

COMMON COUNCIL

Organizational Meeting
January 5, 2009

Mayor Joseph Maiurano presided at an organizational meeting of the Common Council held at 7:00 PM on January 5, 2009, in the Common Council Chambers at One Court Plaza.

Present:

Mayor Joseph Maiurano
Ald. Robert Carey
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. John Deierlein
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Paul Laughlin
Ald. Robert Jeffery

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk William Roberts
City Attorney Patrick Flanagan
Deputy City Clerk Brian Drake
Code Enforcement Officer/Fire Marshall Jason Lawrence
EMO A. Jones
DPW Superintendent Carl Ivarson
Jessica Lewis, Media Representative

Absent:

None

Call to Order

The organizational meeting of the Common Council was called to order by Mayor Maiurano at 7:10 p.m.

Goals and Objectives

Mayor Maiurano presented a review of goals and objectives for the City of Norwich and the State of the City to the Common Council as follows:

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR CITY OF NORWICH 2009

As we start a new year, we must be prepared for the future of the City of Norwich and the Greater Norwich area as well as all of Chenango County. All areas of government, from the State down, must realize that we are all connected and must work together to ensure a healthy future for generations to come. The holiday season is a reminder of sharing with others, especially those less fortunate. In fact, the first lesson most of us teach our children is how to share with others. The concept of sharing continues to be an important conversation between the City of Norwich and other municipalities as we explore ways to pool our resources and streamline government to make it more efficient.

Our fragmented system of local government in Chenango County demands our attention and our collective action to improve efficiencies. There are 21 towns, one city, and 8 villages. These boundaries and governments were set hundreds of years ago with different needs, different times and different technology. With the new needs of today and the advancement of technology it is time to ask and answer the question, "is there a better way"?

As Mayor of the City of Norwich, I welcome conversation between the City, County and our municipal neighbors to explore increased sharing of services. We must make this a priority at all levels and do it in a way that is effective and responsible for all our residents.

At the beginning of 2007 the City Council adopted "Mission and Goals of the City of Norwich". We should continue to focus on the mission, the ten goals, and to be proactive in implementing these goals. Below are suggestions and progress we have made for implementation of the mission and goals.

MISSION: The mission of the City of Norwich is to serve its citizens in achieving and maintaining an optimum quality of life consistent with available resources, providing those services to the public that cannot be provided by the individual on a cost-effective basis.

Goals: To effectuate this basic mission, the Norwich Common Council has established for this City government ten goals:

1. **To provide an effective forum for self-government.** The Council and Mayor have proven over the past year that debate and a positive attitude is one of the best ways the City can move forward and solve problems. We should continue to work as a team to ensure decisions are made with the

community's best interests in mind. Much work has been done to change sections of the City's Charter and this work should continue. There are more sections that are outdated and may require modification or change. We will continue to implement ordinances and laws in a professional manner. Our new Website has been very productive in making government more open and marketing the City. We will soon have all City codes and the charter on line. This Mayor and council are committed to serve. Our goal is to streamline the way we do business, and this may require change. We ask the citizens to have an open mind and support changes that, in the long run, will be beneficial to all.

2. **To provide for public health and safety through a professional level of police, fire, emergency preparedness and other health and safety services.** I have had the opportunity, as Mayor, to witness the professionalism of the Fire, Codes, EMO, and Police Departments and I can honestly say they are second to none. These services must be on call twenty-four/seven and are over fifty percent of our total operating budget. We have made much progress to stabilize costs without cutting the high standard of services provided. These efforts should continue.

3. **To stimulate development of the local economy in an orderly manner, while preserving the environment and quality of life for which Norwich is known.** This goal will still be a number-one priority. We have been working with private developers, entrepreneurs, the Chamber and BID to bring new businesses to our City. Many projects have been started but there is still more work to be accomplished. We have been proactive to market the City and the wonderful quality of life it offers. This will continue especially in these difficult times.

4. **To enhance our environment through programs designed to provide parks, street trees, neighborhood beautification and other civic and cultural improvements.** In 2007 we initiated a sidewalk program that will continue through 2009. We support our downtown program and the many events that enrich the City's Culture. Businesses thrive in other areas of the City; future programs must include those businesses. With the Restore New York program we will be putting new homes where burnt houses once stood. We should encourage all homeowners to take pride in their property and to take time to paint, plant and pamper their homes. A paint program may help beautify the City.

5. **To stimulate, through careful selection and a continuing emphasis on training, an active and intense public service ethic among its employees, so that effective and responsive service to the public is the number one responsibility of every employee.** City employees work very hard to maintain and protect the City and they do this in a professional manner. Training is also important for our employees and our department heads have made training a priority.

6. **To utilize its financial and human resources in a responsible and responsive manner, through a balanced budget with prudent reserves, developing a stable financial base and investing those resources through sound business methods in the long-term best interests of the City and its citizens.** We have come a long way in the past few years to accomplish this goal. Nobody likes a tax increase. We continue to develop alternative revenues, and if the trend continues we may be financially able to decrease taxes in the near future. We continue to work on this priority.

7. **To plan for the long term, both in terms of the physical growth of the City and specific essential services, such as water, sewage disposal, transportation, housing and electrical power.** Two projects have been started to ensure water and wastewater disposal are available for future development of the City and Greater Norwich area. We are actively working with State and Federal officials to secure funding. The upgrading of the Route 12 corridor and continued operation of the railroad are essential for the future of this area. We are looking at ways to be energy efficient and use more alternative energy. Many steps have been taken to move in this direction. There is a demand for housing of all kinds. The Norwich Housing Brown Avenue development will break ground this spring and have two units ready by the end of the summer. Although this is a move in the right direction, more has to be done. The Highlands project is another future housing development that needs our attention.

8. **To maximize the benefits of society for its citizens through an effective program of intergovernmental cooperation.** I believe my opening statement covers the importance of this goal.

9. **To utilize the substantial resources of the private sector and the public at large, through their involvement in City boards, commissions and public forums, to ensure the widest possible community participation in their City government.** I believe our boards and commissions and the citizens that give their time are second to none. I will be addressing each board to continue to be business friendly and task oriented. I encourage the council to attend these board meetings.

10. **To reflect in each year's budget a set of objectives that reflect these goals and contribute to their achievement.** Creative steps have been taken in 2008 on police and fire scheduling that helped stabilize costs. Department heads watch all line items to ensure we stay within or below budget. We are constantly trying to find other creative ways to provide essential services at the lowest possible cost.

Times are changing, but this Mayor and City Council are committed to keeping pace. With a total team effort and a positive community attitude, we will accomplish our goals.

Thank you,

Joseph P. Maiurano
Mayor

STATE OF THE CITY, JANUARY 2009

Every mayor has the responsibility to report to the Common Council and the citizens on the State of the City.

In the broad sense, the City is fiscally sound and well run. Citizens and especially visitors constantly remark on the quality of life that Norwich enjoys. But we cannot be complacent. We must continue to work in a positive manner to ensure a better future.

We can achieve our ambitions for a better Norwich only if we have the means to make investments, retain quality staff, and undertake the projects that can make our city and the greater Norwich area more attractive, more scenic, safer and more appealing to visitors, businesses, citizens and students.

Norwich, unlike many upstate cities, remains far below its constitutional tax and debt limits. Even though our real property taxes remain well below those of many municipalities, we need to find ways to stabilize taxes and relieve the burden on taxpayers. Steps have been put in place to increase our general fund balance that are necessary to allow the City to insulate itself against inevitable economic functions that affect all cities while at the same time investing in our future.

In my short time as your Mayor, I have gained a deep appreciation of the quality of our City's workforce and the dedication of our department heads. Our department heads and employees provide quality services to the citizens of the City and greater Norwich area. Since 1990 our workforce has been reduced from over one hundred full-time employees to seventy-nine, with a bigger workload. Our department heads have taken on the responsibilities of more than one department. Chief Angelino is in charge of the Police and helps out in other departments. Chief Chawgo is in charge of Fire, Ambulance and Codes Departments. Carl Iverson is in charge of both the DPW and Water Department. Bill Roberts is in charge of the Finance and with me the Zoning and Planning Departments. Also, many of the City employees are cross-trained to be able to handle the extra workload.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

If we are going to be a City of choice for people who can live anywhere, then people who choose to live here must feel safe in their homes and on the streets. Our outstanding and professional Police Department, under the leadership of Chief Angelino, has worked hard to reduce crime and improve overall public safety. I urge everyone to read the 2008 annual report that is available on the Police Department web-site.

While keeping our City safe and answering many calls, our commitment must continue to foster a culture of non-violence. Our Police Department works proactively with many community organizations to help prevent violence and ensure we are a non-violent community. We all must take the responsibility and remember there is never a substitute for good old-fashioned family values and living the Golden Rule.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The City and the greater Norwich area are dependent on an up-to-date, efficient water and wastewater system for its development and growth. Under the direction of Carl Iverson plans are being developed to upgrade the water treatment plant and wastewater facilities.

We continue to work on replacing infrastructure, sidewalks, and paving the streets. Along with these we also set a public works schedule that encompasses services such as snow removal, parking-lot upgrades, potholes, park maintenance, crack sealing, water main leaks, repair manholes, City-wide pickup spring and fall, Chenango River and creek cleanup, and the many daily problems that may occur.

The Department also supports various groups such as Pumpkin Fest, Rotary, Colorscape, Gus Macker, Bid, Norwich Housing, the Town of Norwich and the County, which help keep Norwich and the greater Norwich area great.

CITY OF NORWICH FIRE DEPARTMENT AND CODES

When asked about the Fire Department, I am proud to say we have a combination of volunteer and paid firefighters and EMS personnel that is second to none. They are there when the need arises. This Department is a great marketing tool for new businesses. The Department works with the school and community on fire safety, being present at various functions, offering class tours of the fire station and code inspections, to name a few of their outreach programs. We encourage anyone interested in becoming a volunteer to pick up an application at the firehouse.

Our Codes Department is very busy keeping the city safe and clean. In the past year there has been much noticeable progress, thanks to the dedicated work of Jason Lawrence, that shows we are moving in the right direction. We ask all residents to take pride in their property, whether you rent or own, to help us keep your city safe and clean. Simple painting and grounds maintenance goes a long way.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We are working on many projects in conjunction with the comprehensive plan, Commerce Chenango, many organizations, and developers to strengthen future growth of the City and the greater Norwich area. Over the past year much progress has been made in the downtown area with new facades, sidewalks and expansion. Our Department works closely with BID to help fund these projects. Our goal is to create a downtown with many thriving businesses. The Restore New York Grant also will put new homes on distressed properties in the City. Todd Dreyer, our Planning Coordinator, has been working on our Brown Fields Opportunity Grant site and clean up property for future development.

Our Goal is to market the City of Norwich and build on the good that Norwich offers, the schools, safety, social activities and culture that entice businesses and developers. We continue to work to keep the businesses we have in the City. These businesses support the many activities in Norwich and we must support them. Make it a priority to shop the City of Norwich in 2009.

CITY GOVERNMENT

The City government is multidimensional. It comprises the Mayor, City Council, and many committees that are made up of skilled and dedicated appointees who make recommendations to the Council in the areas of traffic, planning, parks, zoning, historical preservation, plumbing and electrical codes, and civil service. This committee system is working well. I am proud and thankful to have so many people giving up their time to serve the City.

In November, I was appointed to the NYCOM Finance Committee to help develop 2009 State legislative priorities. Since November I have sent many letters in support of legislation that will help taxpayers. Some of the issues are: local taxation for service not provided to sub-units of local government, unfunded mandates, compulsory arbitration, GML 207-a & 207-c, and retirement and health insurance mandates, CHIPS monies to upgrade streets and arterial maintenance payments (Highway Law Art. 12B, 349- c) whose rates have not changed in 20 years, automatic tax-exemption for City property outside the City, Wicks law, state retirement costs, and continuing emphasis on State revenue sharing, providing adequate funding for upgrades in water and wastewater systems. As Mayor I make it a point to be in contact with State, Federal, and local officials to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

CONCLUSION

There is much to be proud of in Norwich, and I am deeply honored to serve this community as Mayor during times that are sometimes trying, often challenging, but always promising a stronger and better future. Times are changing, but this Mayor and City Council are keeping pace. I want to personally thank each member of the Council for his commitment to serve and to make Norwich a delightful and rewarding place to live. I am proud of all we have accomplished together, but the journey into our future continues.

“Some people see things as they are, and ask Why?

“We see things as they never were, and ask Why Not?”

Mayor Maiurano thanked the Common Council and the department heads for their hard work during the year. He noted that the Planning Commission will be meeting on January 19, 2009, at 7 PM in the Council Chambers, One Court Plaza, and would be discussing the comprehensive plan and promotion of the City for businesses. The Zoning Board of Appeals will be invited to the meeting, and the Mayor urged the aldermen to attend as well. Mayor Maiurano invited Ald. Deierlein to serve as Council liaison to the Planning Commission.

Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

Ald. Deierlein **moved** to adopt the 2008 Rules of Procedure for 2009. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn and duly adopted ayes all.

Appointments to Council Committees

The Mayor made the following appointments:

- ◆ Finance / Personnel – Ald. Walt Schermerhorn (Chair), Ald. Robert Jeffrey, and Ald. Paul Laughlin.
- ◆ Public Works/Safety – Ald. Terry Bresina (Chair), Ald. Robert Carey, and Ald. John Deierlein.

The Mayor stated that all Advisory members shall be consulting members of all committees, being notified of all committee sessions and being able to participate in discussion. He added that all committee members, including Advisory members shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor.

Meetings of the committees may be called by the chairman, the Mayor or any two members of the committee.

The Committee meetings shall be held as follows:

- ◆ Finance / Personnel – First Tuesday of each month – 6:00 PM – Council Chambers, One Court Plaza.
- ◆ Public Works/Safety – Fourth Thursday of each month – 7:00 AM – Wastewater Treatment Plant, Route 12.

Nomination of President of the Council to a one-year term expiring December 31, 2009

The Mayor opened the nominations for President of the Common Council for a one year term expiring December 31, 2009. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to nominate Ald. Terry Bresina to President of the Common Council for 2009. The motion for Ald. Jeffrey's nomination was seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn and duly adopted ayes all. The Mayor asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, the Mayor then declared the nominations closed. The nomination of Ald. Bresina was duly adopted.

Nomination of Acting Mayor to a one-year term expiring December 31, 2009

The Mayor opened the nominations for Acting Mayor for a one-year term expiring December 31, 2009. Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to nominate Ald. Jeffrey as Acting Mayor for 2009. The nomination of Ald. Jeffrey was seconded by Ald. Laughlin and duly adopted ayes all. The Mayor asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, the Mayor then declared the nominations closed. The motion of Ald. Jeffrey as Acting Mayor for 2009 was duly adopted ayes all.

Appointments by Common Council:

The Mayor asked for a motion to approve the following appointment by the Common Council:

Traffic Commission

- ◆ *George Cleveland, 17 Columbia Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.*

Ald. Bresina **moved** to approve the appointment. Ald. Jeffrey seconded the motion, duly adopted, ayes all.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions by the Mayor

The Mayor reported the following Mayoral appointments:

Historic Preservation Committee

- ◆ George Carnrike, Sr., 29 Jones Avenue.

Electrical Board

- ◆ Tom Jensen, 12-14 Park Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.

Planning Commission

- ◆ Sharon Pelosi, 141 No. Broad Street, re-appointment to a three-year-term expiring December 31, 2011.
- ◆ Kay Zaia, 43 Rexford Street, re-appointment to a three-year-term expiring December 31, 2011.

Plumbing Board

- ◆ Gary Brightman, 221 Randall Avenue, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.
- ◆ Adam Francis, 7 Griffin Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.

Youth Board

- ◆ Julian Drelich, Jr., 17 Beebe Avenue, re-appointment to a three-year-term expiring December 31, 2011.
- ◆ Charleen Sastri, 77 Pleasant Street, re-appointment to a three-year-term expiring December 31, 2011.

Zoning Board

- ◆ Edward Morano, 21 Miller Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.
- ◆ Scott Sutton, 141 North Broad Street, re-appointment to a three year term expiring December 31, 2011.
- ◆ Kathy Campbell, 21 Francis Avenue, re-appointment to a three year term expiring December 31, 2011.

Appointments by the Mayor with the Approval of the Council

Parks Commission

- ◆ Scott Sutton, 141 North Broad Street, re-appointment to a three year term expiring December 31, 2011.

Street Tree Committee

- ◆ Daniel Wagner, 15 Canasawacta Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.

Water Board

- ◆ Ken Winans, 66 Canasawacta Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.
- ◆ Sharon Pelosi, 141 No. Broad Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.
- ◆ James Wysor, 10 Locust Street, re-appointment to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2011.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the appointments. Ald. Bresina seconded the motion, duly adopted, ayes all.

Designation of Official Newspaper and Depositories

Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to designate the *Evening Sun* as the Official Newspaper for the City of Norwich. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey and duly adopted ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to designate NBT Bank, M&T Bank, Key Bank, and Wilber National Bank as the Official Depositories of City of Norwich Funds. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin, duly approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Schermerhorn **moved** to adjourn from Common Council organizational meeting at 7:20 PM. Seconded by Ald. Laughlin and duly approved ayes all.