A Business Meeting of the Johnstown Common Council was held on February 21, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

PRESENT:

Vernon F. Jackson :Mayor

Craig Talarico :Council Member-at-Large

Kathi Iannotti :Council Member

Bradley Hayner :Council Member

Helen Martin :Council Member

Timothy Cellary :Council Member

Michael Poulin :City Attorney

Bruce Heberer :Fire Chief

David Gilbo :Police Lieutenant

Chris Vose :City Engineer

Erica Wing :Library Director

Michael Gifford :City Treasurer

Mary Jo Smith :Deputy City Clerk

Michelle Jones :Senior Center Director

ABSENT:

Cathy VanAlstyne :City Clerk

Mark Gifford :Police Chief

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order and led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

SWEARING IN- Judge Preston swore in Council Member-at-Large Craig Talarico.

ROLL CALL- All Council members present.

GUEST SPEAKER- Ron Peters, President of Fulton County Center for Regional Growth requested to speak about his organization. He explained the primary function is to “market Fulton County”, especially the industrial parks, specific sites and community development activities. He spoke especially about CRG’s accomplishments working with the City of Gloversville. For example, they are arranging for a $300,000 EPA grant to fund some projects. He said they could do the same thing for the City of Johnstown. They submitted several applications with CFA and received a $500,000 grant for the Parkhurst Foundation for the ball field. He said he’d like to develop a team for economic development and project financing in the City of Johnstown. He also passed out a sheet listing the events that will be going on in Gloversville this year. Peters said he can help with funding applications as there is “money out there”. Everyone was invited to the next CRG Board meeting on Friday at 8:30.

PUBLIC HEARING- Mayor Jackson invited residents to speak about no parking during school hours on Pleasant and Linden Avenues. John Sagan of 111 Linden Ave. requested to speak, indicating he was also speaking for Anita Herr of 109 Linden Ave., who was unable to attend the hearing. Mr. Sagan stated that he wished to speak about the ordinance, but wondered if it was also acceptable to address the proposed curb cut. The Mayor replied that it was appropriate. Mr. Sagan said he was opposed to rescinding Ordinance #4, 2016, because he felt it would be unsafe to have parking on the east side of Pleasant Ave. causing parents and students to cross the street to access school property. He further noted that the sidewalk on the west side of the street makes it easier to “load and unload” from the vehicles. There are no sidewalks on the east side. He also stated that it is more difficult for cars entering Pleasant Avenue from Walnut Street to see past cars parked on the east side. He further went on to address the proposed curb cut on Linden Avenue indicating that he has not observed any backups on Pleasant Avenue and the traffic appears to move very smoothly, so he wondered if there really was a problem with traffic flow around the parking lot and pick up area. He requested that the school district give answers to the city council before a decision is made. He also felt that the proposed ordinance to prohibit parking on the south side of Linden Avenue would create the same concern as crossing Pleasant Avenue. Superintendent Trish Kilburn spoke for the school district explaining that the car loop was set up to alleviate the congestion. At this time, first graders are escorted to their cars in the loop taking a total of 10 to 13 minutes to board all of them. She said the curb cut proposed would help with the kindergartners having access to the car loop, too. She said Engineer Vose was very helpful examining the traffic flow and recommending changes for better fluidity. The additional curb space isn’t so much about creating more space for more cars in a park mode, but to keep the traffic going through. She said when cars turn right out of Linden onto Pleasant, they won’t run into a line of parked cars on the west side of Pleasant. Also, the curb cut would eliminate having to drive through a parking lot, and can create a double lane in the Linden Ave. loop. She added that the loop will not be used for pre-kindergartners.

APPROVE MINUTES- The minutes of the January 18, 2017 Business Meeting were approved with a motion from Council Member Martin and seconded by Council Member Iannotti. Motion carried with Member-at-Large Talarico abstaining.

CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS- Council Member Iannotti moved to pay the bills for the general audit: General Fund (A) unpaid $215,304.33; General Fund (A) paid $1,031,606.64; Sewer Fund (G) unpaid $610; Sewer Fund (G) paid $1,059.53; Voucher Fund paid $45,432.10; and Capital Fund 2012 (H12) unpaid $59,767.30 and place on file claims and accounts with a second from Council Member Martin. Motion carried.

CITY OFFICIALS’ AND LIAISONS’ REPORTS

FIRE DEPARTMENT-Chief Heberer reported that the Fire Department continued in-service training on Basic Firefighting Operation in January. The Codes Division conducted training on the New York State 2016 Property Maintenance Code. In January they responded to 61 calls for service. These included 2 structure fires, 7 motor vehicle accidents, 22 hazardous condition calls, 8 medical assistance calls, 4 carbon monoxide calls and 18 service calls. The monthly building report is as follows: 34 permits issued with an estimated cost for improvements of $238,859 with fees of $1,945 that were collected. He added that complaint responses are being addressed as needed. The Codes Division conducted 525 inspections and complaint responses in January. The Chief wanted to remind people that only 25% of the Department are on duty at one time. He reported that the fire on N. Perry St. over the weekend caused heavy damage, but the house is salvageable, and no one was hurt. He commended the Police and DPW for their continued assistance during fires. He further wanted to remind the public not to hesitate in contacting the Fire Department if the odor of smoke exists.

POLICE DEPARTMENT- Lieutenant Gilbo reported that in January there were 559 calls for service with 92 cases generated leading to 49 arrests. There were 54 tickets issued, and 30 accident reports filed. He said the traffic on 30A and the bad weather seems to be contributing to the increasing number of accidents. He said the city is temporarily suspending the winter parking ban, unless there is a winter storm forecast. Residents should use commonsense, because they will be ticketed or towed if the streets are affected by bad weather. He reminded everyone that the City offers overnight winter parking permits for several of the City-owned parking lots. These permits can be obtained from the City Clerk. Each month officers are continuing in-service training, mostly online, on blood-borne pathogens and hazardous materials. Lt. Gilbo reported that Sergeant Jamie Allen is retiring February 23 and there will be a lateral transfer from the Sheriff’s Department starting February 26.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS-Engineer Vose said the DPW has been busy with a lot of housekeeping including clearing of snow at night. They have been cutting and moving snow banks, maintaining sand barrels and making sure catch basins are clear. Some park benches and trash cans are being refurbished. He said the Region 2 DOT has awarded $550,000 for deck replacement on the bridge over the Cayadutta on W. State Street / Rt. 29. Within the first 90 days there needs to be “fully executed” agreements between DOT and the City. Since a consultant needs to be selected within 90 days, a selection committee needs to be set up soon. DOT provided a list of 15 firms. The City will send out letters to a few of those firms, interview them and make a selection. Since it is a deck vs. total replacement, the DOT wants more investigation into the condition of the superstructure. Engineer Vose has spoken to GPI to do some deck coring and maybe some ground penetrating radar to make sure the condition is adequate to move ahead on the deck. Once the Comptroller’s office approves, they have 18 months to award a contract for the construction. The bridge on Townsend Avenue will probably be addressed in 2019.

SENIOR CENTER- Director Jones said this Thursday the Mayor will come to discuss some City matters of importance to seniors. The 50 Plus Club did some fundraising for the Community Band and will be presenting the money to Mr. and Mrs. Dougherty. On Saturday, Life Line Screening will be at the Center for health screening targeting those who don’t have insurance. She praised DPW’s efforts clearing the parking lot of snow this winter.

LIBRARY- Library Director Wing also commended the DPW for its work with the Library’s parking lot. She reported that about 40 raffle baskets are already on display at the Library. The drawing and mini-golf fundraising event will be on April 1. All of the proceeds will go toward the operating budget. Council Member Martin commented that she enjoyed going to the Library on Sunday afternoon to watch a movie meant for adults.

TREASURER’S OFFICE- Treasurer Gifford reported that his office is working on 2016 year end business. He said that $1,000 will be spent to finally study the feasibility of regional bus transportation including FMCC, Fulton County, Johnstown and Gloversville. The resolution for this study was passed in March 2016.

ASSESSOR’s Office- Council Member Iannotti reported that March 1 is the deadline to file for all City tax exemptions.

ORDINANCE No. 1, 2017 was presented by Council Member Iannotti to amend Chapter 20, Section 20-209, entitled Streets where parking is limited, to include the following in subsection ( c) of the Code of Ordinances Schedule of Streets: Walnut Avenue- “No Parking Any Time” on the north side of the roadway; between North Market Street and Pleasant Avenue. Seconded by Council Member Hayner.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

ORDINANCE No. 2, 2017 was presented by Council Member Iannotti to amend Chapter 20, Section 20-209, entitled Streets where parking is limited, to include the following in subsection (c) of the Code of Ordinances Schedule of Streets: Pleasant Avenue-“No Parking 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on School Days” on the west side of the roadway; between Matthew Street and Elmwood Avenue. Linden Avenue- “No parking 7:00 a.m.to 4:00 p.m. on School Days” on the south side of roadway; to the end of school property. Seconded by Council Member Martin.

Council member Iannotti asked Engineer Vose if he could elaborate on the Pleasant Avenue and Linden Avenue situation. He explained that the ordinance is an attempt to keep fluidity in the streets. He said the School District needs to put in place and enforce any policies. He reported that he and Mayor Jackson went to the area and observed a “choke point” with the existing Linden Avenue parking lot being “online” with the buses. Essentially there is one car traveling through the parking lot and cars staged waiting for their children so anyone who is parked in the parking lot, which includes some pre-K parents, can’t back out and exit. They are at “the mercy” of people within the traffic loop. Ideally you want to take that parking lot off line. He suggested a loop with two lanes that will give a “storage lane” for people in the queue waiting to pick up their students. Then they have a through lane where they can pull out and exit. No one will be allowed to stage in the traffic lane. You have to keep the traffic flowing for emergency vehicles and regular pedestrian vehicles. He said 95% of the school’s students come from areas south and east of the school, so the traffic is naturally northbound on Pleasant Avenue. Because of that, and the fact vehicles have to take a left onto Linden Avenue to get into the loop, they need the right side shoulder so they can pull off and wait until it is their turn. You only want the grade level that is being dismissed at that time in the loop. So, to keep traffic as simple as possible, you “store” people on the east side of Pleasant Avenue and the north side of Linden Avenue making one turn. Otherwise, they will be turning around in people’s driveways. Also, they are hoping that it will be safer, as it should increase visibility. He said he’d like to see pre-K using as much of the Linden Avenue parking lot as possible to mitigate children crossing the street. He also suggested putting some of the faculty in the southern parking lot, but that would be the school district’s decision. He said this is on a trial basis. If it doesn’t work, the school district will go back to the way it is now. Council Member Martin asked if each level has a designated pick up time. Superintendent Kilburn said they do, and elaborated on how the school district has, and will, handle this. She also explained that the buses are in the front loop. Council Member Iannotti asked Lieutenant Gilbo if he felt this was the best solution for traffic flow. He said, because of the age of the students at Pleasant Avenue now, the basic premise is that no student is released without an adult so it isn’t a problem. The school grade configuration could change and that might mean revisions in the future. Council Member Hayner asked about one way traffic. Lt. Gilbo explained that he didn’t think that would solve the problem, and would probably make it worse.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

RESOLUTION No. 22, 2017 was presented by Council Member Talarico to rescind Ordinance #4, 2016. Seconded by Council Member Martin.

Council Member Iannotti asked how long before the signs will be installed. Engineer Vose said they don’t have signs now, but will soon, so temporary ones may be placed there.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

RESOLUTION No. 23, 2017 was presented by Council Member Martin to authorize the Mayor to execute documents to transfer the City-owned property at 308 ½ S. Market St. (#174.12-9-21) to Christopher A. Tomchik and Nancy A. Ackerbauer for the purchase price of $1,000.00. Seconded by Council Member Iannotti.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

RESOLUTION No. 24, 2017 was presented by Council Member Cellary to authorize the Mayor to execute a Multi-Agency Mutual Aid Agreement with the Fulton County Sheriff’s Office and Gloversville Police Department. Seconded by Council Member Hayner.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

RESOLUTION No. 25, 2017 was presented by Council Member-at-Large Talarico to appoint Catharine Levee of 1 E. Green Street to the City Board of Assessment Review to fill an unexpired term from February 21, 2017 through September 30, 2018. Seconded by Council Member Martin.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

RESOLUTION No. 26, 2017 was presented by Council Member Hayner to authorize the Mayor to execute all documents necessary to acquire the $11,261 funding from New York DCJS Police Protective Equipment Program for the purchase of police protective equipment. Seconded by Council Member Martin.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

RESOLUTION No. 27, 2017 was presented by Council Member Martin to authorize the Mayor to execute a contract with Orion Management Company to assist the City with grant administrative and program delivery services in the amount not to exceed $17, 000. Seconded by Council Member Hayner.

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

DISCUSSION

Council Member Martin stated that a resident who lives on James Street sent her an email indicating she had received a “ boil water” notice, but was then never notified if and when it was lifted. The email noted that she had called the Sheriff’s Office, and they told her the ban was lifted on Saturday. The resident later talked to a “lady” at the Water Department who indicated that notices were hand-delivered to everyone on the street. The Mayor asked Council Member Martin to give this information to Council Member Cellary as he is now the liason to the Water Department.

ANNOUNCEMENTS- Mayor Jackson announced that the City-wide garage sale will be May 19, 20 and 21, and no permits are required. Council Member Martin reported that the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Hometown Consortium is holding their annual symposium at HFM BOCES on March 18 starting at 8:30. The Mayor also added that Animal Control Officer Walker found that 124 dog licenses had expired, and she was contacting the owners and giving them two weeks to come to the Clerk’s office to renew the licenses. Chief Heberer announced that there will be a semi-formal Firemen’s Charity Ball on March 11 from 7 to 11 pm at the Masonic Temple. Council Member Martin announced that the Tourism Committee would be meeting at 8:30 Saturday at the Railside Café.

ADJOURN- At 8:14 Council Member Hayner moved to adjourn. Council Member Martin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryJo Smith

Deputy City Clerk