



# LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ▪ CITY OF BINGHAMTON

*Phil Strawn, City Council President  
Leighton Rogers, City Clerk*

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**COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BINGHAMTON  
Business Meeting Minutes  
City Hall, 38 Hawley Street, Binghamton, NY 13901  
Wednesday, April 6, 2022**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Strawn called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by President Strawn

**III. ROLL CALL**

Present (via Zoom): Scaringi, Resciniti, Riley (6:24pm), Friedman, Burns, Scanlon, Strawn  
Also Present: Brian Seachrist (Corporation Counsel), Janine Faulkner (Deputy City Clerk)

**IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS**

**V. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Approval of Minutes**

Approve the Minutes from the March 23, 2022 Business Meeting.

Motion: Resciniti

Second: Scaringi

Vote: 6-0-0-1

Absent: Riley

**City Council Finance Committee: Scaringi (Chair), Scanlon, Burns**

No items to report.

**City Council Planning & Community Development Committee: Scanlon (Chair), Scaringi, Friedman**

No items to report.

**City Council Municipal & Public Affairs Committee: Scaringi (Chair), Resciniti, Riley**

No items to report.

**City Council Public Works/Parks & Recreation Committee: Scanlon (Chair), Resciniti, Riley**

No items to report.

**City Council Employees Committee: Resciniti (Chair), Scaringi, Burns**

No items to report.

**City Council Rules & Procedures/Special Studies Committee: Resciniti (Chair), Scanlon, Friedman**

No items to report.

**VI. APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS**



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## VII. PUBLIC HEARING

## VIII. SET PUBLIC HEARINGS

## IX. PUBLIC COMMENT/COMMUNICATION

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.com](mailto:clerk@cityofbinghamton.com) or virtually via zoom during the meeting.

1. Tina Chronopoulos
2. Letter from Tarik Abdelazim (attached)

## X. REVIEW OF MAYORAL VETO

## XI. SECOND READING LEGISLATION

## XII. FIRST READING LEGISLATION

### A. PREFERRED AGENDA

#### **Introductory Ordinance 22-57. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to update the City of Binghamton's Chart of Accounts to provide for a custodial trust fund and corresponding accounts per GASB Announcement 84

#### **Introductory Ordinance 22-58. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the Charter and Code of the City of Binghamton Part 1, Chapter 5 Subsection 5-7.G, Designation of Depositories, to add Tioga State Bank N.A. as a company authorized to accept deposits of monies in an amount up to \$40,000,000

#### **Introductory Ordinance 22-59. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to account for additional grant funds received from New York State for the 7 Hawley Street Parking Garage

#### **Introductory Ordinance 22-60. Considered in Planning: Scanlon**

An Ordinance to establish a "Parking Reserve Fund – 7 Hawley Street Parking Ramp Debt Service" in the amount of \$540,304

#### **Introductory Ordinance 22-61. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2022 Capital Fund budget to close bond lines that are no longer active

#### **Introductory Ordinance 22-63. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2022 I.T. Capital budget to allocate ARPA funds for hardware/software upgrades and improvements



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**Introductory Ordinance 22-64. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2022 Assessment budget to increase the annual salary of the Assessor to \$85,000

**Introductory Ordinance 22-65. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2022 Insurance Fund budget to account for and replace 4 City vehicles damaged in an accident on State Street

**Introductory Ordinance 22-66. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2021 Insurance Fund budget for incurred loss for year end

**Introductory Ordinance 22-68. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2022 Law budget to increase funding for Temporary Services

**Introductory Ordinance 22-69. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2022 Binghamton-Johnson City Joint Sewage Board budget to increase the Insurance Recovery revenue for ongoing rehabilitation work

**Introductory Resolution 22-27. Considered in Planning: Scanlon**

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to amend the agreement with Greater Opportunities for Broome & Chenango for use of FY46 CDBG funds for capital projects

**Introductory Resolution 22-28. Considered in Planning: Scanlon**

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the Binghamton Local Development Corporation ("BLDC") for use of FY47 CDBG funds

**Introductory Resolution 22-29. Considered in Planning: Scanlon**

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the Binghamton Housing Authority ("BHA") for use of Tenant Based Rental Assistance ("TBRA") funds

**Introductory Resolution 22-30. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into Supplemental Agreement No. 2 with Barton & Loguidice DPC for GIGP grant administration and construction phase services for the DECO District Streetscape Improvements project

**Introductory Resolution 22-31. Considered in Planning: Scanlon**

A Resolution authorizing an amendment and extension of the lease and operating agreement for the Discovery Center

Motion to approve the Preferred Agenda as amended: Resciniti

Second: Friedman

Vote: 6-0-0-1



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Absent: Riley

## **B. NON PREFERRED AGENDA**

### **Introductory Ordinance 22-62. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to account for lost revenue of \$964,943 per the ARPA guidelines

\*Pulled from preferred agenda: Friedman

Motion: Scaringi

Second: Resciniti

Discussion: Friedman, Burns, Riley

Vote: 4-3-0-0

Nay: Riley, Friedman, Burns

### **Introductory Ordinance 22-67. Considered in Finance: Scaringi**

An Ordinance to amend the 2022 budget to purchase and equip 10 Police vehicles with loss revenue funds

\*Pulled from preferred agenda: Friedman

Motion: Scaringi

Second: Resciniti

Discussion: Friedman

Vote: 5-2-0-0

Nay: Riley, Friedman

## **XIII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**

1. Scaringi
2. Resciniti
3. Riley
4. Friedman
5. Burns
6. Scanlon
7. Strawn

## **XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn 6:48pm: Riley

Second: Resciniti

All in favor

**To be read into the record at the April 6 City Council business meeting:**

April 5, 2022

Dear City Council members,

I am puzzled by the conversation regarding potential reforms to Binghamton code enforcement efforts to more equitably and effectively deal with substandard rental properties, vacant properties, and irresponsible property owners.

In my professional capacity, I work with communities here in New York and across the nation in helping to design equitable solutions, including code enforcement practices, to vacant, abandoned, and deteriorating properties.

**The first step any community must take is to better understand the scope, scale, and nature of the problem one is trying to solve.** Do Council members know how many vacant properties exist in the City? Do Council members know how many zombie properties exist in the City? Do Council members know how many tenants have called to complain of safety and health hazards in their rental units? Do Council members know how many properties have been condemned as uninhabitable by Binghamton Code, or rental properties vacated by orders of the Broome County Health Department because of lead hazards that have threatened the well-being of children? Do Council members know **where** in the City these problem properties exist, where they are more prevalent?

**The second step is to better understand why current approaches are not working effectively to protect neighbors and neighborhoods from the harms imposed by such problem properties.** Do Council members know how Code is currently deploying staff time and resources to try to address each of the above categories of problem properties? Do Council members know how the City spent more than a million dollars in code enforcement grant funds over the last five years, which were designed specifically to help communities tackle problem properties more effectively and equitably, and what the outcomes were? Do Council members know whether or not the vacant property registration program is working, or whether the City is effectively utilizing existing tools and state laws, such as Article 19A Abandonment Proceedings Law or the Zombie Property Inspection and Maintenance law? Do Council members know what the biggest challenges or barriers cited by the Code Department and the Law Department are in trying to protect neighbors and neighborhoods from the harms imposed by each of these different types of problem properties?

**The third step is to identify which tools and policies the state laws allow (or prohibit) a municipality to utilize to achieve greater impact and more successful outcomes.** As a home-rule state, there are fortunately few limitations in New York, and overall, we have very good legal systems related to code enforcement, delinquent property tax enforcement, and land banking that allows forward-thinking communities to integrate many different strategies and interventions across these systems to achieve optimal effect—and some communities are doing outstanding and innovative work that have become national best practices.

**Finally, the fourth step is then to design new policies, partnerships, and programs, tailored to the community's needs and priorities, and allocate resources accordingly.** And then commit to ongoing evaluation and adjustment. Again, there are great models right here in New York that have been incubated over the last few years, thanks largely to the unprecedented funding from the AG's Office.

That's why I'm puzzled by the Council's approach: there is no meaningful, open conversation with each other, the administration, and the community about the first and second steps, and there seems to be a rush to jump to potential solutions across a whole range of 'alleged problems.'

I can share from experience, as the City's former Housing Director and a long-time southside homeowner, that the biggest local challenges in need of better practices and policy solutions are substandard rental properties and vacant properties.

For what it's worth, I walk my dog a few times a day in my neighborhood, and within a 10-minute walk from my house on Tremont Avenue, I have identified just in the last week approximately two dozen properties that strongly indicate vacancy. The list is below. Also, the properties that always seem to be the most run-down and poorly-maintained are rental properties. It saddens and frustrates me to think of the living conditions inside many of these units, and how they likely present real health and safety concerns to the tenants, many of them vulnerable and with few to no other housing options.

Thus, the idea that the Council can meet once every two weeks for 2 or 3 times in order to come up with meaningful reforms to protect neighbors and neighborhoods from substandard rental properties, vacant properties, and irresponsible property owners is impractical and unrealistic. This is not a political statement. This is based on my eight-years of professional experience working with communities across the country day in and day out on similar challenges.

As I mentioned in my letter and suggest again above, there are critical steps of information-gathering and analysis—as well as open, inclusive conversations—that must first be prioritized. And if the Council and administration does them right—transparently, in partnership with the community, and centering those most harmed by problem properties—then I promise the solutions ultimately identified and pursued will be equitable and effective. The process will take longer, but I can also promise that there is no short-cut here if you genuinely want to pursue this important work.

As always, please know that I remain available as a resource to the Council and the administration should there be any interest.

Sincerely,  
Tarik Abdelazim  
17 Tremont Avenue

Likely Vacant Properties Within a Few Blocks from My House:

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. 3 Tremont     | 13. 4 McNamara      |
| 2. 19 Tremont    | 14. 6 McNamara      |
| 3. 1221 Vestal   | 15. 14 McNamara     |
| 4. 1274 Vestal   | 16. 24 McNamara     |
| 5. 2 Livingston  | 17. 29 Mary         |
| 6. 6 Livingston  | 18. 78 Mary         |
| 7. 24 Livingston | 19. 82 Mary         |
| 8. 19 Birch      | 20. 83 Mary (?)     |
| 9. 34 Mill       | 21. 88 Mary         |
| 10. 36 Mill      | 22. 62 S Washington |
| 11. 46 Mill      | 23. 63 S Washington |
| 12. 45 Vine      | 24. 20 Conklin      |