

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
December 14, 2010

Present:

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

Also:

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

Absent

Ald. Robert Jeffrey

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:24 p.m. on December 14, 2010, at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Carey **moved** to approve the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting of November 9, 2010. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Visitors

Sarah Ulfick, Market Manager of the Chenango County Farmers Market, addressed the Committees on the need to update the City's Code regarding the public market. The original Public Market law was adopted in 1933. She explained that the discrepancies between State regulations and the old City law made enforcement very difficult, as current State regulations provide for oversight of public markets regarding health matters and agricultural and technical requirements. Ald. Carey expressed his hope that rectifying these discrepancies would help the market grow and become more robust. Ms. Ulfick explained some of the problems facing the market's growth, including the current economy, the small number of available vendors in the County, and the problem with blight the last two years, which significantly reduced the amount of produce available. Ms. Ulfick explained how the Market Board is constituted and administered. Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake reviewed some of the revisions necessitated by regulatory and logistic changes over the years. Ms. Ulfick stated she has requested the Traffic Commission to investigate placing another sign designating parking for vendors on market days. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend the Common Council receive the proposed revision to the law at its next meeting and set a date for a public hearing. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo informed the Committees that ambulance 2393 has a couple of broken welds, which will be repaired under warranty, and that the Department will thus have only two ambulances for two to three weeks. The votes for Assistant Fire Chiefs are being held; he anticipates the current assistant chiefs will be re-elected. The County's new, upgraded radio communications system has been tested and Norwich has no dead zones. All new equipment is being logged, and FEMA grant monies, which funded the purchase of new equipment, are being drawn. Chief Chawgo also noted that there have been a few fires, typical of the holiday season, which were not allowed to get out of hand.

Police Department Police Chief Joseph Angelino noted that despite many absences due to illness and one officer being deployed for active military duty, the officers have used flex time to hold overtime expenses down. Director of Finance William Roberts stated that the Department's budget for total personal services, which includes both higher overtime and much lower regular time, will be overall favorable for this year because of the officers' willingness to adjust their schedules to cover absences. Ald. Carey asked that Chief Angelino thank his officers on behalf of the Council for their efforts.

Codes Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence presented pictures to the Committees of progress on the buildings being renovated at 24 East Main Street and 49 Front Street. The building at 49 Front Street has had its foundation re-pointed and walls constructed. The building at 24 East Main Street will have new floors installed and will be inspected by the prospective purchaser soon. No change orders have been required. Ald. Carey asked when the work at 24 East Main is to be finished. J. Lawrence said he would check, but expected it to be complete by the end of March. He noted that the Restore NY house on Fair Street has been sold.

Ald. Schermerhorn noted that the Byrne Dairy project appears to be prepared to move ahead. J. Lawrence remarked that new NYS Codes go into effect this week and he is expediting his review of plans in light of this. Mayor Maiurano expected the new facility to be completed by the end of May.

DPW

Sludge Grinder

DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson reported that the sludge grinder at the WWTP saves energy, manpower, and money by grinding sludge before it goes into the Primary anaerobic digester. The grinder is 15 years old and requires major repairs. It was rebuilt once eight years ago. Parts would cost approximately \$17,000, while a new grinder costs approximately \$14,900. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve purchase of a new sludge grinder and transfer of funds to cover the costs. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, approved ayes all.

Pool Project

C. Ivarson reported he and W. Roberts have investigated funding possibilities for the pool renovation project. W. Roberts explained that investigating possible grants and waiting for awards would guarantee the pool's closure during 2011, but that the City could borrow the money from the Sewer Fund upon issuance of a bond and pay back this loan over a three to five year period at a rate of 1.5%; he noted that if this approach is taken, grant funds can not be received for the project later. Ald. Carey agreed that such a loan would be the best way to handle the situation. A bond resolution can be presented to the Council when bids are returned and the amount of funds required is known. Mayor Maiurano stated that he has also spoken with the School District and the YMCA for use of their pools in the unlikely event that the renovation project is not completed by the beginning of June.

Firehouse/City Hall Roof Modifications

C. Ivarson reported that the City Hall roof is completed, the repairs to the kitchen in the Firehouse are completed, and the work to be done on the third floor of the Firehouse is approximately 40% complete and on schedule. He has asked that lights be added to the third-floor bathroom and that wiring deficiencies on the third floor be remedied.

Manpower

C. Ivarson noted that he is missing several workers due to illness and will be hiring a temporary employee for two to three weeks for coverage. Funds are available in the current budget to cover this.

RBC Project

C. Ivarson reported that the recent low temperatures have made it difficult to test the RBCs. Screw pumps will be replaced the first week of January. The wet well stairs have been installed and finished.

Other Items

Fees Increases

W. Roberts reported a NYCOM survey of fees charged by municipalities throughout the State has prompted a review of the City's current fee schedule. He presented a memo detailing some proposed increases to bring the fee schedule in line with current costs. C. Ivarson noted that the replacement fee for frozen water meters, currently \$25 and proposed to be increased to \$50, is sufficient to cover a plate, but that new meters cost \$102 and the fee should reflect that. Ald. Carey clarified that this fee is for meters that have frozen as a result of a homeowner's not heating the home where the meter is located. W. Roberts asked that the Aldermen review the memo and provide him with comments.

Retirement System Costs - Funds Transfer

W. Roberts explained that for several years the City has been able to pay its obligations to the State Retirement System in December, before the due date, resulting in savings of several thousand dollars. The City is once again able to pay its obligations in December, which is reflected in the 2011 budget. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve early payment of Retirement System obligations and the necessary transfer of funds. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

NYCOM Resolution on Property Tax Cap

W. Roberts presented a proposed resolution from NYCOM to be sent to State officials decrying the proposed cap on property taxes while not addressing unfunded State mandates on municipalities, including retirement contributions and health insurance costs. Mayor Maiurano reported on a meeting with NYCOM he attended and will distribute to the Aldermen information and documentation received on this issue. He noted that it is critical that everyone fight to make State legislators recognize the impossible burden a property tax cap would place on municipalities. Ald. Carey asked that another resolution be prepared demanding that the State budget be reduced and brought in line with sensible economic principles. He also asked that the City's website be provided with links to State officials so that concerned citizens could express their opinions directly.

Executive Session

Ald. Laughlin **moved** to enter executive session at 7:08 p.m. to discuss the sale of real property where price may be affected.
Seconded by Ald. Carey, approved ayes all.

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to exit executive session at 7:17 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Motion

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the Common Council accept a proposal from Gary Brightman to purchase a City-owned vacant lot located at 96 Silver Street for \$1,200. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Laughlin **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, approved ayes all.