

**Auburn City Council  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, March 9, 2023 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 Councilor Kent.

**ROLL CALL** – The City Clerk called the roll. Councilor Ginny Kent, Councilor Jimmy Giannettino, Councilor Terry Cuddy and Councilor Tim Locastro were present. Councilor Mayor Quill was excused.

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

- Acting City Manager, Jennifer Haines
- City Clerk, Chuck Mason
- Corporation Counsel, Nate Garland
- Comptroller, Rachel Jacobs
- Director of Capital Projects and Grants, Christina Selvek
- Police Chief, James Slayton
- Fire Chief, Mark Fritz

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag** – Councilor Kent led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Moment of Silent Prayer or Reflection** – Councilor Kent asked for a moment of silent prayer.

**Public Announcements –**

**Ceremonial Presentations –**

**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 2023 the site will open as part of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park; and

**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, Michael D. Quill, Mayor of the City of Auburn, New York, on behalf of the members of City Council and citizens of Auburn, do hereby proclaim the 9<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2023, 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 Ninth day of March 2023.**

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**Michael D. Quill, Mayor**  
City of Auburn, New York

Mayor Quill presented the Harriet Tubman Day proclamation to descendants of Harriet Tubman that were in attendance including, Judith Bryant, Pauline Copes Johnson and Ursula Johnson.

**Public to be heard** – The City Clerk read the rules for the Public to be Heard. No speakers.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes –**

February 23, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the February 23, 2023 minutes by Councilor Giannettino, seconded by Councilor Cuddy. Motion to approve carried 5-0.

**Reports of City Officials**

**City Manager's Report –**

**Reports from members of Council –**

**Matters to Come Before Council**

**A. State Environmental Quality Review Act Resolutions (SEQR) -**

**B. Ordinances – none**

**C. Local Laws – none**

**D. Resolutions –**

**GRANT ACCEPTANCE RESOLUTION #28 OF 2023**

**AUTHORIZING GRANT FUNDING ACCEPTANCE FROM THE WILLIAM G. POMEROY  
FOUNDATION FOR A ROADSIDE HISTORICAL MARKER**

By Councilor Cuddy

March 9, 2023

**WHEREAS**, the City of Auburn is rich in historic and cultural resources and is known as History's Hometown;

**WHEREAS**, one of the City's most notable historical figures was Harriet Tubman who resided in Auburn for the final 54 years of her life following her escape from slavery; and

**WHEREAS**, during her life in Auburn Harriet Tubman established the Home for the Aged and Indigent Negroes on property she owned on South Street in the City; and

**WHEREAS**, Harriet Tubman employed Mrs. Frances Brown as matron of the Home for the Aged and Indigent Negroes and Mrs. Brown served in that capacity beginning in 1908 serving through the final years of Harriet Tubman's life and until 1929; and

**WHEREAS**, during her time living and working in Auburn Mrs. Frances Brown resided at her residence on 31 Parker Street, which is today 45 Parker Street, a residence owned by Ms. Pauline Copes Johnson a great, great grandniece of Ms. Tubman; and

**WHEREAS**, following research coordinated by Ms. Johnson the City of Auburn applied for a roadside historical marker grant program offered by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation and on February 27, 2023 the City received notice that the Pomeroy Foundation awarded a \$1,550. grant to be used to install a roadside historical marker as a tribute to Mrs. Frances Brown on City right of way property located in front of 45 Parker Street in Auburn.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Auburn that the Mayor, or his named designee, on behalf of the City of Auburn, is hereby authorized and directed to accept these grant funds in an amount not to exceed \$1,550. For the installation of a roadside historical marker as a tribute to Mrs. Frances Brown; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Comptroller is authorized to accept these funds into the Gifts and Donations account A99.2705.

Seconded by Councilor Giannettino

	Ayes	Noes	Excused
Councilor Kent	X		
Councilor Giannettino	X		
Councilor Cuddy	X		
Councilor Locastro	X		
Mayor Quill			X
Carried and Adopted	X		

#### **APPOINTMENT RESOLUTION #29 OF 2023**

#### **APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE AUBURN HISTORIC RESOURCES REVIEW BOARD**

By Councilor Cuddy

March 9, 2023

**WHEREAS**, the Auburn City Code, Chapter 178 entitled “Historic Preservation” was established “to protect the many structures and landscape features having special character or historic interest to the City of Auburn,” and has declared, as a matter of public policy, that “the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements and/or landscape features of special character or history be preserved as a public necessity and required in the interest and welfare of the people of Auburn”; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 178-4 of the Auburn City Code requires that members of the Historic Resources Review Board be appointed by the Mayor and approved by Council; and

**WHEREAS**, it is recommended that the following persons all being city residents be appointed for three (3) year terms: Michael Deming, Jackie Gumtow, James Hutchinson, Ed Onori, and Richard Stankus.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUBURN, NEW YORK** that the following persons shall be appointed to the Historic Resources Review Board for three (3) year terms of service beginning immediately and lasting through March 9, 2026: Michael Deming, Jackie Gumtow, James Hutchinson, Ed Onori, and Richard Stankus.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Seconded by Councilor Giannettino

	Ayes	Noes	Excused
Councilor Kent	X		
Councilor Giannettino	X		
Councilor Cuddy	X		
Councilor Locastro	X		
Mayor Quill			X
Carried and Adopted	X		

### **APPOINTMENT RESOLUTION #30 OF 2023**

#### **APPOINTING MEMBERS OF THE AUBURN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

By Councilor Locastro

March 9, 2023

**WHEREAS**, the City of Auburn has created the Auburn Human Rights Commission pursuant to the General Municipal Law of the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council would like to appoint the following persons, all of whom are residents of the City of Auburn, shall be appointed as members of the Commission for a term of three (3) years, namely:

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Gilda Brower, Robert Ellison, William Gonzalez, Kathleen Barnard, Gwendolyn Jones, Rhoda Overstreet-Wilson and John Price; and

**WHEREAS**, the members shall serve for a term of three (3) years beginning immediately upon approval of this Appointment Resolution.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the following persons are hereby appointed as members of the Auburn Human Rights Commission for a term of three (3) years, namely:

Gilda Brower, Robert Ellison, William Gonzalez, Kathleen Barnard, Gwendolyn Jones, Rhoda Overstreet-Wilson and John Price; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that said appointments are to become effective immediately upon approval of this Appointment Resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Giannettino

	Ayes	Noes	Excused
Councilor Kent	X		
Councilor Giannettino	X		
Councilor Cuddy	X		
Councilor Locastro	X		
Mayor Quill			X
Carried and Adopted	X		

**E. Staff or Vendor Presentations –**

- Update on the Historic Thompson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Rehabilitation Project by Ahna Wilson, Superintendent of Harriet Tubman National Historical Park

**TABLED ITEMS - none**

**OTHER BUSINESS – none**

**Second Public to be Heard. None**

Executive Session: Councilor Giannettino made a motion to enter Executive Session, seconded by Councilor Cuddy. Council voted to enter an executive session regarding the following matters:

- One matter made confidential due to attorney client privilege due to pending litigation.

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The motion to enter executive session carried 4-0. The Council entered Executive Session at 5:50 p.m. Executive session adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** By unanimous vote the Council adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m..

Minutes submitted by: Chuck Mason, City Clerk