

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL
JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR COUNCIL WORK SESSION

October 19, 2021 – 6:00 PM

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

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Regan (attended via Zoom), Clr. Camera (left the meeting at 7:13pm), Clr. Gaglianese, Clr. Noone, Clr Pruet, Clr. Burrall, Clr. Pealer, and Clr. Salamendra (left the meeting at 7:13pm)

2. 2022 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mayor Valentino said that council is returning tonight after asking staff to focus on a zero percent increase, and they have provided a document with the information they came up with.

City Manager Gerling explained that much of the proposal is the delay of hiring new positions along with some economic development related items and reducing neighborhood revitalization or programming. She said that staff made an effort to delay equipment purchases and maintenance of McDonough Park, and they added Clr. Pruet's items; funding for the Heritage Trail and tree removal. Mrs. Gerling said that she will have the fire company agreements tomorrow night, noting that those agreements are what allow us to use our volunteer services for firefighting. She said they are about \$1000 over a neutral budget not including the additions presented.

Clr. Gaglianese said he would like to add three items to the budget; \$22,500 each for the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Recreation Department. He said that this money would provide programming and healthy things to do for our youths, families and seniors. He said he is also against holding off on positions noting that it has been hard to get people to fill positions up until now.

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

MOVED THAT three items be added to the budget; \$22,500 each for the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Recreation Department

Deletions/Additions

Potential Deletion	Savings		Potential Addition	Added Cost
<i>ONI - Neighborhood Revitalization</i>	\$ 3,000		<i>Heritage Trail</i>	\$ 8,000
<i>Personnel - Electronic Payroll</i>	\$ 35,000		<i>Trees</i>	\$ 20,000
<i>Cornell Ag & Food Tech Farm Park</i>	\$ 5,000		TOTAL	\$ 28,000
<i>BID - Economic Development</i>	\$ 5,000			
<i>Deputy Fire Chief - Start in April</i>	\$ 33,179			
<i>Police Admin - Start in June</i>	\$ 26,248			
<i>One Code Officer - Start in July</i>	\$ 33,989			
<i>Rec Supervisor - Start in March</i>	\$ 9,301			
<i>One MEO - Start in March</i>	\$ 11,636			
<i>One MEO - Start in May</i>	\$ 22,663			
<i>B&G Equipment - Loader</i>	\$ 30,000			
<i>B&G Equipment - Weed Steamer</i>	\$ 25,000			
<i>B&G - McDonough Park</i>	\$ 10,000			
<i>Highway Equipment - 3/4 Ton Pickup</i>	\$ 40,000			
TOTAL	\$290,016			

Other Economic Assistance – Contracted Services breakdown listed on page 26

\$30,000 Innovation Kitchen – 6326.4075 – City Manager

\$15,000 Cornell Ag & Food Tech Farm Park – 6326.4062 – City Manager

\$5,000 Collateral Development – 6326.4066 – ONI

\$30,000 Marketing/Communications – 6326.4061 – City Manager

\$30,000 Economic Development Support – 6326.4104 – City Manager

\$75,000 Business Improvement District – 6326.4064 – Highway

Parking Enforcement Position

2020 Pay - \$16,635.80

2020 Ticket Revenue - \$14,000.00

2021 Pay - \$14,170.60

2021 Ticket Revenue - \$15,376.50

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF/FIRE MARSHAL OVERVIEW

CODE ENFORCEMENT	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Supervisor Duties</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee Fire Dept. code enforcement personnel regarding inspections and unresolved fire code issues and complaints. • Reviews code inspections conducted by team, advises team and trouble shoots issues • Handles courts cases/paperwork and completes court paperwork • Answer complaints/public questions regarding code 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Operational/Administrative Duties</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews new fire alarm and sprinkler systems plans and tests installed systems • Performs code inspections • Code admin work related to code complaint fire inspections

FIRE SAFETY, PREVENTION & FIGHTING	
<p style="text-align: center;">Supervisor Duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts for and in place of Fire Chief as assigned • Assists in dept. budget and makes equipment purchase recommendations • Assists in planning and directing training activities for Career Firefighters • Assists in planning and direction fire prevention activities (inspections, industrial processes, public education) • Assumes command at fires and emergency incidents in absence or direction of Chief. • Assists in discipline of subordinate staff • Other assigned supervisory duties 	<p style="text-align: center;">Operational/Administrative Duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists, develops and implements operational policies, procedures, standards and goals • Conducts investigation and determination of fire causes. • Approve fireworks/bonfire permits • Covers limited apparatus as needed. • Manages other assigned operational/admin duties

Clr. Pruettt said he will match the Heritage Trail funds in order to make Geneva a destination and as a benefit to our residents. He said that eventually the city will be covered with heritage trails. When Clr. Pruettt asked Clr. Gaglianese how he came up with the \$22,500 for each organization, he said that he believes in 2019 the YMCA asked for \$22,500, then the city reduced it to \$18,000 in 2020, and eliminated their funding in 2021. He said he feels it is fair to give the same amount to each group for our youth.

Clr. Salamendra said she supports these institutions, but can't give funding to recreation department and also outside contractors. She said that she is all for contracting out, noting that the Boys and Girls Clubs just had a successful campaign, and she would like to hear from each of these organizations what their needs are including Epic Zone.

Clr. Camera said he agrees with adding money for the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCA, but maintaining ONI and the Recreation Department can be done together. He said that he is not sure money will help the recreation department because he feels they have not performed.

Clr. Pealer said that it is inappropriate to assess the recreation department based on the past two years. He said they have been underfunded in programming and playgrounds maintenance for the past three years. He said he would like to see \$10,250 of that money go to playground and maintenance revitalization noting that many of ONI's activities, besides the Farmer's Market, this year were cancelled such as the Pumpkin Roll and Musical Porches. He said that the recreation department has been performing with a stripped-down budget.

When the city manager was asked about requests for funding from outside agencies, Mrs. Gerling said that staff did not put out requests for proposals, noting that if they had, there would have been many requests. Mayor Valentino said he would be in favor of tabling this motion in order to find out what services these organizations would be able to provide for that much money.

Clr. Regan said that you can't not be in favor of these initiatives, but the problem is that council is trying to reduce the budget tonight, and if we wanted to fund these organizations, we should open it up to other organizations. She said that the city is not in a position to afford these programs. She said they deserve to ask, but she is not in favor at this time. Clr. Salamendra said that because the city did not take requests, it would not be fair, and she would rather see money go to direct programming and not overhead.

Clr. Pruettt said it is difficult without more specificity. He recommended a subcommittee be formed for recreation to see what types of programming should be in there, and council should table this motion.

Clr. Gaglianese said that this money could bring back programs that have been removed, and council needs to listen to the experts. Clr. Pealer said that the regular topic at the recreation meetings is no funding. He said he would like to see input from the three organizations before voting to approve this request. Clr. Salamendra questioned what recreational programming the city provides to residents.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Noone; seconded by Clr. Gaglianese
MOVED THAT this request be tabled
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (9)

Clr. Noone said he is concerned what the impact will be of holding off on hiring the Deputy Fire Marshall and the other new hires and buildings and grounds equipment. He said he is still in favor of the original budget as it builds on positive things in the city. City Manager Gerling said that the Deputy Fire Chief is a new position and there will be less time for training that position, and the police admin position has been vacant for several months, but with vacations coming up, it makes it difficult with only one person in the office to get FOIL requests done and to take vacations. Delaying equipment purchases may require more maintenance.

Clr. Burrall said that he is still on the fence with adding the Deputy Fire Chief position noting that in the long run, we would be saddling the tax payers. When he asked about the \$10,000 delay for buildings and grounds for McDonough Park, Mrs. Gerling explained that it is for maintenance and upkeep of the facility. Clr. Burrall questioned whether this park feeds into recreation and investment in a revenue generator in our community. City Manager Gerling said that this could be a retreat conversation for council.

Clr. Regan questioned the parking enforcement position noting that the city is losing money with it. She questioned if the police could handle that task. She also questioned the line item of Other Economic Assistance of \$100,000. Asst. City Manager Blowers explained that all of the items related to economic assistance are listed in two sections; first in the state version, and then in the localized budget. He said that they are all the same, but the local version separates them out. He said that the parking enforcement for downtown is not designed for revenue generation, but rather to deter behavior for parking regulations and not having vehicles parked in places they are not supposed to park. He said that the goal is to break even, noting that parking enforcement is not a top priority for our police officers with their current staffing level.

Clr. Camera said he does not support the new Deputy Fire Chief position as the items in the list given to council by the fire chief are already being done. He said he feels there are 18 firefighters who know the job well enough to step in to cover. He said that a code enforcement officer would be a better use of the funding.

Police Chief Passalacqua asked to elaborate on the parking enforcement position. He explained that his office receives frequent requests from businesses about long term parking in front of businesses. He said that his officers cannot adequately monitor parking since they would need to come back in a certain amount of time to verify the vehicle is parked over the limit. He said that if parking is not enforced, it would be a free for all, and businesses will suffer. He said that he feels that position needs to stay. Clr. Camera said he agrees with the chief about keeping this position.

Clr. Pealer said he supports the presented budget because it is under-funded compared to the rate of inflation. He said he is all for lowering taxes, but does not feel this is the way to do it, noting that our property

values are lowest in the region. He said that the things that are cut from the budget this year will only be more expensive next year. When he asked the Director of Public Works about the green space for downtown, Mr. Venuti said that there are expected to be roughly 9,200 trees, plants and shrubs in addition to the green space in the downtown plan. He said that his office requested extra help for maintenance. Clr. Pealer said that if the maintenance of this additional greenery is not funded, then council needs to lower their expectation of maintenance.

When Clr. Pruettt asked Mr. Venuti about the Shadetree Committee's inventory of trees needing removal, Mr. Venuti said that the inventory done in 2015 of 250 trees are still standing, and six years later, there are now hundreds more trees that need to be cut down. He noted that they have not planted any trees in the past three years either, which is something they like to do when taking a tree down.

Clr. Salamendra said she supports the new DPW positions, but not the Deputy Fire Chief position or the admin position at the police department. She said that emphasis needs to be put on code enforcement and the police and fire departments do not need more staff.

Clr. Pruettt said he feels the fire department inspectors look at more issues than the code inspectors. He also mentioned that the fire chief is the only department head who does not have a deputy, and he is reluctant to cut that position when inspections are not being taken care of. He said that the salary is not much higher than other positions with the city noting that the training this position would provide is needed for volunteers. Fire Chief Combs told council that there are constant updates and continuous training that has to be done every year, and even the trainers have yearly, mandatory training to do.

Clr. Camera said that the DPW is a safety department as well that keeps our city running and streets open, and we need to put money toward DPW and hire outside contractors to supplement the workload and to respond to emergencies.

Mayor Valentino thanked staff noting that they did what council asked by being fiscally responsible, and it is important that council understands what the cuts are and how they will impact us in the future. He asked the city manager that as council talks about the deletions presented tonight, what are we looking at for next year's budget. Mrs. Gerling said that it will be even harder next year unless we are able to generate revenue. Asst. City Manager Blowers told council that the originally presented budget is an aggressive budget from a staffing point in part since last year's was so conservative, but he noted that the rate of inflation never stops. He said that staff heard council's request for beautification, code enforcement and DPW. He said that many factors will affect next year's budget as we have new ideas coming in for revenue growth. He said that they felt strongly about the presented budget based on the goals of council. Mrs. Gerling added that it is a desire to be able to serve our residents better, but our frustration as a team is that we are overloaded, and we are okay with that, except we do not get to be as proactive as we would like to be when we keep skimping.

Clr. Noone referred to Clr. Pruetts statement that council needs to set goals and asked what council is going to do with this information. He said it would be nice to have a goal at each session. Mayor Valentino said that the goal set at the last session was a 0% increase based on the majority of council. He said that moving forward, council has the opportunity to make changes with a goal of passing the budget.

Clr. Pruetts made a motion to approve the add-ons presented by the city manager including \$8,000 for the Heritage Trail and \$20,000 for tree removal. Clr. Pealer asked to make them two separate items, and Clr. Pruetts agreed to that. Clr. Pruetts said that the amount requested was \$10,000 which is twice the amount that has already been invested. He said they put 7 stations together with artwork, and they are looking to put more panels up along with 2 kiosks and a mounting post. He said that matching funds would give them \$20,000 for this year to expand the program significantly.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pruetts; seconded by Clr. Noone

MOVED THAT \$8,000 be added to the budget as funding for the Heritage Trail

ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye – Clr. Pruetts, Mayor Valentino, Clr. Gaglianese, Clr. Noone, Clr. Burrall, and Clr. Regan

Nay – Clr. Pealer

Absent - Clr. Salamendra and Clr. Camera

MOTION CARRIED

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pruetts; seconded by Clr. Noone

MOVED THAT \$20,000 be added to the budget as funding for tree removal

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (7-2 absent)

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Noone; seconded by Clr. Pealer

MOVED THAT the Deputy Fire Chief position be filled in January 2022

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

Nay – Clr. Pruetts and Clr. Regan

Absent - Clr. Salamendra and Clr. Camera

MOTION CARRIED

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

MOVED THAT the police admin position be filled in January 2022

When asked about the vacant position, Police Chief Passalacqua said that the last two chiefs had the luxury of long tenured staff, and he lost both administrative aids recently due to retirement. He currently

has one full time administrative aid working two desks, and she is extremely behind. He said he has trouble listening to council member(s) wanting to cut positions when they don't know what staff's duties are. He said leaving this position vacant was supposed to be a team approach, but it is hurting his department with different issues.

Clr. Regan reminded everyone that the majority of council wanted to see this budget held at neutral. They asked the city manager to provide some methods to get there, and this is how this list came up. She said that so far, all council has done is add when that was not the direction of council. She said she would like to hold at a minimum what was recommended by staff tonight. Clr. Gaglianese thanked the two chiefs and director of public works for giving detailed answers to council's questions. He said that having a flat rate this year will hurt us later, noting that next year will see large increases. Clr. Pruett said it would be nice to afford a lot of stuff, but our tax rate is too high.

{vote on the above motion}

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

Nay – Clr. Pruett and Clr. Regan

Absent - Clr. Salamendra and Clr. Camera

MOTION CARRIED

Clr. Pruett said he would like to take off the additions voted on tonight and maintain the \$16.17 tax rate. Clr. Pealer said he does not support the funding for the Heritage Trail at this time. Mayor Valentino explained that this cannot be done as one vote from Clr. Pruett's motion. Clr. Regan asked if council could look at other items such as delaying the purchase of the fire truck.

Mayor Valentino said that a majority of council needs to give direction to staff for tomorrow night's meeting. Clr. Gaglianese suggested compromising with a 2% increase. Clr. Burrall, Clr. Regan, Clr. Pruett and Mayor Valentino said they would like to see staff try to get to zero again.

3. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Gaglianese; seconded by Clr. Pruett

MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:01pm

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Lori Guinan

City Clerk