

COMMON COUNCIL

Work Session
August 15, 2006

Mayor Joseph Maiurano presided at the work session of the Common Council held at 7:00 PM on August 15, 2006 at One Court Plaza.

Present:

Mayor Maiurano
Ald. A. Abraham
Ald. Terry Bresina
Ald. Suzanne Williams
Ald. Walter Schermerhorn
Ald. Paul Laughlin
Ald. Robert Jeffrey

Also:

Dir. of Finance/City Clerk, William Roberts
Human Resources Director Deborah DeForest
Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith
Code Enforcement Officer Jason Lawrence
Media Representative Jeff Genung
Media Representative Jessica Lewis
Deputy Clerk, Darlene Colaso

Call to Order: The meeting of the Common Council was called to order by Mayor Maiurano at 7:02 p.m.

Public Hearing: Proposed Local Law to Amend Charter Re: Property Taxes

Mayor Maiurano opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m. with no one wishing to be heard. The Mayor declared the hearing closed at 7:04 p.m.

Open Forum

Christine Carnrike, Jones Avenue, is speaking on behalf of the Norwich Cemetery Association in regard to a quarterly water bill received in January, which was ~\$200. She contacted the City in February to have the water shut-off until a suspected leak could be found. She claims it took five weeks of calling until to March 7, 2006 to get bill and to have water shut-off. At the last meeting she spoke (in April) and Carl asked her to give him copies of the bill for his review, telling her that the Association would be responsible for any legitimate water usage. Carnrike claims that nothing happened until July 26th when City came to shut-off water for non-payment. She contacted the City and said she would pay under protest and the City representative told her that they had to shut the water off, but if the Cemetery Association paid the bill today, the City would come out and turn it right back on. Carnrike stated it is ridiculous that it (allegedly) took five weeks to shut the water off, but that the City can turn it off in a single day. She noted that the bill has been paid, but that she wrote a letter to the City on July 26th, asking for a written response as to what the problem is and why this is happening. She also noted that the quarterly usage is generally ~\$35. To date in 2006, they have paid \$440 of water usage and have received nothing from the City in response to her letter. She is asking the Council to give direction as to whom the responsible department is and she stated that the Association definitely wants a credit. She stated that they are not responsible for the City's negligence, as it took 5 weeks to have water turned off. They are very dissatisfied with water service at the City and she is also dissatisfied that they cannot get a response from anyone in the department. She is formally requesting a credit and hope that this doesn't happen again.

Ald. Abraham inquired as to whether or not she remembers who she spoke to and Carnrike responded "whoever sits at the front desk." Mayor Maiurano stated that he would take a look at the situation and make sure it is addressed.

Ed Morano, 21 Miller Street, wanted to say that he feels that there are important things that need to be included in the agenda, such as the City's Comprehensive Plan. He's concerned the Council is being complacent and he believes in this plan. He believes Council should vote on tossing it or carrying it with them and would like to see them start putting sections of the plan into the agenda. He mentioned high density housing conversions and stated that he believes the Council is stepping too lightly, so as not to irritate people. He believes residents need to conform (to the code) or live somewhere else. He did mention that the garbage ordinance enforcement and Rental Dwelling Unit Registration seems to be moving well, as he's tired of seeing single-family homes with seven different people living in them. He stated that it is his belief that things should be taxed on gross margin basis versus property value of land or the home.

He also wanted to discuss the "Greater Norwich Area," and believes the Council needs to begin thinking about consolidating or annexing of the City and the Town. He said these are things the Council has control over and need to move forward on. He also addressed his view on light manufacturing and believes it should be considered

as a viable industry in Norwich. He continued on to discuss the PUD in the North section of Norwich and talked about making those lots R1 zoned with concessions that lots don't conform to zoning requirement size. He said he is not suggesting the City helps the Developer make money, but higher grade housing.

Larry Davey, 5 Plymouth Street, said that over a year ago he petitioned to have the Kurt Beyer Pool dam torn down. The last he knew it was supposed to be torn down sometime in August. Mayor Maiurano responded that we are working on the final stage of having the dam torn down and that it is definitely a priority. Mayor said that no one has seen a flood of this magnitude, alive today, and reiterated that it is a high priority item. Ald. Bresina wanted to point out that the hang up is the permit process (i.e., procuring permits from Environmental Conservation). Ald. Williams also indicated that there have been many hang-ups and that the fish hatcheries even got involved at one point. She said that the City has jumped through hoops and overcome obstacles and that nothing has changed as far as removal.

Committee Chair Reports

Finance/Personnel Committee of August 8, 2006

Committee Chairperson Ald. Schermerhorn gave an update on the Finance/Personnel Committee meeting reporting that the second grant on the Main Street program has been approved and that Todd Dreyer, Community Development Specialist, will be following suit on that to administer the grant in the same fashion as the original one. He stated that Assistant Police Chief Dale Smith recommended eliminating two of the four school crossing guards, however Ald. Schermerhorn noted that the Council will need a lot of information before a decision can be made. Nothing will change for the first half of the school year. Ald. Schermerhorn talked about the renewal of City Fire Contracts with the Towns mentioning the current contract was not signed until March and they are attempting to get this done earlier, so that it can be signed prior to the new contract year.

Ald. Schermerhorn also discussed the flood of 2005 updates noting that Ivarson is working on the dam and also that the FEMA meeting scheduled for this week had been canceled. In regard to the bid for the City Court HVAC system replacement, we received a bid for \$19,450. He also indicated that Ivarson reported that the 2006 Street Program status pushed back a bit, due to the flooding. He also said that Roberts reported that the Tax Sale Certificate issues have been addressed and that we are moving forward so the City has first right of refusal on tax-sale property. Ald. Schermerhorn mentioned that Simplex Systems proposed figures for a service contract for the City's municipal building's alarm systems and that Ivarson recommended the City pursue the lower contract price.

Ald. Schermerhorn also mentioned that the Committee discussed future Fin/Per Committee meeting dates and they decided that they would meet (permanently) on the first Tuesday of each Month at 6:00 p.m. He also mentioned that at the end of the Committee meeting, Ald. Jeffrey brought up the idea of having Community Development entice some type of hotel franchise into the area and promoting an economic development zone in Wards 4-5-6 for home improvements. Ald. Jeffrey mentioned that after the executive session there was a discussion about the Zoning and Planning Boards moving forward with proposals to change some of the 6th Ward areas from an R2 to R1 status.

Public Works/Safety Committee of July 27, 2006

Ald. Abraham, who was unable to attend the July 27 meeting, deferred to Ald. Williams to give the Committee report. Ald. Williams reported that Police Chief Joe Angelino would be applying for a \$32,000 IMPACT Grant, which is federal money distributed through DCJS. This would be applied to overtime and closing down the police station at night (placing more security equipment around the building). Chief Angelino anticipates that it could add ~2400 more man hours for officers to be out on the streets. She also reported that the Police Chief and the DPW Superintendent discussed partnering in order to procure more favorable pricing on different items they both needed.

Ald. Williams reported that crossing guards were discussed and that the laws have been changed, so that schools are now required to bus all children to school. As a result, on many days the Crossing Guards have no children to cross. Beebe Avenue gets a few more children crossing daily, but they discussed the possibility of cutting back to two Crossing Guards (Beebe and Rexford Street), versus four, after the first of the year.

Ald. Williams reported that DPW Superintendent Ivarson is still lacking manpower and is currently in need of four people. She reported that when he does get applications, he often finds the applicant not qualified. As a result of the lack of manpower, the Eaton Avenue project is canceled for this year. Ivarson reported to the Committee that he is out of time and out of people, particularly after the flood-related man-hours utilized. The latest figure for the flood was reported to the Committee as \$1.1 million in damage.

Ald. Williams reported that for the building alarms service contract, Ivarson wants to go through Simplex Systems directly. Simplex has offered proposals for service contracts (to service the alarm systems at municipal buildings). He recommended the \$4400 versus \$7200 contract, opting for the lower price, as we simply need the basic service contract. Ald. Williams also reported that Emergency Management Officer A. Jones noted that FEMA has been working out of the EMO (Emergency Management Office) and he and Director of Finance/City Clerk Bill

Roberts determined a monthly rate for them to utilize the office, which totals \$1250 per month. Ald. Williams mentioned that they seem happy with that, and noted that that is a nice income. Roberts stated that that would be allocated to the General Fund. She also added that Jones has requested that some of the funds be used to upgrade the Emergency Management Offices.

Ald. Williams relayed Fire Chief John Tighe's recommendation in regard to the outdated and outmoded municipal fire alarm system, suggesting we convert to a radio system. He indicated that the City would need to write letters to encourage specific users to change over to a digitized system. Ald. Williams also noted that Tighe discussed delivering the fire truck specifications to Deputy Clerk Colaso. She also reported that the Code Enforcement Officer, Jason Lawrence, gave his first Codes Report for June & July combined, reporting that he issued 50 building permits and, based on a phone call from a local contractor, anticipated an additional 30 permits to come in the following week. The Committee agreed with maintaining the way permit fees are being handled due to the recent flooding (no charge), and will revisit this topic in September.

Discussion

Proposed Mission Statement Status

Mayor Maiurano asked if everyone had a chance to review the Mission Statement he distributed last month. He stated that he had not received feedback to date and added he would like this to be a goal-oriented Council. He also believes it will help to have something like this to refer back to see how we are progressing toward our goals. He believes that these are all the components that the City needs to operate effectively.

Multi-Family Dwelling Status – Moratorium Extension

Mayor Maiurano stated that the Task Force has been working diligently, but that for safety sake and for the sake of not having to rush anything, he believes we should consider extending the moratorium for three additional months. DeForest noted that we would need to set a public hearing to extend this. The reasoning is that while we are likely to have much of the work completed, we want to be sure that we extend it so that nothing is lost.

A brief discussion ensued as to the timing details. Lawrence stated that the Rental Registry has been finalized through all channels and that the Committee recommendations are the next step in this particular piece of legislation. Ald. Jeffrey inquired about an inventory of the current housing and DeForest discussed that the Police and Fire Chiefs went on a citywide tour and surveyed which properties multi-family dwellings. She stated that everything is currently in the process. Lawrence added that if this gets voted on, we would need at least 2-4 months for intensive public announcements and informational press releases, prior to initiating the registry. Public awareness is going to be key and we anticipate February or March as the beginning date for fees to be due; in order to not overload the finance office during the property tax period during the month of January. Another brief discussion ensued as to the timing details and Ald. Jeffrey made the suggestion that the moratorium be extended for six months, just to ensure that we have enough time to give us ample time to enact any possible legislation.

Development of Agenda for Regular Common Council Meeting of August 22, 2006

- 1) *Call To Order*
- 2) *Pledge of Allegiance*
- 3) *Invocation*
- 4) *Approval of minutes of the work session of July 11, 2006 and the regular meeting of July 18, 2006*
- 5) *Open Forum*
- 6) *Bids*
- 7) *Correspondence*
- 8) *Department, Board and Commission Reports *report not received*
 - ◆ *Fire Department/Codes monthly report for **
 - ◆ *Historian monthly report for **
 - ◆ *Police Department monthly report for June 2006*
 - ◆ *Public Works/Water System monthly report for July 2006*
 - ◆ *Records Management monthly report for **

- ◆ Youth Bureau (combined Jul/Aug report to be distributed at end of Aug)
 - ◆ Civil Service Commission minutes of &*
 - ◆ Parks Commission minutes of July 10, 2006
 - ◆ Planning Commission (no meeting in July 2006)
 - ◆ Traffic Commission minutes of June 14, 2006
 - ◆ Water Commission minutes of *
 - ◆ Youth Board (no July or August meetings)
 - ◆ Zoning Board of Appeals minutes of *
- 9) Ward and Committee Reports
- ◆ Finance/Personnel Committee meeting of August 8, 2006
 - ◆ Public Safety / Public Works Committee meeting of July 27, 2006
- 10) Old Business
- 11) New Business

Mayoral Appointments

- ◆ Historical Preservation Committee Appointees: Fran Nile, Chair; Don Windsor, Patricia Scott, Joseph Telesky, and Todd Dreyer

Award of Bid

- ◆ HVAC Replacement for City Court

Motions

*Denial of Appeal of Determination on Private Building on City Property at Chenango Lake
Authorizing Elimination of Present Pull-Box Fire Alarm System and Recommendation of
Digitizers*

- ◆ Authorizing Mayor to Sign Agreement for Simplex System Maintenance (NTE \$4500)
Set Public Hearing to Extend Multi-Family Moratorium

Resolutions

- ◆ Res – Adopting Local Law to Amend City Charter Regarding Property Taxes
- ◆ Res – Adopting City of Norwich Mission Statement
- ◆ Res – Acknowledging and Ratifying Motion Updating Fee Schedule

- 12) Payment of Bills
- 13) Executive Session: To Discuss Employment History of Particular Individual
- 14) Adjournment

Agenda Addition

Mayor Maiurano announced that there would be a motion added to the agenda. The motion would direct the City Attorney to proceed with condemnation proceedings on a burned-out property.

Executive Session: To Discuss the Employment History of Particular Individuals

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to go into Executive Session at 7:47 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Williams and duly adopted, ayes all.

Ald. Abraham **moved** to exit Executive Session at 8:11 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Schermerhorn and duly adopted, ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn the Common Council work session at 8:12 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Williams and duly adopted, ayes all.