

City of Norwich

One City Plaza
Norwich, New York 13815
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Minutes

Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting of August 5, 2008

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn presided at the meeting of the Finance/Personnel Committee held at 6:00 PM on August 5, 2008, in the Common Council Chambers at One Court Plaza.

Present:

Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Robert Jeffrey (arr. 6:04 p.m.)
Ald. Paul Laughlin

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Director of Finance William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. John Deierlein
Police Chief Joseph Angelino
Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo
Mayor Joseph Maiurano
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Jessica Lewis, Media Representative

Call to Order

The meeting was held in the Council Chambers at One Court Plaza and called to order at 7:12 p.m. by Ald. Schermerhorn.

Approval of Minutes

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

Youth Bureau None.

Visitors None

Public Safety Items

Code Enforcement

Temporary Waiver (until 12/31/2008) of Permit Fees for Wood Stove Installation

Finance Director William Roberts reported that a recommendation had been made by the Public Safety/Public Works Committee to temporarily waive, until year-end, the permit fee of \$50 for wood stove installations, in order to encourage residents to apply for a proper permit and receive safety inspections after installation. Ald. Jeffrey asked if this applied to outdoor wood-burning furnaces. W. Roberts reminded him that the Council had banned all such furnaces in 2007 (see Local Law No. 2 of 2007, approved June 19, 2007). Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of the temporary waiver of the permit fees for wood stove installation until 12/31/2008. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Police

Patrolman Vacancy

Chief Joseph Angelino reported that a patrolman, James Samuelson, has resigned from the Department, leading to a vacancy. He further reported that this vacancy has already entailed the accrual of 24 hours of overtime; this is because the new 12-hour shifts, which have eliminated much overtime, have also made it difficult to use other officers to cover vacancies, as they are already working 12-hour shifts. He projects a minimum of 88 hours of overtime to be incurred. Ald. Jeffrey expressed concern about future costs in the Department. Chief Angelino noted that the hiring process would take a minimum of two months, that the outgoing patrolman was at the second pay step and a new patrolman would like be coming in at an entry-level salary. Ald. Jeffrey asked if it is necessary to fill the vacancy. Chief Angelino explained again that while the former shift schedule was more flexible in handling absences, in the current 12-hour shift plan, a vacancy necessitates overtime and leads to difficult scheduling problems. Ald. Jeffrey expressed that he is against filling the vacancy at this time. Mayor Maiurano stated that overtime pay will have to cover the vacancy until a replacement is hired. Ald. Jeffrey reiterated his statement that he would not approve filling the vacancy until projected 2008 expenditures and the 2009 outlook are available. W. Roberts explained that such projections are part of the preparation of the 2009 budget and such information can't be finalized until October at the earliest. Ald. Laughlin **moved** to refer the matter to the Common Council for further discussion. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn, approved.

Fire Department

Ambulance Bid

Fire Chief Tracy Chawgo announced that bids for a new or demo ambulance had been opened. The only bid received was from Tyler Fire Equipment for a demonstration model in the same style as the current ambulance. The model has approximately 7,000 miles. The amount of the bid was \$108,051.00, with a trade-in allowance of \$7,500, for a total bid amount of \$100,551.00. W. Roberts explained that Capital Reserves currently holds \$124,000, with another \$15,000 to be deposited by year-end. Ald. Schermerhorn asked if this were a top-line ambulance. Chief Chawgo responded that this was the least expensive ambulance that would be adequate for the Department's needs. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of the bid and corresponding transfer from the Ambulance Capital Reserves. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

EMO

None.

Community & Economic Development Ald. Jeffrey asked about the monthly economic development loans report. W. Roberts replied that loans are following the same pattern as in the past few months. Those that are past due are being caught up, new loans are being paid on time, and that Amy Donnison, who prepares the loan report, has been occupied with her Code Enforcement duties and will probably complete the report on Wednesday.

Public Works

Playground Equipment Replacement – Weiler Park

C. Ivarson reported that though the Council had approved the replacement of certain playground equipment at Weiler Park, because of higher overall, unrelated costs and the current State fiscal crisis, he, the Finance Director, and the Mayor had considered postponing this expenditure. Ald. Jeffrey stated that he is strongly in favor of replacing the equipment. W. Roberts added that several aldermen had expressed their desire to proceed with replacement. The Committee, asked C. Ivarson to proceed with the purchase of the new equipment.

Rate for Water Supply to Gas-Drilling Companies

C. Ivarson presented to the Committee a proposal for rates to supply water to gas-drilling companies. He announced that the figures cannot be considered final until after City officials meet with the DEC, the DOH, and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission on August 12, when more information will be forthcoming. He noted that the Common Council will be responsible for setting the rate, and he will supply all information needed for that decision after the August 12 meeting. Ald. Jeffrey asked about costs related to supplying water during winter months, specifically for salting the hydrant area. C. Ivarson pointed out that a section of the proposal deals specifically with winter supplies, and that the area where water will be loaded is already salted because the Water Department loads its raw water for flushing at the same point. He will attach a meter to this equipment in order to bill the gas-drilling companies.

Pretreatment Industrial Waste Stream

C. Ivarson reported that the current City sewer-use ordinance regulates any wastewater stream entering the treatment plant. The previously referenced meeting on August 12 will affect a proposed agreement with gas-drilling companies for waste streams. He will follow-up with the Committee on this at a future meeting. He added that any such streams would be closely monitored, and no hazardous or toxic content would be accepted.

Capital Reserves Transfer for Chemical Costs to RBCs Project

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of a transfer of approximately \$12,000 from Capital Reserves to the RBCs Project for chemicals. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Capital Reserves Transfer for Reduction Gear to Sewer Fund Repairs

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend Council approval of a transfer of approximately \$18,000 from Capital Reserves to Sewer Fund Repairs for reduction gear. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Miscellaneous Items

Change in Wards and Selection of Supervisors

W. Roberts reported that this item had been suggested by the Mayor, but more research is necessary for discussing it at a later time.

2008 Expenditures and 2009 Budget Timeline & Process

W. Roberts presented to the Committee a chart detailing the proposed budget-preparation process. This will entail presenting a draft of tentative budget at the September Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting, with special Common Council meetings as needed to discuss line items, a public hearing on the proposed budget at the October Common Council meeting, the required notice submitted to the State Comptroller's Office at the end of October, and the budget adoption at the November Council meeting. Ald. Jeffrey thanked Mr. Roberts for his work on this timeline. He asked about City expenditures to date. W. Roberts stated that while some line items, such as fuel costs, are up, overall current expenditures are tracking well. Revenues are very good, especially sales tax and ambulance fee recovery revenues. He annually prepares statistical analyses for projected revenues and costs as part of the budget process, and noted that sales tax projections are quite uncertain until after the holiday season. Ald. Jeffrey asked about sales tax revenues from eBay sales. W. Roberts explained that while technically sales tax is collectable from such sales, and some people do voluntarily report such purchases, its effective enforceability by the State Taxation Department is uncertain.

Date of September Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting

W. Roberts requested that the September Finance/Personnel Committee meeting be scheduled for September 9 rather than September 2, because September 2 falls the day after Labor Day and this will provide an extra week for the preparation of a tentative draft budget. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to set a date of September 9, 2008, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers, for the September meeting of the Finance/Personnel Committee. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Executive Session

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to enter executive session at 7:52 p.m. to discuss the potential sale or lease of City-owned real property, the credit history of a particular individual, and labor contract negotiations. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to exit executive session at 8:52 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Laughlin **moved** to adjourn at 8:52 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, duly approved ayes all.

Next Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting – September 9, 2008