

COMMON COUNCIL

November 17, 2015

Mayor Joseph Maiurano presided at a meeting of the Common Council held at 7:00 PM on November 17, 2015, in the Common Council Chambers at One Court Plaza.

Present:

Ald. Bryan McCracken
Ald. Brian Doliver
Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Thomas LoPiccolo
Supervisor Robert Jeffrey
Supervisor James McNeil
Mayor Joseph Maiurano

Also:

City Chamberlain/City Clerk John Zielinski
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
Deputy City Chamberlain Dee DuFour
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
City Attorney Patrick Flanagan
EMO A. Jones

Absent:

Ald. Kecia Funaro-Burton

Call to Order

The meeting of the Common Council was called to order by Mayor Maiurano at 7:14 p.m.

Approval of minutes

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to approve the minutes of regular meeting of October 20, 2015 and the special meetings of October 28, November 4, and November 9, 2015. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn and duly approved ayes all.

Open Forum

Bob Barnes, of the Norwich Fire Fighters Association, stated that the Fire Department is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The fire fighters work a 48-hour week. Since October 28 they have been trying to reduce expenses as requested by the Director of Human Resources at the direction of the Common Council. They have presented a list of concessions to the Director of Human Resources so there won't be layoffs. Any cuts would have serious consequences. He urged the Council to look at the concessions presented. Reductions in staff would lead to reductions in services.

Lynn Robertson, Gold Street, said she was part of the Fire Department. She worked as a dispatcher 40 years ago. The Department gives service and dedication. She noted that area businesses may have higher insurance premiums if services are cut. She asked how the reserve funds were spent. Taxes need to go down, but if cuts are made, response time will go up. She said you can't put a price on life or property.

Christine Carnrike, 15 South Broad Street, asked that the spelling of her name be corrected in the November 4, 2015 minutes. She then spoke at length about the budget. She said that while the budget should be restored, operating costs must be brought under control. She said it is easy to target the Big Three, the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments, because they are the largest, most expensive parts of the budget, but they should not take the deepest cuts. Other departments may not be vital to the City. All operations must be reviewed. There should be no new fees, which are disguised taxes. She said the City should look at consolidation and discussed the drug problems in the area. She said the Common Council must have accurate information. She said City Council salaries are not the reason for the crisis. The aldermen are paid \$4,000 a year and the Mayor is paid \$16,273 a year. To cut this amount would only be symbolic. The coming administration should not repeat the mistakes made in the past. Transparency is important.

Jason Miller, 127 South Broad Street, was impressed by the large audience of public servants, and wished more citizens attended the meeting. He stated the City is in a reactive position facing tough decisions. He believes the Norwich Fire Department is probably the finest in Central New York. He suggested additional committees be formed to perform a cost-benefit analysis of public services. He has seen the Fire Department going out of town. He said that while cutting Council and Mayor salaries would indeed be symbolic, doing so would double the current fund balance. Cuts in salaries should start at the top, with the Council, Mayor, and Department Heads.

Pat Ford, 11 Chirlin Drive, said he has been active in the Fire Department for 46 years, 26 years as a paid fire fighter. He is a former chief, president, and is now an assistant chief. He said in many communities volunteers don't get along

with paid fire fighters, here they do. The fire fighters are dedicated, well trained, and knowledgeable. He noted several recent fires and an explosion, the prevalence of heart attacks, and the importance of rapid response. He reviewed the equipment purchased by the Department in recent years, which used up all the Fire Department reserves, and financial contributions from the volunteers. In 2014 the volunteers donated \$44,862 to the Department, in 2015 \$125,474, \$80,000 of which was for a new truck and UTV. Emergency services cannot be compromised.

John Alishauskas stated he owns apartments, does farming and other businesses. His three sons often work for no pay. He spoke about possible funding from the federal government and his concerns about such funding.

Jan Papelino, Assistant Fire Chief, spoke about the City's ISO rating, and stated the City has moved from a ranking of 5 to 3, which lowers local insurance rates. Reductions may impact that. The Department does not have many volunteers and an all-volunteer staff is not possible. Fire fighter I class is 104 hours, a large commitment. He said the contracts with the towns may need to be renegotiated. He said the Department depends on Jason Lawrence as Fire Marshall/Code Enforcement Officer and it is important to keep that position.

Elizabeth Bunce, 14 Marshall Street, said she is a small business owner, single parent, and taxpayer. She said staff cuts generally affect the newest employees and do not accomplish much in savings, the Council should consider other options. Health insurance should be shouldered by the employees and employer [Note: City employees pay health insurance premiums]. She asked if the City is receiving sufficient compensation for fire services. She said cutting the pay of City leadership may not solve the problem, but a leader should be the first to take a cut. Cutting employees is not a long-term plan. She said she has to decide if she can afford to continue living in Norwich and urged the Council to look at other ways to balance the budget.

Todd Barnes, owner of the Colonia Theater, said with tax increases businesses won't last. The Council should look to the future and not make quick cuts. He said he could take the theater off the tax roll because it's historical. The City has been mismanaged and must make cuts without cutting what we have now. Everybody needs to be looked at, not just one person. Businesses must be brought in, not scared away. These issues should have been looked at five years ago.

Ewen Kelly, 14 Beebe Avenue, said cutting staffing in unions is insane, it's always the people at the bottom and doesn't help much. Make the cuts at the top where Department Heads are making around to \$80,000. Everyone should make sacrifices. He asked if the City has looked into different health insurance plans and suggested several.

Salvatore Grippaldi, 110 Birdsall Street, said he lived on Long Island and the taxes there were crazy. They had a volunteer fire department, which he was part of, and response time could be up to 15 minutes. Now he lives in Norwich, a small city, and sees the fire fighters, police, and street cleaner out frequently. He knows the City employees and they're always helpful. He said he can pay a little more in taxes and doesn't want to see anyone lose their job. The Department Heads know what they have to do and can cut back a bit to help. He noted all the qualities of Norwich that make it a special community.

Mayor Maiurano thanked everyone for their comments. He assured them that the City is taking nothing lightly and will do what must be done in the best way possible. He attended the NYCOM conference in Albany during the past weekend where plans are being made for a consortium of cities to try to curtail benefit costs. The same problems are being faced in all cities. He discussed legislation being proposed regarding escalating costs passed down to the cities by the State, which has cut revenue sharing. Pension expenses for the City have climbed from \$50,000 to over \$1 million annually. NYCOM is working to lobby the State for relief. He noted the need to keep the level of services and not overtax. He knows the elected officials will do the right thing.

Mayoral Appointment with Council Approval Ald. McCracken **moved** to approve the mayoral appointment of Tom Revoir, 13 Conkey Avenue, to the Parks Commission for a three-year term expiring December 31, 2018. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all.

Department, Board and Commission Reports

- ☐ Water Commission Minutes of October 21, 2015
- ☐ Youth Board Minutes of November 4, 2015
- ☐ Youth Bureau Monthly Report of October 2015

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to receive and file the department, board, and commission reports. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all.

Ward Reports

Ward 1

Ald. McCracken reported that he has received communications from constituents regarding the budget and will take their comments into consideration when voting on the proposed budget.

Ward 2

Ald. Doliver reported that he has received communications from constituents regarding the budget and will take their comments into consideration when voting on the proposed budget.

Ward 3

Ald. Deierlein reported that he has received communications from constituents regarding the budget and will take their comments into consideration when voting on the proposed budget.

Ward 4

Ald. Schermerhorn reported that he has received communications from constituents regarding the budget and will take their comments into consideration when voting on the proposed budget.

Ward 6

Ald. LoPiccolo reported that he has received communications from constituents regarding the budget and will take their comments into consideration when voting on the proposed budget.

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to receive and file the ward reports. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all.

Resolutions

RESOLUTION #81-2015

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE FOR RADIO REPEATER

Ald. LoPiccolo introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Police Department has for several years been in need of a repeater to improve radio transmission for the Department; and

WHEREAS, a study was done determining the best location for such repeater; and

WHEREAS, funds are available for the purchase of such repeater; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Committees have made certain recommendations; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the purchase of a repeater for the City of Norwich Police Department is hereby approved.

Seconded by Ald. Doliver, and duly adopted, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Discussion: Ald. Deierlein asked the cost of the repeater. Police Chief Rodney Marsh said it is less than \$15,000. Ald. Schermerhorn asked if this was budgeted. Chief Marsh said it is part of the water tank replacement project. Ald. McCracken ask that the reasoning behind the purchase be explained for the public and stated this was essential for police communication. Chief Marsh said the repeater will enhance the signal for portable radios. City Chamberlain John Zielinski noted the funds were already budgeted for a police vehicle, which was not purchased.

RESOLUTION #82-2015

ACCEPTING AGREEMENT WITH NYSEG FOR 2016 STREET PAVING

Ald. Doliver introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of the Department of Public Works has negotiated an agreement from New York State Gas & Electric ("NYSEG") regarding their payment of costs associated with pavement restoration in 2016; and

WHEREAS, a letter dated October 2, 2015, has been received from Rick Wilson, Gas Field Planner, of NYSEG, agreeing to pay NYSEG's share of costs for the 2016 street paving, in the amount of \$229,061; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Committees have made certain recommendations; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Norwich receives and accepts the October 2, 2015, letter of Rick Wilson of NYSEG in which NYSEG agrees to pay its share of costs for 2016 street paving in the amount of \$229,061.

Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, and duly adopted, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

RESOLUTION #83-2015

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE FOR SNOWPLOW AND TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Ald. Schermerhorn introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Parks Department snowplow is no longer repairable; and

WHEREAS, the wastewater treatment snowplow will fit the Parks Department truck and can be transferred to it; and

WHEREAS, a V-snowplow is required for wastewater treatment plant plowing; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Committees have made certain recommendations; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the current wastewater treatment plant snowplow be transferred to the Parks Department truck and the purchase of a V-snowplow for the wastewater treatment plant truck is hereby approved; and, further be it

RESOLVED, that the City Chamberlain be and hereby is authorized to make the following transfer of funds in the 2015 Wastewater Fund Budget:

From:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
HR42-9950.9	Sewer Equipment – Transfer to Other Funds	\$5,000.00

To:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
G8130.2100	Sewer – Treatment & Disposal Equipment	\$5,000.00

Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, and duly adopted, 4-1, on a roll call vote, Ald. McCracken voting nay.

RESOLUTION #84-2015

AUTHORIZING MAYOR TO ENTER INTO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH JOHNSON CONTROLS, INC. – FACILITY AUDIT

Ald. Schermerhorn introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich has investigated an Energy Savings Performance Contract for City-owned facilities; and

WHEREAS, a proposal for a preliminary facility audit has been received from Johnson Controls, Inc., of Milwaukee, WI, to determine the feasibility of implementing an energy performance contract; and

WHEREAS, the preliminary facility audit will be performed at no cost to the City; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Norwich hereby finds the proposal to be reasonable and in the best interest of the City; and

WHEREAS, the procurement policies of the City of Norwich and the applicable laws of the State of New York allow the City to enter into a professional services contract on this matter; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Mayor be and hereby is authorized, under the direction of the City Attorney and the City Chamberlain, to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Johnson Controls, Inc. of Milwaukee, WI, to perform an Energy Savings Performance Contract.

Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, and duly adopted, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Discussion: Ald. McCracken asked what this contract is for. Mayor Maiurano replied that the City is investigating LED street lighting and this will provide a basic audit of City facilities. There is a bill in the Governor's hands to help

municipalities in negotiations with NYSEG for purchasing street lighting. LED lighting may save approximately \$100,000 a year in energy costs. This contract is at no cost to the City. Ald. McCracken asked if this audit would include all City facilities. The Mayor stated it would. Ald. McCracken asked if the contract obligates the City for any future expenditures. The Mayor said it did not. The audit will take two to three months. Ald. McCracken asked if the grant for LED lighting is a reimbursement grant. Mayor Maiurano said the lighting would be paid for through savings. The City currently spends approximately \$141,000 a year on street lighting. LED lighting has minimal maintenance. Ald. Deierlein asked, if there is no cost to the City, and no obligation for future expenditures, will the City save money? The Mayor repeated that there would be large savings. Ald. McCracken asked how the City would get light bulbs. Mayor Maiurano said the City would have to finance that. J. Zielinski stated this agreement entails no cost to the City. After that any move forward would be the decision of a future council.

Motion

Receive Tentative 2016 Budget and Set Public Hearing Ald. Deierlein moved to receive the General Fund portion of the tentative 2016 Budget of the City of Norwich and set a public hearing for December 9, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. The remainder of the tentative 2016 Budget will be received at a special meeting of the Common Council on December 2, 2015, prior to the public hearing. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn and duly adopted 5-0 on a roll call vote.

Payment of November 2015 Bills Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to pay the November 2015 bills after proper audit and certification. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo and duly adopted ayes all.

November Bills

	<u>Prepaid</u>	<u>11/17/15</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>
General Fund	\$ 124,930.08	\$ 42,723.57	\$ 167,653.65
Sewer Fund	6,328.56	24,455.16	30,783.72
Water Fund	12,130.35	8,919.26	21,049.61
Trust Fund	27,217.27	-	27,217.27
Debt Service	53,800.00	-	53,800.00
Comm. Dev. – Special Grants	3,776.00	1,220.00	4,996.00
Capital Projects	171,939.97	-	171,939.97
TOTALS	\$ 400,122.23	\$ 77,317.99	\$ 477,440.22

Executive Session Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to enter executive session at 8:38 p.m. to discuss labor contract negotiations, and to discuss pending litigation. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to exit executive session at 11:04 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Motions

Ald. McCracken **moved** to authorize the Mayor to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Norwich Fire Fighters Association to amend the labor contract regarding use of Fire Assistants. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to authorize the Mayor to sign an amended engagement agreement with Assistant Police Chief Scott Burlison. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to adjourn at 11:09 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.