

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
April 5 2016

Present:

Mayor Christine Carnrike
Ald. Matthew Caldwell
Ald. Brian Doliver
Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. David Zieno
Ald. Thomas LoPiccolo

Also:

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

Absent:

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn

Media Representative Shawn McGrath

Ald. Brian Doliver called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:13 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Minutes Ald. Zieno **moved** to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2016 Joint Committees meeting. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved ayes all.

Correspondence

Allegro Run for the Arts – The Chenango Arts Council will be holding its 15th annual Allegro Run for the Arts on Saturday May 7, 2016. Registration will begin at 8 a.m. with the run starting at 9 a.m. They are requesting street closures from West Main St. in front of their building from Elm St. to Broad St. from early morning until the end of the race (about 10:15 a.m.), as well as Guernsey St. at West Main for the start of the race, and NO PARKING signs going south on Broad St. for a running lane. The intersections of Elm and West Main, West Main and Canasawacta, and Canasawacta and Pleasant are crossover points and police or fire police presence would be helpful. In addition they are requesting road closures from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. at Maple St. from Guernsey to Court Sts. for their May Day “block party”. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the request. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Parade of Lights – The Pennysaver/Evening Sun will have its annual “A Christmas to Remember Parade of Lights” on Saturday, November 26th, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. They are requesting the use of Route 12 from Division Street to Fair Street. The lineup to their assigned streets will begin at 5:30 p.m. They are requesting as many barricades as possible to control crowds along the route with the assistance of Fire police with radios at each parade entrance street. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the The Pennysaver/Evening Sun’s request to hold The Parade of Lights. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Discussion: R. Marsh stated that last year this event created 10 hours in overtime for the Police Department. This is one of the events that will now need to complete their own DOT Perm 33B.

Northeast Classic Car Museum Event – The NECCM is requesting Police presence and a partial street closure on State St. from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 17, 2016 from Rexford St to the entrance of Cobbler’s Square for a large outdoor event being held at the Northeast Classic Car Museum. Residents of State St. will have access to the street during the event. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the request. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Discussion: R. Marsh reported that last year this event caused 5 hours of Police overtime. This year, that weekend is a short shift so it will require overtime and is one of the events that would be charged for those hours under the new policy. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the event. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Youth Bureau

Resurfacing the Skatelite panels on the skateboard ramps – Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason informed the Committee that since the building of the skate park in 2003 at a cost of \$52,000, all of which was in the form of donations or grants, only 14 ramps have been replaced. They have a life expectancy of 10 years and 19 more panels need to be replaced. He received a quote of \$8,804.98 from RC Woodson. Last year the council approved Resolution #14 – 2015 to establish a Skating Facility Capital Reserve Fund with a current balance of approximately \$35,000. He would like approval at the next Council meeting for a transfer of funds from the reserve account to finance the panel replacement. Ald. Zieno asked if they are covered in the winter and R. Mason replied that they are made for weather extremes and that covering them would cause more damage by the tethers used in holding down any kind of tarp covering. Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the request. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved all ayes.

DPW

Dunne Drive BPS - C. Ivarson informed the Committee that the low bidder was originally \$90/pump less than the second bidder. The company now wants an additional \$1,000/pump so he will be purchasing the pumps from the second bidder and should only be \$80 more and is within budget. He added that in addition to putting pressure reducing stations in the street, about 40 homes will also receive pressure reducing valves at a cost of \$2,800.

Street Signs - C. Ivarson indicated there may be grants available to replace street signs. He has done a survey of City street signs (not including the special ones downtown) and replacement would cost approximately \$25,000. He would like permission to search out any grants.

Summer Help - C. Ivarson wanted clarification if summer help could be hired or was it part of the hiring freeze. He usually hires 5 people for public works, 2 for the water side, and 1 for the waste water treatment plant. It is in the budget. Ald. Doliver and Human Resource Director D. DeForest concurred that summer help was not included in the freeze and hiring for summer is fine. Ald. Deierlein would like preference given to those within the city limits.

Tank & Filter Projects – C. Ivarson reported that excavation is almost complete for the tank project. D&N Tanks will be here next week but will be weather dependent. Regarding the FilterPlant, the DOH has required that UV, which is very costly, be installed under the Surface Water Treatment Rule. In 2014 in the Filter Plant Pilot, he tested for E.coli for 8 months with negative results. He called the engineers and insisted that installing UV was not necessary. C. Ivarson does not want to impede the progress of the project, so the project will proceed with engineers planning for the UV but can be removed with an addendum in the bid package at a later date if necessary. Mayor Carnrike asked how long the City can run on the wells if the filter plant is shut down. C. Ivarson responded that right now the water usage is about 850,000 gallons per day with the ability with use of surface water and wells to supply 7 million gallons per day. He went on to say that back in the '80's the daily usage used to be 3 million gallons per day.

RBC Project – C. Ivarson stated the RBC project was finished in 2012 and he would like the project closed out and the money put back in the accounts that were taken to pay for the project. J. Zielinski stated that it does not need council approval and can be done administratively. D. DuFour reminded the Committee that another \$40,000 needs to be drawn down before it can be closed out. Mayor Carnrike asked if there was a reason the remaining \$40,000 was not drawn down. J. Zielinski stated his understanding is that there is \$40,000 available. When he did what he thought was the final draw down there was only \$1,194,000 of expenses submitted. He went on to say that a review of the project expenses can be done. The project has been finished for almost four years and he went with what he had as of July 2015

Screw Pumps – C. Ivarson reported that he had been going back and forth with the manufacturer regarding the issues with the screw pumps and after a strongly worded e-mail to the company president, they had removed the pump, took it back to their machine shop for repair, and reinstalled it. However, when it was machined and replaced it does not sit parallel to the pump barrel and needs to be removed. The company will pick up the cost.

Railroad Crossings and **Surplus Material, Concrete Blocks** With talk of the railroad starting up again and work to be done on the railroad crossings, C. Ivarson wanted the Committee to know that in 25 years he knows of only three crossings that the railroad themselves have repaired in the City. He stated that before asking the City to repair crossings, the railroad should do more repair work on their own crossings. He went on to say that the railroad is interested in the concrete material being stored at the Borden Ave. site to use for Rip Rap for the washed out areas of train track. That material needs to be declared surplus before he can dispose of it. Ald. Caldwell asked how the railroad will get approval from DEC since the City could not use this material because DEC thought it may cause contamination. Ald. LoPiccolo **moved** to declare the concrete material as surplus. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved all ayes.

Discussion: Ald. Zieno asked who's responsible for the railroad crossings in the City. C. Ivarson responded that the tracks as well as the sidewalks that come up to the tracks on railroad property are the railroads responsibility; an area the size of a 2x4 up to the tracks would be the City. The City does pay for maintenance for the crossing at the WWTP and an unimproved crossing at Borden Ave.

Super Duty Truck - C. Ivarson reported that a build out date for trucks is coming up and he will be doing a bid for a truck in a month or so. This will be for the truck that was to be purchased last year but then became unavailable from the bidder. The order needs to be in by September 2016 for a 2017 delivery. Ald. LoPiccolo asked if any of the specs have changed and C. Ivarson said the engine specs have changed.

Riverbank Erosion - C. Ivarson distributed pictures to the Committee demonstrating the erosion of the river banks. The river has changed course again resulting in sand bars and erosion of about 200' of City property. He has spoken to the Core of Engineers and they are in agreement that we need to do Rip Rap and remove the sand bars. Right now the discharge is still able to get to the river. He also needs permission from the DEC to do this work. He would like permission from the Committee to start communications with the DEC and to get permits ready. Permits would not be completed until the end of 2016 with work to begin in 2018. Ald. Deierlein asked what would happen if this work was not done. C. Ivarson responded that the City property will continue to erode and the corn field will deteriorate making it more difficult to lease. The Greenway Trail that he used to cut cannot be done since a tractor can no longer get across. Ald. Caldwell asked how fast did this happen and C. Ivarson said about 1 1/2 years.

Fire Department

Status of the Aerial Truck – T. Chawgo reported that the aerial truck is in Syracuse and is being looked at. He will keep the Committee apprised of the findings.

Volunteer Recruitment Efforts – T. Chawgo reported that the committee set up by the Fire Council is working on volunteer recruitment. There are upcoming events aimed at increasing the number of volunteers. Recruit NY, part of the NYS program, is April 24, 2016. They have contacted area business to set up a banner with a truck to solicit for volunteers. Ald. Caldwell asked if he had a target number of volunteers. T. Chawgo responded by saying that from those that apply some do not make it past the background check, others can't make the time commitment, and some decide it "isn't for them" after all.

Activities and Overtime Reports – T. Chawgo distributed the Activities Report and the Overtime Report for the month.

T. Chawgo also reported that he and the Mayor are beginning negotiations with the towns for Fire Service contracts. Currently there is one contract for the three towns involved; it is felt that there should be a separate contract for the Town of Guilford, the Town of North Norwich, and the Town of Norwich, so they will meet with each Town individually. Ald. Zieno asked if they would discuss EMS recovery costs and T. Chawgo said they would at some point. Ald. Caldwell asked about the status of the surplus vehicles. T. Chawgo said they were to go to the auto crusher but there was a delay. When they are disposed of he stated he would like the funds to go into the maintenance account.

Finance Department

Declaring equipment as surplus and authorizing disposal J. Zielinski distributed a list of vehicles from the Police department to the Committee to be declared as surplus. The first 5 items were police seizures, the last three items were previously declared surplus on September 15, 2016 but the VIN numbers were incorrect. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to

recommend the Common Council declare these as surplus and approve of their disposal. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Approve application for USDA-RD Community Facility Program Loans/Grants - J. Zielinski asked to have the Committee recommend the Common Council approve the application to the USDA-RD for grants/loans up to \$1.5 million for equipment, vehicles and potentially infrastructure. Ald. Deierlein asked if there are specific items. J. Zielinski responded it would be for equipment that was previously discussed bonding for. More specifics would be gathered at the department head meeting but he mentioned some needed items such as an ambulance, two police cars, ID badge machine, and Finance Department software. Ald. Zieno asked if this was 100% grants to which J. Zielinski responded it was only a 20%-30% grant, the balance would be loans. Ald. Zieno asked if loan payments were factored into the budget. J. Zielinski replied this would affect the 2017 budget, not the current budget. Ald. Deierlein asked if the City would be obligated to go forward if the application was accepted and J. Zielinski stated there would not, however C. Ivarson stated that it hurts the City's chances of obtaining other grants if approved grants are then turned down. J. Zielinski went on to say that in previous years the process to purchase equipment was to use money from reserve accounts or to borrow for it by issuing Serial Bonds. This is a third option and the interest rate should be comparable to that of Serial Bonds and there would be no issuance costs. The length of the loan would depend on the life of the equipment purchased and would be broken down by the different multiple projects. The Federal year end is September 30th and funds available are on a "first come, first serve" basis. T. Chawgo and C. Ivarson stated some of their needed equipment. Ald. Caldwell and other Committee members would like to see a list of items before they could recommend approval. Ald. Zieno expressed concern that the City is in a critical budget situation and they are being asked to make decisions now that will affect a future budget. He asked if a list along with costs, how much would be covered by grants and how much would be debt service and how it would impact the budget could be made available. J. Zielinski will get them as much information as USDA will commit to. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to take this to Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved all ayes.

Other

J. Zielinski discussed with NYSEG the possibility of purchasing the City street lights. The real savings in this project is buying the system of lights from NYSEG. The City pays NYSEG \$84,000 in "rent" each year before any kilowatt of electricity is used. He is hopeful that the lights can be purchased for less than two years of rent. The City would contract to maintain the lights with a third party, 850 disconnect fuses would need to be installed at a cost of \$50-\$100/fuse link. The replacement of the "burned out" lights would no longer be covered by NYSEG, but there would be the \$84,000 in savings to offset that.

Assessor's Office

Revaluation discussion presented by City Assessor Brian Fitts - City Assessor Brian Fitts reminded the Committee that the revaluation process that was suspended at the request of the Common Council in the summer of 2015. His hope is to reschedule the revaluation to begin July 2016 with the data mailers that would be sent to all property owners. Data mailers are used to verify information such as square footage, age of house, number of bedrooms and bathrooms. This is the first step in new assessments and values for the 2017 tentative assessment roll that would come out May 1, 2017 and finalized July 1, 2017. He encourages transparency and public education to have a successful revaluation, the last of which was done 28 years ago. The purpose of a revaluation is about equity. Over those 28 years the market has changed and assessments are out of line with some properties being over-assessed (paying more than their share) and some being under-assessed (paying less than their share). One concern many have is that the older population may have trouble paying their taxes if they should go up. There is the senior citizens tax exemption that is on a sliding scale based on income that starts at \$16,700 to qualify and is a 10% break and slides to \$11,000 in income for a 50% break off taxes. The City has the ability to adjust those income levels as high as \$37,400 that is allowed by the State with a 5% break, then adjusted down by \$1,000 increments to \$29,000 in income for a 50% break in taxes. This is one option, however when an exemption is given the dollars saved must be picked up by others. One other possible advantage could be that after the revaluation it may be determined that the State has over assessed the City and could result in a positive outcome for our burden with the County and the School. Ald. Doliver asked at what point in the process would this be known and B. Fitts said not until the end of the entire process, however he did say he could gather all the data and do all the work short of setting the values and sending the new values to property owners. There would still be the necessity of verifying and adjusting assessments based on the information collected, but you would have a raw set of data that could be plugged into the respective budgets to get an idea of the impact. He again stressed the importance of transparency and the education of the public that should take place which is the key to a successful revaluation. A typical misconception of doing a revaluation is that everyone's taxes will go up. In actuality, some will go up, some will stay about the same, but many will have taxes go down. Ald. Deierlein suggested creating a schedule including the steps and timeline of the process. Ald. Zieno expressed concerns about the

revaluation coming after raising taxes more than 11% over the last two years and the fact that the Star Program will be changing next year where any homeowner who moves must now pay the full School tax upfront and then receive a rebate or tax credit when they file their taxes. He would have a hard time supporting the revaluation unless there is an adjustment for senior citizens. Mayor Carnrike stated her biggest concern is if it's not done now, then when? In twenty-eight years the City has dramatically changed and this needs to be done.

Community Development

Discussion of Fit Path proposal for Weiler Park – T. Dreyer explained the proposal of a fitness trail at Weiler Park put forth by the Chenango County Department of Environmental Health. It would consist of approximately a dozen workout stations and would be coordinated with the DPW to find locations for the apparatus'. There is no cost to the City, but the City would be responsible for maintaining the equipment, as well as wood chips or pea gravel ground cover. There will be a resolution at the next Common Council meeting.

Discussion of proposed ADA Grievance Procedure Policy –) There was an audit done by the NYS Office of Community Renewal concerning the CDGB grant assistance provided to The Label Gallery for their purchase of a digital printing press. There is loan money coming back to the City from this project. ADA is a Federal program but the Office of Community Renewal is requiring the City to have an ADA Grievance Procedure Policy. This would allow a member of the public an avenue, through the City, to grieve anything they thought was not ADA compliant. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the ADA Grievance Procedure Policy. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved all ayes.

Other Items

Special Events Fee – Ald. Doliver proposed changing the Special Event Fee for the sponsoring organization from \$25 to \$50, leaving the per vendor fee at \$5. This is just a small way to recoup some of the expenses the City incurs during these events such as electricity, DPW clean-up, and Police services. There are about four special events per year. D. DuFour explained that a Special Event is an event that has vendors. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the change in the Special Event Fee. Seconded by Ald. LoPiccolo, approved all ayes.

Taxicab Fee – Ald. Doliver informed the Committee that if the City were going to go forward with a Taxicab License he felt more must be asked of the Taxicab company. This is a matter of public safety, therefore background checks should be done on each driver. Ald. Zieno stated that the public transit was being cut back, so there would be even less public transportation available. D. DuFour explained that in the past the previous Director of Finance, William Roberts, felt that licenses should not be given if there were no precautions or requirements taken. Currently there is no policy on file. Other municipalities go through stringent measures before issuing a Taxicab license. Ald. Deierlein said that by issuing a license it implies that the City has done its due diligence to protect the public. EMO Officer stated that background checks can be done at the Super 8 Motel at a cost of \$107. Further discussion will be held at a future Committee meeting.

Zombie Property Registry

Ald. Doliver stated that this will be tabled until more information is gathered.

Third Floor of the Firehouse

C. Ivarson presented the Committee with two proposals for moving City Hall to the third floor of the Firehouse. These are preliminary costs, the first from GHD at \$9,500, and the second from Delaware Engineering at \$6,000. Delaware Engineering did the work to modify the Firehouse as it is now. He suggested hiring professionals to advise how to use the third floor efficiently. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the preliminary engineering costs. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

2014 Tax Sale Properties - It was discussed that the Council should decide how to proceed with disposal of the six properties, by RFP or auction. This was previously decided at the March 15, 2016 Common Council meeting that the City will use the RFP process.

Hazard Mitigation Plan - J. Zielinski brought attention to the Hazard Mitigation Plan that EMO Officer A Jones distributed to the Council and Mayor. A Jones added that this is the final draft. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to remove Resolution #18 - 2016 from the table and recommend the Common Council approve the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Executive Session – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to enter executive session at 8:29 p.m. to discuss current litigation and labor contract negotiations. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to exit executive session at 10:09 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Deierlein moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.