

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, August 18, 2020 – 6:05 p.m.

Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Witte, Vice Chairman Dougherty, Alderman Panus, Alderman Gonzalez, Alderman Crawford, Alderman Robinson, and Alderman Anastasia. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Tim Richardson, Fire Chief, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Witte called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and asked that the record show that all Aldermen were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings (Tuesday, August 4, 2020)

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2020 meeting was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Discussion Items

i. COVID-19 Update

Alderman Witte explained that she wanted the Mayor to update the Council on COVID as things are changing as far as openings. Mayor Aiello explained that as of the 24th the Governor is giving permission for gyms to open, as well as bowling alleys. He noted that he has not looked into all of the restrictions associated with this. He has also not reached out to the YMCA or Eades to see how this will affect them, but this is a good thing. He explained that from reports from the County in terms of Coronavirus cases, he believes that there was only one over the past weekend so things have been going pretty well.

Alderman Witte asked about eviction concerns. Alderman Crawford explained that this was presented to him by a constituent and then he had heard it happened to a couple of others. He explained that he has posed this question to the City Attorney as well. He explained that it is his understanding that the Governor has put a stop during the pandemic to any sort of evictions. He explained that he has heard of two individuals who have had the Sheriff's Office bring eviction notices to them as tenants, because their landlords have not paid their property taxes.

He explained that the tenants are still paying rent, but now they are being told that they will be homeless because taxes are not being paid and the County is taking back the properties.

Mayor Aiello explained that he hasn't gotten any calls about this. Alderman Dougherty explained that he knew about the eviction hiatus because courts are not currently scheduling. He explained that he doesn't know how the County Treasurer is doing evictions, but that the property tax auction is beginning online this weekend for two weeks.

Alderman Crawford asked what happens if the landlord walks away, and the tenant is still in the property. Alderman Dougherty explained that the property would go back to the bank, and the bank as the new owner would start the same proceedings to evict a tenant as a landlord would for whatever reason. Alderman Crawford asked what about the County, and Alderman Dougherty explained that their goal is to get people out as soon as possible. He is sure that they are just trying to get the ball rolling.

Alderman Gonzalez asked if the County is really doing this, and Alderman Crawford responded that they are.

Mayor Aiello explained that the County makes the City whole on all back taxes. They are able to foreclose if you don't pay County taxes for two years. He explained that he will be calling the County Attorney tomorrow to see what is going on.

Alderman Panus explained that he knows that this is not what people will want to hear, but if you are being evicted because someone else owns the property and didn't pay their taxes, at least you can go somewhere else. Alderman Crawford explained that he understands, but this is confusing because of the Governor's Executive Order. He asked that if the Mayor can find out what is going on and let the Council know, he'd greatly appreciate it.

Alderman Dougherty explained that from a landlord's perspective, he doesn't have a hiatus on any of his rentals. The County doesn't care about COVID when it comes to paying taxes, and he still has to pay taxes and the mortgage even if he isn't being paid rent.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15 p.m.