

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
March 3, 2015

Present:

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

Absent:

Ald. John Deierlein

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
EMO A. Jones
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer

Ald. Paul Laughlin called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to approve the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting of February 3, 2015. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Youth Bureau Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason informed the Committees that he is having great difficulty finding and keeping part-time employees because the City is paying the Federal minimum wage instead of the State minimum wage of \$8.75/hour (going up to \$9/hour in 2016). He has been donating his own time at the skating rink to fill in for vacant positions and will not be able to continue this. He noted that for the past two years he has already included the increase in his budget. Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest noted that the DPW lost two summer employees who moved to other jobs that paid the State minimum wage. Ald. McCracken asked if this was budgeted for. R. Mason repeated that he had included the increase in his budgets for 2014 and 2015, which will cover paying lifeguards \$8.75/hour and supervisors at the pool \$9/hour. Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to recommend the Common Council increase the minimum hourly wage from \$7.25 to \$8.75, based on the State minimum wage. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all. Ald. McCracken asked if R. Mason had surveyed other communities with lifeguard positions. R. Mason replied that he had not yet done so for this year, but noted that State Parks pay the State minimum wage, and offered a list of the positions to be filled with their current pay.

Code Enforcement Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence reported that a resolution will be presented to the Council to declare surplus a number of appliances and trashed items from the renovation of 45 Silver Street. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to recommend Council declare surplus items from the renovation of 45 Silver Street. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

DPW

Chemical Bid Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend Council accept the lowest qualified bids for liquid chlorine and sodium hypochlorite from Jones Chemicals, Inc. for liquid chlorine cylinders and Amrex Chemical Co. Inc. for bulk and drum sodium hypochlorite. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

2015 Street Paving Bid Ald. Doliver **moved** to recommend the bid for street paving be awarded to the only qualified bidder, Suit-Kote. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all. DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson reported that NYSEG will be covering 25% of the cost of street paving, leaving a surplus of approximately \$38,000. He offered three other streets that could be added to the paving schedule. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to add Pleasant Street from Canasawacta to Plymouth Street to the paving schedule. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Manpower C. Ivarson reported that injuries and absences of workers have occurred and are anticipated to occur, leaving him with only one weekend worker for two months. He wants to add one of the current employees to the weekend schedule, which will cost an additional \$1,800 in overtime for two months. Director of Finance William Roberts noted these funds are available in the budget. C. Ivarson also noted that the City has not been able to hire a lead operator or lab technician for the wastewater treatment plant, or a mechanic, so much of the repair work has to go to outside companies, which is expensive for the City. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to approve proceeding with appointing a worker to weekend coverage with overtime. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all. C. Ivarson warned there may be budget increases because of worker absences.

Filter Plant Project and Storage Tank C. Ivarson reported that the filter plant project is on schedule and should go to bid in April. The storage tank replacement project is on hold because the ground is frozen.

2015 Training Schedule C. Ivarson presented a schedule for training for Water Department personnel for 2015, charges to be covered from the water and wastewater funds.

Pedestrian Crossing Sign C. Ivarson reported that the Parks Commission had recommended a pedestrian crossing sign at Weiler Park. Ald. Doliver, a member of the Parks Commission, thought it was to be placed near the entrance to the skate park. C. Ivarson said the sign recommended would cost approximately \$1,500, which is not available in the budget, and was fairly flimsy. That area sees a lot of vandalism and he thought such a sign would not last. He said he would prefer to find a heavy-duty sign instead. He also noted there is no crosswalk marking in the street in that location.

WWTP Boilers C. Ivarson reported that both boilers at the wastewater treatment plant have had problems. The boiler for the digester and primary buildings cannot be shut down without serious consequences, but he has made a repair that he hopes will hold until Spring. The boiler for the digester failed and methane was lost, so an increase in the budget will be needed for fuel. So far approximately \$3,000 has been spent.

Screw Pumps C. Ivarson reported that all three screw pumps have been making a strange noise that can't be isolated. One screw pump was inspected and the bearings were in good shape. Affected new screw pump components are approximately \$29,000, refurbished will be \$14,000, to be paid for as a line item expense.

Reservoir C. Ivarson reported that half the work at the reservoir has been completed, the rest to be completed when the weather clears.

Equipment/Buildings C. Ivarson presented a list of equipment that must be replaced and building repairs that are reaching critical points. He stressed that this is not a wish list, but absolutely necessary. The list was compiled after consulting with all department heads. W. Roberts noted that the City will be looking for financial advisors to help find ways of financing these costs, estimated at over \$4.5 million. The Committees discussed the most critical repairs to be made.

Finance W. Roberts reported that when the skateboard park was constructed 12 years ago, a capital reserve fund was established for maintenance and repair costs, with approximately \$31,000 left from the original project funding. Such capital reserve fund specified for the skateboard is no longer required and the account should instead be configured for the entire skating facility. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to rename the skateboard capital reserve fund and transfer those project funds into the new skating facility capital reserve fund. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all.

Community Development Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer reported that Frontier Communications and Dish Network are sponsoring an America's Best Communities contest. Funds will be awarded for the establishment of a Makers Room, a computer lab for small-scale inventors with computer-aided design and 3D printing. Commerce Chenango is acting as lead agency. Matching funds of approximately \$15,000 must be provided by area businesses, not municipalities. Because communities must have a population of at least 9,500, the City and Town of Norwich will together act as lead municipality, but this will bear no financial obligation. Ald. McCracken asked if the Town of Norwich had committed to provide the \$15,000 in matching funds. T. Dreyer reiterated that the matching funds must be provided by participating businesses, not municipalities. Twelve area businesses will be approached by Commerce Chenango for participation. Ald. Doliver **moved** to recommend Council adopt a resolution of support for the America's Best Communities application. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved 4-0 all, Ald. McCracken abstaining.

Executive Session

After some discussion and clarification, Ald. Doliver **moved** to enter into executive session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the employment history of a particular individual. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to exit executive session at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. McCracken **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.