

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
December 5, 2011

Present:

Ald. Robert Carey
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Paul Laughlin
Ald. Robert Jeffrey

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
Police Chief Joseph Angelino
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence
EMO A. Jones
Mayor Joseph Maiurano
Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake

Absent:

Ald. Walt Schermerhorn called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:02 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Visitor Stan Cwynar of Cwynar & Associates presented a Scope of Audit Services to the Committees and reviewed its contents. He also again reviewed the audit he presented in September and discussed the possibility of improved efficiencies in procedures and software.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting of November 1, 2011. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department

Fire Protection Contract Director of Finance William Roberts reviewed the renewal of fire protection contracts with the towns of Norwich, North Norwich, and Guilford, stating that the contracts are the same as in past years except for increases in the rates. Ald. Jeffrey voiced concern that the fire protection contracts are for a period of three years, with options to renew for an additional two years, while labor contracts with the firefighters' union will not be renewed until the end of 2012, and thus the City will be fixing fire protection rates without knowing how costs may change. Mayor Maiurano noted that by maintaining a paid fire department, the City will always have certain costs, but providing fire protection services to the surrounding towns generates revenues to offset those costs. The Committees discussed changing the term of the contracts to more easily permit necessary changes in the rates; W. Roberts cited language in the contracts allowing any party to the contract to withdraw from the agreement with six months' prior written notice. The Committees agreed that this clause would suffice. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council authorize renewal of fire protection contracts. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Ambulance and First Responder Contracts Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo reviewed ambulance revenues through October from the various municipalities covered by the contracts. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Common Council authorize renewal of the ambulance and first responder contracts. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all. The Committees discussed reports the Fire Chief may provide the Council.

Code Enforcement Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence presented proposed revisions to the Rental Registry application and new residential rental inspection forms. Proposed changes would require that vacated rental properties be inspected before being rented again. J. Lawrence estimated that inspections could number as high as 600 in a single year, or 1,200 over three years. There would be a \$25 fee for each inspection. Ald. Schermerhorn suggested hiring a part-time employee to conduct such inspections. The Committees decided to postpone action until its January meeting, so that they could review the proposed changes.

Finance

Budget Transfer - Tax Sale Advertising W. Roberts reported that revenue from tax sale properties exceeded budget projections by more than \$25,800, but that this also raised the expense of advertising, and a budget transfer of \$5,400 is required to cover the additional expense. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approve a budget transfer to cover tax sale advertising expenses. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Renewal of PILOT Agreement W. Roberts reported that a PILOT agreement, under the auspices of Chenango Housing Improvement Program, Inc., for Marlene Meadows apartments will expire at the first of the year. Under this contract, Marlene Meadows makes payments of \$8,000 annually to the City in lieu of property taxes on this tax-exempt property. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council authorize renewal of a PILOT agreement for Marlene Meadows. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Transfer of Funds - State Retirement System Payment W. Roberts reported that, as for some years past, the City is again able to make an early payment to the State Retirement System in December of this year. The payment will cover \$587,000 of the \$670,000 due (\$83,000 to be amortized over ten years). Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council authorize a transfer of funds to cover payment of State Retirement System obligations. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Extension of Site Access Agreement with Frontier Telecommunications W. Roberts reported that Frontier Communications had an agreement with the City to use the second-floor meeting room at the firehouse for four months for training purposes, but will require the space through February 2012. Under this agreement Frontier pays the City \$1,500 monthly for use of the space. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council approve extension of the site access agreement with Frontier Communications. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved 5-0, Ald. Jeffrey abstaining.

Budget Transfer - City-Owned Tax Properties Contracted Services W. Roberts reported that some of the delinquent tax properties acquired by the City accrued maintenance costs of approximately \$3,200. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approve a budget transfer to cover maintenance costs of tax properties. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Budget Transfer - 2011 CHIPS Program W. Roberts reported that Ross Avenue was added to the repaving schedule for 2011, and that funds from 2010 are available to cover the excess cost of \$3,104.40 required. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approve a budget transfer of \$3,104.40 for repaving. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

DPW

Pick-Up Truck Replacement DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson reported the foreman's 1990 pick-up truck is in bad repair and should be replaced. He will purchase a new truck under State contract; funds are provided for under the current budget. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve purchase of a new pick-up truck under State contract. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Screw Pumps and Bond Resolution C. Ivarson reported that the insurance company has performed multiple inspections of the damage to screw pumps from the flood, and a FEMA project sheet has been completed. Total cost of the replacement will be approximately \$832,000. Insurance will cover the bulk of the cost, with FEMA covering 87.5% of the balance. Because of the time required to receive payment from FEMA and incidental costs that insurance will not cover, W. Roberts stated that the EFC will provide a 0% interest interim loan of \$850,000. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approve a bond resolution to cover interim costs of the project. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Town of Norwich Sewer Charges C. Ivarson reported that the Town of Norwich neglected to bill residents for the full cost of certain sewer charges due the City, resulting in a shortfall of approximately \$53,000. He and Mayor Maiurano met with the Town to discuss the matter and will assist them in devising a plan to pay this.

Community & Economic Development

2012 Council of the Arts Decentralization Grant Application Community Development Special Todd Dreyer reported that, as in past years, the City will seek a grant of approximately \$1,600 from Council of the Arts to cover certain costs of the City Band, Youth Dance Program, and the Lunchtime Concerts in the Park. Further grants are often awarded by the

R.C. Smith Foundation and the Greater Norwich Foundation to defray City Band costs. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council authorize application for a Council of the Arts grant. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Emergency Home Repair Loan - 8 Lee Avenue T. Dreyer reported that a low-income family at 8 Lee Avenue has applied for a loan of approximately \$1,000 to pay for installation of a new water heater and repairs to their gas line. This will be a loan at 3% interest over approximately two years. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to recommend Council approve an Emergency Home Repair Loan of \$1,000 to the owners of 8 Lee Avenue. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Executive Session Ald. Deierlein **moved** to enter executive session at 7:49 p.m. to discuss labor contract negotiations and to discuss the employment history of a particular individual Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all.

Ald. Carey **moved** to exit executive session at 8:21 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Carey **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.