

CITY OF NORWICH
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

August 28, 2008

Present:

Ald. Bresina, Chairman
Ald. Carey
Ald. Deierlein

Also:

City Clerk/Director of Finance William Roberts
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
Police Chief Joseph Angelino
EMO A Jones
Ald. Paul Laughlin
Mayor Joseph Maiurano

Absent:

None

Ald. Bresina called the August meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety Committee to order at 7:01 AM on August 28, 2008, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2008 Committee meeting. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Correspondence

Norwich YMCA Annual Halloween Parade, October 25, 2008

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend Council acceptance of a request from Thad Loomis of the Norwich YMCA for the Annual Halloween Parade to be held on October 25, 2008, with street closings on South and North Broad Streets from Beebe Avenue to Howard Johnson's from 2 PM until the end of the parade, with police escort. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Hayes Street Block Party, September 20, 2008

Ald. Carey explained that a request had been received regarding a block party to be held on Hayes Street in August, but because the request had been received after the August Council meeting, the residents decided to postpone their party until September so that the Council could be given appropriate notice. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council approval of a request from Joe Phelps to hold a block party on Hayes Street from Locust Street to Elm Street on September 20, 2008, between 12 PM and 7 PM. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department

Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo announced that the NYS Department of Health inspected the City's ambulance services and the Department passed with high marks.

Police Department

Police Chief Joseph Angelino announced that he had received verbal confirmation of approval of a Governor's Traffic Safety Commission grant in the amount of \$20,000-\$23,000 for the Department to purchase new rugged laptop computers for 6-7 police vehicles. Ald. Bresina said he had heard that the current laptops could not be easily read by officers. Chief Angelino explained that the current computers have touchscreens and, as they are 7-8 years old, the touchscreens have deteriorated significantly.

Code Enforcement

Mayor Maiurano stated that Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence had drafted a proposed ordinance on the keeping of animals. This was reviewed by Ald. Laughlin and will be reviewed

by City Attorney Patrick Flanagan. The Mayor further commented that the property that has prompted the drafting of this proposed ordinance now has only one calf left, which will be removed this week, and he is trying to get a commitment from the property owners that they will not bring in other farm animals. Ald. Laughlin and Chief Angelino discussed multiple complaints that have been brought against the property owners. Chief Angelino reminded the Committee that in the past other ordinances have been proposed to deal with problems caused by specific individuals, and these ordinances have often led to further, unforeseen problems. He warned of possible problems this ordinance may cause for such annual, popular events in Norwich as circuses or petting zoos.

EMO

Stream Gauge Installation

EMO A. Jones reported that the stream gauges have been installed, and presented pictures of the installations. He noted that these are resistant to vandalism. The next step in their implementation is to determine water levels for base readings, including levels from the Sherburne and Greene gauges. The radio transmission software has also been installed. He also reported that proposed United States Geological Survey funding cuts may cause all gauges in the Susquehanna River to be turned off, and if so the gauges at Sherburne and Greene would also be turned off. This would make the new gauges even more important for the City and surrounding area in the case of flooding. Ald. Bresina asked about the impact on the City if the Sherburne gauge is turned off, as it is upriver from Norwich. A. Jones responded that the Sherburne gauge is a forecast point, and reminded the Committee that during the 2006 flood the Chenango River crested at Sherburne and Greene but continued to rise in Norwich. He hopes to have the new gauge designated a forecast point.

Flood Buyout

A. Jones reported that the County will approve the Flood Buyout program this month. Properties purchased by the County under the program would be renovated for green or flood mitigation purposes and would no longer be productive of property taxes. He and the Mayor are having conversations with a property owner who is interested in the program to work out other methods to keep the property on the tax rolls.

DPW

Storm Drain Mapping

C. Ivarson reported that mapping of the storm and sewer system has been completed. This project took three years using interns and the final map has been created in AutoCAD. He stated that during mapping some manhole covers were discovered to have many extra holes, which allows too much inflow to the sewer system during rains. He explained that the Clean Water Act restricts inflow and these manhole covers will need to be replaced. C. Ivarson also noted that the mapping has revealed a problem with several mains where groundwater mains are located under and connected to sewer mains with pipes. While this was an inventive solution when the mains were installed many years ago, it may cause problems with inflow. Ald. Bresina asked how it is determined if groundwater is entering the sewer system. C. Ivarson replied flow increases show that extra water is entering the system.

Willard Court

C. Ivarson announced that he had received three responses to his letter regarding construction of curbs and sidewalks. Two of the responses were negative, all three were in favor of using delineators instead of installing curbs.

2008 Tree Removal Bid

C. Ivarson reported that four bids had been received for the 2008 Tree Removal. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Finance/Personnel Committee approval of the low bid of \$16,030.00 from Cooks Tree Service of Vestal, NY. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Annual stream permit, NYSDEC

C. Ivarson reported that he has received a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to protect fish and aquatic life in the waters of New York State. This MOU will allow the DPW to do work in the area of streams within certain restrictions, such as not placing equipment in streambeds. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend the Council approve the Mayor entering into this Memorandum of Understanding. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Vandalism

C. Ivarson reported that vandalism was found at the Wheeler Avenue water tank. Evidently a person or persons unknown attempted entry to the building through a steel, wire-cage door, which was damaged. He warned that if vandals enter the facility, the consequences can be serious: electric equipment could be tampered with, the tank could be drained, or the water supply could be contaminated. The Norwich Police Department responded immediately when the damage was discovered. C. Ivarson suggested that these City properties located outside the City need to be annexed to allow for Norwich Police Department response. Ald. Deierlein asked about preventing such vandalism at the Wheeler Avenue tank. Chief Angelino explained that the area is secluded and wooded. C. Ivarson is investigating fencing the area, but the lot is difficult to fence because of the stoniness of the site and the limited room for fencing. Ald. Carey suggested changing the angle-iron on the door frame to square iron to improve security. Chief Angelino suggested motion-activated lights.

Open House

C. Ivarson reported that the Open House was a success, with approximately 75 guests.

RBCs Replacement

C. Ivarson reported that he spoke with the NYSDEC regarding construction permit limits. He asked for no limits in order to shut down the RBCs all at once rather than in stages, and demonstrated that effluent would be less by doing this, but was turned down. He agreed to a 50% limit on effluent. He noted that he has emailed all State representatives regarding the status of the RBC grant, and Congressman Arcuri stated that he has contacted the Chair of the Appropriations Committee regarding his continued interest in this grant.

City Hall and Firehouse Repairs

C. Ivarson suggested that the City should move forward with engineering preparation for all the repairs to be made to City Hall and the Firehouse. Such engineering work will cost approximately \$45,000, which will be covered by capital reserves and may be reimbursable by the grant, but will at least be prepared whether or not the grant is received so that the necessary repairs can move forward. Ald. Carey asked about the repairs to the Firehouse roof and whether they would be covered by manufacturer's warranty. C. Ivarson explained that was a one-year warranty that expired in 2006, whereas the roof of the new section is covered by a 20-year warranty. Ald. Carey recommended waiting on engineering until the status of the grant is learned.

Road Repaving and Capital Reserves

C. Ivarson reported that the City has 24.57 miles of road that are eligible for CHIPS funds for repaving. He stressed that "repaving" does not entail complete replacement of the road and these repairs are only good for 7-8 years. He hopes to have all roads in the City repaved within 15 years. Ald. Carey expressed his concern about costs for repairing City streets and updating the sewer and water mains. C. Ivarson stated that he and Finance Director William Roberts recommend establishing a new capital reserves fund for Infrastructure, and to begin its funding with \$20,000. He noted that with the current financial crisis, CHIPS funding is vulnerable and such funds may not be available in future for municipal use. W. Roberts noted that an increase of funding of \$20,000/year would mean a 1% increase in property taxes. Ald. Deierlein recommended the prudent course of

action would be to establish a new capital reserve fund for such infrastructure repairs and maintenance, and suggested that \$20,000/year is not sufficient to cover projected costs. C. Ivarson noted that there is already in place a capital reserves fund for sewer and water repairs. Mayor Maiurano commented that a grant is expected from the Safe Routes to School program which will allow some sidewalk repairs. C. Ivarson noted that if that grant is received, the City's Sidewalk Program could not then be pursued in 2009 as well, due to manpower limits.

Energy Audit

C. Ivarson informed the Committee that an energy audit on all municipal buildings was conducted in 2003 and he can provide that survey to them if they wish.

Training

Ald. Carey **moved** to approve C. Ivarson's attendance at training seminars in September and December. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Other Items

City Parcel – American Legion

The Committee discussed the request of the American Legion to lease or purchase a portion of a City-owned property adjacent to their property. C. Ivarson reported that, in mapping the City's sewer system, he learned that the line in that parcel is not straight but crosses the parcel at a diagonal. Not only is City access to the parcel required, but it also contains major lines for NYSEG. Mayor Maiurano expressed his concerns about the expansion of a drinking establishment in a residential neighborhood. He suggested they contact other adjacent property owners about improving parking for their lot. Ald. Carey **moved** that the Mayor communicate to the American Legion the City's decision to decline selling or leasing the parcel, due to concerns raised by local residents about expansion of their drinking establishment in a residential area, concerns with utility access, and the City's determination not to sell only a portion of the parcel. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Changing City Charter regarding disposal of City-owned property

Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake reported that he has attempted to contact NYCOM attorneys regarding legal ramifications of revising the City Charter to allow other means of disposing of City-owned property than by auction, but has so far received no response.

Ald. Deierlein left the meeting at 8:11 AM.

49 Front Street

Mayor Maiurano reported that he has spoken with NYSEG regarding their use of a portion of 49 Front Street, and they have agreed to put in a clause required by the City for their ownership of the property, which involves a 50-foot section at the rear of the lot and a 10-foot right of way for access. The rest of the property can be available for sale. The property would, therefore, be transferred to the Local Development Corporation, and proceeds from the sale designated for improvement of downtown parking. Ald. Bresina asked about the tax ramifications, as utility companies do not function under the same tax structure as private property owners. W. Roberts confirmed that the tax ramifications, due to the small size of the portion of the lot to be used by NYSEG, would be negligible.

Adjournment

Ald. Carey **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 AM. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.