

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

Via Zoom
February 2, 2021

Present:

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

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour
Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
EMO A Jones
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Media Representative: None

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Absent

Supervisor James McNeil

Ald. Caldwell 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. Doliver **moved** to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2021 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Speaker

- ◆ **The Livingston Group – EV Charging Stations** – Samantha Hawkins and Steve Coons from the Livingston Group asked if things were ready to go, if the Committee had reviewed the sites and if there were any questions. Ald. Caldwell wondered if the City should look at other companies and if there is any competition for the Livingston Group. Mr. Coons stated there is no one who does exactly what they do in so far as they do all of the “leg work” with permitting, paperwork and installation. Ms. Hawkins will provide a list of national brands to the Mayor for comparison. Ald. Caldwell felt that the City not having ownership of the charging stations and letting the Livingston Group reap the rewards is the way to go and Aids. Allaire and Doliver concurred. It was clarified that each station would require 2 parking spots for charging. Discussion ensued of enforcement of non-electric vehicles parking in those spots. E. Pepe stated that he has not seen the locations of the charging stations and asked if there would be any issues with the plowing of snow in those areas. Ald. Zieno asked if a contract had been sent to the City Attorney. Mr. Coons stated that with the last meeting, his understanding was the City wanted to own the charging stations and keep the revenue and they would sign the stations over to the City after installation and “training”. Ald. Allaire asked who or what department would oversee the stations. Mr. Coons stated there is very little involvement, but usually a Department Head or Supervisor. If the Livingston Group retains ownership, a contract would be needed stating the agreed placement on City-owned property. Ald. Zieno **moved** the approval of the installation and ownership of EV charging stations by the Livingston Group to the Common Council subject to the City Attorney’s approval and a review of the locations concerning snow removal by E. Pepe. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved 5 – 1 with Ald. Jeffrey voting nay. Ald. Jeffrey stated there has been no real discussion on whether to own the stations or not; he would like to look at other companies; he wondered if an additional person would need to be hired for the billing; he wanted to hear from the City Attorney.

Department Head Reports

Human Resources

- ◆ **Transfer for Attorney Fees** – L. Murray explained that attorney fees for December were more than expected and would like to transfer \$3,904 from Contingency to Legal. Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the transfer. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.
- ◆ **Whistleblower Policy** – L. Murray stated the City lacks a Whistleblower Policy. The Policy would run congruent with the Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies. Ald. Doliver **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the Whistleblower Policy. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Fire Department

- ◆ **EMS Update** – J. Papelino reported he had spoken with Matt Beckwith who stated the County had an internal meeting to discuss EMS. He felt the new Chairman of the County Board may give it more attention. Papelino has corresponded by Oxford to see what their intentions were. He felt that at Oxford's pay rate, they may have trouble attracting personnel and will only be operating Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Papelino gave feedback on a potential mutual aid plan with Sherburne and New Berlin but has not heard back. One of his concerns was that New Berlin only has service from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Ald. Jeffrey stated that in the email to Oxford, Chief Papelino sticks up for the City of Norwich taxpayers as well as his employees. Referencing a letter that was sent to the County last year, Ald. Zieno felt we should begin billing municipalities for calls outside our response area. J. Papelino said a letter should be sent to municipalities stating the City's intention of billing for calls. There was further discussion about having contracts with municipalities, halting service if there is no contract, wear and tear on staff and equipment.
- ◆ **Captain Retiring** – J. Papelino received notification that Capt. Gray will be retiring at the end of October 2021. The Civil Service test will be offered in May.
- ◆ **Ambulance status** – J. Papelino reported that ambulance #2393 is out of service waiting on parts. The new ambulance should be coming in March.
- ◆ **Vaccine status** – J. Papelino reported that 75% of his staff have accepted the vaccine. Everyone who accepted it has received their second shot. Some have changed their minds, so only 3 are not interested in receiving the vaccine.

Code Enforcement

- ◆ **68 East Main St- Building posted** – J. Papelino reported that they a fire inspection at 68 East Main St. which is the Arrow Laundry building about 6 weeks ago and found significant deficiencies. They returned for a re-inspection and spoke about the deficiencies with the tenant who is planning on purchasing the building. The potential new owner, whose business would be The Laundry Café, was told the building would be posted if corrections were not made within 2 weeks.
- ◆ **Chentronics Flood Mitigation** – J. Papelino reported receiving plans for a flood wall around their building from Chentronics. It is quite an extensive project and should be in progress this summer.

DPW

- ◆ **Shared Services Agreement with DOT** – E. Pepe stated that the DOT would like to enter into a shared services agreement with the City as the previous agreement has expired. The four-year agreement would include up to \$25,000 of shared equipment and resources as needed. Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the shared services agreement. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all. Before the vote there was discussion of whether any FEMA awards would be reduced by the agreement and liability for any broken equipment.
- ◆ **Declare excess millings surplus** – E. Pepe reported that there is an abundance of millings left over from paving projects. Not all the millings are needed and would like to declare them as surplus and sell them. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve declaring the millings as surplus. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.
- ◆ **WWTP Nutrient Removal study** – E. Pepe would like to transfer \$19,000 from Unappropriated Reserves to Contracted Services for consulting services by GHD for the Nutrient Removal study. The \$19,000 is part of the match required by the grant awarded by the EFC for the study. Ald. Zieno **moved** to

recommend the Common Council approve the transfer. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell asked E. Pepe if he had reached out to local engineering firms for the Street Paving project. Pepe said they are still finalizing the project, so he has not reached out yet. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to send the bid specs out to local engineering firms to see what they could do. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell also asked Pepe how the equipment is holding up with all the snow. Pepe stated they are down 2 salt trucks and are awaiting the arrival of the new salt truck which should arrive soon.

Finance Department

- ◆ **Year End Transfer** – D. DuFour explained this is the transfer for Personal Service lines that are at a negative at the end of the year. This transfer covers Police, Fire and Street Maintenance overtime. Also included are transfers for retirement based on the State year from April 1 to March 31. Ald. Caldwell and Ald. Zieno discussed the overtime transfers that come from one department to cover the overtime from a different department. Ald. Zieno **moved** to approve the year end transfers. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved 5 – 1 with Ald. Caldwell voting nay.
- ◆ **CHIPS PILOT** – D. DuFour reported that CHIPS would like to make 10 monthly payments on their PILOT agreement for 27 West Main Street as they have done in the past. Ald. Jeffrey moved to approve the 10 monthly payments for the PILOT. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.
- ◆ **NYS AIM Payment Update** – D. DuFour reminded the Committee that the NYS AIM payment is the revenue sharing payment from NYS who had withheld 20% of the payment. DuFour reported that 15% out of the 20% will be received by March 31, 2021 per the Governor's Office. That payment will be \$163,391.85 (which will go to Fund Balance), leaving the remaining 5%, or \$54,463.95, as the balance due for 2020 with no word on if or when that will be paid out. The Governor's office announced that in the 2022 budget a new formula has been created for calculating cities' State Aid payments. They have not released the formula, but have released a schedule stating the payments. The City of Norwich's normal payment is \$1,089,279 – the 2021 payment is now \$980,351 – a difference of \$108,928.
- ◆ **Loan Report** – D. DuFour reported on the 2 Community Development loans. Cirello's is 2 months past due which is understandable considering the circumstances (referring to Covid); the loan for Kid's Kingdom, which has been delinquent for quite some time, has been turned over to the City Attorney. It was discussed that the City have some Community Development funds, but that there are very strict requirements of what they can be used for such as adding jobs or growing a business.

Other Items

- ◆ **Overtime Procedure** – D. DuFour presented the Personal Services and Overtime Budget Line Transfer Procedure which she and other Department Heads had worked on as requested by the Council. J. Papelino addressed the previously discussed methods as not the preferred way to handle overtime, pointing out that setting up a Reserve account would lock funds into that account and a Contingency account would raise taxes. He has spoken to other Fire Chiefs and they are battling the same overtime issues. R. Marsh stated that the Police Department is exploring shift swapping to help alleviate overtime. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to remove the Overtime Procedure from the table. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey. D. DuFour explained that this will be a trial and error process as this procedure will require finding money in the same department's budget that is unused at the time of transfer or another department's budget if necessary, the process of asking for approval of transfers at Joint Committee and then Common Council, and later may require a transfer of funds back to an account where money was taken from if it is then needed. Ald. Caldwell stated the procedure is what he has been looking for and appreciated DuFour and other Department Heads work on it, acknowledging that the procedure may have to be changed or eliminated depending on how it works out. He requested the Council to be apprised if this procedure "creates a mess" in the last quarter of the year and should be abandoned if it requires more work than it's worth. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to take the Personal Services and Overtime Budget Line Transfer Procedure to Council. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.
- ◆ **Late Fees and Norwich Housing Authority** – Mayor Sastri said these items will be discussed at next month's meeting as there is more information needed.

- ◆ **Frontier Phone Installation** – Ald. Jeffrey was made aware there is an issue with City’s telephone system provided by Frontier. He wondered if a change to a different provider was in order or if Frontier was resolving the issue. Ald. Allaire remembered that Frontier was the only provider that had the speed the Police Department needed to comply with NYS mandates. D. DuFour stated that Ald. Allaire is correct for the internet for the Police Department and reported that the City currently has a contract with Frontier for internet and telephone service for the City. Frontier is not sure what the problem is, but they are working diligently on resolving the issues with the phones. There are also some billing issues that are in the process of being worked out. Ald. Caldwell suggested asking for a credit. Ald. Doliver asked DuFour to update the Committee in a few months time.
- ◆ **Dumpster on City Street Ordinance** – Ald. Caldwell felt it may be helpful to create a dumpster Ordinance and/or permit to help alleviate instances of prolonged dumpster use such as what has occurred with the dumpster on South Broad St. that has “grown roots”. R. Marsh reported there is not an Ordinance that specifically references dumpsters, however he contacted the person using the dumpster and was going to issue a ticket based on the winter parking Ordinance. Some change needs to be done to be able to enforce the placement and/or removal or time limit of dumpsters. J. Papelino felt a permit process would be helpful as they would have to state what the dumpster will be used for, where it is placed, give a time limit and a fine associated with any violation. He didn’t feel that this should be applied to private property such as someone renovating a home. An Ordinance will be drafted for dumpsters.

Executive Session – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to enter executive session at 8:25 p.m. to discuss the sale of property where price may be affected. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to exit executive session at 8:45 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Doliver **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:46 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all