

CITY OF NORWICH
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

September 25, 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
Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence
Mayor Joseph Maiurano

Absent:

None

Ald. Bresina called the August meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety Committee to order at 7:03 AM on September 25, 2008, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2008 Committee meeting. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Correspondence

Norwich High School, Homecoming Parade, September 26, 2008

Ald. Carey **moved** to receive and approve a request from Lansing R. Dimon of Norwich High School for the closing and use of East Main Street from the P&C parking lot north to Midland Drive, and Midland Drive to the High School for the annual Homecoming Parade. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Chenango Community Players – Ghost Walk, October 24, 2008

Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council acceptance and approval of a request from Kathy Glavin of the Chenango Community Players to hold their annual Ghost Walk on October 24, 2008. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Norwich YMCA Annual Turkey Trot, November 23, 2008

Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council acceptance of a request from Shannon Gawronski of the Norwich YMCA for the Annual Turkey Trot to be held on November 23, 2008, with street closings on North Broad Streets to Division Street, Birdsall Street to Silver Street, and Silver Street to Borden Avenue from 12 PM until the end of the parade. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Emergency Snow Plowing Action Plan

Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo reported that some municipalities have implemented emergency snow plowing action plans to make most efficient use of equipment and personnel. Mayor Joseph Maiurano commented that with the increase in fuel and salt costs, the City should investigate ways to implement economies and still keep the streets safely plowed and maintained. DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson stated that as equipment, personnel, and plowing schedules stand now, the Department is plowing as efficiently as possible. But schedules and equipment should be investigated for potential improvements. The City has a contractual obligation for arterial maintenance with the State to plow North and South Broad and East Main Streets. C. Ivarson also clarified that salt is not placed in order to melt snow, but in order to prevent a bond forming between snow and pavement, which would cause damage to the roadway when plowed. The plowing equipment is over 20 years old and new plows are available that would make it possible to plow some streets in fewer passes. Ald. Carey inquired about the fact that less frequent snow plowing would potentially increase damage to the roads due to snow and ice bonding to the roadway. Carl Ivarson

confirmed that this is a potential risk in scheduling fewer passes. If a new plowing schedule were to be implemented, this could save greatly on fuel costs as well as DPW overtime. Currently the City has seven designated plowing areas, and to plow the entire City takes approximately seven hours. Police Chief Joseph Angelino commented that public perception will be important, and noted that many communities do not plow other than main arteries until a snowstorm ends. Mayor Maiurano remarked that the City is looking hard at any savings possible in order to keep property taxes stable. C. Iverson added that the City attorney should be consulted regarding possible liability issues. He stated that he would work up possible action plans and comparisons of costs with the current schedule.

Department Head Reports

Fire Department

Status of Fire and EMS Vehicles

Fire Chief Chawgo presented a chart detailing the current Fire/EMS vehicle roster, with mileage for each vehicle. The oldest ambulance will be made a first responder during the winter in order to save wear and tear on the newer units. Five vehicles should be sold because of age, high mileage, and poor general condition. One vehicle, a 1999 Ford Crown Vic, is now being shared between the Fire Department and Code Enforcement because the Code Enforcement vehicle is experiencing severe mechanical problems. Ald. Carey asked how selling the 1987 American LaFrance pumper truck could benefit the loan the City has undertaken for a new pumper truck. Director of Finance William Roberts stated that it will not affect the amount of the loan, but will reduce funds needed from capital reserves to make the purchase. Contained in the chart was a summary of 911 calls responded to by the Department. A total of 1,872 calls have been responded to year-to-date.

Availability of Responders During Work Hours

Fire Chief Chawgo reported that, with the current economic climate, fewer volunteers are able to leave work during working hours to respond to calls, and for recent calls only two volunteers have been able to respond.

Communications

Fire Chief Chawgo reported that some of the Department's communications equipment fails frequently, especially pagers, which are no longer supported by the manufacturer. Various members of the Department have luckily provided technical expertise to keep the equipment working. He does not recommend replacing the equipment at this time because of the new equipment that will be required to meet the County's new standards. Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence asked if it would be possible to do reverse 911 calls. Fire Chief Chawgo said that is not possible. EMO A. Jones said that currently they are using text messaging to communicate. Fire Chief Chawgo commented that the Department is also looking to improve the volume of the firehouse horn.

Fire Inspection Fees

Fire Chief Chawgo reported that fees for fire inspections of commercial entities have been discussed in the past, and wondered if the Committee is interested in pursuing these, in light of the current economic climate. Ald. Carey expressed his conviction that the City should proceed with implementing fire inspection fees, as all municipalities are looking for revenue streams other than property taxes, and fire inspection fees would be a normal business expense for business owners. Also, the City is the only local governmental entity that does not charge for such inspections, and the proposed fees are lower than those of other local governmental entities. Ald. Deierlein agreed. J. Lawrence stated that he will distribute the proposed fee schedule so that the Finance/Personnel Committee can consider this at its next meeting.

Open House

Fire Chief Chawgo announced that Fire Prevention Week will be October 6-10, and the Fire Department will hold its Open House on Thursday, October 9.

Police Department

Police Chief Angelino announced that the Department has been busy, with several arrests and a drug raid conducted. Interviewing for the vacant patrol position continues.

Code Enforcement

J. Lawrence reported that he and other City officials met with County representatives regarding possible shared services with the County Codes Department. The City presented information and made suggestions for increasing efficiency, including combining offices and setting up satellite offices throughout the County to decrease driving expenses. Mayor Maiurano stated that another meeting will be held soon to continue discussions. A State-sponsored meeting to discuss shared services will be held in Binghamton on October 22, and the City is also looking to share water and wastewater treatment services. J. Lawrence then reported that the proposed law regarding keeping of animals within the City is being reviewed by the City attorney. Mayor Maiurano announced that the animals have been removed from the property that prompted this proposed law, and the owners of that property are leaving the City. Ald. Deierlein inquired on progress regarding the feeding of stray cats in the City, which is attracting skunks. J. Lawrence responded that he has spoken to the citizen who has been feeding the cats, who stated her willingness to only feed cats during the day, and who further commented that none of her neighbors had ever spoken to her regarding this problem before approaching the City.

DPW

RBCs Update

C. Ivarson reported that the NYS DEC has agreed to effluent rates of 80% of the existing rates before construction begins, 66% with one RBC off, and 27% with two RBCs off. He finds these rates acceptable. A consent order will have to be signed for liability reasons, and he will forward that to the City attorney when it is received. Funds for the project will be required beginning in April 2009. W. Roberts reported that he is working with the financial advisors and bond counsel for the \$4.5 million bond offering. He continues to investigate possible alternative funding sources. In order to begin the project, an initial short-term bond anticipation note will be required. That will be put out to bid. It will not be known for at least two months if any Federal grant funds will be available for the project.

Wheeler Avenue Tank

C. Ivarson reminded the Committee that he had investigated replacing the Wheeler Avenue tank at a projected cost of \$1.2 million. Repainting the tank was originally anticipated to cost \$500,000-\$600,000. However, he has found a way to repaint the tank for approximately \$130,000.

Sidewalk Program 2009

C. Ivarson stated that Council members should begin gathering names for residents interested in participating in the 2009 Sidewalk Program. While material costs are increasing, residents pay 50% of the costs, so it does not increase City costs. The program is popular and necessary. J. Lawrence asked if commercial properties might be included in the program. C. Ivarson advised against this for cost reasons, and because commercial properties are required by law to maintain their sidewalks.

Primary Troughs

C. Ivarson reported that installation of primary troughs, if handled by outside workers, would have cost \$160,000. Because the original plans were discovered and work was done in-house, costs were \$35,000.

Raw Water Testing

C. Ivarson reported that he will be conducting required e. coli testing at a cost of approximately \$3,000. If e. coli is found at levels of 10 colonies per 100 ml, cryptosporidium testing must be done at a cost of approximately \$15,000.

Leaf and Yard Waste Pickup

C. Ivarson reported that leaf and yard waste pickup will be in November but dates are not yet set.

Employee Transfer

C. Ivarson reported that the DPW employee who had been approved for transfer to the Wastewater facility declined the offer.

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus

C. Ivarson stated that three self-contained breathing apparatuses required by the Department were obsolete. He will be obtaining new units from the Fire Department.

Firehouse Roof Repairs

Ald. Carey asked about the status of necessary repairs to the firehouse roof. C. Ivarson responded that he has contacted local roofers to have a complete roof inspection done. Ald. Carey asked whether any warranty on shingled roof section would cover replacement of missing shingles. C. Ivarson expressed his conviction that a full inspection must be done for a realistic evaluation.

Other Items

Chenango Lake Lawsuit

Ald. Deierlein asked the status of the Chenango Lake lawsuit agreement. C. Ivarson stated that signed agreements are being received. An extension was granted by the court for these agreements. If agreements are not received, the City will follow with legal action. W. Roberts stated that he has requested the law firm to estimate further legal costs and a courtesy discount has been proposed. C. Ivarson noted that a watershed inspection will be done in 2009 at an estimated cost of \$70,000, to identify any properties that are not compliant.

7 Waite Street

Ald. Deierlein stated that a resident had thanked the City for removing the structure at 7 Waite Street and expressed some concerns about the property. J. Lawrence stated that all concerns had already been addressed.

Executive Session

Ald. Carey **moved** to enter executive session at 8:28 a.m. to discuss the employment history of particular individuals. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

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

Adjournment

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