

CITY OF NORWICH
JOINT MEETING of the
PUBLIC SAFETY / PUBLIC WORKS and
FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEES
December 3, 2024

Present:

Mayor Brian Doliver
Ald. Eric Warren
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
Asst. Police Chief Scott Burlison
EMO William Edwards
Community Development Director Erik Scrivener
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Absent

Ald. Fred Gee
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.

Approval of Minutes – Ald. Zieno **moved** to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2024 meeting. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Citizens Academy Graduates Ceremony – R. Roach presented graduation certificates to the 16 people who completed the first Citizens Academy held in a decade. Graduates were Shawn Sastri, Yusuf Harper, Melissa Beers, Kyli Anderson, Lindsey Northrup, James Michalowski, Carol Lumm, James Edwards, Sophia Root, Robert Hagenbuch, Jennifer Westervelt, John Fuller, John Albrecht, John Klockowski, Michael Squires, and Mike Ford. Roach thanked them for their enthusiastic participation along with instructors Sgt. Mark Martin and Officer Sam Stratton.

Department Head Reports

DPW

Flusher Truck – E. Pepe reported that the 2008 flusher truck has 138,000 miles, a leaky valve and the tank has been patched numerous times and requested to go out to bid for a replacement which would be approximately \$275,000 - \$300,000. It is an important piece of equipment to maintain the sewers. Funds would come from Sewer Reserves. Ald. Jeffrey moved to approve going to bid. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Bucket Truck – E. Pepe researched as requested the purchase of a new bucket truck versus a used one. The current bucket truck is 16 years old with 85,000 miles and has a bad motor that, if repaired, would cost \$33,000. A 2025 F550 on State bid and a June delivery would be \$177,980 with 5-year warranties. A 2019 used vehicle with 86,000 miles would be \$109,000 with a 30-day warranty. He recommended purchasing the new vehicle. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the purchase a new 2025 bucket truck for \$177,980 and the corresponding transfer of funds. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

E. Pepe reported that the I&I project is out to bid with a pre-bid meeting on Friday and bids will be opened on December 19, 2024. There is a WWTP project kick-off meeting with the engineer on Thursday. Regarding the Water Meter Replacement Project, he has a meeting with Ferguson on December 12 to review the status of the repeater.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council authorize the DPW Superintendent to sign an agreement with Fleetio for a 12-month subscription to track vehicle maintenance. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Fire Department

Outside CON EMS calls – J. Papelino reported there were 5 calls outside the CON within the last 2 weeks with 4 of them billable.

Volunteer Firemen's Association request – J. Papelino presented a request from the Norwich Volunteer Fireman's Association to allow the alarm bell that was previously mounted at the Ontario Fire Station on Sheldon St. to return there to be displayed at Grant's Fire Museum located there. As a historical artifact, an agreement will be necessary to declare it will only be on loan to the Fire Museum and that its return can be requested at any time or if the museum shuts down, the building is sold. Ald.

SREMS REMAC Letter – J. Papelino reported receiving a letter from the Susquehanna Regional EMS Council saying upon arrival at Emergency Departments they are requesting EMS bring all necessary equipment, medications etc. into the Emergency Department in order to document patient vitals/changes until care is transferred to hospital care. He explained that this means that if a bed is not available, EMS will be providing care at the hospital until a bed is available. Although there is sometimes a wait of 20 minutes at CMH, other hospitals such as Wilson in Binghamton or Upstate in Syracuse can have waits of up to 2 hours to off-load their patients to the Emergency Department.

Chenango Heritage Trail meeting- Postponed – J. Papelino reported that the meeting for the Chenango Heritage Trail has been postponed so they will not meet in the second floor Firehouse conference room.

Declaring Items as Surplus – J. Papelino requested to declare surplus a list of obsolete fire and office equipment. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve declaring the items as surplus. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Code Enforcement

Property issues – J. Papelino reported they have been at the Mitchell St. property twice with charges being \$500 and \$600. He impressed upon the owner that it would be cheaper if she would hire someone to haul away the garbage before the City got involved. He noted there were 2 more bags in front of the garage today. The property on Guernsey has marginally been better with some of the issue being the garbage produced by homelessness. Ald. Zieno mentioned a complaint about 26 Grove that was forwarded to Codes prior to Thanksgiving and there is now additional garbage there along with a truck full of scrap metal.

City Court – J. Papelino said there were a couple of Alderpersons in Court to witness the court hearing involving the owner of the N. Broad St. properties in which the owner was given a 6-month suspended sentence on the condition there were no more incidents, otherwise she would be going to jail. They had been hoping for at least a fine of some kind since it has been almost a year of dealing with the properties.

The property on Gold St. has been transferred to a family member, so the process will likely have to start from scratch. The property is in rent receivership, therefore rent is being paid to the attorney.

Police Department

Raising the Fee for Events – R. Roach asked to raise the fee for events utilizing police services from \$30 to \$60. After research, he indicated that other municipalities are charging from \$100 to \$120 per hour. Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the increase in the fee. Seconded by Ald. Loomis, approved ayes all.

Transfer from Reserves for LPR vehicle outfitting – R. Roach asked for a transfer from Reserves of approximately \$16,134 cover the cost of installation of the License Plate Reader (LPR). Ald. Loomis **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the transfer. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all.

Update on PD Firearms – R. Roach reported that they have received the new firearms and Officers have been training with them.

Arrest numbers for the year – R. Roach went over the police numbers from November 2023 to November 2024. Arrests - 1,082 up from 914 from 2023; tickets – 729 down from 1,115 in 2023; calls for service – 5,951 up from 2023 at 5,904.

Finance

Fund Balance Transfers to Capital Reserves – D. DuFour distributed a list of the recommended transfers to Capital Reserves for the 2025 Budget. Some that were a “must do” were for the fire engine, bucket truck, flusher truck and WWTP equipment. She noted that transfer amounts into Reserves have been reduced in order to meet the tax cap.

Community Development

Housing Rehab Program – E. Scrivener requested an increase in the City’s amount thru the Housing Rehab program from \$25,000 to \$50,000 per unit. The contract with Greater Opportunities has been in effect since June 2023 and only one project has been completed due to the funding limits. The rehab work averages \$33,000 per unit. HUD has approved the increased level. The wait list has 29 people for the program. They will look for CDBG or other affordable housing fundings to continue. The County also has increased their threshold. He noted there are only 3 contractors working for the program in the City. Ald. Loomis **moved** to recommend the Common Council approve the increase. Seconded by Ald. Allaire, approved ayes all.

LED upgrades at WWTP – E. Scrivener reported that Eastern Energy Solutions has proposed LED upgrades for \$13,517 with a 28-month payback with annual savings of \$5,232. Ald. Allaire **moved** to approve application for the incentive from NYSEG and the \$13,517 paid to Eastern Energy. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Other updates - E. Scrivener reported the BID has chosen Bagnall Electric as contractor for the downtown LED lighting. He also reported that LaBerge has submitted a proposal for \$71,000 for a study regarding whether a City Manager is needed along with Charter revisions. This was one of three companies recommended. It is recommended that a steering committee be formed. Ald. Zieno felt that the timeline of 5 to 6 months would push this until 2026 and he indicated he would like it on the ballot in 2025. It was pointed out that is a very tight timeline. Zieno also said the proposal included a reorganization of all departments which is not what they had asked for, however Ald. Jeffrey felt it made sense to look at restructuring at the same time. It was suggested that cities that have gone through a restructuring to a City Manger such as Oneida and Oneonta be looked at. A brief discussion of term limits took place. The [vacant lot] proposal has not been signed by the Governor yet. Ald. Zieno hoped the County would also look into [a vacant lot proposal] as well as only 6 homes have been built in Chenango County since 2021.

Other Items

Change meeting times – Mayor Doliver asked if the start times for the Joint Committee and Common Council meetings could be changed to 6:00. Ald. Zieno said he had a conflict, but everyone else was fine with the change. Ald. Loomis **moved** to recommend the change to the Common Council. Seconded by Ald. Warren, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Loomis **moved** to adjourn the Joint Committee Meeting at 7:48 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey, approved ayes all