

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.
VIA ZOOM

IN ATTENDANCE WERE: ALDERMEN CRAWFORD, WITTE, PANUS, GONZALEZ, BARNARD, 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; BOB RING, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS; TIM RICHARDSON, POLICE CHIEF; 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. Presentation – Bird Scooter Program

Alderman Crawford explained that he wanted to share an opportunity that Mr. Ring reached out to him about. He explained that he has been passing around some emails with the Mayor and Mr. Ring regarding this, and he has reached out to Bird for more information. He explained that Bird is one of the largest manufacturers of electric scooters. He explained that he personally is a devout user of electric scooters, and New York State has included them as a new form of transportation under their transportation laws. He explained that in many ways he would say that these are treated light bicycles, and they are given the same rights and have the same rules. They cannot be ridden on sidewalks and have to be in bike lanes or be ridden on the right side of the road while complying with the rules of the road and local regulations. He explained that New York State allows local municipalities to create legislation and specific rules pertaining to electronic scooters. He noted that children need to wear helmets and you cannot operate them under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Alderman Crawford explained that he feels that this is another opportunity that we should consider as we try to move forward with Walkable Olean and Olean's revitalization. He explained that Bird has a program that comes into the City to set up shop and charges nothing to the City. He explained that there would be no cost or liability to the municipality. He explained that they are manufacturers as well as distributors. They originally targeted their program to big Cities but now they are going after small communities like ourselves with the university nearby. He explained that the representative that he spoke with looked that the City's grid and streetscape.

Alderman Crawford explained that users sign up as members and pay a membership fee. He explained that the user would pick up and drop off the scooter. He explained that sometimes having unregulated electric scooters in the City can be too much which is why the local municipality has

to take control. He explained that Bird is looking for a partnership with the City to give them a Memorandum of Understanding for exclusive rights in the City. He explained that they would create one to three jobs, including someone to manage the program. He explained that they would provide the scooters as well as the insurance so there would be no liability to us. He explained that the riders would need to follow local rules like bicyclists do and it would be within the Council's legislative powers to define the operating zone.

Alderman Crawford explained that the scooters are obviously an economically friendly and sustainable mode of transportation. He explained that if some scooters are left at St. Bonaventure they can be used to ride into Olean to take advantage of shopping and restaurants. He explained that the sole purpose of jobs created is to drive around the City and move scooters through the course of the day to charge or move them to where they are needed. He explained that on average, someone could earn \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month doing this as a "side hustle".

Alderman Crawford explained that cities benefit because this creates local pride and allows the City to expand upon the economic opportunity. He explained that it incentivizes people to come to Olean. He explained that these are some of the safest vehicles and there is a program for low income riders which offers 5 30 minute rides a day for \$5 a month. He explained that there is community pricing and 50 percent off for veterans and not for profit groups. Users sign agreements that they will obey laws and wear helmets. He explained that the responsibility falls back on the user or Bird, and there is no liability falling on the City.

Alderman Crawford explained that this is something that we really don't have in place. He explained that they are rolling this out across the Country but with the exception of New York City, no other big cities in New York State have committed to this. He explained that the thought that it would be kind of cool for Olean to do something like this and be a leader in this market. He explained that Olean can be a progressive trendsetter.

Alderman Crawford explained that they would start with around 70 scooters but they would not be flooded out all at once. He explained that they would roll out around ten in the first month and then roll out 15 to 20 a month after that after assessing supply and demand. He explained that based on how many rides are used, the individual that manages the fleet can make more money. He explained that Bird's safety study shows that electric scooters run the same risk as bicyclists, and the more we incentivize to not drive, we improve safety by taking cars off the road. He explained that cars are what create injury.

Alderman Crawford explained that he wanted to present this to the Council so that he can later invite a representative from Bird to do a Q and A with the Council, Mayor, and Department Heads. He explained that the key takeaways are that this doesn't cost the City anything and it gives us the opportunity to pursue something and be progressive. He explained that this ties in with the bike boulevards that are being created and riding them is a lot of fun.

Alderman Crawford explained that he thinks that this is a great idea. He explained that with our ambitions of what we want the trail to be, this could be a huge addition to that. He explained that it is not just for commuters, and someone could ride the trail to Twist and Shake for ice cream and then ride back downtown. He explained that he feels that the City should definitely get in on this game if we can.

Alderman Witte asked if there would be charging stations, and Alderman Crawford explained that part of the responsibility of the employees would be to pick up the scooters and charge them when they need to be. He explained that to be a user, you need to take a photo of where you park the scooter upright in a designated area. He explained that there would not be charging stations everywhere because the program manager could go into an app to see what scooters have low batteries and then pick them up to charge them.

Alderman Robinson explained that they have these in Arizona, and he feels that they are a great idea. He explained that they are in towns that border with colleges, and he sees a ton of students and adults riding. He explained that he knows that you have to have an account and that's how you pay but once you have the account, you can go anywhere. He would love to see these in Olean.

Alderman Crawford explained that we obviously have a lot of things to consider as far as traffic goes, and the one rule that Bird has is that they cannot be ridden on roads with speed limits greater than 30 miles per hour. He explained that this is beneficial to us, and quite possibly when we move forward with the bike boulevards we can look at reducing speed through neighborhoods. He explained that we should be continuing to look at things that make us stand out, and be marketable to people of all ages. He explained that he doesn't know if it is still the case, but when he was a freshman at St. Bonaventure they could not have cars on campus. He explained that if this was there when he was, he doesn't think he would have wanted to have a car because he could utilize this program. He explained that we can look at pulling different people into our community by using different modes of transportation.

Alderman Crawford asked the Council to review the email that he sent out regarding this, and get back to him with any comments or questions.

2. PL #16-21: (Aiello) To authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Vito Sportelli for Professional Services relating to transportation through May 31, 2023.

Ms. Kerper explained that Mr. Sportelli is the contracted consultant for our OATS bus program. She explained that there are no contributions to this agreement by the City as any salary that he does make is paid for by Federal and State operating assistance, as well as the OATS partners.

A motion to approve PL #16-21 was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried

3. PL #17-21: (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 2% and sewer rates 1 ½ %.

Alderman Crawford explained that this was previously discussed in committee and that there was a public hearing earlier in the evening.

A motion to approve PL #17-21 was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

4. Discussion – In Person Meetings

Alderman Crawford explained that he wanted to bring up our transition to in person meetings. He explained that there were some issues as far as going in person tonight, but we should be ready to go back to in person next Tuesday, April 20, 2021. He asked if there are any issues going to live meetings, and there were none. He explained that we will still maintain social distancing. He asked if we are still responsible for a decreased percentage of people in the chambers, and Mayor Aiello responded that we are still at reduced capacity and we will have that all figured out prior to the meeting.

5. Adjournment

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