

# THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

## JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

### SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

September 26, 2022 – 6:00 PM

Cornell Agritech Campus, Jordan Hall  
630 W. North Street  
Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

#### 1. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Gaglianese, Clr. Noone, Clr. Burrall, Clr. Camera, Clr. Brimm, Clr. Regan (via Zoom),  
and Clr. Pealer (left at 7:25pm)

Absent: Clr. Salamendra

#### 2. BUDGET WORK SESSION

City Manager Hendrix thanked council for the questions sent in response to their review of the budget document. She said that she and the comptroller continue to be available to respond to budget related questions and will work with department heads to get council further information.

She said there are many steps in presenting a budget document and sometimes errors may occur as information is translated from various spaces into one document.

She gave council a few corrections which have no budgetary implications:

- Page 41...Cemetary Fees is misspelled...should be cemetery
- FIRE line – A cut and paste error shows information for “City Council/Mayor” department
- Salary schedule update (missing one of the 33 staff members of police department)

The City Manager said that additionally, they have provided the fire reports for the three volunteer fire departments from 2021 for council’s review. Tonight, we will be joined by members from Police, Fire, HR, Finance, and City Management. She said the next budget session will be on October 19<sup>th</sup> and will include additional topic items related to fleet management, public works, recreation, and other areas that may be addressed.

She said she received several questions regarding different departments, and her plan is to ask for the department head to provide council better insights into their department. While the department heads have been meeting regularly with her and the comptroller on budget as well as operations, they are the experts in their programming and services. She noted that each department head meets with the City

Manager every other week for discussions related to departments. Additional meetings are held on a regular basis as needed and we work together as one city team to find solutions.

As noted in the budget book, often departments request additional items that we are not able to achieve while keeping the entire city budget priorities centered. It does not mean that these items are not important it just means that they are not supported in this budget as there may be more work to do, not enough resources, or other ideas to achieve the goals that the resource may provide. She and the comptroller had to make some very difficult decisions to bring the budget together and they are here to provide insights on those decisions.

She said that Chief Passalacqua is here to discuss the questions that council sent in with regard to policing.

## POLICE

1. Bicycle patrol - I love this concept, but have not seen it in years. (Page 49) What is the status of this program?
  - Chief Passalacqua told council that his department has four bicycles, and it comes down to staffing. They have not been able to use the bicycles since they became short staffed as officers need to be in cars to get places quicker.
2. We have long awaited a study on staffing the GPD. Several months ago, Council was advised the GPD had received the results from a staffing study through the Department of Criminal Justice Services. What is the delay on presenting the results? We need these results for budget planning.
  - Chief Passalacqua said that the results have still not been provided to him from the DCJS. He is having continued conversations with the department on the results, but due to short staffing and newer employees, it is taking DCJS longer to get the results.

Clr. Gaglianese said that it is important to say that without the study, the person with the expertise is the police chief and his staff who can give council accurate information. He said he believes the officers are getting burned out and we have no incentives for lateral transfers. He said he feels our priority is to protect and serve and be proactive. City Manager Hendrix told council that the way they built this budget for staffing was that at the end of 2023, there would be 33 police officers or one additional from this year.
3. Other lines in the police budget that would be helpful to explore include the \$9,000 increase in General Maintenance and the \$8,000 jump in Physical Exams.
  - General Maintenance is building maintenance and care. Mold remediation, paint, water remediation, etc. The initial request was \$25,000.
  - Physical exams increase is due to the recruitment of additional officers. Chief Passalacqua said that each new officer needs to have three exams; physical, psychiatric, and polygraph before being hired. He estimated that each new hire will cost \$900 to \$1000 in exams.

4. I would also like to see information on the 2022 actuals on overtime pay. Is the increase of \$50,000 on this budget line necessary, especially if we follow through on reinstating another officer?
- The time it takes to bring onboard additional officers from training to completion is ~12 months. Our overtime costs will likely remain high until the officer has completed training.
  - YTD # on overtime \$220,411 (\$70,000 over budget)

Clr. Regan said that we need to look at staffing closely and how our population compares to other cities. She said she is opposed to addressing extra positions until we receive the analysis, and she is also against increasing overtime.

When Clr. Camera asked about the number of working police officers, Chief Passalacqua stated that there were 23 with 2 starting soon, noting that 2 officers were currently on light duty due to job related injuries. Clr. Camera said that he also feels council needs to see the study results and we need more operational flexibility. He asked if we continue to use overtime, are we wearing our officers out, and questioned if we could put less officers, say four, on a particular shift. Chief Passalacqua said that would be a safety issue as we currently have only three officers per shift, and if they are called to a domestic disturbance, they could be tied up for hours. He said that Ontario County is willing to assist when they can, but they don't have the manpower to assist on a regular basis, noting that we are often called to assist them when they are short staffed. Clr. Camera said he would like to delay hiring until the results of the study are in.

Clr. Burrall asked if there was a group that could assist with lateral transfers to save time with training. Chief Passalacqua said that his department pushes out information about hiring on all types of social media and the website. He said that numerous people have signed off for the city with the number one reason being salary and benefits as the county and Canandaigua are better.

When Clr. Pealer asked how many of the officers were actually active officers, Chief Passalacqua said that there are only 13. Clr. Pealer said he read somewhere that three active-duty officers are needed for every 1000 residents, so that would mean that the City of Geneva needs 32 active-duty officers. Chief Passalacqua said that since he was hired almost 20 years ago, they have gone from 36 officers to 34 in 2020.

Clr. Noone said that he feels the lack of policing is an issue for people who were recently victimized, noting the Pick Quick robbery and some lakefront benches being destroyed. He said he would like to see the city-wide surveillance cameras definitely purchased. City Manager Hendrix told council that they are in the IT budget for a phase in. Chief Passalacqua said the cameras will put us in a better position, but we still need more officers, noting that it would be 12 months before any new hire was able to start working on their own. Clr. Noone said there would be no point in promoting economic development and tax revenues if our city cannot be protected. He said we need to improve staffing for the police department.

Clr. Brimm thanked Chief Passalacqua for the information and said he checked the International City/County Management website, and they recommend 2.5 officers per 1000 residents, and with a college, that number should be higher. Chief Passalacqua said that we have a partnership with the college where they are willing to pay overtime for officers on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, but staff isn't able to cover the shifts.

Mayor Valentino thanked Chief Passalacqua, the Budget Advisory Board, the City Manager and the City Comptroller. He asked about the hiring of a mental health professional, and Chief Passalacqua said that he is a proponent of having someone at their fingertips, and he hopes that next year they will be able to split a position with Canandaigua to help during and after a call. Mayor Valentino asked if there were ways we could be creative with housing incentives or other ideas to attract lateral transfers.

5. I would like to know how the money in the 2023 proposed salary line for GPD was saved. How were you able to save that amount in the salary line?

- Retirements/Benefit changes of new officers
- City Comptroller Newcomb said that salaries are prorated based on start dates to reflect actual cost.

6. How much savings do we have in the GPD current year salary line due to unfilled/vacated/retirements/death?

- Exceeded overtime costs of \$70,000
- Projected salary savings for current year is ~\$200,000
- This does not take into account hiring any officers in current year

Clr. Noone asked the comptroller how the budget would be affected if one more police officer was added, and she said the tax rate would go up to \$17.25, and if two positions were added, it would go up to \$17.33.

**ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Noone; seconded by Clr. Gaglianese**

**MOVED THAT one unfunded police officer position be added to the 2023 budget**

Clr. Burrall said that it is incredibly optimistic to think we can fill nine vacancies within 14 months, and said he would rather amend the budget later to add a position after we have filled the other vacancies.

**ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Camera; seconded by Clr. Regan**

**MOVED THAT this motion be TABLED to allow council to consider all options**

**ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye – Clr. Burrall, Clr. Camera, and Clr. Regan**

**Nay – Clr. Pealer, Clr. Gaglianese, Clr. Noone, Clr. Brimm  
and Mayor Valentino**

**Absent - Clr. Salamendra**

**MOTION DEFEATED**

**{Roll call on the original motion}**

**ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye – Mayor Valentino, Clr. Gaglianese, Clr. Brimm, Clr. Pealer,  
and Clr. Noone**

**Nay – Clr. Regan, Clr. Burrall, and Clr. Camera**

**Absent - Clr. Salamendra**

**MOTION CARRIED**

7. What is the annual cost for insurance as related to GPD?

- Working our broker to pull this number for the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting

8. In our website, we have a lot of documents and references to Police Reform and Reinvention Collective but there has not been much movement in this area for almost a year. What is the plan on this going forward?

- Chief Passalacqua said that we submitted our plan on time, and it has been put into place.

Clr. Gaglianese asked about the police department not getting two new vehicles, and Chief Passalacqua said that their plan is to rotate out two each year to avoid costly maintenance charges, but we are behind our schedule. He noted that their vehicle maintenance budget was gone in June. When Clr. Brimm asked, Chief Passalacqua said that warranty work or extensive repairs go to the dealership, but 75% of maintenance is done in house.

## FIRE

1. Can we get details on the Fire Fighters Agreement line? How are these funds being spent in 2022?

- Per the contract, we do not receive use of funds until following year. We will receive 2022 report in March of 2023.
- 2021 reports have been provided to council.

2. Why are we adding Fire Investigations budget line after so many years without this?

- Chief Parrotta said that with the retirement of Chief Combs, this is no longer done in house. He is working to obtain necessary training and certifications. The initial request was \$10,000

3. Physical exams up to \$17,000 from nothing past few years?

- Previously exams were included in miscellaneous at \$10,000 the additional \$7,000 is for cancer screenings.

4. Computer costs up \$25,000 after nothing past few years?
  - This was also included in miscellaneous and did increase this year due to the lifespan of software and necessary additional software.
5. Why is there such a huge increase in Personal Protective gear?
  - Chief Parrotta said that initial gear was all purchased at one-time via a grant source that is no longer available. This gear needs to be regularly updated and this is the start of an equipment purchase plan to replace all of the gear that is outdated. He noted that in the past 10 years, they have only replaced 11 sets of gear while the replacement plan is 5 sets every year
6. Does the fire dept have any plans to fund raise to replace protective gear? If so, what is the plan?
  - Chief Parrotta told council that the volunteer departments are different than the career staff, and the volunteers and Firematics do fundraising to fund a variety of items they need. In the past, they have also contributed to the purchase of new firetrucks and gear for the departments. Chief Parrotta noted that in the past 10 years, the city replaced 11 sets of gear while the volunteer departments replaced 32.

Clr. Gaglianese asked about a vehicle for the deputy chief, and Chief Parrotta said that he would like two command vehicles and one utility vehicle. Clr. Gaglianese said we have the best fire department in the state, and feels we should have the best equipment for them. When Clr. Noone asked about the replacement program, Comptroller Newcomb said that the 2024 plan is to replace the remaining 25-30 sets of the initial 50 sets requested that need to be replaced and then a replacement plan of 5 every year will be started. Chief Parrotta said it comes down to what is important, and when a needs assessment was done, gear and vehicles were top. He added that things needed but not today would be active shooter training and imaging cameras. He said that we can always use more, better equipment.

Mayor Valentino thanked Chief Parrotta for the information and questioned the water rescue apparatus proposed by his office. Chief Parrotta said that the marina developer told him that a marina should have a rescue boat. Chief said that it is our responsibility to have the equipment and training when we are called to a water rescue.

Clr. Regan said she appreciates the flexibility of the fire department as we are a high taxed, small community. She encouraged council to not add more items to the budget at this point.

## PAYROLL

- A couple of years ago, a local payroll service presented an option to the city. Does the city still have this plan?
  - The payroll line mentioned in the Comptroller's Budget is for finance software (\$22,000) and ongoing maintenance of an add-on payroll system through our current vendor.

- A local payroll service charges per change on the account with multiple contracts, 24/7 operations, and various additional items such as stipends, education incentives, buyouts, etc. the costs of an outsourced service were greater than an internal solution. The city team at the time reviewed this concept and found that the costs outweighed the benefits so going through an add on to our current software is a more reasonable expense.

## COMPENSATION

- I see several management staff requested increases in salary, what is the justification for not providing this? How are salary increases achieved for managers?
  - 2% increase for all managers was provided as part of the base salary schedule. The Clerk, City Manager, and Attorney are all council employees which council can decide on increases as related to their contracts and/or performance evaluations. The remaining management employees currently follow an agreement achieved in 1999 with a 2% annual increase, but she has not found this to be a consistent approach in the past. This is an area that should be further reviewed in 2023 as we look at recruiting and retaining talent at all levels of our organization. She noted that there has not been a consistent approach to practices in the past.

Mayor Valentino said that he would like to see the city clerk under council on the organizational chart, and he would like to offer the city clerk a well-deserved additional 2% increase in 2023. Clr. Burrall asked why the city clerk was being singled out and not the rest of the managers, and the mayor explained that the city clerk, city manager and city attorney are considered council's employees, and he would like to see a performance evaluation process developed for future compensation proposals.

**ACTION TAKEN by Mayor Valentino; seconded by Clr. Gaglianese**

**MOVED THAT the City Clerk position include an additional 2% increase in the 2023 budget**

**MOTION CARRIED (7-2absent)**

## RECRUITMENT

- Noted in presentation that there are several vacancies we are having challenges recruiting, what is the strategy that will be employed to recruit?
  - Addition of "stay stipends", working with candidates on earned years of service, review of upcoming contracts, reviewing regional hiring trends and difficulties, there is a national challenge with labor recruitment and retention
  - We have high cost of healthcare burden for our employees and wages that were once competitive are not as competitive, compound that with the changes to the retirement system for Tier 6 employees and the recruitment for government jobs is increasingly difficult
  - Deputy Director would help with recruitment and Jennifer Slywka currently works with potential new hires to come up with solutions

City Manager Hendrix said that the next budget meeting will be October 19<sup>th</sup>, and she asked council to send any new questions to her office before then. Mayor Valentino asked about the newspaper's report that the budget is being increased by 6%, and City Comptroller Newcomb said that is on the tax levy itself. She said that 4% is a spending increase for the total budget, and 2.28% takes into consideration the increases in 2022.

When Clr. Camera asked what the budget would need to be at in order to not need to override the tax cap. City Comptroller Newcomb said that this information is on page 86 in the budget document.

9. ADJOURNMENT

**ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Noone; seconded by Clr. Gaglianese  
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:36pm  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Lori Guinan*

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City Clerk