

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
July 2, 2013

Present:

Ald. Bryan McCracken
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Paul Laughlin
Ald. Daniel Palmer

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk William Roberts
First Assistant Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Code Enforcement Office/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence
EMO A. Jones
Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Mayor Joseph Maiurano
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Shawn Magrath, Media Representative

Absent:

None

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:04 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Laughlin **moved** to approve the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting of June 4, 2013. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Correspondence

Commerce Chenango 5k Run/Walk Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend Council accept and approve a request from Jill Eddy of Commerce Chenango to hold the second annual Commerce Chenango 5k Run/Walk on September 14, 2013, with police assistance and attendant street closings. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Park Place Restaurant Request Ald. Laughlin **moved** to recommend Council accept and approve a request from David Cirillo to waive Section 136-3 of the Norwich City Code, the open container law, to allow Park Place Restaurant to provide beer and wine outdoors on August 3, 2013 in conjunction with the Chenango County Blues Association Summer Jam. Seconded by Ald. Palmer, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department Director of Finance William Roberts brought forward the matter of acquiring an aerial ladder truck for the Committees to consider. First Assistant Fire Chief Jan Papelino noted that the demo vehicle located by the Fire Department was only held until the second week of June and may no longer be available. W. Roberts explained that the City could not respond so quickly to purchase any vehicle because such purchase would require bonding. The maximum duration of a bond issue would be 20 years, the period determined by State law as the term of probable usefulness of the vehicle. Debt service for such a bond would be approximately \$50,000 a year, which the City cannot at this time afford. This would translate as a 1.8% property tax rate increase. As Chief Chawgo had stated previously, it is impossible to know if this would be offset by more favorable homeowner insurance rates. Ald. Schermerhorn noted that contracts with towns in the fire district need to be negotiated to help defray such expenses. J. Papelino noted that underwriters have not re-evaluated the City in approximately 10 years. The Fire Department needs to be instructed by the Council how to proceed. Mayor Maiurano stated that three of the Department's trucks have been replaced in the last eight years. J. Papelino stated that through mutual aid the Department has called into service ladder trucks from Sherburne and Oxford. EMO A. Jones noted that Oxford's truck is out of service, and that it was purchased at the same time as the City's.

DPW

MEO I Position DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson reported that an MEO I resigned without notice and asked permission to proceed with recruiting for the open position. Ald. Bresina **moved** to proceed with recruiting for an MEO I position. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Promotion of Water System Trainee C. Ivarson reported that the Water System Trainee had passed the Grade 2 examination and must be promoted to Water System Operator. Ald. Laughlin **moved** to recommend Council promote the Water System Trainee to Water System Operator. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, approved ayes all.

Well 3 Gas Engine C. Ivarson reported that the gas engine at Well 3 has a wrist pin knocking. The pistons must be pulled to access the pin. This will require an expenditure of approximately \$4,000, which will require a transfer of funds from reserves. Ald. Laughlin **moved** to recommend Council approve a transfer of \$4,000 from reserves to cover repair of the Well 3 gas engine. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Filter Plant Piloting C. Ivarson explained that before the filter plant project can begin, a full pilot of the proposed project must be tested. A small package plant will be brought in that functions by the same mechanisms as will the new plant. He will be traveling to investigate the pilot plant package in July. He warned that this will commence the expenditures for the filter plant replacement project.

Elm Street Storm Sewer C. Ivarson reported that he will use video to investigate whether the storm sewer on Elm Street needs to be replaced or could be cleaned. If it can be cleaned, this will save approximately \$100,000 on the project.

Water System Policies C. Ivarson explained that the various policies of the Water System had not previously been consolidated, and distributed a draft of the consolidated policies to the Committees, requesting feedback. The City Attorney is also reviewing the draft. Such a set of policies is required by USDA-RD.

Community & Economic Development Projects & Funds

Main Street Grant Application Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer reported that the B.I.D. will serve as applicant for the Main Street Grant, and has requested the City provide a supporting resolution. The maximum amount that may be applied for is \$200,000. Ald. Palmer **moved** to recommend Council provide a resolution of support for the Main Street Grant application of the B.I.D. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

CFA Applications T. Dreyer reported on three components of the Consolidated Funding Application the City will apply for: (1) a redevelopment grant for properties at 42, 44-46 North Broad Street, including perhaps the parking lots behind these properties and other properties on Lackawanna Avenue; (2) an Environmental Protection Fund grant for the skating facility. A local match is available; (3) a Council of the Arts grant for a local not-for-profit for a second digital projector, with local match.

USDA-RD Housing Preservation Grant T. Dreyer reported that a Housing Preservation Grant is due in early August. This is a grant the City received in 2010, funding Community Development for emergency home repair loans/grants for low-income owner-occupied properties. That grant funded 19 projects involving roof replacements, boiler replacements, etc. Of those, 14 were total grants, four were 50/50 grant/loans, and one was a loan. The City should recoup funds it contributed when the loans are repaid. Ald. Laughlin **moved** to recommend Council approve the USDA-RD Housing Preservation Grant application. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

CDBG Application T. Dreyer reported that the City was awarded a \$100,000 CDBG grant for Label Gallery to purchase equipment. Of this, \$66,000 will go to Label Gallery as a grant, \$34,000 will be loaned, to be repaid to the City at 1.5% over five years. Label Gallery will be required to hire four new employees.

421-m Property Tax Exemption Program T. Dreyer reviewed the details of the 421-m Property Tax Exemption Program for areas designated for the benefit. Property owners in designated areas will have their current assessments held for a period of 12 years, and the full assessment value of the property improvements will be phased in gradually from years 12 through 20. Property tax rate increases are applied throughout the period. Ald. Schermerhorn asked how often re-assessment is performed following improvements. Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence replied that the Assessor is given a report of all building permits annually, and reviews the assessment at that time. Ald. Schermerhorn stated he liked the program but was bothered by the length of time of the tax exemption. Mayor Maiurano stated this is a good program providing needed incentive for the improvement of certain properties in the City. He added that in some instances the assessment for a property would not change significantly after improvement. Ald. Palmer stated that he did not disapprove of the program, but did not want low-income rentals and their tenants on North Broad Street. T. Dreyer explained that the requirement was for 20% of units to be offered to low- or moderate-income tenants earning up to 90% of the median income for the area, which obviously includes the majority of the population. Ald. McCracken asked if clearer or more stringent criteria could be incorporated so that the inclusion of properties in benefit areas would not be decided arbitrarily. T. Dreyer responded that the criteria are defined by the State law. He stated that the proposed law, if adopted, would also

have to be forwarded to the County and school district for their compliance in the tax exemption program. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend Council remove from the table the motion to receive Proposed Local Law No. (A) of 2013 and set a public hearing. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, approved 5-1, Ald. Palmer voting nay.

Executive Session Ald. McCracken **moved** to enter executive session at 7:08 p.m. to discuss the sale of real property where price may be affected. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to exit executive session at 7:52 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Bresina **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.