

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018 – 6:30 p.m.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS – OLEAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING

IN ATTENDANCE WERE: ALDERMEN CRAWFORD, WITTE, ANDREANO, GONZALEZ, DOUGHERTY, AND GEORGE. OTHERS: MAYOR WILLIAM AIELLO; LENS MARTIAL, CITY CLERK; NICHOLAS DICERBO, JR., CITY ATTORNEY; FRED SARADIN, CITY AUDITOR; BOB RING, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS; KERI KERPER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR; BOB BELL, FIRE CHIEF; JEFF ROWLEY, POLICE CHIEF, AND TIFFANY TAYLOR, MANAGERIAL CONFIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY.

Alderman Crawford called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all Aldermen were present except Alderman Smith, who was excused.

1. PL #35-18: (Aiello) That the Common Council as Lead Agency declares the Downtown Farmers' Market Project a Type I Action that will not result in any significant adverse environmental impact and thus issues a Negative Declaration in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act.

Mayor Aiello stated that this is another step towards getting the Farmers' Market Project underway. Alderman Crawford questioned if there is any determined environmental impact. Ms. Kerper stated that she completed Parts I and II of the Environmental Assessment Form, She sent the forms to all interested agencies, who had thirty days to respond. All agencies responded that they concur with the Common Council acting as Lead Agency, and they agree that there is no environmental impact due to the Project.

A motion to approve PL #35-18 was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

2. PL #38-18: (Aiello) To amend the water rates, pursuant to Section 27-22, and sewer rates, pursuant to Section 27-167(A) of the City of Olean Code of Ordinances, to raise water rates 5% and sewer rates 3 ½ %.

Mayor Aiello stated that he knows that this seems like a lot, but it is necessary to repair infrastructure.

Alderman Crawford stated that he realizes that water and sewer rates are a touchy subject. In no way does the Council want to gouge residents. The City has a massive public safety infrastructure problem. On Washington Street, if there is a serious fire, there is a chance that the fire department couldn't use the hydrants on that street properly and would have to run lines to the next street over. There is also a chance for a potential line collapse. He feels that we could

accomplish replacing lines on Fourth Street and Washington Street with proper budgeting and avoid bonding.

Alderman Andreano stated that she is against this for several reasons. She one hundred percent agrees that the City has a huge infrastructure problem. Her issue is that we continue to take money from the Water and Sewer Funds to pay for other items. A large reason for the rate increase is also because a major user did not use nearly as much water in the past year, therefore reducing the revenues in the Water Fund. She feels that when rates go up, usage will go down and we will need to continue to raise rates. She feels that this is just the beginning.

Mayor Aiello stated that we have to realize that water and sewer is a user fee. There are many properties and organizations in the City that are tax exempt and that don't pay property taxes. Everyone does pay water and sewer bills. When you consider a backhoe that the City would like to purchase, you have to consider that it would be used by not only the Streets Department, but also by the Water and Sewer Departments. That is why you can use 1/3 of the payment from the General Fund, 1/3 from the Water Fund, and 1/3 from the Sewer Fund. This way, people who are not taxed still pay their fair share.

Alderman Crawford stated that he feels that this is a valid point. He believes that it is approximately 40% of Olean that is tax exempt, and that is a high number. If we don't transfer some costs to the Water and Sewer Funds, then entire costs hit the General Fund and taxes go up.

Alderman Witte stated that the Water and Sewer Funds don't pay for just equipment. Salaries for workers in the Water and Sewer Departments come from these Funds, and workers who aid the Water and Sewer Departments have their salaries split between these funds and the General Fund. We can't afford to put the entire burden on the General Fund. She does not like raising rates, but we have an aging infrastructure that we have to deal with.

Alderman George stated that he feels that people are not entirely comfortable continuing to raise rates, but if we want to continue to plan to maintain the infrastructure, we have to.

A motion to approve PL #3819-18 was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

3. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.