

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022. Scheduled for 7:00 pm. In the City Council Chambers City Hall, Mount Vernon, New York.**

\*\*\* Due to the ongoing pandemic this meeting was held in the council chambers, with virtual participation via ZOOM and CMVNY Facebook. The meeting was not closed to the public however, the maximum number of in-person occupant was limited \*\*\*

**PRESENT:** Danielle Browne Esq., Cathlin Gleason, Edward Poteat

**ABSENT:** Lisa A. Copeland

**PRESIDING:** Derrick Thompson, President

**OTHERS:** Tanesia M. Walters, Deputy City Clerk, Elias Gootzeit, Legislative Assistant and Brian G. Johnson, Corporation Counsel

Council President Derrick Thompson called the meeting to order and provided house-keeping rules, including in case of emergency. He then asked councilwoman Danielle Brown to lead the council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Council President then proceeded to the Public Speakers session of the evening (listed below as public comment).

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Lynette Mentilla** – 115 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. Mount Vernon, NY- *appeared via zoom*. Ms. Mentilla voiced her concerns about the City’s law enforcement. Ms. Mentilla called the police department to assist with a tenant issue, where the tenant damaged her property. Upon their investigation at her property Ms. Mentilla said that the officers refused to document the damaged property. It took her 8 months of her going back and forth to get the issue documented. She would like to see some change in the department as the pick and choose what they document. So, there is an on-going issue with the law enforcement pick and choose what they report on. Their behavior towards people that lives in this town are very rude and I would like to see some change towards that.

**Cynthia Crenshaw** – 315 Mundy Lane, Mount Vernon, NY- *appeared via zoom*. Ms. Crenshaw asked if the City Council needs to approve every building in the City, before any building is built the City Council must know what the building will provide to the community. The building at 4<sup>th</sup>. Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Street what are the purpose of this building? Why is there no sign on the fence to let the people know what is coming in the community? Usually there are some sorts of information posted concerning the purpose of the establishment being built.

**Donna Bell** – 31 South Terrace Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY – *appeared via zoom*. Ms. Bell, said that she has been a resident of Mt. Vernon since 1993 and have not had many complaints about the city, however she has noticed that there have been no changes for some of the communities. There is no change in fighting crime, and she does not feel safe enough to walk the neighbor for exercise. In addition, there is a lack of street cleaning as streets are left neglected after snow. Some areas are cleaned, and some are left neglected. There are too many potholes. Rezoning- the demolition and building in her neighborhood and around south terrace has had a negative effect upon quality of life because of noise pollution all hours of the day and midnight. Parking – commercial trucks are parked on her block all night prohibiting residents from parking especially on alternate side of the street parking days. Ms. Bell said she wants to believe that Mount Vernon is a fair city where everyone is held by the same laws and regulations but that does not seem to be the case. She stated that she has a duty as a citizen to vocalize injustice that jeopardize the quality of life for her and her family in this beautiful city.

**Tom Keller** – 12 Pasadena Place, Mount Vernon, NY – He said that he noticed the budget was increased from the January proposed budget to the February 8<sup>th</sup> budget that was passed by the BOE. total. He stressed his concerns and disagreement with the budget. His disappointment with the elected officials, the concerns with the chamber of commerce not fully functioning and the effect it will have on the businesses.

**Geoff Monroe** – He said that he agrees with the sentiments of Mr. Keller. He advised that when people suffer enough the elected officials will no longer be able to hide, and the counsel is starting off on the wrong foot if this is what protection looks like. This community needs better transparency. Public Access serves to feed the state from the community. People needs to have a voice or else they will suffer in silence. We do not have a community media center which is a vital part in the need to be informed in the community. The council cannot pass the budget without dialog from the community. Explain to the people what their rights and responsibilities are, and they will understand what your rights and responsibilities are.

**Marlene Wertheim** – 100 Sycamore Ave, *appeared via zoom*. – She advised that it is her first time being Infront of this counsel. She thanks the council and legislative aide Elias Gootzeit for sending out a summary of the 2022 legislative agenda. An unsolicited commitment means a lot, however, she would like to draw attention to the advocacy section of the summary which to her have overlooked an inclusion of an important city feature, it would have been more complete if you have also included your collaboration in a city wide effort to focus on the health and quality of life for residence through sustainability and protecting and expanding our green landscape. Also, following the election outcome in an interview with the journal news the council said that their new approach to development is that the body would be moving forward prudently, does this mean that there will be a suspension of all zoning changes and use variances until the comprehensive plan is completed?

**Lauren Carter** – 120 Archer Ave – *appeared in person*. She is concerned about the sewage and refuse fee. She understands why the fees are being proposed but she thinks they are wrong. There are other options the City have. The Mayor advertised on social media that she had a \$10M grant and that should have been enough to get us through. Additional money will come from congress and HUD to assist in fixing the sewers, other option should be addressed first, and the council should reconsider the fees. As per raises the union people should get their raises instead of hap hazard arbitrary raises. If the City does not use the funds appropriately future use can be forfeited. The ARPA monies should be used appropriately. Prices are through the roof and we shouldn't put a burden on the people.

**The council person responded to the speakers concerns.**

## **REFERRAL SESSION**

**Roll Call** administered by Deputy City Clerk Tanesia M. Walters

## **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES AND ACTION THEREON**

### **To the Council:**

The **LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE** recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

- Item No. 1      A Local Law adopting a new subsection 112-b to Chapter C. Chapter, Article IX. Department of Public Works entitled “Sewer Rents” to establish a sewer rent and providing for the lien and collection thereof.
- Item No. 2      A Local Law adopting a new subsection 112-c to Chapter C. Charter, Article IX. Department of Public Works entitled “Refuse Sustainability Fee” to establish a refuse sustainability fee and providing for the lien and collection thereof.
- Item No. 3      An amendment to the City of Mount Vernon Administrative Code Part II, General Legislation entitled “Chapter 126. Fees and Deposits” by adding another article, entitled “Article VI. Sewer and Refuse Sustainability Fees.”

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Danielle Browne, Esq., Chair*

*Cathlin Gleason, Co-Chair*

*Received, passed and filed.*

Passed by the following vote:

**Ayes:** President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** councilwoman Copeland

**To the Council:**

The **HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE** recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

Item No. 4      An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to accept a grant award from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. (\$89,200.00 – Safe Haven)

Item No. 5      An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to accept a grant award from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. (\$122,700.00 – S.T.R.O.N.G. program)

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lisa A. Copeland, Chair*

*Edward Poteat, Co-Chair*

*Received, passed and filed.*

Passed by the following vote:

**Ayes:** President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** councilwoman Copeland

**To the Council:**

The **PUBLIC SAFETY AND CODES COMMITTEE** recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

Item No. 6      An ordinance authorizing the Fire Department to accept one (1) fire safety vehicle.

- Item No. 7 An ordinance authorizing the Police Department to purchase five (5) used police vehicles
- Item. No. 8 An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with The Guidance Center of Westchester (“TGCW”).

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Cathlin Gleason, Chair*

*Danielle Brown, Co-Chair*

*Received, passed and filed.*

Passed by the following vote:

**Ayes:** President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Councilwoman Copeland

**To the Council:**

**The FINANCE AND PLANNING Committee** recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

- Item No. 9 A Local Law to override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-C.
- Item No. 10 An ordinance authorizing and directing the Comptroller to refund an overpayment for 2021 taxes to “Pro National Title Agency.” (\$22,234.76)
- Item No. 11 A resolution of the City of Mount Vernon City Council endorsing the expedited review Committee’s recommendation for the Q West Towers Project
- Item No. 12 An ordinance fixing the date for a Public Hearing for the Annual Estimate for the Year 2022.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lisa A. Copeland, Chair*

*Edward Poteat, Co-Chair*

*Received, passed and filed.*

Passed by the following vote:

*Ayes:* President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

*Nays:* None

*Absent:* councilwoman Copeland

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Tanesia M. Walters, *J.D., M.P.A*

Deputy City Clerk