

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
March 2, 2021

Present:

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

Also:

Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
EMO A Jones arrived 7:06
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey arrived 6:42

Media Representative: none

Absent

Ald. Linda Kays-Biviano
Supervisor James McNeil

Ald. Jeffrey 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. Caldwell **moved** to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2021 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

CAB for Police Reform - Final Plan Presentation – The Community Advisory Board members, Jen Westervelt, Adrienne Zornow, Missy Beers and Melody Girgenti, presented the changes to the Police Department Collaborative Improvement Plan since the presentation on January 19, 2021. Changes included adding to the Guiding Principles, Police Department Roles & Functions – adding a Secretary II position; including a salary for the reinstatement of a Parking Reinforcement/Animal Control position; specialized training; explore having part-time Officers. Community Oriented Policing – recommendation to continue CAB beyond April 1, 2021 with increased or expanded responsibilities, the placement of policies and the Service Evaluation form on the Police Department website. Department Culture and Accountability – recommend Police Officers hand out business cards in their interactions with the public; adding Department complaints received in the Annual Report.

Ald. Caldwell thanked them for their work, but said the adding of positions, training etc. was going to cost money and asked if they had considered where the funds are going to come from with a tax base that is already stretched thin. Ms. Zornow said that finding funding was not in the scope of the committee's function. Ms. Westervelt said that some costs are added, while others are already imbedded, realizing that some parts of the plan will be easier to implement than others. For example, the Parking Reinforcement/Animal Control will generate revenue, the mental health component brings in other entities in the County that could share the burden with the City, the School Resource Officer would require a conversation between the two entities to work out details, and the City already has the equipment for the recommended bike patrol.

Ald. Zieno recommended including in the report that the City formally adopt the Lexipol policies to make the report more acceptable to the State. Discussion continued regarding if the CAB continues, their review of potential use of force complaints, the qualifications of members of CAB if that were the case, the difficulty of getting citizens to commit to that level of work and the confidentiality issues of them doing so. Discussion also included having 2 separate committees – one that may be more focused on Community engagement and another that would be a review board which would require much more in-depth knowledge of Police work.

The Public Hearing to hear comment on the Police Department Collaborative Improvement Plan will be March 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Correspondence

Parade of Lights – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from the Parade of Lights Committee for road closures and Police assistance for the parade on Saturday, November 27, 2021. Line up will begin at 5:45 p.m. on Division, Frances, Conkey, Hickok, Brown Ave. and Eaton with the parade proceeding north on Route 12 at 6:00 p.m. and ending at the Red Roof Inn at Fair St. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Hope and Healing 5K Race – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request for Police Assistance, partial street closures and special event status from the Chenango Child Advocacy Center for the Hope and Healing 5K Run/Walk on Saturday, April 24, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to raise awareness on issues relating to Child Abuse. Registration is at 10:00 a.m. with the run beginning at 11:00 a.m. and the walk at 12:00 p.m. They have contacted the Chenango County Department of Health and will follow all Covid guidelines. The Chief of Police has contacted the organization to suggest a change in the route as the current route crosses Route 12 twice which makes things more difficult. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Human Resources

NYS Mandated Safety Plan – L. Murray distributed the Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for the City of Norwich which is mandated by NYS. Creating the plan began with recommendations from A Jones, the Mayor and herself, then the Department Heads and Unions. Ald. Zieno **moved** to send the plan to the Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness Position – L. Murray reported she had spoken to the Labor Attorney regarding the Emergency Management position being vacated by A Jones. She stated the Attorney gave her two options which she already shared with the Council. However, after speaking with Ald. Caldwell, looking at the Civil Service information and speaking with the NYS Civil Service Commission, as the position is non-competitive, part-time, therefore cannot be a contracted position but an hourly paid position with the City of Norwich. A job classification and job description were reviewed, the Civil Service Commission approved the Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness non-competitive, part-time position. Minimum qualifications were added to the job description as well. They also approved a new position Duties Statement for the training of the new position of Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness. A Jones stated that currently the position is for 10 hours per week. It was questioned why the position cannot be salaried and L. Murray stated it does not fall under the qualifications for a salaried position. Discussion of overtime was discussed and confirmed that over 35 hours overtime would be paid. When asked his opinion, A Jones stated that on “blue sky” days 10 hours a week is fine; when an event occurs you could be doing 10 hours in 1 day. He stated during Covid he has been working 5 or 6 hours a day for a year. There was discussion of how to balance the “blue sky” days with those events needing more, having the Mayor direct the work of the position on a daily basis and verifying when the person is working, budgeting some overtime into the position or using Comp time and the current stipend rate of \$9,695 per year. Ald. Caldwell asked if there was a candidate in mind and L. Murray stated there is but would still like to conduct interviews. Ald. Caldwell made a motion to create a temporary 3-month training position at \$15 per hour at 10 hours per week because he feels that \$9,695 per year is low. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey. Ald. Caldwell added to his motion that the Mayor has the authority to add more hours. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey. It was discussed whether A Jones will stay for the 3 months of training as his resignation is effective April 20, 2021. A Jones asked if he would be continuing in his current position or would he be changing his title to the new title as an hourly employee. Ald. Caldwell moved to enter executive session at 7:36 p.m. to discuss the employment history of a particular individual. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to exit executive session at 7:49 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell restated his previous motion to create a temporary position for training of the Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness at \$15 per hour not to exceed 3 months with the incumbent to become the Coordinator on the last day worked of the training position. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to refill the position of Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness effective one day after the last day worked by the current incumbent at a salary of \$9,000 per year as an employee and not a contractor and up to 10 hours per week unless authorized otherwise by the Mayor. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to modify the annual salary of the current EMO Director beginning March 3, 2021 through no later than June 10, 2021 to \$15,600 per year. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Fire Department

Ambulance status – J. Papelino reported that ambulance #2393 is still out of service due to finding a lack of finding parts and therefore will not be repaired. The new ambulance will be received early next week when the radios will be installed.

EMS Status – J. Papelino reported that the Mayor said L. Murray had made contact with an EMS Attorney stating the email response was in “interesting read”. The Mayor requested a breakdown of call for the last month and monitor them for the next 90 days for comparison. J. Papelino runs the calls every day and compares them to the Personal Care Reports (PCR). Papelino reported that from January 1 to approximately February 24 responded to 182 calls outside the City’s contracted areas; extrapolated for the year the calls would be over 800. He sent an email to Mayor Stark in Oxford to ascertain their current staffing situation as the City of Norwich responded to Oxford 3 times from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in one day.

Staff vaccine status – J. Papelino reported that 90%-95% of all staff including volunteers have been vaccinated.

Third Floor of the Firehouse – J. Papelino reported that he has been approached by Car 5 (Steve Cady, County EMS Coordinator) to utilize the third floor for holding EMT classes which would allow them to leave the class set up, rather than tearing it down each time as they do now. There was discussion of the room needed for the class and the Historian records that will be put on the third floor. A. Eaton stated it would not be a problem and the Historian records will be secured. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to refer this to the City Attorney for any liability issues with the classes being up there. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Fire Inspections – J. Papelino reported that Fire Inspections continue to be done at no charge. Any follow up inspections that fail are being referred to Code Enforcement.

Code Enforcement

Sidewalk Clearing – J. Papelino reported Code Enforcement left approximately 80 door hangers for the lack of snow or ice removal which resulted in a lot of phone calls being received.

CMH Inspections/Progress – J. Papelino reported that Codes have been at CMH for many inspections, many by department. A full inspection of the facility was done last week and CMH is making good progress and will be very impressive when completed. He commended CMH for making this investment in our community.

Dumpster Permit – J. Papelino has a draft copy of a dumpster permit. He will be reviewing it with the Chief of Police and will hopefully have something to bring to the next meeting.

Ald. Caldwell asked what additional productivity has been achieved by having an additional Codes Officer. J. Papelino said that currently they have more time and experience to focus on things like sidewalks. It enables Codes to not only leave the door hangers, but to document with pictures which can be uploaded to the property file and helps create a paper trail.

DPW

Chips Update – E. Pepe reported that EWR has been eliminated from the 2021-2022 executive budget which will result in a loss of \$24,000 down to \$192,000 in the CHIPS budget if it doesn’t get reinstated. The State has released the majority of the 20% funding withheld from 2020.

Salt truck – E. Pepe reported receiving the new F750 with spreader salt truck. This will spread four times the amount of salt, making the job to be faster and more efficient.

South Broad St. and East Main St. Repaving – E. Pepe reported that DOT is planning on repaving South Broad St. in 2022 and possibly East Main St. as well. He met with DOT to let them know the City is interested

in replacing the Water, Sewer and Storm lines as they are over 100 years old. DOT said there is a chance that the work can be incorporated into their project. The next step is to develop the scope of work of the project, then writing a letter to DOT stating what our needs are and our wish to incorporate the work into their project and try to get as much funding as possible. The City will need to provide a temporary water source to those impacted by the project. E. Pepe stated that replacing the Water, Sewer and Storm lines and then repaving South Broad and East Main will be a very large and major project for the City of Norwich.

Water Meter Replacement – E. Pepe reported that most meters and the reading system are 20 years old and are outdated. He completed and submitted a grant to the EFC to replace the meters and reading system and hopefully will hear if it has been awarded soon. A new AMI reading system will send flow meter data from the meters to receivers mounted to the water tanks on an hourly basis. This will greatly improve customer service by finding leaks much earlier and improve efficiency by eliminating meter readings by staff. The City will match 25% of funding with total cost which will be around \$1.5 million. The City would hire a contractor for the project and would take an estimated 2 months to complete.

Lead Service Line Replacement – E. Pepe reported that the City was awarded a \$528,750 grant from the Department of Health for the replacement of lead service lines. Covid had slowed the approval of documentation, but this week he was notified that the DOH and the NYS Comptroller has signed off. He would like to go to bid for work to be done this spring and summer. He has identified 50-60 lines that are eligible, and the grant will pay for excavation to investigate whether a line is lead if necessary. There is still time for additional properties or lines to be included. Ald. Jeffrey moved to approve the lead service line replacement go out to bid. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell asked how long Mr. Pepe has been employed by the City and what his favorite part of the job is. E. Pepe said he has been with the City for about a year and a half and that he enjoys getting things done and making improvements. He stated that when he took over there were many things in failing conditions. Making improvements in the water system, highway and wastewater is his number one goal. Ald. Jeffrey also complemented the DPW for their quick actions in a recent break in a resident's water line. He asked Pepe if the remaining snow in the downtown area between the sidewalk and the street could be removed. E. Pepe said that will be part of the snow cleanup. Ald. Jeffrey received a query from a resident about the sidewalk cleanup inside of Bruchhausen Park. E. Pepe said the snow has never been removed from the sidewalks inside the Park because it limits our liability from trying to maintain them. Ald. Doliver remarked it is not uncommon for Parks not to be shoveled.

Mayor Sastri received the agreement with Delaware Engineering and asked if E. Pepe had received other quotes. Pepe stated he had checked with a local engineering firm, however they were not able to this year due to their work load.

Other Items

NO PARKING sign on East Side of State St. – The Traffic Commission referred their request for a NO PARKING sign on the East side of State St. from Mitchell St. north, 50' north of the entrance into Cobbler's Square. Chief Marsh believed the issue to be cars parking on the street creating difficulty when busses try to make the turn. Pending input from Ald. Kays-Biviano, Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the sign. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

EV Charging Stations – Mayor Sastri reported that the City Attorney has reviewed the proposed contract and has no issue with it if the City wants to proceed except that he would recommend the removal of section 15. Ald. Zieno stated he looked over the contract which was sent late in the day so he only had time to quickly review it, but did not see any costs in the proposal. He thought the City would be looking into other options that may be more cost effective. Ald. Allaire agreed the City should be looking at additional vendors. She went to a Mirabito's gas station in Oneonta which had several Tesla charging stations as well as another brand of charging station by Electrify America. Ald. Jeffrey spoke about the requirement of having the charging stations and the possibility of everchanging new technology. Mayor Sastri stated you will always be having new technology changes and waiting 5 years will we not be in a different position (as technology can change 5 years after that as well). He said they approached the City in December and we still have not made a decision. Ald. Allaire said at the last meeting the Council had decided to not own the stations, to let the Livingston Group own the station and reap all the rewards and the City would allow them to install on City property. Ald. Doliver felt these charging stations by be a novelty since they charge a vehicle in 4 hours, where, when the gas stations eventually add them, they will charge in 15 minutes. No one could answer whether the Livingston Group's proposal included leasing the sites for the charging stations. Ald. Zieno felt the City should reconsider owning the stations, as doing so will help establishing Norwich as a clean energy community and assist in obtaining future grants. Right now there is very little cost associated with

the charging stations other than the software charge. Ald. Caldwell felt that governments will never be competitive with the private sector and doesn't want to put constituents in the position to do so. Ald. Doliver offered to assist the Mayor in making calls to explore other vendors and gather information. The consensus was to wait and see what Ald. Doliver and the Mayor find out and talk about it at the April Joint Committee meeting.

Adjournment

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:50 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.