

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
May 4, 2021

Present:

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

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh left @ 6:35, returned 7:36

Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Media Representative: none

Absent

Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey
Supervisor James McNeil

Ald. Caldwell 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. Kays-Biviano **moved** to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2021 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Presentation – Bryan McCracken – Mr. McCracken informed the Council of an opportunity for the nomination of South Broad Street to be placed on the National Register of Historic places as a historic district. Doing so would entitle qualifying property owners to a tax credit for certain work on their properties. The funds to create the nomination would come from the Highbridge Wind Farm project in Guildford as part of their required mitigation process as Norwich is in the projects impact zone. Mr. McCracken became aware of the available funds through a friend who works for an environmental consulting firm that is working with the High Bridge Wind Project environmental mitigation plan and also prepares National Register nominations. He stated the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has determined the proposed South Broad Street Historic District eligible for listing on the State and National Registers and a consultant would need to do extensive research and writing to prepare the nomination with the scope of work costing around \$20,000. Mr. McCracken volunteered his time to help administer (the grant). McCracken stated that North Broad Street is already listed on the Registry from Cortland Street to Newton Avenue as well as the majority of the downtown area. A. Eaton reported that a study had previously been done and the result was that South Broad Street did not qualify for a Historic District, however her contact at the SHPO office felt that a new study would be advantageous for a new nomination. Mr. McCracken stated the South Broad Street Historic District to study would be from Front St. to Jones Ave. and would be at no cost to the City or property owners. Several steps by the developer still need to be completed and approved before funds become available for the study, possibly several months and up to a year. He suggested a Resolution expressing interest in accepting the mitigation be done. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council express their interest in accepting mitigation funds from the High Bridge Wind Project in order to fund a study of Historic District nominations to the State and National Historic Registries with an anticipated cost of \$20,000. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

DPW

Refill Pool and Parks Tech – E. Pepe asked to refill the vacant Pool and Parks Technician, explaining this position is responsible for the day-to-day operation of all City parks, the pool and ice rink. A Certified Pool Operator license is required. Ald. Doliver **moved** to refill the position. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Water Operator – E. Pepe reported the Water Operator trainee has earned all licenses and passed all tests and recommends he be moved to the Water Operator position. Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the appointment from the Water Operator Trainee to the Water Operator position at the entry level effective May 19, 2021. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Street Paving Bid – E. Pepe reported that Broome Bituminous was the low bidder at \$226,878.40 and recommends awarding the bid to them. He also reported that the State increased the CHIPS funds to approximately \$325,000, enough to roll over about \$100,000 for next year. Pepe said they can now do all proposed streets as well as all alternative streets this year. Ald. Doliver **moved** to recommend the Common Council award the bid to Broome Bituminous. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Lead Service Line Replacement Project Bid – E. Pepe reported that the low bidder did not provide the required MWBE documents and therefore has been disqualified and is recommending Burrell's Excavating, with a bid of \$709,700. He stated that not all of the lines will require replacement, but that wouldn't be determined until they are dug. Because not all lines will be replaced, he feels that the actual amount would not exceed the grant funds of \$528,750. Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the bid be awarded to Burrell's Excavating in an amount not to exceed the value of \$528,750 and also pending Department of Health approval. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Mini excavator, Plow Trucks, Salt Loader – E. Pepe reported there are many pieces of equipment that need replacing and would like to request permission to put out to bid a mini excavator, plow trucks and salt loader. He stated the last couple of years they have rented a mini excavator; a new one would replace a 1991 backhoe that no longer runs. He would like to put out to bid 2 plow trucks with wings. The trucks would replace 2 which are no longer on the road – #44 is a 2009 and requires a new motor with \$20,000 in repairs needed and #12 is a 2008 that doesn't run and needs a new fuel injection system for \$10,000. Currently there is no appropriate vehicle for salt loading and he would like to put it out for bid. He noted this goes back to the Capital plan and the older items would be declared surplus. Funds are available with \$271,00 in Highway Reserves and \$520,000 in Sewer Reserves and \$36,000 in Water Reserves. Ald. Doliver **moved** approve going to bid for the 4 items mentioned. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell asked if there was a plan for mowing [residential] City-owned properties. E. Pepe stated that he would need a full staff of summer help in order to do that. There are no funds in his budget for that, but there are in the Code Enforcement budget as they are usually the department that handles the mowing of [residential] City-owned properties.

Ald. Kays-Biviano asked if the DPW could put grass seed on the Mitchell/State St. property where the building was torn down and Pepe said he would do so.

Police Department

Norwich High School Graduation Parade – R. Marsh reported that he had concerns regarding the Norwich High School Graduation Parade which would be led by a firetruck and followed up with a Police car for safety purposes. His concerns stem from his observation of students on hoods and trunks of cars and hanging out windows and sunroofs. Lisa Natoli stated that the school will be giving parameters of behavior to alleviate concerns, although the event is not sanctioned by either the school or the City. Mayor Sastri expressed Covid concerns in the vehicles and gathering prior to the parade and suggested the school contact the Department of Health.

Surplus Car 23 – R. Marsh reported that car 23, a 2010 Ford Crown Victoria nearly 170,000 miles, and would like to declare it surplus. Ald. Kays-Biviano moved to recommend the Common Council declare car 23 as surplus. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Surplus Old Livescan Fingerprint Scanner and Cabinet – R. Marsh asked to have the old Livescan fingerprint scanner and cabinet declared surplus. Ald. Allaire moved to declare the items surplus. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Other Items From CAB's List of Recommendations – R. Marsh discussed some additional items from the Community Advisory Board's list of recommendations. He stated #4 and #20 on the list are ongoing and that the 2 Officers will be attending bike school in June. Ald. Kays-Biviano moved to recommend the Common Council accept the following items from the list of recommendations. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

- o #2 Fill the Detective Position
- o #4 Consider Opportunities for Officers to Seek More Specialized Training
- o #5 Evaluate Staffing Model in 3 to 5 Years
- o #6 Incorporate Bike and Foot Patrol
- o #12 Adopt the Updated Mission Statement
- o #13 Develop a Training Calendar for 2021 and Create a Tracking System
- o #15 Review Training Budget Line on an Annual Basis
- o #20 Include Information Regarding Department Complaints and Compliments Received in the Annual Report

Finance Department

Transfer for Insurance – D. DuFour reported that there has been an increase in the Law Enforcement insurance premium and requested a transfer of \$14,891.95 from Contingency. She also stated that NBT [Mang] recommended to move the Fire Department policy from NYMIR to ESIP which has specialized coverage for the Fire Department including replacement cost of vehicles and equipment including EMS and also has risk management training. Ald. Zieno moved to approve the transfer of \$14,891.95. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all*. *Note that Ald. Doliver stepped out of the room momentarily and was not present for the vote.

2020 Fund Equity – D. DuFour reported that the 2020 General Fund revenues were in excess of expenditures by \$542,426, the net Capital Reserve transfers were \$(569,573) resulting in a net decrease to the General Fund Equity from 2019 to 2020 of \$(27,147.24). The 2020 projects completed using Capital Reserve Funds were 1) purchase of salt truck 2) resurface tennis courts 3) purchase ambulance 4) demolition and removal of State and Mitchell St. property 5) replace City Court roof 6) replace Fire Department roof 7) purchase Police vehicle 8) partial purchase of LiveScan at Police Department 9) partial purchase of computer for Police cars. She further reported a Capital Reserve balance of \$1,127,476 at the end of 2020. The 2020 Water fund revenues were in excess of expenditures by \$213,431, Capital Reserve transfers of \$52,754 resulting in a net increase to the Water Fund equity from 2019 to 2020 of \$266,185 with a Water Fund equity of \$2,957,135 at the end of 2020. The 2020 Sewer Fund revenues in excess of expenditures by \$72,912, net Capital Reserves transfers of \$36,560 resulting in a net increase to the Sewer Fund equity from 2019 to 2020 of \$109,472 with a Sewer Fund equity of \$3,372,716 at the end of 2020. DuFour stated that the progression from 2015 to 2020 has been slower due to no increase in Water rates since 2016 or Sewer rates since 2017 and suggested to keep that in mind with the upcoming projects, particularly on the Sewer side.

Ald. Zieno asked about progress on the Retirement Liability account and D. DuFour stated she will work on it as it will require an outside company to do it.

Fire Department

Ambulance Status – J. Papelino reported all four ambulances are in service with the new ambulance performing well. He will be looking at replacing ambulance #2394 soon, as it is 15 years old with over 100,000 miles.

Mountain Bike race – J. Papelino reported that Galena Growlers will not need assistance from the City of Norwich for their race being held on May 22 and May 23. They have enough coverage, but will call 911 if it is necessary. The race will have approximately 400 Middle and High School Students.

Chief's vehicle – J. Papelino reported that after the urging of Council members, he has begun looking at a new 2021 Tahoe for \$43,900 and will be "piggy-backing" on the State bid with the City of Bethlehem. He will have specs by the next Joint Committee meeting, but is not doing the light package as it is too expensive. Ald. Caldwell moved to recommend the Common Council approve the purchase of the vehicle pending receipt of the specs. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Norwich High School Graduation – J. Papelino reported that the High School will not require a dedicated ambulance for the graduation ceremonies, therefore an ambulance will be present but will leave if another call comes in.

Demolition Derby - J. Papelino reported he has a request for a dedicated ambulance to be in attendance at a demolition derby being held at the Fairgrounds on June 5th. Ald. Kays-Biviano moved to approve the dedicated ambulance for the demolition derby. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all. The charge for a dedicated ambulance is \$120 per hour.

EMS Mutual Aid Update - Mayor Sastri asked about the EMS Mutual Aid meeting that Chief Papelino attended at the County. Papelino reported that the County's EMS Mutual Aid plan was presented to the County EMS Leaders. The full board still needs to approve the plan. Initially they will hire 12 BLS positions and then add 4 ALS positions for fly cars. The 2021 budget is \$250,000 and with a 2022 budget of \$450,000. Mayor Sastri asked if they were following the guidelines in the letter that was sent stating the City would be holding an ambulance in reserve and would not be responding to calls outside the CON if the other City ambulances were occupied and J. Papelino stated they were. Sastri also asked if the Chief thought that the County's plan would take revenue away from the City. Papelino said that would probably be true eventually. There was the discussion of the County paying the City who could hire additional staff; the remote idea of the County buying ambulances, medications, etc.; the County utilizing the resources that already exist. Supervisor Jeffrey said the EMS Mutual Aid proposal was on the County Board's agenda for the May 10, 2021 meeting.

Code Enforcement

Occupied properties – J. Papelino reported there are six properties that remain occupied. The RFP for 29 Division St. will be released soon.

Unregistered vehicles – J. Papelino reported 22 violation notices for unregistered vehicles have been sent out since the April meeting with 3 being towed to the impound lot.

Code/Fire Inspections – J. Papelino reported that since Firefighter Schussler has been out, Code Enforcement has been doing inspections. Codes have done many inspections at Chenango Memorial. Papelino also reported that a letter has been sent to the owner of the collapsing garage on Park St. and they will follow up this week.

There was also discussion regarding the issues with the recurring Code Enforcement and other telephone lines issues. Ald. Caldwell felt that the City Attorney should address the lack of resolution from Frontier as a breach of contract. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to refer the Frontier issues to the City Attorney and for him to report back in 2 weeks. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell stated the Council has not taken any action on the vacant Grant Coordinator position and asked what affect that has had on Amy Donnison. J. Papelino reported that Jack Roque, Chairman of the Planning Commission, had requested that overtime be approved for A. Donnison even though no overtime was budgeted. Papelino stated that Donnison has been very busy with several Zoning items right now which are priority as well as the inspections at Chenango Memorial. Ald. Caldwell asked if the Grant Coordinator position is posted and D. DuFour stated that the Council needs to decide which position to fill before something can be posted. Ald. Caldwell felt that the Chairman of Finance/Personnel (Ald. Jeffrey) should be present for that discussion.

Ald. Caldwell asked about the plan for the mowing of City-owned properties by the DPW. J. Papelino stated there is money in the Codes budget for mowing which is done by an outside company or individual. He stated part of that budget is for other property clean- up as well as mowing "violations", which are offset by the fees and fines, however with City-owned property, that money would not be recouped.

Other Items

Griffin St. – Don't Block Driveway Sign – Ald. Caldwell reported that the resident at the affected address does not want a sign, therefore no action would be taken.

Handicap Space in Front of Colonia Theater – The Traffic Commission has made the recommendation to remove the Police Parking Only space from in front of the Colonia Theater and replace it with 2 Handicap parking spaces. Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the placement of 2 Handicap parking spaces. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Youth Bureau Director position – Ald. Caldwell stated the range of salary for the Youth Bureau Director position is currently \$17,538 - \$25,500. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to refill the Youth Bureau Director position with an effective date of June 7, 2021 at the entry rate for no more than 19 hours per week. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all. Discussion before the vote took place about also potentially having the need to refill the Recreation Coordinator position as well. There was concern by some that Summer is rapidly approaching and the time for advertising, receiving applications and interviewing is very short. Ald. Doliver **moved** to authorize advertising for a Youth Service Coordinator (Recreation Coordinator) at the entry level of \$5,802 for 7 hours per week. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all. Before the vote, R. Mason clarified that December, January, February and June, July, August are the months primarily worked with other months of no time be worked or put in.

Baker Dog Park Complaint – Ald. Doliver reported a complaint by a resident of the trailer park next to the dog park stating they are being awakened by dogs at 7 a.m. The resident would like to see the hours of the dog park changed. Ald. Zieno thought the dog park hours could be changed to open later rather than the dusk to dawn which is what City parks typically are. This would require a Public Hearing as the hours are set in Ordinance. It was determined to set the Public Hearing at the May Common Council to be held in June so that this can be sent to the Parks Commission to get feedback prior to the Public Hearing. There was discussion of how the change of hours is going to be enforced. Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** to have the Common Council set the Public Hearing. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Doliver **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:48 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all