

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
April 5, 2022

Present:

Mayor Brian Doliver
Ald. Nancy Allaire
Ald. William Loomis
Ald. David Zieno
Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour

DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Youth Bureau Director Anthony Testani
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
EMO Stephen Cady
City Attorney Steve Natoli
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton
Community Development Director Erik Scrivener

Absent

Ald. Matthew Caldwell
Ald. Fred Gee
Supervisor James McNeil

Media Representative: Sarah Genter

Ald. Matthew Caldwell

Ald. Zieno 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. Loomis **moved** to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2022 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Correspondence

Glow 5K Walk/Run – Suicide Prevention Coalition – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from the Suicide Prevention Coalition for Special Event status in Weiler Park for their Recovery & Wellness Glow 5K Walk/Run on September 17, 2022 from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The 5K route will begin at Weiler Park and continue on Borden Ave. to Silver St., Mitchell, Adelaide, Midland, Hale, Birdsall, back to Silver, Borden and finishing at Weiler Park. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Use of Firehouse 3rd Floor for Political Forum – Mayor Doliver has been unable to confirm details with Karol Kucinski. When further details are available this will be brought back to the Joint Committee.

Department Head Reports

Community Development

Introduction to Erik Scrivener – Ald. Zieno introduced the new Community Development Director, Erik Scrivener. Mr. Scrivener said he is happy to be here and is “getting his bearings”. He is already working on some items including Clean Energy Communities. Mayor Doliver said Scrivener was already working on the funding through Claudia Tenney’s office which closes on April 10th. Erik said he has received much support and direction.

Fire Department

Outside CON EMS mutual aid – J. Papelino reported on calls outside the CON: 7 – Oxford; 3 – New Berlin; 1 – S. Otselic; 1 – S. New Berlin; 1 – McDonough.

Stream/River gage update – J. Papelino reported that the sensors are backordered for 90 days.

Flood study grant – J. Papelino reported that the draft should be coming shortly and the deadline for the flood study grant has been extended to June 1st.

Firefighter Winsor – J. Papelino reported that Firefighter Winsor will step back to a Fire Assistant, so they will be down one full-time Firefighter effective April 30, 2022.

Mock Crash - J. Papelino reported a Mock Crash will be held on May 18 with a rain date of May 19 for the Junior Class at the High School which will include LifeNet.

J. Papelino announced a Recruit NY event at the station with 5 Departments in the County signed up on April 25th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in order to get more volunteers.

Code Enforcement

10 Prospect St. – J. Papelino reported that an Open House for 10 Prospect will be held on April 12th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. It can also be seen by appointment. He felt there should be a lot of interest in the property.

Plumbing and Electrical Board update – J. Papelino reported that the Plumbing Board has made significant progress and is drafting a plan to expand the guidelines of who can do certain repairs and renovations. This would include contractors that have over 5 years of experience and homeowners. The Electrical Board is not quite as far.

DPW

Pool pump replacement – E. Pepe reported that the pool pump repairs will be \$14,220 and will need a transfer from Pool Repair Reserves to Parks Equipment. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the purchase and transfer. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Spring Cleanup – E. Pepe announced that Spring cleanup has started and will continue to May 13th. Ald. Jeffrey suggested extending the cleanup to May 22nd and Pepe agreed.

Hydrant Flushing – E. Pepe announced that flushing of hydrants will be from May 2 through May 13.

Request transfer to cover Overtime cost – E. Pepe reported that the Snow and Ice Removal Overtime line was budgeted at \$12,000 and the actual used is \$24,000. He requested a \$15,000 transfer from Contingency to cover the expenditure. Ald. Allaire **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the transfer. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey asked if Pepe knew which streets were going to be able to be paved this Summer. Pepe said that the paving bid is back April 15th. He will not be able to confirm the streets until the State passes the budget with the CHIPS funds included.

Police Department

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to enter executive session at 7:12 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to exit executive session at 7:35 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Authorizing SRO Agreement – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve an agreement with the Norwich City School District for a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the rest of the 2021-2022 school year and the 2022-2023 school year. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Creation of a Police Officer Position – R. Marsh stated that now that the SRO is a fulltime position for the school district, he requested the creation of another Police Officer position to fill that void. When school is not in session, the SRO will be on patrol and will help in reducing overtime costs. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council agree to the creation of another Police Officer position. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

R. Marsh reported that the total number of cases for 2021 increased 20.2%. Adult arrests are up 37.6%; Traffic Tickets up 4.4%; criminal charges up 33.4%. From 2019, narcotic arrests have increased 85.4%.

Finance Department

Utility & Gross Receipts Audit – D. DuFour reported contracting with a company that audits utilities. They review our utility bills to ensure billing is correct and recover any funds due back to the City. If the audit yields results the company gets 40% of the funds and the City receives 60%. Last audits of energy utilities was 2013, Gross Receipts in 2015, and phones in 2017.

Paint Rebate Program Increase – D. DuFour requested to increase the Paint Rebate Program's reimbursement from \$10 per gallon to \$15 per gallon. The maximum reimbursement of up to 20 gallons per property would remain the same. She reported that \$5,000 is budgeted each year and over the past 4 years rebates totaled \$2,000, \$1,500, \$650 and \$480. Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the increase. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

D. DuFour reported to the Committee that the City has received \$20,000 through the NYS Low Income Household Water Assistance Program so far, so residents are taking advantage of the program.

Other Items

Redistricting – D. DuFour reported that City Attorney Natoli recommends that the City not conduct redistricting themselves, but to hire an outside independent firm. She distributed an email she received from such a company and asked if the Committee would like to proceed with getting a quote. After speaking with the Board of Elections, he learned the last redistricting was done in 1990 in-house by the City. He is not in favor of doing it in-house and recommends following Natoli's advice. Ald. Zieno felt it should be done but did not want to pay thousands of dollars for moving 150 people to another Ward. He suggested another option would be to have a bipartisan group of Aldermen come up with a proposal that the entire Council would vote on. Redistricting would not happen prior to the next election.

NYSERDA – Unified Solar Permit and Benchmarking – Mayor Doliver distributed a pamphlet on the Southern Tier Clean Energy Communities. Being designated as a Clean Energy Community (CEC) opens further doors for grant opportunities. The City has already completed two high impact projects towards this goal – the LED street lights and LED decorative lights. Two other high impact actions that are relatively simple to do are a Unified Solar Permit and Benchmarking. Code Enforcement has reviewed the proposed Unified Solar Permit and has no objections to it. Benchmarking would include tracking and measuring all of the energy used by City-owned buildings and reporting those to become part of a public portal which can then be used as comparisons to other similar buildings. Once both are adopted by Resolution, the City would receive \$5,000 in grant funds. Mayor Doliver explained that each high impact action is associated with a number of points. The more difficult the project is, the more points are attached to it and the greater the grant funds are. Other qualifying projects are EV charging stations, having corporations check their energy usage, and Code Enforcement training. Ald. Loomis and Mayor Doliver agreed that there needs to be an avenue to help individual homeowners conduct their own audits.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to send the Unified Solar Permit to Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to send the Benchmarking to the Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey referenced the Youth Bureau's quarterly report with the highest participation since 2014 and 868 persons utilizing the skating rink. One new and one returning program was included – Cheerleading and Soccer which was last done in 2011. Ald. Jeffrey also said the Planning Commission was looking for guidance from the Council on the scope of their responsibilities. Their focus was to be in the B.I.D. district and wondered if they could expand their reach City-wide. Ald. Zieno felt that the new Community Development Director could help with a Needs Assessment for the City and this could fall under that. As he acclimates to his position he can offer more guidance in that area.

Ald. Allaire asked about the status of the vacant lot development proposal. Mayor Doliver reported that it is still being worked on with help from Assemblyman Joseph Angelino. A housing study is needed for it to progress and a recent one has not been able to be located. Mayor Doliver will be reaching out to NYCOM for assistance.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:14 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all