

CITY OF NORWICH
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

August 23, 2007

Present:

Ald. Bresina, Chairman
Ald. Williams

Also:

DPW Supt. Carl Ivarson
City Clerk/Director of Finance William Roberts
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
EMO A. Jones
Police Chief Joseph Angelino
Mayor Joseph Maiurano
Planning and Community Development
Administrative Assistant Amy Donnison
Chairman - Plumbing Board David Francis

Absent:

Ald. Abraham

Committee Chairman Ald. Bresina called the August meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety Committee to order at 6:00 PM on August 23, 2007, in the DPW meeting room on Hale Street.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Williams **moved** to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2007 Reg. Meeting. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

Visitors

None.

Department Head Reports

Police & Fire Departments

Draft 2008 Budgets Chief Joseph Angelino presented to the Committee proposed draft budgets for the Police and Fire Departments, which he had previously presented to the Finance/Personnel Committee. He stressed that these draft budgets had not yet been reviewed by the Director of Finance and would be revised. He indicated that the main change from the 2007 budget was that he had combined the Fire and EMS budgets but had broken out ambulance costs on separate lines to expedite tracking of ambulance costs. Mayor Maiurano commented that the proposed 2008 budgets compared favorably to the 2007 budget. Ald. Bresina asked how costs were progressing. Chief Angelino indicated that personnel costs would rise because 2008 would address contract renewals, and that fuel costs would also be slightly higher.

Chief Angelino also noted that he had included retirement incentives as a reminder, though they are not considered part of the department budgets. Finance Director W. Roberts remarked that those costs are shown on the General Fund budget under Interfund Transfers to Employee Benefit Reserves. Ald. Williams and Superintendent of Public Works C. Ivarson agreed that these costs should be showed on departmental budgets rather than the Undistributed section of the General Fund budget, but W. Roberts pointed out that, while he too would agree, this would be a radical change, as the budget formats are designed by the State.

EMS Equipment Chief Angelino reported to the Committee that he had already indicated to the Finance/Personnel Committee and the Common Council that emergency care now begins in the ambulance. New lockboxes for narcotics and medical devices have been purchased from monies in the current budget, but as of September 1, 2007, statewide standards for equipment are being raised and new equipment will be needed; specifically, 12-lead patient heart monitors must be purchased to replace old three-lead monitors. Cost for the new monitors will be \$78,991 after a trade-in

allowance of \$18,000. If the equipment is purchased within the next thirty days, the provider will also grant a \$5,000 discount. These costs will be paid for over three years at a monthly cost of \$1,943.64, for a total of \$69,971. If, however, the purchase is delayed to after October 1, the monthly cost will be \$2,082.53. W. Roberts remarked that this cost would be taken from the equipment expense line in the budget, and by being spread over 36 months, it would not result in a significant lump-sum impact.

Ald. Williams asked if training for the new equipment was included in this price. Chief Angelino responded that training is minimal and only takes a few hours. The Mayor stressed that action be taken before October 1, in order to benefit from the offered discount. W. Roberts commented that this purchase would not require any budget transfers. Ald. Williams inquired how long acquisition would take once the equipment was ordered. Chief Angelino said equipment would be delivered within 30 days.

Ald. Williams **moved** to refer the request for the purchase of 12-lead patient monitors at the New York State bid price to the Finance/Personnel Committee for approval. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

Chief Angelino asked if he was now allowed to sign a purchase contract for the equipment. W. Roberts explained that this purchase would be done by a purchase order and as such did not need the Mayor's signature, but further noted that the request must first be approved by the Finance/Personnel Committee. Chief Angelino indicated that he would contact the equipment supplier to clarify whether any contract was required other than a purchase order.

Volunteer Firefighters Ald. Williams raised a matter that had been raised by a concerned citizen at the Open Forum of the August 21, 2007 Common Council meeting regarding the volunteer firefighters, and asked if the Chief had been approached about the issue. The Chief replied that he had not been previously aware that a volunteer firefighter would be addressing the council, but he was aware of the issue concerning mask fit testing and that it had been referred to the assistant fire chiefs and resolved. Ald. Bresina asked if issues from the volunteer firefighters were normally addressed to the Chief or to the Common Council. Chief Angelino responded that normally such issues would be brought to the volunteer fire chiefs, and then perhaps referred to the Chief or to the Council if necessary.

Code Enforcement

Plumbing Code Amendments Regarding Testing/Examinations

Amy Donnison, Planning and Community Development Administrative Assistant, and David Francis, Chairman of the Plumbing Board, presented to the Committee a proposed revision of the City of Norwich Plumbing Code. A. Donnison reported that the Plumbing Board had been meeting for several months to update the Plumbing Code in regard to testing of licensed plumbers. The Board recommended contracting with LaserGrade, a computer-based testing service with secure locations throughout the U.S. and Canada. Mr. Francis and other members of the Board visited LaserGrade's Ithaca location, toured the facility, and took a sample test; they were very favorably impressed by LaserGrade's professionalism and services. The proposed revision to the Plumbing Code changes and simplifies the current examination process, eliminating the need for the City to hire proctors, schedule examinations, place advertisements, etc. The candidate would receive official approval from the Plumbing Board to test for certification, and then would arrange testing directly with LaserGrade. The candidate would be given four opportunities to test in the 12-month period from the date of City approval. LaserGrade has three testing locations within 50 miles of Norwich, as well as other locations throughout the nation. Mr. Francis added that LaserGrade offers practice testing to candidates in order to improve results. A. Donnison stressed that there was no annual fee for the City to use LaserGrade, that the relationship could be ended at any time with 30 days' notice, and that LaserGrade charged a set fee for all relevant tests,

which the candidate pays, contrary to current practice, where the City formulates varying fees depending on number of candidates.

Ald. Williams inquired if the test is part of the International Codes Council (ICC). Mr. Francis explained that the ICC creates the test while LaserGrade, as an FAA testing facility, administers the test. Ald. Bresina asked if LaserGrade also offered civil service testing. Ms. Donnison did not know, but suggested that Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest contact LaserGrade to inquire. The Mayor asked if the Electrical Board might be interested in such testing for electricians. A. Donnison noted that the Electrical Board was scheduled to meet on September 10 and the topic might presented to them then. The Mayor noted that the current system of testing electricians had not been very successful.

A. Donnison noted that one other revision in the proposed Code granted the Codes Enforcement Officer on the Plumbing Board voting privileges and allowed the Mayor to assign the duties of Secretary of the Board to someone without voting privileges (such duty currently performed by A. Donnison).

Ald. Williams **moved** to recommend Council approval of a public hearing for the revision of the Plumbing Code. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

Ald. Bresina thanked Ms. Donnison and Mr. Francis for their hard work on the draft and their presentation to the Committee.

DPW Superintendent

Manpower

C. Ivarson reiterated to the Committee that the Department of Public Works is lacking four personnel and has a further two employees out on extended leave. He stressed that the lack of a lead operator was especially a hardship for the City. He commented that he felt hiring a lead operator would be difficult because of the salary offered. Ald. Williams asked if this had been presented to the Finance/Personnel Committee. C. Ivarson affirmed that it had, repeatedly, and that he had attempted to get increases through the union but had not succeeded. He felt that a potential employee should be paid as the City deemed appropriate and let the union file a grievance. Ald. Bresina asked which positions would be filled if funds were available and qualified candidates were available. C. Ivarson responded that none would be filled, because he is saving money for paving costs, and therefore he has been delaying hiring.

Ald. Bresina asked again, assuming that funds were available, which positions C. Ivarson would fill. C. Ivarson responded that he was attempting to hire a park worker. Ald. Williams commented that such a position should be easy to fill. C. Ivarson commented to the contrary, that candidates needed to have certain licensing, including a pesticides license. Ald. Williams noted that such licensing was not difficult to obtain and asked if it would not be possible to fill the position and then have the candidate obtain the necessary licenses. C. Ivarson remarked that it would be inappropriate to hire someone without the needed licenses because the individual might then fail the necessary testing. He then commented that he would fill all available positions immediately if funds were available. Ald. Williams asked if money for the lead operator position were available in the Waste Water budget, or if there were another problem in filling the position. C. Ivarson responded that he felt it was not appropriate to hire a lead operator at the prevailing rate, which may be higher than the superintendent's. Ald. Williams suggested that the matter be referred to the Personnel/Finance Committee.

Paving

C. Ivarson reported that the paving project turned out extremely well. W. Roberts commented that the cost of the total streets portion (\$126,473, excluding the parking lot) was approximately \$6,000 over the General Fund budgeted transfer to Capital Projects and should be referred to the

Finance/Personnel Committee. Ald. Williams **moved** to refer the matter of costs for the project to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

Norwich Schools

C. Ivarson reported that he has not yet received confirmation from the Norwich School District that they want the City to work on the water line connections portion of their project, but assumes they will.

Bid Renewals

C. Ivarson announced that two bid renewals for the original pricing have been accepted by the respective providers, for uniforms and fuel. W. Roberts remarked that as the renewals were included in the original contracts, no further action need be taken by the City.

Dump Truck

C. Ivarson reported that a City dump truck has a deteriorated bed but is still mechanically sound and he would prefer to replace the bed rather than the entire truck. Ald. Williams **moved** to refer the request to replace the bed to the Finance/Personnel Committee. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

Beebe Avenue

C. Ivarson said that NYSEG is currently performing gas main and service work on Beebe Avenue. He noted that rather than requiring excavating curb to curb, he would require them to fill the trenches with asphalt and then schedule the repaving for 2008. Ald. Williams asked if the trenches would then be higher than the pavement. C. Ivarson replied that they would not, and that NYSEG has consistently performed high quality work. A. Jones asked if NYSEG would be performing repairs on Miller Street. C. Ivarson responded that that was the project's builder's responsibility, that he would write to the builder requesting the work be done, and if the work were not done, the bond placed by the builder with the City would be used to pay for the necessary work.

2008 Budgets

C. Ivarson presented draft 2008 budgets to the Committee. Ald. Williams asked if the DPW handled the Parks budget. He said that was so, and that he knew the Parks Commission wanted to start a separate equipment capital reserves account, but wanted to explain to them the reasons against that. Ald. Williams explained that a separate account was desirable so that playground equipment would have its own reserves fund. She asked how much is currently available in the Parks equipment account. After discussion, W. Roberts said that the account was scheduled to have \$33,000 available by year end. Ald. Williams commented that that was sufficient to purchase needed playground equipment. She asked if Planning and Community Development Specialist Todd Dreyer had been made aware of the amount available in the account, as this may affect research he is performing for grant monies for this purpose. She also asked for new playground equipment brochures, which C. Ivarson stated he would procure. C. Ivarson asked which parks the Commission wanted to purchase equipment for first. Ald. Williams replied that the Commission first wanted to purchase equipment for Weiler Park first, and then for Kurt Beyer Park. A. Jones added his concerns regarding the condition of the equipment in the parks.

Regarding the General Fund budget, C. Ivarson commented that he had included amounts for a new street sweeper and increased the amounts for sidewalk repairs and repair and maintenance for the East Main Street parking lot. Ald. Williams asked about the projected roof repair for City Hall. C. Ivarson responded that those costs would be charged to Capital Projects, and that the roof needed to be replaced, rather than repaired. The Mayor also commented that he expected the City would receive grants to help cover repairs. C. Ivarson remarked that repair costs for City Hall may be affected by State Historical Preservation Office requirements. W. Roberts noted that the building is on the Historical Register, but is not designated as a historical landmark.

EMO

Approval to Attend Disaster Preparedness Conference - October 15-17, 2007.

Ald. Williams **moved** to approve the attendance of A. Jones at the Disaster Preparedness Conference in Lake Placid, NY, from October 15 through 17, 2007. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

Absence

A. Jones announced that he would be in Syracuse on September 10, 2007 to attend a New York State Emergency Management Association board meeting.

Stream Gauges

A. Jones further reported that three sites had been designated for stream gauges: 1) the Rexford Street bridge, 2) the Plymouth Street bridge, the site for which is located in the City of Norwich, and 3) on Highway 23 in South Plymouth. Two of the sites will also have rain gauges, but Rexford Street would not have an accompanying rain gauge. C. Ivarson asked if the rain gauges would automatically dump accumulated rainwater and reset themselves. A. Jones confirmed that they would, and further reported that information from the gauges would be automatically relayed every minute to the EOC, and would then be available on the Internet. C. Ivarson asked if this would remove the necessity for the Waste Water Treatment Plant's reporting. A. Jones stated that he would check.

Other Items

None.

Committee Concerns

None.

Correspondence

Norwich Pumpkin Festival Ald. Bresina **moved** to recommend for Council approval a request from Gard Turner of the Norwich Pumpkin Festival for the closings of East Park Place and West Park Place from 12:00 p.m. Friday, October 26, until 12:00 p.m. Sunday October 28, and the closing of West Main Street from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 27. Seconded by Ald. Williams, duly approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Williams **moved** to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Bresina, duly approved ayes all.

Next Meeting –September 27, 2007