

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATERVLIET
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2017 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, Director of Finance Michael McNeff, Corporation Counsel Yorden Huban, Police Chief Mark Spain, and Fire Chief Rob Conlen.

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

REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

General Manager's Report

General Manager Jeremy Smith announced the City had recently received three grants. The first being a Public Facilities Grant through CDBG which will be used at the former Dutch Reformed Church located on 15th Street. The church project will cost Four Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$450,000.00), Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00) of which will be funded with this grant. Mr. Smith explained that the City Council had previously agreed to borrow the remaining funds to complete the project. The project will include installing a new heating system and bathrooms as well as improving the electrical system and making the building ADA compliant.

The next grant the City was awarded was for Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00) to complete a Housing Needs Assessment Study. This study will allow the City to pursue more grant funding in the future once completed.

The third grant awarded was a Thirty Thousand Dollar (\$30,000.00) Sanitary Sewer Study, which will allow the City to camera fifty percent of the City's sanitary sewer lines. This study can also be used in the future to apply for additional grant funding.

General Manager Smith also pointed out that the Village of Green Island was awarded a grant for a Water Inter-Connect with the City of Watervliet. This grant will provide an emergency water source for both communities. Also, General Manager Smith explained that this could potentially be a revenue stream for the City.

Mr. Smith thanked David Wheatley and Paul Murphy for their hard work in acquiring these grants for the City.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE NO. 1799 - An Ordinance adopting the Annual Estimate and fixing the rate to be employed in computing the amount to be collected for the City taxes for the year beginning January 1, 2018. This was the second reading of this Ordinance.

General Manager Smith gave an update on the budget and tax levy. Mr. Smith explained that after hearing feedback and input from the public, as well as all members of the City Council, the tax levy increase which was previously proposed at 19.2% was now at 15.8%. The total reduction in the budget was around One Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$140,000.00) with roughly Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) in expenditures being cut and Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) in revenue being added.

Mr. Smith then highlighted some of the major changes to the budget on the expenditure side. One was combining the positions of General Manager's Secretary with the City's Purchasing Clerk which saved Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00). Also, after further negotiations with the City's Workers' Compensation Insurance carrier and Liability Insurance Carrier the City was able to lower the premiums by Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) and Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) respectively.

On the revenue side, General Manager Smith explained that the Code Enforcement Department projected revenue had been raised Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) and that grant revenue had been raised by Twenty-Seven Thousand Dollars (\$27,000.00).

Mr. Smith noted that these proposed changes do not compromise the stabilizing of the City's finances.

Councilman Patricelli stated that he still had concerns with portions of this budget, such as new hires. He also stated that he was hoping to get the budget increase lowered than 15.8% but that he was pleased to see it lowered from 19.2%.

After a motion to move on the Ordinance by Councilman Patricelli and seconded by Councilman McGrouty a vote was taken. With Councilman Patricelli being opposed and Councilman McGrouty and Mayor Manning being in favor, the Ordinance passed with a 2-1 vote.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE NO. 1800 - An Ordinance of the City of Watervliet, New York adopting the rate to be employed in computing the amount to be collected for State and County Tax pursuant to Section 116 of Chapter 462 of the Laws of 1918. This was the first reading of the Ordinance.

General Manager Smith explained that this would be the adoption of the Albany County tax levy. Director of Finance noted that the County tax levy is roughly a 1.7% decrease from the previous year. He also explained that if you combined the City's tax increase with the County's decrease, the total property tax increase would be 11.42%.

Upon a motion to move on the Ordinance by Councilman Patricelli, seconded by Councilman McGrouty, the Ordinance passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 9441- The Council of the City of Watervliet hereby approves the settlement of the Real Property Tax Law Article 7 proceeding between Italo DiFebbo and the City of Watervliet regarding real property located at 2600 4th Avenue and 204 13th Street in the City of Watrvliet.

Corporation Counsel Yorden Huban explained this is a settlement of a Tax Assessment legal proceeding that requires City Council approval to move forward.

Councilman Patricelli asked where the City would be drawing the money from to pay this assessment reimbursement. Mayor Manning then asked when the reimbursement had to be paid.

Mr. Huban explained that it had to be paid within Sixty days. Mayor Manning then pointed out that the amount would be between One Hundred and Two Hundred Dollars, and if paid in 2018, would come out of the City's General Fund.

A motion was made by Councilman Patricelli to move on the Resolution which was seconded by Councilman McGrouty and the Resolution passed with a 3-0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 9442 - The Council of the City of Watervliet hereby approves an agreement between the City of Watervliet and Everbridge, Inc., with an office located at 155 North Lake Avenue, Suite 900, Pasadena, CA 91101, for the utilization of the Everbridge Nixle emergency notification system.

Police Chief Spain explained that this was a mass notification system that will replace the "Code Red" system the City used previously. He also noted that the Nixle system has more flexibility for those who choose to use it because you can decide which types of alerts you would like to receive and which ones you would not.

Upon a motion by Councilman Patricelli which was seconded by Councilman McGrouty, the Resolution passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 9443 - The Council of the City of Watervliet hereby appoints Steve Jamrosz, residing at 1213 4th Avenue, Watervliet, New York 12189, as a member of the City of Watervliet Board of Ethics for the unexpired term to April 30, 2019.

Mayor Manning made a motion to table the Resolution because nor he or Councilman McGrouty had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Jamrosz as of yet. Councilman McGrouty seconded the motion and the Resolution was tabled with a 3-0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 9444 - The Council of the City of Watervliet hereby accepts and approves the proposal from Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, D.P.C., 288 Genesee Street, Utica, New York 13502, for engineering services to complete the Dambreak Analysis and for the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) and Inflow Design Flood (IDF) Study for the Normanskill Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2955) and that the Council of the City of Watervliet hereby authorizes the expenditure of \$94,600.00 for said engineering services related to this project.

General Manager Smith explained that a different engineering firm, "Albany Engineering," was originally tasked with this project but their work was deemed inadequate by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Mr. Smith also pointed out that FERC was pleased to hear that Gomez and Sullivan were taking over this project. Also, this project was planned for 2018 so it was included in the Budget that was proposed and passed.

Councilman Patricelli asked General Manager Smith if he had spoken with Albany Engineering and Mr. Smith stated that since the City received word that the work was inadequate from FERC he had no communication with Albany Engineering. Councilman Patricelli then asked how much the Albany Engineering work cost and Mr. Smith explained that the "remodel" they were tasked with that was deemed inadequate cost Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00). Councilman Patricelli also asked if the City was able to speak with Albany Engineering, could they fix the work that they completed and General Manager Smith stated that they had resigned as the City's engineers.

After a motion by Councilman Patricelli, seconded by Councilman McGrouty, a vote was taken, with Councilman Patricelli being opposed and Councilman McGrouty and Mayor Manning being in favor, the Resolution passed 2-1.

RESOLUTION NO. 9445 - The Council of the City of Watervliet hereby approves an Agreement for the removal/storage and disposal of motor vehicles between the City of Watervliet and Dawson's Towing and Recovery, LLC, with an office located at 2 Schuyler Lane, Watervliet, New York 12189, for professional motor vehicle towing services for the City of Watervliet and the Watervliet Police Department, and Mayor Michael P. Manning and Police Chief Mark J. Spain are hereby authorized to execute said agreement.

Police Chief Spain explained that the City has had a long standing agreement with Dawson's but never had an agreement on paper.

Upon a motion by Councilman Patricelli, seconded by Councilman McGrouty, the Resolution passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 9446 - The Council of the City of Watervliet hereby approves the purchase of a 1997 KME Aerial Cat 102' Ladder Tower (T19-6) from the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Fire District, with an address of 38 Old Route 146, Clifton Park, New York 12065, in the amount of One Hundred Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$100,000.00).

General Manager Smith explained that the City's ladder truck had been damaged at a Mutual Aid fire in Cohoes and while the City's insurance company was finalizing their estimate to repair the ladder truck the City is in need of one in the interim. He also pointed out that all costs incurred by repairing the damaged truck would be covered by the City of Cohoes, per the Mutual Aid agreement. To purchase this replacement ladder truck, Assemblyman John McDonald acquired the funds through the state assembly so there would be no cost to the City.

Councilman McGrouty asked Fire Chief Conlen to weigh in on the situation. Chief Conlen stated he thought this situation worked out well for the City with having to incur no costs to purchase the replacement truck. He also pointed out that he believed the truck was sound and

would be able to get the job done and to have it as a backup once the City's truck was fixed, would be an asset to the department.

After a motion to move on the Resolution by Councilman Patricelli and seconded by Councilman McGrouty, the Resolution passed with a 3-0 vote.

APPROPRIATIONS AND ACCOUNTING

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Paul Huban – 1500 12th Avenue – Mr. Huban made a comment that City Assessor, Mark Gilchrist, was soliciting properties for the vacant School Nine building and that he had never heard of the City doing such a thing. He also stated that ownership of that property has changed hands multiple times and the issue with the fuel tanks in the ground has never been addressed. Police Chief Spain explained that according to New York State Fire Code fuel tanks do not have to be removed. If they are unused for more than one year they can remain in the ground but have to be filled with a specific inert substance.

Councilman Patricelli stated that he brought up the issue of the fuel tanks with Chief Spain which led to him looking into the New York State Fire code.

Pat Snyder – 1880 1st Avenue – Mr. Snyder stated that surrounding communities had received grants for homes that have lead pipes and asked if the City had looked into applying for those types of grants. General Manager Smith stated that the City would absolutely be applying for that funding in the future.

Peg Germano – 1124 7th Avenue – Ms. Germano read a prepared statement. *I decided to type this out so that I make the most of my 2 minutes. I worked for the US Treasury Dept for over 33 years and have seen many municipal financial disasters but, the one in my city is personal. My husband was a city cop for 33 years, my son a city fireman for 3 years before he became a state trooper and my son in law is the police chief so I have huge respect for the important and dangerous jobs they do. The fire Dept has been wonderful to me, my husband and my family. However, we have come to a breaking point in Watervliet due to years of poor leadership, incompetent contract negotiations and mismanagement. A \$900,000 mistake on the Delta Dam project was unconscionable. We borrowed a million last year and now \$2.5. This has to come to an end or our city will collapse under its own weight.*

I received tons of emails, texts and calls about the last council meeting where TPs expressed their outrage at a near 20% tax increase. A few months back, retirees were told that their Medicaid Part B reimbursements were going to end. So, now that TPs and retirees have

felt financial pain, I want to know who in city government is going to feel the pain too. I lobby for seniors on a national level and do not believe in taking away what was promised. Seniors depend on your promises and are unable to supplement their incomes at advanced ages. TPs and good renters are leaving this city by the droves as the school system was deemed greatly stressed a few years ago and now the city is the second most stressed in the state. One TP told me, according to Zillow, their home is worth \$7000 less this year than last year. This has to end. As was pointed out in a political flyer, as a member of the church finance committee, I voted to take St Patrick's church down. Yes I did because, when faced with difficult financial decisions, you need to make hard business decisions. Emotions and personal gain have to be put aside. Also as pointed out, I have a home in Florida. It is a beautiful house on a half-acre and my total taxes, school, city, county and state are \$1200 a year.

Holly Collett – 1812 9th Avenue –Ms. Collett thanked the Council for their hard work in preparing the budget and lowering the tax increase from its original amount. Ms. Collett stated that she does not see “performance based outcome measures” included in the 2018 budget. She explained that she worked in the government sector for over Thirty years and those types of measures are vital to preparing a budget. Ms. Collett then stated that she doesn't support taking benefits away from retired City employees such a medical co-pays and Medicare Part B reimbursement.

Mayor Manning explained that taking benefits away from retirees is complicated due to Union contracts. He also stated that the Medicare Part B reimbursement was not mandatory which is why it was taken away as a way to save the City money. However, it is his hope that nothing else be taken from retirees but if something was, it would be a last resort.

Councilman McGrouty stated that he is a retired City employee and believes the City has taken good care of him in his retirement. He stated that he doesn't mind giving some back to help the City but that he would not be in favor of retirees “giving it all back.”

Kathy Crudo – 1863 9th Avenue – Ms. Crudo stated that she was grateful for the reduction in the tax increase but that she thinks there was room for more of a decrease. She then asked if new collective bargaining agreements in 2018 were added to the budget. General Manager Smith stated that they are not and Ms. Crudo expressed her concern with that. She also said that City employees need to start giving back, citing medical co-pay reimbursements as an example. In this day and age, Ms. Crudo stated, full reimbursement for co-pays is “unheard of.”

Robert Brott – 720 6th Avenue – Mr. Brott, who is a renter, commented that governments sometimes think certain things are “not touchable.” He stated the City has to stop being afraid of the Fire and Police Departments when it comes to pay increases. He then stated that City should look into “Micro Apartments,” as a way to keep rents lower. Mr. Brott also thanked the City for reducing the tax increase.

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

A motion was then made to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:57PM.

***Next Meeting: January 4, 2018 7:00pm**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Scott P. O'Reilly".

Scott P. O'Reilly

City Clerk & Clerk to the Council