



**THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
NEW YORK**

**PUBLIC HEARING
(PROPOSED 2013 BUDGET)
MINUTES**

Monday, NOVEMBER 5, 2012 5:30 pm

City Hall

Chairwoman Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Good evening and welcome to the public hearing regarding the 2013 Budget.

Michael R. Makar - 6 Hanscom Avenue –Wanted to know how the property tax cap passed in 2011 affects him. Is there a limit on amount of money he can raise? Is that the reason why the City can't balance the budget?

Chairwoman Johnson: Just to reiterate, this is not a Q & A, it's a public hearing.

Dory Marcinelli - 31 Miller Road – Handed in letters of support for co-worker, Chris Reardon, PD Youth Worker scheduled to be laid off. Hopes that the Council does what is fiscally appropriate and saves as many jobs as possible. Suggested we start charging for garbage – whatever it takes. Hopes the Council can save even one job. Buyouts for ward money – I have no issue with not having any ward parties or festivals. I just want to save as many jobs as possible.

Constantine Kazolias - 47 Noxon Street – If garbage is privatized, people won't be able to take it off their taxes. It will cost \$400 to privatize the garbage. Submitted an article about burnout. Read the following from his notes: Mayor Tkyazik pits public safety against public health as stated in his 2013 budget. Public safety is untouchable. Other comparable surrounding cities have less police/thousand. Newburgh with its 800 abandoned properties vs. Poughkeepsie with 500 has less police 1/400 per thousand while City of Poughkeepsie. 1/343/k. T/Poughkeepsie has 1/480/k; Schenectady 1/413/k. Additionally, Poughkeepsie has the Sheriff, State Police and MTA. The finance commissioner [czar] controls all monies because he has veto power over all P.O.'s. He is not a CPA, administering an \$80+ million budget. Some city auditing is being done by an unlicensed auditor. Legal dept. 2011 budget was \$80,000 but over-spent an additional

\$400,000 without Common Council approval. An overall view by eliminating city rubbish will change Poughkeepsie from a tree city to a rat city. Closing the transfer station would be a DISASTER!!! It primarily meets the city needs during emergencies as a backup. Additionally, eliminating bulk pickup creating a critical hardship for many, especially senior citizens and those without means to fend for themselves. The transfer station's actual revenues for 2011 were \$113,902.20 but the entry was \$90,165.60!!! Why the shortfall? PONZI accounting, one of many!!! Transfer stations revenue receipts for periods prior to 2011 are squirreled away in finance office. Last year's, Irene storm's cleanup cost the Town of Poughkeepsie \$300,000. The city 'DPW minute men,' not the Bacon-Davis \$51.71/hr. Personnel, cleaned the debris and saved the city big bucks. Obama told Jersey would get aid in 15 minutes!!! How much did FEMA give the City? On short notice, the 'DPW's orange shirted minute men' cleaned Waryas Park for Gov. Cuomo's 'unannounced visit.' Cutting DPW mechanics who service 474 vehicles, 83 police, inspecting 200 taxis, losing \$50,000 yearly in revenues, and servicing many other pieces of equipment. This will necessitate outsourcing much of the maintenance work. DPW personnel having taken a major hit in the past by adding the additional workloads on those that remain, contribute to 'the burnout factor.' Why does the city service the N/S arterial lighting, free, and maintains E/W arterial at \$60,000/yr., which is costing/losing the city big bucks. The political deal between Tkzyzik/Molinaro was for a County takeover by coupling both the Community Development funds to the city, pays city office rental and the city federally purchased buses with fed subsidies going to the private Loop bus system. FYI, Loop maintenance is below par and many times non-existent!!! There are three restaurants located on city park land that have leases with the city. The Ice House has the city pick up its' garbage container at no cost [freebee] to them. Another expense DPW absorbs without a revenue offset. Ice House recyclables are not separated, violating both County/City recycling law. Enforcement, huh? FYI, the city sanitation inspector is out cutting grass full time!!! The other two restaurants pay Royal Carting a fee. There are seven federal housing projects that the city receives fed funds that cost the city \$50,000/year to service. Those funds were in the city coffers until the city changed its' category to NH class #411, there are many questionable accounting practices which the audit report should be noted and clarified. I leave that to the official audit report which has been delayed in forthcoming!!!

Ken Stickle - 118 Catherine Street – Too much money being moved around. Gave statistics of his property value, taxes and how it will increase with the proposed increase of 1.9% and how much more it will cost. By adding the cost of "designer bags" for garbage pick up. Did calculations on the cost of pick up by Royal, Waste Mgt., etc. To have garbage picked up by Royal, it costs \$32 per month, another \$384. There's going to be an increase in the water bill of \$.50/unit which averages out another \$80 - \$120/year. This is over a 50% tax increase. By using private garbage pick up, homeowners will not be able to write garbage pick up off their taxes. You don't want people to lose their homes, but if you're able to write it off property taxes, you're able to recoup some of your tax money back. By using \$3 designer bags; most households use between 2-3 bags/week. \$6 to \$9/week x 52 weeks – add it up. You can't write that off your income taxes. In winter, the sanitation workers picked up trash off the streets, and they can't

even get decent gloves to wear half the time out there. And we're worried about, "We're going to save this much?" No, I'm sorry. I would call for the impeachment of everybody sitting up here before I'll see these guys.....

Councilwoman Johnson: You're out of order. Let's not have threats or insults. Go ahead.

Ken Stickle – No, it's not right. I came down the highway today, by Monroe Muffler. I saw a box spring and mattress. I see furniture sitting all over the city. I said that when the city took the 411's, it would become a dumping ground. Well, it did. Now it's getting worse again; nobody's noticing...? You want to bring business into the city? Not when it's a dumping ground. We're going back to the 80's and 90's when it looked worse than downtown Beirut bombed out? That's what it will look like. You have a choice – Keep these guys in the budget or let it become a dumping ground. And, who cares? Maybe we can push it all down to the waterfront, because that's where all the money's going, to the waterfront – not uptown. So, I hope you can figure this one out. Thank you.

Nancy Fedoreshenko - Fallkill Avenue – Just have some comments. Read the Waste Zero documentation and wondering if they are going to educate their customers on how to reduce waste cost. For those people who put their garbage out on the street, what makes you think they'll wait and keep it in their houses until they are given a bag to put it in? If they don't wait and put their stuff out on the street, it will get put in with recyclables. They need to be made aware that they can get money for it instead of putting in the recycle bins. They need to be educated on how to separate their garbage and put recyclables into cash or non-cash items. Another thing is that the city complains that they don't have enough revenue. Well, you need to attract more businesses. There are problems with the way a property owner can and cannot fix a building. The Building Inspector has told someone I know that was planning to put a business in a large piece of property building in the city that it would have to be brought up to code in order to do that. He was told that he wasn't allowed to perform the work himself. He didn't buy the building. I also wanted to purchase a property in the city. It was being offered at \$25,000. I offered \$14,000. When I asked the Assessor why the property was assessed at \$325,000 when the building could not be used. He said he'd take a look at it after I purchased it. I did not buy the building. You say that you want to reduce costs. I say you give everybody the \$7 and change salary that the government says they're entitled to. You want to increase revenue, increase revenue by decreasing taxes.

Councilwoman Johnson: Interjected that the time clock is broken and that the 5 min. time allotment has passed, but if the speaker wanted to continue, the public participation meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Fedoreshenko thanked her and she intimated that she will speak at the next meeting.

Elizabeth Sulmonese - 239 Hooker Avenue – I am a taxpaying citizen. I have two children in the Poughkeepsie School System. Last year, my youngest child went down to the Hudson River 5 times with the teacher. They cleaned up the garbage there. They cleaned up the river; they tested it. There is garbage in the sewers. Doesn't want to see the garbage end up in the river. Her child worked too hard for that. If we don't have the garbage collectors, that's where it's going to end up.

Jeff Purdy - 115 Balsalm Square, part of Springside Condominiums – Is aware that the city admin and Common Council have some extremely difficult decisions to make. Is respectful of that and respectful of the job that the garbage men do. My objective is to come up with a way to keep these jobs. My idea is to come up with a 2 tiered charge system. Those with one pick up per week and those who need 2 pickups per week. The 2 pickups would be a higher charge than those with only 1 pickup. I know it's a very tough issue and it's very important that we keep these guys employed, and at the same time, try to find a way to come up with a 2 tier

MC Edwards - 158 North Clinton Street – Wanted to voice concerns about the layoffs of the Public Works guys and the "Pay as you Throw" policy being considered. Since she adopted a dog, she has become a pedestrian and stated that the Southside is much cleaner than the Northside of Poughkeepsie. The Northside is very neglected. Feels that educating people about recyclables is really not necessary. Most people know, they just don't care. The Sanitation workers did a massive cleanup of College Hill Park in the children's section for some private or church function at the end of Sept. or beginning of October. Within a week it was littered all over again. They're doing it themselves. These kids should know better – aren't they taught about littering in school? It's the parents' responsibility first and foremost. It's disgusting. I walk my dog in College Hill Park, though not as much as I used to because of the garbage, which is depressing. When we had the storm last October, it took until Feb. to come in and clean up the trees that were demolished – there's still one tree; it hasn't been cleaned by the outdoor reservoir. There's garbage by the paths (carpet, tires) a year later. There is garbage strewn about on vacant lots, thrown over fences. The Pay as you Throw will not work. It's just going to get worse. There's a percentage of the population that just doesn't care. It works in some areas, but I don't think it will work in Poughkeepsie. Good luck with the budget and I hope you guys can get to that tree.

Jeremy Doxsee - 21 Rosalind Road – I can appreciate how difficult this budget is and the challenges before you. I came to support the DPW. There's been a systematic reduction in government services over the last 5 years. Some are necessary, but you reach a point living in a city community where you want to be in and don't want to see my Department of Public Works eviscerated like this and privatized out. I feel that the solid waste pick up as part of municipal services. I speak for myself, but I support an increase in taxes. When I was here in the Spring, Mayor Tkazyik was talking about how he's kept taxes low here. He also pointed out that Beacon has had a 26% tax increase. It's important to point out that you go to Beacon and it has an attractive downtown; it's a community people go to. It seems to be on the way up. I think Fishkill is proposing a 30% tax increase. Communities that are in this game to win are showing the political

courage to raise taxes – I'm not saying we should raise taxes 30%, but I'm willing to let my taxes go up more than 1.8%. Mayor Tkazyik said that 60% of the households pay fewer taxes this year. I find that unconscionable, particularly given the vacant housing and foreclosure crises that we're having. I was expecting a more significant increase in taxes to confront the very difficult problems we have here in the city. People like me are ready to jump ship. I'm not going to sit in a sinking ship and keep investing money in my house, knowing I'll never get it back. When I see empty tree wells, crumbling sidewalks, trash strewn streets, empty storefronts; you get to a point and say if the City is not going to make strategic investments, then I'm just going to sell my house for a loss and be done with it. So, we need to look in the mirror here. If you keep cutting taxes and services, you'll watch people flee the city and we'll be Detroit in a couple of years. I don't know, but for starters here tonight, I'm willing to pay a little bit more if we can keep our DPW and try to make some strategic investments here in the city. That's all I got. I wish you well. It's a really difficult budget. I appreciate what you guys are trying to do, so that's pretty much it. Thank you.

Mark Griffith - 33 Salt Point Turnpike – I noticed that a considerable amount of people throw garbage as they walk. I'm a homeowner and I have to go out and pick up other people's garbage and it makes me angry. We have laws in this country saying that littering is illegal. If the laws are enforced by the police, the DPW guys won't have to pick it up and the city could use the money to help keep the DPW people. I see hundreds of people throw bags of garbage. Like the lady said before, all these people could easily take the trash and put it in the trash dispenser. But, no, they make more work for these gentlemen (DPW) and for everybody else who owns a home. That's all I have to say.

Mrs. Marone - 20 Fountain Place – I agree with what the speakers have said so far. We're going from trash city into something worse. We desperately need the DPW workers and our garbage men. We cannot live without them. Why anybody is even considering a proposal like this, I do not know. It is all wrong. There is money allocated and has been since I was born, and I've lived in the city ever since I was born for garbage pickup. Why should we pay double? It's covered in our taxes. Now we're going to have to pay \$3.00/bag to get rid of garbage? What about those, like me who live alone, or an elderly couple? How much garbage could we possibly put out? The city's going to change the tax base on what they get from us? They're going to get about \$6.00 every 3 mos. Is that going to relieve our tax thing and fix our 2013 budget? This is crazy. Somebody is not looking at this from the right angle. They're not looking at it from a poor man's angle. I, for one, am not a property owner, but I keep the property as well as other properties on the street, and I pick up the City lots, too. There aren't enough DPW workers – there should be more to help the ones we have. They're doing a darn good job, the only ones that work for the city. No intents personally who do any work are the DPW and we desperately need them, all of them. Besides, it takes 6 weeks to 2 mos. to put out a 30 gallon bag of garbage, where am I supposed to store it meanwhile? Against the kitchen wall, so I could smell it? Or put it in the hall, so my landlord can smell it, or boost it up outside so the animals can get it? This is not going to work. Nobody's looking at this from the right angle. Referring us out to private haulers, is not saving city tax dollars, it's giving it to private concerns. It's not keeping it here in the city; I

understand that's what our higher ups wanted to do – was keep it here in the city. We don't need a 1.9% tax raise, but it should cover the garbage pickup if we do have, which we will. Tax raises are never voted down for some reason. We have enough in there now without the 1.9 tax...without all this nonsense with the garbage. It shouldn't be at hand right now. There's no reason for it. We should be able to keep our 2 times per week pickup. It's all in the tax dollars, and we should not have to pay \$3.00 per bag to get rid of our garbage. That's all wrong. The city is going to suffer in the end. Like all these other people said, there's going to be garbage all over the city and people are going to making phone calls about this and that – and guess who is going to have to pick it up for nothing anyway?

Bruce Dooris, Vice President of CSEA - 41 Wilson Blvd –Thanked all who spoke on behalf of the DPW workers. They are the hardest workers in the City. We're here to save all the jobs. It is ridiculous to think that one person, Dory Marcinelli left in Juvenile, and getting rid of Chris Reardon, with the problems we have in a city of this size is insane. Getting rid of 2 mechanics – we got the numbers last week from the department head. To think that these guys can handle the workload. They can't handle the workload now. They're tremendously overburdened now. Getting rid of 2 mechanics on top of the workload we got with the extra load with the taxicabs, with winter coming on and all that load – is not going to happen. It's going to fall behind. As far as the Sanitation, we've knocked on over 3,000 doors, going door-to-door. Every one, Well over 95% have said, "No way, can the city get rid of garbage collection." It's overwhelming. In the ten days we went out, there was only one person who shut the door in my face. We talked about what the garbage people do. Sandy hit on Monday. We were pretty well prepared. We had two shifts. Sanitation was a part of it. We could not do it without the Sanitation Department helping out from 4:00 p.m. to midnight, and from midnight to 8:00 a.m. They were tremendously helpful. Garbage was cancelled. Without their help on Tuesday, they went with the garbage and pickup trucks, dump trucks, trailers and went street-to-street on Tuesday and Wednesday. We were pretty much cleaned up by Wednesday. We didn't get hit as hard as Long Island or Jersey Shore, but I could tell you, like Gus said, last year \$300,000 was spent on Irene in the Town. We spent nowhere close to that. We easily spent less than \$50,000 because we went out and did it ourselves. We did not hire contractors to do the work. It's just not economically feasible to have Royal or any other carting company come in here and pickup our own garbage. You just don't get the "Bang for Your Buck." You don't get the extra guys snowplowing. The Department Head, Rich DuPilka, said last week, "Snowplowing is going to be affected." There's no way around it. Six of those guys do the streets with the big plows; the rest do the parking lots or the sidewalks. There is just no way you can...look, whoever comes in and picks up garbage is not going to snowplow or pick up Main Street, the gutterline, the parks, the dead animals. I could go on and on. There's just no way it's possible. I could sit down with this Council and Administration and we have some great ideas. The education part is the best idea. To educate our citizens on how to recycle and better streamline their garbage and save the city money. Our guys are the best. We got the bravest, the cops do a great job, the firemen do a great job, but we were the first responders in this storm. It's not going to happen if we get rid of Sanitation. Just ask the guy at 73 Hooker Avenue or the guy at 47 North Randolph,

ask him about the service that DPW gives to this city. Leaf collection is part of DPW. We can't do it without those guys. We got to get together here and do our best. We're working hard. We're going to make it. If you need any help, I'm here to help. I'm here for any suggestions. Thank you.

Anthony Politano - 19 Maryland Avenue – Good Evening Council. I'll keep this concise. We all seem to have the same concerns here – as human beings, we all have the same basic needs; shelter, clean water, clean food, clean earth, sanitary place to live. Sense of community might be another one. As individuals and members of the community, our money seems to be losing its' value quite rapidly these days. Finding solutions to community problems, before raising taxes or cutting jobs maybe we should consider what's going on with our money. Consider what we have to work with. One thing I wanted to bring up – the city CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report). My question is has it been considered before proposal of this budget? Will it be presented to the Council and to the community in relation to the proposal for this new year's budget? It can be considered the City's savings account, before we consider the budget as our checking account. That's it. Thank you.

Marta Knapp 10 South Clinton – Elimination of sanitation services. I was upset to read in the Poughkeepsie Journal about the Mayor's plan to eliminate city garbage pickup and 13 Sanitation workers' jobs. The City workers' union, the CSEA should immediately go on strike in support of those jobs. The Mayor tried to do it once before. The public outcry was clearly against it then, as we are still now. Garbage pickup is one of the very few benefits residents receive for their taxes. In fact, their service is the most dependable service that this city provides including police or firefighting. We've experienced enough of that to know what I'm talking about. I also wonder what kind of money the recycling program is earning for the city. Metal, paper, glass and compost is worth a lot of money and we don't do nearly enough recycling. The idea of reducing garbage pickup to one time per week may be reasonable for financial savings but it should be replaced with bulk trash pickup on a regular basis for residents who can't haul it to the transfer station themselves, or afford to pay such fees on the weight of such bulk for disposal. Leaf and branch pickup should be profitable for the city as compost is valuable. The City budget could more effectively be trimmed, if inflated managerial salaries (such as former City Administrator, Michael Long). Those kind of salaries are unbelievable. I don't know what the garbage men make, but it's nowhere near what the city managers make. Also, generous lifelong benefits given to city officials, including the elected members of this body. If you serve enough time, you make lifelong benefits – I'm sure you all know that. How about giving that up? So we can have garbage men....

Chairwoman Johnson: That's not true, but go ahead.

Marta Knapp – Maybe you can give me some information on that. Because as far as I know, you get benefits for life...

Chairwoman Johnson: You have to be here over 10 years, and term limits which are for 8 years, but we'll get you that information. You can continue to read.

Marta Knapp – Yes (reiterated previous statement including mayors). How about that heat that's blowing out that window right now? By any chance, does the Mayor have any good friends or a vested interest in the private hauling business, like Royal Carting? Is it possible? I think it is.

Chairwoman Johnson interrupts by stressing no derogatory remarks and began reading the rules of conduct.

Marta Knapp – This community is struggling to survive. Difficult economic times, unemployment, sub-prime mortgage scams, high taxes resulting in people losing their homes. Rents and utilities are very high and rising. This plan to eliminate crucial service, sanitation would cause more economic hardships and more piles of garbage on city streets and on city properties. Regarding the Mayor's attempt to pass the buck to the County Executive and DC Legislature causing the problem; it is shameful the way the County treats the City of Poughkeepsie like a poor relation one can disregard. Not only are we not compensated for all the county office buildings like the jail, the courthouses, the Motor Vehicle Department and all the non-profit agencies (which, by the way, are very profitable) which serve the whole county, all of whom use the City of Poughkeepsie infrastructure for free, tax free, but we are threatened on top of that insult with a \$2 million loss in city sales tax revenue according to the newspaper article. Molinaro wants to offset a \$40 million county budget gap – more waste, corruption and fraud in government - is that possible? The City of Poughkeepsie needs leadership that fights back against this pressure which you have the power to do by withholding all tax revenue that the county demands. We need compensation for free city services that can help our budget gap, big time. Why should 40% (or maybe more) of the taxpayers carry the weight of the whole city property, the whole piece of real estate? Thank you, Ms. Johnson.

Alex Hoff 8 Glenwood Avenue – I don't have anything new to add, I just want to add my name to the record, that I don't want to see the DPW guys lose their jobs. I think we should have more of them. I think they provide a great service and the city needs it. That's about it. Thanks.

Dorothy Antannono 2 Douglas Street – Long time resident (since 1991) of the City of Poughkeepsie). My husband is a vet, he fought in the Gulf War, and we moved back to Poughkeepsie because this is our home. We love it here. When we bought our house six years ago, we were promised in our contract with the First Time Homebuyer's Assn. that our garbage collection was included. We are in a 10 year contract with the City of Poughkeepsie. They get our taxes, and we are the working poor. I'm disabled, my husband's a vet. This is our chance to make something of ourselves, to own a home. We're on the edge of losing it because of the economy, but we still want to stay in Poughkeepsie. The school taxes are so high, and now you're trying to make the garbage men lose their jobs. We depend on them. The house next door to me is abandoned. I'm caring for that property for free, just to make sure there are no ticks. My kid already got Lyme Disease. I don't want my grandchildren getting it because the lawn isn't mowed,

or the leaves aren't getting picked up. We're the working poor and there are a lot more of us than you know...old, poor, disabled and we want to stay here. If I can sign a contract with the City of Poughkeepsie promising to pay taxes for 10 years, then I think you should stick to your promise to keep the garbage collection going, because that's what we were promised. We chose to live here. We could have bought our home anywhere, we're military. We're on the verge of losing everything. The people of the city are at the breaking point. We need help.

Carol Cachini 35 Bancroft Road – I want to applaud everyone who got up to speak their mind and how they feel about this hairbrained idea. I would welcome a once/week pickup, but on the other hand, these guys work so hard. I can attest to it. I'm outside every day on my property. Those boys see me, and I run out with cold water for them because the sweat is pouring down in those very hot trucks. To take away their jobs to outsource, why can't we decide on something else to save money. I'm sure there are programs in the city to keep this trash removal. This clear plastic bag is a ridiculous idea. I put my blue box out every week. Putting out a clear bag for all the world to see what I throw out, that's a little ridiculous. I don't want us to become a rat city. I live in that Hoy Paloy neighborhood, that my taxes are out of sight. If I have to pay for trash removal, I'm going to move someplace else, and I've lived here – I won't tell you how many years, and my family goes all the way back to 1905. Thank you very much, so take into consideration those jobs.

Myrtle Shell 166 North Clinton Street – The thought of people putting out garbage not going to be taken as frequently as it has been is ridiculous. "Sandy" came in and blew everything over; why are we blowing over the City of Poughkeepsie? We need to keep our city clean. I'm sure we all pay enough taxes for that, and you're supposed to be our representatives. So, represent us, as we represent you when it's time for you to come back into office. It's totally ridiculous. How would you feel if the government, Albany or Obama and said, "We don't need mayors or council people anymore?"

Chairwoman Johnson: I, myself, would be happy, but...go ahead.

Myrtle Shell – You might be happy, but what you are suggesting for us, I'm not happy. I'm sure you can go back and redo the budget and cut something else. You're not going to cut your jobs, and that's part of these gentlemen's jobs to keep the City of Poughkeepsie clean. You are not out there walking and seeing things the way we see them. Some say they do, but I don't believe it when I see things around the City of Poughkeepsie. So my vote is for the men in orange, and I think yours should be also. We should get our garbage picked up the same way we've been doing for years. Bulk pickup was taken away, which was devastating to a lot of people. A lot of people can't get up there to take stuff up. Not only that, but if it weighs a certain amount, you got to pay for it. We pay for all this in our taxes. I would like to say, re-think it, make it happen, make it real.

Chairwoman Johnson concluded the hearing and called for a 5 minute recess.

Official Minutes of Public Hearing held Monday, November 5, 2012

Dated: February 7, 2013

I hereby certify that this a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Public Hearing held on Monday, November 5, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

City Chamberlain