



**THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE  
NEW YORK**

**PUBLIC HEARING  
(PROPOSED LOCAL LAW LL-12-1)  
MINUTES**

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**Monday, December 17, 2012 5:30 pm**

**City Hall**

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**Chairwoman Johnson** called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Ken Stickle – 118 Catharine Street** – This week I realized where my garbage was, and really took heart to the recycling programs more and more. I figured between two people; two adults in my house, my recyclables is about 8 pounds if not a little bit more per week, which I never took into consideration. I said at one of the previous meetings, that I would be the first person to be fined or thrown in jail for not recycling. This week I started and really want to continue doing this. If 6,200 households averaged out using the same type of garbage that I am, I would say that the City will generate around 50,000 pounds of recyclables for the week. I came up with an alternative. I have no objections to the user fee. It was explained how much the taxes would go up if I went with the tax. I understand it will be a 13% increase. I don't want that. I'm willing to pay the user fee. This fee can go down. I asked the City to consider 3 trash cans. One for solid waste, one for recyclables and one for composting materials. If I didn't have to dump my cat litter into my solids, I could put it into the compost along with my eggshells, lettuce, whatever I have left over. On the average, I could probably take out of my garbage, another 20-25 pounds per week. At \$79.00 per ton, for which the County is ripping us off, I would say that this is a great plan. We have got to turn around and start thinking about alternate plans and go after the County to lower their fees towards the City, since we give them so much. Every County building here doesn't pay any taxes to the City. Yet, they just took \$2 Million away from us. I'm asking you to consider doing the user fee, which can go from \$22.00 to \$29.00 per month – I'm hoping it's the lower figure. If we can lower the amount of solid waste, we can see this fee come down next year, because I found out that Sanitation cannot make a profit. I'm happy to hear that, and I'm willing to turn around to do my part. I hope that the other 6,200 to 6,400 people in the City of Poughkeepsie will do their part.

**Tim Massey – 12 Tamidan Road** – Thank you for the opportunity to speak. As a lifelong resident of the City of Poughkeepsie, I'm old enough to remember when there were garbage roll out guys. First, I want to speak on the Sanitation workers remaining on the payroll. I went to school with a lot of those guys. I've known them since I lived on Garden Street. There's not a harder working bunch of guys in the City of Poughkeepsie; I'm saying that as the son of a Police Officer. They will tell you that we recycle everything at our house. Every box, every washed can and ever 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 of plastic gets recycled. I don't fully understand the difference between having the user fee embedded and why there's such a cost difference having a user fee of \$22.00 for a single family and raising the tax rate as high as it would have to go. One benefit in having a figure embedded in the tax rate is that we do get a tax write off. As someone who pays about \$8,000 per year in property tax in the City of Poughkeepsie, on a ranch home. That's for City, County, land, schools and library, so I'm willing to take any break I can get. If there's a way to have the fees as part of the tax bill, that might be one possibility. My biggest concern is having yet, another user fee placed on board because we already pay a separate user fee for water and sewer is, what might be next? A fee for police work, or fire work? When you take a look at owning a home, you want to have maintenance work done at as much as possible – it's cheaper that way, instead of having something go to pot and having an emergency repair and a possible extra added expense. You have to be willing to make the investment for the infrastructure in the City of Poughkeepsie. I talk to these guys. They drive trucks that are decades old and are reduced to the number of people who are able to respond to issues. A neighbor on Lilling Road had a major issue involving water from a storm sewer, in which the City had the right-of-way and it took one year to get that done.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** Mr. Massey, this is a public hearing...

**Tim Massey:** OK. I'm trying to explain why we shouldn't be so willing to say, don't increase the tax. The infrastructure of this City needs to be maintained. That includes the trucks the City operates, the crews that are hired by the City to do the work. So, I'd ask the City Council to consider the people that work for the City, the jobs that need to be done for the City and also to keep in mind, whatever can be done to embed the fee in the tax rate for the City be done, so those of us who are paying the taxes in the City can get some kind of break.

**Michael Fitzmorris – 19 Balding Avenue** – I've lived in the City for 20 years. I've lived on Balding for about 12. We bought it as a two family house. We had a tenant who died, and we then took over the entire house using it as a single family home, but kept the two family status. I know a lot of my neighbors have a similar situation. They've lived in their houses for 50 years or better, using them as a single family home. On the City books, they are listed as two family homes. Is concerned that they would have to pay the fee as a two family home when the tax increases. Wants to know if there would be any kind of concession or averaging the fee somehow.

**Henry Miller – Conklin Street** – The gentleman before me struck a point that I wanted to talk about. I know some people who have the same problem. They're on fixed

incomes, retired, own a two family house and they're the only ones that live in it. I have the same situation. Before I got into this, I wanted to say that I'd like to see the Sanitation keep on. I talked to several people to find out if they've ever had anybody to ride along with the recycling. There are about 3 or 4 houses on my street that recycle. Is there any law that says you're supposed to recycle? That's what I'd like to know. The garbage bags that John Tkayzik recommended doing would be more fair, because a lot of these houses don't put out as much trash as these rental houses that overflow the top of their cans and everything else. If they were in a bag, that means they'd have to place another can there.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** Sir, you do realize this is a public hearing. We had a public hearing last Monday on the bags, and this meeting is for the Sanitation and user fee, but you can continue sir.

**Henry Miller:** That's what I'm getting at. What did I say, I said I support his...the Mayor's suggestion with the bags than what you're suggesting, because I believe your suggestion is overcharging the people. You're not fair to the City of Poughkeepsie.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** OK, sir. Just so that you're up to date, the Mayor is now on board with the Sanitation user fee.

**Henry Miller:** He's on board with Sanitation user fee?

**Chairwoman Johnson:** Yes.

**Henry Miller:** Then you can come up with another solution...He must have something else in his head, and you must have something else in your head, because you're not fair in what you're doing. A few years back, 10-15 years ago, we had a tax increase two years in a row. They labeled it garbage. Why don't you just label it, "garbage" because of the Sanitation? Now what you have here is that you're going to be charging people as a two family house, charging them double and there's only two people living in the house. They're using it as a one family house, yet it's on the rolls, just like the gentleman before me. Is this fair? No, it's not.

**Councilwoman Johnson:** Mr. Miller, right after the public hearing, we're going to update you on that. I took care of that. We'll update on that, right after we hear from everybody. In fact, you know what? Maybe we should let the City Attorney... This way no one has to continue. (Speaking to Ms. Clarke) You can come up. He's just going to answer the question concerning living in a two family house, but you're really operating it as a single family house.

**Corporation Counsel Ackermann:** **Chairwoman Johnson,** pursuant to the Local Law that's proposed and has been (inaudible) by the Council Members, there is an exemption provided for under Section IX-68, under Solid Waste collection fees which basically says that any residential user eligible for Star Exemption, the purpose of that being that it needs to be owner occupied from City Real Property Tax. Upon demonstrating that only

one unit of a two or three unit residential parcel is occupied as their residence, all other units being permanently vacant, after certification by commissioner of inspection, pursuant to the regulation and approved by resolution of the Common Council that they only will pay the annual base rate. That exemption provides that if you are using a two or three family home on a single tax parcel as a one family home, you will pay the base rate, provided that it's owner occupied and that you qualify for a Star Exemption.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** That answers that question.

**Barbara Clark:** I apologize if I'm not up on the latest. I've been travelling for work lately, so I'm hearing about this just at the last minute. I did want to say that a little bit in line of what previous speakers have said tonight. I think this flat fee is very unfair to those of us who don't get garbage picked up twice a week. I'm now understanding that the bags are off the table, but if that's the case, there should be some sort of pay-as-you-go type of user fee "instigated" if you're going to do it, because I have vacant...there are people who are using the garbage pickup services from homes in my neighborhood, although they don't live there. They live distant and they bring it there to get their garbage picked up for free. So, I can only imagine how stuffed my cans are going to be with other people's garbage if I'm paying the flat fee and they're paying nothing. I also wanted to tell you a little story, because I too, am in favor of keeping the Sanitation workers as they are. I've lived in the City of Poughkeepsie for about 12 years and I have been amazed at how knowledgeable these guys are about recycling. I've been an avid recycler my entire adult life and when I moved here, I didn't know all the rules, but these guys trained me. About two months after I'd moved in, they used to compliment me on how well I was doing with my recycling as far as following the rules. I really think they know what they're doing and it would be a travesty to lose them. If we cannot work out some sort of pay-as-you-go fee, bags, whatever, then I think that tax increase is the only way to go. Just as previous speakers said, it's really the only way we have, as homeowners, to deduct any kind of fee like that.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** The City Chamberlain said that there are things concerning the local law and everything, right here on the counter for those that want to update themselves. I just want to remind people, because they missed a lot of public meetings and just so that you know, the tax increase will be 13%. That would only solve this year's problem. Next year, we will have the same problem and an additional 13% increase. It does not stop the bleeding. We have to have a system that will sustain the Sanitation Department, because these guys will be on the chopping block again next year. Then we will lose the Sanitation Department and will have to go private. That means that you will have a different sanitation truck running up and down your street for every homeowner on that block, or pay-as-you-go; you will have dumping and we will have "Rat City." That's where we're at. Other municipalities, this is informational to update those who have not come to the 99 other public hearings that we have had on this subject. I forgot my train of thought...but, the Sanitation user fee is now being used in Beacon, they're drafting their law as we speak. They probably already voted on it. It's being used in Newburgh and Schenectady and is being used very successfully.

**Constantine Kazolias – 47 Noxon Street** – I got a little confused with these public hearings too. I just want to make a few statements about garbage in general. Let's face it, the money crunch is coming down because Steinhaus approved \$25 Million... appropriated \$25 Million to the Dutchess County Legislator in funding, OK, so let's tell this, the money problem we're having here in the City. That's a fact. I get it from up above, not down below. Another thing I can see why we have a user fee is, let's talk about what's down the pike, the sort of democles over the City's head. The 401 Class and non-homestead, the \$400,000 that's hanging over our head. In other words, this is one way of eradicating the \$400,000 being piled onto the taxes. That's another thing about taxes, which I disagree with. Increasing the tax rate – they add the garbage. There's a reason for it. We are being penalized by taking our pensions for our people working for the City into our 2% cap. But yet, the teacher's union is not included in the 2% cap. I have a son who lives in a three family house. In the meantime, he doesn't generate that much garbage. I think there should be a situation like the previous person said that a person living in a two family house, there should be some kind of commission set up to give a waiver according to that.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** Corporation Counsel just read that clause, that exemption.

**Mr. Kazolias:** Yeah, but it only said owner. It should be family too. That should be corrected, but I was going to say a few other things, but let's face it – these garbage guys, like Timmy. He goes way back, a local boy like I am. But, in the meantime, but, hey, these are our people. I gotta say one thing, he's still a Poughkeepsie boy at heart, but so am I. Let's keep these people here because they're the last vestige of community we have. Urban Renewal, East – West Arterial. Everything destroyed the City, but these are the guys we see every day. I go along with the fee schedule for obvious reasons. There has to be waivers or whatever has to be done to modify...and something else - I don't think a single family house be given three barrels out there and other people...I think it should all go in one bag and that you don't have to separate it.

**Phil Berardi – 24 Corlies Avenue** – Lived there for 37 years. When speaking to friends and relatives about taxes, someone brings up the fact that I have garbage pickup. I don't want to see that go. Our Sanitation workers do a great job. They don't slam the empty cans, or throw them across the road. They pick up anything they drop on the street. They do a fantastic job. They're the best part of the clean City we have, here. I hesitate to see if everyone has to pay a different way. Like Mrs. Johnson said, I don't know where people will go to dump their garbage. It's all they can do to keep up with people dumping in College Hill or King Street Park, leave mattresses, etc. I think you know that. You've probably talked about that also. I feel that they live here, they work here, they spend here. What a hard way to work; you've done such a good job for many years, but oh, maybe next week we'll kick you out the back door. But, in the meantime, before we kick you out the back door, I still want you to do a good job. Boy, that's a terrible way to work. So, the end result is I would vote for the user fee to keep the Sanitation workers here. They're a terrific part of the community.

**Ken Kraft – 15 Rosalind Rd - I've** lived in the City of Poughkeepsie for over 20 years. I spoke before you on several occasions about Sanitation and recycling. I'm a retired Public Works Superintendent. I have spent many years, many hours in conferences learning about the many aspects and issues of collecting and recycling. I'm here to support these guys. My message is very simple, though. The first part, you've heard from me before, Sanitation should be once per week. More than that is wasteful and expensive. It costs a lot of money to operate these huge trucks. The second part, is that the City of Poughkeepsie must increase its' recycling rate. We've heard that already.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** Increase the rate?

**Mr. Kraft:** Yes.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** We get zero for recycling right now.

**Mr. Kraft:** That's not what I meant. We need to increase the amount of recyclables. We have an excellent collection system because of those guys. The education of the public is seriously deficient. We need to make somebody in charge of the residents, the 6,200 residents that Ken was talking about. Recycling is the best way to reduce our overall sanitation costs. The more we recycle, the lower our tipping fees. The proposed fee is totally unbalanced. My wife and I generate very little garbage. We recycle, we compost to the fullest extent possible. We'd wind up paying the same rate as a single family home down the street that has 3 generations with 9 or 10 people living in it. That's like charging a flat fee for water and sewer. I support this, but only because I hope it's temporary. I want them to keep their jobs, but you have to look at this, to study this. This is step one. I believe it's the right way to go. You must look at Pay-as-you-Throw again. It will reduce the amount of garbage the city generates and will improve the recycling rate. The way it was recently presented, thrust into the budget discussion with was totally wrong. To introduce this means of collection as a way to save jobs, shows how little is known about this subject by those in this administration. You should not abandon "Pay-as-you-Throw." It needs to be reintroduced to the public, in a public forum educating them that it is the best way to reduce, reuse and recycle. I know I can get rid of the garbage my home generates for a lot less than \$22.00 per month with "Pay-as-you-Throw." So can most households with the proper education. To conclude, once per week collection, focus on recycling and revisit "Pay-as-you-Throw" – please, and have a happy holiday.

**Felicia Santos-Griffin – 24B College Avenue –** I have had the distinct pleasure for the last 4 years of working with the Sanitation Department. I am in support of the fees. As with any plan, things can be tweaked, changed or work together to amend, but we need to start somewhere. If we're wanting our Sanitation Department, and we're so happy to have them around. I'm 49 years a resident today, it's my birthday. So, I'm born and raised here. I would love to see them keep their jobs, and if they keep putting forth the services that we appreciate, then we need to show it. This is our hometown. This is the

City of Poughkeepsie. We don't want to be known as "Garbage City or Rat City." We are known as "Tree City." I'm very proud of my hometown. I serve my hometown well, at least I pray that I do. We have to be able to start somewhere. As far as education in recycling is concerned, everyone uses computers. I've always been told that education starts in the home. You can look up recycling information as easily as you can look up Facebook, Google, etc. I don't need to teach anyone about recycling. I can educate myself; I don't need to be told. I need to be a doer and so should everybody else. You need to participate. Do what you need to do. I also remember the garbage men taking out the cans and putting the lids back on them. Anything that fell out was picked up and put into the garbage truck. They'd say, "Hello," and "Have a Nice Day." They still do the same thing. Nothing has changed, except the fact that we don't pay attention to the garbage can lids. Maybe we should be setting fines for that. It looks atrocious that you keep piling garbage bag, after garbage bag on top of each other and having no respect for your home. You need to start at home – pick up after yourself. The way you do the inside, you should do the outside. This is the season for giving. Give a little. Thank you.

**Sharon Haugh – 307 Crystal Hill** – I've lived in the City for 51 years, by choice. Currently, I take my garbage once per day to the dumpster. If we were using Waste Zero, that means that I'd be paying \$3.00 per day per bag to store in the dumpster. That would be \$21.00 per week. I ask that you think very seriously about not having Waste Zero. That's my request. The other aspect of it is that when we use the dumpster, we fill them twice per week. If collection was just once per week, that would be very unfortunate.

**Kathleen Wood – 35 W. Arnold Road** – I wasn't here from the beginning so I'm not sure about the fees or bags, but I want to talk about the fact that I looked up the City's website regarding garbage. You apparently don't need a lid, and you can pile as many bags on top of the can, as long as they don't touch the ground. I was fined for having 3 bags of Styrofoam in each bag for \$25.00 per bag. The crows or other animals don't go into the bags. I was driving to work this morning by Worrall Avenue and S. Grand and saw about 20 bags of garbage on the ground already gotten into. A lot of revenue will be generated if you fine these people. A lot of them don't care because they're renters and they don't have to pay the fines. The bill doesn't come to them. They don't have pictures of the bags. I have pictures of the bags of Styrofoam in front of my house. When I drive to work and see all those bags on the ground...those guys should be picking up cans and stuff and not everybody's garbage all over the ground. Having all that garbage on the ground looks disgusting, smells disgusting and it's not helping anybody. People not getting fines, the way it says it should be. I paid my fines, the way it should be.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** Ms. Wood, I think the comments you are making are more for the public participation in our regularly scheduled hearing. This is solely for the Local Law.

**Ms. Wood:** OK. So, part of the law is the fines for the bags.

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**Chairwoman Johnson:** It's not about the bags. It's about the Sanitation user fee.

**Ms. Wood:** Yes, but if everybody paid the fines, these guys would keep their jobs.

**Chairwoman Johnson:** That's an enforcement issue. Please speak at the 6:30 p.m. meeting, because this is an interesting topic.

This concludes the public hearing for the proposed law, amending Chapter IX, Article V, entitled, Garbage, Trash and Weeds.

Dated: March 6, 2013

I hereby certify that this a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Public Hearing held on Monday, December 17, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

City Chamberlain