

**CITY OF NORWICH**  
**JOINT MEETING of the**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and**  
**FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES**

January 6, 2015

Present:

Ald. Bryan McCracken  
Ald. Brian Doliver  
Ald. John Deierlein  
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn  
Ald. Paul Laughlin  
Ald. Thomas LoPiccolo

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk William Roberts  
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest  
Mayor Joseph Maiurano  
City Attorney Patrick Flanagan  
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo  
Police Chief Rodney Marsh  
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason  
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson  
Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence  
EMO A. Jones  
Media Representative Shawn Magrath

Absent:

(none)

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Ald. Paul Laughlin called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:03 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to approve the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting of December 3, 2014. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all.

Executive Session

Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to enter into executive session at 6:04 p.m. to discuss pending litigation. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to exit executive session at 6:44 p.m. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

**Presentation – Stan Cwynar** CPA Stan Cwynar presented a summary of his analysis of the City's accounting systems. He feels the timing of the current Finance Director's upcoming retirement in April presents an opportune time to consider replacing the existing Gemini system. His analysis included four options for new software. Two were high cost and prohibitive (considering available financial resources). He considered the other two to be affordable and worth looking into further. He also presented two options for tax collection software, which would alleviate the most time intensive aspect of the finance department's operations.

Department Head Reports

**Human Resources** H.R. Director Deborah DeForest reported that the 2015 budget provides for hiring the new Finance Director near the end of February, allowing for some overlap prior to W. Roberts' retirement on April 18<sup>th</sup>. She was looking for the Finance/Personnel Committee to approve going forward with the recruitment process. While the Civil Service title for the position is City Chamberlain, in practice it also involves covering several responsibilities including City Clerk and management of Community Development and Planning activities among others. The question was asked on how the advertising for the position would be detailed. She said that it would state Finance Director, but in the interview process the multiple responsibilities would be covered. An extensive discussion followed. Some committee members asked if there might be a possibility to share the position with other municipalities on a part-time basis. W. Roberts pointed out that it is a full-time position requiring an average of 48 to 50 hours a week. He said that it would be totally unrealistic to assume that one person could cover the needs on a part-time effort of 48 to 50 hours a week while also maintaining the same role in another location. Over the past several years, the City has consolidated functional responsibilities over many departments, reducing the staffing levels by many positions in order to save taxpayer dollars. The Mayor interjected that he felt it was too soon to fill this slot at this time, and that a few more weeks are needed to examine how other municipalities handle this role. He recommended that action be postponed for another month. He emphasized that when a slot opens up, it should not be automatically filled. He said that the whole operation needs to be looked at for other possibilities, and when you keep on doing things the same way, you just continue to get the same results. The Committee decided to move the discussion to the February Joint Committees meeting. They added that if necessary, the overlap period could be reduced. In the meantime, D. DeForest will check with NYCOM to confirm

whether a State- mandated residency requirement for the Finance Director and City Clerk positions would override the City's Charter provision that residency in the City is preferred for all department head positions, but it is not required.

**EMO** EMO A. Jones provided an update on Tier 3 Training for Elected Officials. He said that the original target date for last November was not accomplished due to many other priorities. He outlined some of the highlights of the training elements. The next training opportunity will be on Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, from 1 to 5 p.m. at the County Office Building. He will send out an e-mail this Wednesday with a link to register for the program. He anticipates that the next training opportunity will probably be at night for around 3½ hours.

## **DPW**

**Filter Plant Update** DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson said the project is into the final design phase for setting up the bidding process. There will be a 20-week lead time going to a 3-week construction phase, with a 2-week startup period.

**Digester** C. Ivarson reported that this project has been completed successfully.

**Dunne Drive Booster Station** C. Ivarson updated committee members with a location map illustrating the areas that will benefit from the water pressure improvements.

**NYSEG Tree Trimming** C. Ivarson has received plans from NYSEG for their scheduled trimming and tree removal activities this year. Unlike prior years, they will this time notify affected property owners prior to performing the work. Ald. Deierlein asked what control the City has over the process. Ivarson responded that it is essentially none, although closer communication is expected.

**Engineering Contract Amendment – Wheeler Ave. Tank Project** Since further soil testing is needed at the project site, C. Ivarson pointed out that an amendment #3 will be needed to the GHD engineering agreement. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to recommend Council approval for the Mayor to sign an amendment agreement with GHD. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all.

**Letting of Bids – Firehouse Third Floor** C. Ivarson said that the details and timing of grant funds availability is being pursued by the Mayor, after which the engineering design and bid details can be put in place to move ahead with the project.

**Finance** Finance Director William Roberts presented details in follow-up to the presentation by City Assessor Brian Fitts at the November Joint Committee meeting. He reviewed the Assessor's highlights on how the process will take place over the next 3 years. The 2015 project budget will total \$7,263, with \$6,013 for additional personal services time and \$1,250 for mailings expense, for a total of \$7,263 to be transferred from the General Fund contingency line, as anticipated in the overall budget preparation. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend Council approval for moving ahead with the revaluation project and transferring \$7,263 from the contingency line to the Assessor's department as outlined. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all.

## **Other Items**

**Traffic Commission** W. Roberts relayed three recommendations from the Traffic Commission minutes over the past several months. Two would require ordinance revisions, as they involve parking regulation changes. The third one involved a no-exit sign for Biviano Lane, which would be informational only and not affect traffic related control. On that one, C. Ivarson said that the specifics of the sign and its exact location would be needed and it could be put in place after an approximate two-month order lead time. After extensive discussion regarding the first two recommendations, the committees decided that more detailed input is needed, such as sketches of the effects on parking and traffic flow. Ald. Doliver said it would be brought back to the Commission for follow-up.

## **Executive Session**

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to enter into executive session at 7:44 p.m. to discuss labor contract negotiations. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to exit executive session at 8:09 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

## **Adjournment**

Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all.