

# COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

*TUESDAY, JULY 27, 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; 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. Finance & Bills

Alderman Robinson explained that last week, the Council discussed a wood chipper. He explained that the wood chips for the playground were \$2,310, and that this is the cost of a wood chipper. He explained that if we used the wood chips that were produced by the chipper, it would justify the cost of purchasing one.

Alderman Crawford asked if this would indeed be the price that the City would be considering. Mr. Ring explained that the City has been quoted for both new and used wood chippers and the price is close to \$18,000 to \$20,000. He explained that we are looking for something that will take up to a 12 inch log. He doesn't believe that regular wood chips can be used for fall protection. They may be able to be used in gardens, but those used for fall protection are special wood chips.

Alderman Crawford explained that sometimes the equipment that we consider for our own backyards is different from the size of the equipment that a municipality needs. He explained though that Alderman Robinson's point is still valid and he feels that a wood chipper would be a benefit to homeowners. He explained that the City would be able to better take care of brush from the community and then provide the wood chips remaining for people for their gardens and such. He explained that this would be a great service to consider. Mayor Aiello explained that this will be discussed at the Fleet Committee meeting coming up next week.

A motion to approve Finance and Bills was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Barnard. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting.

2. PL #43-21: (Aiello) That the Common Council of the City of Olean is fully supportive of the submission by Olean City Centre for Empire State Development Grant Funds for the redevelopment of the property located at 400-450 North Union Street.

Ms. Kerper explained that Olean City Centre is applying for the funding, not the City of Olean., She explained that they are asking for the Council's support for the application, and explained that she is assisting the applicant in writing the application which is due July 30, 2021. Ms. Kerper explained that they plan to demolish the BonTon portion of the building and construct a 60 unit senior citizen housing high rise, with first floor retail and floors 2, 3, and 4 to contain housing. She explained that there will be a new entrance to the mall and a separate entrance to the housing portion.

Ms. Kerper explained that DePaul Housing was founded in 1958 in Rochester and they seem to be a progressive organization that specializes in senior housing. She explained that they specialize in independent living, respite care, and memory care. Ms. Kerper explained that in the DRI one of the City's top priorities was downtown housing, especially senior living and senior housing. She explained that given the proximity of this location to the VA Hospital, the Olean Medical Group, grocery stores and other amenities in the area, it seems that this is a prime location for this type of project. She explained that this is also a point where there is a transfer between the Olean Area Transit System and the Allegany County Transit System.

Ms. Kerper explained that the total project cost is \$18,475,000 and Olean City Centre is asking for \$2 million in funding from this program for exterior improvements. She explained that the application does not involve housing components, and that this will be a separate application to the Office of Community Renewal. She explained that upgrades will also include improvements to the HVAC system, new ceiling tiles, interior renovations and upgrades in common areas, as well as new bathrooms and the replacement of the roof. She explained that she would like to note that Angelo Ingrasia has a proven track record and a current project can be seen in Irondequoit. She explained that the senior housing in that location is full, and there is a waiting list of additional applicants. Ms. Kerper explained that one thing that they are trying to do is accomplish the goals of increasing jobs and reducing poverty, which will help with commercial marketability.

Alderman Witte commended Ms. Kerper for doing her homework and explained that across the country you can see more and more multi-use malls. She explained that constituents fear that we will let the mall die a slow death and she is glad that something is being attempted. She noted that this is privately owned and not a City project.

Alderman Crawford explained that Ms. Kerper did a great job working with the mall developer and explained that it is great to hear how things will work out in the hands of someone new. He explained that the growing trend is the death of malls. There was a recent market study, and a concern of his is that he hears all about the Union Street apartments and the housing market. He does like the housing concept that was sent, but he wonders if Olean has enough demand or population to support all of this new housing. Ms. Kerper responded that the latest study that was done was in 2019 for the CDS Housing project at 422 East State Street and at that time a market demand analysis was done. She explained that the Office of Community Renewal was not wild about this location and actually put the developer in touch with Zamias, the prior owner of the mall

property. She explained that studies are out there to prove that this would be successful, otherwise that would not invest or apply for funding to New York State.

Alderman Crawford explained that he is concerned because the attraction of downtown housing drives people out of neighborhoods and it will either lower rent across the City because of the increase in vacant apartments, driving up demand for people to move in, or it could leave vacant apartments and houses that end up blighted. He explained that he is thrilled to see some movement being done with the mall and this sounds like great potential, but he hopes that we have our eyes on possibilities, too,

Ms. Kerper explained that one thing that she likes to look at in a different way, is that older individuals in the Town of Allegany or the village don't want the yard to maintain anymore, can't drive anymore, and have trouble with stairs. She explained that people are already calling Savarino about their apartments, and the urban sprawl is coming into the City. She explained that the population from outside the City would be drawn into the City, in this respect.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that he thinks that we are actually pretty lucky that we have something like this to go in and take up that space. He explained that malls across the country that are better than what we have are in their final days. He explained that we have this mall that could be a problem for a long time, but we have someone willing to come in and spend \$18 million to renovate.

Alderman Crawford explained that it may be too early in the game to see, but he wonders what sort of taxable status this new investment would look like. Ms. Kerper explained that the developer is still in the planning phase, and she is unable to answer this. Mayor Aiello explained that he does know that the assessment has been going down, and he is confident that the investment will bring the assessment back up,

Alderman Panus explained that he gets a feeling that with the things that have happened over the past couple of years with more people working from home and in personal office spaces, people are going to be coming from bigger cities to Olean looking for a development like this. He explained that prices will be in the upper tier of what is renting, so he thinks that these are the kind of people that are going to be attracted. He explained that he feels that we should make the best of this and get more people into Olean.

Alderman Crawford explained that he feels that this is a good clarification. He feels that all they are looking for from the Council is support, and we are not applying for the grant on their behalf. Ms. Kerper explained that this is correct. She explained that she is helping to write the grant application, but they are just looking for support through a resolution from the Council.

A motion to approve PL #43-21 was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

### 3. Update on East State Street Bridge

Mr. Ring explained that on Sunday it was discovered on the East State Street Bridge over the Olean Creek that there was a water line break. He explained that the water line rests along the bridge girder over the river and is suspended about 20 feet in the air which presents a unique engineering challenge to fix the leak in the water line. He explained that there was coordination between the water distribution crew and the Fire Department in order to come up with a game plan to fix the water line, which they did today. He explained that they also coordinated with Cattaraugus County, who came to help with scaffolding.

Mr. Ring explained that a sleeve was placed over the hole in the water line and about a half an hour later another hole developed. He explained that the current line is a 12 inch supply line that supplies East Olean. He explained that the area is also fed from another 12 inch supply line on the Main Street Bridge so there is still water supply but there is limited volume in the hydrants, especially in higher elevations. He explained that at this point we really haven't put together a game plan to repair the second hole only because the sleeves that we buy are already \$2,000. He explained that the County has assured us that they will come back to help with the repair, but we are looking at all of our options at this point.

Mr. Ring explained that he has been working for several days with the Department of Health and a consultant for bridges, and he will be meeting with the Mayor and J.D. Northrup tomorrow to try to come up with a game plan of potential replacement of the line. He explained that he wants to look at that option, especially as the water line is pitted so the outside of the pipe is starting to deteriorate. He explained that he is not sure of the age of the pipe, but it is at least 45 years old and could be 60 to 70 years old. He explained that he is looking at bridge plans to see how set in there the materials used are. He explained that the purpose of tomorrow's meeting is to get an idea of whether this should be replaced on an emergency basis.

Mr. Ring explained that we can keep the line shut down for a couple of months if needed. He explained that we could get it back on in a few days but if we repair the line and it breaks in the winter, we are looking at a potential 6 to 8 month shutdown. He explained that he will get the price to replace the line now. The water line is insulated so at the very least we will need to pay the contractor to reinsulate the line in areas that were broken off during the water line break. He explained that it may be worth it to look at replacing the line. He explained that we could cut of the line and replace in kind or find another suitable area to put the line under the bridge. Otherwise, we could bore into the river.

Mr. Ring explained that the bridge is old as well, and it may only last another 20 to 30 years where he would hope a new water line would last 40 to 50. He explained that if we are investing in new lines, it may be worth it to take it off the bridge. He explained that there is also a major supply line on the South Union Street Bridge that we need to evaluate the condition of and have a plan to

repair or replace before an issue arises there. He noted that we also need to evaluate the line on the Main Street Bridge. He is going to explore other vulnerabilities that we may have.

Mayor Aiello explained that as it stands right now, the Recreation Center is the only building that is without water right now. He explained that the Council should also keep in mind that he believes that this would be fundable through the stimulus money that the City received. Alderman Crawford asked if the facilities are not in operation then at the recreation center, and Mayor Aiello responded that they are. He explained that a porta john was brought in and also during the day when the Recreation Program is ongoing the restrooms at the stadium are opened as well as the tunnel so children that have to use the restrooms can be escorted there.

Alderman Witte asked if it would behoove the City to go from a 12 inch line to an 18 inch line on East State Street. Mr. Ring explained that it could increase the supply. He explained that he is eager to get the program for the hydraulic study because this will show data that should always be considered when replacing a line. Alderman Witte asked where the water would come from for the new apartments on North Union Street and Mr. Ring explained that there are water lines all around the mall property, including water supply lines and fire supply lines.

Alderman Panus asked if the new installation of the water lines would be steel or plastic. Mr. Ring explained that duct tile iron would be used pretty much exclusively. He explained that he is looking at the feasibility of using plastic pipe with Brad Camp. He explained that this would be the first plastic pipe in the City besides the ones at the plant that were replaced during the project. He explained that hanging the plastic pipe on the bridge could be a more viable option. Mr. Panus explained that he was thinking of placing the line under the river and that a plastic line placed here could last 100 years or more. Mr. Ring explained that he was thinking of beginning with a pilot project with plastic line on a side street to see how it holds up and to get employees trained with how to repair it prior to any major installation.

#### 4. Adjournment

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