

COMMON COUNCIL

March 16, 2021

Mayor Shawn Sastri presided at a meeting of the Common Council held at 6:30 PM on March 16, 2021, in the Common Council Chambers at One Court Plaza.

Present:

Mayor Shawn Sastri
Ald. Matthew Caldwell
Ald. Brian Doliver
Ald. Nancy Allaire
Ald. Linda Kays-Biviano
Ald. David Zieno
Ald. Robert D. Jeffrey

Also:

Director of Finance/City Clerk Dee DuFour
Director of Human Resources Lynn Murray
Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason
Fire Chief Jan Papelino
Police Chief Rodney Marsh
EMO A Jones
City Attorney Steve Natoli
Deputy City Clerk Agnes Eaton

Supervisor Robert M. Jeffrey

Media Representative: none

Absent

Supervisor James McNeil

Call to Order

The meeting of the Common Council was called to order by Mayor Sastri at 6:34 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to approve the minutes of the special meeting of February 9 and the regular meeting of February 16, 2021. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey and duly approved ayes all.

Public Hearing – Mayor Sastri opened the Public Hearing to hear comment on the Norwich Police Department Collaborative Improvement Plan at 6:36 p.m.

Yusef Harper, Norwich resident, attended the CAB meetings virtually. He listened to people who are committed to making Norwich a better community. He felt the Police Department has a good idea of where we've been, how we got there and that CAB addresses where the City needs to be going forward. Citizens have a unique role to play in doing that. He witnessed occasional "grittiness" getting to the heart of things, stating more "gritty" moments going forward will be necessary. CAB performed in a highly organized manor. Building trust must go both ways and this process will be a positive step in doing that. He felt CAB should do oversight, but advisory only.

Harry Graves, 54 Mitchell St., said he is impressed by CAB, they have done a great job, and their recommendations are "on the mark". When he was young, he knew the Officers and they were taught the Police were our friends and someone you go to for help. Over time this seems to have changed and he misses that. He wants to know who our Officers are and wishes there were more interaction with them. He felt de-escalation training is important. He also commented that the Police Department Mission Statement suggested by CAB doesn't include "to serve" or "to help" the Community. He would like to see more positivity in the report.

Hearing no further comment Mayor Sastri closed the Public Hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Open Forum

No one spoke.

Correspondence

Parade of Lights – Ald. Caldwell **moved** to approve a request from the Parade of Lights Committee for road closures and Police assistance for the parade on Saturday, November 27, 2021. Line-up will begin at 5:45 p.m. on

Division, Frances, Conkey, Hickok, Brown Ave. and Eaton with the parade proceeding north on Route 12 at 6:00 p.m. and ending at the Red Roof Inn at Fair St. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Hope and Healing 5K Race – Ald. Zieno **moved** to approve a request for Police Assistance, partial street closures and special event status from the Chenango Child Advocacy Center for the Hope and Healing 5K Run/Walk on Saturday, April 24, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to raise awareness on issues relating to Child Abuse. Registration is at 10:00 a.m. with the run beginning at 11:00 a.m. and the walk at 12:00 p.m. from East Park Place, down East Main to Silver, River, Park, Grove, Marconi to Midland, Hale, Birdsall, Delaware Square, back to Birdsall to Westcott, West Midland, Ross, back to Birdsall to East Main and ending at East Park Place. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Proclamations

Mayor Sastri made the following Proclamations:

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

WHEREAS , The Place, Family Enrichment Network, Morrisville State College Early Childhood program and several local organizations and schools, in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, are celebrating the Week of the Young Child April 10-16, 2021; and

WHEREAS , these community organizations are working to improve early learning opportunities, which are crucial to the growth and development of young children, and to building better futures for children in Norwich and surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS , programs of all areas and public policies that support early learning for all young children are crucial to young children’s futures; and

WHEREAS , all young children and their families across the country and in Norwich deserve access to high-quality early education, care and resources; and

WHEREAS , teachers, coaches, instructors, caregivers and all others who make a difference in the lives of young children in Norwich deserve thanks and recognition; and

WHEREAS , starting on the 10th of April 2021 through the 16th of April 2021, The Place, Family Enrichment Network, Morrisville State College Early Childhood program and several local organizations and schools will be providing a free family friendly virtual event to help kick off and celebrate the Week of the Young Child in an effort to promote all the resources available to children and families in our community. This event will take place virtually on the Facebook platform at the Chenango County Young Children & Families page; now, therefore

I, Shawn Sastri, Mayor of the City of Norwich, do hereby proclaim the week of April 10th - 16th, 2021 as the Week of the Young Child in the City of Norwich, and encourage all citizens to work to make an investment in early childhood development, learning and education in our community to help every one of our children be able to grow, learn and thrive, to the best of their ability.

P R O C L A M A T I O N

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

WHEREAS, National Child Abuse Prevention Month has been a time of national remembrance since 1981. It’s an opportunity for communities, victims and their loved ones to join together and reflect on the progress achieved in the prevention of child abuse within their communities.

WHEREAS, child abuse prevention must be a priority to confront the reality that an estimated 656,243 (Statista, 2021) children nationwide are victims of abuse and neglect each year; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the Chenango Child Advocacy Center (CAC) interviewed 153 children impacted by a crime in the Chenango County region. In addition, the CAC provided 329 counseling sessions, provided emotional support and resources to 147 secondary victims and provided case management services 73 adolescents with high-risk behaviors.

WHEREAS, Child abuse prevention is a community responsibility and finding solutions depends on involvement among all people and communities making an effort to promote programing that benefit children and their families:

WHEREAS, everyone in the community should become more aware of child abuse prevention and begin having conversations, take appropriate action, and support one another to create a safer environment for all; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that I, Mayor Shawn Sastri, do hereby proclaim the month of April 2021 to be Child Abuse Prevention Month and urge all citizens to work together to help reduce child abuse and neglect significantly in years to come and reaffirm our commitment to respect and honor children victims throughout the year to build a more just community.

PROCLAMATION

PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, the National Council on Problem Gambling, the New York Council on Problem Gambling, the Central Region Problem Gambling Resource Center have designated March 2021 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

WHEREAS, problem gambling is a public health issue affecting thousands of New Yorkers of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds;

WHEREAS, problem gambling has a significant societal and economic cost for individuals, families, businesses and communities;

WHEREAS, problem gambling is treatable, and treatment is effective in minimizing this harm to both individuals and society as a whole;

WHEREAS, numerous individuals, professionals and organizations have dedicated their efforts to the education of the public about problem gambling and the availability and effectiveness of treatment;

WHEREAS, the New York Council on Problem Gambling, and the Central Region Problem Gambling Resource Center invite all residents of the City of Norwich, NY to participate in Problem Gambling Awareness Month; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that I, Shawn Sastri, Mayor of the City of Norwich, do hereby proclaim the month of March 2021 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month and encourage all citizens to support the New York Council on Problem Gambling, and the Central Region Problem Gambling Resource Center in their efforts to raise awareness and stimulate action for the issue of problem gambling with friends, family, patients, and clients.

Mayoral Appointment – Mayor Sastri announce the following Mayoral Appointment:

Norwich Housing Authority

◆ *Deborah Elwood, 72 Pleasant Street, to fill the remainder of a three-year term expiring June 25, 2021.*

Department, Board and Commission Reports

- ◆ Police Department Reports – January and February
- ◆ Human Resources Report – January

- ◆ Fire Department Report - February
- ◆ Traffic Commission Minutes – February

Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** to receive and file the department, board, and commission reports. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Ward Reports

Ward 1

Ald. Caldwell reported some communications about the CAB report as well as snowplowing issues that have been resolved.

Ward 2

Ald. Doliver reported a couple of communications which have been forwarded to the proper department for resolution.

Ward 3

Ald. Allaire reported no communications.

Ward 4

Ald. Kays-Biviano reported no communications.

Ward 5

Ald. Zieno reported that a previous complaint has been resolved.

Ward 6

Ald. Jeffrey reported an inquiry about the sidewalk replacement program and sidewalk maintenance, the clean-up of the benches in East Park, correspondence in support of the CAB presentation, and vaccine distribution within the City which was referred to Supervisor Jeffrey. He has received overwhelming feedback in support of the EMS Mutual Aid stance the City has taken.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to receive and file the ward reports. Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, approved ayes all.

Motions

- ◆ **NYS Mandated Public Employer Health Emergency Plan** - Ald. Caldwell **moved** to approve the Public Employer Health Emergency Plan presented to the Joint Committee on March 2, 2021. Seconded by Ald. Zieno, approved ayes all.
- ◆ **Use of Firehouse Third Floor for EMT Training** – Ald. Kays-Biviano **moved** to approve use of the third floor of the Firehouse by the County EMS Coordinator for EMT classes. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.

Resolutions

RESOLUTION #10 - 2021

AUTHORIZING NO PARKING SIGN ON STATE STREET

Ald. Kays-Biviano introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Traffic Commission has recommended that a "No Parking" sign be placed on the East side of State Street from Mitchell Street north, 50 feet north of the entrance into Cobbler's Square.; and

WHEREAS, the DPW is now authorized to post "No Parking" signage, on the East side of State Street from Mitchell Street north, 50 feet north of the entrance into Cobbler's Square.; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Committees have made certain recommendations; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the City Clerk update the City Code Chapter 525-54 A. Parking; Regulations - No Parking of The Vehicle and Traffic code to include the East side of State Street from Mitchell Street north, 50 feet north of the entrance into Cobbler's Square.

Seconded by Doliver, and duly adopted, 6 - 0, on a roll call vote.

RESOLUTION #11 - 2021

**CREATION OF TEMPORARY COORDINATOR OF DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS TRAINEE POSITION**

Ald. Caldwell introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the proposed job duties, requirements and qualifications; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to create this temporary new position to provide training to a new employee filling the position of Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness; and

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich Civil Service Commission has classified the position as part-time, non-competitive, non-union; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the job duties, job description, requirements and qualifications are hereby approved; and further be it

RESOLVED, that the position of Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness Trainee be and hereby is authorized to be created; and further be it

RESOLVED, that this temporary position of Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness Trainee be paid at the rate of \$15 per hour, 10 hours per week and for no longer than three months.

Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey and duly adopted, 6 - 0, on a roll call vote.

RESOLUTION #12 - 2021

COORDINATOR OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS POSITION

Ald. Caldwell introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Joint Committee has recommended to refill the Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness position; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council has reviewed and concur with said recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council recommends the position be paid at the rate of \$9,000 per year for 10 hours per week unless additional hours are otherwise authorized by the Mayor; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness position will be paid at the rate of \$9,000 per year for 10 hours per week unless additional hours are otherwise authorized by the Mayor effective one day after the Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness Trainee becomes the permanent Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness.

Seconded by Ald. Allaire and duly defeated, 0 - 6, on a roll call vote.

Discussion before the vote: Ald. Caldwell wanted to change the Resolved wording so the trainee would automatically become the Coordinator when the current Coordinator (A Jones) left employment. There was discussion on the validity of doing so. A. Eaton suggested this Resolution was not needed as there is currently no one in the Trainee position and a Resolution would be needed to appoint the Trainee to the Coordinator at which point the details of employment and the rate of pay would be specified. It was decided to close this motion and table the resolution.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to table the Resolution for Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness Position. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

RESOLUTION #13 - 2021

AUTHORIZING COORDINATOR OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PAY RATE CHANGE

Ald. Caldwell introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Joint Committee has recommended that the incoming employee for Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness position will need training; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council has reviewed and concur with said recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council recommends that the salary of A Jones be increased from \$9,695 to \$15,600 per year effective March 3, 2021 through no later than June 30, 2021 for the purpose of training the Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness Trainee; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that A Jones, Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness, will be paid at the rate of \$15,600 per year effective March 3, 2021 through no later than June 30, 2021.

Seconded by Ald. Doliver and duly adopted, 6 - 0, on a roll call vote.

Before the vote it was clarified that this position is currently an hourly employee paid per stipend annualized.

RESOLUTION #14 - 2021

AUTHORIZING LEASE OF VACANT PROPERTY TO COOK BUILDING, LLC

Ald. Caldwell introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich is the owner of real property located on East Main Street, alongside The Cook Building, known as 6 East Main Street, Norwich, New York, having dimensions of 144 inches wide by 84 inches deep at the Northwest Corner of the municipal parking lot, hereinafter referred to as the "property", which is not currently needed for municipal purposes; and

WHEREAS, Cook Building, LLC, is in need of this space in order to place lockers, and in return for the use of this property, agrees to, among other things, maintain said lot, provide insurance on said lot, and hold the City of Norwich harmless for use of said lot; now; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Shawn Sastri, as Mayor of the City of Norwich, is hereby authorized to enter into a lease under the direction of the City Attorney for the lease of the City owned property, adjacent to 6 East Main Street, Norwich, New York to Cook Building, LLC.

Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, and duly adopted, 6 - 0, on a roll call vote.

RESOLUTION #15 - 2021

ADOPTING THE CITY OF NORWICH POLICE DEPARTMENT COLLABORATIVE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Ald. Allaire introduced the following and **moved** its adoption:

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2020 the governor signed an Executive Order requiring each local government to adopt a policing reform plan by April 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Order authorizes the Director of the Division of the Budget to condition State aid to localities on the adoption of such a plan; and

WHEREAS, the plan must be ratified or adopted and certification of adoption must be sent to the State Budget Director on or before April 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich created the Community Advisory Board (CAB) to review aspects of the Norwich Police Department according to the *Resources and Guide for Public Officials and Citizens* issued by the NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative; and

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich Community Advisory Board (CAB) made presentations to the Council on January 19, 2021 and March 2, 2021 and Public Hearings were held February 9, 2021 and March 16, 2021; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the City of Norwich Police Department Collaborative Improvement Plan produced by the City of Norwich Community Advisory Board (CAB) is hereby adopted.

Seconded by Ald. Kays-Biviano, and duly adopted, 6 - 0, on a roll call vote.

Discussion before the vote: All acknowledged the hard work and time put into this plan under the time deadline they had. Ald. Caldwell received feedback from some constituents who felt de-escalation should play a big part of the plan. He “whole-heartedly” agrees with some items and “whole-heartedly” disagrees with others and would not vote for them when individually brought to Council for approval. Ald. Jeffery said this is a good stepping-stone for improving our community. Ald. Zieno would like CAB to provide a checklist of items from the report to the Council in order to “hold our feet to the fire”. During discussion it was pointed out that the New York State Police were not required to provide a Police reform plan.

Payment of March 2021 Bills

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to pay the March 2021 bills after proper audit and certification.

	Prepaid	3/16/2021	Grand Total
General Fund	\$456,006.57	\$530,857.70	\$986,894.27
Sewer Fund	19,474.72	14,343.01	33,817.73
Water Fund	18,599.93	12,351.00	30,950.93
Trust	29,219.29	-	29,219.29
BID	46,827.73	-	46,827.73
Comm. Dev. - Special Grants		-	
Capital Projects		-	
TOTALS	\$570,128.24	\$557,551.71	\$1,127,679.95

Seconded by Ald. Caldwell and duly adopted 6 - 0.

Executive Session

Ald. Caldwell **moved** to enter executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular individual at 7:29 p.m.. Seconded by Ald. Jeffrey. Ald. Zieno **moved** to also discuss contract negotiations Seconded by Ald. Caldwell. Both motions approved ayes all.

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to exit executive session at 7:48 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Caldwell, approved ayes all.

Adjournment

Ald. Jeffrey **moved** to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Doliver, approved ayes all.