



## MINUTES OF CAUCUS Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The Common Council was convened at 5:38 p.m. in the Council Chambers on the Second Floor of City Hall, 24 Eagle Street, and was called to order by President Pro Tempore Kimbrough. It livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook.

**Members Present:** Anane, Balarin, Clarke, Farrell, Flynn, Hoey, Johnson, Keegan, Kimbrough, Robinson, Zamer

**Staff Present:** Shaniqua Jackson, Brett Williams, Jake Eisland, Bryan Jimenez, Max Thierry, and Juliette Geraghty.

**Speakers/Invitees:** Albany City School District Superintendent Joe Hochreiter, Board President Vickie Smith, Ron Lesko (Director of Communications and Operations)

### Discussion/Questions:

- The agenda for the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 regular meeting was discussed.
  - Council Member Flynn spoke on Resolution 88.82.23R.
  - Council Member Balarin requested a change in the language of Resolution 88.82.23R.
  - Council Member Johnson asked about enforcement, to which Council Member Flynn responded that it is a request and there will not be any enforcement.
  - Council Member Robinson asked if resource cards could be created to give to individuals seeking money from others instead of money and if language reflecting this could be added to the resolution, to which Council Member Flynn responded in agreement.
  - Council Member Hoey spoke on the purpose of the resolution being to discourage direct requests for money from others as a way to make a living, not those who do it out of need.
  - Corporation Counsel Brett Williams spoke on the need to pass changes to the resolution past the Mayor, the City Treasurer, and the City Auditor.
  - Council Member Kimbrough requested that Rachel Braidster, the appointee to the Planning Board, attend the next caucus/work session.
  - Council Member Balarin spoke on the appointment and reappointment to the Planning Board.
  - Council Member Hoey asked about the length of Rachel Braidster's term, to which Council Member Balarin responded.
  - Council Member Kimbrough moved to release Resolution 84.81.23R from the Public Safety committee, seconded by Council Member Hoey, and passed by voice vote.
- Council Member Keegan spoke on a draft resolution regarding Patroon Creek Greenway funding.
- Council Member Anane spoke on the Municipal Internet Commission's final report and their upcoming attendance at the August 30<sup>th</sup> caucus/work session.
- Council Member Balarin spoke on Ordinance 29.71.23 and asked Council Members to attend the next Planning Committee meeting if they have any issues or concerns.

- President Pro Tempore Kimbrough invited Superintendent Joe Hochreiter, Board President Vickie Smith, and Ron Lesko up to speak.
- Superintendent Hochreiter introduced himself and spoke on the Albany City School District.
- Council Member Zamer thanked Superintendent Joe Hochreiter, Board President Vickie Smith, and Ron Lesko for coming and expressed appreciation to the Superintendent for his responsiveness.
- Council Member Johnson spoke on the Council recognizing students for their accomplishments.
- Council Member Keegan recommended focusing on engaging middle and high school students in positive development after school hours.
- Council Member Keegan also spoke on community schools.
- Superintendent Hochreiter spoke on a Federal grant for community schools and a grant writer employed by the district.
- Board President Smith spoke on a different approach to community schools, to which Council Member Keegan responded in agreement.
- Council Member Johnson spoke on Giffen Memorial Elementary School's status as a community school.
- Council Member Anane welcomed the speakers and asked about their thoughts on the role of attendance when it comes to learning, to which the Superintendent responded about issues with attendance at the elementary school level and spoke on resources the district uses to encourage attendance.
- Superintendent Hochreiter spoke on Regents Exams and conversations regarding ways to measure student success.
- Board President Smith spoke on teachers engaging students and extracurricular activities encouraging attendance.
- Superintendent Hochreiter spoke on students' increased interest in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
- Ron Lesko spoke on the need for CTE programs and funding for the programs from the State.
- Council Member Anane spoke on the need for after-school programs.
- Council Member Anane asked about areas where they could see the Common Council and the school district working together, to which Superintendent Hochreiter responded about creating focus groups within wards to workshop how to support students and their families.
- Council Member Anane recommended using the staff as resources to engage with students' families.
- Council Member Balarin welcomed the Superintendent and spoke on prioritizing improvements to safety in and around the school.
- Council Member Balarin also spoke on the idea to use the current facilities as quasi-community centers during off hours.
- Superintendent Hochreiter spoke on an incident outside Albany High School regarding an accident involving a student and collaboration with city officials and the police department to improve vehicle and pedestrian safety outside of schools.
- Council Member Hoey spoke on a resolution of the New York State Legislature for speed cameras at various locations, including potentially outside Albany High School.
- Council Member Hoey spoke on utilizing Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) as a resource.
- Superintendent Hochreiter spoke on gathering PTA leaders to act as committee that he will meet with monthly.
- President Pro Tempore Kimbrough spoke on a school bus safety initiative that he and Council President Ellis are working on.
- Council Member Farrell spoke on bringing CTE programs from Abrookin into Albany High School and the Common Council being a partner to the school district.
- Superintendent Hochreiter and Council Member Farrell spoke in appreciation of Council Member Johnson and his work with students.
- Council Member Farrell spoke the traffic issues on North Main Ave.
- Council Member Farrell also spoke on the building aid formula regarding community schools.

- Council Member Flynn asked about contacting Ron Lesko if Council Members have questions/concerns regarding the school district, to which Board President Smith responded they could contact Ron Lesko or the School Board email directly.
- Council Member Johnson spoke on the impact other city initiatives can have on the school district.
- Board President Smith spoke on the Council receiving regular communications from the district.

There being no further business, Council Member Balarin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Farrell, and President Pro Tempore Kimbrough declared the meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM.

**Link to meeting recording:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCGNRz-de0U>

Respectfully submitted,  
Juliette Geraghty  
Junior Legislative Aide