SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

December 16, 2025 @7:00 P.M.

Town Council President Nathan Scherer called the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Other Council members present were Cindy Kaiser, Paul Stoelting, and Larry Siegel. Clerk-Treasurer Virginia Cazier and Town Attorney Jay Rigdon. Bill Musser was absent.

Nathan Scherer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments - Discussion from the floor (agenda items only) 2 minutes per speaker 10 minutes total.

The Council Minutes - The minutes from November 18th, regular meeting presented for approval. Paul Stoelting moved to approve the minutes; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

The Special Meeting Minutes – The minutes from December 4th, special meeting presented for approval. Paul Stoelting moved to approve the minutes; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

The Town Claims - Claim #'s 1219-1329 for $1,258,858.34 presented for approval. Paul Stoelting moved to approve the claims; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Darron Longenecker, Town Insurance Options – Darron received the 2026 packet from IPEP which increased 21.21%. We have seen increases as high as 39%. PHP came in at 10.4%. The town would save $50,173.80 if they switched to PHP. The difference in the plan structure is just shy of 11% less than IPEP but this plan design is somewhat of a different structured plan. PHP calls this their level-funded solution plan. What this means is that during the course of a year, you pay a level premium, just like you did with IPEP. At the end of the year, if there are any monies left in the claims fund, then the town will get a portion of those claim funds back after a run-out period. This year, we did not have a good year, next year could be better. PHP designed this product to work in the small group environment, which is where the town is classified, and gives you that opportunity to participate in that savings. Typically, what most carriers do is keep the funds, they do not return them. This would be a new concept for the town. The town has used PHP in the past, locally in Fort Wayne. There were several question and concerns discussed about in network across the United States, if you are traveling or on vacation, are we covered. Yes, the employees would be covered. The great thing is the employees are covered in and out of network. The deductible last year was $3,300. The deductible for PHP is $3,500.

Currently the employees have an HSA this fully funded by the town, the indexed issue of the minimum deductible is going to recur. Every year their deductible is very likely to be increased. From a budgetary perspective, I would think that as time goes on, this might be the inflection point where the council decides that there might be a little bit of skin in the game that is diverted to the employees. That their HSA might not be increased to match this new deductible amount, that would be $200.00. When we switched at the end of 2024 from PHP to IPEP we saved around $80,000, we are now switching back to PHP and we are saving $50,000. We have no complaints from the employees with either plan. Does the council want to contribute the extra $200 to the HSA or do you want to cap it at $3,300? Council decided to cap the HSA to $3,300.00. Larry Siegel made a motion to go with PHP, and we use his company as our agency; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Board Appointment for 2026 – Some must be appointed by the council president and some by all the council. Nathan Scherer made a motion to approve the appointments that he needed to make. Paul Stoelting made a motion to approve the appointments that the council had to make; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Resolution 2025-10 Sewage Works 2015 & Water Works 2016 paid in full – Paul Stoelting made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-10; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Resolution 2025-08 End of Year Transfers – Paul Stoelting made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-08; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Ordinance 2025-18 Water Rates for Out-of-Town Customers – This is what has been discussed earlier in previous meetings. All we have to do is introduce it. There will be a publication requirement to have a hearing on it because it is a rate modification. The council would introduce it and instruct David and Virginia to schedule the notices. Paul Stoelting made a motion to introduce the rate for out-of-town customers and instruct David and Virginia to schedule the notices; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Employee Handbook Changes – There were a couple of things brought up in the November meeting that need some clarification on, cell phone coverage and the other was for on-call time. Council did approve the cell phone coverage at $45.00 every three months and no changes to the on-call time. Council needs to make a motion regarding these changes in the employee handbook. Paul Stoelting made a motion to the changes; Cindy Kaiser seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried.

2026 Council President/Vice President Nominations and Votes – Paul Stoelting nominated Cindy Kaiser as President; Nathan Scherer seconded. Larry Seigel nominated Bill Musser as Vice President; Paul Stoelting seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Commonwealth Engineering Report – No representation present.

TOWN MANAGER

David Wilkinson asked if there were any questions in his report. Pier rentals funds, in the past, were normally placed the funds in the police training funds. We are not allowed to do this anymore, so it will go into the general fund. There is a question of do we want to change who is responsible for it since the police can no longer benefit from it, the Parks Department used to do it in the past. We could do an additional appropriation into their training fund to make up the difference with the lost revenue. I think once we have the numbers from the pier rentals, we can just bring an additional appropriation to the council at that point. Larry suggested making a resolution, we can have David draft up a resolution that can pass at the same time as the additional appropriation.

POLICE

Jim Layne, Police Chief, asked if there were any questions in his report. In your packets, asking the council to approve two vehicles for next year. Paul Stoelting made a motion to spend up to $86,852.00, delivered within 90 days; Nathan Scherer seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. Jim also mentioned that we would be losing a police officer who will be moving out of the area.

No ADA complaints.

PARK

Chad Jonsson, Park Superintendent, stated this Saturday we are having breakfast with Santa. We have around 150 youth and around 300 breakfasts served. Having a lot of Christmas parties held over the weekends. Adult basketball leagues will begin in January through March.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mark Aurich, Public Works Director, asked if there were any questions in his report. Nothing else to report.

FIRE TERRITORY

Quin Hunter, Fire Chief, this is his first council meeting. Quin asked if there were any questions in his report. He had several updates to report on the airboat that has been out of service for several months, needing a Teflon coating that has been finished and back in service. Update on the ladder truck, we do have a final inspection the week of February 16th. I wanted to thank Chad Jonsson and the parks department crew for their hospitality on Chief Scott's retirement party last Friday. Our assistant chief, Kevin Grindle is retiring as well. Kevin served 37 years at the Fire Department. We are going to be hosting a retirement party at Station 1 on January 9th from 4-7, everyone is invited. Quin introduced his replacement Mr. Keeney, our new Deputy Chief of Operations. Mr. Keeney spoke about working with both Chief Scott and Chief Hunter in different aspects of the fire service. I look forward to working with Chief Hunter and contributing to the positive direction that we are going.

CLERK TREASURER

Virginia Cazier, Clerk-Treasurer, asked the council if there were any questions about her report. She presented the salary ordinance.

2025-15 2026 Salaries and Wages – Paul Stoelting made a motion to approve the 2026 Salaries and Wages; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Jay Rigdon, Town Attorney, nothing to report.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Matt Goodnight, 702 N. Lake St., wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Asked the council to double-check the previous ordinances about the pier rental spaces. When you approved the new rate, it did not say that it was going into the police training fund, that was removed two ordinances previously. Next year is going to be a fun year.

Ron Sindelar, 614 E. Nokomis Dr., spoke about the significant price increase to the piers from $100 to $500. Nathan Scherer stated that from his perspective, the rates elsewhere are significantly higher by 3 to 4 times what the town charges. When the council over the years does not raise the prices for inflation purposes, then all of a sudden at a time to get it appropriate takes this huge jump. It would be best practice for the council across the board to look at things and rather than holding off, we try to do it more incrementally rather than all at once to keep it appropriate.

DISCUSSION FROM THE COUNCIL - OLD BUSINESS

Resolution 2025-09 Transfer to Rainy Day – Unencumbered money and unused money from 2021-2024 be transferred into Rainy Day Fund. The Resolution was already approved at the Special meeting on December 4th. Council just needed to sign the Resolution.

Ordinance 2025-17 Additional Appropriation General to #6207 Sewer BAN and #6107 Water BAN – Paul Stoelting made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-17; Cindy Kaiser seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION FROM THE COUNCIL - NEW BUSINESS

Council packets were the topic of conversation. Larry Siegel suggested we get the packets sooner. The council discussed iPads. Larry stated before COVID, we used to get our packets on Tuesday and Friday. In the past the council made a decision to only get their packet on Friday. The majority did not want two packets. Jay Rigdon suggested getting ahold of Warsaw, they use software that you can post the reports right on there and the council can look at them when they post. It was decided that the packets will be distributed on Wednesday before the council meeting for the January meeting. David will look into what Warsaw uses before the next meeting.

Paul Stoelting moved to adjourn the Town of Syracuse Council Meeting; Cindy Kaiser seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

ATTEST: Virginia Cazier

Virginia Cazier, Clerk-Treasurer

~~Nathan Scherer,~~ Council President
Bill Musser