

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

Present:

Mayor Shawn Sastri
Ald. Matthew Caldwell
Ald. Nancy Allaire
Ald. Linda Kays-Biviano
Ald. David Zieno
Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour
Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
City Attorney Steve Natoli
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Media Representative: none

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 6:34 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Speakers

Friends of Recovery of Delaware & Otsego Counties – Debra Berrios, Executive Director of Friends of Recovery of Delaware & Otsego Counties (FORDO), explained that the organization operates one of the longest standing recovery centers (20 years) in New York State. They are currently located in Oneonta and Delhi and operate four locations. They offer two programs for adults and two programs for ages 18-24 and 13-18. She was approached by Ruth Roberts of Chenango County Behavioral Health to expand FORDO's recovery services to Chenango County because of the need identified in the area. Berrios explained that recovery services are individual counseling and support for anyone struggling with alcohol or drug addiction. They do not offer clinical services, they do not diagnose or give medication. They do offer a non-judgmental environment with certified peers to help and support people in their recovery free of charge. Services may include a linkage to treatment, a ride to treatment if needed, mutual aid support groups such as meditation, yoga, and resume writing. She stated that in Delhi they service 300 – 500 individuals every month and in Oneonta between 1,300 – 1,500 people per month. During COVID, they were approved to do Tele-Health services and their numbers tripled and are climbing. Their staff is certified by NYS and they provide training for the certified peers. She explained they are a 501(3)c who receives Federal funding. Once the Federal funding runs out, NYS may then provide funding. They will begin with an office space provided by Behavioral Health and as they grow will look to expand to a space of their own.

Eric Larson – Re: Museum District - Eric Larson, speaking on behalf of the Friends of the Museum District, stated they are looking to move their project forward and looking for support from the City regarding the sidewalks in Phase I of the project. Phase I is from Broad St. to Silver St. (approximately 5,000 feet of sidewalk). They are asking the City to remove the existing sidewalks, use the sidewalk forms and City labor for new sidewalks with an estimated in-kind contribution of \$50,000. Friends of the Museum will fundraise for the cost of materials. The total budgeted amount for Phase I is just over \$500,000 which will also include new electrical, street lighting, tree planting and signage. Kerri Green (Commerce Chenango) is heading up the fundraising. He stated that each museum is doing a separate piece of the plan but as a part of the whole plan so

that it is cohesive. The Museum District area is meant to be a “tourism driver”. Ald. Jeffrey moved to take this to Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

MCM Solutions, Frank Maiurano – EV (Electric Vehicle) Charging Stations – Frank Maiurano and Nate Collins of MCM Solutions, an electrical contracting company located in Norwich, is here to speak on their behalf as well as the Livingston Energy Group who owns Level 2 electric car chargers. Steve of Livingston Energy participated via speaker phone. Maiurano stated that they had walked the City with Mayor Sastri to identify City-owned properties where EV charging stations could be installed at no cost to the City. The stations would need to be located near a transformer to make it cost effective. MCM and Livingston were also identifying potential retail sites such as TOPS, the YMCA, NBT etc. to see if they would be interested. The Level 2 stations would need to be operational for at least 5 years (required by NYSEG) and have a 3-year warranty. Questions arose about who would own the stations (Livingston), who would maintain them, who would do an upgrade as technology changed, who is responsible between the 3-year warranty period and 5-year required installation period, who sets the rates, and what is the advantage for the City to offset any of the potential risk or expense. It was agreed it is a good idea but more details are needed and that a contract should be submitted to the City Attorney to review.

Correspondence

Chenango Blues Fest 2021 – Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from the Chenango Blues Association for special event designation for the free Concert Series every Thursday in July and August 2021 with the road closure of East Park Place during the event is also requested. In addition, they are asking for special event designation for Saturday, September 18, 2021 for an event in cooperation with BID and the first Saturday in the Park farmers market day. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Chobani Yogurt Giveaway – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve a request for Police assistance in traffic control for the 6th Annual Chobani Community Yogurt Giveaway being held on Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Chenango County Fairgrounds. This is a drive-thru only event. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Finance Department

Cyber Security – D. DuFour distributed the IT security measures for the City from the Garam Group as was requested by the Council. If they had any questions, they were to contact DuFour for clarification.

Fire Department

Call volume year over year – J. Papelino reported the Fire calls are down 22 calls over last year, however EMS call are up by 33.

Status of Ambulances – J. Papelino reported that all four ambulances are in service, therefore they are back on mutual aid.

EMS update – J. Papelino reported he has had conversations with the Fire Chief in Sherburne for a potential stand-alone EMS plan for the north end. He stated he had a meeting with AMR who is trying to have more of a presence. However, they are a for-profit company and they are not going to sit and wait for a call. Also discussed was the status of the new ambulance, which should be in service toward the end of January 2021. Ald. Caldwell expressed concern over the first responder vehicle’s reliability and suggested he start looking to replace that.

Code Enforcement

Status of RFPs – J. Papelino reported that the only properties left to put out for RFP’s are occupied. He mentioned vacant lots that may fall under the proposed Vacant Lot Development proposal which will be discussed later in this meeting. The sale of 83 S. Broad St. closed yesterday.

Grants Coordinator

DEC Grant – L. Keckeisen, City of Norwich Grants Coordinator, explained and requested approval to pursue the 2021 application for the Broome, Chenango and Otsego County Decentralization Grant. The grant allows an artistic program held in East Park for the City population. Community participants will sign up to receive

training to partake in the street theater presentation. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to go forward with the grant. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

DPW

WWTP – RBC repairs – E. Pepe reported that the drive shaft and bearing of RBC 1 needs repairs at a cost of \$24,000 and there is a broken bearing on RBC 13 needs repairs which will cost \$11,500. He requested a transfer of the \$35,500 from Sewer Reserve-Equipment to Wastewater Treatment and Disposal-Repairs & Maintenance. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the transfer. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Ald. Zieno wondered if the DPW would be able to handle the requested in-kind replacement of the sidewalks requested by the Friends of the Museum District. E. Pepe stated that replacement of all sidewalk on both sides of the street from Broad Street to Silver Street is a lot of sidewalk and involves a massive amount of labor. He estimated it would take at least a month working fulltime on the sidewalks. He would like to check with NYSEG to see if they have gas mains in that area that need to be replaced. He stated that NYSEG prefers to place the mains under sidewalks rather than the street and replacement of those sidewalks would be at NYSEG's cost. There was discussion of doing sections of sidewalk at a time, however part of the plan is to update the lighting at the same time as the sidewalks [which may prohibit that].

There was a brief discussion of the yard waste pickup. E. Pepe will check on properties mentioned by the Alderpersons with debris remaining.

Other Items

Use of Firetruck – J. Papelino stated he had been contacted by B.I.D. to request a drive-by from Santa on a firetruck could be done in the same manner as was done for the Easter Bunny earlier in the year due to COVID. All agreed it was a good idea.

Vacant Lot Development Proposal – In the absence of Ald. Doliver, Ald. Jeffrey stated that Doliver had been working with Code Enforcement, the Director of Finance and City Attorney to present a plan to help expand the development of vacant lots within the City. Plans of the program were distributed to the Committee with a tentative effective date of January 2021. Ald. Allaire stated there are a lot of vacant lots in Ward 3 and raised the concern of who would be responsible to install and pave a road to those properties. Discussion regarding the City creating/paving the road would encourage building with the result of increasing the tax base of the City. A cost of \$750,000 for the street was suggested and some felt it should be considered an investment necessary to grow the City and expanding Ward 3. There was discussion of the program excluding the vacant lots in Ward 3 on Wales Dr. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to take the Vacant Lot Development proposal to Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved 4 – 1 with Ald. Zieno voting nay saying he is still concerned by the potential street costs around Wales Dr. Ald. Caldwell concurred, but felt it could still go to Council.

Clarification of Winter Parking – A. Eaton explained that the Traffic Commission had supplied the wording for the change in the Ordinance for the winter parking ban which was approved at the August 18, 2020 Common Council meeting. However, the wording seemed to be unclear and has been reworded with the following:

Section 525-54. No Parking.

- A. No parking on any city street from 12:00 a.m. to 6 a.m. effective December 1 to April 1. (8/18/20)
- B. No parking on any city street from 12:00 a.m. to 6 a.m. effective April 2 to November 30 when 2 inches or more of snow or any ice accumulation is predicted by the Binghamton National Weather Service. (10/18/16) (8/18/20)
- C. No parking within thirty (30) feet of a stop sign.
- D. No parking within fifteen (15) feet of a fire hydrant.
- E. No parking for a distance of fifty (50) feet from all street intersections within the City of Norwich.
- F. Specific streets:

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the revised Winter Parking Ban change. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Overtime Policy – Ald. Caldwell distributed an Overtime Policy which he has drafted and is recommending. He explained the overtime policy states that before overtime can be used after an overtime budget has been expended, a Department Head must first get prior authorization by coming before the Council for approval and explain the request in written detail. He compared this to over-expending his checkbook. The purpose of the policy is so that there is no unexpected “bill” at the end of the year that needs a transfer to cover it. J. Papelino took exception to the policy saying that his monthly report includes why any overtime is needed, so saying that there is an unexpected “bill” at the end of the year is not valid. Caldwell clarified that when overtime lines run out, they should clarify which accounts the funds will be coming from and transfer funds at that time and not wait till the end of the year. Ald. Zieno said that transferring funds from other accounts to fund overtime lines could cause a shortage in those accounts. He stated this is just shifting budgeted funds and felt it should be up to the Department Heads to manage their departments. He felt that regular personal services lines could be used to cover the overtime lines. Further discussion ensued. D. DuFour stated that the year-end transfer for personal services and overtime accounts is an acceptable practice with the NYS Comptroller’s Office. She explained, as she has done the last several years, that you monitor the Budget dollars to make sure you have funds to cover those transfers at the end of the year. The policy was considered redundant by Aids. Kays-Biviano and Zieno. Ald. Allaire stated that we already approve transfer at Council and the public only has to read the minutes to find out how the money moves – she doesn’t see how a policy would make it any clearer. The Director of Finance stated this is true, however because she has not seen or been given a copy of the policy she cannot speak to what Ald. Caldwell is referring to. She also stated that we are required to pay people for the time worked and Ald. Caldwell rebutted not if the Council didn’t approve it first. Discussion ensued as to the payment of employees’ overtime if it was not approved by Council according to the policy. Ald. Caldwell moved to the Overtime Policy to Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey. Ald. Allaire suggested tabling the policy until everyone is here. She also felt she was not knowledgeable enough about this without getting more input. Ald. Kays-Biviano concurred, feeling that she could read over the Policy to make a more informed decision. Ald. Kays-Biviano moved to table the Policy. Seconded by Ald. Allaire. To close the first motion by Ald. Caldwell to take the Policy to Council, motion failed 2 – 3 with Aids. Caldwell and Jeffrey voting aye and Aids. Allaire, Kays-Biviano and Zieno voting nay. The motion to table the Policy until the January 2021 Joint Committee meeting passed 4 – 1 with Ald. Jeffrey voting nay.

Adjournment

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:30 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all