



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 4, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Virtual / Zoom

Welcome to the regularly scheduled meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is October 4, 2021, and the time is 7:07 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 – Five present, two absent at time of roll call (Absent: Councilmembers Cherry, Petsas; Late arrival: Councilmembers Menist, L. Johnson)

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

**Public Hearing Meeting September 7, 2021
Common Council Meeting September 7, 2021**

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

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

ADD:

VIII: MOTIONS & RESOLUTIONS

1. RESOLUTION R-21-74: 4th Quarter Budget Amendments

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

1. Laurie Sandow, S. Grand Ave.

Regarding the Council's weekly game of "gotcha" in response to Mayor's comments. All I can say is really!?!? Are certain members of this Council so childish that after Mayor's comments were finally added back to the Council's agenda, these councilmembers choose to waste the public's time and delay agenda items in order to play the non-agenda game of "gotcha" in response to the Mayor's comments? It seems to me that what the "gotcha" game is actually revealing is that certain councilmembers are not doing their work, nor attempting to seek these answers in between and prior to Council meetings.

Regarding Council Chair Salem's rescheduling of the September 20 organizational and Council meetings to suit Salem's personal whim, it's beyond my comprehension that one individual thinks their own absence takes priority over everyone else's calendar and schedule. And/or that the same individual is so married to personal power, that they do not trust others to hold a meeting without them.

Regarding the City's website redesign: I agree that the revised website is more visually attractive. But form and/or style over substance is not a good service to the public.

—For example, the City website post about tonight's Public Hearing gave absolutely NO clue of the purpose of the hearing, without one or two more clicks;

—The same is true for accessing tonight's Council meeting agenda, which also requires at least two more clicks to reach;

—On tonight's agenda, we have a late addendum, which—even though the City website no longer uses even the most minimal timestamps—was obviously posted sometime after 12noon today. That addendum refers to an attached Schedule A, yet no schedule is attached. Furthermore, the agenda contains zero links to the entire City Budget document, again depriving City residents of easy access and the right to know;

—At last week's Council meeting a resolution was added only after the meeting began and was not made public during the meeting;

—Oddly, individual agenda items are now posted as machine-readable, yet the entire agenda packet is still posted in graphic format. The City website does not post one simple, 1-or-2-page document of agenda items only;

—But even machine readable documents must be downloaded, before they can actually be read, and before one knows their digital size and can determine whether actually worth downloading;

—Many website posts do not have unique links, therefore impossible to share or post in a way that will take people straight to certain information;

—Then we have the re-occurring problem of certain information that is not posted to City website at all, but somehow shows up in an online news outlet. For example, today's article about Mayor Rolison announcement that the City will be using federal COVID relief money to bolster mental health and housing services through partnership programs—information that's nowhere to be found on the City website. Are there plans to incorporate a "press release" button into the City's new website?

And need I waste time and breath AGAIN to make note of the councilmembers who are late and/or absent from this Council meeting?

V. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. 90 percent survival rate if you detect breast cancer early. There's a 90 percent survival rate. This is just a reminder. I wore the closest shade of pink that I own realizing today I don't have many pink things, so I have to look for some pink things, I guess maybe to update my wardrobe. However, I just want to let people know as a reminder, go out to your doctor, get tested. Miles of Hope is an organization that ran an in person breast cancer walk this past Sunday at James Baird Park, and they're running it virtually throughout the entire month of October. You can walk. You can run. You can bike throughout the entire month in support of breast cancer awareness and support of finding a path toward a cure. And again, early detection gives you around 90 percent survival rate, so it's really important to stay on top of it. Go to your health care visit. Ask your doctor if you're of age for mammogram, keep yourself up to date. And if you can support Miles of Hope and their awareness campaign, you can go to MilesOfHope.Org, and you can sign up for a virtual walk. You could do that from absolutely anywhere. You can do it in your neighborhood, in a park, in your town, on a trail, wherever you are. You can support breast cancer awareness to honor the fighters, the survivors and those that we've lost to breast cancer. Again, if you're interested in registering for that virtual walk, run or bike, you can do so at MilesOfHope.Org.

The New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program is still accepting applications for those who are in need of rent relief. Please, if you need rent relief, take advantage of these funds and feel free to reach out to Hudson River Housing if you need assistance in finding or completing the application. Right on their website, they have a pop up and it directs you right to the New York State website, where you can then fill out the application. And there's plenty of organizations out there who will help you do that if you need assistance. But please, if you need it, don't let these funds pass you by. They're there for your benefit.

There are 104 active COVID cases currently in the City of Poughkeepsie. COVID and coronavirus is still kind of raging around us, and it's important that we all get out there and get your shot, get vaccinated if you're able to. I highly encourage people to do this. Health professionals are saying this virus is continuing to spread among the folks who are unvaccinated, and that is really risking everyone's health and safety and the vitality of our entire community from us getting back and operating in a way that we were and at the level that we were prior to the pandemic. And it's important not to forget that kids under a certain age still can't get vaccinated. Your ability to get vaccinated helps to protect everyone in the community.

We're entering cold and flu season, and that is even more reason to ensure that you're using the proper precautions and continuing to mask up. Last cold and flu season, we saw very, very few cold and flu cases, and that's because we're wearing masks. Masks work against the general protection of viruses, and they work against the coronavirus. If you're vaccinated or not, and it's suggested to wear a mask because of your proximity to other people, because of the environment that you're in, please do so. And if you can, please consider getting vaccinated. It's really easy to get the vaccine now. There are pop ups happening all over. You can go to your local drugstore. Most times you don't even need an appointment anymore, and we're already starting to see folks get out there and get boosters for their shots. So, you know, it's really important to take advantage of this public health innovation that is the COVID vaccine.

This past Saturday, I had the great pleasure of attending the Grand Opening and Harvest Festival for the Pershing Avenue Farm and Community Garden. Councilmember Flowers was there as well as Mayor Rolison, and I have to say that this is such an incredible project and the event was very well attended and it featured simultaneous interpretation, which was very impressive and inspiring.

And I want to give a massive thanks out to Scenic Hudson, Directions, Poughkeepsie Farm Project, MASS Design, Dutchess Outreach and Zion Church, the partnership and all the community members who work to make this possible and in partnership with the Ecological Citizen's Project and their Community Regenerator Program for ensuring that this space, this urban farm and Community

Garden is going to be managed by the community for the community and grow food for the direct community. This neighborhood farm is directly supporting the community and growing community food security and honestly, food security should be named as a priority that we are aiming to achieve here in the City of Poughkeepsie with more than 26 percent of individuals suffering from food insecurity, and that's prior to the pandemic. Through the pandemic, the estimates were that those numbers were almost double in Dutchess County. We're not really sure of the granular data here in the Poughkeepsie, however. Either way, that's above the national average. And more and more individuals are facing a greater difficulty in accessing fresh and healthy foods.

I'm very, very grateful that the Pershing Avenue Farm will be growing food for the community and will be offering guarding plots to folks that want to grow their own food. Because this encourages both food sovereignty and encourages land sovereignty to folks who come from histories of farming who don't necessarily have the spaces they might need to farm living in a small urban center. If you haven't been out there, I encourage you to go take a look. It's right off Pershing Avenue. It's right behind the park.

And if you haven't had a chance to visit Dutchess Outreach's Urban Farming Community Garden on North Clinton Street, I'd really encourage you to go visit that. It's up and running for more than 6 years now. And if you're going there, just be sure to let me know and I'll give you the official tour.

As we enter a comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance update, I'm going to be personally asking us to include urban agriculture as a land use in our code so that these places are protected and so that we can continue to turn vacant lots into vibrant plots where it's appropriate and where it might be needed. These projects, these kinds of projects are worth investing in because they contribute to the overall health and success of cities and the people in them, and they do this in a number of different ways, but just to name a few. By increasing the availability of healthy foods, they provide incredible opportunities for workforce development. As we're seeing on Pershing Avenue for youth and for adults, they give you things to do. They give adults things to do and they contribute real value to the neighborhoods. I can go on and on about the benefits of these kinds of food security interventions, community gardens and urban farms.

As a body, a legislative body, the Common Council, I hope we consider investments like this when we're determining how we put the American Rescue Funds to work for this community. As we start to enter budget season, we should be getting our budget soon from the Administration. I think by October 15th is the deadline. I suggest we start to name priorities that we want to see and make better here in the City of Poughkeepsie. They could include infrastructure improvement and development, economic development and supporting projects that encourage

workforce development. They can also include social infrastructure improvements like supporting projects that provide mental health and addiction services, as well as projects that help us contribute to greater community food security. I'm really, really looking forward to having more conversations about where we can direct funds in the near future in the next couple of weeks.

I also want to flag that we did start our council meeting late, and that is because we had more than 69 folks signed up to speak during the public hearing on the proposed legislation, which is incredible. However, we did not conclude that meeting. We adjourned that public hearing to October 18th. I do want to flag for the public that we will be continuing to receive comments from the folks that had already signed up on October 18, starting at 5:30pm, where we've adjourned the public hearing.

And with that, I will finalize my comments and Mayor Rolison informed me that he couldn't be with us here tonight, so we will skip over our Mayor's comment and move to reports of Boards and Committees.

VI. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

VII. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

1. FINANCE COMMITTEE, CHAIR, COUNCILMEMBER MENIST

I'm going to make it very brief.

We had a Finance Committee meeting this past week where we were able to take some public comment on proposed uses for American Rescue Plan Funding from the federal government. We were able to have a few commenters, but I think because of a rescheduled meeting, I think we did not have the reach that we would have liked to have had. Expecting to continue having public comment period on use of American Rescue Plan Funds as we move forward to continue engaging with the public about these dollars that are available for city use. That's incredibly important for the public to know and keep an eye out for our Finance Committee meetings.

In our Finance Committee meeting, we also discussed an agenda item, which was added this evening after discussing it in our Finance Committee meeting and bringing it to the Chair for an addendum. This is a budget change that would reallocate some funds for what are essentially several new positions or

promotions or title changes. There is not a significant impact to the budget. The expectation is to take the funding out of contingency.

But by moving this tonight, instead of waiting two weeks to do it, it will allow for the Administration to begin hiring for these positions. Normally, I would not want to move something immediately. It will be up to the Council for discussion this evening during new business and we'll have Mr. Nelson, give us more of a definition of exactly what the Administration is looking for. But it seemed based on our conversation during the Finance Committee meeting that ultimately these are positions that are needed. They're needed as soon as possible. Some of these positions will remain vacant through the end of the year, but they'd like to begin being able to list the positions so they can be hired for in the next budget, which of course, we'll still have to debate and discuss, but the Administration wanted some flexibility there. And one of these positions is incredibly important because we have a looming retirement that will probably happen at the beginning of next year. This position would be a temporary position. So that way, basically their replacement for that person could start learning the position while the person is still on payroll so we can transfer over some of that institutional knowledge before that person leaves.

We did not have enough members of the Finance Committee to officially recommend it. We did not have a quorum to take a vote to recommend it to the Council for Passage. But I can speak for myself and saying that I do believe we should move this forward tonight. We should pass it tonight and during our conversation later, I'm sure the Councilmember Flowers will be happy to share her perspective on that as well. But that is all we have for tonight and look forward to continuing to engage with the public on our Finance Committee meetings. Please keep an eye out on the city website for when those meetings will be posted.

Thank you.

VIII. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

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

1. RESOLUTION R-21-74: 4th Quarter Budget Amendments

**RESOLUTION
(R-21-74)**

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBERS MENIST & FLOWERS:

WHEREAS, City Administrator and Finance Commissioner, in consultation with the department heads, have identified the need to amend certain budgeted positions in the various departments to make City Government more efficient and ensure necessary functions of government continue; and

WHEREAS, the administration is requesting that the Common Council amend the 2021 budget as proposed in the attached Schedule “A”, to meet the needs of the department heads, which will in turn better serve the residents of the City of Poughkeepsie; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie has determined that this resolution constitutes a Type II action as defined by the New York State Environmental Quality review Act and 6 NYCRR Part 617; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2021 budget is hereby amended as provided in Schedule “A”, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Commissioner of Finance be, and he hereby is, authorized to make such technical adjustments and corrections he deems necessary to this resolution to carry out the intent of this Council.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER _____.

R-21-74						
☒ 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. **Ordinance O-21-04**, amending §13-111 of Chapter 13 of the City of Poughkeepsie Code of Ordinances entitled “Motor Vehicles and Traffic”

**ORDINANCE AMENDING §13-111
OF CHAPTER 13 OF THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED “MOTOR VEHICLES
AND TRAFFIC”**

(O-21-04)

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBERS McCLINTON AND FLOWERS:

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

SECTION 1: Section 13-111 “Parking prohibited on front lawn”

[Ord. of 6-15-1982, § 1, Ord. of 11-5-1998, § 1; Ord. of 1-21-2003, § 1]

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to operate any vehicle or to allow any vehicle to be parked, put in place or let remain on the front yard, front lawn or front property of any lot, building, residence, structure or premises:**
 - (1) In an R-1, R-2, R-2A, R-3, R-3A or R-4 Zoning District, unless such vehicle is located on a driveway extending through such front yard to a garage, carport or properly surfaced parking area beyond the front yard line and surfaced with materials set forth in Section 16 1/2-3 of this Code; or**
 - (2) Bordering on Route 44/55, also known as the "East-West Arterial" in the City of**

Poughkeepsie.

- (b) **It shall be unlawful to park a licensed or unlicensed non-passenger motor vehicle or box or trailer part over 18 feet long on the lawn or driveway in any residential zone between the front line of the residential structure and the curb-line to the street, except between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., when a vehicle is engaged in the temporary activity of moving, lawn maintenance, or delivery.**
- (c) **The provisions of this section shall not apply to premises for which the Zoning Administrator of the City of Poughkeepsie has given a permit pursuant to Section 19-4.13(3) of this Code of Ordinances.**
- (d) Any person violating Section 13-111 shall be subject to a fine, upon conviction, of \$50.

vii>

viii>

SECTION 2: This Ordinance shall take effect immediately.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER _____:

ADDITIONS denoted by **Bold** and **Underlining**

DELETIONS denoted by Brackets [] and ~~Strikethrough~~

Councilmember Y. Flowers motioned to make an amendment to change the fine from \$75 to \$50. Councilmember McClinton seconded.

Amendment to O-21-04, fine changed from \$75 to \$50						
☒ 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	☒	☐	☐	☐
O-21-04						
☒ 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 COMMUNICATION FROM ASSISTANT CITY ENGINEER JOE CHENIER,** regarding Eminent Domain Hearing for the Garden and Washington Street bridge projects
- 2. A PRESENTATION FROM THE SOUTHERN WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE**

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember L. Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 10:26pm.

Official Minutes of the Common Council Meeting of October 4, 2021

Dated: October 19, 2021

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, October 4, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmin Nicole Davis
City Chamberlain

