

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

Present:

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

Absent:

Ald. John Deierlein

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
EMO A. Jones

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:07 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes

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

Correspondence

Allegro Run Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approve a request from Victoria Calvert Kappel of the Chenango County Council of the Arts to hold the Allegro Run for the Arts Saturday, May 7, 2011, from 8 a.m. with street closings. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Little League Parade Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approve a request from Andrea MacIntosh of the Norwich-Oxford Little League to hold the Little League Parade on Saturday, April 30, beginning at 10:00 a.m. with police escort. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all. Ald. Jeffrey suggested a second police car be used to ensure safety for those parading.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department

Engine 231

Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo reported that old engine 231 is suffering from many leaks, that the pump is so old that parts must be manufactured especially for it, and that it could be declared surplus and sold. Ald. Jeffrey noted that a \$25,000 grant was received to make repairs approximately four years ago, and the City has also spent \$18,000 on repairs. DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson reminded the Committees that they were told at that time that they were repairing a very old truck. Ald. Jeffrey asked that an assessment be made of the vehicle before it be declared surplus.

Career Firefighters' Bunk Room

Chief Chawgo stated that the career firefighters have requested alterations be made to the bunk room. They have drawn up plans and the Codes Office is reviewing them. The alterations would be paid for by the firefighters, not the City. Chief Chawgo will report back to the Committees if the firefighters decide to proceed.

Fire Station Fire Alarm System

Chief Chawgo reported that the fire alarm in the firehouse does not sound in the sleeping quarters, though those quarters have detectors. DPW is investigating.

Fire Station Doors

Chief Chawgo reported that several external doors at the firehouse do not close properly, and two are rusted and should be replaced with fiberglass. C. Iverson reported he will have prices for replacements within two weeks.

Surplus Fire Equipment

Chief Chawgo reported that much old equipment and other unused items, including rolls of copper wire, copper-clad grounding rods, and fiber-optic cable should be declared surplus and sold or disposed of. The old portable radios, replaced by the new equipment, could be transferred or sold to other companies. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Council declare these items surplus. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Volunteer NY Open House

Chief Chawgo announced that Volunteer NY Open House will be held at the firehouse on Sunday from 10 to 3 p.m.

Ald. Jeffrey asked about ambulance calls. Chief Chawgo replied that the number of calls has increased as compared to last year at this time.

Police Department

Retirement of Police Sergeant

Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith reminded the Committees that Sgt. Berry is retiring and this will leave a shift without a sergeant. He requested permission to appoint Officer Russ Tumminia as temporary sergeant to fill that gap. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council appoint Officer Tumminia as temporary sergeant. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Police Work at Dedicated Locations and Events

Assistant Chief Smith reminded the Committees that police officers have in the past been used at dedicated locations and special events, such as the County Fair and Colorscape Chenango, and were paid separately for that work through the Policemens Benevolent Association, which was paid by the sponsors of the events for those services at a rate of \$25/hour. Police officers would be assigned to those events in any event. However, such events are now being held to stricter worker compensation rules, and offered instead to pay the Police Department for these services. Ald. Carey asked if this rate should be negotiated to include the City's employee benefits, withholdings, and retirement. He suggested the rate be an average hourly rate of pay plus time and a half for overtime and 7.65% for FICA and 20% for retirement, and requested those numbers be provided before the April Council meeting. Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest stated she would provide such numbers.

EMO EMO A. Jones stated that the electronic river gauge installed at Rexford Street could not be synced with the staff gauge that appears on the side of the Rexford Street bridge until the flood three weeks ago, and is now calibrated so that water levels can be reported accurately. Flood-level forecasts are not yet possible because of lack of proper equipment, but the EMO will study flow data for the creek and additional water sources so that forecasts can be made. Ald. Jeffrey commended his work.

Ald. Jeffrey asked about the new FEMA flood maps and flood zones. A. Jones responded that, in light of flooding in 2005 and 2006, the new flood maps are accurate. The City actually saw many properties removed from flood zones, while some others were added. He explained the process used by FEMA to set the zones. His office will be working to link sites where residents may look up their properties' flood zone designation and where they may receive certified copies of that designation to the City's website site.

Code Enforcement

NYS Dept. of Labor Pyrotechnic Display Requirements

Code Officer Jason Lawrence reported that the NYS Department of Labor - Pyrotechnic Displays has issued new requirements. The Codes Office is working to prepare a permitting procedure for such displays, of which there are approximately four held in the City each year. The new requirements allow displays by private individuals if handled by professionals, and also demand fire service be available at a display. That cost may be rolled into the permit fee.

Zero Tolerance

J. Lawrence reported that his Department has started zero-tolerance with several properties that have had repeated codes violations. All tenants and landlords have been notified and the Department is tracking these properties daily.

J. Lawrence reported that a new committee is being arranged regarding housing in the City of Norwich, to include the Norwich Housing Authority. Ald. Jeffrey asked to be included in this committee. J. Lawrence reported that the Byrne Dairy project is proceeding according to plan, and framing should be up within the next week.

Ald. Jeffrey asked about the 49 Front Street project. J. Lawrence replied that bids have been awarded for heating, plumbing, and electrical, and the students will start work again in April. The roof, siding, and insulation should be completed by the summer.

Ald. Jeffrey noted a broken sidewalk on Hale Street that is causing difficulties for pedestrians. J. Lawrence stated that they have spoken with the property owner and are helping to locate a contractor. Ald. Jeffrey suggested the City do the work. Ald. Carey said the City should not be competing with private industry.

Human Resources

Clerk Position - Finance Office

D. DeForest reported that interviews were held to fill a clerk vacancy in the Finance Office and recommended Regina Pylinski, 6 Hickory Street, for the position. Ms. Pylinski can start on April 25. Ald. Jeffrey suggested this be discussed later.

MEO1 Position

D. DeForest reminded the Committees that the former Cleaner was appointed as a police officer. An MEO1 has elected to transfer to the Cleaner position, leaving an MEO1 vacancy in the DPW. Ald. Jeffrey discussed the possibility of not filling that position. C. Ivarson stated that he is working with a skeleton crew as it is and if this position is not filled, work will not be done. The position involves plowing, street cleaning, and other necessary tasks. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to proceed with filling the vacant MEO1 position. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Finance

Council of the Arts Study Project Finance Director William Roberts reminded the Committees of a presentation by Victoria Kappel of Chenango Council of the Arts at the March Council meeting regarding a nationwide study being conducted on revenue generated by arts funding. The Council of the Arts has requested the City assist with a \$500 expenditure. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of an economic development expenditure of \$500 to the Chenango Council of the Arts. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Norwich Housing Authority Bridge Loan

W. Roberts reminded the Committees that the City granted a bridge loan to the Norwich Housing Authority to assist them in construction of a 2-unit building on Brown Avenue. That loan was repaid within nine months. The Authority is preparing to erect a second 2-unit structure and has requested another bridge loan of \$90,000, at an interest rate of 4.5%. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council grant a \$90,000 bridge loan to the Norwich Housing Authority. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Computer Systems Network Upgrade

W. Roberts reported that plans were developed some years ago to upgrade the City's computer network to a more secure and faster Citrix server system. Currently, other departments must dial in to the City's network, which is slow and not secure. This system was not adopted in the past because sufficient reserve funds had not been accumulated. However, funds have now been accumulated and the price of such a system has dropped. Such a system would allow approved City employees to access the network remotely through a secure website, such as the Police Department having access to dog license records. Cost of such a system would be \$12,500. Currently \$31,500 has been accumulated for computer system and technological requirements. Ald. Carey suggested that a protocol be formulated for who is allowed to access the system remotely. He asked who will set up the new system. W. Roberts responded that Mike Tomaselli of ProSoft has been the City's IT provider for at least 15 years and will manage this upgrade. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council approval of a capital reserves transfer of \$12,500 to provide for the computer network upgrade. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved ayes all.

BIDMA Bridge Loan

W. Roberts reported that, similar to the bridge loan to be made to the Norwich Housing Authority, BIDMA has requested a bridge loan of \$60,000 to commence work on the East & West Parks restoration project. They have received pledges sufficient to proceed and have awarded the bid to replace the pavilion. The DPW will start its sidewalk work in West Park while the contractor works in East Park. Ald. Jeffrey discussed the lighting in the parks.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of a bridge loan of \$60,000 to BIDMA for the Parks project. Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

DPW

Entrance Signs

C. Ivarson reported that the Parks Commission has recommended Council approval of the design, construction, and erection of entrance signs on North and South Broad Streets. He presented an artist's rendering of the proposed sign. Total cost, including installation, will be \$9,780. C. Ivarson reminded the Committees that similar proposals in the past were estimated to cost over \$45,000. The Committees discussed placement of the signs. Ald. Carey **moved** to approve proceeding with the construction and erection of the entrance signs, pending more information on location. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, approved ayes all.

RBC Update

C. Ivarson reported that he has begun the second round of testing and installed the baffles. Testing should be complete April 18, results should be available approximately three weeks later. The 5-HP motors, which were insufficient to drive the heavier equipment, have been swapped out for 7.5-HP motors, the next size available. The screw pumps were not acceptable and replacement pumps have been agreed upon, involving a change order. However, he has also canceled the expected pump repairs, considering them to be unnecessary.

Flow Meter - Filter Plant

C. Ivarson reported that an accident involving a car hitting a light pole caused a power outage that destroyed a flow meter. Replacement will be \$5,000. W. Roberts will check into the possibility of our insurance company subrogating the driver's insurance company.

Pool Project

C. Ivarson presented proposals for repair of the City pool and filter. He noted that the new filters will have a useful life of ten years. Because the masonry lining of the pool also has a useful life of ten years and is in its ninth year now, he has included replacement of that as part of the project. He recommended installing solar heating for the showers, which may also improve the chance of obtaining a grant for the project. The total estimated costs would be approximately \$280,000. Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer stated that he has communicated with the NYS Department of Parks and Recreation and learned that grant applications will not be available until June. At that time he will learn what grants are available in what amounts, and what requirements will need to be met. He noted that all such grants are competitive. Ald. Jeffrey asked if some savings could be made by cutting pool hours. Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason said that shortening staff hours could result in a small savings.

NYSEG Gas Main Replacement

C. Ivarson reported that a permit has been issued to NYSEG to make gas main replacements on Francis and Hickok Avenues. Ald. Jeffrey questioned the planned cuts in light of DPW Standards requiring street paving. The Committee discussed changing those standards to require paving of entire streets where such cuts are made. C. Ivarson reminded the Committees that the City itself must also follow such standards, and that if the City must make cuts, such as for water line repairs, it also will be required to repave entire streets. He stated that he would ask for a meeting with NYSEG to discuss this project.

Ald. Jeffrey asked about the DPW budget in light of increases in gas prices. C. Ivarson replied that he is within budget for supplies. Ald. Jeffrey then asked about the street-paving schedule for 2011. C. Ivarson reiterated that Hale, Eric, and Gerald Streets are scheduled for paving. Ald. Jeffrey then asked about increasing wattage of the ornamental streetlights in the Business Improvement District. C. Ivarson noted that such lights are not designed for higher wattages, that they would have to be modified at some expense to accommodate other types of lighting.

Ald. Laughlin remarked that the brickwork in the downtown sidewalks is showing deterioration. C. Ivarson responded that he is waiting for more work to be necessary so that repairs or replacements would be more cost effective.

Community & Economic Development

Emergency Home Repair Applications

T. Dreyer presented applications for three Emergency Home Repair grants/loans at 6 Sheldon Street, 33 Brown Avenue, and 78 Mitchell Street. The request from 6 Sheldon Street involved frozen pipes, and so the work has already been completed. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of Emergency Home Repair grants/loans to 6 Sheldon Street, 33 Brown Avenue, and 78 Mitchell Street. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

2011 CDBG Application

T. Dreyer discussed application for a CDBG grant. This would be used to restore a row of buildings at State and Mitchell Streets. Engineers will provide plans and cost estimates, which should not exceed the maximum grant award of \$400,000. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to set public hearings for April 19 and May 17, and to recommend Council proceed with application for a CDBG grant. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey asked how many applications for sidewalk replacement have been received. T. Dreyer stated that ten properties are participating so far, and urged the aldermen to speak with property owners in their wards. He offered to send invitations to participate in the program to property owners who reside out of the area.

Other

Parks Commission Recommendation - Smoke-Free Parks Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake reported that the Parks Commission had approved and forwarded to the Council a proposal from the Chenango County Health Network to make all City parks smoke-free. The Network will provide signage. The Committee noted that, while the goal is worthy, enforcement posed a serious problem. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of the request to make City parks smoke-free. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved 4-1, Ald. Carey against. Ald. Carey argued that enforcement of such a prohibition would be impossible and **moved** to reverse the prior motion. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey asked about tax-sale properties. W. Roberts responded that eight properties had not been redeemed.

Clerk Position - Finance Office

The Committee discussed filling the vacant Clerk's position in the Finance Office. W. Roberts reminded them that they had approved filling the position, and that the position would be funded entirely by the Sewer Fund. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council approve hiring of Regina Pylinski, 6 Hickory Street. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Carey **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.