

CITY OF NORWICH
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

November 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 7:05 AM on November 25, 2008, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2008, Committee meeting. Seconded by Ald. Carey, duly approved ayes all.

Correspondence - None

Department Head Reports

Fire Department Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo informed the Committee that bid specifications for a new pumper apparatus have been sent and the bids will be opened December 2, 2008.

Code Enforcement Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshal Jason Lawrence informed the Committee that the Codes vehicle experienced a massive system failure in Johnson City and is not worth repairing. The Fire Department car that has been used by Codes as a backup is also out of service, but will be repaired, though other vehicle repairs are taking precedence. The Committee discussed various options, such as purchase of a new or used vehicle, retiring another police vehicle after purchase of a new vehicle in 2009 and transferring the retired vehicle to Codes, and leasing a vehicle. Police Chief Joseph Angelino explained that a car would be purchased in 2009, with partial funding from a grant, but no cars would be purchased in 2010. Ald. Carey questioned the wisdom of purchasing a low-price vehicle that would likely not be in the best condition or have a long use life. Director of Finance William Roberts discussed how a vehicle might be paid for from various capital reserves. J. Lawrence suggested that a pick-up truck be purchased so that it could be shared with other departments for their occasional use, such as the Fire Department, Youth Bureau, and Planning. DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson suggested that the Sewer Fund sell to the General Fund a 2005, 1-ton pick-up truck with currently 13,000 miles, for \$8,000. This met with general approval. Ald. Deierlein **moved** to recommend Finance/Personnel Committee approval for selling a Sewer Fund pick-up truck to the General Fund. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

J. Lawrence informed the Committee that he will be out of town the first week of December to attend training.

Ald. Carey asked about the progress of the proposed local law regarding keeping of animals. J. Lawrence stated that the City Attorney has returned the law with some comments, and it will then be brought back to the Committee for review.

EMO EMO A. Jones announced that the State flood buy-out program is progressing. The current round of applications has closed and funding will be exhausted, though future funding may be provided. Currently one property in the City has applied and should be approved. The property will be purchased by the County and the two structures on the property will be demolished and the property converted to green use, such as park, playground, etc. The County may sell the property, but there will be deed restrictions on use of the property. Ald. Deierlein asked about the tax revenues from the property. W. Roberts said that pre-flood the property taxes were approximately \$500, post-flood that has dropped to approximately one-third of that. C. Ivarson asked when the new FEMA flood maps will be released. A. Jones replied that FEMA is behind schedule, and the maps will probably not be released for another nine or twelve months. The Committee discussed the impact this may have on city residents in regard to flood insurance.

DPW

Side Snow Plows

C. Ivarson presented to the Committee two proposals for side snow plow purchases. This would be a line-item purchase of one snow plow, though several more will be required eventually.

Emergency Snow Routes

C. Ivarson reported that he presented the proposed emergency snow routes to the Traffic Commission, which approved them. They questioned why the routes did not include schools. C. Ivarson informed them that schools are closed during snow emergencies and other communities do not plow residential streets except during normal business hours.

Drinking Water Regulations

C. Ivarson reported that State drinking-water regulations will be made more restrictive in 2009. The increased cost to the City is not yet known. Certification for workers applying chemicals will also be more restrictive.

Engineering – Third Floor of Firehouse

C. Ivarson presented a hypothetical floor plan for relocating City offices to the third floor of the firehouse, using movable partitions for some office walls to reduce cost. Cost of the hypothetical plan would be approximately \$280,000, plus engineering costs, but he stressed that no plan could be finalized until he knew the Council's final requirements for the space. Ald. Carey stated that he had not been aware plans to move City offices to the third floor of the firehouse had been revived. He asked how proposed construction would be paid for. W. Roberts explained that this would come from Building – Capital Projects and Capital Reserves, which together currently hold approximately \$400,000. Ald. Carey asked about the prospective lessee or purchaser of City Hall. W. Roberts stated that no lease has been agreed to and cannot be finalized for a month or longer. Ald. Carey expressed concern about the City leasing commercial property when empty commercial properties are available. W. Roberts said the goal is to have the lessee eventually purchase City Hall, generating tax revenue for the City. Leasing City Hall would be an interim procedure. Ald. Carey asked about other plans to move some City offices to the first floor of the firehouse. Mayor Maiurano and W. Roberts explained that this would lead to inefficiency for City offices and inconvenience for City residents, who would have to go to different floors to conduct their business. The Committee agreed that City offices should remain consolidated. Ald. Carey asked about the grant that was originally sought to renovate City Hall. W. Roberts replied that the City did not expect to receive that grant. The starting price for City Hall would also be higher than originally estimated. Ald. Carey asked that W. Roberts rework a comparison of costs prepared earlier in the year with the current projections. Ald. Carey **moved** that the hypothetical floor plan and engineers' proposal be forwarded to the Finance/Personnel Committee for their discussion, in anticipation of not receiving a grant to renovate City Hall. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

DPW Standards - Excavations in City Streets

C. Ivarson proposed additional exemptions to the DPW's standards for excavations in City streets, allowing for excavations of newly paved streets done for emergency repairs only within three years after the street has been paved. He explained that the DPW's current standards demand repaving of such excavations if not done to the City's satisfaction. He further noted that the current standards requiring curb-to-curb cuts for such excavations keep City streets in better repair and avoids the development of potholes where patches would be made. C. Ivarson then stated that the completion date of June 30 for repaving in 2009 as proposed by the Finance/Personnel Committee is insufficient, allowing only ten days to do all repaving from the last day of school.

Ald. Carey asked about a curb-cut request from 26 Fair Street that had been tabled at the October 21, 2008 Common Council meeting. C. Ivarson responded that the request would not be appropriate and had been withdrawn.

RBCs Update

C. Ivarson reported that the bond was ready to move forward, but he is still awaiting approval from the NYS DEC to approve project details. He then informed the Committee that a stipend had been granted to him and W. Roberts for extra duties required on the project above and beyond usual business hours. That stipend was for 18 months and expires at the end of February. Due to extra DEC requirements and delays that have extended the project, he requested that the stipends be extended through the project completion to September 2009. The combined cost of both stipends to the project would be approximately \$5,000 and would be covered by the capital project contingency line. Ald. Carey **moved** to recommend Council approval of additional stipends for Carl Ivarson and William Roberts totaling \$5,000 to the end of the project. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

New Regulations – Pool Drains

C. Ivarson reported that new regulations for drain placement in pools go into effect in 2009 and the drain will need to be altered on Kurt Beyer Pool. He is meeting with regulating authorities today to learn of the changes required. Modifications will have to be done before the pool opens in 2009. Because the new requirements affect private pools as well, Mayor Maiurano suggested that the Codes Office publicize the changes.

C. Ivarson also announced that he has been certified applicator for pesticides, so the department can purchase pesticides correctly

Ald. Deierlein asked about insurance compliance recommendations made earlier in the year for the Skating Rink. W. Roberts replied that Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason addressed their concerns and the company was satisfied.

Other Items

2009 Contract – SPCA

W. Roberts reported that the proposed contract with the SPCA for 2009 has been received and is identical to the current contract. Ald. Carey **moved** to refer the contract to the Finance/Personnel Committee for consideration. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.

Greenway Conservancy

Ald. Carey asked about the agreement for the Greenway Conservancy project. Mayor Maiurano explained the proposed route for the path within the City.

Adjournment

Ald. Carey **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 a.m. Seconded by Ald. Deierlein, duly approved ayes all.