**CITY OF NORWICH**
**JOINT MEETING of the**
**PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and**
**FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES**
September 1, 2020

| Present: | Also: |
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| Mayor Shawn Sastri | Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour |
| Ald. Matthew Caldwell | Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray |
| Ald. Brian Doliver | DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe |
| Ald. Nancy Allaire | Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason |
| Ald. Linda Kays-Biviano | Fire Chief Jan Papelino |
| Ald. David Zieno | Police Chief Rodney Marsh |
| Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey | EMO A Jones |
| | Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton |
| Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey | Media Representative: none |

Absent
Supervisor James McNeil

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Ald. Doliver called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:32 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

**Approval of Minutes** – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

**Correspondence**

**Curb Cut at 37 Waite St. –** Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the requested curb cut at 37 Waite St. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

**2021 Budget Presentations**

**Police** – R. Marsh distributed the proposed Police Department budget for 2021. The Personal Services line increased due to the negotiated contracts and a 2% increase for non-unit employees. Ald. Caldwell stated that non-unit employees should be budgeted for an increase in wages, saying that Department Heads are very important to the City and are our best assets. They need to discuss what is reasonable and fair. D. DuFour will put some numbers together and email the Committee. R. Marsh stated that other than personal services, telephone expenses went up while he tried to make cuts in other lines in the budget, making the budget $7,000 less than last year. There was discussion on whether there were enough funds in the overtime line. Some felt more funds should be budgeted for overtime, while others thought it should be kept as is to keep a tax increase down and take money from reserves if there is a shortage. Ald. Zieno pointed out this is the first time in 3 or 4 years there is a full staff. There was discussion of the new Police car and the replacement of body armor for 8 Officers. A grant for the body armor is pending which would pay half of the $6,700 if awarded.

**Fire –** J. Papelino discussed the Personal Services line for the Fire Department. He stated, like the Police Department, some had suggested adding funds to the overtime line. With a full staff (once 3 have graduated the Academy), currently the overtime line is $63,000 less than last year. Overtime is always dependent on having that full staff stay healthy and with no injuries, saying that not a year has gone by where that has happened. The Committee discussed what the overtime figure should be budgeted for and a compromise of $150,000 was agreed upon. Most budget lines went down with Contracted Service having an increase due to payments to Basset which are $9,600 per year. There was discussion of increasing ambulance fees which could result in an additional $31,000 in revenue. J. Papelino said that in 2027 the Critical Care sunsets and those 4 or 5 employees will have to become paramedics. He would like to get one person per year trained to be a paramedic to meet that requirement. It was recognized that budgeting and building back the fund balance over the last several years has proved important, especially since COVID.

**EMO** – A. Jones reported there are no increases or changes from last year's budget. He will email the budget to the Committee.

**Human Resources –** L. Murray reported no budget changes other than an increase for the Civil Service Monitor for the increase in the minimum wage from $11.80 to $12.50 and the Office Expense line. It was noted that the Senior Account Clerk position for Human Resources is an unfunded position that will remain vacant.

**Department Head Reports**

**Fire Department**

**Visited to Academy-** J. Papelino reported that he visited the recruits at the Academy during "Hell" week and they are doing well and received positive feedback from their instructors. The recruits are enjoying it, are thrilled to be there and anxious to get to work. There was discussion on conducting training in Norwich, however there are certain obstacles that would prohibit that.

**Ferno stretcher request** – J. Papelino requested permission to purchase a Ferno stretcher which would auto-lift patients on a stretcher into the ambulance; Currently this is done manually. He views the auto-lift as an investment to eliminate or reduce injuries (and therefore reducing overtime) and would be paid for by taking funds from different accounts. He looked at 2 different kinds: a Stryker model which is auto-load for $52,000 and a Ferno which is auto-lift for $23,864.76 which is what he is recommending. There was discussion of waiting a few months to see how the budget shapes up toward the end of the year. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the purchase. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano. There was further discussion by Ald. Zieno and Ald. Jeffrey about waiting till later in the year. J. Papelino stated that this would need to be incorporated into the build for the new ambulance, therefore a decision would need to be made. D. DuFour felt that the funds could be found to cover the purchase. Further discussion ensued. The motion passed 5 – 1 with Ald. Jeffrey noting nay.

**EMS Revenue Recovery –** J. Papelino reported that there is a $3 per mile increase in BLS, ALS and ALS2 mileage from $25 to $28 as well as an increase of $100 per call. The ALS Fly-car will be increased by $300 per call. He will present further information at the October Joint Committee meeting.

**Fire Inspection Fees –** J. Papelino asked if the Council would entertain the idea of waiving the fees for Fire Inspections for the rest of 2020 due to the financial stresses of businesses due to COVID. Inspections would still be done and any violations would still need to be corrected. Revenue for inspections is typically around $3,000. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve waiving fire inspection fees for the rest of 2020. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

**Code Enforcement**

**RFPs 9 Merrill St and 63 Silver St.** - J. Papelino reported that the RFPs on 9 Merrill and 63 Silver are out with a return date of September 21, 2020.

**Mitchell & State Building** – J. Papelino reported the partially collapsed building on Mitchell and State has been demolished.

**Rental Inspection Fees** - J. Papelino asked if the Council would entertain the idea of waiving rental inspection fees. Many landlords are not receiving rents due to COVID. The waiver would apply only to the initial $25 inspection fee and not to the violation fee of $200 for failing to have the initial inspection done. Revenue from rental inspections in about $3,000. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the waiver of the initial $25 inspection fee. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

**EMO**

**Flood Committee** – A. Jones reported that the Flood Committee that was formed at the beginning of the year and had not yet met due to COVID has had their first meeting. There were many attendees representing the City, one homeowner and one business representative. They discussed a variety of issues regarding the creek. Moving forward the Committee is looking to learn more about flood plain management by having someone from Soil and Water do a presentation. They would also seek input from an engineering firm to do modeling and to see what the cost may be. Funds from the FEMA reimbursement of the storm last fall which is around $20,000 could possibly be used for an engineering study. When the flood maps were redone in 2009, LIDAR was used which could substantially save some money. A Jones also stated that the Town will also be invited. The City could build berms to mitigate the flooding, but that would push the problem further down the river. Ald. Zieno asked about the State bond issue for infrastructure that would include flooding and A Jones stated that had been removed by the State for this year. He also stated that mitigation funds are very competitive and the City is not a good candidate.

**Wales Dr.** – A Jones reported that the solar project in the Town of Norwich will be starting shortly and they need an address for the access through City streets of Wales Dr. and/or Dunne Dr. for 911 purposes. After some research it is not clear whether the extension part of Wales Dr. was ever formally dedicated as such. At the last meeting there was discussion of formally dedicating the street as Dunne Dr., however, since then the property on the corner has been sold. There was some discussion of the City paving that extension to encourage the development of the area. At the time of the development, the developer did not want to incur that expense and the City would not pave until more homes were built. It was decided to leave the extension as Wales Dr. and establish the address for access as 40 Wales Dr.

**DPW**

**Street Project Update –** E. Pepe reported that the street paving project has been completed and a walk-through with the contractor will be done. He formally recognized the DPW for their hard work and effort on prepping and fixing the curbs, the 10 ADA crosswalk modifications, the 48 catch basins and the 38 manholes among other things, all with 50% staffing due to COVID for March, April and May. It was tough, but everyone worked extremely hard. Ald. Doliver also thanked them for the way they worked and assisted the residents during that time. After a concern over seams was mentioned, E. Pepe stated that the seams will need to be sealed and for the specs for next year's paving he will specify seam sealing as being part of the project.

**WWTP Nutrient Removal Upgrades Authorized Representative Resolution –** E. Pepe reported that the EFC requires a resolution for the authorization to execute the grant for $30,000. Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council pass a resolution for the EFC grant. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

**WWTP Nutrient Removal Upgrades Local Match Resolution** - E. Pepe reported that the EFC also requires a resolution for the local match for the $30,000 with a 20% match by the City for $6,000. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the resolution authorizing the 20% match of $6,000. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

**Police Department**

**Lexipol for PD Policies & Police Reform/Reinvention Collaborative –** R. Marsh reported that he, Deputy Chief Burlison, Mayor Sastri and Lynn Murray met to discuss persons to reach out to discuss Police Reform. The 159-page document from the Governor's Office was much more in depth than expected. He was hoping to wait till the end of the year to request the Lexipol service, but after receiving the 159-page document he doesn't want to wait and is asking to use this year's funds and do this now. PERMA will pay $2,262 bringing this year's cost down to $17,136; he has some funds from other lines he can use as well. R. Marsh stated that if they sign up now, the subscription [payment] to Lexipol wouldn't start until 2022. He explained that Lexipol is used all across the country and over 100 agencies in NY. Attorneys write the policies which are based on the best practices in law enforcement. In addition, as laws change, Lexipol will change or update the policies which officers will then receive training on. He stated this is not a "rubber stamp" and is tailored to each individual Police Department. Lexipol works with the Department to ensure that their policies are within the guidelines of the best practice policies. Lexipol is endorsed by the NY Chief's Association, Sheriff's Association, Fire Chief's Association, NYMIR, and PERMA. Ald. Kays-Biviano asked when the policies were last update. R. Marsh replied that since 2012, 48 out of 170 polices have been updated. Ald. Caldwell stated that it took 15 months for the Council to adopt an employee handbook, and [with 170 policies] we'll never get through it. He also said that NYMIR or PERMA would not pay if they didn't believe in it, so he is in favor of doing this. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to send this to Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano. Ald. Zieno stated one function of the Police Reform Committee is to review policies and questioned why we would adopt blanket policies right before the group would review them. L. Murray said that some of the policies are required by the State to be in place beforehand. R. Marsh stated that many of the policies are out of date going back decades. The Reform Committee can still look at the policies and recommend changes if need be, but the changes would be written by attorneys and be within the best practices guidelines. Ald. Zieno stated that Lexipol was established by former Police Officers and attorneys for the Police Union and some of their beginning policies were not of the type we would have now, so he has concerns about the vendor. R. Marsh explained the work process and the timeline with Lexipol. The motion was approved 5 – 1 with Ald. Zieno voting nay.

**Other Items**

**Comprehensive Plan –** Ald. Jeffrey stated he attended the last Planning Commission meeting where an update to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan was discussed. The Commission is looking for feedback from the Council as to what they believe the City needs to focus on in order to include it in the new Comprehensive Plan. He stated there are many goals in the 2014 Plan that the City has accomplished. The update to the plan will be a 1 ½ year process. Grants Coordinator, Lorraine Keckeisen, said she and the Mayor met with the LA Group regarding the BOA designation. The Dept. of State had spoken to the Commission who said it is a very good plan but needs to have the goals and issues updated and particularly to identify partners and stakeholders. An update to the Comprehensive Plan is important to show the City's commitment and that the City is a good investment which will help immensely when pursuing grants. Alignment of goals and networking with other local entities to revitalize our community such as Commerce Chenango, the Economic Development Agency, and Chenango County, is very important. She stated there are webinars available to learn more if the Council was interested. Keckeisen said some of the items discussed were sidewalks and things related to climate such as solar power. Ald. Caldwell asked if plans from the County or Town have been reviewed if the goal is to be in alignment with them and Keckeisen said they have not. Ald. Caldwell asked how many grants the City has received. L. Keckeisen said she has completed 7 grants - 4 have been awarded, and 3 are being reviewed and are still outstanding. Regarding the Comprehensive Plan, an update could possibly be done in 6 months using a consultant.

**Wheelchair Signs for Hayes St. –** A. Eaton reported that the Traffic Commission has approved and forwarded a request from a resident for the installation of wheelchair signs on each end of Hayes St. between Locust St. and Elm St. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the addition of the wheelchair signs. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

**Furniture Stored at City Hall –** Ald. Caldwell reported he has been "hounded" with inquires about the furniture stored in the back of City Hall at no charge. Ald. Doliver and Ald. Kays-Biviano felt a definitive answer must be given to the party involved as it is the City that has been dragging the situation out. If the City is not entertaining renting the third floor after the sale of City Hall to the party was rescinded by the City, then they should be informed of that decision. The storage of the furniture was approved by the previous Mayor and lack of a decision as to whether to rent the third floor of the Firehouse, and through no fault of the perspective buyer/renter, the furniture remains there. Ald. Doliver stated this is a Mayoral decision and defaults to Mayor Sastri. Ald. Jeffrey asked if the third floor was going to be used for Records Management. A. Eaton reminded the Committee that the third floor cannot be used for Records Management due to weight constraints unless the floor is strengthened which is cost prohibitive. Part of the space could be used to house the Historical Records. Ald. Doliver pointed out that the perspective renter would not be using the entire space, would pay for the renovations and this would provide revenue for the City for a space that has thus far been unused and wasted space. There was further discussion of Records Management. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to not rent the third floor of the Firehouse, saying we get the Records Management project moving with or without the grant. Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** that we do lease the third floor. Ald. Jeffrey seconded Ald. Caldwell's motion to not lease the third floor. Ald. Jeffrey asked if there is liability to lease and we should contact our insurance company, what is our responsibility as a landlord and where will parking be. He again referenced Records Management and the City Historian position. He asked how many requests are received for historical records and A. Eaton reported about 5 per year if not less; there are many more requests for non-historical records. Ald. Doliver lease of the third floor would be a revenue source and it's not unusual for municipalities to do so. To keep taxes low, additional sources of revenue will need to be found. Further discussion ensued. Since it is a Mayoral decision, Ald. Caldwell asked Mayor Sastri if he would like to hear a vote on the subject and Mayor Sastri asked for input from the Council on what they are thinking. He asked if the party could even move into the third floor with the roof leaking. Ald. Zieno again brought up the question of Records Management and where do they go after the inventory. Ald. Caldwell said they could go in the back of City Hall and A. Eaton and D. DuFour refuted that idea as that space is no where big enough. Mayor Sastri said he would call the party tomorrow to remove his furniture. Ald. Zieno wondered if he could pay a fee for the storage. Ald. Zieno suggested suspending the motion, however Ald. Caldwell wanted a vote or a motion to table it. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to call the question. No second to call the question. Ald. Jeffrey does not feel comfortable voting on leasing or not leasing the third floor without consulting the City Attorney and our insurance company among other things. Other discussion ensued. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to refer this entire situation about leasing the third floor, to the Director of Finance, Fire Chief, Mayor and City Attorney to find a solution and bring it back to Council. Debate took place about procedures of the motions already made and voted to close Ald. Caldwell's motion to not lease the third floor, tied with Alds. Zieno, Caldwell, and Allaire voting aye and Alds. Kays-Biviano, Doliver and Jeffrey voting nay. The motion to have the Director of Finance, Fire Chief, Mayor and City Attorney to find a solution and bring it back to Council was seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

**Adjournment**
Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 9:09 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all