

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

Special Meeting
September 12, 2018

Present:

Mayor Christine Carnrike
Ald. Matthew Caldwell
Ald. Brian Doliver left at 7:05 p.m.
Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. Linda Kays-Biviano
Ald. David Zieno
Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey

Also:

Police Chief Rodney Marsh left at 7:18 p.m.
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Absent

Supervisor James McNeil
Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Ald. Doliver called the special joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:35 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

2019 Budget Presentation – Police Department – R. Marsh presented 2019 Police Department Budget. R. Marsh presented two budgets; one with a 2% increase in personal services and one without an increase since negotiations with the union has not been finalized. It was noted that last year the amount of the 2% increase was put into contingency until the contract had been settled. Discussion of staffing took place, noting that a full staff would be 20 officers, including the Chief of Police. R. Marsh expressed concern that newly hired officers which fall under the 2014 contract would be leaving the department after the 2-year mark due to the current pay structure which eliminated the 2-year step. Lateral transfers fall under the old pay scale and therefore would get a 2-year step. He gave examples of job postings for Dewitt and Johnson City listing positions open at a 3-year step of \$74,000 and \$72,000. Currently, Norwich Officers at their 5-year step would be at \$52,000.

Ald. Caldwell moved to enter executive session at 6:47 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell moved to exit executive session at 6:50 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Ald. Zieno asked if the overtime could be reduced. R. Marsh responded that the department could potentially be down 4 officers and does not want to reduce the overtime budgeted at this time. Ald. Caldwell stated that no other City Department employees transfer to somewhere else, but Police Officers will. There was additional discussion of canvassing the Police Officer Civil Service Eligible list and then giving the PT test to narrow down candidates. Vehicle purchases averaging \$37,200 each in 2018, 2019 and 2022 were also discussed.

Ald. Doliver **moved** to refill the vacant position in the Police Department. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all. Ald. Doliver left the meeting at 7:05 p.m. R. Marsh reported the Police Department will be switching to Spectrum and there was discussion of why all departments are not using the same internet and phone service to realize possible cost savings. R. Marsh was complimented on the presentation of his budget saying it would be a good model for all departments to use. The Mayor asked if any Revenue, such as Parking Tickets is provided and R. Marsh stated he had not as that is collected at City Hall. R. Marsh left at 7:18 p.m.

There was discussion of minimum wage going up to \$15 per hour and that \$21 an hour is not enough and that when things change the City needs to keep up, especially with the competition (for pay). Ald. Deierlein stated that over the years there has been talk about foregoing a City Police department in favor of using the Sheriff Department and that he is “dead set against it”. Ald. Jeffrey stated that Johnson City has a much broader tax base than the City of Norwich which may account for the higher pay there. Mayor Carnrike said we are more like the City of Binghamton and that our officers are paid more than what Binghamton offers. Ald. Deierlein stated that if we are aiming to keep our tax rate low, there are other areas where cuts can be made. He went on to say taxpayers want to keep taxes low, but if you reduce the

Police they will not be happy. If you reduce Fire, then the taxpayer may not have as much sympathy. The taxpayer may accept a small tax increase in order to keep our trained Police Officers here. Mayor Carnrike stated the problem arises when the taxpayer doesn't see an increase in services for an increase in taxes and that Public Safety is not where cuts should come from. Ald. Zieno concurred stating he has heard feedback from the public saying changes in the Fire Department could be made but would never say that about the Police Department.

Mayor Carnrike said she has not had a chance to look at the new Fire scheduling software but doubts that it is enough to offset \$300,000 in overtime. She went on to discuss the new Water Treatment Plant and budgeting enough for the additional staff that may be needed. Ald. Zieno mentioned that Carl Ivarson had reported that it would be mostly an automated system. Mayor Carnrike stated that is incorrect and that when C. Ivarson had gone to Geneseo, he had reported that the machines are so advanced you need additional bodies.

There was discussion that the Police stay within the 2 square miles of the City, whereas the Fire Department leaves the City limits 80% of the time and not all of that if billable. Discussion included which vehicles go out on certain calls, Fire/EMS contracts with the Towns, the City's obligation to answer a call outside our "service" area, and the need for the County to step in and step up.

Adjournment

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 7:40 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all