

CITY OPERATIONS

Tuesday, October 15, 2019 – 6:20 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Witte, Alderman Dougherty, and Alderman Crawford. Others: Alderman Andreano; Alderman Gonzalez; Mayor William Aiello; Nicholas DiCerbo, Jr., City Attorney; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Smith called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Alderman George, who was excused.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings (Tuesday, September 17, 2019 and Tuesday, October 1, 2019)

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2019 and October 1, 2019 meetings was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

- a. PL #77-19: (Dougherty) To amend the City of Olean Code of Ordinances Chapter 26, Article III, Division 5, to remove taxicab rate restrictions.

Alderman Dougherty explained that he is proposing to remove taxicab rate restrictions and allow the market to decide rates. He explained that with Uber out there, there is competition for companies who the City is allowing to only charge certain rates. He explained that if the City does not pick the right number, these companies will go out of business.

Alderman Crawford explained that he respects and appreciates free market, but that he is concerned that these restrictions were put into place for a reason. He explained that most municipalities provide these types of restrictions to avoid price gouging.

Mayor Aiello explained that he had Ms. Taylor research other local municipalities to see what rate restrictions they currently have. Ms. Taylor explained that in researching, she found that Hornell, Corning, Elmira, Wellsville, Salamanca, Bradford, and Bath have no restrictions; Jamestown reviews and approves rates each year at the time of the taxicab license renewal but

does not impose a maximum rate, and Ithaca has a set of rate restrictions similar to those of the City of Olean.

Alderman Witte explained that several years ago, taxi companies came in to speak with the Council, and she suggests that the Council speak with them prior to making any changes. Mayor Aiello added that Cattaraugus County Social Services spends a lot of money on taxicab fares, so they should be consulted as well.

Chief Rowley suggested that if the Council decides to get rid of the standard rate, that they should require that rates are listed on the outside of cabs in order to prevent fraud. Alderman Crawford asked if the current Code requires an identifier or a sign on a taxi, and Chief Rowley responded that there is a sticker that the vehicle is supposed to have, and the driver should have a license on their person. Alderman Crawford noted that a lot of municipalities require a large decal on the vehicle's door.

Alderman Smith stated that he would reach out to the taxicab companies, and Mayor Aiello explained that he would reach out to the County.

A motion to postpone PL #77-19 to the next City Operations meeting was made by Alderman Dougherty, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

b. Discussion – Plumbing Law Changes

Alderman Dougherty explained that two years ago, the State allowed municipalities who chose so to opt out of the State regulations and laws for plumbing, and at the time the City of Olean did. He explained that since, the City has not updated their plumbing law. He explained that he has been working with the City Attorney for a bit, and that he would like to see the plumbing law incorporate all contractors in the City. Alderman Dougherty explained that currently, Master Plumbers are required to oversee all jobs, and work done under them needs to be done by a journeyman or apprentice. He explained that a lot of plumbing work being done currently is in violation of the Code. For example, he is violating City plumbing law if he replaces a toilet in one of his rental properties.

Alderman Dougherty continued that he is working on building a structure under which you get a contractor's license, and you can take a test which would allow you to offer basic plumbing assistance to property owners. A scale is proposed that if the first test is passed a contractor can do very basic plumbing work, and additional testing would allow the contractor to perform more complex plumbing work, such as replacing hot water tanks or boilers.

Alderman Crawford asked if the point is to make it easier for people who already have the skill and are doing the work to comply with the law that needs to be updated, and Alderman

Dougherty responded that it is. Alderman Dougherty explained that he is bringing this up as a discussion item, and he wants to get everyone's feedback and work with Codes to see how a system such as the one he proposes could be implemented.

Mr. DiCerbo explained that New York State passed a law that all cities in the state had to follow unless the law specifically exempts a City, and Olean requested and was granted the exemption. Alderman Andreano asked why this was done, and Alderman Crawford responded that the State's laws are very restrictive. Alderman Gonzalez asked if we have permission to use our own system, but haven't, and Alderman Smith responded that it is very complex, which is why the City has not done much since the time of the State exemption. Mr. DiCerbo explained that we are not changing the codes, we are looking to change the way that people are registered to do plumbing work. Alderman Crawford asked if this will have the same public response as the property inspection law, and Alderman Dougherty responded that he thinks that this will be as detailed, but that it will not be as controversial. He explained that the most exacerbating part will be how the tests are put together.

Alderman Crawford asked what steps need to be taken. Alderman Dougherty explained that he has drafted legislation, and Alderman Crawford suggested that the Council start chipping away at it.

Alderman Andreano asked Mr. Ring his thoughts, and Mr. Ring responded that it is really more of a Code Enforcement issue but that the City inspects their own lines so the City DPW could be tied in. Alderman Andreano asked that Mr. Ring be included in these discussions to ensure that any concern he has is addressed. Mayor Aiello added that he would touch base with the Fire Chief and Code Enforcement as well. Alderman Dougherty will reach out to the Master Plumber on staff, as well as the Plumbing Board.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.