

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
August 1, 2023

Present:

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

Also:

Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Youth Bureau Director Anthony Testani
Police Chief Reuben Roach
Community Development Director Erik Scrivener
City Attorney Stephanie Hanrahan
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Media Representative: Shawn McGrath, The Evening Sun

Absent

Supervisor James McNeil

Ald. Zieno called the joint meeting of the Public Works/Public Safety and Finance/Personnel Committees to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers.

Commerce Chenango, Sal Testani – Mr. Testani thanked the Police Department for their last-minute assistance with traffic control on Saturday for their Taste of Chenango event. It was more successful than they thought it would be, bringing in 3,000 attendees which caused a traffic backup. After receiving a call for assistance from event coordinators, the Police Department responded immediately to resolve the issue. They will be better prepared for next years event.

Correspondence

NHS Alumni End of Summer Block Party – Lackawanna Ave., Special Event, Waive Open Container Law & Provide Letters for NYS Liquor Authority – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from Commerce Chenango for special event designation and to waive the Open Container Law for the a new event, the NHS Alumni Summer Block Party, held on Friday, September 1, 2023. The special event designation area is Lackawanna Ave., the Frontier Parking Lot and East Park. Alcohol will be served in a designated area on Lackawanna by Park Place Restaurant and Rita's Tavern from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. only. Lackawanna will be blocked until 10 p.m. to facilitate cleanup. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Race to the Face – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a request from the Chenango Greenway Conservancy for Police assistance to block West Main St. for their Race to the Face 5K on Saturday, September 30, 2023. Seconded by Ald. Gee, approved ayes all.

Curb Cut at 10 Prospect St. – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a curb cut request at 10 Prospect St. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Curb Cut at 12 Tillman Ave. – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve a curb cut request at 12 Tillman Ave. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Street Tree removal at 22 Beebe and 43 Hayes – Ald. Jeffrey asked to include 2 trees, one at 6 -8 York St. and one on North Broad St. Mayor Doliver said the trees on Beebe and Hayes are live street trees and the owner will be responsible for paying for removal. E. Pepe stated that the tree in question on North Broad is dead and will be removed and R. Hargrave is looking at York St. tree to make a determination. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the tree removal at Beebe and Hayes, as well as York St. if it is determined to be diseased. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Department Head Reports

Youth Bureau

No Smoking in Parks Ordinance – A. Testani had reached out to the Tobacco Free Coalition for additional No Smoking signs for the parks. They said in order to get signs our policy must address cannabis and vaping, so they supplied a model Ordinance they have used with other municipalities. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council set a Public Hearing. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all. Before the vote there was discussion of the State already having a law prohibiting all forms of smoking in parks. It was determined that since it is a Public Health law, creating our own Ordinance will assist with better enforcement at the local level.

DPW

Rotary Park Bridge Inspection – E. Pepe reported that there is some corrosion on the supports and recommends getting it reviewed by a structural engineer to provide a condition assessment and suggested repairs. The evaluation cost is \$10,500 and will need a transfer from Parks Maintenance Reserves. Ald. Jeffrey moved to recommend the Common Council approve the inspection. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Accept Chenango County Soil Grant for Well 4 study/permitting – E. Pepe reported that the City need to formally accept the \$15,000 in grant funds awarded by the Chenango County Soil and Water Conservation District for the Well 4 Study needed for permitting. Ald. Jeffrey moved to accept the award. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

WWTP Upgrades – E. Pepe reported many pieces of equipment at the WWTP are either not functioning or are at the end of their useful life and must be replaced. The most immediate concerns total \$4 million. To apply for the WIIA grant, an updated engineering report, a Bond Resolution and SEQRA Determination of Non-Significance need to be submitted with the application. He will be handling the engineering report in-house. Equipment will include replacing the screens, the digester safety equipment, mixing system and boiler, associated gas piping, among others. The project may provide cost savings in that more methane will be produced resulting in less natural gas being purchased.

MEO I Vacancy – E. Pepe reported having good applicant but lacks a CDL. He asked for approval to hire the individual as an MEO II and as soon as he obtains his CDL at which time he can be moved to MEO I. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the hiring of the applicant as a MEO II until such time as they obtain their CDL. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Watermain Replacement Project – Derrick Wilcox of Delaware Engineering gave updates on the Watermain Replacement Project. He gave a status of work done so far and timelines. In order to meet the August 31, 2023 completion date, Vacri Construction has been working with the City, DOT and Delaware Engineering with ideas to make up time. They propose reusing the copper pipe that is reusable while using new corporation valves, existing curb stops would remain unless they are inoperable, and working with DOT to evaluate the existing concrete layer. This would also result in savings of approximately \$370,000. He asked for approval to allow for this change of scope in the project. Ald. Loomis asked if the City Water Department staff could handle the change in schedule. Pepe said that even though they are short-staffed, everyone will be pitching in to get the project done. DOT paving is slated to start E. Main by last week of September and continuing onto S. Broad into October. Communication to downtown businesses and residents on the project was discussed. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the change of scope. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all. NYSEG has inquired about the replacement of sidewalk where the decorative “brick” has been disturbed. It was suggested to refer it to B.I.D. E. Scrivener said that in the future B.I.D. would have a budget line for the business district sidewalks. It was decided to tell NYSEG to replace with concrete with confirmation from B.I.D.

Leaf Pickup - Ald. Jeffrey suggested that as fall approaches the City only accept paper or biodegradable bags. Mayor Doliver would like to wait until next year to do so to give property owners a chance to adjust to the change. This year the plan is to once again do a paper bag giveaway for the fall pickup. This will be brought to the September Joint Committee meeting. Ald. Jeffrey also suggested that the DPW only pick up leaves and not sticks and limbs as there are many properties that do not follow the guidelines for pick up. Ald. Allaire questioned what it would take to get a “vacuum-type” attachment to collect leaves like some municipalities have. Pepe said it had been tried before and the process did not work well.

Police Department

First Responder Summit in DC – R. Roach reported he had attended a conference in Washington, D.C. at the invitation of Senator Gillibrand to connect with funding opportunities for next year.

The Homicide Task Force – R. Roach explained that the Homicide Task Force consists of the NYS Police, Chenango County Sheriff's Office and the Norwich Police Department. They have also worked with the District Attorney's Office and the Department of Homeland Security on the current case. Some costs incurred by the NPD are 2 laptops to interface with the State Police at a cost of \$2,307 along with \$223 in hard drives and USB's. The 232 hours in overtime is over \$11,000 with officers working around the clock. Ald. Zieno asked for some statistics to compare to our community. Roach did say that since 2018 there have been 3 homicides.

Status of 3rd Detective – R. Roach reported that a third detective is needed, however no one can currently be taken off patrol due to some major cases coming through this area involving organized crime syndicates. They are working closely with Homeland Security and the FBI.

Station Coverage after 3pm /Overtime Status – R. Roach reported that the Nickstock event at the Fairgrounds resulted in 16 hours of overtime. Although the event was smaller than expected, there were still many complaints from neighbors, music was played past hours but was shut down peaceably when told, music played was vulgar in nature. He hoped that the Fair Association reconsiders if the event wants to come back. Roach stated that one Officers is out on maternity leave, one medical leave in addition to vacations and sick leave. All correlate to a high burnout rate in Officers and he doesn't want to lose anyone. He was approached by two Officers thinking of transferring to another department with less overtime. Coverage from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. is an issue. Sgt. Slack was put on a day tour Monday through Friday which has cut 60 hours in overtime every two weeks. They have tried to use forwarding to cell phones for calls, but that has not worked well. He would like to fill the 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. slot with a civilian at entry level to answer phones, do FOIL's, and be at the desk. There are 2,500 walk-ins a month and they need someone at the desk at least until 9 p.m. This would cut down another 60 hours of overtime every two weeks and help with burnout. Discussion included the additional arrests due to bail reform. Chenango County's responsibility to take 911 calls after 11 p.m. and the number of calls to the Norwich P.D. which are not 911 emergencies but things that still need to be addressed such as barking dogs or neighbor disputes. Roach said that most calls are not criminal, but civil calls. R. Roach said they have a very young department, many hired during Covid when no events were taking place. Events are back and they are not used to working 12-hour shifts, 6 days a week/overtime. Ald. Zieno said more thought might be needed in providing services for events. Roach said that the City charges \$30 an hour for events, while Madison County is \$125. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the Human Resource Director looking into creating a position to cover the front desk. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all. Prior to the vote, there was a heated discussion regarding responses to calls that some felt should not be answered by the Police Department, such as mental health calls being answered by mental health professionals instead.

Finance

September JC meeting Date Change to Tuesday, August 29th – Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to approve the change the September Joint Committee date to August 29, 2023. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Community Development

SEQRA Determination of Non-Significance – Zoning Amendment for Warming Center – E. Scrivener as a requirement of the zoning amendment for the Warming Center, a SEQRA Determination of Non-Significance is needed. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the SEQRA determination of non-significance. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Updates on other Projects – E. Scrivener reported the House Appropriations Committee approved application to the Water I&I Study at \$1.25 million. The Senate still has to approve it for Federal Appropriations. Friday the applications for the NY Main Street as well as the Water Sewer Study was submitted. At the B.I.D. meeting, B.I.D. agreed to a \$10,000 donation for the Placemaking initiative. Other funding sources will continue to be explored.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 8:24 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all