

CITY OF NORWICH
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

January 24, 2008

Present:

Ald. Bresina, Chairman
Ald. Carey
Ald. Deierlein

Absent:

None

Also:

DPW Supt. Carl Ivarson
City Clerk/Director of Finance William Roberts
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Police Chief Joseph Angelino
Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence
EMO A Jones
Mayor Joseph Maiurano
Jessica Lewis, Media Representative

Committee Chairman Ald. Bresina called the January meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety Committee to order at 7:02 AM on January 24, 2008, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Bresina **moved** to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2007 Committee meeting. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Correspondence

None.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department

Chief Joseph Angelino reported that Engine 232 is completely unworthy for use and is being retired permanently. E232 is a 1982 Hahn that was custom-built specifically for the paid firefighters, then handed down to volunteer companies; because of the complete degradation of the truck, to keep it in service would entail exorbitant maintenance costs. Because of the other equipment already in place, a replacement is unnecessary. Director of Finance William Roberts asked about the disposition of the truck. EMO A. Jones stated that the equipment would be stripped from the truck before disposal. Chief Angelino added that that amounted to approximately \$30,000 worth of gear. He also informed the Council that it would be good practice not to keep a truck until it has no trade-in value, but to trade it in after 10-12 years. Another of the Department's trucks is a 1987 La France that should be sold after necessary repairs are completed. Ald. Deierlein commented that a used truck could be of use to a rural fire district.

Police Department

Chief Angelino reported to the Committee that STOP-DWI has supplied some vehicles to the Police Department in the past, paying for them in full or in part, but this will be changing as they will be supplying cars to other communities in the County and then ceasing this program. However, the agency (which is statewide but has local boards in each county) will be giving to the Department one in-car video camera system, estimated value \$5,000. This may entail some installation costs, but because installation will be done on all cars at once as scheduled by the agency, cost will be only approximately \$90 per car, as opposed to \$400 per car. Ald. Bresina noted that the Sheriff's Department was receiving cars at 1/8 cost through a similar program. Chief Angelino clarified that the process used is similar to how the City operates, where police cars are handed down to other departments.

Visitors

Lisa Ianello of Colorscape Chenango requested that the festival be allowed to use the East Main parking lot from September 6 – 7, 2008. She stated that she had spoken with businesses in the area and none had offered objections to the proposal. Ald. Carey asked what the lot would be used for. Ms. Ianello replied that they might relocate the farmers' market to the lot, so that the market could be open for the entire weekend rather than just Saturday. Or food vendors might be placed there. Superintendent of Public Works Carl Ivarson noted that there are no hydrants available on that side of East Main Street for water, and food vendors would need to request water from neighboring businesses, if taps were available. He also stressed that the lot is due to be repaved in August, and no stakes could be driven into the asphalt: all tie-downs would need to use cinder blocks or similar methods. C. Ivarson then asked if the City would require additional liability insurance. W. Roberts said that should not be necessary because the festival has always used City streets in the past. Ms. Ianello explained that the festival carries \$1 million liability insurance for the City. Ald. Carey asked if the City were recompensed for use of its property. Ms. Ianello stated that the City is given a certain fee per vendor. W. Roberts also noted that the City benefits indirectly through sales tax revenue, which is 1.5% paid directly to the City. Ms. Ianello said that a formal request for use of the lot would be made at the same time as Colorscape Chenango's request for street closings, so no action need be taken at this time by the Committee. The Committee did, however, note its approval of this request.

DPW Superintendent

Manpower – C. Ivarson reported that one employee has been out on Workers Compensation since October or November of last year and a return date is not yet known. The Wastewater Department also lacks a lead operator and a lab technician. A compensation schedule published by the American Wastewater Association notes that our pay schedule is approximately \$8,000/year lower than the norm. The City's starting rate is \$18/hour, the current norm is \$22/hour. He noted that the City needs to offer a competitive salary.

14' Light Poles – C. Ivarson reported that the decorative light poles in the downtown area have electrical problems. He has budgeted approximately \$4,000 for repair of the receptacles.

RBC Update – C. Ivarson reported that a meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2008, with the New York State Department of Environmental Control to learn if certain phosphate/nitrate requirements recommended by the Chesapeake Bay Commission will be required. If so, the planned upgrade to the wastewater plant would not be sufficient to meet those requirements; instead, compliance would require entirely new plant procedures, equipment, and trained personnel, amounting to approximately \$12 million for capital expenditures and a yearly increase in operating expenses of approximately \$1 million. A definitive answer may not be obtained at the January 30 meeting, as the DEC may need further research. Ald. Bresina asked if the concern with phosphate pollution was mainly because of farm usage. C. Ivarson noted that municipal wastewater was easier to control than farm runoff. Ald. Carey asked what the City's phosphate output is currently. C. Ivarson responded that output is 2.6 mg/liter, whereas the new requirements would be 1.15 mg/liter. Ald. Deierlein asked if Federal funding would be available to meet this need. C. Ivarson explained that if Federals are available, they will only be allowed for capital expenditures, not for annual operating expenses.

Ald. Carey asked the timeframe for compliance. C. Ivarson replied that compliance would need to be met within 4-5 years. Ald. Carey then asked about wastewater capital reserves; C. Ivarson explained that at the current rate, another 15 years would be required to accumulate the required funds. Ald. Carey asked how many people use the City's wastewater system. C. Ivarson said that the number of hookups was 2,364. Ald. Carey suggested that if a surcharge were added to each user's account, to be placed in a special reserve account, a significant portion of the required funds could be collected within several years. W. Roberts noted that this could represent a significant increase in the sewer rate. C. Ivarson added that the larger reserves the City has available for such a project, the less likelihood of receiving sufficient Federal or State grant funds.

City Hall Roof – C. Ivarson reported that the roof of City Hall is in urgent need of major repairs, as the sheathing is rotten. Previous estimates will not be a good guideline for costs because they only contemplated replacement of the shingles. He added that costs will be even higher if the decorative copper on the roof must be replaced. While the building itself is not on the Historic Registry, the area is a Historic District, and also, if grants funds are received from SHPO, then SHPO will have requirements about retaining such decorative features. He urged the Committee to look at other options, as has been discussed in the past, such as moving City offices to the third floor of the fire house. Ald. Carey asked how old the roof is. C. Ivarson said it is over 40 years old. Mayor Maiurano remarked that City offices had been in one building in the past, and that having them in various separate buildings was inefficient and created additional maintenance costs. C. Ivarson remarked that the third floor also needs repairs and that it is unfinished. Ald. Deierlein asked for projected costs for repairing the roof and for preparing the third floor for occupancy, including debt servicing for City Hall.

East Park – C. Ivarson reported that he had met with Eric Larson and Peggy LoPresti of B.I.D. several months ago, and then again just recently, to discuss the City's aid for plans to renovate East Park. By providing labor, the City could save B.I.D. \$90,000 - \$95,000 in such renovations. B.I.D. representatives will probably address the Common Council in the next few months to discuss this question.

Wheeler Avenue Water Tank – C. Ivarson explained that the Wheeler Avenue tank is over 60 years old and constructed of steel. It is not possible to regulate the water height of the tank, which can lead to problems with freshening the water and potability. He recommends that a new concrete tank be included in the plans for the new filter plant to save additional costs. He has asked the engineers, Stearns & Wheeler, to include such replacement in their proposals. W. Roberts asked if these preliminary engineering costs are sufficiently covered in the budget line item. C. Ivarson said money is available from capital reserves if approved. Ald. Carey **moved** to forward this matter to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Training – C. Ivarson presented a list of budgeted training required for DPW staff and himself. Ald. Carey **moved** to approve the training schedule as presented. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Returning to the issue of manpower raised earlier, Ald. Carey asked why the Department was not offering current employees the opportunities for promotion. C. Ivarson responded that he has promoted in-house on four occasions, and those promoted then failed to pass required tests. He explained that Wastewater employees need experience and training in electrical work, mechanical work, and laboratory work.

Rolling Equipment – C. Ivarson pointed out that the DPW performs maintenance for Police Department vehicles and the current budgeted amount of \$4,000 is not adequate.

Chlorine Bids – Bids were received on January 17, 2008, to supply chlorine for the City's wastewater plant. He recommend the low bids received as follows: for 150-pound cylinders, Jones Chemicals Inc. of Merrimack, NH, for \$65.00/cylinder; for Sodium Hydrochlorite, 55 gal. drums, Amrex Chemical Co., Inc., of Binghamton, NY, at \$.98/gal.; and for bulk Sodium Hypochlorite, Slack Chemical Co., Inc., of Carthage, NY, at \$.949/gal. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the award of these bids to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Street Paving – 2008 – C. Ivarson reported that Hale Street and Beebe Avenue need to be repaved this year, and recommended that Canasawacta Street and Front Street be included. The approximate cost for this project would be \$106,465, and such costs are usually covered by grants from CHPS. Ald. Deierlein asked if an inventory of street pavings is kept or compiled. C. Ivarson showed a map with various repavings marked. He said that most streets were paved under the water projects. He

instructed the new Committee members that they should also suggest streets they feel need to be repaved and he would provide projected costs.

West Main Street Traffic Light – C. Ivarson alerted the Committee to complaints about the flashing traffic light on West Main Street. He said the light needs a new controller and funds had not been budgeted for that last year. He recommended that the light be replaced by stop signs to improve traffic flow. He explained the procedure for working with the Traffic Commission on such questions. Ald. Deierlein also suggested that parking in front of 42 South Broad Street constituted a hazard and the parking spot should be removed. Chief Angelino suggested the Council so instruct DPW.

EMO

EOC Software - EMO A. Jones informed the Committee that EMO was working on a program with the County to test new EOC software, which provides needed software to the City without cost, as the Emergency Management Office will be testing the product and providing feedback to the developer. The software also will have a component for working offline in the event of internet outages. In response to a question from Ald. Carey, A. Jones explained that the Department is investigating using a dual internet system and has also investigated satellite connections.

Public Assistance Program Changes – A. Jones explained that when a disaster occurs, FEMA currently reimburses communities 75% of the eligible expenses, and the State and community split the remainder. In extensive disasters, such as the 2006 floods, the State paid all the remainder. FEMA also gives 2-3% of the reimbursement amount for administrative costs. However, FEMA is now proposing changes that will significantly impact such administrative-cost reimbursements. These changes are not final, but an interim proposal suggests that FEMA will reimburse the State alone at a rate of 3-1/2%, and then the State, after paying its own costs, will distribute the remaining funds to communities on its own schedule.

Code Enforcement

Chief Angelino reported that the City adopted Section 1203 of the State's Municipal Building Code, which mandates fire and building inspections at specified intervals for variously classified structures. The number of inspections this would require in the City would require more than a full-time, dedicated inspector. Currently, fire captains are assisting with some inspections. In order to cover expenses for such inspections, many communities charge for these inspections. For instance, Chenango County charges \$40/hour. Otsego charges \$50/hour. Cortland charges \$20 - \$100, based on the square footage of the building inspected. Binghamton, however, chose not to charge for inspections because they felt it was anti-business. Ald. Carey suggested that a charge based on square footage would be appropriate and asked how long a typical inspection takes. Chief Angelino explained that would depend on the type of building and other factors. It was brought up that square footage might not be a viable approach, since complexities between various structures could vary widely. Ald. Deierlein asked that Chief Angelino prepare a report on this issue and make a recommendation to the Committee..

Adjournment

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to adjourn at 8:50 a.m. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.