

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.

VIA ZOOM

IN ATTENDANCE WERE: ALDERMEN CRAWFORD, WITTE, PANUS, GONZALEZ, DOUGHERTY, ROBINSON, AND ANASTASIA. OTHERS: MAYOR WILLIAM AIELLO; LENS MARTIAL, CITY CLERK; BOB RING, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, 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.

1. 2021 Council Outlook

Alderman Crawford explained that he wanted to get things rolling for 2021 and have something at the forefront of the Council's initiatives and to rally the Council's legislation in the coming year. He presented a PowerPoint to the Council.

Alderman Crawford congratulated the Mayor, the Council, and the City for weathering the COVID-19 storm during the past year. He explained that this is one of the strongest group of individuals that he's worked with thus far and together, we can weather the remainder of COVID-19. It is not important where we have been, but rather where we are going, and he would like to discuss key opportunities for the coming year.

Alderman Crawford explained that as a City, there are things that we do really well. There is no doubt that we have put major investments, grant funding and taxpayer money into the downtown, and many have had a huge role in helping to reshape Olean's downtown region. He explained that as much as infrastructure and physical structures have improved though, we still see empty storefronts and empty houses,

Alderman Crawford explained that one short-term objective is to invest in our community and neighborhoods, He explained that we have done a solid job bringing neighborhoods to the forefront, but we need to focus on restoring the downtown and neighborhoods equally. He explained that we should not be putting business first and population second. We need to build a community where people want to live first, because people are more likely to move somewhere that they want to live and commute to a job than to purchase a home in a neighborhood that they don't like closer to their employer. He explained that we need to build the community, then business growth will follow.

Alderman Crawford explained that another short-term objective is to support our fire, police, DPW and other City staff. We need to expand mental and social health and virtual interaction. He

explained that he is happy to hear that the City is providing virtual services through Zoom. He challenges the Council to think outside the box in the coming year to help tackle COVID-19 side effects.

Alderman Crawford explained that we need to maintain control over spending when possible, He has a “steady as she goes” mentality when it comes to spending and budgeting due to COVID-19. Fortunately, the City has a strong fund balance in each fund so there is greater flexibility in planning for the years ahead.

Alderman Crawford explained that the City has done an excellent job in the last ten years. Our balance sheet grows stronger and our assets outweigh our liabilities. He explained that major projects have been completed, are underway, and are upcoming. He explained that we need to consider who we are, where we are going, and what we want to become. He explained that no organization succeeds without a common mission, vision and identity. He explained that each of us probably have different answers, and having different ideas isn't a bad thing. However, for our investment to work, he believes that we have to strengthen the City's identity and formalize initiatives to align with our mission.

Alderman Crawford explained that a long-term objective is marketing, branding, and recruiting. He explained that we need to recognize the opportunity when it presents itself, and look at keys to rebranding, recruiting and retention. He explained that we need to look more into remote workplaces. We need to decide how we encourage people to want to live in Olean who have the opportunity to work virtually 100%. We need to determine how we tap into this opportunity.

Alderman Crawford explained that in the coming weeks he will be presenting a Rebranding Olean Taskforce in an effort to research questions asked earlier. The Taskforce will aid in rebranding and marketing the City. He does not accept that Olean can't turn a corner, and he doesn't accept that living in New York means that the population will continue to flee our community. He explained that we need to show off the wonderful things that Olean has done and is doing. We need to step up, brainstorm, bring new ideas and concepts to the table, capitalize on improvements, and think outside the box.

2. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.