

CITY OF NORWICH
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

June 28, 2007

Present:

Ald. Bresina, Chairman
Ald. Abraham
Ald. Williams

Also:

DPW Supt. Carl Ivarson
City Clerk/Director of Finance William Roberts
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
EMO A. Jones
Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith
Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence

Absent:

Police Chief Joseph Angelino

Committee Chairman Ald. Bresina called the June meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety Committee to order at 6:02 PM on June 28, 2007, in the DPW meeting room on Hale Street.

Approval of Minutes:

Ald. Abraham **moved** to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2007 Reg. Meeting and May 24, 2007 Reg. Meeting. Seconded by Ald. Williams, duly approved ayes all.

Visitors:

Dave & Maureen Francis presented materials regarding the establishment of a Neighborhood Watch program in the City of Norwich. Mr. Francis explained the functions of a neighborhood watch group and noted that such groups may be established without approval by any City agency or department and without the assistance of the Police Department, but noted that cooperation with the City and Police Department are important. He suggested that one role the Police Department might play would be to educate the community about neighborhood watch groups, and stressed that he would like the Police Department involved in the establishment of such a group. He pointed out several helpful roles such a group might play with City services, for instance, assisting emergency management with communications in the event of catastrophic events such as the flood of 2006. He also suggested that having a neighborhood watch might boost economic development by demonstrating the safety and security of the community. Costs for such a group would be very low, mainly covering literature and signs. Ald. Williams said she had discussed this idea with Police Chief Angelino, who was not overly enthusiastic. She mentioned that she knew of communities that had established a "porch watch," urging residents to spend time on their front porches to monitor activities in the neighborhoods. She said that Norwich may not be ready at this time for the more formalized approach of a neighborhood watch. Mr. Francis commented that he thought a neighborhood watch can help the City by helping to prevent crime, whereas the police are only able to act after a crime has been committed. He made a formal request that the Committee review the materials he had distributed and consider a neighborhood watch in Norwich. Ald. Bresina agreed that involving the Police Department was a good idea, both to educate the community and to guide a watch group. Mr. Francis stated that a neighborhood watch has the added benefit of bringing neighbors together and helping citizens in need, such as the elderly or infirm. He also mentioned that he had heard of cases where neighborhood watch groups had helped bring pressure on landlords to make needed repairs on their properties. Ald. Bresina mentioned one such group that had been established successfully in Guilford, but stated again that he believed the Police Department should be involved. The Committee thanked Mr. and Ms. Francis for their presentation.

Department Head Reports:

Fire Department: None.

Police Department: Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith mentioned that there is a vacancy in the Police Department due to Assistant Police Chief Van Miles's retirement. W. Roberts commented that this opening would be addressed at the next meeting of the Finance/Personnel Committee. Ald. Williams asked if the City commonly sent a letter of thanks to departing personnel. W. Roberts and Assistant Chief Smith said that such matters are usually handled internally by the department.

DPW Superintendent: Carl Ivarson reported first on the Ransford Creek Repair bid. There were four bidders, with the lowest qualifying bid from Bombard Excavating Corp. of Middle Grove. To Ald. Williams's question as to how the cost of the project was being paid for, EMO A Jones explained that FEMA supplies 75% of the cost, and while the City and State would normally split the remaining 25% of the cost, because of the extent and severity of the flood of 2006 the State will pay the entire 25%. Ald. Williams **moved** that the bid of Bombard Excavating Corp. for \$279,000.00 be approved and sent to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Ald. Abraham seconded, and approved ayes all.

C. Ivarson reminded the Committee that he had requested engineering costs for replacing the rotating biological contactor at the City's wastewater treatment plant. Costs were to stay within 13% - 15% of estimated construction costs, and Delaware Engineering proposed costs of \$340,000, or 12.9%. Because of the estimated project cost of \$3.2 million, the project will be bonded. Ald. Abraham asked how long the payback period would be. W. Roberts indicated that by law the payback period may be up to 40 years. C. Ivarson stated that if a lower interest rate were available they may choose a shorter payback period. Ald. Abraham **moved** that the engineering costs be forwarded to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Ald. Williams seconded, approved ayes all.

C. Ivarson said that the DPW currently lacks a mechanic, lead operator, lab technician, and park maintenance worker.

C. Ivarson updated the Committee on the status of the Filter Plant. He had reviewed a report by Stearns & Wheeler and indicated that the deciding factors would be the size and type of plant. Costs will not be discussed until these matters are decided. A new plant would process between 1 million and 1.2 million gallons per day. Ald. Abraham asked how much the current plant processed. C. Ivarson responded that the current load is .9 million gallons per day, that under extreme pressure the plant could process 1 million gallons per day. Ald. Abraham asked about pumping versus gravity-fed, and C. Ivarson confirmed that currently pumping costs are running between \$60,000 and \$70,000 per year. W. Roberts and C. Ivarson will be working on a request to the USDA. The Federal budget starts October 1 and requests must be submitted in July.

C. Ivarson discussed the gradual replacement of DPW, Police Department, and Fire Department radios to conform with new FCC standards. The cost will be approximately \$50,000, which will come from the General Fund. He asked the Committee if they considered the bid necessary. Assistant Chief Smith said that for the Police Department it was not necessary at this time. C. Ivarson said that he would finalize the costs, cancel the bid, and have bidders return the information. EMO Jones commented that the FCC requires the City to replace all radios over the next three or four years, and the City would be responsible for the costs. C. Ivarson remarked that some radios have already been replaced in the DPW and Police Department, and that new vehicles have the new radios installed. A Jones indicated that replacing Fire Department radios would be a larger undertaking due to the number, and that this should wait upon the County's decision as to the type needed. W. Roberts asked about the timeframe. A Jones stated that the new towers would be erected in 2007, the new radios would be implemented in 2008. W. Robert mentioned that the City would need to start earmarking funds to pay for this.

Bidding had been opened in June for a new 2008 Cab Dump Body Truck 4x4. There were no local bidders, despite invitations; the only bidder was Oneonta Ford, at a cost of \$49,462.72. This would be paid for from a grant. Ald. Williams **moved** to approve the purchase and send the item to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Ald. Bresina seconded, approved ayes all.

C. Ivarson next said that he received a letter from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation which required the City of Norwich to have an Emergency Action Plan and to provide a flow analysis of all dams. This is a separate analysis unrelated to the inspections previously conducted. He has asked Stearns & Wheeler to investigate if such analyses were conducted in the past. If so, he will try to learn if new analyses are required.

C. Ivarson remarked that the Historian's building needs a new boiler. This is a budgeted line item, but as the cost will exceed \$5,000, it will require the approval of the Finance/Personnel Committee. Ald. Abraham **moved** that the item be presented to the Finance/Personnel Committee, Ald. Williams seconded, approved ayes all.

EMO: A Jones reported that the gauges will be placed on rivers in Norwich, Binghamton, and Oneonta. The Susquehanna River Basin Commission has questions about paying for maintenance of the gauges, which may delay installation, but A Jones hopes they will be installed this year. The State has also created flood inundation maps, currently mostly for Broome County, but the data for Chenango County may become available at no cost in the near future. A grant from NOAA will supply bridge-mounted stream gauges as well for Canasawacta Creek and two other locations to be decided upon.

A Jones also reported that he has been promoting the email weather alerts with the County. Subscription to the alerts has gone up 30% since starting this push.

Code Enforcement: Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence reported that there have been problems working with NYSEG to have electric power restored to homes after the recent storm. NYSEG is now requiring reports from a licensed electrical inspector before restoring power, and will not accept reports from Code Enforcement. This has led to hardship for some citizens of Norwich, and in at least one case this may have medical consequences. A Jones mentioned that NYSEG keeps a list of homes that have special medical needs so that power can be restored to them outside the usual procedures. J. Lawrence commented that there are currently not enough locally available licensed electrical inspectors to be able to react in a timely fashion to such situations.

Correspondence: Ald. Bresina presented a letter from Kathleen S. Campbell requesting permission to close Francis Avenue on August 11th from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for the 77th Annual Francis Avenue Clambake. He **moved** for approval of the request. Ald. Williams seconded, approved ayes all.

Ald. Bresina presented a second letter from Martha Brower-Ryan of Business & Professional Women requesting permission to hold a voting rally in West Side Park. Because West Side Park is not in the City's jurisdiction, the request was not considered.

Other Items/Executive Session: The question of finishing the third floor of the firehouse arose. W. Roberts indicated that this would require discussion in Executive Session. Ald. Abraham **moved** to enter Executive Session at 6:46 p.m. to discuss the sale or lease of real property and the work histories of two individuals. Ald. Williams seconded, approved ayes all.

Ald. Abraham moved to exit Executive Session at 7:11 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Williams, approved ayes all.

Motion to Recommend Stipends for WWTP RBC Replacement Project: Ald. Abraham **moved** to recommend Council authorization of a \$5,000 stipend to the Director of Finance for administrative bookkeeping and reporting services, and an \$8,000 stipend to the Superintendent of Public Works for technical resident construction inspection services, both for required extra duties to be performed under and charged to the capital project costs for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Rotating Biological Contactors Replacement Project and to be funded by the Wastewater Fund through transfers to the Debt Service Fund. Seconded by Ald. Williams and duly adopted, ayes all.

Prior to the vote, Ald. Williams asked how long the project was expected to take. C. Ivarson indicated that it would be approximately eighteen months.

Adjournment: Ald. Abraham **moved** to adjourn at 7:12 p.m. Ald. Bresina seconded. Ayes all carried.

Next Meeting – July 26, 2007