

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
May 2, 2023

Present:

Mayor Brian Doliver
Ald. Eric Warren
Ald. Fred Gee
Ald. Nancy Allaire
Ald. William Loomis
Ald. David Zieno
Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour
Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Youth Bureau Director Anthony Testani
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Reuben Roach
EMO Stephen Cady
Community Development Director Erik Scrivener
City Attorney Stephanie Hanrahan
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Absent

Supervisor James McNeil

Media Representative: Sarah Genter, The Evening Sun

Ald. Jeffrey called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:32 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes – Ald. Warren **moved** to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Gee, approved ayes all.

Interconnect Wireless – Wheeler Ave. antenna – Rhett Genung and Shawn Smith of Interconnect Wireless said that as part of the Chenango County Broadband Expansion project, they request to lease space on the Wheeler Ave. water tank for the placement of an antenna in order to provide affordable internet for the residents of the city. The antenna will not interfere with anything for the Meter Replacement project. He will email a PowerPoint presentation he prepared for the Council to view. When asked about the status of the previously approved antenna on Wales Dr. which will benefit the residents of Plymouth, Mr. Smith said it has not been installed yet. They will be installing in several locations in the city and will fill the “holes” in the network that may occur due to tree foliage they with several micropods to allow full coverage. He said that 6 other privately-held sites, which are approved by NYS, have agreements already. Ald. Jeffrey asked that an agreement be drawn up and sent to the Mayor and City Attorney for review and the PowerPoint can be sent to the Deputy City Clerk for distribution to the Council.

Correspondence

Street Tree Removal at 23 Park St. – Ald. Zieno received a request for 3 Street Trees to be removed. Although the trees are healthy, they are causing other issues for the homeowner who may replant with smaller trees. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the removal of Street Trees at 23 Park St. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

YMCA Gus Macker – Ald. Loomis **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the request from the YMCA for Police, Fire and DPW assistance as well as special event designation for the 2023 Gus Macker Basketball Tournament held July 7 to July 9 at the Norwich High School and Midland Drive. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

YMCA Halloween Parade – Ald. Zieno **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from the YMCA for road closures, Police and Fire assistance at the Annual YMCA Halloween parade on Saturday, October 28, 2023. The parade will begin at 11:00 a.m. with the same route as in years past. Seconded by Ald. Warren approved ayes all.

YMCA 5K Turkey Trot - Ald. Warren **moved** to approve a request from the YMCA for road closures and Police assistance at the Annual Turkey Trot 5K on Sunday, November 19, 2023. The race will begin at 12:30 p.m. with the same route as in years past. Seconded by Ald. Gee, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

DPW

S. Broad St Watermain Replacement Project – E. Pepe reported that the USDA gave authorization to issue the Notice of Bid Award with the next steps of executing the agreements, having a pre-construction meeting, and creating a construction schedule. In the meantime, the contractor has been working on the project. A preliminary schedule indicates East Main St. work will commence first since DOT is paving there first, with construction continuing to Broad St. and working towards the south. A meeting with DOT and NYSEG will be held tomorrow to see how schedules are working together. Hopefully the project will break ground by the end of this month. Ald. Loomis stated it is a very aggressive schedule. E. Pepe agreed and said the likelihood of completing the project by August seems low but does not want to speculate further. When the schedule is set, the public will be notified.

Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation – Well 4 – E. Pepe reported that RFP's for the Alternative Hydrogeologic Evaluation required by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission have been reviewed and recommends contracting with Geo Services of Camp Hill, PA. He reached out to 10 Geologists who do this type of work, narrowed the field to a couple based on qualifications and interest, with Geo Services being the lower quote. Pepe is working on a grant application to help cover some of the cost. Ald. Gee **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve entering into a contract with Geo Services for \$30,600 and a corresponding transfer of funds. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Skate Rink Resurfacing – Rebid – E. Pepe reported that the Parks Commission agreed to rebid the Skate Rink Resurfacing project. Regarding the possible alterations to the project, Pepe will reach out to some contractors to see what the cheapest way to go would be. Ald. Loomis **moved** to approve rebidding of the Skate Rink Resurfacing. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Water Meter Replacement Bid Award – E. Pepe reported there were 4 bidders with Ferguson Water Works having the lowest bid and recommends awarding them the bid at \$1,421,360.38 which includes the first \$15,150 annual fee and a one-time charge of \$9,450 for a customer portal option. The customer portal will allow customers to view their own water use data, set alerts, receive over-budget and unauthorized use notifications. Training is included and will work with our current billing system. He will be in contact with EFC due to the \$1 million grant from them. Ald. Warren **moved** to recommend the Common Council award the bid to Ferguson Water Works. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Fire Department

Outside CON EMS Calls – J. Papelino reported the number of calls were 3, all billable: 1 – Mt. Upton; 2 – Sherburne

Lexipol for Policy Updates – As discussed previously, J. Papelino requested approval to contract with Lexipol to review all Fire and EMS policies like they do for the Police Department. The policies (20 to 30 policies just for EMS alone) have not been reviewed in a very long time. The cost would be \$15,39.80 (with annual maintenance cost of \$9,103) includes a 10% discount from the insurance company with a possible additional discount from PERMA. Ald. Jeffrey felt this would be proactive, rather than spend tens of thousands of dollars in a court room. Papelino said that having someone reviewing new policies as they are issued [by the State] and then issue that training is invaluable. Ald. Zieno said the budget is tight and wondered if a grant might be available. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve entering into a contract with Lexipol to review Fire and EMS policies. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved 5 – 1 with Ald. Zieno voting nay.

Fire Officer 1 training – J. Papelino reported that the National Fire Officer 1 training class was held at the station two weeks ago. Six paid staff and two volunteers took the class with all passing the final exam. All were commended for their accomplishment.

MSA Connected FF Platform – J. Papelino reported moving forward. The City bought 8, the volunteer Companies and the Volunteer Fireman's Association bought 16 for a total of 24. Appreciation was expressed to the companies for their contribution.

Firefighter Physicals – J. Papelino reported physicals are scheduled for June 15th in conjunction with Plymouth and North Norwich.

Code Enforcement

Tax Properties Status – J. Papelino reported that 20 Barnes St. and 6-8 Natoli Ave. have a court date on May 4th for eviction. 88 Mitchell St. RFP will be going out this week. One apartment of 61 Cortland St. is vacant, the other is occupied with the eviction process started. 18 Griffin St. has been completely cleaned out. 28 Silver St. will be the next RFP out after 88 Mitchell.

UHS/CMH – J. Papelino reported that the Chenango Memorial Hospital have multiple projects ongoing. The latest grant money will be for Women's Health and work in the old ER section. They will be looking to add an additional generator.

Courtesy tags – J. Papelino reported that Code Enforcement has issued about 30 courtesy tags, mostly for garbage and unregistered cars, with a few for high grass. There are several cars on Borden Ave. that are unregistered. There was discussion of sidewalks and it was noted that this year's schedule for sidewalk replacement is full. Interested parties can be put on a wait list for next year. Ald. Zieno asked about violations at 17 Maydole and a sidewalk on Park St.

Human Resources

Sexual Harassment Policy – L. Murray said that NYS came out with a new model for the Sexual Harassment Policy and as soon as it is approved at the State level she will be bringing an updated Sexual Harassment Policy to Council for approval.

Department Head and Non-Unit Benefit Summary Handbook – L. Murray reported that she has been reviewing the Department Head and Non-Unit benefit summaries with the Mayor and D. DuFour. The last update was done in 1999 and she will also bring the changes to Council when completed.

Ald. Zieno commented that the Cyber Security trainings from the Garam Group are very detailed and thorough.

Police Department

Creating a third Detective Spot for Drug Task Force – R. Roach requested creating a third Detective spot which will be specifically assigned to the Drug Task Force. Over the last 2 ½ weeks there have been 10 overdose calls and 2 deaths. His goal is to have the Detective cross-designated with the DEA so they would have Task Force Officer (TFO) status which would be of great benefit. The TFO would have to go to Syracuse 2 to 3 times a month to assist the Federal government. They are currently working with Sen. Schumer's office for funding for a True Narc test kit valued at \$30,000. **New Hire to replace the move (Federal COPS Grant)** – R. Roach said that if moving an officer to the third Detective this would create an Officer vacancy which he hopes to fill using a Federal COPS Grant. The grant would pay a minimum of \$120,000 over a three-year period, after which the City would be responsible. The deadline to apply is May 11th with no date of notification of the grant award decision. With no current Civil Service applicants to choose from, the next list won't be available until the beginning of 2024. The Sheriff's Office has 4 Detectives with 1 dedicated to narcotics. The result of an additional Detective position on the budget will be a stipend of \$500 a year. Roach said that in the past there has always been a First Sergeant position which has no pay increase, but the shift was from 5:00 to 2:00 at the desk. Doing so will save money spent on overtime. Discussion of the Sheriff's taking over P.D. phones after 11 p.m. for (potentially) \$75,000 – negotiations are ongoing. Supervisor Bob Jeffrey said that Chenango County is responsible for all emergency calls – they are required to take and dispatch all calls. He further said there is no way they can come back and charge the City for services they are mandated to cover. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to create a third Detective position in the P.D. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all. There was no motion to replace a vacancy [resulting from the move to Detective by existing officer] with Federal COPS grant at this time.

Creation of [First] Sergeant within the PD (total of 6 Sgt.'s) for supervisory roles – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the creation of a [First] Sergeant position in the Police Department. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Vehicle status updates – R. Roach reported the new police vehicle car has arrived which will be a “ghost” car. The previous car will be surplus as it has over 111,513 miles.

Ald. Jeffrey reported that at a B.I.D. meeting call there were requests from downtown business owners for additional foot patrol or Police presence during the daytime into the evening. R. Roach reported patrols have been incorporating 2 times in the day, 2 times in the afternoon every day, particularly certain buildings and officers are checking doors at night. It has been successful with 13 arrests resulting from persons with warrants, heroin, loitering etc. There is patrol officer on bike patrol and looking to add another for bike patrol.

Finance

Fund Equity 2022 - General, Water and Sewer – D. DuFour reported on Fund Equity. General Fund 2022 – expenses exceeded revenues by \$484,163 resulting in a deficit for 2022. The City made a net Capital Gain of \$798,476 resulted in a net increase to the General Fund of \$314,313 giving a General Fund equity of \$5,753,993. The Capital Reserve Balance is \$1,614,27 with no money being transferred in due to the deficit. The biggest expenses are Personal Services and Employee benefits. Water Fund 2022 – Operating expenses exceeded revenues creating a deficit of \$428,764. The General Fund Net Capital Gain of \$678,346 resulted in an increase in Fund Equity by \$246,282 giving a Water Fund Equity of \$3,465,689. Sewer Fund 2022 – operating revenues exceeded expenses by \$69,388. A Capital Reserve Net Loss of \$39,484 resulting in a Sewer Fund Equity of \$3,381,988.

Mayor Doliver said that although the City is healthy financially, he has notified the Department Heads that we need to be mindful of spending and go back to the “needs, not wants” mentality.

Community Development

Community Cleanup – E. Scrivener reported that B.I.D. has been working with BOCES, downtown businesses and the City for a Community Cleanup taking place on Friday, May 5th at 9 a.m. The B.I.D. District will be the focus, but depending on the number of volunteers that may be expanded.

Water Main update – E. Scrivener reported that the EPA application has been submitted.

Housing Rehabilitation Program—Subrecipient Agreement – E. Scrivener reported once documents have been reviewed by the City Attorney and finalized it will be ready to execute. Discussion on administrative costs of the program ensued.

Ald. Zieno asked EMO S. Cady for an update on the stream gauges. Cady said that even with all the rain received over the last 3 days the water mark has not gone above 9’ which is the minimal flood stage. That is due in part to the previously extremely dry condition of the river and creek. He noted that the Rexford St. stream gauge is not correct and needs adjusting. Currently water levels are receding with no significant precipitation forecasted. He reported that software training on the stream gauges will commence tomorrow. Mayor Doliver reported that the City has received a grant for a flood study which will likely take some time. The Flood Commission recommends reaching out to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Adjournment

Ald. Gee **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:17 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all