Johnstown Common Council

Business Meeting - Council Chambers, City Hall

Monday, December 7, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The proceedings of this meeting were taped for the benefit of the City Clerk; the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings, therefore the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript.

Due to Covid-19 this meeting was closed to the public but broadcast using Facebook Live. The public was able to view the meeting from the official City of Johnstown Facebook page: City of Johnstown, New York

CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Vernon F. Jackson, Mayor

MOMENT OF SILENCE – Pearl Harbor Day

ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL – Vernon F. Jackson, Mayor

IN ATTENDANCE:

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| [x] Vernon F. Jackson, Mayor | [x] Michael C. Gifford, City Treasurer |
| [x] Craig Talarico, Council Member-at-Large | [ ] Michael J. Poulin, City Attorney  |
| [x] Bradley Hayner, Council Member Ward 1 | [x] Carrie M. Allen, City Clerk |
| [x] Kathi Iannotti, Council Member Ward 2 | [ ] Bruce Heberer, Fire Chief |
| [x] Amy Praught, Council Member Ward 3 | [ ] David F. Gilbo, Chief of Police |
| [x] Max Spritzer, Council Member Ward 4 | [ ] Christopher J. Vose, City Engineer[ ] Diedrie M. Roemer, Director, Senior Citizens Program[ ] Darryl Purinton, Internal Control Officer[x] Vikki Nellis, Deputy City Treasurer |

ABSENT

Michael J. Poulin

Department Heads were excused from attending the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING – 2021 Budget

Opened at 7:08 p.m.

* No comments from the public
* The Council went over several line items in the budget to clarify questions prior to the Council being ready to approve the budget.
* The Council proposed decreases to 6 accounts:
1. Decreases to conferences/travel for Police and Fire. The Council felt travel should be limited for conferences during Covid.
2. Reduction in hourly wage for EMT/Paramedics.
3. Reduction in professional services for Program for Aging. Praught asked if the center isn’t open why are we paying them; the center was closed for several months during the states shutdown and not currently being utilized by the Seniors. Questions for clarification were asked of the salary of the Senior Center Director. Praught didn’t understand the difference in the department request and Mayor’s request. Gifford explained that a partial reason for the difference was due to last year’s numbers being wrong, which makes the percentage increase look off-base. Praught wanted to clarify that ultimately her salary is increased by 2.5% for 2021.
4. Raises for two non-union employees (Clerk & Deputy Treasurer). Spritzer questioned the budget and difference between department request and Mayor’s request. Spritzer felt the pay increases were big. Gifford then asked Spritzer if he was in favor of discrimination Spritzer stated he did not say that. Gifford stated the raises were proposed because there has been deep seated and long term discrimination in the city. Praught asked why the raises haven’t been addressed before now, during a pandemic. Spritzer previously requested employment history from the Treasurer regarding the two positions. Gifford questioned why he only requested history on two specific employees. Spritzer stated they are the ones with a request for a large pay increase. The Mayor had the requested information and read it during the meeting and advised the council that he would provide the council with copies for their further review. Praught felt that the raises should be factored in over time, not all at once. Spritzer mentioned 15% over three years. The Mayor stated that the positions have been underpaid for years and trying to play catch up. Praught felt last year would have been a better time as there was a 0% tax increase. Praught also suggested that the Clerk be paid a stipend out of the Attorney’s Professional Services line to do his work.
* Discussion was briefly had regarding a time keeping system for the city, due to a high risk alert provided by the Internal Control Officer.
* The Mayor stated that the Council has to get any amendments they request be made to the budget to him, in writing, so that he could respond before December 10th. The Council would then have until December 15th to amend the budget further, if necessary.
* Praught asked if she could discuss the Water Board Budget. She questioned the metered monthly item. Went from $1,000 to $21,400. Initially thought to be an expense but it was listed in the revenue portion of the budget. The Mayor stated that would be a question for the Water Board as to what that was for.
* Spritzer asked Gifford to touch base on the sales tax for 2020. Gifford stated that the first 3 quarters were not as bad as he thought they would be. Which leads him to believe that the estimate for next year would probably be the same as this year.
* The Resolution to approve the Budget was tabled.

Closed at 7:08 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS

1. 76, 2020 presented by Council Member Spritzer to advertise for a Public Hearing for Community Development Block Grant for Evolution Recycling.

Seconded – Council Member Praught

Discussion: None

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

DISCUSSION

 Spritzer

* Recognized the Johnstown Restaurant Supply for 70+ years of service.
* Thanked the Fire and Department of Public Works for making the park look so nice.
* Overnight Parking Ban in place.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – N/A

MOTION TO ADJOURN at 7:13 p.m.

Council Member Iannotti

Seconded – Council Member Hayner

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Allen

City Clerk