



# LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ▪ CITY OF BINGHAMTON

*Hadassah Mativetsky, City Council President*

*Sarah Dinhofer, City Clerk*

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## **COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BINGHAMTON**

### **Business Meeting Minutes**

**City Council Chambers, 38 Hawley Street, Binghamton, NY 13901**

**6:00 PM Wednesday, March 27, 2024**

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

At 6:01PM by President Mativetsky

#### **II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by President Mativetsky

#### **III. ROLL CALL**

Present: Porter, Middleton, Cavanaugh, Hotchkiss, Mativetsky, Kosty, Dundon

Also Present: Sarah Dinhofer (City Clerk), Sophie Bergman (Corporation Counsel)

#### **IV. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of Business Meeting Minutes from 3/13/2024

Motion: Dundon

Second: Porter

All in Favor

2. Reports from Committees

Motion to delegate food deserts to MPA: Porter

Second: Middleton

Vote: 7-0-0-0

#### **V. APPOINTMENTS**

Motion to direct the Commission for Conservation of the Environment to review the draft climate action plan and submit a report to Council and Director of Planning for review and comment by end of April: Cavanaugh

Second: Hotchkiss

Vote: 7-0-0-0

1. Committee Appointments:

- i. Finance: Cavanaugh (Chair), Hotchkiss, Kosty

- ii. Employees: Porter (Chair), Dundon, Kosty

- iii. Planning: Hotchkiss (Chair), Cavanaugh, Middleton

- iv. Municipal and Public Affairs: Middleton (Chair), Dundon, Kosty

- v. Public Works and Parks: Dundon (Chair), Porter, Middleton

- vi. Rules and Procedures/Special Studies: Hotchkiss (Chair), Porter, Cavanaugh

2. CDAC: Kosty

3. BLDC: Kosty

City Hall ▪ 38 Hawley Street ▪ Binghamton, NY 13901 ▪ [www.cityofbinghamton.com](http://www.cityofbinghamton.com)

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4. BURA: Kosty
5. Commission for Conservation of the Environment: Mativetsky

## VI. SET PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. The City of Binghamton will hold a Public Hearing regarding RL24-17 “An Ordinance to amend Chapter 410 to address below-grade amenity spaces in multiple-unit dwellings”
2. This Public Hearing will take place at 6PM during the April 10, 2024 regular City Council Business Meeting in City Council Chambers, 38 Hawley Street, Binghamton NY. Residents wishing to participate in Public Hearings may do so electronically by emailing their comments prior to 1:00PM on the day of the meeting to [clerk@cityofbinghamton.gov](mailto:clerk@cityofbinghamton.gov) or in-person during the meeting.

## VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Residents wishing to submit public comment may do so electronically by emailing their comments prior to 1:00PM on the day of the meeting to [clerk@cityofbinghamton.gov](mailto:clerk@cityofbinghamton.gov) or in-person during the meeting.

- John Tokas, Binghamton Resident: Invites Council to view Binghamton Plaza before taking eminent domain. Space needs work, but taking property off tax rolls and paying for repairs would be very expensive. Tenants are very upset; Mayor promised to assist in finding other spaces to lease, but haven't been connected with other potential spaces. Interested renters have approached, but none will sign on considering month-to-month status
- Aviva Friedman, Binghamton Resident: Brings up Chrysalis RL on agenda to be voted on later in evening, worried that City repeatedly contracts to have these plans created, but urges Council to actually put findings to use. Results have been clear year over year. Voices support for ceasefire RL submitted to Council and discussed at recent Work Session. While it may not be what Councilmembers expected, urges the importance of signing out and supporting legislation, as multiple weapons manufacturers are based in Binghamton area
- Kenny Brown, Binghamton Resident: Seems unnecessary to appoint Kosty. Doesn't believe appointment of Kosty was about fairness, considering previous appointment of Rathmell. States Kosty made \$90 donation to CM Dundon's campaign and asks Council to state if they had prior knowledge. Considers this cronyism, believes it will open the door to further escalation.
- Tarik Abdelazim, Binghamton Resident: Echoes previous speaker in frustration with 6<sup>th</sup> District appointment. Urged Council not to appoint Strawn prior to this meeting, considers Strawn worst public servant. No longer sure it was worth effort. Urges Council to support Southern Door Community Land Trust RL, emphasizes housing and poverty crisis in City. Will send data to Council demonstrating that Land Trusts do not typically take on debt.

## VIII. FIRST READING LEGISLATION

### Introductory Ordinance O24-20. Considered in Employees: Porter

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Ordinance to amend the 2024 General budget for Parks Department for responsibility adjustments for temporary Acting Commissioner

Motion: Porter

Second: Dundon

Vote: 7-0-0-0

**Introductory Ordinance O24-21. Considered in Employees: Porter**

An Ordinance to amend the Code of the City of Binghamton, Chapter 124, Section 26, to update eligibility for retiree health insurance

Motion: Porter

Second: Dundon

Discussion: CM Dundon thanks union brothers and sisters and labor unions for their efforts to ensure that Binghamton workers have access to benefits they deserve. As mentioned in work session, change made in 2021 to take away workers' rights to retirement insurance was shameful and dishonest on part of City, particularly office of the Comptroller. Further states it was diligence and advocacy of labor unions that brought this injustice to everyone's attention. Proud to vote to make this right for all workers, will continue to track efforts to ensure retroactive compensation and fairness. Will continue to work as a member of Council to stand up for labor, improved working conditions and protect employees that work hard to serve City

Vote: 7-0-0-0

**Introductory Ordinance O24-22. Considered in Employees: Porter**

An Ordinance to amend the 2024 Treasurer budget to adjust the salary and classification of the Treasurer position

Motion: Porter

Second: Middleton

Discussion: CM Cavanaugh explains necessity of having this position filled for functioning of City, issue with tax rolls is an example of why vacancy in office must be addressed.

Vote: 7-0-0-0

**Introductory Ordinance O24-23. Considered in Finance: Cavanaugh**

An Ordinance to amend the 2024 Capital budget to close serial bond accounts no longer active

Motion: Cavanaugh

Second: Middleton

Vote: 7-0-0-0

**Introductory Ordinance O24-24. Considered in Employees: Porter**

An Ordinance to amend the 2024 budget for HUD Admin & Housing to add CDBG funded Housing & Community Development Specialist position

Motion: Porter

Second: Middleton

Discussion: CM Porter notes this position will be particularly helpful to those trying to coordinate development for affordable and low-income housing

Vote: 7-0-0-0

**Introductory Resolution R24-22. Considered in Planning: Hotchkiss**

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor into an agreement with Chrysalis Research for the creation of an Analysis of



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Impediments to Fair Housing study

Motion: Hotchkiss

Second: Dundon

Discussion: CM Hotchkiss emphasizes need to follow through with findings of report

Vote: 7-0-0-0

### **Introductory Resolution R24-23. Considered in Employees: Porter**

A Resolution to accept NYS Resolution to re-open Section 384 of the retirement and social security law

Motion: Porter

Second: Dundon

Vote: 7-0-0-0

### **IX. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL**

CM Dundon: Eastside Neighborhood Watch meeting coming up first Tuesday of every month at 6PM at Hands of Hope Free Methodist Church at 270 Robinson St. Invites anyone who would like to have a conversation to attend.

CM Kosty: Grateful to serve the 6<sup>th</sup> District, will be at next Southside Neighborhood Meeting. Invites residents to attend and get acquainted.

CM Hotchkiss: Pleased with efforts to have public submit RLs, had 3 presenters from public at most recent Work Session. Hopes to see this trend continue. Encourages action on ceasefire resolution after large downtown rally.

CM Cavanaugh: Children's Charity of Greater Binghamton has its yearly egg hunt at Rec Park this Saturday from 10AM-12PM (egg hunt at 11AM). Worked with CM Middleton to secure meeting site.

CM Middleton: Has worked with CM Cavanaugh to secure a site for Community Watch meetings – will be hosted at Unitarian Church on Riverside Drive, flyers coming shortly. Reads quote for Women's History Month: "Women belong in all places where decisions are made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception." – Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Upcoming Sunday is Easter Feaster for free grab and go meals on Easter for anyone who wouldn't otherwise have a warm meal, encourages donations.

CM Porter: **N/A**

CM Mativetsky: Discovery Center has a spring break theme "Star Seekers". First Friday will be art show and free admission night (4/5/24 4-7PM). Will have special activities that are free with admission from 11AM-1PM during Spring Break. Ross Park Zoo has some spring break activities and Extravaganza coming up on Friday and Saturday. Monday will be Fossil Fool's Day for April 1 – they have lots of exciting things happening. Due to a scheduling conflict, Southside Neighborhood assembly this Thursday is cancelled, waiting on new date. Save the date for April 20th for a potential Southside cleanup. Toured two properties w CM Cavanaugh that City owns and leases -- toured Baseball Stadium with President of Rumble Ponies and Ross Park Zoo with Executive of the Zoo, learned about maintenance needs and their visions. At Traffic Board, dealt with Southside District 5 topics there re: Kane Ave mailbox access after canvassing and flyering area. Board has 30 days to parking sign change, expected to move around April 14<sup>th</sup>. Still working on Woodland issue, thanks Deputy Mayor for work soliciting community feedback. Thanks Fire Department for putting out a vehicle fire this week in District 5.

### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Motioned at 7:03PM: Dundon

Second: Middleton

All in Favor

City Council members,

Your refusal to appoint Phillip Strawn as councilman for his district and defy a court order is unconscionable. What more will it cost the taxpayers of Binghamton to get this over with? How much time and money will be spent to delay this appointment?

Mr. Strawn ran for the position and fifty percent of the voters decided in his favor. The legal side of the tie has been decided by the court. Why are you trying to nullify the wishes of the people that voted for him? Why would you deny those constituents their choice? I realize you are all members of the same party and you have strength in numbers, but that doesn't make your wishes greater than that of the people living in that district.

Please don't waste anymore time and taxpayer money on this. Put your attention onto things that actually need to be done to make Binghamton better. Don't let party politics overshadow the needs and wants of the people of that district.

Sincerely,

**Frances Cook**

Dania  
City of Binghamton Resident

Honorable President and esteemed councilmen/woman,

Firstly, Congratulations to all of you for getting here. I pray that God help you, friends, and do well by the people. You shoulder a big responsibility, and I sincerely hope you're able to do a good job. To my council friends of color stay strong.

I am trusted by the people I used to neighbor. I often investigate things for them because I am disabled and have nothing else to do all day. One neighbor is an employee at city hall. They asked that I do this because they are afraid of retaliation by one of the city attorney's or their biggest supporter Mayor Jared Kraham. Now, I am not making any allegations when I say this because I am just passing along a message and making a request. I have no idea if any of this is true and am sharing this as a means for city council to investigate this big issue. City Council, please investigate this alleged personal issue because the mayor will not. I do not intend this to be defamation as I am just trying to help investigate.

First rumor or allegation is that city council meets and makes decision in violation of the public meetings law. They also seem to have issues with one another and often make snide remarks about each other.

This one is for Sophie Bergmann. I think you are doing a good job so far. I know that is controversial, but it seems like you aren't an fake and are good so please address the following rumors going around.

To both Sophie and city council apparently there is a very big problem with an employee [REDACTED]. Allegedly they are yelling at employees not in their department. They are bossing code officers around like they are their boss and reports to their real boss when they don't listen to someone from another department. Then they get in trouble. They yelled at the IT director who has been working for the city for decades. And allegedly disregards people they think are below them (in other words anyone in city hall.)

Another rumor is that the mayors administrative staff talks a lot of shit about the city attorneys. Apparently some emails were obtained through foia about lockdown where one mayors staff member read like they were targeting someone specific for a lockdown.

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Thank you in advance.

-Dania