

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, January 7, 2020– 5:30 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Alderman Gonzalez, Alderman Witte, Alderman Panus, Alderman Dougherty, Alderman Crawford, Alderman Smith, and Alderman Anastasia. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Fred Saradin, City Auditor; Gregg Piechota, City Assessor; Kris Shewairy, Director of Youth and Recreation; Keri Stephen, Community Development Program Coordinator; Bob Bell, Fire Chief; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all Aldermen were present.

2. Unfinished Business

None

3. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Department Head Presentation

Mayor Aiello explained that he thought that with two new Council members, as well as for a refresher for the others, it would be a good idea to have the Department Heads give a brief explanation of what each of their departments do.

i. Youth & Recreation

Mr. Shewairy explained that this is the third year that he has been the Youth and Recreation Department Supervisor. He explained that his department encompasses and does all programming for all child, adult, and senior citizen programming that the City offers. He explained that his department works out of several facilities, including parks, playgrounds, the William O. Smith Recreation Center, the John J. Ash Community Center, and the Bartlett House. He explained that there is a Summer Program from June to August, as well as a Winter Program from September to April.

Mr. Shewairy explained that this year is the earliest that the ice rink has ever been opened because of the recently completed renovation at the ice rink, as well as because of customer demand. He explained that there is a learn to skate program, as well as public ice skating seven days a week. He explained that the Recreation Center is open over 1,000 hours a week to the

public and is only closed on Christmas Day, and over 4,000 people have used the facility in the past two weeks alone. He explained that the facility is very bust, and has new programs such as the ice bocce group from the Senior Center that comes every Thursday. He noted that he would like to see other groups, such as Intandem, utilize the facility for this purpose down the road.

Mr. Shewairy explained that the John J. Ash Center is open daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and has programs such as Tai Chi, a breakfast cart, lunch program, and numerous holiday parties. In addition, the facility is the site of the Meals on Wheels program, and is rented out for parties, events, receptions and shows. Mr. Shewairy noted that Terry Shaw is the supervisor.

Mr. Shewairy explained that the pool and the summer lunch program are a part of the Summer Recreation Program. He explained that there are daily and weekly events to get kids involved and keep them moving, as well as to keep their minds stimulated during the summer. He noted that the St. John's Program is open from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. daily for the entire school year, and the basketball program currently has 87 kids enrolled.

Mr. Shewairy explained that his department is also responsible for booking for facilities and parks, such as the Bartlett House and Bradner Stadium. He explained that this year the Bartlett House and museum was heavily promoted, and several events were held there including those in conjunction with the Greater Olean Area Chamber of Commerce's StrOlean. He explained that in June, a Coach bus trip will be coming from Buffalo to view the center. He explained that he is constantly trying to get the word out to attract interest to the Bartlett House.

Alderman Witte asked how many kids utilized the roller skating program over the summer, and Mr. Shewairy explained that on average there were 50 people weekly for the program, which was open three days per week.

Mr. Shewairy explained that some upcoming events at the Recreation Center are the Easter Egg Hunt, a Jujitsu show, a craft show in May and the annual Home Show. He noted that one of the big programs at Lincoln Park is the concert series, which he is hoping to expand next year. He explained that the 2019 season saw 17 concerts with over 200 viewers per concert.

Alderman Gonzalez asked how the security systems are working at the Recreation Center. Mr. Shewairy explained that they are installed and that the cameras and alarm system are linked to dispatch, and there have been no further issues such as those that occurred in the past.

ii. Community Development

Ms. Stephen explained that her office works on the Downtown Property Improvement Program loans by meeting with prospective applicants, who then meet with the Project Loan Committee. She explained that her office monitors al Homeownership Assistance Program. She added that

her office also acts as a liason between the City's administration and the Planning Board, and reviews all site permits and applications while working in direct coordination with Code Enforcement.

Ms. Stephen explained that her office administers the Olean Area Transit System and coordinates with local partners to have one of the most unique transit systems in the State of New York. She explained that her office also handles Federal funding for the program, handles reimbursement requests, coordinates capital projects such as the ordering and placement of bus shelters, and handles the ordering of buses.

Ms. Stephen explained that the New York State Office of Homes and Community Renewal's latest programs for funding include the Microenterprise Program, which her office applied for and received in conjunction with Olean Business Development, and a funding opportunity to assist the new Hampton Inn on Buffalo Street with costs for furnishings and fixtures. Her office has also worked with the Blight Task Force to receive funding through LISC for the Zombie 2.0 initiative, which allows for reimbursement for a Zombie Coordinator for two years. She explained that the coordinator, as well as herself and the Mayor, attend Cattaraugus County Land Bank meetings to report on the City's blight efforts and coordinate with their efforts.

Ms. Stephen explained that she is the City's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, as well as the City's Civil Rights Officer, Fair Housing Officer and Prevailing Wage Rate Officer, and does necessary reporting as such. She works closely with the Olean Business Development Corporation and the Urban Renewal Agency. In addition, her office creates and submits applications for funding from Federal, State, Local and Private Sources. She explained that if the funding is awarded to the City, her office then does monthly, quarterly, six month, and annual reporting for the grants. Her office also assisted in the update of the Code for Form Based Code, as well as assisted in the creation and implementation of the Urban Renewal Plan.

Alderman Witte noted that Ms. Stephen's office assisted in putting together the Comprehensive Plan, and asked when this comes due. Ms. Stephen responded that the plan is for 2005-2025, and that the Council is actually in charge of putting it together and updating the plan. She explained that her office is available to assist with this.

iii. Assessor's Office

Mr. Piechota explained that himself, as well as a full time Assessor's Aide, work in his office, and his department also encompasses the appointed Board of Assessment Review. He explained that a certain amount of classes are needed to be an Assessor, and although the Aide's position has no requirements, he still sends the Aide for classes once a year to keep him updated. He explained that the Board of Assessment Review contains three to five members and meets on

the fourth Tuesday in May if there are complaints to be heard. He explained that they hear the complaints and make a final determination that is reflected when the roll comes out.

Mr. Piechota explained that his office must adhere to the New York State Real Property Tax Law with respect to record keeping and tax administration, as well as follow New York State's Assessment Calendar. He explained that July 1st is the Valuation Date, and January 1st all applications are sent out for renewals for senior citizens, wholly exempt, and clergy. He explained that all applications and renewals must be in by March 1st, which is Taxable Status Day, and this is also the date that determines the condition of the property for the roll. For example, if a garage is being demolished and is done March 2nd, it will still show on the roll for the year since it was not demolished before March 1st. He explained that there is a Saturday before Grievance Day when he sits in the office with the roll in case anyone chooses to inspect it; however, typically no one does, as it is also on the internet. He explained that he still does this because New York State requires it.

Mr. Piechota explained that his office maintains all records on real property, and also does exemption administration for the City, including senior citizens, veterans, clergy, business, and not-for-profits. He noted that New York State has taken over STAR exemptions. He explained that his office handles all tax bills for both the City and the County, whereas most municipalities contract out for this. He explained that this is a benefit to the City because the City can keep all penalties paid when the County taxes come due, which amounts to more than what it costs the City to send out the bills.

Mr. Anastasia asked if the City could also handle the school's tax bills in order to receive those penalties as well, and Mr. Piechota responded that it could be looked into, but that it may be difficult since the school district encompasses multiple municipalities. Mayor Aiello added that it could be looked into.

Mr. Piechota explained that every building permit issued gets sent to his office throughout the year so that his records can be updated and new values can be created for properties, if needed. He explained that the last time there was a City-wide data collection was in 2009 when the City did a City-wide revaluation, and since then, building permits are used to keep up with inventory changes. He noted that his office also receives calls on a daily basis from attorneys, banks, and lending institutions about properties, and they assist in any way they can. His office also records all properties for all deeds in the City, and they have to be recorded in the City before they are filed with Cattaraugus County.

iv. Fire Department

Chief Bell explained that in the 1990's his department was called the "Fire Department", and that a Charter change renamed it the "Department of Buildings, EMS, and Emergency Services".

He explained that they operate out of two separate buildings, plus the Code Enforcement Office in the Municipal Building. He explained that there are three officers at Station 1, four at Central Fire, plus two in Code Enforcement. He explained that his department does everything with the ambulance, including transporting and handling emergencies. He noted that there are 17 EMT's in the department. He explained that the State has changed protocols recently, and although OGH is a stroke and cardiac center, they have the ability to bypass the ER and go straight to Mercy Flight if medical direction has them do that.

Chief Bell explained that the fire department is all encompassing, and handles everything from full blown fires to cats in trees. He explained that the City also has mutual aid agreements with the County and surrounding municipalities, so the City helps volunteer departments, and volunteer departments help us out. He explained that the Fire Department also participates in fire safety and inspections with Codes. He explained the smoke detector program in which if the department goes in a house and does not see a smoke detector and/or carbon monoxide detector, they will leave one there or even install it help ensure the safety of the residents.

Chief Bell encouraged residents to call early because it is a lot easier handling a smaller situation rather than a full blown, large situation, and that the department can respond without lights and sirens. He explained that the fire engine and ambulance work together and that there have been times when all ambulances are out and fire protection is basically down to the Chief and Code Enforcement. HE explained that the biggest question the department gets is why the engine goes out with the ambulance, and it is because the engine needs to be able to respond to other parts of the City if it is needed during an ambulance call. He noted that the engines also include advanced life support (ALS) equipment such as a defibrillator and everything else the ambulance carries, minus the ability to transport a patient. He noted that manpower on a cardiac arrest call also needs to be four people, so five respond.

Chief Bell explained that he has been asked if only one station in Olean would work, and he feels that Olean's demographics have changed so the City could probably get away with only one department, if it was strategically located. He explained that to apply for grants for a new building, it is required that the project be shovel ready, and the City must own the property, have plans in place and have a coin in the game.

Chief Bell explained that his department encompasses Code Enforcement, and he presented a list to the Aldermen that includes the section of Code that his department is responsible for. HE explained that if his office does receive a call about something that the department does not handle, they try their best to direct the caller in the right direction where someone can assist with their issue.

Chief Bell noted that his department also falls under the Discovery Reform Law that was recently passed.

v. Police Department

Chief Rowley explained that there are 27 officers in the uniformed division of the Police Department, including the uniformed officer in the high school. There are three investigators (two criminal and one juvenile), two undercover officers in the Street Crimes Unit, court officers who work for the City but whose salaries are reimbursed by the State, and three school security officers who work for the City but whose salaries are reimbursed by the school. He explained that the recent addition of the school security officers has been very well received. He noted that there are also five full time and two part time dispatchers.

Chief Rowley explained that what his department does is pretty straightforward. He explained that last year the Council gave funding to the department for trail cameras, but they have not been received yet because since then, the department received a grant that covers the cost but creates additional administrative work before they arrive.

Chief Rowley explained that there have been some major changes recently to how the policing system works. For example, a person is considered a juvenile in New York State through age 18, when previously they could be considered an adult at 16 or 17, depending on the crime. He explained that the juveniles who are under the age of 18 have a separate set of rules from adult offenders.

Chief Rowley explained that Bail and Discovery Reform are the most recent changes made to departments through the State of New York. HE explained that the governor does not want people sitting in jail awaiting sentencing, so for a majority of crimes, everyone gets an appearance ticket and gets released. He explained that unless it is a violent crime or something very serious, the offender is processed and then the department has to let them go. He explained that judges have an entire new set of rules as well to go by to make decisions regarding bail, and it is presenting a problem. He explained that for crimes such as vehicular manslaughter or burglary, the police department cannot take into consideration a prior criminal record, and has to only write an appearance ticket. He explained that the foresees a huge backlash as high profile cases have already come up, and he foresees a huge pushback for the legislature to look at this and make different decisions. He explained that there will be a lot of reoffenders locally, and this change is affecting the morale of officers across the state.

Chief Rowley explained that before the Discovery Demand Reform occurred, if you were arrested, you or your defense could request from the DA anything related to the case to aid in your defense. He explained that the DA would then provide this information, but that it did not happen all that often, HE explained that with the new law, every single ticket or arrest,

including Code Enforcement tickets, requires that within 15 days of the date of the ticket or arrest that everything be turned over to the defense that the DA has in relation to the case. Otherwise, the defense could move for the case to be completely dismissed. He explained that this is a huge issue for every DA's office and Police Department in the State, and this is a huge amount of work that is required even if the information is not requested by the defense, as it still needs to be provided.

Alderman Crawford asked where this information is sent, and Chief Rowley explained that his department is required to turn over everything they have within five days to the DA, and they have ten days from there (for the total 15 days) to turn the information over to the DA. He explained that there are a lot of different systems that are used to store different kinds of data and reports, so right now there is a night time Sergeant working days to handle this information. He explained that it is not good having this supervisor on his shift, but he really had no other options. He explained that he is looking to hire an officer just to do this work, and that every department in the State will need to hire additional help to do this task. He explained that he thinks that you will eventually see changes in the Bail Reform, but not in this.

Alderman Witte asked why these changes are so radical. Chief Rowley explained that what was happening down state was in Rikers, an offender would be arrested for a small misdemeanor offense but was not able to make bail, so they sat in jail for a year before trial. He explained that it was happening at such an alarming rate that they felt that they needed to do something. Although it was a legitimate problem, it was not solved in the best way possible, HE explained that this change is making New York State a lot less safe than it was before. He noted that DA offices are also already overworked, so he can see a lot of cases that are dropped, dismissed or pled out because of these changes. Mayor Aiello added that it is another unfunded mandate from New York State.

vi. Auditor's Office

Mr. Saradin explained that there are two employees in his office in addition to himself. He explained that the City of Olean is in a way a \$25 million business between the General Fund, Water Fund and Sewer Fund. He explained that every check that is issued and every dollar that is received is accounted for in his office.

Mr. Saradin explained that the City is required by New York State to have an independent audit done of our operation each year. He explained that for this purpose, he works with the City's chosen independent auditor, Buffamante Whipple Buttafaro (BWB), as they do an annual audit on his office to ensure that the City remains compliant and that numbers make sense.

Mr. Saradin explained that his office does payroll for around 155 full time and 60 part time (depending on the time of year) employees. He explained that payroll functions run through his office, as well as anything to do with health insurance for current employees and retirees.

Mr. Saradin explained that his office is responsible for issuing all internal financial reports, working as a liason with banks, and work with bond consultants when the Council decides to undertake a project that requires funding. He explained that in a nutshell, his office is responsible for overseeing a \$25 million business.

Mr. Saradin let the new Aldermen know that his office is always open, and that he would rather answer questions in office, over the phone or through email rather than be put on the spot on the Council floor. He explained that he is at their disposal to help make good financial decisions for the City.

Alderman Anastasia asked what the City's current bond rating is, and Mr. Saradin responded that it is "A". HE explained that when he first started in 2010, the City was coming out of a pretty difficult financial situation, but the City is in pretty good financial shape right now. He noted that there is a pretty good fund balance in all three funds, and that the City has been able to accomplish a lot since he's been here.

vii. Department of Public Works

Mr. Ring explained that he is the Public Works Director, and that he is a licensed engineer with a focus in construction and transportation. He explained that he also does environmental work with water and sewer. HE explained that there are thirteen different divisions and 64 employees, 54 full time, and 7 supervisors in his department. He explained that he is the Chair of the DPW Safety Team. He explained that one of the big focuses of his department is to continue to do work internally with the people that the department has. He noted that his department is split up into three different funds – General Fund, which is funded through taxes and other revenues, and Water and Sewer Funds, which are funded from revenues from water and sewer billing.

Mr. Ring explained that in the City Garage, the Streets division handles plowing, potholes, "tree work", patching, milling and paving, tar and chipping, and managing trucking, HE explained that the Parks department includes five people and is housed at the Bradner Stadium shop. He explained that Parks is responsible for the maintenance of all parks, in addition to mowing, putting down and taking down Christmas decorations, repairs, plowing and shoveling, and repairs where needed and replacing what they can in house.

Mr. Ring explained that the Electric division has three employees and is also housed at Bradner Stadium. He explained that they oversee everything electrical in the City from building electric

to street lighting. He added that the City owns several hundred lighting fixtures themselves and the division takes care of the underground electric for lighting. Mr. Ring explained that at the water and sewer plants, a SCADIA system works as the brain of the plants, and the electrical division ensures that the system is in working order. He explained that this system is constantly taking flow data and analyzing the makeup of water and sewage, and has allowed the plants to go from three shifts to one because the system can call employees in during times of heavy use and if there is an issue that needs to be dealt with. Mr. Ring noted that the Electricians also oversee the fire alarm systems for all buildings and maintain the ID system to get into buildings.

Mr. Ring explained that the Engineering division is on the second floor of the Municipal Building, and they wear a lot of hats around the City, including surveying for Capital Projects and defining City lines. He explained that the division is taking a lot of survey data and doing a lot of design in house this time of year, and designing Capital Projects. He explained that the Engineers are specialists in researching and planning. He noted that most of the projects that are done in the City come from Engineering in some way.

Mr. Ring explained that the City Forester is an expert in investigating trees, and that she inspects, goes to the Tree Board with recommendations, and then the Board makes determinations. He explained that the Tree Board essentially manages her budget. He explained that the mechanics in the City Garage manage a fleet of about 170 pieces of equipment, including vehicles and heavy equipment. HE explained that a lot of warranty work is done in the garage, and that some deep dive projects require outside help, but this is pretty rare. HE explained that a lot of work is done by the mechanics for only having four employees.

Mr. Ring explained that the City Airport is located in Ischua and that he oversees operations there, while it is maintained by part time workers and open five days a week, 8 to 4. He explained that it is a small plane airport and that there are no commercial flyers. HE explained that the Airport receives a lot of funding from FAA grants so annually he is working with the FAA, and there is a lot of requirements about what is eligible and what is not from the FAA.

Alderman Anastasia asked if the airport is still running in the red, and Mr. Ring responded that it is by about \$100,000. Alderman Anastasia asked if each FAA grant increases the amount of time that the City is committed to the airport, and Mr. Ring replied that they do.

Mr. Panus asked if there is any chance for commercial flights, and Mr. Ring responded that the airport does not have the appropriate length of runway. He explained that it would, however, support a small commuter on a clear day. He noted that in the 1980's the FAA began subsidizing airports, but you could not be subsidized if you were not a commercial carrier with a major business plan, He explained that the City could try to get into FAA funding and get subsidized, but a lot would go into that. Alderman Dougherty noted that the Airport is used for collateral

when it comes to bonding and leasing. Alderman Anastasia asked if the City still receives aid from the County for the Airport, and Mayor Aiello responded that we do, but it is very little. He noted that we will be working on obtaining additional funding this year.

Mr. Ring explained that there are three office administrators in the office, and they he prides the office on getting back to residents questions the same day if at all possible. He explained that if the Council can't answer a question or help with a complaint, that they are welcome to call the office for assistance. He explained that his office works closely with the Community Development office as well. His office handles street, water, and sewer projects, they share duties on parks and such, and she handles other types of grants.

Mr. Ring explained that one of his big duties is managing capital projects. HE does estimating, invoice tracing, and works closely with Mr. Saradin to track project finances. He explained that he monitors how far along in a project we are versus how much has been spent, and he does his best to keep projects on time and under budget. He noted that he is also on the Beautification Committee, the Safety Committee, and a member of Fleet Management.

Mr. Ring explained that he oversees the Water and Sewer divisions, and the Aldermen are welcome to stop down to either plant for a tour. He explained that the employees take pride in what they do, and that the departments are completely City-run with thte Department of Health and EPA overseeing water, and the DEC and EPA overseeing sewer. HE explained that there are 14 employees in each plant, and half are general operators and administrators while half are maintenance crews. He explained that there are 100 miles of water lines, 100 miles of storm sewer and 100 miles of sanitary sewer under the streets, and these divisions service all of those, in addition to fire hydrants and water meters in every single home.

Mayor Aiello explained that it is important to have a chain of command structure, and if the Aldermen are looking for information, that they need to contact the Department Head and not the rank and file staff. He also asked that the Aldermen copy him on all emails so that he can track requests and make sure things are getting done.

b. Discussion – Facility Needs Report

Mr. Ring explained that the top need on the recently presented Facility Needs Report is the Times Square entrance to the Municipal Building. He explained that if the Council wants to get work done in the next construction season, then he needs at least some sort of indication to get work started on plans and contracts. He explained that he estimates the cost between \$100,000 and \$125,000, and this is not a budgeted item. Mr. Ring explained that there is a cracked beam and rebar exposed in the basement, and there is a hole growing because of salt by the ramp. HE explained that the idea is to cut out all of the concrete and re pour it, which

will last a good 20 to 25 years. He explained that there would also be work on the catch basin and ADA upgrades, in addition to assistance with the standing water.

Mayor Aiello explained that the City may be around \$100,000 over the required 15% fund balance, so this could be a possibility for funding. Alderman Witte explained that this project has to do with public safety and the City is liable if someone gets hurt. Alderman Crawford explained that it is only going to get worse, not better.

Alderman Smith explained that although he feels like the entrance was previously an aesthetic issue, it has become a safety and structural issue and he would support the project if it could be as financially reasonable as possible. Mr. Ring noted that if the repairs had been done as presented five years ago, that it may not have fixed the root of the problem and we could still be where we are now.

It was the general consensus of the Council to authorize Mr. Ring to put together better numbers for the project to allow for an idea of the funding amount needed.

4. Approval of Committee Reports

None

5. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

a. Discussion – Facility Needs Report

6. Approval of Committee Reports

7. Adjournment