

# COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

*TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.*

## COUNCIL CHAMBERS – OLEAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING

IN ATTENDANCE WERE: ALDERMEN CRAWFORD, WITTE, PANUS, GONZALEZ, BARNARD, ROBINSON, AND ANASTASIA. OTHERS: MAYOR WILLIAM AIELLO; LENS MARTIAL, CITY CLERK; BOB RING, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS; RON RICHARDSON, FIRE CHIEF; TIM RICHARDSON, FIRE CHIEF; JERRY VOLZ, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, 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 – Update on the City Website – CivicPlus RFP

Alderman Crawford explained that after CivicPlus met with the Council, he met with the Mayor and IT Department to put together a RFP. He presented to the Council a proposal for services from CivicPlus.

Alderman Crawford explained that they are the largest provider of municipal websites, and they have a 99.9% guaranteed up time or your money back. He explained that the company has invested \$4 million in cyber security and to date they have not been hacked. They work with over 4,000 local government partners, and they really have the ability to improve the City's website and change the marketing approach of the City of Olean.

Alderman Crawford explained that the Council previously budgeted \$15,000 for the update, and the first year cost presented by CivicPlus is \$36,854. He explained that the upside is that the annual cost is only \$7,047 starting in year 2. He explained that beyond that, they have asked for a 5% technology uplift each year which seems steep. This company is the gold standard. One of the major benefits is that they can send direct messages if there is a water line break or other situation directly to community members who have signed up on the site. He explained that there is an additional cost for each department to have their own custom header.

Alderman Crawford explained that the initial tech upcharge each year was 5%, and he, Mayor Aiello and Mr. Volz all felt that this was too high. He reached out to the company and explained that this is pretty unsustainable, and they got approval to drop this from 5% to 2%. He explained the tax cap to the company, and let them know that at the most, taxes can be increased by 2% most years so a 5% increase each year is a pretty hard sell. Alderman Gonzalez asked if this 5% is on the \$7,000, and Alderman Crawford explained that it is.

Mr. Volz explained that a lot of our maintenance contracts have an increase each year. He explained that he is not positive off the top of his head how much it is but 5% seems high. He believes that most contracts have a ½% or 1% increase. Alderman Crawford asked if 2% seems fair, and Mr. Volz explained that he believes that it is. He explained that it is hard to judge because we have been running for 20 years on a primarily free website that himself and Mr. Wells do all of the work on. There currently really isn't too much of a cost.

Alderman Crawford asked how much time Mr. Volz and Mr. Wells spend working on the site. He explained that this hosted service would free up some time for them. Mr. Volz explained that the doesn't know off the top of his head. He explained that it is his understanding that departments would handle their own pages. He explained that it is hard to throw numbers out there.

Mayor Aiello explained that he got sticker shock hearing the price. He explained that everyone has to look into this though, and see if it is the right thing for Olean. He explained that department heads would work on their own pages, and Mr. Volz would oversee or assign duties to different people in the building. He explained that this is not a 40 hour a week job. It is more of an 8 hour a week job for someone to ensure each week that everything is up to date. Alderman Crawford explained that Mr. Wells and Mr. Volz would be "supervisors" and would be able to do supervisory editing, or assign editing rights to department heads and their departments. He explained that a part of the site would include a document repository so that users could complete documents online.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that freeing up Mr. Volz and Mr. Wells is a side benefit from this, but that the primary purpose is to improve the City website. He explained that we want to make it more user friendly as well. It does cost a lot, but a majority is a onetime expense.

Alderman Witte asked if it would behoove the City to ask for RFP's. Alderman Crawford explained that he feels that it is worth exploring, and that this is a valid point. He explained that at the end of the day, this is the gold standard and these are their numbers. He explained that he is looking at the website as a marketing tool and something that will fall in with our new Comprehensive Plan.

Alderman Robinson explained that he doesn't understand what the 2% would be needed for. Alderman Crawford explained that the best way to handle this would be to draft questions and he will end them to a representative at CivicPlus. Otherwise, he would be speculating. He explained that the company does have to invest in their resources and they provide 24/7 customer service, but this is a great question.

Mr. Volz explained that in addition to the maintenance, support and security that this company provides, they would also provide a reboot or redesign of the website every four years to modernize. Alderman Robinson explained that the City would already be paying an annual fee though, so the increase doesn't seem necessary.

Alderman Witte asked if there are any local companies that do this. Mr. Volz explained that there might be a couple around. He explained that this is indeed the gold standard and he doesn't think that local companies would be able to give all the bells and whistles that this company provides. He explained that he spoke with a local company a few years ago for this service and their quote was \$50,000 so they didn't go further with the idea at that time.

Alderman Crawford explained that there was sticker shock initially but a couple of his students graduated and go to have websites built at a cost of \$50,000 to \$100,000 for a website with similar features that we are being offered. He explained that there is obviously no time crunch so we can look at other companies that deal with municipalities.

Alderman Gonzalez asked how long the commitment is with this company, and Alderman Crawford explained that there is no end date to the agreement so at any time the City could terminate the agreement. Mr. Wells explained that the downfall would be that the City would lose the website and need to start all over with a redesign. He explained that we have plain HTML now. We do not want to paint ourselves into a hole. Alderman Crawford explained that we have our own content, and Mr. Wells explained that their product is their own. Mr. Volz explained that we would have to reformat to whatever the next provider is, which could be very tricky. Alderman Crawford explained that we can save our current HTML in case this were to occur, and Mr. Wells asked why we would want to take that step back.

Mr. Volz explained that he is just being the devil's advocate, and explained that we have talked about the website forever. He explained that they spoke with a company to do it 6 or 7 years ago but the sticker shock at that time prevented them from moving forward. Alderman Panus explained that for year 2 and on, the price is about \$25 a day. If we can find that benefit, then it would be worth it. He explained that the department heads should look and see if this would benefit them daily and how the website would be used for their department.

Alderman Crawford explained that he will research and look for other well-known municipality vendors prior to moving forward.

## 2. Discussion – Foam Equipment Lease

Mayor Aiello explained that we originally signed an agreement for the foam trailer a year or so ago and we need to update. Chief Tim Richardson explained that this would be a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Department of Homeland Security. He explained that it was originally signed last year and we fell into their contract renewal period, so the new agreement will be signed for six years. He explained that it is an \$80,000 piece of equipment, and is one of 18 total in the state. He explained that costs are reimbursed when it is used, and it is a great resource.

A resolution will be proposed at the Regular Meeting to authorize the Mayor to enter into the agreement.

### 3. Adjournment

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