

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 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; 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. PL #10-21: (Aiello) To authorize the Mayor to sign agreements between the City of Olean and the State of New York in connection with consolidated Section 5311 Program funds and Accelerated Transit Capital funds for the purchase of three Lot K buses for the Olean Area Transit System and to authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with Matthews Bus Alliance d/b/a Matthews Bus Commercial.

Ms. Kerper explained that this is in connection with the OATS bus, and that there are currently five Lot K buses in the fleet. She explained that Matthews Bus Alliance actually builds the buses and delivers them. This purchase is fully funded, and is necessary because we are currently short one bus in the fleet and two of the buses we do have are ready to reach the end of their useful life. She explained that this will get the fleet back to where it needs to be and will allow for a fill in when a bus is briefly off the road for its monthly DOT inspection. She noted that each bus costs approximately \$148,000 and she was able to have them funded 80 percent Federal and 20 percent State, so there is no cost to the partners.

Alderman Crawford asked if this means that the older buses are retired out of the fleet, and Ms. Kerper explained that it does. She explained that she works with the City Garage and Department of Public Works to have the buses taken to auction, and noted that the funding sources for the program dictate how the money received at auction can be used.

A motion to approve PL #10-21 was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Voice vote. Ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

2. PL #12-21: (Aiello) To adopt and implement the City of Olean Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan.

Mayor Aiello explained that he first would like to thank the Police Reform and Reinvention Committee for their hard work. He explained that they had 14 meetings to discuss this plan between December and March.

Mayor Aiello explained that in the plan, the committee recommends that the Common Council consider a shared services agreement with Cattaraugus County to have a social worker available for the Department when necessary on certain types of calls such as mental health and homelessness. Mayor Aiello explained that during the meetings, a discussion was held with Mary O'Leary from Cattaraugus County Social Services. He explained that there is an on call worker that is available to the department, but the committee felt that the Common Council should still explore a shared service agreement to enhance the coverage to better serve the community.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee recommended that the role of the School Resource Officer be defined and be a part of the Community Policing Program. He explained that the committee supports a second resource officer and recommends that the City look into the option with the school district. He explained that as of right now the one position is a shared cost with the district. We also have two Special Patrol Officers who act as security officers for the elementary schools, and Mayor Aiello noted that these two positions are fully funded by the school district.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee recommends that the Common Council explore property tax incentives for officers living in Olean and a sponsorship program to the police academy, and noted that the committee also supports the work of the Equity and Inclusion Committee in regard to recruitment of new officers. He explained that the committee felt that incentives would help in recruiting the best candidates for the Police Department. He explained that the committee felt that the City should look into ways to sponsor candidates who would like to attend the Academy, and noted that we would have to follow Civil Service guidelines. He explained that the committee would also like the Common Council to look into a mentoring program which could help with future recruitment and employment.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee recommended that the department pursue and maintain accreditation through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, and noted that it was stated that many functions of the department would be monitored in order to maintain that accreditation. He explained that this will be a lengthy process which will be monitored by the Division of Criminal Justice. He explained that this will require many man hours and once granted will require additional funds for the training requirements. He noted that this would be a very good thing.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee recommended that the Community Policing Program be reestablished, and that the School Resource Officer be a part of the initiative. HE explained that the committee recommended that the public be made better aware of the community involvement of the Department, and also recommended that the City research and possibly introduce an Explorer's Program for ages 6 to 20 as well as a Civilian Academy for residents. Mayor Aiello explained that in conversations with Chief Ron Richardson, he found that the Police Department

is doing some community policing but we can get much better at it. He explained that this will require additional funding to institute an Explorer's Program and Civilian Police Academy.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee recommended that the creation of a Civilian Review Board be further explored, and that the committee desires to work together to bring forth their recommendations to the Common Council. Mayor Aiello explained that the questions that will have to be answered about a Civilian Review Board will be does the community want a Police Review Board, how will this Board be formed, what will their duties be, what authority will they have, and how will the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Taylor Law, Civil Service Law, and Public Employees Relations Board come into play with a Review Board. He noted that after public comments and other community correspondence, there is a general consensus that a Review Board is needed.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee recommended that Police Officers continue to receive defensive tactics training and that a Cultural Awareness Program be initiated. He explained that accreditation will address many of the training needs, He explained that the Police Department 8is currently training the officers in cultural awareness and defensive tactics. Mayor Aiello explained that the committee was pleased that the Olean Police Department was proactive and had banned choke holds prior to the passing of the Eric Garner Anti-Chokehold Act. He explained that the committee recommended that the policy be updated to ensure that the definition of chokeholds include both the obstruction of air to the lungs and of blood circulation to the brain. He explained that there are now New York State laws that deal with choke holds and the Department's policy has been updated.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee recommended that a physical fitness program and testing for officers be initiated. He explained that physical fitness requirements are established by Civil Service and the Division of Criminal Justice Services. He explained that the committee is well aware that stresses on officers are overwhelming, especially in the current environment and that this atmosphere has a negative effect on morale, which is low. He explained that the committee recommended that confidential programs and help for officers be provided by the City, and that the committee suggested that police officers that go above and beyond be honored publically. Mayor Aiello noted that the Department does provide crisis counseling through our Employees Assistance Program.

Mayor Aiello explained that the committee supported and commended the Police Department's practice of limiting consecutive shifts. He explained that it was deemed unhealthy for officers to work back to back shifts, but it was found that this was seldom ever the case unless in an absolute emergency and officers were held over for no more than four hours. Mayor Aiello explained that the committee supports the upgrades to the City's website as recommended by the Equity and Inclusion Committee. And that this is being worked on and will be brought up next week during the Council's budget meeting.

Alderman Anastasia explained that he has received a couple of phone calls from constituents, and he is not sure that he is in favor of offering tax incentives. He asked if passing this legislation tonight will offer tax exemptions to police officers. Alderman Crawford explained that it will not be, and that this is a list of recommendations that were made after the Police Reform and Reinvention Committee reviewed a wide variety of policies and procedures. He explained that the Common Council is the legislative body so we need to pass these recommendations so that the Mayor can send the plan to the Governor's Office in response to the Reform Act. He explained that as far as individual recommendations, they will be things that the Council will need to consider moving forward. Mayor Aiello explained that everything is a recommendation and that anything made permanent will need to be acted on by the Common Council.

Alderman Crawford thanked the Committee of twenty plus people who gave up evenings and time to help have long, meaningful conversations to help better the City of Olean and put together a strategy to move forward.

A motion to approve PL #12-21 was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

3. PL #14-21: (Aiello) To establish the Standard Work Days pursuant to New York State and Local Retirement System Regulation 315.4.

Mayor Aiello explained that the Council can recall that this was done a few weeks ago. He explained that the retirement system sent this back and explained that it was not coded properly so it has to be done again. He explained that this resolution will authorize the proper information to be sent back to the State.

A motion to approve PL #14-21 was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

4. Discussion – Repair of Brick Streets

Alderman Crawford explained that Mr. Ring has reached out and has requested verbal approval to move forward with the contract to repair brick streets. He explained that this was discussed last week as one of the Capital Projects. He explained that the streets scheduled for repair would be West Ohio Street, South Fifth Street, South Seventeenth Street, North Tenth Street, North Sixth Street, North Fifth Street, Griffin Street, River Street and Euclid Avenue. Mr. Ring explained that this is the list that was compiled for this round of repairs.

Alderman Crawford explained that he reached out to the Council prior to the meeting to see if there was support to move forward. Alderman Witte asked if any water or sewer lines would be repaired or replaced during this process. Mr. Ring explained that they would not be, as these are just spot repairs. Alderman Witte asked if this is not for full street repairs, and Mr. Ring explained that it is not. He explained that this isn't going to be a fix all and we are not doing what we did

no North Third Street, which was incredibly costly. He explained that this is for spot repairs and patches in the worst area.

Alderman Witte asked which street we are paving over, and Mr. Ring explained that we would be paving over South Fifth Street. He explained that we didn't really consider doing the water and sewer along with this, and noted that lining the sewer lines is really non-invasive. Alderman Witte explained that she has heard constituents in the past say that we paved a street and a couple weeks later we came back and dug up a water a line. She wants to be proactive.

Alderman Crawford explained that this is something that we should have a conversation about and explore. He explained that with many of these streets, such as North Tenth Street along the YMCA, there are large divots in the road that have been patched again and again. He explained that he doesn't foresee a total overhaul, but he sees this helping with quality, plowing, and aesthetics. He noted that South Fifth Street will require some major paving.

Alderman Anastasia explained that River Street was recently paved, and East Forest Avenue should be on the list.

A motion to authorize an amount not to exceed \$100,000 to repair brick streets as discussed tonight and in the previous Capital Project discussion with funding sources to be determined in the following weeks during budget discussions was made by Alderman Anastasia, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

5. Adjournment

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