

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
September 1, 2015

Present:

Ald. Bryan McCracken (arr. 6:13 p.m.)
Ald. Brian Doliver
Ald. Kecia Funaro-Burton
Ald. Thomas LoPiccolo

Also:

City Chamberlain/City Clerk John Zielinski
Director of Human Resources Deborah DeForest
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Media Representative Shawn Magrath
Mayor Joseph Maiurano

Absent:

Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn

Ald. Brian Doliver called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:06 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Department Head Reports

Youth Bureau Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason advised the Committees that he is seeking Council approval to proceed with contracts with the towns to provide youth services for 2016.

Human Resources Ald. Doliver stated that he and the Mayor have worked with Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest to devise a self-evaluation system for non-unit City employees to improve communication. D. DeForest explained that the system will provide department heads and other non-unit employees a means of evaluating work and setting goals. The Common Council must also set goals for the various departments and then work with the department heads to coordinate and prioritize these goals to ensure agreement. Ald. LoPiccolo asked how many non-unit employees there are. D. DeForest replied that there are 17. She stressed that communication is key and that, while priorities may change, these evaluations will ensure everyone is on the same page. Ald. Funaro-Burton asked if there are job descriptions for these positions. D. DeForest said there are, and these will be supplied to the Council. A PowerPoint presentation will be offered to educate the Council and department heads.

The meeting was temporarily adjourned at 6:14 p.m. to hold a special meeting of the Common Council. The meeting was reconvened at 6:17 p.m.

Code Enforcement Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake reported that an ordinance was adopted in 2011 to amend the Zoning Ordinance in regard to garage and yard sales. However, another definition in the Zoning Ordinance conflicts with that amendment, and a proposed ordinance to delete that section will be presented to the Common Council to be received and to set a public hearing. Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to recommend the Common Council receive a proposed ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance. Seconded by Ald. Funaro-Burton, approved ayes all.

DPW

Surplus Equipment DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson presented a list of surplus equipment to be disposed of. He noted that this will leave the Department with only one heavy-duty plow truck, which is 25 years old, and that equipment must be replaced soon. Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to recommend the Common Council declare DPW equipment surplus and authorize disposal. Seconded by Ald. Funaro-Burton, approved ayes all.

Sidewalk Program C. Ivarson reported that only six residents enrolled in the sidewalk replacement program this year and very few last year. He suggested that the program be better advertised and that perhaps a single ward be designated for replacement each year and all residents in the ward contacted directly in January and February about the program, with a final enrollment by May 1 so that work can be scheduled. Ald. Doliver asked how many properties the Department can handle in a season. C. Ivarson replied they could do up to 30 properties, and that doing one entire street at a time is the most efficient use of labor. Ald. McCracken suggested changing the program as he

considers it unfair to individual property owners, some of whom, such as he, have very long sidewalks or corner lots and consequently must pay more. He now works for the City of Ithaca, which picks a district for sidewalk repair and charges every property a set fee for sidewalks as a public good, which he thinks is a more equitable way of distributing the cost. City Chamberlain John Zielinski said that Ithaca is studying the establishment of special improvement districts for sidewalk and storm sewer replacement. Ald. McCracken also considered that some property owners who might not choose to replace sidewalks in bad condition would then have to participate. Ald. Doliver asked if the City can order that sidewalks be repaired or replaced. C. Ivarson replied that the Code does give the City such authority. Ald. McCracken noted that in Ithaca, if a resident has replaced a sidewalk at their own expense in the recent past, they can be exempted from the fee. Ald. Funaro-Burton asked if this would include businesses. C. Ivarson said the current program is for residential properties only. Ald. McCracken said that, while he doesn't know the fee structure Ithaca is considering, properties with higher population density, such as apartments or care facilities, would pay more. Ald. Doliver suggested keeping the current program but offering the program to residents of one section of the City at a time. Ald. Funaro-Burton expressed concern about residents who may be experiencing financial difficulties being forced to pay for sidewalks.

2016 NYSEG Gas Main Replacement C. Ivarson reported that NYSEG has presented a revised list of streets for gas main replacement in conjunction with the City's 2016 street paving. Clinton Street and Grove Avenue have been added. Several of the streets in the proposed list would be covered with CHIPS funding; for others, the paving cost will be covered by NYSEG. While in the past NYSEG has paid such costs, those costs were smaller; this amounts to approximately \$230,000. He suggested that an agreement for payment be entered into with NYSEG. He also noted that after the 2016 paving only \$200 will be left of CHIPS funds. This is good, as CHIPS funds should not be carried over, in case the program is eliminated. Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve this revision to the 2016 street paving project. Seconded by Ald. Funaro-Burton, approved ayes all.

Finance

Loan Report J. Zielinski stated he sent to the Council via email a copy of the monthly loan report showing the status of outstanding loans made from Community Development funds, which are funded by grants, and if the Council has any questions, they should contact him or Deborah Minami of the Finance Department, who creates the loan report. The auditors recommended that the report be distributed regularly, and the Committees have requested it in the past. Ald. LoPiccolo asked why so many loans are delinquent. J. Zielinski replied that there are various reasons, e.g., one loan was made to a company which has since declared bankruptcy. Each delinquency is different, and there is more detailed information in each loan file. Ald. McCracken asked if the report includes the collateral position. J. Zielinski replied that it does not, each loan is collateralized differently and details of the collateral are in each loan file.

2016 Budget J. Zielinski reported that preparing the 2016 budget will be a challenging process, as 75.2% of the budget is tied to employee and retiree salaries and benefits. Of that, 92% is controlled by union contracts. There are four union contracts, which will have a 2% increase this year. He noted that State aid has been limited, sales tax revenues are variable, fees are a minor source of revenue, and the only revenue source under the City's control is property tax rates. He will hold budget workshops for the Council and asked for ideas.

Loan Resolution – Wheeler Avenue Water Storage Tank Project J. Zielinski reviewed the history of funding for the Wheeler Avenue Water Storage Tank project: a bonding resolution for \$2.8 million was adopted; in July 2014 a resolution was adopted by the Council authorizing a USDA loan; on July 7, 2015, the Council adopted a resolution authorizing additional bonding. Additional lead remediation in the property increased the projected cost, and the City has received approval of an increase in the USDA loan and award of an additional \$62,000 grant. A resolution will be presented at the September Council meeting increasing the amount of the loan and accepting the grant. Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a resolution increasing the amount of the USDA loan and to accept the grant. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all.

Community Development

Constitution Pipeline Community Grant Program Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer reported that a grant is available from Constitution Pipeline Company for up to \$25,000, which the City is eligible to apply for, with the funds to be used for playground equipment in Bruchhausen Park. The Parks Commission has investigated this and recommended application for the grant. The grant guidelines state that applications with a "matching element" are given priority; though the matching element is not defined, he stated that a community build would count toward the match. Ald. McCracken asked if this community build would be done by volunteers or by DPW workers. C. Ivarson stated that if he is given several months' notice, he can schedule such work. Ald. McCracken expressed concern about a grant from a

company building a natural gas pipeline. T. Dreyer also stated that Chobani has revamped its philanthropic activities and the City is eligible to apply to them for grants. Ald. Funaro-Burton **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve application for a grant from Chobani. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all. Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve application for a grant for playground equipment from Constitution Pipeline Company. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved 3-1, Ald. McCracken voting nay.

Update of Parks and Recreation Plan T. Dreyer reported that the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2014 recommends that the Parks and Recreation Plan be updated. The Parks Commission has also recommend the update. Ald. McCracken asked if an outside consultant would need to be hired. T. Dreyer said this will not require an outside consultant, nor did the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Expenses for that project amounted to less than \$100, and this project should be similar. Ald. McCracken said this is a good way to strategize and set goals. Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve an update of the Parks and Recreation Plan. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Recommendations from the Traffic Commission Ald. Doliver reviewed a recommendation from the Traffic Commission adding limited parking to Guernsey Street from Fair to Cortland Streets, which would involve 5-6 additional parking places for limited times, excluding weekends and holidays. Police Chief Rodney Marsh stated that he investigated the recommendation and concurs with the Commission's recommendation. Ald. McCracken expressed concern that this is a narrow street and additional parking there could pose a safety hazard. He asked, if this were a matter of residents wanting to park for a few minutes while unloading a vehicle, could some sort of sticker system be used instead. Ald. Doliver stated this would be difficult to implement. He noted that there are stop signs at most intersections in that area and additional parked cars would further slow traffic. Ald. Funaro-Burton **moved** to recommend the Common Council revise the Traffic Ordinance to provide additional limited parking on Guernsey Street from Fair to Cortland Streets. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Ald. Doliver then addressed a second recommendation from the Traffic Commission establishing no parking on the east side of Locust Street from Hayes Street to Eaton Avenue. Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend the Common Council revise the Traffic Ordinance to establish no parking on the the east side of Locust Street from Hayes Street to Eaton Avenue. Seconded by Ald. Funaro-Burton, approved ayes all.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to approve the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting of August 4, 2015. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign contracts to provide youth services to the towns. Seconded by Ald. Funaro-Burton, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. McCracken **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Funaro-Burton, approved ayes all.