

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
August 3, 2021

Present:

Mayor Shawn Sastri
Ald. Matthew Caldwell
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
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
EMO Stephen Cady

Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Absent

Ald. Brian Doliver
Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey
Supervisor James McNeil

Media Representative: Sarah Giglio, The Evening Sun

Ald. Jeffrey called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:36 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes – Ald. Zieno **moved** to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2021 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Correspondence

- ◆ Curb Cut at 11 Ridgeland Rd. – Ald. Allaire stated that E. Pepe has looked at the proposed curb cut and has no issue with it. Ald. Allaire **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a curb cut at 11 Ridgeland Rd. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Presentation – Mayor Sastri presented retiring Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason with a plaque in grateful appreciation for his many years of hard work and dedication to enrich the lives of children, families and our community.

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to enter executive session at 6:39 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to exit executive session at 6:55 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Human Resources

2022 Budget Presentation – L. Murray presented the 2022 HR Budget. Some changes from 2021 included a 2% increase in Personal Services; and Contracted Services - adding \$15,000 for Attorney Fees and lowering the amount for ADP.

EMO

2022 Budget Presentation – S. Cady presented the 2022 Emergency Management Budget. Compared to 2021 Personal Services decreased and an increase in Telephone. He stated that part of the equipment line will be needed next year to replace the stream gauges.

Finance Department

Property Tax Cap – D. DuFour reported that the Tax Cap for 2022 has been set.

American Rescue Payment – D. DuFour reported receiving the first payment of \$334,109.88 from the American Rescue Plan Act with the second half being paid out in approximately one year. The money must be spent on eligible expenses by December of 2024. The funds will be in the General Fund and will not be counted as revenue until it is expended.

2022 Budget Presentation – D. DuFour presented the 2022 Finance, Clerk, Assessment, Mayor, City Attorney and Planning budgets. Some changes over 2021 included: Finance – Personal Services, Advertising and Contracted Services increases and a decrease in Telephone; Clerk – decreases in Personal Services Overtime, and Office Expenses; Assessment – an increase in Personal Services; City Attorney - there was no change; Common Council – no change; Mayor – no change; Planning – decrease in Personal Services.

Non-Unit Compensation Schedule – Ald. Caldwell stated that DuFour had, as requested by the Council, prepared drafts of the 2022 Non-Unit Compensation schedule with increases of 1.5%, 2% and 2 ½% for review. He **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the 2022 Non-Unit Compensation schedule with the 2% increase. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Fire Department

2022 Budget Presentation – J. Papelino presented the 2022 Fire Department budget. Changes included increases in Personal Services Overtime, Fuel, Contracted Services and Telephone and a decrease in Personal Services. There was discussion of refilling the position coming up that will be vacant due to a retirement in October. J. Papelino said they are currently trying to do so as the Fire Academy starts in just under two weeks. Ald. Caldwell stated that there is no position to put a new-hire into [until the position actually becomes vacant]. Therefore, Ald. Caldwell **moved** to refer to the Civil Service Commission the creation and classification of a permanent position used for training purposes only. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all. Discussion for the vote: Aids. Jeffrey and Zieno asked for clarification. Ald. Caldwell explained that there are only so many positions allowed. By creating a training position, it allows the hiring of a candidate before the incumbent leaves which will minimize the time a “regular” Firefighter position is vacant. Once the incumbent leaves, the new hire will already be trained and can then move into the vacant position, leaving the training position vacant for when it may be needed again. L. Murray confirmed that only so many positions are allowed per Civil Service rules and any added positions must go through the Civil Service Commission first. J. Papelino stated that to get someone on the job this year and save on overtime costs, that person must go to this upcoming Academy in less than two weeks.

Ambulance Status – J. Papelino reported that #2392 was out of service for about a week and #2393 had a flat tire taking it out of service for half a day. All ambulances are currently back in service.

Ambulance Requested for Harness Racing – J. Papelino reported that the Harness Racing at the County Fair requires an ambulance on site so they will be there on Tuesday, August 10, 2021 with the service fee being charged to them.

#237 Aerial Truck Replacement Proposal - J. Papelino reported that Fayetteville-Manlius is buying new trucks and are surplus their ladder truck. He inspected the truck with some of the Firefighters and felt it would make an excellent truck for the City of Norwich and should last 15-20 years at a cost of \$385,000. #237 is almost 30 years old and was purchased in 2013. To refurbish #237 would be \$139,000 and that money would be better spent on a newer vehicle. Papelino stated that a new ladder truck would be upwards of \$1 million and does not see the City spending that kind of money. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the purchase and transfer of funds for the purchase of the used 2006 Pierce aerial truck. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Outside CON Mutual Aid – J. Papelino reported within 2 weeks, 21 calls were outside the CON with many of them going to Oxford.

Chenango County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan - J. Papelino presented the Chenango County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan which should be adopted by the City. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the adoption of the mitigation plan. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Declaring Items Surplus - J. Papelino reported that the model Zoll E series heart monitors are no longer in use and would like to declare the remaining supplies as surplus. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common council declare the items as surplus. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Code Enforcement

2022 Code Enforcement budget (presented after the Fire Department budget) – J. Papelino presented the 2022 Code Enforcement budget. Changes included increased or stayed the same in most lines for a total budget increase of \$3,770 and reflecting decreases in Telephone and Materials & Supplies. Ald. Jeffrey suggested adding another \$2,000 to Contracted Services due to the amount of work to hire out for grass mowing, trimming and garbage removal that Codes has had to do.

City tax properties update – J. Papelino reported that the property at 29 Division St. was shown and that the next RFP's that will be going out shortly will be for 20 Sheldon St. and 26 Hale St. The remaining properties are all occupied. There was discussion involving the lots on Miller St. and S. Delaware Square which the City Attorney is working on.

Ald. Zieno asked if the extension by the State for tax redemptions had expired. D. DuFour said it had and that the City Attorney was also working on that.

Park St. Garage - J. Papelino reported that there has been progress with the removal of the dilapidated garage on Park St.

Ongoing ordinance issues – J. Papelino reported that it has been a challenge to find enough contractors to keep up with the mowing of those in violation as well as City-owned properties.

Municipality upgrade – J. Papelino reported that the Municipality software that Code Enforcement uses will need to be upgraded as support for it will end next year. They have received a quote for the new version and have spoken to other municipalities that are using the newer version. The newer version will be \$36,000 which can be purchased in five phases with the price valid until October 22, 2021. A. Donnison explained the newer software will increase ease of use by Codes and will also allow use by the Fire Department and Police Department for their various uses. The current Municipality software was purchased in 2006 for \$40,000. Papelino and Donnison will get further information to the Council for discussion at the September Council meeting.

Chentronics permit – J. Papelino that a permit for the installation of a flood wall around their facility which is a very expensive undertaking. J. Papelino stated that the berm that Chentronics installed previously was not adequate. A berm installation would have to run from Black Bridge to Perry Browne school.

Achieve Manufacturing Sites – J. Papelino reported that the Achieve manufacturing sites will be closing by the end of the year. Contact information will be kept so that if any issues crop up they can taken care of. Ald. Zieno hoped that the buildings could return to the tax rolls.

Ald. Zieno said that he spoke with the construction company working on the hospital who had great compliments for A. Donnison and the Code Enforcement Office saying they are very responsive and wonderful to work with.

DPW

Resurfacing of Skatepark - With E. Pepe not present, Ald. Jeffrey addressed the Skatepark resurfacing. Ald. Zieno wondered whether the park was used enough or the demand high enough for warranting the expense of the resurfacing. D. DuFour stated the equipment is there and it would be a shame to let it go to waste. R. Mason stated that the park is now 20 years old and it had cost the City nothing as everything was donated or fundraised for. The skatepark was built because there were many complaints from businesses about skateboarders. He has no doubt that the Skatepark will be used. J. Papelino reported that any newly paved streets are being utilized by skateboards. S. Cady stated that skateboarding is actually banned inside the B.I.D. district. Ald. Caldwell said this was the second Parks project he was made aware of that didn't cost the City anything and thought perhaps this is what should be done for a dedicated Pickleball court. Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** to recommend the approval of the transfer required to resurface the Skatepark. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Police Department

Review additional CAB recommendations – R. Marsh recommended to adopt/accept the following items from the CAB list:

- #11 Expand Community Engagement Programs
- #16 Update the Shift Swapping Policy
- #18 Supply Staff with Business Cards
- #19 Work closely with Union Officials to ensure that the newly adopted City policies work in tandem and not in conflict with the Employee Handbook

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council adopt/accept the four items discussed from the list of CAB recommendations. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Discussion before the vote: R. Marsh stated that: for #11 they have already participated in two “Cram the Cruiser” events which will become a monthly activity for the next couple of months; #16 The current Shift Swapping trial period will expire at the end of this year and would recommend it continue; #18 Officers have this option in their clothing allowance. Those that don't have cards will be provided with a basic card. If they wish to “upgrade” the cards they can use their clothing allowance to do so; #19 Soon they will have to discontinue certain policies because they will be in conflict with each other.

Formation of Community Advisory Board - Ald. Jeffrey addressed the formal creation of a Community Advisory Board. Discussion ensued regarding the formation of the board and the requirements which depended on what the duties of the board would encompass. The duties should be more developed and brought back to the September meeting.

Vacancy at the PD – R. Marsh announced that Sergeant Legacy has resigned and would like permission to refill the position. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to approve the refill of the vacant Sergeant position and any subsequent vacant position if the Sergeant position is filled from within. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all. A discussion ensued about a sign on bonus, however R. Marsh stated they don't even have the Civil Service results back yet. He also stated that there are no Academies that he knows of at this time.

Use of PD Garage and Rear Parking Lot – R. Marsh stated some former CAB members and the PBA are working on a “back to school” event on Tuesday, August 31, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. He stated that insurance would need to be provided to protect the City from liability. Some other organizations involved include Helping Hands, Chobani and Fidelis. They would be giving out backpacks with school supplies and offering hair cuts among other things and they would like to use the Police garage and parking lot. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the use of the Police garage and parking lot to use for the event. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Other

Political Signs – Ald. Zieno explained that the Supreme Court ruling regarding signs effects more than just political signs. The revisions to the sign Ordinance had been previously tabled due to the complexity of the issue and was referred back to the Planning Commission. A. Donnison explained that this includes all temporary signs whether it be “identified” as house for sale, garage sale, Norwich Tornado, Be Kind or political signs. The Supreme Court ruling states that sign content cannot be regulated. Therefore, whatever Ordinance is created for temporary signs would apply to all temporary signs and not the category or “identification” of the sign. Her recommendation is to table the subject for now.

Marijuana Legislation – Ald. Caldwell felt the City should take action to opt out of the retail sale and on-site consumption sites. He explained that the State does not have the regulation and oversight in place, but the City is required to make a decision by the end of December 2021. The City can opt back in at a later date, but if not opting out now there would never be an option to opt out later. Other Committee members did not feel the same, saying that it will be highly regulated, just as alcohol is. Opting out will not prevent the use of marijuana within the City – it just means that it will be purchased elsewhere and by doing so, will eliminate any tax revenue the City may gain from those sales. If opting out, a public hearing would be done and, if necessary, a permissive referendum may have to be held.

Executive Session – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to enter executive session at 9:04 p.m. to discuss the sale of property where price may be affected and the employment history of a particular individual. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to exit executive session at 9:43 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Motion

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve authorization for the Mayor to sign the annual Town Contracts for the youth recreation programs. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Allaire **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 9:44 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all