

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
August 27, 2024

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 Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour
Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray
DPW Superintendent Edward Pepe
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Reuben Roach
Community Development Director Erik Scrivener
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Absent

Supervisor James McNeil

Ald. Jeffrey 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.

Department Head Reports

DPW

Refill MEO1 – E. Pepe reported an MEO 1 vacancy and requested permission to refill it. Ald. Gee **moved** to refill the MEO 1 position. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Purchase of 2 new F350s – E. Pepe requested permission to purchase 2 1-ton pickup trucks with plows which will cost \$58,127.25 per truck, 1 from Water Capital Reserves, the other from Sewer Capital Reserves. Ald. Loomis **moved** to approve the purchase. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Community Development

2025 Budget – E. Scrivener presented the 2025 Community Development budget. The total budget increase was about \$15,000, mostly from Personal Services and Contracted Services. There was discussion of moving about \$25,000 of the Contracted Services to Water or Wastewater since it is for the Water and Wastewater Capital Plan.

Fire Department

2025 Budget – J. Papelino presented the Fire Department's 2025 Budget. Excluding Personal Services increases, there was a \$26,873 increase overall.

Outside CON EMS calls – J. Papelino reported six calls outside the CON with five of them billable.

Declare 2003 ambulance surplus – J. Papelino requested to declare the 2003 ambulance #2394 as surplus, saying there is some interest in purchasing it. Ald. Loomis **moved** to recommend the Common Council declare the ambulance as surplus. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Code Enforcement

2025 Budget – J. Papelino presented the 2025 Code Enforcement budget went down slightly overall compared to 2024 with Personal Services going down and Contracted Services going up by \$6,000.

Tax properties status – J. Papelino reported the RFP for the lot at the corner of Park and East Main is out; the owner of 30 Henry St. is still in Valley View and will be sent a final notice to remove their belongs by September 30, 2024.

City Court – J. Papelino reported that the court granted another 30 days to the landlord due to her attorney not showing up.

J. Papelino also reported that NYSEG has pulled the meter at 19 Miller St. and it should be torn down soon. There is no further information on 35 Pleasant St.; 41 Guernsey was notified that the garbage piled against the neighbor's fence must be removed or the City would be cleaning it up [and billing the owner].

Code numbers – J. Papelino reported 262 phone calls; 94 walk-ins; 169 correspondences; 16 permits; 46 complaints; 14 red tags; and 30 rental inspections.

Transfer to Cover Excessive Trash Cleanup – J. Papelino requested a transfer of \$5,000 from Contingency to cover the added costs of the excessive trash cleanup that Code Enforcement has had to do. Ald. Warren **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the transfer. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Human Resources

2025 Budget – L. Murray presented the 2025 Human Resources budget which had a \$594 increase over 2024.

Police Department

Current staffing and Refill Police Officer Position - R. Roach reported that 3 staff members were on Comp with 2 on light duty and 1 Officer is leaving. He requested permission to refill the upcoming vacancy. Ald. Gee **moved** to approve refilling the vacancy. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.

Homelessness and larcenies increasing – R. Roach reported that larceny is increasing and homelessness is not necessarily a spike in homelessness, but the same people in the same situation in camps and loitering. They continue to direct individuals to agencies for help. Mayor Doliver said that a homeless forum is in the works. He has spoken with Supervisor McNeil who will have the Mayor come in September to speak with the County.

Technology Grant updates – R. Roach reported they are still looking for a vendor for the cameras. They have until the first quarter of 2025 to use the funds, however because virtually all law enforcement received the same funding it has been difficult to locate a vendor willing to come here.

Finance

2024 Budget – D. DuFour presented the budgets for Finance, Clerk, and Assessor, all of which had slight increases in Personal Service. The Common Council, Mayor, Historian and Records Management are the same as 2024. The City Attorney's budget is the same, however the contract will be expiring and will have to be negotiated. There were increases in the budgets for Insurance, Employee Benefits and Health Insurance.

Section 211 of City Charter – Interest on Taxes – D. Dufour explained that due to a new NYS law regarding interest on taxes which is now linked to the Prime rate, currently at 8.5%, we must change our current interest rate table. The NYS law will require the Prime interest rate as of January 1, 2025 to remain in effect for 5 years, after which the new Prime interest rate will take effect for the next 5 years. She recommends raising the interest on split tax payments from 3% to 5% to help make up for some of the lost revenue. Ald. Loomis moved to approve the increase on split payments. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

Property Tax Software – D. DuFour reported that they will be moving back to ATC for tax software. ATC had previously been used but at the time they could not process credit cards. They have been using GovTec for 5 years and have been experiencing issues with their inaccuracies in calculating interest. Since ATC can now process credit cards they will be going back to ATC at the beginning of the year.

Financial Auditing Services – D. DuFour reported an RFP for auditing services will be done. She will be bringing more information on that soon.

Other Items

Notification System – Mayor Doliver and A. Eaton reported looking into a resident notification system to address the question of how to communicate with the community more than we do now. One system they are considering is a text-based system which is very customizable and will allow residents to sign up for the type of notifications they would like to receive. Another advantage will help people to find answers to their questions faster and also allow them to report things to departments such as potholes or tall grass.

Adjournment – Ald. Warren **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Gee, approved ayes all.