

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
October 1, 2019

Present:

Mayor Christine Carnrike
Ald. Matthew Caldwell
Ald. Bryan McCracken
Ald. Linda Kays-Biviano
Ald. David Zieno
Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Fire Chief Jan Paelino left at 7:20
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Media Representative: The Evening Sun, Zachary Meseck

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Absent

Ald. Brian Doliver
Supervisor James McNeil

Ald. Jeffrey called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:31 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2019 meeting. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Proclamation – Ald. Jeffrey presented Frank Speziale with the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Frank Speziale has dedicated 55 years of his life to the Evening Sun, City of Norwich and the greater Chenango County community; and

WHEREAS, he has epitomized the meaning of the American Dream after having immigrated to the United States from Italy in 1956 and has since engrained himself into the fabric of the City of Norwich; and

WHEREAS, Frank and his wife Patricia raised a family and became a staple in the City of Norwich's East Side and have made significant contributions to their neighborhood in the City's Sixth Ward; and

WHEREAS, his love for community, love of people, love of life is infectious, and it has forever been engrained in anything that he does and continues to do for our community; and

WHEREAS, Frank has documented the local history of the City of Norwich as well as Chenango County and beyond through his photographs published in the Evening Sun; and

WHEREAS, during a productive lifetime, he has demonstrated in countless ways his dedication to the welfare of others and has earned the respect, affection and admiration of people from all walks of life and all ages; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert Jeffrey, Ward Six Alderman of the City of Norwich, New York, along with the City of Norwich Common Council, do hereby deem it an honor and pleasure to extend this proclamation to FRANK SPEZIALE on the occasion of his many years of service to the City of Norwich and surrounding communities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereby set my hand, and cause the seal of the City of Norwich to be affixed this First day of October, Two Thousand Nineteen.

Introduction of new Grants Coordinator – Mayor Carnrike introduced Lorraine Keckeisen to the Council as the new Grants Coordinator. Ms. Keckeisen explained her focus is on community service and coming up with viable projects for the community and looks forward to working with everyone.

Correspondence

Dollars for Scholars Bottle Drive – Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from Dollars for Scholars for the use of the Firehouse for a Bottle Drive on Sunday, November 3, 2019 from 9 a.m. – noon. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department

Fire Prevention Week- All schools scheduled – J. Papelino reported that the Firefighters will once again be visiting the schools for Fire Prevention Week.

Fire Prevention Week Open House- Thursday October 10- 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM – J. Papelino reported that for the Open House they will be doing the burn simulator for a house and the 911 Center will be doing a demonstration as well.

Red Cross Fire Detector Program – J. Papelino reported that the Red Cross will once again be canvassing the area for those in need of fire detectors. The detectors are available to homeowners as well as tenants, are free of charge, and are installed on October 26th by the Fire Department, also for free.

Code Enforcement

45 Silver St. – J. Papelino reported the Open House for 45 Silver St. will be Wednesday, October 9th from 10:00-10:15 a.m. for a ribbon cutting. The BOCES students who participated in the build will be present. RFP's will be going out soon after the Open House.

One RFP for 65 Silver Received – J. Papelino reported one RFP was received and will be discussed in Executive Session tonight.

Next RFPs- 10 Columbia & 21 Plymouth – J. Papelino reported that RFP's for 10 Columbia and 21 Plymouth will be going out shortly.

Walgreens Change-Over in October – J. Papelino reported that the transition of Rite Aid to Walgreen's will be completed by October 22nd with the exception of signage since they will need to apply for a variance for the size of the sign Walgreen's is requesting.

Ald. Caldwell asked J. Papelino if the Firefighters go to the schools in their turnout gear. J. Papelino said the firefighters arrive at the school in regular clothing and put the gear on in front of the children. This helps children realize there is a real person under all the equipment and makes it less scary.

Ald. Jeffrey asked when the City can apply for the next round of Restore NY grant. It was determined that there has not been an announcement for that date yet.

Ald. Caldwell stated that by according to the Fire Report the Fire Department has exceeded their budgeted overtime funds and made a **motion** to transfer \$40,000 from the Personal Services line to the Overtime line. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey. Ald. Kays-Biviano asked if that was enough. D. DuFour asked to speak on this since, as the Director of Finance, she was not consulted on this issue. She explained there is a policy in place for the Personal Services and Overtime lines that transfers are held off until the end of the year. Further, the NYS Comptroller's Office has no problem with the policy. and indicated that when you start transferring money from account to account, it is a waste of everyone's time, as every transfer would need to go to Council for approval. Ald. Caldwell referenced a section of Charter to the contrary, however it was pointed out that section refers to a City fund and not an individual budget line. Discussion continued regarding transferring money from account to account, the fact that \$40,000 is not an exact

number but just a guess. D. DuFour asked if Ald. Caldwell's intention is to do this all the time to which he responded that we're going to budget better. D. DuFour stated that the overtime was caused by an employee leaving. She also expressed her concern as to why he does not speak with her, as the Director of Finance, on financial matters. She also pointed out that [at his request], all items for discussion were placed on the agenda and this was not. Mayor Carnrike said that when questions arise regarding financial matters, the Director of Finance should be included as a matter of professional courtesy. J. Papelino stated that by the end of the next payroll he will be at the overtime amount budgeted for the year due to the loss of a firefighter. Again, it was unknown what the figure will actually be by year-end. The motion to transfer \$40,000 was defeated, 4 - 1, with Ald. Caldwell voting yea and Aids. McCracken, Kays-Biviano, Zieno and Jeffrey voting nay.

DPW

Salt truck Bid – E. Pepe reported they are requesting bids on NYS contract for a new salt truck with results being received on October 9.

Playgrounds at Parks – E. Pepe reported that the Parks Commission has received a \$15,000 grant from the Follet Foundation, \$13,000 from the City per Resolution #38-2019 for a total cost of \$28,000 for the new playground equipment at Greenway Park. E. Pepe would like permission to enter into a contract with Little Tykes for equipment costing \$28,000. Ald. McCracken **moved** to recommend the Common Council authorize the contract with Little Tykes. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all. E. Pepe also reported that they are looking at equipment for other parks (Weiler and/or Auburn). He stated there is \$4,000 in the Parks Equipment line and \$5,000 left from the Chobani donation that is managed by United Way.

Flushing Hydrants – E. Pepe reported hydrant flushing will take place sometime after the 10th of October; dates are to be determined.

Emergency PRV Repair Capital Reserve Transfer – E. Pepe reported that the pressure relief valve has been malfunctioning over the last 7 or 8 months and finally failed completely on September 5th causing 2 water main breaks on Beech St. The cost of a new valve is \$15,255 and would require a transfer from HR-30 Water System Improvements to F8340.4040 Water Distribution and Repairs. Ald. Caldwell moved to recommend the Common Council approve the transfer. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Maintenance and Fleet Management – Mayor Carnrike expressed her concern that the City vehicle used by employees to attend training etc. is currently not usable due to the brakes and rotors needing to be replaced. The purchase of the fleet maintenance and management software was done so that repairs and maintenance are done regularly and had concerns that the City's resources are not being fully utilized. Ald. Zieno asked if the software accounts for a cost basis for equipment. D. DuFour said with the purchase of new software in the Finance Dept. there is a module for tracking equipment, which is being worked on, but the software for the fleet management is primarily to track vehicle maintenance and costs. E. Pepe stressed the need for good communication concerning use of vehicles and also for employees to report when they feel something needs to be addressed with vehicle.

Ald. Zieno asked for information on the lead water line replacement grant. E. Pepe reported that anything with lead can be replaced and will receive full reimbursement from the State. When lead is identified, both the public and private line replacements are reimbursable. If excavation is needed in order to test for lead, the Department of Health will reimburse for that as well. If inquiries are made, a list of those interested is being gathered until further details are worked out.

Ald. Jeffrey asked on the plan for the LED Street Light replacements is still to be completed by the end of December and E. Pepe stated that is his understanding.

Finance

Presentation of 2020 Finance, Attorney, Clerk, Mayor, Assessor and Planning Budgets – D. DuFour presented the 2020 budgets for Finance, Attorney, Clerk, Mayor, Assessor, Planning and Miscellaneous Departments. All budgets were mostly unchanged (there were minor increases and decreases from various lines) from 2019 with the exception of increases in Personal Services. There were added Personal Services and expenses in the Planning budget due to the hiring of a Grants Coordinator and a reduction in Personal Services for the Assessor with the expectation that a new Assessor will be at entry level.

Other Items

Change November Joint Committee Meeting Date – Due to November 5 being election day and City offices are closed, the November Joint Committee shall be moved to Wednesday, November 6, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. Ald. McCracken **moved** to change the date. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

52 Sheldon St. – Ald. Zieno addressed the fact that there were no RFP's received for 52 Sheldon St., most likely due to the fact it is occupied. With the law regarding rentals having changed making eviction much more difficult, he wondered what recourse the City has and suggested this be referred to the City Attorney for options. D. DuFour also pointed out that the occupants were not tenants, but the owners of the property and wondered how that effected the situation. J. Papelino reported that many landlords that have come in to Codes have said they will be selling their properties as the latest legislation from the State has made it too difficult to continue saying tenants have all the rights and landlords have none.

Sidewalk District for Discussion – Ald. McCracken reported that he, Ald. Doliver and the Planning Commission have been looking at creating a sidewalk district in order to address the deteriorating sidewalks all across the City. Some felt that even though there are several areas of the City where there are no sidewalks, those property owners most likely avail themselves of using other's sidewalks around the City and should share in the burden of replacement. Sidewalks are a form of transportation for many, not just limited to those without vehicles. With the current sidewalk program, individual owners are replacing their sidewalk, but surrounding sidewalks by others on the street may remain in disrepair. In a Sidewalk District program, all property owner's, including non-profits, would pay a small fee that would go into a fund to do wholesale replacements of sidewalks, with the maintenance of the sidewalks remaining with the property owner. The Ithaca model that was looked at has fee for residential owners would be around \$35-\$45 per year with the larger institution properties based on a formula. Ald. McCracken will bring further information to the Common Council meeting either in October or November.

Karol Kucinski, a member in the gallery, re-stated for clarification steps for a Sidewalk District Program: 1) Creation of districts 2) Repair/replace existing sidewalks to be done completely by the City and then wondered if future new housing construction projects would be required to install sidewalks.

E. Pepe asked who would decide when a sidewalk needs to be replaced, saying what is being proposed is a lot of work. Ald. McCracken said in Ithaca there is a position that coordinates their Sidewalk District program with part of the sidewalk fees to pay that person's salary. E. Pepe pointed out that the City would be accepting all liability related to sidewalks. He likes the idea, but responsibility needs to stay with the property owner – they know their sidewalk better than anyone else. Ald. Zieno suggested the Planning Commission get input from E. Pepe, the City Attorney and perhaps some other cities with similar programs.

Ald. Jeffrey updated the Committee regarding the NYS DOT crosswalks, reporting that Assemblyman Crouch's office will be returning to complete the crosswalks in approximately 3 weeks saying the delay is due to waiting on materials. All remaining crosswalks will be completed this Fall with the first one being at Front and Broad Sts. E. Pepe reported that he is meeting with the DOT tomorrow.

Executive Session – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to enter executive session at 8:08 p.m. to discuss the sale of property where value may be affected, the employment history of a particular individual and to discuss pending litigation. Seconded by Ald. McCracken, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell and the Director of Finance left executive session at 9:20 p.m.

Ald. Zieno **moved** to exit executive session at 9:38 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 9:38 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.