

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
October 5, 2021

Present:

Mayor Shawn Sastri
Ald. Matthew Caldwell
Ald. Brian Doliver
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 Anthony Testani
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
EMO Stephen Cady
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Media Representative: Sarah Genter, The Evening Sun

Absent

Ald. Nancy Allaire
Supervisor James McNeil

Ald. Caldwell called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:31 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes – Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2021 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Correspondence

Chenango Blues Fest 2022 Summer Concert Series – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from the Chenango Blues Fest for Special Event status for the 2022 Summer Concert Series held on Thursdays from July 7 to August 25th, as well as the closure of East Park Place beginning at 3 p.m. on those days. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Rexford Street Decorative Lights – Eric Larsen, Friends of the Museum District, reported that progress is being made in the Museum District project. He stated that although plans had been brought before the Council previously and approved, the details of the decorative lights and corresponding electric bills were not specifically addressed. He requested that the City take ownership of the decorative street lighting. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the City's ownership and corresponding electric bills for the decorative street lighting being installed during the Museum District project. Seconded by Ald. Kays—Biviano, approved ayes all.

Joe Coe, Veteran Services – Joe Coe of Chenango County Veteran Services announced that Chenango County has been designated as a Purple Heart County. As such, the County has approved placement of a monument in East Park in front of the flagpole to honor Purple Heart recipients in Chenango County and will be comprised of black granite with a bronze plaque. The goal for placement of the monument is by Memorial Day 2022. Mr. Coe hoped that in the future an eternal flame could be incorporated into the monument. Further discussion included additional signage at the County and City lines, a Hometown Heroes banner program, the difficulty of finding all Purple Heart recipients, and future projects to recognize veterans.

YMCA Turkey Trot – Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from the YMCA for road closures and Police assistance during their annual Turkey Trot 5K race on November 21, 2021. Events begin at noon with the Kids Fun Run, the adult race at 12:30 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Human Resources

Employee Handbook – L. Murray reported that there are changes needed in the Employee Handbook due to changing laws. Those changes are for 1) Break Policy - add Lactation Accommodation 2) Update protected classes per NYS Law 4) Equal Employment and Sexual Harassment – adding Notification of policy violation wording (concerning prompt reporting of incidents) 3) Added NYS Medical Marijuana Policy 4) updated complaint form for sexual harassment. Ald. Jeffrey , **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve these changes to the Employee Handbook. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

ADP Essential Learning – L. Murray requested the addition of the Essential Learning option through ADP. This consists of a base of learning modules such as NYS Sexual Harassment, Blood-borne pathogens, Supervisor trainings, Compliance, Diversity and Inclusion etc. and can be tracked. The cost is an additional \$2,400 per year. Ald. Zieno moved to recommend the Common Council approve the Essential Learning option in ADP. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Community Development Director Job Description – Ald. Zieno **moved** to approve the Community Development Director Job Description as presented to the Joint Committee. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Fire Department

Ambulance's status - J. Papelino reported that ambulance 2392 has been out of service for a month with an alternator issue. This is a 2015 Chevy and cannot be worked on locally, Botnick Chevrolet has been searching for part. The new ambulance 2393 was out of service in order to be decon-ed and should be back in service tomorrow.

Rescue Truck- 235 – J. Papelino reported that rescue truck 235 has been out of service for approximately 2 ½ weeks. A mechanic will be coming up from Pennsylvania to hopefully get this fixed. This truck is almost 30 years old.

Annual pump testing – J. Papelino reported that annual pump tests were conducted and no issues were found.

Outside CON mutual aid – J. Papelino reported that since the last Council meeting there were 19 mutual aid calls outside the CON – among them were 8 to Oxford, 3 to Sherburne, 3 to New Berlin and 2 to South New Berlin.

J. Papelino responded to a question about Fire Assistants by saying they can have as many Fire Assistants as they like, but they do have to be 229 Certified and be a Basic EMT. Currently there are a couple of Fire Assistants.

J. Papelino stated that Greene has applied for a CON for the City of Norwich. He has reached out to the Greene squad Captain and will be speaking with him.

Code Enforcement

City tax properties update – J. Papelino reported that Ross Ave. is still occupied, but may be out by the weekend at which time Codes will secure that unit. An RFP will follow after it is cleaned out. Henry, Cortland and Canasawacta properties are still occupied. The City attorney continues to work on the eviction process.

Ordinance court status – J. Papelino reported four properties were taken to City Court for violations. Two have been cleaned up, the other two are going back to Court October 14 after being given a two-week extension.

Municipity – J. Papelino reported that the current Municipity software will no longer be supported as of September 2022. The discounted quote of \$34,434.18 is good until October 22, 2021 so he would like approval to purchase the upgraded version of Municipity. The newer version is cloud-based so it will free up storage on the servers and would also allow the Police and Fire Departments to use the program. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the purchase of the new Municipity software. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

DPW

New Loader – E. Pepe reported that there is currently only one loader to load salt which is a 1996 John Deere backhoe loader which needs repairs of approximately \$10,000. He proposes using the 2008 Honda used to plow and load snow from the streets for loading salt and purchasing a new loader for snow removal. A new Volvo L90H loader on State bid would be \$187,864 which would come from Reserves. The list price of this backhoe is normally \$333,000. Delivery would be December of 2021. Ald. Doliver **moved** to approve the purchase and transfer for the loader. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Street Paving Change Orders– E. Pepe reported that 99% of the paving has been completed with only Rexford St. remaining. After notification or receiving additional CHIPS money and the Touring Route funds Rexford St. had previously been added to the paving schedule. It was decided to pave the rest of West Main St. to the bridge at a cost of \$61,310 to also take advantage of the extra funding. Therefore, a change order to the 2021 Paving bid schedule needs to be approved in order to make the \$61,310 payment to the paving company. Ald. Jeffrey moved to recommend the Common Council approve the change order of \$61,310. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

E. Pepe reported that the paving of the parking spaces at the dog park cost more money than was budgeted due to the additional base layer that was needed and the expanded area for the spaces. The parking spaces were originally bid at almost \$5,000 are now \$11,326 and require a transfer from reserves since this is not covered by CHIP funds. Ald. Caldwell **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the transfer from reserves for the parking spaces. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Refill Water/wastewater operator – E. Pepe reported that the current Water/Wastewater Operator will be leaving and requests permission to refill the position. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to refill the position. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Septage increase to \$0.11/gal - E. Pepe recommends that the Septage Waste fee be increased to .11 per gallon from .05 cents per gallon which will bring it more inline with market rates in the area. Although Septage has not been accepted for a while, he would like to start slowly as the plant is in much better shape now than it had been. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the increase in the Septage Waste fee. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Police Department

Declaring Car 26 surplus – R. Marsh reported that Car 26 is 8 years old with 124,000 miles has undercarriage issues and is no longer safe to drive. He would like to declare the car as surplus. Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council declare the vehicle surplus. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Refilling Sergeant positions – R. Marsh asked to refill two vacant Sergeant positions and said that by the Common Council meeting he should have names of persons to fill the positions. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to refill the 2 vacant Sergeant positions. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Transfer from Equipment Reserves to outfit new patrol car – R. Marsh asked for a transfer of funds from Equipment Reserves in order to outfit the new patrol car with lights and computers. Vendors are requesting a purchase order due to the current delays [in the supply chain]. A quote from JPJ is \$9,817.84 and the computers will be an additional \$8,015.28. He stated that the \$740.93 he has left in drug seizure money will be put towards the purchase, but the balance will necessitate transfers. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the transfers. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

There was discussion about speeding complaints. R. Marsh was asked about the “war on drugs”. He replied that with bail reform it has been very difficult. He said that prior to bail reform they had more informants, however now the arrested principle gets all information.

Finance Department

Compensation Schedule-Seasonal Employees – D. DuFour reported receiving the minimum wage increase to \$13.20 which will affect the Seasonal employees on the Non-Unit Compensation Schedule that was approved previously. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the revised Non-Unit Compensation schedule. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Eliminate Sales Tax Exemption on Clothing – D. DuFour stated she was asked by Ald. Jeffrey to look into eliminating the sales tax exemption on clothing in the City. The current tax exemption is for clothing [and footwear] under \$110 per item. She distributed information regarding those jurisdictions in NYS that do and do not provide the exemption. Any change to the exemption takes effect on March 1st. Since McLaughlin's has closed, there are no places which exclusively sell clothing, while some clothing items may be sold in grocery stores, pharmacies, etc. There was also a discussion of online clothing sales. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council eliminate the sales tax exemption on clothing and footwear. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Set November Joint Committee Date – As the next Joint Committee meeting falls on election day and City offices are closed, the November Joint Committee meeting will be held on November 1, 2021. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to move the Joint Committee meeting to November 1, 2021. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Environmental Stress Designation – D. DuFour distributed information from the NYS Comptroller which indicates the City is Susceptible to Environmental Stress [separate from the Fiscal Stress Score] which is an improvement over last year's designation of Moderate. Over a three-year average, "Environmental Indicators provide insight about economic and demographic forces in a community that are beyond the immediate control of local officials but might influence revenue-raising capability and demand the for certain types of services such as change in population, households on public assistance, percentage of population under 18 and over 65, percent change in home value, median household income, unemployment rate, and reliance on State and Federal Aid". She pointed out one of the contributing factors for the better designation is that we received a lot of revenue for the Water Treatment Plant. Also, the increase in home value may be due to the overall increase of property seen during Covid.

Ald. Caldwell asked about the Assessor's progress on the revaluation project. Ald. Zieno said he had spoken with the Assessor and because there has been such a big change in property values since the project started they are almost starting from scratch. The equalization rate was 65% and most likely it is more like 60% now.

Ald. Caldwell asked the Youth Bureau Director to share the idea of using the ice skating rink for pickleball. A. Testani reported going to the Parks Commission meeting to present the idea. A concern was whether the surface was suitable with the slope of the rink. Testani met with players who tested the rink and they had no problems. He reported that Fort Covington, NY has done the same with their ice skating rink and so far it has held up for five years.

Other Items

Designating Day and Hours of Trick or Treating – Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council designate Trick-or-Treating as Sunday, October 31, 2021 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

2022 SPCA Contract - A. Eaton stated that the contract is identical to last year's contract. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council authorize the Mayor to sign the SPCA contract. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Executive Session – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to enter executive session at 8:06 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations and the sale of property where price may be affected. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to exit executive session at 8:48 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:49 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all