

CITY OF NORWICH
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

June 19, 2008

Present:

Ald. Bresina, Chairman
Ald. Carey
Ald. Deierlein

Also:

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

Absent:

None

Ald. Bresina called the June meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety Committee to order at 7:05 AM on June 19, 2008, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2008 Committee meeting. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Correspondence

Petition for Curb at Willard Court/South Plymouth Street

DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson explained that installing a curb is not simply a matter of installing the curb, but also involves work on the street and adjoining land areas. Curbs alone currently cost \$37/foot. He noted that there is no sidewalk at Willard Court or part of Plymouth Street and suggested sidewalks should be installed at the same time. The City Charter provides that the City cover one-third of the cost, and residents on either side of the street cover each a third. Because this involves properties on a cul-de-sac, property owners there would have to pay higher costs as the two-thirds would be covered by fewer property owners. C. Ivarson suggested that the center island at Willard Court also be curbed, to match the street sides, if the Council decides to proceed with the request. Finance Director William Roberts suggested that the petitioners should be informed of the costs. Ald. Deierlein requested that C. Ivarson prepare a firm cost projection, showing costs with and without sidewalks, and the City then send a letter to the petitioners including the projected costs. The Committee agreed with this plan of action.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department

Fire Station Horn

Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo reported that the fire horn will not cost as much to repair as anticipated because the original compressor is being used. This will save \$400-\$500. Ald. Carey asked that the City formally thank the volunteer companies for covering the cost of the repairs when the fire horn is operational.

Police Department

Bicycle Patrols

Chief Angelino reported that bicycle patrols are currently on the streets. He noted the current fleet of bicycles was originally purchased before the Department moved to its current Station. He plans on acquiring two new bicycles this year. Ald. Bresina expressed his opinion that the bicycle patrols are extremely effective. Chief Angelino concurred, stating that the officers also teach children about bicycle safety.

Military Service Leave

Chief Angelino announced that he would be on military leave from July 11 – 27, and that this would be his final military leave, as he is retiring from military service after 23 years.

Code Enforcement

Fee for Temporary License for Plumbers

Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence reported that the Plumbing Board recommends the single-project temporary license fee for a master plumber be lowered from \$500 to \$175, as was done with the temporary electrician's license. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend the change in fee to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Woodstoves

The State has noted that, with the increase in fuel costs, more home owners are likely to be installing woodstoves for heating without the required permits and inspections. J. Lawrence recommended that the City request an experienced chimney sweep be brought in to conduct an informational meeting for interested residents. Ald. Carey suggested that the City waive permit fees in order to encourage home owners to have their stoves inspected to ensure they are installed correctly, and that the City run informational notices in the newspaper.

Bicycles

J. Lawrence reported that the Codes Department is currently clocking 16-20 miles a day on their bicycles, saving fuel costs.

Fire Prevention Education

J. Lawrence reported that he and Chief Chawgo are investigating acquiring a robot fire truck for education purpose. Chief Chawgo noted that the Department receives 2-3 requests a month for a fire truck to come to schools and special events, and using the robot truck would fulfill such requests, leaving the trucks for emergency response. Discussion followed regarding the process for funding such equipment, for which 100% grants are anticipated.

EMO

American Red Cross Memorandum of Understanding

EMO A. Jones presented to the Committee the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the American Red Cross. This agreement is the same as that entered into the past several years, and provides for cooperation between the EMO and Red Cross. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council approval for entering into the Memorandum of Understanding with the American Red Cross. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Flood Buyout

A. Jones explained that unlike FEMA flood buyouts, the proposed State flood buyouts would require that the County cover the costs of demolition of buildings and renovation of the properties purchased. Because of this costs incurred by this requirement, the County may reject the offered funds. He will have more information for the July Committee meeting. He also stated that a second property owner has expressed interest in the flood buyout if the County decides to proceed.

Pandemic Exercise

A. Jones announced that the EMO, Chenango Memorial Hospital, and County Department of Public Health will be participating in a pandemic exercise on Wednesday, June 25, to test local responses to a pandemic disease outbreak. C. Iverson remarked that nationwide such exercises are now stressing the importance of clean water by focusing on how such disasters affect water and wastewater facilities.

River/Stream Gauge Update

A. Jones reported that the NYS DOT has suggested improvements to the river and stream gauges that will be incorporated before they are installed. The river-height sign at the Rexford Street bridge will be replaced to show the true flood level as 9 feet instead of 11. C. Ivarson asked if the flood plain maps would be revised to reflect the 2006 flood levels. A. Jones replied that they were already being revised. Ald. Carey noted that revised flood maps may have a negative impact on property owners if their homes are designated as being in flood plains, and this will also affect those wishing to relocate to Norwich. A. Jones noted that the maps will be much more accurate and there will be a comment period to suggest revisions to the maps. This will also allow for accurate flood-inundation maps to be created.

DPW

Fuel Costs

C. Ivarson reported that the Department's fuel costs to date have amounted to \$24,000, equal to costs for all of 2007. Diesel has risen \$0.63 to \$4.66/gallon, and unleaded gasoline has risen \$0.34 to \$3.99. Currently the fuel budget for the DPW will be depleted by September. He has instituted new policies for fuel conservation, such as no idling of trucks, no unnecessary trips, and more workers per truck. He cautioned that these higher expenses may necessitate drastic measures.

Filter Plant Project

C. Ivarson stated that a report is due by week's end on the filter plant project. The renovation or replacement of the Wheeler Avenue water tank has been separated from the project in order to allow for additional grant applications to defray costs.

Natural Gas Drilling

C. Ivarson remarked that the City Attorney is working to arrange that an expert in natural-gas leasing speak to the Council. He stressed the importance of this because of compulsory integration," a policy whereby properties within a designated drilling area are compelled to agree to certain conditions. Ald. Bresina asked if the City should approach the State with its concerns for municipal water supplies. C. Ivarson replied that the City's aquifer extends to Sherburne and the number of municipalities potentially involved is extensive. He recommended waiting for the expert's input. He also recommended that if the City were to pursue natural gas drilling, it should take place at the wastewater treatment plant, where water drilling is not available, rather than at the City's reservoir properties.

Street Repaving Schedule

C. Ivarson explained that the City's street repaving schedule, which is distributed to the Council in January of each year, is not arbitrary, but based on coordination with water main replacements, sewer repairs, utility companies' street work, and other factors. The Council may then suggest additions or deletions to the schedule. Repaving only offers 7-8 years of service. Ald. Deierlein asked about the state of Sunset Drive, which is in bad repair. C. Ivarson said that the street was built improperly, without a base. He is exploring various ways of improving the Drive, but completely replacing the street would cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He also noted that FEMA has not yet reimbursed covered costs related to the 2006 flood. A. Jones explained that FEMA sends reimbursements to the State, which then distributes the funds, and this may add several months to the process. Ald. Deierlein commented that NBT Bank offers loans to people expecting FEMA reimbursements. W. Roberts suggested that, because of fuel and materials cost increases, the Council reconsider its decision to roll over unused CHIPS monies to 2009.

Water Main Replacement Schedule

C. Ivarson explained that the water main replacement schedule is decided in the same manner as the street repaving schedule. The schedule was created in 1997 as a 15-year program. Currently

approximately 20% of the water mains in the City have been replaced, at a rate of 3-4%/year. He hopes to move such work in-house to save on costs. Workers are currently mapping the sewer system, which has never been mapped. W. Roberts noted that \$100,000 in reserves have been built up over the years, from a time when there were no reserves and the Department operated at a loss. Ald. Deierlein suggested a water rate increase might be appropriate to accelerate the water main replacement program. C. Ivarson reminded him that the filter plant project will increase rates as well.

Curb Repair – Maple and Hayes Streets

C. Ivarson stated that the sidewalks and curbs at Maple and Hayes Streets were not damaged by City snow plows but are all in a state of deterioration. He demonstrated how the design of the plows does not allow this kind of damage to be done. He suggested the necessary curb repairs be done in tandem with street and waterline repairs. Ald. Carey stated that he would advise the property owner to proceed with his sidewalk replacement and that the area will be considered for repairs on the 2009 street repaving schedule.

Screw Pump Reduction Gear

C. Ivarson reported that the screw pump was stripped for gears and is being shipped for repairs.

Storm Damage – Route 12 Booster Station

C. Ivarson informed the Committee that storm damage at the Route 12 booster station amounted to \$75,000, to be covered by the Town of Norwich. He also noted that other pumps must be bled and that a power-shutdown is scheduled from midnight, June 20, to 4 a.m., June 21.

Sidewalk Program

C. Ivarson received an email from the Historic Society inquiring about eligibility the sidewalk replacement program. Ald. Deierlein suggested the matter be referred to Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer, who administers the sidewalk program.

County Fairgrounds – Sewer Services

C. Ivarson received a request from the County Fair Association for another hookup to the City's sewer system. This will bring in additional water revenue to the City. He suggested an unused manhole be donated to the Association, but for a municipality to donate equipment to a private entity is prohibited by law.

SCBAs

C. Ivarson informed the Committee that new self-contained breathing apparatus is required by law, as the current apparatus is outdated. Costs will be approximately \$2,500-\$3,000.

Manpower

C. Ivarson reported that an employee hired as MEO I has a degree in environmental science. Because of this, C. Ivarson would like to reallocate the employee to the wastewater plant. The employee will be qualified to test for Grade 3 Operator in 1½ years instead of 4½ years. He will discuss this with the employee and also announce the position in-house.

Other Items

South Broad Street Park – Designation for Vendors

Ald. Bresina remarked that the request for a redesignation of South Broad Street Park for vendors is moot, as the Mt. Hope Cemetery Association, from which the City leases the property, refused to allow such use for the park.

Traffic Light – West Main/Elm Streets

Ald. Bresina noted that the Traffic Commission has recommended the traffic light at West Main and Elm Streets be replaced by a 4-way stop. Discussion followed as to the safest solution for the intersection and

traffic flow. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the Council accept the Traffic Commission's recommendation. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Chenango Greenway Conservancy License

C. Ivarson informed the Committee that a letter regarding the license has been sent to the Conservancy.

RBCs Project

C. Ivarson announced that a public meeting had been held but no one attended. He gave copies of the presentation to the Committee.

Parking Space – South Broad Street

Ald. Deierlein requested again that the parking space at 42 South Broad Street be removed. C. Ivarson replied that this space as well as one at West Park would be painted out when street painting is done.

Request from Property Owner

Ald. Deierlein relayed a request from a property owner on Wales Drive to mitigate stones being thrown into her house by car traffic. C. Ivarson said he would mark the road so that the owner could erect a barrier.

Streetlight – Gerald/Hillview

Ald. Deierlein asked about the defective streetlight at Gerald and Hillview. C. Ivarson explained that the light is not defective, but the power supply to the light is. As the light is owned by NYSEG, it is NYSEG's responsibility.

Sidewalks/Driveways

Ald. Carey asked about the City's regulations regarding materials for sidewalks crossing driveways. C. Ivarson offered Ald. Carey a copy of the Department of Public Works Standards.

Adjournment

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 AM. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.