

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

via Zoom

Present: Members: Chairman Witte, Vice Chairman Dougherty, Alderman Panus, 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 6:00 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings (Tuesday, November 3, 2020)

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2020 meeting was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

- a. PL #78-20: (Robinson) to authorize the installation of “Deaf Child Area” signs in the vicinity of the intersection of Henley Street and North 14th Street.

Alderman Robinson explained that he had a constituent get a hold of him stating that she is moving into the corner home at South 14th Street and Henley Street. He explained that this is close to the National Grid parking lot. He explained that they are looking to have four signs installed. He explained that he forwarded an email to everyone that the resident sent him, and Mr. Ring indicated that this letter would be needed in order to place the signs. He explained that the constituent’s grandson frequents the home and he has profound hearing loss and is fascinated by trucks. He explained that there is concern that with the trucks from National Grid and the intersection that he will not react to a typical honking of a horn. He would like the City to go the extra mile to alert that there is someone in the area that cannot hear. He explained that the signs would be removed when they are no longer needed.

Alderman Witte explained that Mr. Ring sent an email indicating that a request from a resident is needed, and asked if there is anything else required. Mayor Aiello explained that we need to pass a resolution authorizing the installation of the deaf child signs.

Alderman Crawford explained that he has no concern about the current signs and he is not trying to rehash what has already been talked about, but the City should consider its sign policy. He explained that he can think of two that are very rusted and old and probably not even necessary anymore. He explained that the City should consider the removal of some of these signs, and when we put more in we should circle back and remove what is no longer necessary. Alderman Witte agreed and explained that we should go back to the resolutions to see who requested the sign and see if they still reside at the residence. If they are no longer there, then we can remove the signs.

Alderman Robinson explained that he thought that the Aldermen were going to check out their wards and come back with a list of sign corrections, so that it could all be done in one PL. Alderman Crawford explained that it does not have to be connected to this, but that he wants to make sure that we keep talking about it to make sure that it gets done. Mayor Aiello explained that we should clean it all up the best that we can, and that we won't necessarily catch all of the necessary changes. Alderman Witte explained that it will go a long way to update the book in DPW as well.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that these signs are not at all the same as the "Children at Play" signs that the City and County have gone away from. He explained that these signs are totally different. Alderman Witte explained that these signs should be installed as it is a public safety issue.

Alderman Anastasia asked about a sign on West Fall Road that can't be seen from the intersection, and Mayor Aiello explained that he will mention this to Mr. Ring tomorrow to see what we can do.

A motion to approve PL #78-20 was made by Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to City Attorney for Resolution.

b. COVID-19 Update

Alderman Witte explained that she wanted to put this on the agenda because of the way things are going, it behooves us to stay on top of the information available. She thanked Mayor Aiello for the weekly updates from the hospital, and explained that there is a lot of misinformation out there. She explained that the Public Health Board met today, and she wanted to share some numbers. She explained that there are currently 339 active cases, and 27 deaths in Cattaraugus County. She explained that there have been 1138 confirmed cases and we have tested 57,874 people tested in the county. We have quarantined 27 travelers and 531 people who have had contact with positive cases. She explained that 483 people have recovered in our region and there have been 19 deaths in our region. She explained that of 339 active cases, 28 people are hospitalized. She explained that 16 people are at Olean General with 2 in the ICU, 2

from Cattaraugus County are at Buffalo General, 2 are at Hamed, 2 are in Chaffee, 2 are at Brooks Memorial and 2 are at WCA. She explained that people from Cattaraugus County are not just at Olean General Hospital.

Alderman Witte explained that there have been 157 positive cases in ages 0 through 19, 244 cases in ages 20 through 29, 154 cases in ages 30 through 39, 152 in ages 50-59, 111 in ages 40 through 49, 150 in ages 60 through 69, 97 in ages 70 through 79, 55 in ages 80 through 89 and 18 in ages 90 through 99. She explained that in areas designated yellow businesses can remain open, in orange areas high risk nonessential businesses are closed such as personal care and gyms, and in red areas only essential businesses are open. In yellow areas indoor and outdoor dining are allowed, in orange areas only outdoor and takeout are allowed, and in red areas only takeout and delivery are allowed. Schools remain open in yellow areas, in orange areas twenty percent of students and teachers must be tested weekly but schools remain open, and in red areas schools are remote only.

Alderman Witte described the phases for vaccine distribution and explained that hospitals are trying to get retired workers back to work. She explained that once the vaccine is available retired people may be those tapped to go to nursing homes and senior housing areas. She explained that it behooves us to know all of this because people will be asking the Aldermen about this information.

Alderman Anastasia asked if there are 339 active cases county-wide, and Alderman Witte responded that there are. She explained that there have been 731 total cases in our corridor from the beginning until now, and that we have the highest number in the county. She explained that we also have the largest population in the county.

Alderman Robinson asked if this information is shareable, and Mayor Aiello explained that it is and he receives it weekly, so he will forward it to the Aldermen. Alderman Robinson explained that he will begin sharing it on his page. Mayor Aiello explained that there are currently four City workers out on quarantine. He explained that the City has been working on a pandemic plan, and he will be meeting tomorrow to go over some things. He explained that Brad Camp and Chief Richardson have been working on this. The plan will not just be for COVID but for any pandemic or situation that we could get into like this.

Alderman Witte explained that the numbers she provided are from Dr. Watkins and he shared them to educate the public. She explained that her street is usually packed for Thanksgiving, but this year it was really quiet. Nobody had a huge amount of visitors. She thinks that more and more people are starting to realize the seriousness of the situation. She feels that it is possible that another spike has occurred. The numbers after this coming week will be reflective of people traveling during Thanksgiving. We will have to wait to see how things pan out.

Alderman Crawford explained that he just heard the news this evening that 40 percent of COVID fatalities occurred at nursing homes long term care facilities and in skilled care facilities. He explained that this is a shocking number but it is absolutely real. He explained that his grandmother caught COVID at a facility in Allegany and five days later she was dead. He explained that the elderly and those with preexisting conditions need to be very careful over the next few months.

Alderman Witte explained that we have to be grateful for our healthcare providers. We can't take them for granted, as they are physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted and we really need to be sensitive to these folks. She explained that everyone who puts themselves at risk every day really needs to be in our prayers right now.

Alderman Dougherty explained that he thinks that this situation stinks the whole way around regardless what side of the fence you are on. He explained that having the statistics are great, but he would like to have some context as well. He explained that we need to look at other countries around the world, both less and more advanced than us. He explained that some people do what is right and some don't. He does not feel that mask mandates and lockdowns necessarily help or change the numbers.

Alderman Witte explained that in Florida, people are outside more and since we are entering winter here she feels that this is a reason that our numbers are going up. She explained that people still need to wash hands, social distance and wear a mask. She explained that we will see the end of this, but that we need to do our due diligence and educate people. If there is something that we can do to help, we should do it.

Alderman Robinson explained that he was in Arizona over the summer, and when he was out and about, he didn't see anyone not wearing masks. He explained that there just seems to be a lot of people in this region that don't want to. Other counties, when you compare their political systems to ours, they're still struggling like us. The ones who aren't struggling are authoritarian. If they tell you to wear a mask, you don't have a choice. If you don't want to wear a mask, don't wear it, but for the rest of us we want to stay safe and live.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that if you look up COVID cases in Florida to date, they have almost 1 million. New York has 653,000. Alderman Crawford explained that he is not in favor of the widespread shut downs, but you can't say they don't work. England did another shutdown and reduced the affected rate by 35 percent. He explained that there has to be a balance and a happy medium somewhere.

Alderman Witte explained that Vermont has some of the lowest numbers in the country, but they take it seriously. They take your contact information when you go into a restaurant, and

everything is social distanced. She does think that it makes a difference, but everyone is going to do what is comfortable for them.

Mayor Aiello explained that the Fire Department is starting to have some issues with supplies and suppliers. He explained that there may be an issue obtaining personal protective equipment. We are keeping track of that and trying to maintain the equipment. He explained that the State is no longer providing things to the County, so we will need to start purchasing it ourselves.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Executive Session

A motion to enter into executive session to discuss contract negotiations was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session began at approximately 6:25 p.m.

A motion to adjourn from executive session was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Gonzalez. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.