

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, August 4, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Witte, Vice Chairman Dougherty, Alderman Gonzalez, Alderman Crawford, Alderman Robinson, and Alderman Anastasia. Others: Mayor William Aiello and Tiffany Taylor. Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Witte called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Alderman Panus, who was excused.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings (Tuesday, July 7, 2020)

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2020 meeting was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Discussion Items

i. COVID-19 Update (Witte)

Mayor Aiello explained that he really doesn't have anything to update on the situation right now. He explained that there are no longer every other day meetings with the Governor's Office.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that there have been emails received by the Council and Mayor regarding Aldermen not wearing masks, and he wants to know how to approach this as a Council. He asked if the Council is just indifferent or if the situation should be addressed.

Alderman Witte explained that as a retired nurse who is married to a doctor, she knows that masks do help, and it is her belief that we should wear them. Alderman Anastasia explained that his mask is preventing him from passing anything to other Council members, and if a Council member isn't wearing a mask, then that member isn't protecting him from getting anything. He explained that because the CDC says it is working, and out of common courtesy, they should be worn until the pandemic is over.

Alderman Gonzalez asked if we prevent people from entering the building if they don't have a mask, and Mayor Aiello responded that we do. He explained that he gets questions all the time about why some Aldermen don't wear masks, and he explained that they are elected officials and this is out of his control. He noted that if these Aldermen want to come in with no masks during the day, they will be denied access to the building.

Alderman Robinson asked about the constituents who are attending the Council meetings at night, and Alderman Gonzalez explained that he feels that we should all be wearing masks, period. He explained that he feels that the concept that not wearing a mask is an act of civil disobedience is ridiculous. He explained that this is a public safety issue, and even if you don't believe in the virus, you still cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough to protect others. He explained that no one likes wearing a mask, but people have to suck it up because this is a place of employment. He explained that Aldermen are still paid by the City, so technically "employed" by the City. He explained that the employer requires that employees wear masks on site so the Council should have to wear masks on site as well.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that it's really pretty simple, and Alderman Witte agreed that it is straightforward. Mayor Aiello explained that it is, and as elected officials we took an oath to uphold the laws of the State of New York. He explained that this is an order by the Governor. Alderman Gonzalez explained that even President Trump is wearing a mask. He explained that he knows that this mask / no mask thing is a political issue because our President has made it this way, but you're taking away others freedom if you don't wear a mask.

Alderman Witte explained that whatever Aldermen do in their private life is up to them, and she doesn't want this to be political or confrontational. She explained that she respects others choices, but asked that masks are at least worn during Council meetings.

Alderman Dougherty explained that people elect the Council to lead them, and if the Aldermen take willy-nilly the "do this" instructions from the Governor, that's not law, then we will all be in trouble down the road because he feels that this is a small part of a big thing that is going to happen to the United States. Alderman Crawford responded that he doesn't feel that constituents elect the Council to "lead" them. He explained that he prefers to err on the side of caution, but he cannot force anybody, as this is the America that we live in. He explained that he doesn't have the right to force anybody to wear a mask. He explained that he feels that it is his public duty to wear a mask, but he doesn't feel that it is fair to force someone else to do so.

Alderman Gonzalez asked that the Aldermen who do not wear masks, at least wear masks when coming to Council meetings. He explained that people are noticing. Alderman Witte explained that she thinks that this is something that we needed to talk about and will probably talk about again.

ii. Willow Street – Parking on One Side (Witte)

Alderman Witte explained that Willow Street off of Main Street is one of the oldest streets in the neighborhood, and it is very narrow. She asked if the Council can prohibit parking on the first block on one side of the street. She explained that she has a couple more constituents to talk to, but those she has talked to already are fine with this change. She noted that she did ask the Police Chief and Fire Chief to look at it, and they were both fine with it as well. It was noted that an ambulance or fire truck cannot get down the street with vehicles parked on both sides. Alderman Witte explained that she knows that every Alderman has these kinds of streets in their ward, and she will bring this back to the Council after she has spoken with the rest of the residents in the area.

Mayor Aiello explained that he had a request from Savarino Companies to see what kind of parking the City may have for his project at the Manufacturers' Hanover property. He explained that the City owns lot 9 on North First Street, and after looking at that lot with the parking committee, Mr. Ring looked at the street and determined that thirteen additional on street parking spaces could be added. He explained that there are 51 spots in that lot, 28 of which are available for permits, with only 23 rented, and 23 metered spots. Mayor Aiello explained that if the City comes up with additional spots on North First Street for customers of businesses in that area, then about twenty spots can be freed up for permits for tenants of the Manufacturers' Hanover property. He explained that this could be a win for everybody, and it will take Council action to install "Two Hour Parking" signs on this section of roadway.

Alderman Crawford asked if Mayor Aiello foresees any adverse effects on the street, and Mayor Aiello responded that he does not. He explained that they have been looking into this and actually looking at a study done by Mr. Piechota some time ago when the North Union Street Project was originally being planned, and these on street spots were planned at that time but never added. He explained that if there is a function that requires that the entire roadway be clear, temporary "No Parking" sign could always be put up.

Alderman Witte asked if the on street parking is planned for the same side as the lot, and Mayor Aiello responded that it is not, it is on the opposite side of the street. Alderman Witte asked if there will be an issue with people entering and exiting the lots on this street, and Alderman Dougherty explained that Mr. Ring had everything laid out during the parking meeting so the committee could see that there are spots without congestion and plenty of room for turning.

Mayor Aiello explained that he will be submitting a PL to put two hour parking on the street to allow for parking in the lot for the project at the Manufacturers' Hanover property.

iii. Police Review Board Update (Witte)

Mayor Aiello explained that he has been working with Chief Rowley to put together goals and objectives as well as looking at what other communities are doing. He explained that Hornell is participating in a county-wide committee, and Jamestown already has an existing board that has become somewhat dormant, so they will be resurrecting that. He explained that he has also reached out to the Mayor of Dunkirk, but he has not heard anything back yet.

Mayor Aiello explained that he has received quite a few letters of interest and resumes, and moving forward, they will continue to be accepted. Alderman Witte asked if there has been any update from NYCOM, and Mayor Aiello responded that there hasn't been. He explained that NYCOM recently sent out a survey with a lot of questions to do with this, so as soon as they get those back he's sure that they will tabulate the responses and get a suggested plan out. He explained that moving along, we should have something in the next couple of weeks.

Alderman Crawford explained that while we are on this topic, he did send out his thoughts on the diversity committee and the reasons why he thinks that it would be beneficial. He explained that he does not think that they need to have a finished product at this time, but we are hearing from people who are interested, but who want to see a general concept or outline of responsibilities. Alderman Gonzalez explained that it is to attend meetings and talk about issues, and Alderman Crawford responded that he feels that interested constituents should at least have a couple of guidelines. He explained that someone had wanted to know the difference between committees, and what the City is looking for, for each. He explained that the Council should put bullet points on both and get this out to the public so that they can send in their resume and explain that this their background, they would be better suited for a specific committee.

Alderman Witte asked if the committees will meet simultaneously, and if it will be once a month, or twice a month, or more.

Alderman Robinson asked what the timeline for the resume submission is, and Mayor Aiello explained that he has a file of resumes started. He explained that in terms of a timeline, we need to have somewhat of a purpose for each committee so that those who are interested will have an opportunity to get their letter of interest or resume in. He explained that we need to detail what we expect from the community. He explained that Albany has bylaws for their committees, such as you could be replaced if you miss two meetings. He explained that he does not know if we need to go into it, to that extent, but we should at least say what we are doing this for.

Mayor Aiello explained that he feels that in a couple more weeks we can have something drawn up, and then give it another week or two for people to get their interest in before interviews

and putting together the committees. He explained that he can then get people appointed so that the committees can get moving and down to business.

Alderman Witte explained that we have to make this clear, especially for the Police Review Board, that this is going to be ongoing and she asked if the Diversity and Equity Committee will be the same. She asked if we are actually going to be having someone work for the City in an equity and diversity capacity as well. The Council touched on this previously but did not finalize anything. She explained that she thinks that we need to be clear on how long these committees will be in place. In addition, available days for meetings could limit some people's potential to be on these committees.

Alderman Crawford explained that people are looking for general guidelines, such as how many times a month a committee will be meeting and what they will be dealing with. Alderman Gonzalez asked what an appropriate amount of meetings per month would be. He explained that once a month may not be enough at first but that later it could be. Alderman Robinson explained that we should focus on getting the interested people interviewed, and get the committees together. They can then set their own boundaries and limits, and they can create their own objectives, and they will know from what they have created how much time they will need to put in.

Alderman Crawford explained that Alderman Robinson makes a great point. He explained that the committees should be left open ended enough so that members can determine their own scope, declare their mission statement, and be self-sufficient. He thinks that at this point we can move forward, and give one more week for resumes and letter to be submitted to the Mayor's Office. Alderman Crawford explained that from there, we can start narrowing down candidates.

Alderman Gonzalez asked how the resumes could be reviewed as a Council. Mayor Aiello explained that he would have to see how this could be done, and Alderman Dougherty explained that it is up to the Mayor to appoint the committee members. He explained that any time three or more Aldermen meet, it has to be an open meeting. He explained that the members are ultimately appointed by the Mayor, even if the Council creates the committee.

Alderman Robinson explained that a lot of websites list the same thing that we should look for in committee members. He explained that this includes good communication skills, good standing in the community, the ability to network, the ability to stay open minded, a knowledge of the role in which they are participating, and the ability to work well with others. Alderman Gonzalez explained that this makes sense. Alderman Robinson explained that there is nothing difficult in these requirements.

Alderman Crawford explained that he would ask that as the resumes come in for one committee or the other, similar to the way the Mayor interviewed for the open Alderman position, he would like to ask that maybe some of the Aldermen sit and review the resumes with the Mayor. Mayor Aiello explained that he would like to have input from the Aldermen on this, as they are creating the committees and he feels that it is important.

Alderman Gonzalez asked if people are specifying which committee they want to be a part of, and Mayor Aiello responded that they are. He explained that he has only received one resume where they want to be on both. Alderman Gonzalez asked if people are favoring one committee over the other, and Mayor Aiello responded that he feels that there has been more interest in the Police Oversight Committee than the Equity and Diversity Committee.

Alderman Robinson explained that if you read Governor Cuomo's Executive Order, it details what he is looking for in a Police Oversight Committee. He explained that it is pretty much set up for longevity. He explained that there is really nothing there that the Council needs to think about. Alderman Dougherty explained that if the Governor spelled out what we need, then this should be what we create.

Mayor Aiello explained that we will get this done. He explained that we are not dragging out feet, and that we only want to make sure that this is done right so that we don't have issues in the future. He explained that we want a meaningful committee.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Executive Session

A motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss the proposed acquisition or sale of real estate was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session began at approximately 6:05 p.m.

A motion to adjourn from Executive Session was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session adjourned at approximately 6:35 p.m.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.