

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2020  
5:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

(RC)

**Present:** Mayor Colin Read, Councilors Ira Barbell (W1), Mike Kelly (W2), Elizabeth Gibbs (W3), Steve Brodi (W4), Patrick McFarlin (W5), Jeff Moore (W6)

**Absent:** None

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**MAYOR'S COMMENTS:** spoke about and thanked Community we've done incredibly well with COVID for quite some time.

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**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Common Council held on September 17, 2020 are approved and placed on file among the public records of the City Clerk's Office

By Councilor Barbell; Seconded by Councilor Kelly

(All in Favor/opposed)

Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**2. PAYROLLS OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS:**

**RESOLVED:** That the payrolls of the various Departments of the City of Plattsburgh for the week ending September 23, 2020 in the amount of \$ 456,140.68 are authorized and allowed and the Mayor and the City Clerk are hereby empowered and directed to sign warrants drawn on the City Chamberlain for the payment thereof.

By Councilor Moore; Seconded by Councilor Gibbs

(All in Favor/opposed)

Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**3. REPORTS OF CITY OFFICES & COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Report from the Building Inspector's office for the week of September 16 - 22, 2020
- Reports from the Police Department dated September 21, 2020
- Minutes from the Finance and Budget Committee meeting held on September 17, 2020

**COUNCILOR/DEPARTMENT CHAIR COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Governance, Strategy, and City Operations-** Chair Councilor Barbell indicated nothing to report.

**City Infrastructure** – Chair Councilor Moore indicated nothing to report.

**Finance and Budget** – Chair Councilor Kelly indicated nothing to report.

**Public Safety** – Chair Councilor Gibbs met tonight nothing additional to report.

**Plattsburgh Public Library** – Chair Councilor McFarlin asked to meet with Richard and Library Director de la Chapelle next week on budget.

**MLD** - MLD Board President Councilor McFarlin indicated nothing to report.

**RESOLVED:** That the reports as listed are hereby ordered received and any written reports are placed on file among the public records of the City Clerk’s Office.

By Councilor Gibbs; Seconded by Councilor Barbell  
(All in Favor/opposed)  
Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore  
(All voted in the affirmative)

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**4. CORRESPONDENCE OR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS: None**

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**5. AUDIT OF CLAIMS:**

**RESOLVED:** That the bills Audited by the Common Council for the week ending September 25, 2020 in the amount of \$ 2,672,037.74 are authorized and allowed and the Mayor and City Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to sign warrants drawn on the City Chamberlain for the payment thereof.

By Councilor Moore; Seconded by Councilor Gibbs  
(All in Favor/opposed)  
Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore  
(All voted in the affirmative)

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**6. PERSONS ADDRESSING COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:**

**Mayor Read announced** that Council meeting will adjourn at 5:30pm and reconvene at 130 Arizona Avenue for the Joint Public Hearing on Petition to Annex Territory from the Town of Plattsburgh to the City of Plattsburgh. Therefore, they are asking public comments to be limited to 2 minutes instead of 5 minutes.

**Geoffrey Barker** submitted email comments on the budget, Saranac River Trail and the Durkee Street parking lot, which are made part of the minutes of the meeting.

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**7. OTHER ITEMS:**

**A. RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Mayor is hereby authorized to sign a Memo of Understanding with GNG Fitness Training, in a form approved by the Corporation Counsel, to allow for their use of the Oval Fields for their Youth Football program for the fall of 2020.

By Councilor McFarlin; Seconded by Councilor Gibbs

Discussion: Yes

Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**B. RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves revising Capital Project H5110.58, 2016 Saranac River Trail – Phase II, to include funding from the Sewer Fund of \$270,000 and to decrease the General Fund additional bonding requirement, needed to complete the project construction, from \$1,236,363 to \$966,363. The General Fund additional bonding requirement was approved for the amount of \$588,267 on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and this request adds another \$378,096 to provide approval for that total General Fund bonding addition of \$966,363 needed to complete the project.

**Motion to waive reading and move Resolutions 7B and 7C**

By Councilor McFarlin; Seconded by Councilor Gibbs

(All voted in favor of waiving reading and move Resolutions 7B and 7C)

Discussion: Yes

Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore

(Councilors Barbell, Gibbs, Brodi and McFarlin voted in the affirmative. Councilors Kelly and Moore voted in the negative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**C. WHEREAS,** the Common Council has been presented with a revised capital project resolution amending the funding sources for capital project H5110.58, 2016 Saranac River Trail – Phase II, which includes funding from the Sewer Fund.

**RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves the construction contract for “Saranac River Trail Phase 2” be awarded to the low bidder, Luck Brothers, Inc., in the amount of \$3,098,501.31 and authorizes the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

**[See details under Item 7B]**

Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore

(Councilors Barbell, Gibbs, Brodi and McFarlin voted in the affirmative. Councilors Kelly and Moore voted in the negative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**Item D was added during Committee meeting:**

**D. RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore, upon receipt of the revised invoice, the Common Council determines that the referenced fees were proper and necessarily incurred in connection with the review of the pending applications, and hereby approves paying the invoices

referenced on the Open Invoices Report dated September 24, 2020 from Barclay Damon in the amount of \$20,000; and it is further

RESOLVED: that the Common Council authorizes and approves the Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals signing of a Letter of Engagement with Barclay Damon dated April 24, 2020, and authorizes and approves the Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeal to sign a revised Letter of Engagement dated September 24, 2020; and it is further

RESOLVED: that the Common Council terminates the investigation into the chairperson of the zoning board of appeals hiring of a law firm from Buffalo NY on or about April 24 2020 in connection with the Durkee Lot mixed use development required by the resolution dated September 3, 2020 effective immediately; and it is further

RESOLVED: that the City Chamberlain shall adjust the 2020 General Fund budget by transferring appropriations of \$26,000.00 from Contingency to Zoning Contract Services to provide for unbudgeted legal fees incurred by Zoning Board of Appeals from April of 2020 for special counsel services related to their review of the Durkee St. development under the City's DRI funding project.

**Motion to waive reading and move Resolution**

By Councilor Gibbs; Seconded by Councilor Kelly  
(All voted in favor of waiving reading and move Resolution)

Discussion: Yes  
Roll call: Councilors Barbell, Kelly, Gibbs, Brodi, McFarlin, Moore  
(All voted in the affirmative)  
**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted  
Follow up Action: None

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**8. TRAVEL REQUEST: None**

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**9. RESOLUTIONS FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION: None**

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**10. NEW BUSINESS AND COUNCILOR REPORTS:**

**Councilor Gibbs** mentioned the Council received written comments from an individual regarding Police Chief she will be reaching out to Corporation Counsel Dean Schneller to discuss.

**Mayor Read** mentioned he has written Saranac River Trail funding in to budget Council has asked him to prepare will have some details on that next week.

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**11. CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ANY TOPIC:**

**Unidentified Speaker** spoke on behalf of Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance that they holding a Rolling Pride car parade for this year's event on October 3, 2020. The car parade will start on Durkee Street and go to US Oval, have some entertainment and disperse afterwards. Have received guidance from Clinton County Health Department and since no city services or street closures requested they were informed council approval is not needed.

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**At 5:30pm: Meeting temporarily recessed to reconvene at 130 Arizona Avenue for the Joint Public Hearing on Petition to Annex Territory from the Town of Plattsburgh to the City of Plattsburgh.**

**Meeting Reconvened at 6:06pm    Location: 130 Arizona Ave**

**Present:**        Mayor Colin Read, Councilors Ira Barbell (W1), Mike Kelly (W2), Patrick McFarlin (W5), Jeff Moore (W6)

**Absent:**        Councilor Elizabeth Gibbs (W3) and Councilor Steve Brodi (W4)

*[Councilor McFarlin left meeting at 6:35pm]*

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:11 pm    Location: 130 Arizona Ave**

**Present:**        Mayor Colin Read, Councilors Ira Barbell (W1), Mike Kelly (W2), Jeff Moore (W6)

**Absent:**        Councilor Elizabeth Gibbs (W3), Councilor Steve Brodi (W4) Patrick McFarlin (W5)

9/24/2020: Written comments submitted in to  
Minutes of Meeting.

**Carlin, Beth**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 24, 2020 9:46 AM  
**To:** Read, Colin; Carlin, Beth; dean@schnellerlaw.com  
**Subject:** Vital input to tonight's council meeting

Could you please forward this information to the Common Council ASAP. I have "AOL" and am unable to use the City web's directory format to load.

With respect to tonight's Common Council Meeting please consider the following:

1. The proposed budget cuts are necessary..
2. Fully fund the River Trail Phase II as required. It is a core ingredient to the future success and prosperity of the City and its residents / users.
3. Change the name of the "Durkee Street Paring Lot" to something moere attractive and core to our history such as "Patriots Parking Lot" or " City Center Parking Lot".

The above is based upon diligent reading of the situations facing the City. Hopefully the Durkee DRI monies can be routed to more useful projects. The City success is based upon having a large parking area for residents, visitors and events such as parades and "Flea Markets". Think of the strategic three: Lake frontage, a nearby City core, and walking / biking trails throughout.

Thank you for your consideration to the above.

Geoffrey B. Barker

9/24/2020: Councilor Kelly submitted written comments in to minutes of Meeting

#### Finance issues

- 1) The accounting employed to lower the capital expenditure does not make the project any more feasible. In fact, adding sewer funds without consulting the Finance Committee, Council or Mayor is not in keeping with our policy of openness in government. This only makes the project less appealing, not more appealing.
- 2) The above is just another example of how messy this project has been from day one. For example, didn't anyone assess the condition of the old Saranac Street bridge prior to including it in the original scope? That was the first of what will be numerous cost overruns the City Council will be asked to approve.
- 3) We have now received dozens of estimates on what this project will cost. The only thing the estimates have in common is each one is more costly than the last. It has doubled in price. I liken this to buying a new car. Would you go to the dealer who doubled the price after the first quote?

#### Operations Issues

- 1) Below is a list of most of the city's General Fund/Rec facilities and the current state of repair. We are in serious need of money to fix our current inventory, and yet we keep adding new infrastructure. This list does not include streets, which we all know have a long way to go before we can consider them satisfactory once again.
  - a) Crete Center - \$3 million to bring up to satisfactory standing or \$1 million to remove
  - b) Old Beach bath house \$100 K to replace
  - c) New Beach bath house - \$10 K
  - d) Farmer's Market - \$277,000 dollars to complete new building - assuming Prime removes old FM at no cost to the city
  - e) Marina - Requires setup and breakdown each year but little additional cost to city thanks to outsourcing agreement
  - f) Parks and Rec buildings (6) These are in various states of repair but all need at least some repairs - none are satisfactory
  - g) Skate park - okay except for occasional graffiti
  - h) Old base marina - teardown of old building and pier
  - i) Sailor's beach - \$40 K to restore walkway
  - j) Transportation Museum - the tenant's inability to pay leaves the city with the burden of maintenance. Is this a teardown or a fixer-upper? Who knows what one of those two options will cost?
  - k) "The Alamo" - reported to be in good condition
  - l) City Hall - A beautiful building when it was built, it has suffered from years of deferred maintenance and upgrades. The plumbing, lighting, and electrical all need extensive work. The floors and walls are dingy and have not been professionally cleaned or painted in decades, with the exception of a small section painted on the first floor by volunteers. There are periodic leaks but those

seem to be contained at present. Fortunately, window replacement is about to commence at least for some of the many windows.

- m) Green St. Bridge - This bridge was repaired a few years ago.
  - n) Base Gym - Windows, roof and heating are all in need of repair. Lighting could be improved. This building will be very costly to bring into ADA compliance.
  - o) ADA compliance - A study commissioned by the City Council indicated that there are dozens of ADA violations throughout the city that need to be addressed.
- 2) If you add up the list above and study it carefully, you will likely conclude that maintenance, not new capital projects, should be our primary focus. Each year that repairs go undone make them more costly. I liken this situation to your neighbor who lives in a shack but borrows money to build a brand-spanking new garage. It just doesn't make sense to do that. It doesn't make sense for the city to add new infrastructure when we have a backlog of repairs, unless we plan to retire some of those older assets.

#### Human Resource issues.

- 1) When Jeff, Ira and I met with the department heads, one of the most frequent questions was: "Why are you doing all these big capital projects when you're talking about downsizing?" It is a fair question. These continued expenses put pressure on payrolls. If we do get to a point of layoffs, people will always wonder why we didn't take other measures first.
- 2) DPW is stretched thin. Adding another big infrastructure project only increases their stress and makes them demand more help. You can't blame them for that, either.