



The Minutes

by Tracy Letts

SAMUEL FRENCH

The world premiere of *THE MINUTES* was produced and presented at Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Anna D. Shapiro, Artistic Director; David Schmitz, Executive Director) in Chicago, Illinois, on November 9, 2017. The performance was directed by Anna D. Shapiro, with scenic design by David Zinn, costume design by Ana Kuzmanic, lighting design by Brian MacDevitt, and sound design and original music by Andre Pluess. The stage manager was Christine D. Freeburg. The cast was as follows:

MR. PEELCliff Chamberlain
MAYOR SUPERBA William Petersen
MS. JOHNSON Brittany Burch
MR. BLAKEJames Vincent Meredith
MR. BREEDING Kevin Anderson
MR. HANRATTY Danny McCarthy
MR. ASSALONE Jeff Still
MS. INNES Penny Slusher
MS. MATZSally Murphy
MR. OLDFIELDFrancis Guinan
MR. CARP Ian Barford

CHARACTERS

MR. PEEL
MAYOR SUPERBA
MS. JOHNSON
MR. BLAKE
MR. BREEDING
MR. HANRATTY
MR. ASSALONE
MS. INNES
MS. MATZ
MR. OLDFIELD
MR. CARP

Note: Innes and Oldfield should be older than the others.

SETTING

A city council meeting room

(She clears her throat again, takes a drink of water.)

JOHNSON. “Number One. Welcome and Overview. Mayor Superba called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and, due to the closed meeting, dispensed with the invocation. The council recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Superba then asked if there were any announcements. Mr. Carp then announced to the group that Mr. Peel was not in attendance because his mother had just passed away and Mr. Peel was attending her funeral on the coast. Mr. Carp then passed around a sympathy card for Mr. Peel and all the members of the board signed it. Mr. Carp planned to present the card to Mr. Peel at the next board meeting.”

(Pause. BREEDING glances at Carp’s empty station, picks up a card in a sealed envelope, and passes it down the line of MEMBERS until it reaches PEEL.)

“Number Two. The minutes of the meeting of October eighteenth were submitted and approved. (APP-X 972, ‘COBC Co. Meeting Min.,’ 10/25.)”

(A few side-eyed glances.)

“Number Three. Mayor Superba began the meeting with an acknowledgment of the success of the Big Cherry Savages, undefeated so far this year. Two of the team’s players, Kyle Murray and Danny Coldiron, had been named co-recipients of Defensive Player of the Month in the 4-A Division. The council discussed creating a proclamation for the Savages and designating a specific date as ‘Big Cherry Savages Day,’ but decided to wait and see how they fared in the playoffs. This decision has been postponed as an agenda item until January of the new year.”

(Pause.)

“Number Four. Mayor Superba then, by proclamation, declared November as Eye Injury Prevention Month in Big Cherry. The proclamation was intended to be presented to Dr. Mahendra Puri but he was unable to attend the meeting. The City delivered the proclamation to his offices at the Big Cherry Eye Institute. (APP-X 973, ‘Eye Inj. Prev. Mo.,’ 10/25.)”

(Pause.)

“Number Five. The council then turned to the subject of the upcoming Big Cherry Heritage Festival. There was a lot of discussion about the importance of this year’s festival in particular, for two reasons: First, November 29 will be the sesquicentennial of the Battle at Mackie Creek, and second, attendance has been steadily dropping at the festival for twelve consecutive years and the festival now consistently operates at a deficit. In the interest of generating greater income for the festival, Mr. Blake proposed an attraction called ‘Lincoln Smackdown.’ Some discussion about the attraction followed and Mr. Blake agreed to develop the idea further before reintroducing it to the group.”

(Pause.)

“Mr. Carp continued discussion of the Festival, raising the issue of lost and stolen bicycles, held in a City of Big Cherry warehouse. After some investigation, Mr. Carp had discovered that Sheriff Assalone was selling these items on eBay and using the proceeds to rent a privately-owned fire engine from his brother, Councilman Assalone, which is used for entertainment purposes in the Big Cherry Heritage Festival. Mr. Breeding pointed out the fire engine has become one of the trademarks of the festival, and its image has been used in the festival’s publicity materials for a number of years. Mr. Carp countered that the sheriff was handing city funds over to his brother, that the rent for the fire

engine was astronomical, and that the bicycles would serve a greater good in the community if they were given to low-income children rather than to the festival. Mr. Carp went on to say that he had taken a low view of the festival and suggested that the community might be better off without it. This view was rejected and **Mr. Carp's tenure with the council was completed.** (NB: APP-X 974, 'Tr. Carp on BCHF, 10/25.)"

(Pause. JOHNSON drinks water.)

"Given the high emotion of the proceedings, Mayor Superba called an end to the meeting before any other agenda items could be considered. Closing ceremony. The meeting concluded at 8:18 p.m."

(JOHNSON looks up from the minutes at PEEL.)

"Minutes comp., DJ, 10/26."

(A moment.)

SUPERBA. *(To PEEL.)* I hope that answers your questions.

ASSALONE. Yeah, I don't know, maybe she should read it again and I could live through it a *third time*.

PEEL. May I see that, please?

(JOHNSON looks to SUPERBA, who shrugs. She hands the minutes to PEEL.)

ASSALONE. I don't appreciate the suggestion that we aren't doing our jobs well. This council's been around a long time, y'know, and it was doing just fine even before you showed up.

SUPERBA. Mr. Assalone –

ASSALONE. I'm sure you're very eager to make your contribution but trust me, Big Cherry runs like a top.

(Lights flicker, buzz back on. Again, PEEL seems to be the only one who notices.)

SUPERBA. It's all right. Mr. Peel is new to our council and so deserves every benefit of the doubt.

BREEDING. Hear, hear.

SUPERBA. We are still on Agenda Item 7.2, Mr. Blake's proposal for an attraction called Lincoln Smackdown. Mr. Blake, further discussion?

BLAKE. Mr. Mayor, I'd like to draw up two proposals, one for the temporary version of the attraction, to be used only during the Big Cherry Heritage Festival, and the other to be a permanent attraction, housed in its own purpose-built steel cage, somewhere in the vicinity of –

PEEL. "NB"?

BLAKE. Sorry?

PEEL. *(To JOHNSON.)* "NB"?

(A hesitation.)

(Pointing at the page.) "NB"?

SUPERBA. Yes, Mr. Peel?

PEEL. I see the notation "NB" at the conclusion of Number Five, the paragraph concerning Mr. Carp's interaction with the council.

(Silence.)

(Reads.) "...View was rejected and Mr. Carp's tenure with the council was completed. (NB: APP-X 974, 'Tr. Carp on BCHF, 10/25.)"

SUPERBA. A secretarial notation.

BREEDING. Boilerplate.

ASSALONE. So now we're going to examine the footnotes?