



**CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023**

7:00 P.M.

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – ROOM 206
CITY HALL, MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK
&
VIA FACEBOOK.COM/MOUNTVERNONNY**

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF THE MOUNT VERNON CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 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 occupants was limited ****

PRESENT: Danielle Browne, President; Derrick Thompson, Pro Tempore, Lisa A. Copeland, Cathlin Gleason and Edward Poteat (EP arrived at 7:57pm).

ABSENT: None

PRESIDING: Danielle Browne, President

OTHERS: Tanesia M. Walters, City Clerk; Donna M. Jackson, Deputy City Clerk; Brian G. Johnson, Corporation Counsel, Alyssa Gillespie, Assistant Corporation Counsel, Khush Kam-Au, Legislative Aide.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Browne called the meeting to order at 7:01PM. She provided general house-keeping rules, what to do “in case of emergency”. Council President Browne asked Deputy Clerk Jackson to lead the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **Delia Farquharson, former councilwoman, 468 North Fulton Avenue, MVNY, re: “Emotional Wellness Week”.** Appeared online via Zoom. She provided information and an appeal for greater mental health services. She noted the NAMI celebration has happened for 9 years to reduce stigma and increase awareness of mental health. She thanked the Council for their consideration on passing the NAMI legislation. She requested hanging the banner at City Hall. Requested the designation of the first full week of May as Mental Health Awareness Week.

2. **Dr. Sonia Cole, 105 East Broad Street, MVNY, re: “The importance of recognizing Mental Health Week in Mount Vernon”.** Dr. Cole is a resident of Mount Vernon and practicing “community” psychiatrist. Noted that mental health is also recognized in September. She stated she is one of the community members that helped bring Mental Health awareness week to Mount Vernon with former councilwoman Delia Farquharson. What is critical is that we engage the people receiving these services and amplify their voices in planning and development. She works with the sick and the homeless. Also wants to amplify frontline worker voices.
3. **Suva Krasdale, 461 Bedford Avenue, MVNY, re: “Mental Health Services at Mount Vernon Hospital”.** She noted she has a young sister who is currently hospitalized, and her concerns regarding mental health and patient rights are not being addressed. The same rights a patient has when seeking hospital admission, are the same rights we need to have when we seek mental health services.
4. **Cassandra Campbell, 461 Bedford Avenue, MVNY, re: “Concerned how Mount Vernon Hospital treats the residents of Mount Vernon and their family members”.** Speaking against the psychiatric unit of Mount Vernon Montefiore Hospital. Her cousin made a voluntary decision to enter the hospital seeking mental health services and alleges that she is being held against her will. She read information regarding the ability for patients to self-select their dismissal. She alleged terrible customer service and is concerned about her cousin’s treatment. Alleges mental health abuse and patient abuse.
5. **Geoff Munroe, 140 Elm Avenue, MVNY, re: “Police oversight issue”.** Expressed Police department issues, policy change where police department is effecting judges orders.
6. **Thomas Keller, 12 Pasadena Place, “Gas leaf blower”.** He noted he attended the Commissioners Meeting. Inquired about refuse fees that went into effect 8 months ago, and asked if the fees were supposed to go away. He alleges that former mayor Richard Thomas is asking for payment of legal fees against Kela Tennis. Discussed block parties, and stated the 2pm-11pm timeframe on recently submitted community requests is excessive in consideration of apartment buildings surrounding the event location. He asked about the leafblower ordinance, discussed timeframe of the ordinance. Discussed the DPW gas powered leaf blower being used by staff, and asked the city to lead by example.
7. **Brian Johnson, One Roosevelt Square, “Law Department Matters”.** Discussed his trip to learn about police negotiations and Police Benevolent Association (PBA) negotiations. Thanked the Council for allowing him and corporation counsel Anthony Odorisi to attend. It gave them insight on how our community is similar to others across the country. We do have an expert in PBA negotiations to get movement on current contracts, and the hope of working towards renegotiation. He discussed misinformation on the hiring of attorneys. His office has been extremely conservative with the “public purse”.
8. **Anthony Odorisi, One Roosevelt Square, “Law Department Matters”.** Second Deputy corporation counsel Odorisi has worked here for approximately one year. He noted that labor relations is important. He will put together a final report on the seminar he attended and touched on “pattern bargaining” where one union looks to another union’s negotiations as precedent. One of the themes of the seminar was that pattern bargaining may be coming to an end because of the scrutiny of police.

Public comment ended at 7:36pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT RESPONSES

Responses:

- Councilwoman Gleason: She addressed Dr. Cole and former councilwoman Farquharson, noting she sees the mental health issues through the attendees of the soup kitchen. To Ms. Krasdale and Ms. Campbell, she discussed power of attorney for family members, thanking them for bringing light to a serious situation, and asked if this issue was brought to the attention of hospital leadership. Ms. Campbell responded she has not received a response from hospital administration, but she has reached out the NYS Office of Psychiatric Health. Councilwoman Gleason asked that their contact information to be given to Legislative Aide Kam-Au.
- Councilwoman Copeland suggested Ms. Krasdale and Ms. Campbell contact the Montefiore advisory board for assistance. She responded to former councilwoman Farquharson that she supports mental health awareness and supports, and believes it is important. She further thanked former councilwoman Farquharson for keeping the matter in front of the council. For Mr. Munroe, she responded that family court leaves the visitation times up to the involved parties. To Mr. Keller, it is not unreasonable to request that events end before 11pm, and your suggestion is credible. Further, your suggestion about the leafblowers is reasonable. She thanked Counsel Johnson and Counsel Odorisi for their report.
- Councilman Thompson: He responded to Ms. Krasdale and Ms. Campbell it is strange that a doctor would allegedly hold a patient hostage and he will reach out to a community board member for insight on how to address. To Mr. Keller, the City Council will always have a conversation about where we are with our fees and how we can alleviate or eliminate them. To former councilwoman Farquharson, mental health and wellness is near and dear to his heart; in 2021 he spoke with the MVPD and unions because the police encounter so much trauma, and discussed the stigma associated with mental health. He noted first responders should receive assistance too. He discussed a post on his Facebook page regarding a mental health conversation

happening at the L.I.V.E. church on May 6th and how we need to be proactive and get these services into the city for prevention and support. He discussed the need to cross collaborate with institutions like the school district and other organizations. Councilman Thompson noted at 7:54pm to Ms Krasdale and Ms. Campbell that his Montefiore board contact responded and she will reach out to hospital administrators to seek resolve.

- Council President Browne: Noted that Councilman Poteat is running late and will join us shortly. To Ms. Krasdale and Ms. Campbell – she is almost speechless regarding the allegations. She advised and clarified that family members need to explore a health care proxy, and to reach out to the Hudson Community Services. If you qualify you may be able to receive free legal services. Because Montefiore is a private institution, the City cannot direct them on what to do. To Mr. Keller, councilwoman Copeland addressed taking the leafblower suggestions into consideration, and confirmed that the council is reviewing it. Council President Browne apologized for the length of time it is taking to resolve. She thanked corporation counsel Johnson and second deputy Odorisi, and noted the knowledge gained sounds like it will be beneficial. She thanked former councilwoman Farquharson and Dr. Cole for their work with mental health, and stated we are not doing enough. Council President Browne was vulnerable, noting she suffers from anxiety, and she is willing to collaborate with them to do the work, and if we need to pull city and community representatives into one room for a conversation we can do that.

Councilman Poteat arrived at 7:57PM.

Council president Browne asked Planning Commissioner Rausse to speak. He discussed the GIS administrator position, stating the Planning Dept conducted interviews of 4 candidates, and held a second round of interviews with other city departments as well. There is a candidate that they believe is qualified for the position. He noted that salary is on the low end (Step 1) for someone who will build out a GIS platform and would like to be able to offer a candidate a step 4, which will move the salary from \$70k+ to \$82K. He asks the city council to approve the increase to attract and retain the quality of candidates that we have interviewed thus far.

- Councilwoman Copeland noted that the Board of Estimate & Contract sets the salaries, and this request should be presented to them.
- Corp Counsel Johnson noted he will follow up.

Council President Browne asked for a 5-minute break at 8:03PM. Break ended at 8:09PM

Council review of the tally sheet. 8:09pm. Tally sheet reading ends at 8:19 pm

REFERRAL SESSION

Roll Call at 8:20PM. All Members present. We have a quorum.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES AND ACTION THEREON

To the Council

LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

PERMISSION	1.	An ordinance requesting permission for the Department of Public Works to co-sponsor Earth Day with Comrie Enterprises (Saturday, April 22, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on City Hall Plaza. In case of inclement weather (rain), the event will be moved to the Rotunda. Funds not to exceed \$3,000.00 and are to be accounted for in budget code A7111.447).
		Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: none Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None
PERMISSION	2.	An ordinance requesting permission to convert the position of Laborer to Cleaner (Court Facility) within the Department of Public Works (\$59,941.73 from Budget Code 8170.101to Budget Code 1620.101).
		Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: None. Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY	3.	An ordinance requesting permission to declare an emergency situation at S. Fulton Avenue & E. 3 rd Street Bridges (Overpass) - C&D Debris Removal – (the associated cost(s) for these emergency services is \$166,000.00 and funding for this project is available within the FY2023 A8160.424 - DPW Dumping Costs. Capital Industries Corp. has been identified as the most responsible contractor to complete this work).
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: Councilman Poteat discussed getting Minority- and/or Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) company, and asked to go on the record that “at some point we need to walk the walk and give contracts to black and brown vendors.” Response: Council President Browne noted that we should consult with corporation counsel on how to choose an MWBE. She stated Fulton Ave was closed prior (3rd street at Fulton). This was an emergency situation. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Browne Nays: POTEAT</p>
AMENDMENT	4.	An ordinance amending Ordinance No. 4 adopted on December 16, 2022, entitled “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE COMPTROLLER TO MAKE PAYMENT IN FULL TO GRANICUS CORPORATION.” (Year 1: [27,625.00] \$27,650.00. Total Amount to be Paid [\$105,189.00] \$105,214.00.
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: none Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
RESOLUTION	5.	A resolution appointing a member to the City of Mount Vernon Tree Advisory Board (term of three (3) years, commencing April 5, 2023, and expiring April 4, 2026 – Ruby Olisemeka).
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: none Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
RESOLUTION	6.	A resolution of the City Council of the City of Mount Vernon, New York recognizing and honoring Gregory Robeson Smith, Jr.
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: none Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
RESCIND	7.	An ordinance rescinding “Resolution No. 13 adopted by the City of Mount Vernon City Council on March 22, 2023 “APPOINTING A MEMBER TO THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON TREE ADVISORY BOARD.”
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: none</p>

		<p>Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
AUTHORIZATION	8.	<p>An ordinance authorizing the City of Mount Vernon to issue One-Day Marriage Officiant Licenses.</p>
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: Discussion on ordinance versus a resolution. Corp Counsel stated resolutions are more “in support of” and ordinances are actionable. Response: None. Ayes: Poteat, Gleason, Copeland, Thompson ABSTAIN: BROWNE Nays: None</p>
PROCLAMATION	9.	<p>An ordinance proclaiming May 1-6, 2023, as the City of Mount Vernon emotional wellness week, May 5, 2023, as mind wellness day and every day going forward as mental health awareness month.</p>
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Copeland Seconded by Councilwoman Gleason On the Question: Councilwoman Copeland read the ordinance so the Council could discuss revisions. The amendments from the floor include hanging the banner in a different location, “this includes the hanging of the NAMI banner on May 1st”. Council President Browne discussed Section 4 and requiring NAMI members to remove the ribbons after hanging them. Further edit, “Section 5 this ordinance will take effect immediately.” Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>

HUMAN RESOURCES

PERMISSION	10.	<p>An ordinance requesting permission to set the prices for field usage at the stadium at Memorial Field <i>only</i> for sports practices.</p> <p>Prices for Peak and Off-Peak Hours are set forth below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full field - \$550.00/hr.: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. • Full field - \$650.00/hr.: 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. • Half (½) Field - *F1 / *F2: - \$300.00/hr.: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. • Half (½) Field - *F1 / *F2: - \$350.00/hr.: 4:00 0.m. – 9:00 p.m. • Running track - *S1 / *S2: - \$150.00/hr.: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. • Running track - *S1 / *S2: - \$250.00/hr.: 4:00 0.m. – 9:00 p.m. • Locker Rooms - *L1 / *L2: - \$50.00/hr.: per locker room • Press Box – (No Scoreboard, No Sound) - \$100.00/hr. per room
		<p>Moved by Councilman Thompson Seconded by Councilman Poteat On the Question: none Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
AMENDMENT	11.	<p>An ordinance amending Ordinance No. 14 adopted on March 22, 2023, entitled “AN ORDINANCE REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH WESTCHESTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE, GEORGE LATIMER, BOARD OF LEGISLATORS AND THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU”</p>

		<p>(\$25,666.00) as of March 20, 2023, the newly awarded amount was increased to \$27,426.00.</p>
		<p>Moved by Councilman Thompson Seconded by Councilman Poteat On the Question: none Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
EXECUTE	12.	<p>An ordinance requesting permission for the Mayor to enter into an Agreement with Computer Adventures for the Mount Vernon Bureau’s Strong Program (\$5,000.00 for the Mount Vernon Youth Bureau’s Mount Vernon STRONG Program (Students Taking Responsibility and Ownership Now and Graduating) – OCFS extension, for the contract period April 13, 2023 to June 15, 2023 to provide twenty (20) weekly workshops). Funds in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 are to be accounted for in Budget Code A7316.405 OCFS (contracted expenses).</p>
		<p>Moved by Councilman Thompson Seconded by Councilman Poteat On the Question: none. Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
EXECUTE	13.	<p>An ordinance requesting permission for the Mayor to enter into an Agreement with NYS Office of Children and Family Services through the office of Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow (\$80,000.00 for the contract period of October 1, 2022 through September 31, 2023, contract number CO29560. Funds for these programs are to be accounted for in revenue code A2229.8 and expense code A7319.101 (Salaries and Fringes). The Youth Bureau will then transfer \$25,000.00 to the Recreation Department, Revenue Code A2001.5 to expense in A7310.104 and 458 for Boxing programs. There is no matching obligation for this grant.)</p>
		<p>Moved by Councilman Thompson Seconded by Councilman Poteat On the Question: none. Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
AMENDMENT	14.	<p>An ordinance amending Ordinance No. 15 adopted on July 13, 2022, entitled “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH WESTCHESTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE, GEORGE LATIMER, BOARD OF LEGISLATORS AND THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU AND ACCEPT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$71,428.00”</p>
		<p>Moved by Councilman Thompson Seconded by Councilman Poteat On the Question: none. Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None</p>
RESOLUTION	15.	<p>A resolution of the City Council of the City of Mount Vernon, New York recognizing and honoring the Columbia University Lions Women’s Basketball Team.</p>
		<p>Moved by Councilman Thompson Seconded by Councilman Poteat</p>

		<p>On the Question: Poteat asked, why the Council is putting forth this resolution?</p> <p>Response: Council President Browne answered she is a proud product of the Columbia University’s women’s basketball team and this team won the championship for the first time in history.</p> <p>Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne</p> <p>Nays: None</p>
--	--	---

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CODES

PERMISSION	16.	An ordinance requesting permission to conduct follow-up inspections of Mount Vernon businesses to ensure accuracy of price displays.
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Gleason</p> <p>Seconded by Councilwoman Copeland</p> <p>On the Question: none.</p> <p>Response: None.</p> <p>Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne</p> <p>Nays: None</p>
PERMISSION	17.	An ordinance requesting permission for six (6) Members of Service from the Fire Department to attend fire training (NY State Fire Academy Training Center from April 3 through April 6, 2023. Fees not to exceed an amount of \$1,200.00 – (approximately \$176.00 per firefighter) are available in Budget Code A3410.451, Training Budget).
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Gleason</p> <p>Seconded by Councilwoman Copeland</p> <p>On the Question: none.</p> <p>Response: None.</p> <p>Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne</p> <p>Nays: None</p>
PERMISSION	18.	An ordinance requesting permission for four (4) Members of Service to attend the ICISF Assisting Individuals in Crisis Peer Development Training (VFW Memorial Building, located at 413 Main Street, Beacon, NY 12508 from April 17 – April 18, 2023). There is no cost for this course.
		<p>Moved by Councilwoman Gleason</p> <p>Seconded by Councilwoman Copeland</p> <p>On the Question: none.</p> <p>Response: None.</p> <p>Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne</p> <p>Nays: None</p>
PERMISSION HELD ON THE FLOOR	19.	An ordinance requesting permission to accept the newly created position of “Deputy Commissioner of Emergency Medical Services” within the Fire Department. (Funding for this new position for the first two (2) years is available within the Public Health, American Rescue Plan Appropriations (ARPA) that was approved in 2021. (A4540.101ARP PHS-003 1.12).

FINANCE AND PLANNING

FIXING THE TAX RATES	20.	An ordinance requesting permission to fix the tax rates for the County and Special District Taxes for the Year 2023.
		Moved by Councilman Poteat Seconded by Councilman Thompson On the Question: none. Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None
OVERPAYMENT	21.	An ordinance requesting permission for the Comptroller to refund an overpayment of taxes to “Gitsit Solutions LLC.” - (Account Code A690 – refund in the amount of \$117,366.11 for overpayment of property taxes on Block 3127, Lot 29).
		Moved by Councilman Poteat Seconded by Councilman Thompson On the Question: none. Response: None. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None
PERMISSION	22.	An ordinance requesting permission for the Mayor, two (2) members of the Department of Planning and Community Development and one (1) member from the Department of Public Works to attend the National League of Cities (“NLC”) Mayors’ Institute from May 16 – 18, 2023. (The expenditure for the four (4) City members will not exceed \$7,200.00. The cost for three of the four participants will be reimbursed by NLC. The travel and lodging costs for the three department staff members will not exceed \$5,400.00. This trip requires the expenditure of \$3,600.00 City funds from the Planning and Community Development Department’s Contracted Outside Services expenditure code A8020.405 for the two members. Expenditure of \$1,800.00 City funds from the Department of Public Works Job Training Program budget code A8170.405 for one member. Each department will receive reimbursement from NLC corresponding to the amount spent by each department to code A8020.405 and A8170.405, respectively. Expenses for the fourth participant’s travel and lodging will not exceed \$1,800.00, to be covered by the Mayor’s Office Travel Budget Code A1210.402, this amount will not be reimbursed by the NLC.)
		Moved by Councilman Poteat Seconded by Councilman Thompson On the Question: Councilwoman Copeland asked if we know who is attending this conference? Response: Council President Browne answered that it is members of different departments but does not mention who. Ayes: Copeland, Gleason, Thompson, Poteat, Browne Nays: None
PERMISSION HELD FROM THE FLOOR	23.	An ordinance requesting permission to increase salary line 8090.101 for the GIS Administrator within the Department of Planning and Community Development (from \$70,631.00 to \$82,231.31 within the approved 2023 Budget).
PERMISSION HELD FROM THE FLOOR	24.	An ordinance requesting permission for the mileage reimbursement rate to be set as the same as the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) rate.
PERMISSION HELD FROM THE FLOOR	25.	An ordinance requesting permission for conference attendees to be reimbursed within two (2) weeks.

The agenda was completed at 8:48PM.

FURTHER BUSINESS:

There was discussion on the Comprehensive Plan, and an additional fee. Councilman Thompson noted the funeral for two community members who passed away.

Councilman Thompson moved to adjourn, Councilman Poteat seconded. Roll Call on adjournment. **ALL AYES** at 8:52pm Moment of silence for the deceased community members.

Adjourned 8:53 PM.

Submitted
Deputy Clerk Jackson
4/12/2023