

City of Norwich, Department of Finance

One City Plaza
Norwich, New York 13815
(607) 334-1230

Minutes

Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting of May 1, 2007

Present:

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

Absent: (none)

Also Present:

Director of Finance William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Police/Fire Chief Joseph Angelino
Volunteer Asst. Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Comm. Dev. / Planning Specialist Todd Dreyer
Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence
EMO A. Jones
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. Suzanne Williams
Mayor Joseph Maiurano

Call to Order

The meeting was held in the Council Chambers at One Court Plaza and called to order at 6:03 p.m. by committee chairman, Ald. W. Schermerhorn.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Laughlin moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of April 3, 2007. Ald. Jeffrey pointed out several errors in the minutes, which W. Roberts said he would follow-up and correct. Ald. Laughlin's motion was then amended to approve the minutes, as corrected. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey and duly adopted ayes all.

Public Safety Items

Police: (no items)

Fire: Bid Opening on New Custom Pumper Truck

Chief Angelino reported that four bids were received and opened at 2:30 p.m. today. He asked Assistant Chief Jan Papelino to highlight the details of the various bids submitted. Papelino summarized that three of the bids were relatively in the ballpark of price expectations, but the fourth one (from Priority Fire Apparatus of Cortland, NY) was far outside of the price range (at \$362,000) because it was overloaded with "bells and whistles" not needed nor specified in the bid package. It was a last-minute submittal, and it represented the only in-stock apparatus that they could deliver within the specified 30-day period. Chief Angelino noted that they made an extra effort to respond after learning of the bid late in time, and they likely wanted to get on the list for possible future bid invitations. Asst. Chief Papelino then referred to the American LaFrance bid (Clay, NY location); he noted that the base price of \$221,436.00 did not include the required 5-year warranty. When the corresponding charge was included, the total effective price is \$238,940.00; however, they indicated that they could not meet the 30-day delivery requirement. Also, their paint warranty covers only 7 years versus the 10 years specified requirement. Based on those failures to meet requirements, this bid would not qualify. Next, he addressed the bid from Tyler Fire Equipment of Elmira, NY, sales representative for Pierce Manufacturing. He pointed out that they also cannot meet the 30-day delivery (they indicated 45 to 90 days), and that no warranty was provided. It seemed apparent that they totally overlooked this and failed to include it. Therefore, their base bid amount of \$223,197.00, although relatively low, was incomplete and failed to meet requirements. Lastly, Papelino highlighted the bid from Absolute Emergency Vehicles & Equipment of Endicott, NY (sales representative for manufacturer, E-One). He added adjustments to their base price of \$227,521.00: \$1,022.00 for the bumper feature, plus \$7,304.00 for a 5-year warranty versus the 2-year warranty covered by the base price. This brings their total effective price to \$235,847.00. They did confirm delivery within 30 days. Ald. Jeffrey asked whether we have any E-One equipment and was concerned about standardization of parts and efficient maintenance procedures. He also asked if this replaces two trucks, and is there any history on the manufacturer. Papelino indicated no, we don't have E-One equipment, but said that E-One has a history of being in business for a very, very long time, and may possibly be the largest manufacturer in the nation. Chief Angelino added that the city of Montreal recently purchased about 50

trucks from them. C. Ivarson pointed out that highway maintenance does not stock replacement parts for any of the fire equipment. Papelino added that this is a replacement for just one truck, Engine 3. Additional discussion followed: Ald. Jeffrey said the last time we explored truck replacement, we were thinking of using the same or similar vehicles; if we purchase another vehicle next year or soon after, could we have saved by buying two together? Chief Angelino pointed out that there will be different, higher-cost engine specs after the 2006 model year (this being a new, 2006 model); Papelino added that NFPA is always changing standards. In summing up, Chief Angelino indicated that the preliminary recommendation, pending the completion of a thorough review of specifications details, is the bid from Absolute for the E-One apparatus. Ald. Jeffrey moved to recommend full Council approval to award the bid to Absolute as stated. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, ayes all.

Following the vote, additional discussion addressed the logistics of bumper-to-bumper warranty work, and the possibility of a future cash ("loyal customer") discount should a second vehicle bid be awarded to Absolute.

EMO: Surplus Equipment

A. Jones reported on his plans for the disposal of older equipment, mostly computer related, some in working condition and others not, and handed out an itemized list. He said he planned on first offering it to other departments before pursuing the disposal, including the use of e-Bay. Ald. Laughlin moved to approve the disposal. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, ayes all.

Codes: Outdoor Solid-Fuel-Burning Furnaces

Codes Officer J. Lawrence distributed copies of various materials relating to outdoor solid-fuel-burning furnaces. They included: an October 2005 report from then Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's Office - Environmental Protection Bureau - entitled, "Smoke Gets in Your Lungs: Outdoor Wood Boilers in New York State"; a tentative draft for a local law prohibiting outdoor burning furnaces; a corresponding draft for an amending resolution to remove such equipment from the permitted heating equipment fee schedule; and photographs of the one such unit currently installed in the city. Lawrence drew attention to pages 14 and 15 of the report, which illustrate the relative initial capital and ongoing operational costs of this type of equipment and major types of other conventional equipment. He noted that there was not any noticeable economic advantage, unless the wood fuel was self-sourced. That is, unless a homeowner lived on a large tract of land with available forest and the ability to produce their own firewood supply, it would not appear to be a cost savings alternative to most conventional options. Ald. Laughlin asked what the essential difference was between this type of equipment and other wood-burning devices. Lawrence said it was that it is out-door versus indoor operation. Ald. Schermerhorn asked what the issue was with this equipment. Lawrence said it was the hazard of getting smoke into the lungs of residents (i.e. air pollution). Ald. Jeffrey added that he felt very strongly about prohibiting such equipment (out-door only). He said that in the relatively close-density neighborhoods configuration of a city, versus wide-open out-door areas in the countryside, operating even only one creates health-related smoke issues. Further discussion followed; Ald. Jeffrey asked if a public hearing could be scheduled in May. W. Roberts said that there would probably be enough legal notice time, but not enough staff resources to put everything together properly for the May meeting. He suggested a discussion for the Council Work Session, and if it is desired to move forward, to schedule the public hearing in June. Ald. Jeffrey moved to forward it to the full Council for discussion at next week's work session. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, ayes all.

Codes: Additional Items:

J. Lawrence also reported on activities for Building Safety Week (ref. Mayor's proclamation for April 27, 2007). He said that he was working with Curtis Lumber, and the ICC (International Codes Council) on various planned activities including an announcement in the newspaper, drawing attention to the importance of functioning smoke detectors and correction of wiring hazards, plus the EMO's provision of information on storm survival, and safety kits. He was also working on converting media for airing by Time Warner on the government channel and possibly other channels.

Lawrence then provided an update on the Rental Registration Program. He said it is going very well, with around 450 to 500 registrations turned in. He said an added benefit of the effort is much improved communications with landlords. Following the May 30th free filing deadline, he will have a full results and status report for the Council in June.

Community & Economic Development Projects & Funds:

T. Dreyer presented the concept of seeking bids for the sale of City-owned property at 96 Silver Street, suggesting a minimum bid of \$20,000. This is property acquired by the City for taxes. A former house destroyed by fire was cleared from the site, and it is now a vacant lot. Since it is in the Empire Zone (EZ), Dreyer pointed out that any improvements – particularly the construction of a new house – would be fully exempt from property taxes for 7 years, after which it would become fully taxable over the next 3 years. This benefit should be worth a substantial amount to a prospective owner. He said he would be consulting City Assessor S. Harris to confirm a reasonable minimum. The property was included in last year's (unsuccessful) Restore New York grant application, but due to the EZ aspects, this approach would be more advantageous to the City. Ald. Jeffrey moved to recommend it to the full Council for the June meeting. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, ayes all.

Public Works & Engineering Items

RBC's – RFQ, Delaware Engineering

The Rotating Biological Contactors (RBC's) at the wastewater treatment plant are extremely worn out and are in need of complete overhaul or more likely, replacement. C. Ivarson reported that he had sent out RFQ's (request for qualifications) to four Engineering firms. All rules and regulations as they relate to USDA-Rural Development requirements for hiring an engineering firm were carefully followed in the process. Three out of four responded, and he rated each response according to a set of technical and qualitative criteria. All three adequately addressed the RBC problem. He was particularly impressed with Delaware Engineering's response, which received a preferable rating. His recommendation to go with Delaware has already been approved by the Water Commission and the Public Safety / Public Works Committee. He noted that this selection process is at no cost to the City. He added that when an engineering proposal for design, inspection, and related professional services is received from a firm, the proposed fees typically run from 13% to 15% of the project construction costs. Ald. Jeffrey moved to approve the qualifications selection of Delaware Engineering. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, ayes all.

Cold Water Meters Bid

C. Ivarson reported on the bid opening on April 11, 2007 for cold-water meters. In this case, of the two bids received, the low bid (Vellano Bros., Inc.) of \$60,668.77 did not meet specifications. Consequently, the other bid of \$69,307.42 from E. J. Prescott, Inc., was recommended for award, and the Water Commission and Public Safety / Public Works Committee have both approved. Ald. Jeffrey moved to recommend awarding the bid to E. J. Prescott, Inc. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, ayes all.

Request for Bids: One-Ton Dump Truck

Ivarson said that he would be issuing a request for bids for a one-ton dump truck and a backhoe, in connection with Senator Libous' member item award totaling \$110,000. The truck bid will be scheduled for opening on May 23, 2007, and he plans on the backhoe bid going out for opening in June. Ald. Jeffrey moved to approve the letting of bids. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, ayes all.

Old Business:

Sidewalk Program Update

T. Dreyer said that approximately 85 property owners, with approximately 7,400 lineal feet of sidewalks, have indicated a desire to participate in the sidewalk program, which received the \$50,000 grant from Senator Libous. The grant would provide half, and the owners would pay the other half, of the approximate cost of \$100,000 for this summer's project, which would cover roughly 4,000 lineal feet of sidewalk. Ald. Jeffrey inquired as to how soon the work would begin and when the cost to each owner will be known. In coordination with Supt. Ivarson, the selection of which walks will best fit into this year's work schedule and DPW capabilities will be made soon. It may total out to a little less than 4,000 lineal feet, depending on the final selection. Costs were estimated in the grant application, and the ultimate charge will be based on calculated actual costs. Owners will have the option of paying either the full amount or one third of their 50% share as a first installment to accompany their contract prior to starting the work. If opting for installments, the second and third ones can be made over the next two years. A discussion followed, regarding those owners whose sidewalks are not selected for this year's program. W. Roberts said that based on encumbering current year budget amounts for sidewalks and public works in general, plus continuing the same budgeting level next year, it could be possible to provide a similar follow-on program for the remaining owners. The current grant is making it possible to not have to use the 2007 budgeted expenditures. Therefore, such an approach to extending the program would not result in a net "bottom-line" increase for the total General Fund budget. However, as C. Ivarson pointed out, the Council would need to decide relatively soon on

including it in the 2008 budget, since he is already planning out next year's DPW work schedule. After brief discussion, Ald. Jeffrey suggested putting it on the Finance/Personnel agenda for June, for a recommendation to the full Council to decide next month. Mayor Maiurano also said he could try to see if he could get another grant for the next year and a half.

Deputy Clerk Vacancy Update

W. Roberts reported that between 35 and 40 applications were received, and 9 interviews were conducted. There were several good candidates, and 3 of them were strongly qualified. He has tentatively ranked them and will make a final choice after D. DeForest completes a review of background references. He anticipates providing the full Council with a resolution to appoint a candidate at the work session next week. He is planning on having the person start at the beginning of June, based on notification timing and his return from vacation after Memorial Day.

Parking Lot Behind McLaughlin's

W. Roberts said he didn't have anything new to report yet; the next steps are developing a lease agreement and confirming how much will be required to do the work. He added that approximately \$17,000 is earmarked from GNLDC funds for parking improvements, and possibly another \$15,000 might be available when properties on Front and N. Front streets are sold to NBT. He said he would double-check and advise C. Ivarson accordingly. Mayor Maiurano said that City Attorney P. Flanagan has the information and would be drafting an agreement.

Chenango Lake Lawsuit

C. Ivarson received word from Hancock & Estabrook that the earliest they could meet with the Council would be on May 15th (at regular Council meeting). A brief discussion followed, questioning whether a separate special meeting should be scheduled instead for the sole purpose of briefing the Council. Mayor Maiurano noted that this has been delayed and postponed several times already since the beginning of this year. He felt it should not be put off any further, and with 5 out of 6 aldermen present, it was concurred that the meeting for May 15th would start at 6:00 p.m. with an executive session to discuss current litigation. This should allow the regular portion of the meeting to begin close to 7:00 p.m. W. Roberts said he will put notices out.

New Business

Correction to Amendment to Municipal Cooperation Agreement & Merger of GNLDC with Chen. Co. Area

Corp. W. Roberts referred to last month's Council action to approve an amendment to the municipal cooperation agreement, with respect to the membership designations for the new consolidated board. He said when he wrote the resolution, he paralleled wording already drafted through the Area Corp. As a result, it provided for the City to have the Mayor and either a Council member or City staff person as appointed by the **Common Council** (paralleling the Town appointing by the Town **board**). However, past City appointments to the GNLDC have been made by the **Mayor**. Roberts said he will draft a resolution to correct the original one to read appointment of either one Council member or one City staff member, as appointed by the **Mayor**. Ald. Jeffrey moved to recommend the correction. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey moved to adjourn at 7:23 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin and duly adopted ayes all.