

CITY OPERATIONS

Tuesday, January 17, 2017 – 5:45 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Gonzalez, Alderman Dougherty, Alderman Andreano, and Alderman George. Others: Alderman Witte; Alderman Crawford; Mayor William Aiello; Nicholas DiCerbo, Jr., City Attorney; Fred Saradin, City Auditor; Tom Windus, Director of Public Works; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief; Ed Jennings, Code Enforcement Supervisor, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Smith called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, December 6, 2016)

A motion to approve minutes of the December 6, 2016 committee meeting was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

- a. PL #04-17: (Aiello) To authorize the creation of one part time permanent Building Inspector position.

Mayor Aiello stated that we have received a \$100,000 grant to help address the issue of zombie houses throughout the City. In applying for the grant, we put together a package of what we would like to do, including hiring a part time building inspector. The grant was awarded with funding to hire a part time building inspector, and as this would be a civil service position that we do not currently have in the City, we must create the position.

He continued in stating that this position will be under the Department of Public Works and Mr. Windus. The position will entail putting together a database of the zombie houses in the City, as well as possibly aiding in the building inspections that are required per the DEC's Order on Consent (for sewer disconnects when properties are sold). The person hired would aid in our fight against blight.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned if this person would be interfacing with Code Enforcement, and Mayor Aiello stated that they possibly could.

Alderman Andreano questioned if this is a full time position with benefits, and Mayor Aiello stated that it is a part time position (approximately 20 hours a week) with no benefits. Alderman Andreano asked what they will do when the database is finished, and Mayor Aiello replied that the funding is good for one year, so at the end of the year the position could quite possibly be eliminated. We will let applicants know this before anyone is hired. Alderman George questioned if this is a fully funded position to which Mayor Aiello responded that yes, it is.

Alderman Andreano asked why we aren't putting someone in Code Enforcement, and Mr. DiCerbo stated that the funding will not allow for that. Mr. Windus added that the person would not be able to write tickets. They would not be able to enforce Codes.

Alderman Andreano asked if anyone knew how many zombie houses are in the City, and Mr. DiCerbo responded that there are enough that if they are all cataloged within the year, he will be impressed.

Alderman Gonzalez asked if there is potential to fund this position further than one year if we find it beneficial. Mayor Aiello stated that blight and zombie houses are a hot issue for New York State, so we foresee future funding opportunities. We will apply for any future funding, if it does become available.

Alderman Andreano questioned what we would do with the list once it is created. Mr. Windus stated that we would have to keep it updated. It will aid with the Police Department, and it would aid the City in working with the community to make them aware of zombie houses in their neighborhoods. Alderman Gonzalez stated that the first part to solving a problem is finding out how bad the problem is.

Alderman Crawford asked if this catalog of zombie homes would aid in getting future grants, to which Mr. Windus responded "absolutely". Mayor Aiello stated that these properties are called zombie houses because we have a hard time tracking who actually owns the home and holds the deed. It makes it difficult to serve an order to remedy or to find the responsible party when there is an issue.

Mr. DiCerbo stated that you see a lot of communities across the state require that vacant properties become registered. Requiring this could aid in knowing who to call in case of emergency, such as if a vacant property catches on fire.

Alderman Andreano asked if we have to hire off of a civil service list. Mayor Aiello stated that since there is not currently a list, we would hire someone provisionally and they would take the test at a future time. He would like to get this position created, if it is acceptable to the Council, as soon as possible as the grant has already started and we are a month into it.

Alderman Smith questioned if the creation of this position is required for the grant, to which Mr. Windus stated that we did put this into the application. Alderman Smith asked what would happen if we do not create the position and hire an individual, and Mr. Windus stated that we would be in violation of the terms of the grant and we could very well lose it.

Alderman Smith stated that this may be beneficial, and it may not, but if the funding is there and it is not costing the City, then we might as well try it out. Alderman Gonzalez agreed.

A motion to approve PL #04-17 was made by Alderman Dougherty, seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. PL #04-17 referred to Regular Meeting 01/24/2017 for Resolution.

b. Discussion – City Backhoe Damage

Alderman Smith stated that, as the Council is aware, the City's backhoe was damaged last year, and we have been renting equipment for approximately \$5,000 per month while we get financials figured out with different parties for a replacement. He stated that he has received comments from several constituents that they aren't happy that we are "throwing away" \$5,000 a month renting equipment. Because of this, he spoke with Mr. Windus regarding using rents paid toward the purchase of the equipment.

Mr. Windus stated that the equipment that we are currently renting, with its attachments, costs approximately \$63,000. The company is willing to apply approximately \$10,000 of what we have paid so far, plus a portion of future paid rents, towards the purchase. Alderman Witte asked if this is equal to the damaged piece of equipment, and Mr. Windus replied that it is not. We would still need to replace the damaged equipment, even if we chose to buy out what we are currently renting. He stated that he does not like throwing money out on a rental, but we absolutely need this equipment to function.

After some discussion regarding who should pay for the rental and whether or not the purchase of an extra piece of equipment is necessary, it was decided that the item will be discussed in the Fleet Management committee for the time being.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

A motion to approve Committee Reports was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman George. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman George. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 p.m.