

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON
June 14, 2023

The regular meeting of the Mechanicville City Council was held at the Senior Center, 178 North Main Street, Mechanicville, New York on Wednesday June 14, 2023.

Commissioner Seber: Called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Commissioner Seber led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:	Mayor Butler	Present
	Commissioner Seber	Present
	Commissioner Sgambati	Present
	Commissioner Hosley	Present

Motion to accept the May 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Motion: Commissioner Hosley Seconded by: Commissioner Sgambati

AYES: 3 NAYES: 0

Abstain: 1 Mayor Butler

Commissioner Reports:

Mayor Butler stated the Building Inspector asked him to inform the public that there is a complaint form online so if someone sees something they can report it on the City's website under the Building Department. He announced that Kevin Koval recently purchased the DiSiena property and is having fundraisers for Toys for Tots, he is doing "coffee and cars" once a month. He stated the next one is going to be on Sunday July 23rd from 8am-12pm. Mayor Butler gave Sergeant Jordan McBride some recognition for completing a three (3) week training course certifying him as a Drug Recognition Expert. He went on to say he is specifically trained to recognize impaired drivers under the influence of drugs and there are only a few people certified in the area to do this. He recognized Jordan for taking this effort and giving up three (3) weeks of his life to do this.

Commissioner Seber announced City Hall/City buildings will be closed on Monday June 19th in observance of Juneteenth.

Commissioner Sgambati stated the DPW crews have been very busy, the playground bathrooms, and the boathouse bathrooms are up and ready, and the water has been turned on at the docks,

fountain in the park has been painted and is up and running. He added he is still in the process of getting the kayak docks in and ask the public to be patient as they are waiting for a crane. He went on to say they are waiting for a few dry days so that they can paint the pool so that they can get that up and running. Commissioner Sgambati stated they had three (3) employees take and pass bucket training class and he thanked the crews for a job well done on the two (2) water main breaks they had last week. He thanked Mayor Butler for having the company that did the Central Avenue manhole come back and fix it. He added the Building Inspector is now located at the DPW offices and he reminded the public that when they are dumping materials they need to check into the Office and they only accept checks and money orders. Lastly, he stated there is job opening online for a labor positions.

Commissioner Hosley stated they are looking for an Animal Control Officer. He apologized for the banners not being put up in a timely manner but the shortage in DPW is holding things up. Commissioner Hosley went on to they they need to get a bus the Seniors and he has a petition with over fifty (50) signatures saying they support getting a new bus. He added they have the van but it is not handicapped accessible and they can't fit too many people in it at once. He announced the Seniors would be taking a trip to Lake George on July 20th for a lunch cruise. Lastly, he stated the splash pad has not been mentioned in a while but he is hoping construction will begin by the end of the year and they put six (6) new signs in the Tallmadge park about keeping dogs on a lease and have had a really good response.

Public Hearing (Brownfield Opportunity):

Commissioner Seber stated Bob Murphy from Barton and Loguidice is there to answer any questions the public may have.

Bob Murphy from Barton and Loguidice stated the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program was something the City completed a nomination plan for seven (7) years ago and funding for the program dried up shortly thereafter so it was not advanced to the next step. He went on to say the next step is petitioning the Secretary of State for a Brownfield Opportunity Area Designation which opens up various financial support for cleaning up properties that either are contaminated or have the appearance of being contaminated, and that is the purpose of the program. He added this designation does not obligate the City to do anything or to any property owners for anything, it just opens up opportunities for funding should those property owners decide to pursue this at all.

Commissioner Seber stated that typically when they apply for any grant it is scored and the higher scores obviously get the grants, he asked if this would add any points to an application.

Bob Murphy stated it absolutely would even if it was not for a contaminated property, if it was for new infrastructure to encourage economic development or something similar to that, being in a designated area will help the City's score.

Kim Dunn asked what property this is referring to and if it is City owned property or privately owned property.

Bob Murphy stated it is basically everything from the railroad tracks east and it is not just City owned property.

Kim Dunn asked if the grant funds were 100% or would there be a City match.

Bob Murphy stated there would be a match that may even be available to private property owners as well but this designation does not apply for any grants by itself it just makes the City eligible.

Marylou Kling asked Bob Murphy to explain the timeline of where this process started, what reports were done, and how they got where they are now.

Bob Murphy stated the City began a BOA ground area nomination study between ten (10) – twelve (12) years ago which involved a public participation process and property analysis of potentially impacted properties, which was a multi-year process, and he believes there were a handful of public forums, and it was finalized in early 2016. He went on to say at that time there was no funding available through the State budget and it did not advance but now that program is back and so the next logical step is to submit for this designation.

Ray Martin asked Bob Murphy if he thought they needed significant updates to the plan.

Bob Murphy stated he looked over the plan and it is pretty relevant to where they are today and there would be no cost to the City to take this plan and submit it as is.

Ray Martin asked what changes were made to make this opportunity more relevant now than it was two (2) years ago.

Bob Murphy explained that was not that it wasn't relevant two (2) years ago but, it did not rise to the priority of pursuing it at that time.

Ray Martin asked to have the plan put on the website.

Commissioner Seber closed the Public hearing on the Brownfield Opportunity and opened the public hearing on the modification of the three (3) sections of the code that are listed.

Public Hearing (Modification §183-4(a), 183-11, and 183-12):

Commissioner Seber stated the codes they are voting on to make changes to relate to parking signs, one-way street, and even/odd parking. He went on to say the codes have specific streets listed, the City has a Traffic Commission that meets to discuss requests, ideas, and concerns and then they bring those to the Council which in turn then votes on whether or not they want to make the changes. He added that prior to what they are voting on tonight, every time there is a change it had to be a local law change since the streets were listed so tonight they are voting to eliminate the streets in the code so that way going forward the Council can make the changes by resolution.

Kim Dunn asked what would happen with past changes that were made through the Traffic Safety Commission.

Mike Butler stated that was his responsibility and he did not realize this needed to be done.

Kim Dunn stated it is a great idea that now these just need to be done by resolution and not have to go through the local law.

Ray Martin stated what he read was that this will be taking out specific streets but include all streets so that means stop signs will be on the corner of all streets.

City Attorney Lyn Murphy stated that is not correct, that would only be if the City Council approves a resolution. What the resolution tonight means the Commission can make recommendations for the entire City of Mechanicville and the Council can vote on them as opposed to being limited to certain streets.

Commissioner Seber closed the public hearing and opened the meeting to public comments.

Public Comment:

William Connors suggested Commissioner Seber resign and the Council appoint Cheryl Blodgett so that she may get acclimated to the position.

City Attorney Lyn Murphy advised the Council to refrain from commenting.

William Connors stated that he hopes when the budget process begins they allow Public Works and Public Safety get the funds they properly need.

Dave Hicks expressed his disapproval of the new code changes and the changes in fees.

Leonard Brooks of Stillwater Avenue asked what happened to the petition he submitted.

Mayor Butler stated the Committee met and decided to put stop signs on Stillwater Avenue but decided not to change the speed limit.

Leonard Brooks stated no one cares about the signs and no one stops at them. He added trucks should not be on the road but they continually drive up and down the road because nothing is enforced. He also stated the City needs more Officers and at budget time they need to allow for more Officers.

Chief Rabbitt stated in reference to the number of Officers, there are studies done based on population, crime, and crime types and the City meets the recommendations.

Elizabeth Espinoza of Harris Avenue stated she does not think more Police Officers is a good idea but suggested putting more cameras in the area. She added the Police Reform Committee needs to be updated on the webpage to the Police-Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission.

Darlene McGraw of Halfmoon requested the City purchase new transportation that is ADA accessible.

Marylou Kling stated that at the most recent Charter Review Committee meeting a resolution was passed to be presented to the City Council but is not on the agenda and she is wondering why it is not.

Commissioner Seber stated the Committee wanted to provide the Council with more information. He added it will be on the Agenda for July.

Marylou Kling asked various questions in regards to the Charter changes.

Barb McGuire asked how the City could issues violations when City owned property is in violation. She added she does not agree with paying the Code Enforcement Officers salary and then again being charged for inspections. She asked who was responsible for making sure all the details of the GAR contract were carried through.

Commissioner Seber stated it was himself and the Assessor.

Barb McGuire pointed out details in the contract not completed. She stated in 2021 Barton and Loguidice was paid \$10,000 to do studies on the Pump Station and she asked where that proposal is and what improvements were suggested, if they were done, who did them, and how much they cost.

Mayor Butler stated the work is being done on an emergency basis, the building was shut down due to the roof caving in. He added they did not re-build the building they will be re-enforcing the stair cases and it is costing about \$35,000.

Barb McGuire asked if Barton and Loguidice suggested something in 2021 how is it an emergency now.

Mayor Butler stated it was because nothing was done to repair it in 2021.

Barb McGuire asked what is being done with the recently sold City owned properties on Saratoga Avenue and North Main Street, and how long is it going to be before the owners are made to clean them up.

Mayor Butler stated the Code Enforcement Officer has sent letters to the property owners but they have thirty (30) days to comply. He added that they are having trouble finding the owners as the information has not been kept up. He went on to say that the Code Enforcement Officer met with the owner of North Main and had him re-board up the house.

Barb McGuire asked what is going to be done about the sidewalks in the City.

Mayor Butler stated they are not sending letters to home owners about the sidewalks as the City has there own that need to be repaired but they are waiting for anticipated funds to come in, he added it has been a while but it is coming from the State and that takes time.

Barb McGuire stated they should use the \$2.3 million to fix them since they are a liability to the City.

Mayor Butler stated there are millions of dollars of sidewalk work to be done in the City.

Barb McGuire stated they should use the money, instead of worrying about aesthetics they should worry about the City owned areas.

Commissioner Seber stated that there was a \$250,000 grant from the Department of State to fix from the new bridge to the Rensselaer County bridge but the money got sent back and no work was completed. He added it was a no match grant and he has no idea why nothing was done; the money was there in a no match grant in 2018 and nothing was done. He added no money should ever be given back, there is always work to be done.

Josie from 180 North Main Street commended the Police for a job well done and stated the City needs a new bus.

Kim Dunn of South Main Street stated there was no payroll and voucher resolution for the May meeting and pointed out that the numbers were not added correctly on the payroll and voucher resolution for this meeting. She went on to say that while she thinks added cameras around the City is a great idea without dispatch there to monitor them there is no one to watch them.

Police Chief Rabbitt stated they use cameras as more of an investigative tool more than anything and they do not use them to actively watch the City.

Kim Dunn asked why they can't use current City funds to purchase a bus.

Mayor Butler stated they need to look into it but they are probably a year out because it is hard to get any vehicles right now.

Kim Dunn asked Commissioner Hosley if he has looked into purchasing a bus anywhere and if so how much they cost.

Commissioner Hosley stated he looks every day and from what he has seen they are anywhere from \$70,000 to \$90,000 and a low mileage used one for \$50,000. He added he is in contact with DOT to get the specs.

Kim Dunn added she is a big fan of saving money in case something comes up but also feels the bus is a necessity since the City has such a big Senior population.

Ray Martin asked if there was an annual report done for 2022.

Commissioner Seber stated he does an annual report for the business done in his office and he presents it at the Council meeting in February.

Ray Martin stated that all the reports should be posted on the webpage. He asked the City Attorney in reference to the resolutions for the Charter Changes if she submitted those to Saratoga County Planning for their review.

City Attorney Lyn Murphy stated she did and Mike Valentine stated that none of the ordinances that are proposed need County review.

Ray Martin asked if they received that in writing.

City Attorney Lyn Murphy stated she is not sure the contact was through Kyle.

Michael Connors asked what the current status of the tax collections was.

City Attorney Lyn Murphy stated the Supreme Court just handed down a decision on Thursday that you cannot proceed with tax collections, in order to go forward with the tax collections, if you sell the property you have to give back any proceeds over and above what was owed, including fees to the Owner, the City of Mechanicville does not read that way so they can not proceed until they change the Local Law.

Michael Connors asked what the amount of taxes that were overdue over a year.

Commissioner Seber stated he needed to look that up.

Michael Connors asked if there were any budgetary concerns.

Commissioner Seber stated there are always budgetary concerns. He added the general fund is solid right now and there is a substantial fund balance, and over the past three (3) years the City has appropriated almost \$1.6 million dollars in fund balance to keep the taxes down and they have not raised the tax levy in a couple of years. He is hoping in the next few years they tax levy will remain constant and they we will be able to do a few of the things requested.

Michael Connors asked if ordinance changes made after 2017 currently made available on the website.

Commissioner Seber stated he is not sure if they are. He added there have been two (2) or three (3) that he knows of and they have been filed with the State.

Michael Connors asked why it takes so long to receive the annual reports.

Commissioner Seber stated the annual reports are the auditors reports and they are working on them. He added the books are not closed until the end of March and the Auditors are working on them now.

Ethel Baisley of Eight Avenue stated she works with the Seniors and it is very difficult with not having a bus. She added the vehicle they use now only can have three (3) people at a time so you have Seniors that have to wait long periods of time.

Supervisor Richardson stated that people have been attending meeting in the recent months speaking about the lack of work that is done in the City, the poor infrastructure, and businesses leaving the City. He then named several businesses that have recently come to the City and many that have remained in the City for several years. He added that over the years the City has been awarded over \$23 million in grants for infrastructure, bridges, roads, sewer lines, and to help small businesses. He went on to say the City had lost the opportunity to received HUD grants for several years but when given the opportunity under the administration of Commissioner Seber not only did they do a fantastic job they were awarded and additional \$400,000 from the State for a performance-based incentive. He stated that people need to realize there is a lot going on behind the scenes and they are doing everything they can to help out the members of this community and anyone who does business here.

Resolutions:

RESOLUTION 43-2023 Code Amendment (Abandon Automobiles)

Moved by: Mayor Butler

Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 44-2023 Code Amendment (Outdoor Storage)

Moved by: Commissioner Seber

Seconded by: Commissioner Sgambati

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 45-2023 Code Amendments (Residential Occupancy)

Moved by: Commissioner Sgambati

Seconded by: Mayor Butler

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 46-2023 Code Amendments (Streets)

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 47-2023 Parking/Traffic Changes

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 48-2023 Dump Body Award Bill

Moved by: Commissioner Hosley
Seconded by: Commissioner Sgambati

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 49-2023 Resignation

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 50-2023 Full-Time Police Officer (McClements)

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 51-2023 Full-Time Police Officer (Mauleon)

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Sgambati

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 52-2023 Full-Time Police Officer (Traina)

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 53-2023 Part-Time Police Officer (McLaughlin)

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 54-2023 New Chevrolet Tahoe

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 55-2023 Retirement

Moved by: Commissioner Sgambati
Seconded by: Mayor Butler

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 56-2023 Memorandum of Agreement

Moved by: Commissioner Sgambati
Seconded by: Mayor Butler

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 57-2023 Re-appointment of Zoning and Planning Board of Appeals
Members

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Seber

AYES: NAYS:

RESOLUTION 58-2023 Appointment of Zoning and Planning Board of Appeals
Member

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Sgambati

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 59-2023 Brownfield Opportunity

Moved by: Mayor Butler
Seconded by: Commissioner Hosley

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 60-2023 Budget Amendment

Moved by: Commissioner Seber
Seconded by: Mayor Butler

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION 61-2023

Moved by: Commissioner Seber
Seconded by: Mayor Butler

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0

NEW BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

Close Meeting: 8:23 P.M.

Moved by: Commissioner Seber

Seconded by: Mayor Butler

AYES: 4 NAYS: 0