

City of Norwich

One City Plaza
Norwich, New York 13815
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Minutes

Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting of May 6, 2008

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn presided at the meeting of the Finance/Personnel Committee held at 6:00 PM on May 6, 2008, in the Common Council Chambers at One Court Plaza.

Present:

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Robert Jeffrey
Ald. Paul Laughlin

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Director of Finance William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. Robert Carey
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Community Dev. Specialist Todd Dreyer
Code Enforcement Office Jason Lawrence
Jessica Lewis, Media Representative

Call to Order

The meeting was held in the Council Chambers at One Court Plaza immediately following a Special Meeting of the Common Council and called to order at 6:11 p.m. by Ald. Schermerhorn.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Laughlin **moved** to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 1, 2008. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey and duly approved ayes all.

Youth Bureau

None.

Visitors

None.

Public Safety Items

Police

STEP and Child Car seat Grants

Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith reported that the Police Department has applied for grants for a Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) grant and child car seat safety enforcement grant. A STEP grant was received last year and is currently being used to fund extra patrols for seatbelt compliance.

Twelve-Hour Shifts

Assistant Police Chief Smith announced that 12-hour shifts have proved successful, though they have led to increased fuel costs. Foot and bicycle patrols will begin soon, which will help to defray those added expenses.

Fire Department

Ambulance Re-Bid

Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo reminded the Committee that the prior bid specifications had not been properly formulated and reported that the revised specifications are nearing completion and should be ready shortly.

Change in Oxygen Supplier

Chief Chawgo reported that the Fire Department has used a single supplier of oxygen, located in Binghamton, since 1998. The Department has located a local supplier, Chenango Welding, which offers the necessary supplies at less than half the cost and with more service flexibility.

EMO

None.

Code Enforcement

Fees for Inspections

Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence presented a draft proposed fee schedule for fire and building inspections within the City. He noted that this schedule will be presented to the Public Safety/Public Works Committee this month.

Fees for Temporary Electrical Contractor License

J. Lawrence reported that the Electrical Board had recommended Council approval of a reduction in the temporary license fee to \$175. This reduction will bring the City of Norwich in line with fees charged by other communities. Ald. Laughlin, who serves on the Electrical Board, noted that the current fee of \$500 is extremely high and discouraged commercial development within the City. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to refer this matter to the Public Safety/Public Works Committee for review. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all. Ald. Schermerhorn then asked if the Plumbing Board will also recommend a similar decrease in its permit fee. J. Lawrence stated that the Plumbing Board had not yet met to discuss the matter.

Community & Economic Development

Ald. Jeffrey noted that he had submitted items for the agenda which had not been included. He discussed instituting a citizen-based clean-up day for concerned residents to dispose of litter on City streets and public areas. Ald. Carey remarked that he had spoken to Mayor Maiurano regarding this, and NY Susquehanna & Western Railroad had promised to clean the rail bed in the near future.

Public Works

RBCs update

Finance Director William Roberts remarked that costs had risen since the RBCs project had first begun, and an amending bond resolution will be required, which will be decided at the next Council meeting. A grant application had also been filed with USDA-Rural Development, and word was received that their initial finding is that the City of Norwich is eligible for a grant of \$497,000; whether the City will receive the grant will be decided within the next few months. The City is looking for other grant funds, including through the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Disposal of Surplus Equipment

W. Roberts stated that an additional item, a Polymer Controller and Pump, had been added to the list previously offered of surplus equipment for disposal either by online or sealed-bid auctions. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of designating these items surplus and disposing them through an auction process yet to be determined. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Miscellaneous Items

Insurance Buy-Out for Non-Union Employees

Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest reported that Ald. Deierlein had requested the Committee discuss the possibility of offering health-care premium buyouts for non-union employees. D. DeForest stated that her research showed such an offer would probably not be of interest to most non-union employees, and that if it were, rather than saving the City money, it would lead to a further expenditure of approximately \$7,000. Ald. Carey expressed his opinion that such a buy-out offer would not be attractive to non-union employees unless employee insurance premium contributions are significantly increased. D. DeForest recommended that such a plan would not be productive at this time.

Blood-Borne Pathogens Policy and Potential Cost

D. DeForest reported that a blood-borne pathogens policy, for vaccination of workers who have potential exposure to Hepatitis A and B through contact with blood/waste, is in place with the Police and Fire Departments. Because each department keeps its own records of compliance with the policy, a central record-keeping system is needed in case of compliance audit by the State. The Department of Public Works does not have such a system, yet DPW workers have shown that dangerous items and substances are daily injected into the City's wastewater system. She is investigating instituting such a policy with the DPW, where workers can either receive or waive vaccinations. While D. DeForest has not yet finalized costs, the DPW has \$2,000 available for such a program. Vaccinations are also mandatory for lifeguards at the City pool (14 will be working under the Youth Bureau this summer), but many of these are college students and will have received vaccinations through their school plans.

Real Property Tax Auction

W. Roberts announced that bids had been opened for real property sold at tax auction, and presented to the Committee a chart showing the net profit to the City after costs. Ald. Jeffrey asked about the assessed values of the properties. W. Roberts said he would provide that information later. Ald. Jeffrey asked about the process involved if a purchaser wishes to change the

occupancy of a building. J. Lawrence explained that, dependent upon the zoning of the building, such changes may need approval by the Zoning Board. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to defer making a recommendation to the Council on bids received for properties at 16 Hickory Street and 9 State Street as possibly inadequate, pending further information. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all. Ald. Jeffrey then **moved** to recommend the Council accept bids received on properties at 29 Division Street and 20 Hickok Avenue, pending further information. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all. Additional discussion followed with regard to confirming market values and bidder qualifications, with ultimate determinations on bids to be made with the full Council.

Executive Session

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to enter executive session at 6:46 p.m. to discuss the employment history of particular individuals and the credit history of a particular individual. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to exit executive session at 7:38 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Motions

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council remove from the table a resolution authorizing adjustment of salary for Deputy City Clerk and budget transfer, and should revise the effective date of such adjustment to June 11, 2008. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to recommend that the Council: (1) create the Department of Code Enforcement; (2) amend the job title of Code Enforcement Officer to Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall; (3) amend the relevant job description; (4) upgrade the position of Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall from Grade 22 to Grade 29; (5) upgrade Jason Lawrence to the position of Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall at the entry level of Grade 29 effective May 21, 2008. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, duly approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Next Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting – June 3, 2008