

CITY OPERATIONS

Tuesday, November 5, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Witte, and Alderman Dougherty. Others: Alderman Andreano; Mayor William Aiello; Fred Saradin, City Auditor; 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 5:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Alderman Crawford and George, who were excused.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings (Tuesday, October 15, 2019)

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2019 meeting was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

- 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 Smith explained that it was discussed at several previous committee meetings to change the current taxicab rate of \$7.50, which has not been changed in some time. He explained that Rex Bennett and Mike Auman, who own the two local cab companies, are here to discuss this issue with the Council.

Mr. Auman explained that he thinks that the taxicab set rates should be dropped, as the Council does not tell other businesses what to charge. He explained that he is not interested in raising rates a lot, but that minimum wage is going up so a 25 cent raise may be seen. He explained that he feels that he should be able to change the rate as the market calls for it, and that there should not be price control. He noted that prices would not be raised too much because that would hurt business.

Mr. Bennett explained that the rate has not been raised since 2011, but costs have gone up exponentially since then. He explained that if rates aren't raised with the market, that costs will not be recovered and the companies will go out of business.

Alderman Witte explained that one of the biggest users of the cab companies is Cattaraugus County, and asked if they go along with the rates. Mr. Auman responded that the County sets the rates as they see fit, and the companies either go along with them or do not get their business. Alderman Dougherty asked if this works like HUD pricing, and Mr. Auman responded that it does. He noted that medical pricing has not been raised since Dave Carucci was mayor, but that enough volume is done that they can make do with those rates.

Alderman Witte asked if the companies charge extra to go out of town, and Mr. Auman responded that his company charges \$2.25 a mile for going out of the City. Mayor Aiello asked if that price is posted in the cab. Mr. Auman responded that it isn't, but that people call ahead and price the trip. He noted that there are set rates to certain places such as Buffalo, and then it is \$2.25 a mile from there.

Alderman Witte asked if it matters how many people they pick up, and Mr. Auman responded that they do not charge per person. He noted that they used to charge to carry groceries, but they do not anymore. He explained that it is \$2 per stop, but that in certain circumstances, such as if they stop at the bank to cash a check to pay cab fare, they do not charge for the stop. He explained that they try to help, because he knows that people can struggle.

Mayor Aiello noted that in the late 60's and early 70's cab fare was 75 cents, and Mr. Auman explained that the insurance rates for taxi cabs raised exponentially after 9/11.

Alderman Smith asked if the same rate is charged in the City despite how far the trip is, and Mr. Auman responded that there are two flat rates, \$7 and \$7.50. He noted that he does have a senior rate too, which is usually \$1.00 under the regular rate. Alderman Smith explained that the legislation was put into place some time ago to prevent price gouging, and he wonders if this may be an issue in the future. Mr. Auman responded that he does not see this as a future issue, as raising prices too much could hurt their business.

Alderman Andreano asked if the companies do delivery, and Mr. Auman explained that they do. They will pick up and deliver groceries or carry out food, whatever the customer calls for. He explained that he hopes that the price control goes away so that prices can be adjusted according to the market. Mr. Bennett concurred.

Mayor Aiello explained that another municipality requires that rates be submitted to the municipality with the annual license renewal, and then again if they are changed midyear. Alderman Smith explained that he does not believe that Jamestown has rate restrictions; however, he believes that they require companies to post rates.

Alderman Dougherty explained that he feels that a free market is the best way to go. He feels that the cab companies may raise rates slightly, but that it will even out and that price gouging will not be an issue,

Mr. Auman noted that he feels that Uber should not have been able to just begin operating in the City, especially since he and Mr. Bennett get inspected and have licenses, as the City intends them to. He doesn't understand how Uber can come in with no governance. He explained that he does not mind paying the City a permit fee or having the cabs inspected and drivers licensed. He doesn't mind providing proof of insurance to the City.

A motion to refer PL #77-19 to the City Attorney for Resolution was made by Alderman Dougherty, seconded by Alderman Smith. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Discussion – Unified Court System Court Cleaning and Minor Repairs Agreement

Mayor Aiello explained that he brought this to the Council as soon as he received it from the State, and that we have been operating without a contract since April. He explained that it has been calculated that the court uses 17% of the building and that percentage is used to calculate what the State feels they should pay the City for their cleaning and repairs. Mayor Aiello noted that the City doesn't really have much of a say in the rates that are set. He explained that the State pays for a portion of cleaning and janitorial supplies, as well as a portion of maintenance costs.

Alderman Andreano asked if there are any issues with what is proposed, and Mayor Aiello and Mr. Ring both agreed that there is not. Mayor Aiello explained that the City doesn't have issues with the court, except that they are very slow in paying back costs when they want certain repairs and remodeling done, as they have the City pay up front and they reimburse the City. He noted that this is separate from the Court Security contract.

A resolution will be introduced on the next Regular Meeting agenda to authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

A motion to approve committee reports was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 p.m.