

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATERVLIET
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2018 AT 7:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Manning at 7:00 P.M.

Roll call showed that Mayor Manning, Councilman Patricelli, and Councilman McGrouty were present.

Also present from City Administration were: General Manager Jeremy Smith, City Clerk & Clerk to the Council Scott O'Reilly, Deputy Director of Finance Amanda Austin, Corporation Counsel Yorden Huban, Police Chief Mark Spain and Fire Chief Rob Conlen.

Councilman Patricelli made a motion to dispense with the reading of the Minutes from the previous meeting, which Councilman McGrouty seconded. A vote was then taken to dispense with the minutes that passed unanimously.

REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

General Manager Jeremy Smith made several announcements. The first being the hiring of a Tina Dimitriadis as part time Assessor. He explained that three applications were submitted, two of which were qualified. Ms. Dimitriadis has many years of experience working as an Assessor in various local municipalities such as, Troy, Schenectady, and Glens Falls. General Manager Smith also noted that this is a budget neutral hiring and that Ms. Dimitriadis will work no more than twenty hours per week.

Mr. Smith also announced that the City would begin flushing fire hydrants on October 24th and that it will continue for three weeks. Once the City completes its flushing, the Arsenal will begin flushing theirs. Mr. Smith also stated that a Fire Hydrant will be replaced in the area of Eighth Avenue and Eighth Street which will require a water shutdown in that area. Also, the Water Department will begin its annual vacuuming of catch basins in the coming weeks as well.

General Manager Smith then announced some upcoming events that would be taking place throughout the City. On Saturday, October 20th, the annual Upper Hudson Heroes Chili Cookoff will be held at the Dome, then on Sunday, October 21st, the Watervliet Democratic Picnic will be held at Hudson Shores Park. He went on to explain that the following weekend the Dome would be the location for the Watervliet Elementary School Halloween Dance on Friday, October 26th, and the annual Halloween Parade on Sunday, October 28th. Lastly, General Manager Smith stated that bulk garbage pick-up will take place from October 22nd through October 26th.

OLD BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING #1 – A Public Hearing for the purpose of hearing those persons who wish to be heard regarding proposed Local Law No. 6 for the Year 2018, a local law to amend Chapter 230. Sewers of the Code of the City of Watervliet regarding establishing and imposing Sewer Rents for the period of November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019.

Mayor Manning opened the Public Hearing.

General Manager Jeremy Smith explained that he presented the proposed Sewer budget during the previous week's City Council meeting and that it called for a four percent increase from 2018. He then noted that if certain changes were made, such as charging vacant units the full sewer rate, the increase would be reduced to around one percent.

Councilman Patricelli then asked if that change meant charging the full rate to vacant properties that have their water shut off completely. Mr. Smith confirmed that was correct and that the majority of the charge is for the infrastructure that each property has. Councilman McGrouty then asked if the City should be charging the full rate in the event a property has their water turned off and General Manager Smith stated he believed they should. Councilman Patricelli also asked how many units this change would affect. Deputy Director of Finance Amanda Austin stated that it was roughly two hundred.

Paul Huban- 1500 12th Avenue – Mr. Huban asked if the City could be challenged in court should they charge a full sewer rate to properties that aren't using the sewer because the water is shut off and the property is vacant. Mayor Manning again explained that the infrastructure is still in place and would constitute the majority of the fee. Mr. Huban then asked if it was legal to charge for something that isn't being used. General Manager Jeremy Smith then explained that if the proposed Local Law was passed, it would become legal.

Councilman Patricelli then made a comparison to National Grid billing stating that customers are not charged for gas or electric if they do not use it.

With there being no further comments, Mayor Manning closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Manning then noted that the feedback received from the Public Hearing was to consider not charging the full Sewer rate for vacant properties and units.

Corporation Counsel Yorden Huban then explained that if the Local Law is changed there would need to be another Public Hearing before it could be voted on.

Councilman McGrouty then stated that he believed properties that don't use the service should not be charged the same amount as those who do. Councilman Patricelli then stated that he agreed.

PUBLIC HEARING #2 – A Public Hearing for the purpose of hearing those persons who wish to be heard regarding proposed Ordinance No. 1988, an Ordinance of the City of Watervliet, New York amending Chapter 266. Water of the Code of the City of Watervliet regarding establishing and imposing Water Rates for the period of November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019.

Mayor Manning opened the Public Hearing.

General Manager Smith explained that the proposed Water Budget that was presented at the previous City Council Meeting called for no increase to the Water Rate. He also noted that in this proposed budget, properties with their water turned off will be charged the same as properties who have their water on.

Paul Huban- 1500 12th Avenue – Mr. Huban asked if the City was legally allowed to charge for services that aren't being used.

Todd Smith- 902 19th Street – Mr. Smith asked what other communities do with their vacant properties with regards to water billing. General Manager Smith explained that many municipalities have metered water and would include an "infrastructure charge" with their water bills.

Mr. Smith then asked how the City of Watervliet water rates compare to surrounding communities. General Manager Smith stated that Watervliet's water rate is just below the average of the other local Cities.

Mr. Smith then suggested charging the full rate to vacant property owners "might not be a bad idea" because it may encourage them to fill the vacant properties.

Councilman Patricelli then pointed out that some landlords may not want to fill vacant units if they live in the building.

Councilman McGrouty then asked if the rate would increase should the Council decide to change the amount charged to vacant units and properties. General Manager Smith stated that rate would "possibly" increase in that case.

Councilman McGrouty then asked if both the Water and Sewer Budgets need to be passed at the same time. Corporation Counsel Huban informed him that they can be passed

separately. He also pointed out that the Water/Sewer bills that will be sent out on November 1, 2018 are not affected by these numbers because they are for the previous six months.

Don Whitehead – 1921 8th Avenue – Mr. Whitehead asked how many water lines go into a multiple family home. General Manager Smith informed him that only one water line enters a multiple unit dwelling. Mr. Whitehead then stated that there is no way to know if each unit is using water but not being charged for it.

With their being no further comments, Mayor Manning closed the Public Hearing. He also noted that the comments during the Public Hearing were both in favor and opposed to the Ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS

Local Law No 6-2018 - A local law to amend Chapter 230. Sewers of the Code of the City of Watervliet regarding establishing and imposing Sewer Rents for the period of November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019.

After the Public Hearing on this Local Law it was decided by the City Council not to move on the legislation at this time.

Ordinance No. 1988 - An Ordinance of the City of Watervliet, New York amending Chapter 266. Water of the Code of the City of Watervliet regarding establishing and imposing Water Rates for the period of November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019.

After the Public Hearing on this Ordinance it was decided by the City Council not to move on the legislation at this time.

APPROPRIATIONS AND ACCOUNTING

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Laurie Sylvester – 1904 8th Avenue – Ms. Sylvester asked if the City currently had an Animal Control Officer. Police Chief Spain informed her that the City does not.

She then asked what a resident should do in the event a neighbor's dog is barking incessantly. Chief Spain explained that the Police Department still handles Animal Control calls and that residents should contact the Police Department in that situation. Ms. Sylvester then asked if there would be action taken by the Police if they received such a call. Chief Spain informed her that action would be taken.

Finally, Ms. Sylvester asked if there are City Ordinances for noise or dog barking. Chief Spain informed her that there are City Ordinances for both.

Paul Huban – 1500 12th Avenue – Mr. Huban stated that only one of the concerns he has recently brought to the City Council's attention had been addressed. He then stated that the one concern that was addressed, pot holes on Twelfth Avenue, has been made worse because the pot holes were not fixed correctly. Mr.

Huban then asked the City Council to investigate raising the manholes on Third Avenue in Port Schuyler, addressing the large pile of gravel located on Sixteenth Street and Eighth Avenue, and having the City Seal placed on the new municipal vehicles. General Manager Smith explained that the pile of gravel is on private property and that the contractor using that as a staging area has an agreement with the owner.

Councilman Patricelli stated he agreed that the City Seal should be placed on the new City vehicles.

Tatianna Moragne - 2318 3rd Avenue - Ms. Moragne stated that the process for participating in the City's recycling and Organic Waste disposal programs should be changed to make it easier for residents to join. She also stated that the City should be encouraging people to participate in these programs.

General Manager Smith suggested contacting the City Clerk's office if she is having trouble contacting the Sanitation Department. City Clerk Scott O'Reilly then informed Ms. Moragne that he informed the Sanitation Department of her desire to join these programs and that he would follow up with them.

With there being no further comment, Mayor Manning closed the Public Comment period.

Councilman Patricelli then asked for an update on various tree trimming in the City, specifically the tree located at the City Pool that is hanging over the Pool House roof. General Manager Smith explained that he is attempting to set up a shared services deal with a local

municipality to use their equipment and if that fails, the City will rent its own lift to take care of the trees.

Councilman Patricelli then asked what was going to be done about the tar stains on the Senior Center building that were caused by the roof replacement project. General Manager Smith explained that he has instructed the project manager for the roof replacement project to get in touch with the contractor to remove the stains.

Councilman McGrouty then asked for clarification on the process residents need to abide by in order to cut down a tree in front of their house. General Manager Smith explained that if the tree is in the public right of way permission from the City is required and a permit must be obtained.

Councilman Patricelli then made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Councilman McGrouty. After a 3-0 vote the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.

***Next Meeting: November 1, 2018 7:00pm**

Respectfully Submitted,



Scott P. O'Reilly

City Clerk & Clerk to the Council