



LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ▪ CITY OF BINGHAMTON

Giovanni Scaringi, Ph.D., City Council President
Janine Faulkner, City Clerk

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BINGHAMTON
Business Meeting Minutes
City Hall, 38 Hawley Street, Binghamton, NY 13901
Wednesday, July 26, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Scaringi called the meeting to order at 6:03pm

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by President Scaringi

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Burns, Strawn, Scanlon, Scaringi

Absent: Resciniti, Riley, Friedman

Also Present: Janine Faulkner (City Clerk), John Sperduti (Deputy City Clerk), Nicole Sabasowitz (Assist. Corporation Counsel)

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS

V. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Minutes

Approve the Minutes from the July 12, 2023 Business Meeting.

Motion: Scanlon

Second: Strawn

Vote: 4-0-0-3

Absent: Resciniti, Riley, Friedman

City Council Finance Committee: Scanlon (Chair), Strawn, Friedman

No items to report.

City Council Planning & Community Dev. Committee: Resciniti (Chair), Scanlon, Friedman

No items to report.

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

No items to report.

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

No items to report.

City Council Employees Committee: Strawn (Chair), Resciniti, Burns

No items to report.

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

No items to report.



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VI. APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS

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.gov or in-person during the meeting.

1. Misty Kirby
2. Letter - Tarik Abdelazim (attached)
3. Letter - Barry Transue (attached)

X. REVIEW OF MAYORAL VETO

XI. SECOND READING LEGISLATION

XII. FIRST READING LEGISLATION

A. PREFERRED AGENDA

Introductory Ordinance 23-108. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

An Ordinance to amend the 2023 Police budget for Crime Analysis Center Officer in Charge

Introductory Ordinance 23-110. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

An Ordinance to amend the 2023 Binghamton-Johnson City Joint Sewage Treatment Facilities budget for the TPS project

Introductory Resolution 23-55. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

A Resolution to accept the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Grant

Introductory Resolution 23-57. Considered in Planning: Resciniti

A Resolution authorizing the City of Binghamton to jointly apply for a BOA Grant from the New York State Department of State

Introductory Resolution 23-58. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept a Healthy Schools and Communities Grant from Broome County Health Department

Introductory Resolution 23-59. Considered in Planning: Resciniti

A Resolution authorizing the City of Binghamton to complete and submit the NYS Historic Preservation Office Cultural Resource Information System application for the TPS project at the Binghamton-Johnson City Joint Sewage Treatment Facility



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Motion to approve Preferred Agenda as amended: Burns

Second: Strawn

Vote: 4-0-0-3

Absent: Resciniti, Riley, Friedman

B. NON PREFERRED AGENDA

Introductory Resolution 23-60. Considered in Planning: Resciniti

A Resolution to approve the designation of the City of Binghamton as the lead municipality on behalf of the owners of the Binghamton-Johnson City Joint Sewage Treatment Facility to apply for the NYS Intermunicipal Grant supporting the TPS project

Pulled from preferred agenda by Scanlon

Motion to hold over Introductory Resolution 23-60: Scanlon

Second: Burns

Introductory Resolution 23-60 held over to August 9, 2023

Introductory Resolution 23-61. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

A Resolution authorizing the City of Binghamton to enter into a Project-Specific Intermunicipal Agreement for the TPS Project at the Binghamton-Johnson City Joint Sewage Treatment Facility

Pulled from preferred agenda by Scanlon

Motion to hold over Introductory Resolution 23-61: Strawn

Second: Scanlon

Introductory Resolution 23-61 held over to August 9, 2023

Introductory Resolution 23-54. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

A Resolution authorizing the City of Binghamton to apply for a WIIA Grant for upgrades to the water filtration plant

Motion to hold over Introductory Resolution 23-54: Scanlon

Second: Strawn

Introductory Resolution 23-54 held over to August 9, 2023

Introductory Resolution 23-56. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

A Resolution to accept the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services Grant to implement the GIVE initiative and fund the Southern Tier Crime Analysis Center



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Motion: Scanlon

Second: Strawn

Vote: 4-0-0-3

Introductory Resolution 23-62. Considered in Employees: Strawn

A Resolution authorizing the salary increases of the City Clerk and the Deputy City Clerk in the 2024 budget

Motion: Strawn

Second: Scanlon

Vote: 4-0-0-3

Introductory Ordinance 23-109. Considered in Finance: Scanlon

An Ordinance to amend the 2023 Police budget to increase the annual salary of the Senior Crime Analyst

Motion: Scanlon

Second: Strawn

Vote: 4-0-0-3

XIII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Burns
2. Strawn
3. Scanlon
4. Scaringi

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:36pm: Scanlon

Second: Burns

All in Favor

Subject:

FW: Fireworks

From: Barry <barryjtransue@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, July 14, 2023 4:56 PM

To: Friedman, Aviva <afriedman@cityofbinghamton.gov>

Subject: Fireworks

Aviva: We've emailed each other a few years past. About the same issue. Still, no resolution to the incendiary devices exploding in the sky. Why?! They are still exploding in Binghamton as of 13 July! They don't have a beginning and end date in Binghamton. It is truly year round here. I don't get it! I've spoken with city council, the mayor, called the cops, messaged them. No one seems to give a damn. I'm a USMC Combat Veteran. I'm currently receiving care from the VA, and a wonderful therapist. We are trying to break on through, and offer me some peace. It would be grand if the city of Binghamton and its elected officials helped me. I doubt there is any other city in the state of NY with fireworks, so loud they sound (to me) like incoming mortar rounds. I deserve better from my city! In therapy for my PTSD. I'd like this read into the minutes at the next City Council meeting. It would be great if you could offer the Mayor and Chief Zikulsky a copy as well. This issue is effecting man and beast. I want it stopped. Regards, Barry Transue.

Caution: This email originated from outside the organization. BE SUSPICIOUS of any links in the email. If this email is asking for something unusual, do not reply to the email. Contact the sender through another method, or contact the City IT department for help.

July 27, 2023

Dear Council members,

I think it's appropriate we all reflect on the unanimous decision by the Binghamton City School District Board to reject the irresponsible and unjustified 28-year tax break for a wealthy developer to build five floors of privately-owned and managed luxury housing above the proposed five-floors of a publicly-owned and managed parking garage at Water Street.

Unfortunately, reflection is not a trait this body or the occupant of the mayor's office has demonstrated over the years.

If you think I'm being harsh, then just look at Mayor Kraham's response to media outlets after the vote. Instead of demonstrating some humility, he chose instead to 'gaslight' and insult the board, basically saying he's not surprised by their decision because none of them know how economic development works.

And what he means, of course, is that bodies like the School Board, or residents and taxpayers, have no business questioning how a small cabal of politicians and private developers enjoy a parasitic relationship that has been enjoyed by both parties over decades. In this relationship, politicians approve massive tax breaks to generate windfall profits for developers on the backs of compliant taxpayers and, in return, these elected officials receive just enough campaign donations and access to the local halls of power and wealth.

But maybe the school board's decision is a watershed moment: maybe it represents what's possible when a growing community of INFORMED and ENGAGED citizens who SHOW UP are **respected** by a small body of *public servants who dare demonstrate independence, reason, and decency*.

I know that future possibility scares most of you, because the majority on this council has consistently demonstrated opposition to all those attributes, not to mention a vigorous assault against transparency, inclusion, and dialogue.

Your record is clear.

Transparency? I've proposed for years a simple good government ethics reform bill that would subject this Council, the Mayor, and his appointees to the same annual financial reporting and ethical standards that I submit to as a citizen VOLUNTEER on the board of a county entity. Scanlon, Resciniti, and Strawn have all refused to even allow such a discussion while serving as Council Presidents. By your own actions, you have proven to be Guardians of Secrecy—a menacing and inexcusable role for any elected official.

Inclusion? You supported the prior mayor's efforts to dismantle every citizen board possible. You made a mockery of the Governor's order to reimagine policing by being one of the last major municipalities in the state to convene a "community panel." The four Republicans on this Council approved allocating almost 92% of our community's \$46 million in flexible, pandemic recovery funds without ever hosting a SINGLE community forum or inviting community input. And when advocates show up at these meetings, so frustrated by your negligence and exclusion, you bully them, then you intimidate them, and as a last resort, you use your political connections and lies to arrest them.

Dialogue? Please. You approach every issue as a life-or-death debate, which closes the door for learning, reflection, and change in opinion. Did you know the school district board was split 3-3 with one undecided going into their meeting to discuss the PILOT for the Water Street project? And yet the final vote was 7-0. See, board members actually listened to citizens, learned about the impacts, and chose to be a responsive servant to the public instead of a rubberstamping slave to the mayor. They are a model for the future. You are the mold of the past.

If you think my indictment is too harsh, then prove me wrong and consider the following recommendations:

1. Hold a community forum, with Mayor Kraham, to explain this project and stream it live. You all have done an exceptional job being opaque, and misleading when needed. Try the alternative for once. Try transparency, openness, honesty, and dialogue. And at this forum, allow residents to ask questions until we all understand what's happening. Because even the mayor has already started with misleading statements, saying this project will result in \$4.5 million in infrastructure improvements paid for by "our private partners." But the infrastructure he's talking about are the "attachments" needed to place the private housing atop the public garage. Thus, Kraham's comments are disingenuous—none of this infrastructure would even be needed if we went with just the garage! Similarly, if City officials admitted on record that only 60 spots will be reserved for Boscovs shoppers, then why are we spending \$22 million or more to build a ramp? Is a ramp even needed??
2. Councilmember Strawn, before he rubberstamped this irresponsible PILOT, countered some of the criticism of this project by saying this project has nothing to do with the affordable housing crisis. He said we need to approve this project AND move forward with other solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

Well then, how about the Council actually move forward with solutions to the affordable housing crisis? Because to date, this Council announced then suspended a serious conversation about code enforcement, refuses to implement a proactive rental inspection program to protect the health and safety of low-income tenants, and a couple months ago approved the Mayor's proposal to cut the capacity of the code enforcement department by 25%! Excuse us if we deem your words and promises empty and worthless.

Housing justice advocates have been recommending solutions for more than a decade, through formal city and county reports or through informal advocacy. You know them. So if you really are serious about "finding and passing" other solutions to our housing crisis, consider any of them or the following:

- a. Before September 30, 2023, approve legislation that allocates \$2 million of the remaining pandemic recovery funds (ARPA) to the Broome County Affordable Housing Fund, managed by the Community Foundation and supervised by an excellent citizen board.
- b. Before September 30, 2023, approve legislation that refunds the code enforcement positions that this Council defunded this summer, given the acute housing crisis.
- c. Before September 30, 2023, approve the proposed Financial Ethics Disclosure Bill, that will demonstrate your decisions relevant to our housing crisis are not influenced by self-enrichment and, in time, will help reduce political corruption and restore our trust in local government.

I won't hold my breath. We've all been here before. We know exactly who you are.

Sincerely,

Tarik Abdelazim
17 Tremont Avenue
Binghamton, NY