30 and it's going to go to approximately 7:00. It's at the Family Partnership Building on North Hamilton. And one of the other parts of housing and COVID and related issues that we're facing because of the pandemic. Mental health certainly has been something that we have spoken about as a group for quite some time.

We have our full time embedded member, Linwood Burke from Mental Health America, who was working a full time here in the Police Department through Mental Health America. Our second Mental Health America employee started last week, who is going to be working alongside with Linwood and the team specifically as it relates to mental health challenges and COVID-19. And then our expectation is we will be doing the same thing with Hudson River Housing very shortly. Just tying up a couple loose ends where we're going to have a HRH worker who also will be part of this team, which will be looking at housing needs related to COVID related and pandemic related financial issues and other issues that have caused challenges in an individual or family situation as it relates to housing.

We are encouraged by that collaboration and we hope to see where that goes, what we're going to find out. What are the challenges that individuals are facing, whether it's housing supply, whether it's finances, whether it's mental health services, access to services, and all the things that we know can be part of a challenge for an individual or a family. And in many cases, you know, the real tragedy can be is that they face all of those challenges as individuals and or families. We are doing everything that we can right now. We look to hopefully expand upon this with our partners, especially at HRH and MHA.

This Sunday, there is a march against hate taking place here in the City of Poughkeepsie at 2:00. There will be a line up at Market Street and Main Street. This is being sponsored by the Dutchess County Human Rights Commission, the Dutchess County African-American Clergy Association and the Jewish Federation of Dutchess County and other groups and individuals. The All for One and One for All organization is also part of this. It's going to go to Waryas Park, step off at 215 and go down to Waryas Park and where individuals will have the chance to talk to one another and talk about the things that we are all thinking about and facing as a community and really look forward to that on Sunday. I believe the weather is going

to be just perfect for it.

There was a report from the Comptroller's Office on the fiscal stress score for the City of Poughkeepsie, which unfortunately increased to a number that we had not seen before. We know the reasons for that fiscal stress score going up is directly related to the pandemic. It's directly related to the loss of revenue. It's directly related to the deficit that we incurred in 2020 due to the pandemic. We did not have ARP monies at that particular time. That had not happened as of yet. We were not able to make up the budget shortfalls as we plugged this year and we'll continue to do with the ARP.

The finance team is engaged in trying to put ourselves in a better position, and this relates to the budget for next year, which I'll get to in just a second, that our expectation is, is that as we go through the next two years and have the availability of using ARP monies for certain things, that we will be able to bring that score down to. The one thing is, is the fiscal stress measuring system obviously has been in place for a few years. They changed it a couple of years ago, but there was not obviously any consideration, persay, and it wasn't that they had to because they can't right now taking the pandemic into consideration, because, again, our lack of a fund balance creates a very delicate situation for us, that the budgets have to be essentially met on target because either we cut, which we did and you helped us do it, or because we don't have the fund balance to take from that all the other communities, essentially most of the communities have and are able to make up budget shortfalls. The budget will be delivered to you on or before the October 15th deadline. We are working diligently every single day on that. I can tell you there is a lot of challenges with this upcoming budget, but we are working through it. It's not like we haven't had them before. This is a little more difficult. But again, the ARP money is helping us, which obviously we did not have last year.

I'll end with this, Chair, I just wanted to let you know that myself and Mayor Lee Kyriacou of the City of Beacon notified the County Executive in a joint letter of our desire to start discussions on the sales tax agreement, the sales tax sharing agreement with the county. That expires in 2023. We will be starting those conversations very shortly. It was good to partner with Lee and Beacon, since we're the two parties, along with the county that are the three parties that have the sales tax agreement essentially in our hands to make to have these discussions. So at that point, Chair, I think I will conclude.

VII. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

VIII. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Menist to receive and print.

1. **Resolution R-21-73**, IDA appointment of Colby Creedon.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER BRANNEN:

WHEREAS, in accordance with New York General Municipal Law, the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie is authorized to make appointments of City residents to serve on the board of the City of Poughkeepsie Industrial Development Agency (“IDA”); and

WHEREAS, the members of the IDA serve at the pleasure of the Common Council and concurrent to the terms of the Common Council; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the City of Poughkeepsie and its citizens that the IDA Board have a full complement of members in order to properly conduct the business required of the IDA; and

WHEREAS, the IDA board requires at least 3 members in order to conduct business; and

WHEREAS, two IDA members have recently resigned, leaving the board with only two active members;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie hereby appoints the following individual(s) to the Board of the City of Poughkeepsie Industrial Development Agency, to serve at the pleasure of the Common Council, for a term ending December 31, 2023:

Colby Creedon

SECONDED BY: _____

Official Minutes of the Common Council Meeting of September 27, 2021

☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember McClinton	Votes	☐	☒	☐	☐
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☐	☒	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

IX. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Flowers to receive and print.

- 1. Local Law LL-21-02**, the establishment of the Division Youth Services within City of Poughkeepsie Government

**LOCAL LAW AMENDING SECTION 9.01 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE
ENTITLED DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT
(LL-21-02)**

**INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBERS FLOWERS, CHERRY, SALEM,
MCCLINTON, R. JOHNSON, MENIST, PETSAS, L. JOHNSON AND BRANNEN:**

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED, by the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie, a local law amending Section 9.01 of the Administrative Code of the City of Poughkeepsie entitled “Department of Development”, to provide as follows:

**Article IX
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT**

Section 9.01 Department of development.

[L.L. No. 4-1995, § 1; L.L. No. 10-2001, § 1; L.L. No. 1-2010, § 1]

There shall be a department of development which shall consist of the planning, building, **zoning, youth services** and social development divisions. The department of development shall be managed by the development director, **who shall report to the City Administrator. The**

duties of the development director shall include the duty to supervise and manage the activities of the building division, as well as the divisions of Zoning, Planning, Youth Services, and Social Development.

Section 9.02 Building Division.
[L.L. No. 1-2010, § 1]

The **Development** Department shall include a division of building which shall be responsible for

- (a) the enforcement of the state and local building codes, Minimum Housing Standards Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance, and the issuance of notices and orders for enforcement of the same;
- (b) the review of plans and specifications for and inspection of rehabilitation and construction work within City of Poughkeepsie; and
- (c) the administration and enforcement of all provisions of the laws, ordinances and regulations applicable to the construction, alteration, repair, removal and demolition of buildings and structures and the installation and use of materials and equipment therein and the location, relocation, use, occupancy and maintenance thereof.

Section 9.03: Division of Youth Opportunity

The Division of Youth Opportunities will include a full-time Division Head who shall report to the Development Director and who shall be responsible for supporting youth services and programs for the benefit of city residents and their families including, but not necessarily limited to:

- (a) Establish and sustain youth programs for City of Poughkeepsie residents, including but not limited to programs involving, but not necessarily limited to, academics, the arts, and athletics.**
- (b) Oversee the operations and disbursements of the City's youth grant programs, which shall be funded by the City of Poughkeepsie. The Division head will also apply for supplemental funding from other eligible sources to help sustain and grow the grant programs.**

- (c) **Act as liaison with the City of Poughkeepsie to the City of Poughkeepsie Children’s Cabinet, City of Poughkeepsie School District, Dutchess County, and external stakeholders and non-profit organizations including the Youth Empowerment Center.**
- (d) **Create and maintain a centralized directory of all youth services available in the area in such a way that the public may easily access information regarding available programs for eligible City of Poughkeepsie youth.**

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon filing with the New York State Secretary of State.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER _____

A motion was made by Chair Salem to amend LL-21-02 titled “Division of Youth Services” to “Division of Youth Opportunity and Development” The motion was seconded by Councilmember Menist.

Amendment to LL-21-02						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember McClinton	Votes	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

LL-21-02						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember McClinton	Votes	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

X. PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- 1. A PRESENTATION FROM NICOLE FENICHEL-HEWITT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ART EFFECT & JOANNA FRANG, TROLLEY BARN DIRECTOR,** regarding the Youth Arts Empowerment Zone
- 2. A COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ADMINISTRATOR NELSON,** regarding Ordinance amending §13-111 of chapter 13 of the City of Poughkeepsie Code of Ordinances entitled “Motor Vehicles and Traffic”

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Menist to defer the notice of claim to Corporation Counsel.

- 3. FROM JAYNE L MACS,** a notice of personal injury sustained on August 12, 2021

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Flowers to adjourn the meeting at 9:50pm.

Dated: October 13, 2021

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, September 27, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jasmin Nicole Davis
City Chamberlain**

