

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.
VIA ZOOM

IN ATTENDANCE WERE: ALDERMEN CRAWFORD, WITTE, PANUS, GONZALEZ, ROBINSON, AND ANASTASIA. OTHERS: MAYOR WILLIAM AIELLO; LENS MARTIAL, CITY CLERK; JACK HART, CITY ATTORNEY; FRED SARADIN, CITY AUDITOR; KERI KERPER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR; BOB RING, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS; RON RICHARDSON, 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.

1. Discussion - Recruitment, Retention and Rebranding Taskforce

Alderman Crawford explained that he thinks that this is coming forward a bit sooner than he had originally intended, but given the bad news that the City had recently received with the announcement of Siemens pulling their manufacturing from Olean. He explained that he thinks that it is fitting and time to get the ball rolling to look at Olean and what we want to be.

Alderman Crawford explained that he doesn't think that we should answer all of our issues with committees and task forces, but that in this case a task force would be ideal. He explained that the purpose of the board would be to retain existing citizens and businesses, recruit new residents and industry opportunities, as well as rebrand the City's identity and strategic mission. He explained that he categorizes the loss of manufacturing operations at Siemens as the greatest economic catastrophe in Olean in recent times, and that he can't remember anything else in his history that hindered the City's path to revitalization.

Alderman Crawford explained that he is not saying that the City or Council had the power to stop Siemens from chasing profit maximization but for existing businesses and citizens, we may be able to see what we can do to help before a moving or a closing occurs. He explained that he heard through the grapevine that other employers in the City may be hiring, and if they plan to hire 100, that perhaps the taskforce can see what we can do to turn that number into 150. The taskforce would also aid in the recruiting of new residents and industry opportunities.

Alderman Crawford explained that he, the Mayor, and County and State representatives are all eager to try to solve the problem. He explained that when you do the math, it is a potentially massive economic loss to the City, and we need to see how we can go after new opportunities collectively. He explained that this goes along with what our revitalization is, and rebranding our City. We need to ask who we are and what we are doing. We need a mission and identity to go

along with the great things that we are doing here in Olean, and to communicate that to potential residents and businesses.

Alderman Crawford explained that we need to be committed to pooling our resources in order to promote expansion of our population, industries and tax base. He explained that former Alderman Smith always said that New York State chases businesses away, and he doesn't disagree. That doesn't mean, though, that we can't try to draw a line in the sand and see what we can do. He explained that he is looking for the Council's support to form this taskforce.

Alderman Crawford explained that he wanted to get the gears turning with this discussion topic. He proposes a taskforce along the lines of 10 individuals, many who he has already had conversations with. We need to get out of silos and sit at the table to plan for what Olean needs to look like. We need to figure out the message that we want to send out to the world.

Alderman Crawford explained that he is open to feedback and that this will be coming up again next week for further discussion.

2. PL #04-21: (Aiello) to adopt an amended and restated Bond Resolution for the Washington Street Water System Capital Improvements Project.

Mayor Aiello explained that this was discussed during committees last week with Municipal Solutions and Hodgson Russ.

A motion to approve PL #04-21 was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Panus. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

3. PL #05-21: (Aiello) To authorize the City Auditor to bond for the Walkable Olean Phase III Project.

A motion to approve PL #05-21 was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

4. PL #06-21: (Aiello) To authorize the City Auditor to bond for the North Union Street Streetscape Capital Improvements Project.

A motion to approve PL #06-21 was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

5. Discussion – Grant Application to New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation

Mr. Ring explained that his department has been planning to apply for this grant for some time. This is an engineering planning grant. Two years ago the City applied for a grant through this program for a syphon study and was awarded the funding, and last year applied for a hydraulic study. He explained that the City did not receive grant funding last year because we were notified that the hydraulic study was not an eligible use of grant funds. He explained that this study would

look at the inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer and figure out where the worst areas are. He explained that this is a \$36,000 project and that our match would be \$6,000. We can use sewer fund budgeted funds for our match.

Alderman Witte asked if any of the buildings on North Union Street had their downspouts disconnected from the sanitary sewer during the North Union Streetscape Construction. Mr. Ring explained that he was not involved closely with the project but it is his understanding that there is not a storm sewer built for part of the project. He explained that for every inch of rain, millions of gallons go into the sanitary sewer and it is a huge issue.

Alderman Panus explained that he is in support of applying for the funding, but not for a mass disconnection effort. He explained that the City is older and that we need a bigger plan for what to do when we find the worst areas. He asked if there is any thought process in this regard, or if the thought process is just to disconnect. Mr. Ring explained that we don't disconnect, and that the current Code calls for the disconnect upon the sale of property. He explained that he is not sure if an inspection is done on a regular basis, but that Alderman Panus is right in that this is a long-term thing. He explained that we are not going to just tell someone that they need to disconnect at this point. The study will first help us determine which areas we need to tackle first.

Alderman Panus explained that he feels that we need to have a fair plan on what to do. In the past, people have been asked to disconnect when work goes on, on their street. The City was built 100 years ago and people didn't think about storm water then. He doesn't want people to start draining storm water into their yard, because then the City is just passing the problem along to someone else.

Ms. Kerper explained that she was here during the North Union Street Project and that a good majority of the drains were disconnected and addressed. She explained that during site plan review when a project comes before the Planning Board, disconnects are also looked at and added as a condition if they need to be done. She explained that she has also helped with financial assistance to properties in downtown and commercial areas through the City's DPIP program.

Alderman Crawford explained that this will be on the regular meeting agenda tonight for resolution.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.