

## **Auburn City Council Meeting, March 7, 2024**

**Auburn City Council  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, March 7, 2024 5:00 P.M.  
City Council Chambers  
Memorial City Hall  
24 South St.  
Auburn, NY 13021**

### **Minutes**

The meeting of the Auburn City Council was called to order at 5:00 p.m. from the City Council Chambers, 24 South St. Auburn, NY by Mayor James N. Giannettino, Jr..

**ROLL CALL** – The City Clerk called the roll. Mayor Giannettino and Councilor Ginny Kent, Councilor Rhoda Overstreet-Wilson, Councilor Terry Cuddy and Councilor Christina Calarco were present.

**The following City Staff was present for the meeting:**

- City Manager, Jeff Dygert
- City Clerk, Chuck Mason
- Assistant Corporation Counsel, Tim Brennan
- Police Chief, Jim Slayton
- Comptroller, Mary Beth Leeson
- Assistant to the Mayor and City Council, Rhonda Miller

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag** – Mayor Giannettino led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Moment of Silent Prayer or Reflection** – Mayor Giannettino asked for a moment of silent prayer.

**Public Announcements –**

The City Budget preparation webpage has been added to the City website and can be located at this link: [www.auburnny.gov/budget](http://www.auburnny.gov/budget)

Planning is underway for the Summer Recreation Program for Children in the City's parks. Information of the Summer of 2023 program was sent by email to the members of City Council for their review, as well as, the information can be found at the City website page: [www.auburnny.gov/summerrec](http://www.auburnny.gov/summerrec) If members of City Council have any input for the Summer 2024 program they are asked to provide that to the City Manager and the Director of Public Works.

**Ceremonial Presentations –**

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**WHEREAS**, Harriet Tubman was born into slavery as Araminta Ross in Bucktown, near Cambridge, Maryland in 1822; and

**WHEREAS**, Harriet escaped from slavery in 1849 to eventually settle in Philadelphia, where she was introduced to William Still – the “Station Master of the Underground Railroad” and began her mission as one of their conductors; and

**WHEREAS**, Harriet Tubman became known as the “Moses of her people” after making many trips leading several slaves to freedom in Canada, along the Underground Railroad; and

**WHEREAS**, following her escape from slavery she joined with the Union Army and served as a nurse, scout, cook and spy in the Civil War; and

**WHEREAS**, following the war she met Secretary William H. Seward and his wife Frances here in Auburn, through whom she contracted seven acres of land on South Street to build a home for herself and other family members; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1896 she purchased an additional twenty-five adjoining acres to her home, including a frame house that would become known as her Home for the Aged to expand her charitable work providing for poor, sick and elderly formerly enslaved people; and

**WHEREAS**, over the 50 years that she lived in Auburn she took everything she earned and gave it back in service to others and she fought for racial and gender equality with civil rights and suffrage activism; and

**WHEREAS**, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 1913, Harriet Tubman departed for eternal life and was laid to rest with full military honors at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, New York; and

**WHEREAS**, today her home and property in Auburn are registered as a National Historic Landmark; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1998 this site was designated as part of the National Park Service’s National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 19, 2014 President Barack Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which included creating the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park which will protect in perpetuity sites associated with Tubman in Cambridge, Maryland and Auburn, New York; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 10, 2017 the U.S. Interior Secretary signed the establishment of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park officially making the Auburn site the 414<sup>th</sup> unit of our National Park Service; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2022, following years of research and planning the National Park Service broke ground on a rehabilitation project of the Thompson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church located on Parker Street and in the summer of 2024 the site will open as part of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park; and

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**WHEREAS**, Harriet Ross Tubman is an inspiration to many people, as her life's work fighting for freedom and equality makes her one of our Nation's greatest historical figures, and it is therefore fitting that people everywhere pay tribute to this significant American champion of freedom.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that I, James N Giannettino, Mayor of the City of Auburn, New York, on behalf of the members of City Council and citizens of Auburn, do hereby proclaim the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024, as **HARRIET TUBMAN DAY** in the City of Auburn, New York.

**In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Auburn to be affixed this Seventh day of March 2024.**

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**James N Giannettino, Jr, Mayor**  
City of Auburn, New York

**WHEREAS**, American reading levels have been far below grade-level for decades. In 2022, only one-third of children were reading at proficient levels. The rapid shift to distance learning during the pandemic only heightened many of these disparities and put many students at risk of developing long-term disadvantages.; and

**WHEREAS**, reading is an issue of social justice that tops the list of 10 fundamental human rights. The right to read means giving each student the capability to access information that can allow them to reach their fullest potential; and

**WHEREAS**, children have the right to access books in print and digital formats. Connectivity is key to ensuring equity in access to books. Children have the right to supportive reading environments with knowledgeable literacy partners whether they are teachers, librarians, or literacy coaches; and

**WHEREAS**, without equal access to computer hardware, software applications, and the internet, some children will be at a disadvantage—when a child doesn't learn to read, their chances of incarceration, homelessness, and high school dropout increase; and

**WHEREAS**, through the Parent/Guardian University events the Auburn School District has the power to advance understanding and bring unprecedented awareness to the Auburn community. The next Parent/Guardian University event, a screening of the documentary ***"The Right to Read"*** shares the stories of an NAACP activist, a teacher, and two American families who fight to provide our youngest generation with the most foundational indicator of life-long success. This documentary focuses on one of the greatest civil rights issues of our time: the ability to read; and

**WHEREAS**, the goal is to educate parents/guardians about previous injustices when it comes to reading and inform parents/guardians about the Science of Reading. AECSO has focused on the Science of Reading for years and will continue to do so. After watching the documentary, members from both the Reading League of New York and the district will be able to respond to the specific implementations and programming that are being used to ensure our students become proficient readers and writers.

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**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved that I, James N. Giannettino, Jr., Mayor of the City of Auburn, New York, on behalf of the City Council and the Citizens of Auburn, do hereby proclaim March 13, 2024 to be

### **RIGHT TO READ DAY**

and we encourage our citizens and visitors to attend this event at the Auburn Public Theater on the 13<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm to learn more information about this literacy issue, and see how they can better serve families in Auburn.

**In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Auburn to be affixed this Seventh day of March 2024.**

**James N. Giannettino, Jr., Mayor**  
City of Auburn, New York

**Whereas**, March is National Women's History Month, and the National Women's History Alliance has designated the theme for Women's History Month 2024 as *"Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion"*; and

**Whereas**, this theme recognizes the invaluable contributions of women who have dedicated themselves to advocating for equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of society; and

**Whereas**, women from diverse backgrounds have long been at the forefront of efforts to address systemic inequities and promote a more inclusive and just society; and

**Whereas**, the courageous advocacy of women for practical goals such as equity, diversity, and inclusion serves as a beacon of inspiration for all individuals and communities; and

**Whereas**, in 2024, we honor the women who have tirelessly worked to dismantle barriers, challenge prejudices, and create opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background and attacks against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions programs and training in our institutions;

**Whereas**, here in Auburn our NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center has as its mission to promote the legacy of the many women that have provided critical leadership in our State's and Nation's history, women such as Harriet Tubman, Frances Seward, Martha Coffin Wright, Eliza Wright Osborne, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton just to name a few.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved** that, I, James N. Giannettino, Mayor of the City of Auburn, on behalf of the members of City Council and the community of Auburn, New York hereby proclaim that March 2024 is designated within the City of Auburn as

### **Women's History Month**

**Be it further resolved that**, we encourage our communities and organizations to celebrate the achievements of women who have championed equity, diversity, and inclusion, and reaffirm our commitment to advancing these principles in our society. Let us honor the women who have dedicated themselves to advocating for equity, diversity, and inclusion, and let us continue to work together to build a more just, equitable, and inclusive world.

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**In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Auburn to be affixed this Seventh day of March 2024.**

**James N. Giannettino, Jr., Mayor**  
City of Auburn, New York

**Public to be heard:** The City Clerk read the rules for Public To Be Heard. The following individuals spoke: Andrew Bishop spoke regarding topics pertaining to Owasco Lake.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes –**

February 22, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the February 22, 2024 minutes by Councilor Kent, seconded by Councilor Calarco.

Motion to approve carried 5-0.

### **Reports of City Officials**

#### **City Manager's Report –**

- The city has been notified that we have been awarded a NYSDEC grant for Nonpoint Source Planning. This grant will support a Comprehensive Stream Corridor Assessment in the Owasco Lake Watershed focused on phosphorus. The grant is up to \$75,000 with a \$10,000 local match. The project will get underway once NYS documentation and contracts are complete.
- Staff is working on setting up a meeting with all of the Town Supervisors and Village Mayors in Cayuga County to discuss what everyone is doing related to their water systems in an effort to help keep one another informed and promote collaborations where they make sense.
- The Chlorine Dioxide Generator arrived this week. Staff is working on a plan for the installation and change over to the unit. The system will help control zebra mussels at the raw water intake and will improve upon the existing system by reducing disinfection byproducts downstream in our water system.
- Seth Jensen, our Director of Municipal Utilities will be presenting at this weekend's Bob Brower Owasco Lake Scientific Symposium. Mr. Jensen will speak about the process, considerations, and challenges of managing a municipal water treatment and distribution system.
- The elevator at the parking garage remains out of service. Staff has received bids back for the necessary repair work and will have an award resolution for council soon. Parts availability will be our limiting factor and it is anticipated the elevator will remain out of service for several months. We will provide updates as we learn more.

### **Reports from members of Council –**

- Councilor Cuddy reported the Skatepark Committee held a meeting and the celebration ceremony to cut the ribbon on the completed project is scheduled for June 21, 2024 in the afternoon, more details forthcoming.

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- Councilor Kent attended an event held by the Finger lakes Institute with author Dan Egan, his book is on matters pertaining to watershed protection. She also attended a public meeting held by Seymour Public Library where they presented their strategic plan.

### **Matters to Come Before Council -**

**A. State Environmental Quality Review Act Resolutions (SEQR) – none**

**B. Ordinances – none**

**C. Local Laws – none**

**D. Resolutions –**

### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION #32 OF 2024 ADOPTING THE PRO-HOUSING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM PLEDGE**

By Councilor Calarco

March 7, 2024

**WHEREAS**, the City of Auburn (hereinafter “local government”) believes that the lack of housing for New York residents of all ages and income levels negatively impacts the future of New York State’s economic growth and community well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, the housing crisis has negative effects at regional and local levels, the City believes that every community must do their part to contribute to housing growth and benefit from the positive impacts a healthy housing market brings to communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City believes that supporting housing production of all kinds in our community will bring multiple benefits, including increasing housing access and choices for current and future residents, providing integrated accessible housing options that meet the needs of people with sensory and mobility disabilities, bringing economic opportunities and vitality to our communities, and allowing workers at all levels to improve their quality of life through living closer to their employment opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City believes that evidence showing that infill development that reduces sprawl and supports walkable communities has significant environmental and public health benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, the City believes that affirmatively furthering fair housing and reducing segregation is not only required by law but is essential for keeping our community strong and vibrant.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Auburn, in order to take positive steps to alleviate the housing crisis, adopts the Pro-Housing Communities pledge, which will have us endeavor to take the following important steps:

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1. Streamlining permitting for multifamily housing, affordable housing, accessible housing, accessory dwelling units, and supportive housing.
2. Adopting policies that affirmatively further fair housing.
3. Incorporating regional housing needs into planning decisions.
4. Increasing development capacity for residential uses.
5. Enacting policies that encourage a broad range of housing development, including multifamily housing, affordable housing, accessible housing, accessory dwelling units, and supportive housing.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that City staff is authorized to submit this resolution and other supporting documentation to New York State Homes and Community Renewal in order for the City of Auburn to be considered for Pro-Housing Community certification.

Seconded by Councilor Kent

	Ayes	Noes	Excused
Councilor Kent	X		
Councilor Overstreet-Wilson	X		
Councilor Cuddy	X		
Councilor Calarco	X		
Mayor Giannettino	X		
Carried and Adopted	X		

## APPOINTMENT RESOLUTION #33 OF 2024

### APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW

By Councilor Cuddy

March 7, 2024

**WHEREAS**, New York State Law requires that the City of Auburn maintain an Assessment Review Board by which members are appointed by the Mayor with confirmation by the City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, there currently exists a vacancy on the board and it is the recommendation of the Mayor that the following person, who is a resident of the City of Auburn, shall be appointed as member of the Board for a term of five (5) years, namely:

Joseph Villano

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Auburn City Council does hereby appoint Joseph Villano to be a member of the Board of Assessment Review for a term of five (5) years commencing immediately and lasting through March 7, 2029.

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Seconded by Councilor Calarco

	Ayes	Noes
Councilor Kent	X	
Councilor Overstreet-Wilson	X	
Councilor Cuddy	X	
Councilor Calarco	X	
Mayor Giannettino	X	
Carried and Adopted	X	

**APPOINTMENT RESOLUTION #34 OF 2024**

**APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE PUBLIC ART COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF AUBURN**

By Councilor Kent

March 7, 2024

**WHEREAS**, the Public Art Commission was originally established by Ordinance No. 5 of 2017, and said Ordinance sets forth the legislative intent, purpose, powers and membership of the Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the members of the Public Art Commission are appointed by the Mayor of the City of Auburn with the approval of the majority of the City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council are desirous of reappointing the following individuals to their positions for a term of two (2) years effective immediately and completing March 6, 2026:

- Tom Hussey, representing professional artists;
- Lynn Varley, representing education and Chair of the Commission.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Auburn that Tom Hussey and Lynn Varley be appointed as members of the Public Art Commission and that they are appointed for terms as outlined herein.

Seconded By Councilor Cuddy

	Ayes	Noes	Excused
Councilor Kent	X		
Councilor Overstreet-Wilson	X		
Councilor Cuddy	X		



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Councilor Calarco	X		
Mayor Giannettino	X		
Carried and Adopted	X		

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION #35 OF 2024**

**AUTHORIZING THE AUBURN FIRE DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR A FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG) FOR THERMO IMAGING CAMERAS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING EQUIPMENT.**

March 7, 2024

By Councilor Calarco

**WHEREAS**, the City of Auburn Fire Department has the opportunity to apply for funding through the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant program (the “FEMA AFG”), which would be used to purchase five Thermo Imaging Cameras and Emergency Medical Training Equipment; and

**WHEREAS**, the five Thermo Imaging Cameras would replace current cameras that have exceeded their seven-year life expectancy, are no longer supported by the manufacturer and are not NFPA 1801 compliant, while the Emergency Medical Training Equipment would replace outdated and worn training mannequins and allow for dedicated medical training equipment be assigned to the EMS Training Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the Thermo Imaging Cameras will improve safety for Fire Department personnel operating on the fireground and assist in locating victims trapped inside burning building, while the Emergency Medical Training Equipment will be used to train Fire Department personnel, other Emergency Services personnel, City staff and the public in lifesaving skills; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Auburn Fire Department, is interested in applying for FEMA AFG funding to cover the cost of \$49,579 for the purchase of five Thermo Imaging Cameras and Emergency Medical Training Equipment; and

**WHEREAS**, this FEMA AFG application will, if awarded, cover up to 90% of the cost for the five Thermo Imaging Cameras and the Emergency Medical Training Equipment, requiring the City of Auburn to match 10% or \$4,957.90, which will come out of the Fire Department’s Operating Budget; and

**WHEREAS**, the current City of Auburn Fire Department budget does not contain sufficient funds to replace the Thermo Imaging Cameras and Emergency Medical Training Equipment at its full cost, it is necessary to apply for funding assistance from the FEMA AFG program.

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUBURN, NEW YORK:**

1. That the Auburn Fire Chief is authorized to execute any and all forms or applications necessary to complete the grant application;
2. That the Mayor, or authorized representative, upon notice of the funding award, is authorized to execute a FEMA AFG contract and any reimbursement forms or other necessary documents to complete the project;
3. That the City Comptroller's Office is authorized and directed to create a city expense and revenue capital account to track project finances; and
4. This resolution takes effect immediately upon its approval and adoption.

Seconded by Councilor Kent

	Ayes	Noes	Excused
Councilor Kent	X		
Councilor Overstreet-Wilson	X		
Councilor Cuddy	X		
Councilor Calarco	X		
Mayor Giannettino	X		
Carried and Adopted	X		

**E. Staff or Vendor Presentations – none**

**TABLED ITEMS – none**

**OTHER BUSINESS –**

**ADJOURNMENT:** By unanimous vote the Council adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m..

Minutes submitted by: Chuck Mason, City Clerk