

## SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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***NOTE: Due to public health and safety concerns related to COVID-19, this City Council Meeting was not an in-person meeting for the public. In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 202.1, this meeting was held via videoconferencing using GoToWebinar.com. The public was notified in advance and provided appropriate information for attending.***

Mayor Skelly called the meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll:

PRESENT: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher, Kennedy, Powers, Rische and Skamperle

ABSENT: None

### PUBLIC HEARING

1. A public hearing regarding a Local Law to amend the City Charter in regard to a residency requirement for the position of Chief of Police was held.

The following people spoke:

- a) An individual who chose not to identify himself said he opposes the idea. This individual said as a taxpayer he was more concerned about having a good Chief of Police than residency.
- b) Doug Loffler asked if the Local Law is passed and a Chief of Police has a summer camp or hunting camp outside of the City limits if Council planned to impose a perimeter for the residency requirement.
- c) Rick Polniak said he retired as Ogdensburg Police Chief after thirty six years of service. Mr. Polniak said if dedication was Council's reasoning for making the change that issue holds no water at all. Mr. Polniak said Andrew Kennedy lived outside the City limits and often responded to a scene before members of the Police department who reside in the City. Mr. Polniak said there was no problem at all with response time, and he opposed the idea.

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2. A public hearing regarding an ordinance to provide for the sale of City-owned property at public auction (Paper Curtis Street) was held.

The following people spoke:

- a) Jeff Swanson said Councillor Rishe visited the property, and he appreciated the other party involved verbally agreeing to give him a right-of-way. Mr. Swanson asked Council to consider only selling 40' and leaving 10' of the paper street.
- b) Joe Bresett said he spoke with Mr. Swanson. Mr. Bresett said Mr. Swanson could still have access through his back yard or could clear the other side to gain access.

3. A public hearing regarding a Local Law to amend the City Charter in regard to the powers and duties of the City Manager was held.

The following people spoke:

- a) Scott McRoberts asked if the members of Council remember how the previous Council members tried to do the same thing. Mr. McRoberts said the proposal is only an amendment to the Charter and asked if Council members review other sections of the Charter also. Mr. McRoberts said if Charter Sections C(9)b and C(9)c are not also amended and Council acts on the proposed change if passed, those members of Council can be removed. Mr. McRoberts also questioned if a referendum is possible if the proposed change passes.
- b) Doug Loffler said the last Charter Review Commission considered the entire Charter very well. Mr. Loffler said Mr. McRoberts was a member of the last Charter Review Commission. Mr. Loffler explained the Commission reviewed the Charter for 6 to 8 months, gave all sections great consideration and made recommendations to Council. Mr. Loffler said all members of the Commission were volunteers. Mr. Loffler said the proposed change is not in the best interest of the City and added it is dangerous.

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Mr. Loffler said the City Manager does not need the Mayor and Council members to micromanage. Mr. Loffler said the current form of government has been in place since the seventies. Mr. Loffler said the proposal is a power grab and an ego boost. Mr. Loffler said Council appointed the City Manager and questioned if they did not trust him to do his job, how did they trust him and appoint him. Mr. Loffler recommended letting the City Manager do his job. Mr. Loffler said approval of the proposed change would set the City back fifty years. Mr. Loffler challenged all members of Council to prove they can do the job as City Councillors, that the job can be done right away and that the job can be done with class and respect.

- c) Mike Tooley suggested alternate action than what was being proposed. Mr. Tooley recommended the Charter Review Commission be reconvened to review the proposal. Mr. Tooley said the scope of activity bears consideration of the Charter Review Commission. Mr. Tooley described the manner in which the School Board approves the recommendations and asked Council to consider his recommendations.
- d) Ned Hackett said he remembers when the City was under a Mayor and Council form of government and then changed to a City Manager form of government. Mr. Hackett said Council members are chasing a money carrot and cautioned there is also a quality carrot that Council members should consider. Mr. Hackett said switching to a volunteer fire department to chase a money carrot will result in no quality. Mr. Hackett said the Mayor only got involved in City government because he was upset with his assessment. Mr. Hackett said many properties across this City have not be reassessed in years and recommended the entire City be reassessed. Mr. Hackett said if you want fair taxes, you need to fix what needs to be fixed.
- e) Rick Polniak said the proposed change will set the City back 130 years. Mr. Polniak said the City Manager form of government was implemented to stop political appointments of department heads. Mr. Polniak said it is wrong to make the change, and Council should have no say whatsoever.

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- f) Scott McRoberts read Charter Section C(9)b and explained the proposed change would be a violation of this section of the Charter. Councillor Rishe said the City Attorney already reviewed the proposed change. Councillor Skamperle agreed with Mr. McRoberts.
- g) Brian Mitchell said Interim City Manager Stephen Jellie is doing the job working 2 to 3 days per week and asked if a full time City Manager will be in place in January. Mr. Mitchell said the proposed change would take away a major responsibility of the City Manager position and noted the City Manager can do the job now in 2 to 3 days per week. Mr. Mitchell questioned if a hand-picked person will be brought in for the Chief of Police.
- h) James McCarthy said Civil Service was created to take the politics and nepotism out of the picture when hiring and firing individuals. Mr. McCarthy said our Civil Service is now with the County.
- i) Julie Cliff said although she no longer lives in the City she was a long time citizen and taxpayer. Ms. Cliff explained the form of government changed for many reasons and cautioned the proposed change is a mistake. Ms. Cliff said these are challenging times and asked Council to vote with a conscience.

### PERSONAL APPEARANCE

1. Myriam Benjamin addressed Council regarding the dissolution and sale of a portion of Paper Hayward Street. Dr. Benjamin explained she has applied for a subdivision of her property. Dr. Benjamin said she was advised the City usually dissolves all of a paper street or none of the paper street. Dr. Benjamin said she was advised if more than 50% of the paper street is requested, it is not dissolvable. Dr. Benjamin asked for an example in the past of when this type of dissolution was completed. Dr. Benjamin said even dissolving 60' x 110' will still leave an encroachment on her property and questioned why it would not be 60' x 100' which is where the other party's property line ends.

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2. Cyndi Layng addressed Council on various subjects and read a prepared statement. (A copy of her statement follows these minutes.)

3. Doug Loffler said he just read the copy of the sales tax negotiations today and said an agreement could benefit the community. Mr. Loffler recommended City officials sit down with the County and discuss the issue. Mr. Loffler said everyone knows the community is divided and noted staff morale is at an all-time low. Mr. Loffler said he was going down Ford Street today and one patrolman was making an arrest alone with four other individuals standing behind the person being arrested. Mr. Loffler said he drove around the block to make sure the officer was alright in case he needed to call for help. Mr. Loffler said the City has been without a Police Chief for five months, and there is a temporary Fire Chief. Mr. Loffler said our Recreation Department was the envy of every community in the North Country. Mr. Loffler said he would like to be part of the solution, but it needs to start with leadership from the Mayor. Mr. Loffler said all members of Council need to be able to take constructive criticism and put politics aside. Mr. Loffler said the City employees and residents deserve respect and sincerity. Mr. Loffler recommended members of Council swallow their pride and make sure people know they are sincere. Mr. Loffler said there is nothing wrong with admitting you are wrong and apologizing. Mr. Loffler explained that maybe if all members had discussed the proposed cuts in advance, maybe there would have been discussion and it may have worked out differently. Mr. Loffler said tough times never last but positive, professional people do.

### ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Mayor Skelly moved to take an ordinance to amend the Official City Map to dissolve a portion of Paper Hayward Street measuring approximately 60' x 212' off of Hayward Street, just west of John Street off the table, and Councillor Skamperle seconded to wit:

ORDINANCE #9 of 2020  
ORDINANCE AMENDING THE OFFICIAL MAP  
OF THE CITY OF OGDENSBURG

BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Ogdensburg, New York, as follows:

ITEM ONE: Amendment of Official City Map.

The Official City Map of Ogdensburg is hereby amended by deleting a portion of Paper Hayward Street being described as follows:

BEGINNING at an iron pipe found at the northeasterly corner of Block No. 442 at the intersection of the westerly boundary of John Street with the southerly boundary of Hayward Street, said point also being the northeasterly corner of lands now or formerly of William C. & Katherine E. Vielhauer (Inst: 2018-3999) and running;

Thence South 71 degrees 45 minutes 48 seconds West along the northerly boundary of Block No. 442 a distance of 211.90 feet to an iron rod set;

Thence North 19 degrees 08 minutes 17 seconds West through the aforesaid Hayward Street right of way a distance of 60.00 feet to an iron rod set at the southwesterly corner of Block No. 441;

Thence North 71 degrees 45 minutes 48 seconds East along the southerly boundary of the aforesaid Block No. 441 a distance of 212.73 feet to an iron pipe found at the intersection of the westerly boundary of John Street with the northerly boundary of Hayward Street;

Thence South 18 degrees 20 minutes 32 seconds East along the westerly boundary of John Street a distance of 60.00 feet to the Point of Beginning.

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Containing 0.29 acres or 12,739.0 square feet of land more or less as surveyed by Richard D. Jacobs II L.S. 050588 during the month of July, 2020. All bearings as referenced herein are referenced to Magnetic North as determined by Compass Needle on the date of the aforementioned survey.

Being and intending to describe an undeveloped portion of Hayward Street lying between Blocks 441 and 442 of the City of Ogdensburg.

ITEM TWO: This ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after publication of a notice which shall give the title and describe same in summary form.

Director of Planning and Development Andrea Smith described the subdivision and explained the proposed amendment. Councillor Rishe questioned why everyone's concerns were not taken into consideration before a recommendation was made by staff. Councillor Rishe said a better approach may be to recognize that 60' is not recommended for lots. Councillor Skamperle asked if the proposed amendment does just that. Myriam Benjamin said that information is not accurate. Councillor Rishe said the dissolution impacts two property owners and questioned why a 75' right-of-way or easement couldn't be granted. Councillor Powers said the property owners had previously disclosed that they had reached an agreement. Mayor Skelly said there was still access from the other end of the lot. Councillor Rishe said once the paper street is dissolved there is no access. Ms. Smith said Council received a memorandum and a colored map and explained the City can lawfully dissolve 110' x 60', also maintain the required 75' frontage and also be in compliance with the current Code. Mayor Skelly asked if staff recommended the proposed change. Ms. Smith said staff and the Planning Board both recommend the proposed change. Councillor Rishe said the proposal is to dissolve 110' facing John Street and asked if there will still be a paper street. Ms. Smith said a portion of the paper Street would still exist. Ty Smith said he said if only 60' x 110' will be dissolved he will have less property, and he thought he had reached an agreement with Dr. Benjamin. Mr. Smith said Dr. Benjamin is talking about building a house in her back yard, but it is swamp back there. Councillor Skamperle asked if Mr. Smith was agreeable with the proposed change, and Mr. Smith said yes.

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Dr. Benjamin said she will not have 75' frontage with the proposed change and showed a map to the members of Council. Dr. Benjamin said Mr. Smith's property line finishes at 100' and questioned why it would be extended beyond that. Interim City Manager Stephen Jellie said an auction will be held, and there is no guarantee on who will obtain the parcel. Mr. Jellie said he believes the proposed change is the best solution for Dr. Benjamin.

Mayor Skelly made a motion to amend the ordinance to dissolve a portion of Paper Hayward Street measuring approximately 60' x 110' off of Hayward Street, just west of John Street, and Councillor Skamperle seconded the motion.

The vote to amend the ordinance was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

The amended ordinance now reads:

ORDINANCE # 9 of 2020  
ORDINANCE AMENDING THE OFFICIAL MAP  
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ITEM ONE: Amendment of Official City Map.

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Thence South 71 degrees 45 minutes 48 seconds West along the northerly boundary of Block No. 442 a distance of 110 feet to an iron rod set;

Thence North 19 degrees 08 minutes 17 seconds West through the aforesaid Hayward Street right of way a distance of 60.00 feet to an iron rod set at the southwesterly corner of Block No. 441;

Thence North 71 degrees 45 minutes 48 seconds East along the southerly boundary of the aforesaid Block No. 441 a distance of 110 feet to an iron pipe found at the intersection of the westerly boundary of John Street with the northerly boundary of Hayward Street;

Thence South 18 degrees 20 minutes 32 seconds East along the westerly boundary of John Street a distance of 60.00 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Containing 0.15 acres or 6,600 square feet of land more or less as surveyed by Richard D. Jacobs II L.S. 050588 during the month of July, 2020. All bearings as referenced herein are referenced to Magnetic North as determined by Compass Needle on the date of the aforementioned survey.

Being and intending to describe an undeveloped portion of Hayward Street lying between Blocks 441 and 442 of the City of Ogdensburg.

ITEM TWO: This ordinance shall take effect ten (10) days after publication of a notice which shall give the title and describe same in summary form.

The vote on the amended ordinance was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

2. Councillor Rishe moved a Local Law to amend the City Charter in regard to a residency requirement for the position of Chief of Police, and Mayor Skelly seconded to wit:

LOCAL LAW #1 OF 2020

A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND THE OGDENSBURG CITY CHARTER  
IN REGARD TO A RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE POSITION OF CHIEF OF POLICE

Be it enacted by the City Council of the City of Ogdensburg as follows:

Section 1. Article XI of the City Charter is amended as follows:

§ C-38 Department established; head.

A. There shall be a Department of Police, the head of which shall be the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police need not be a resident of the City or State at the time of the appointment but must reside within the City while serving in this position.

Section 2. Effective Date. This local law shall take effect 20 days after the date of filing with the New York State Secretary of State.

Councillor Rishe said the proposed language is the same as the City Manager residency requirement in the Charter. Councillor Powers said the current City Manager does not live in the City. Councillor Powers explained other agencies and employees live outside of the City and said this has never been an issue. Councillor Powers questioned why this is an issue now especially with the current temperature towards certain individuals in law enforcement. Councillor Powers said he will not support the proposal. Councillor Kennedy said she does not feel it is necessary. Councillor Kennedy explained the individual will be spending tax dollars in the City even though he or she may not pay property taxes. Councillor Kennedy said she does not agree with uprooting an entire family of someone already making a sacrifice, and she will not support the proposal. Councillor Skamperle said he has thought a lot about the proposal, and former Police Chief Richard Polniak made some good points. Councillor Skamperle said there is no reason for it, and he will not support the proposal.

The vote was:

AYES: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher and Rishe

NAYS: Councillors Kennedy, Powers and Skamperle

CARRIED, 4 TO 3

3. Councillor Powers moved an ordinance to provide for the sale of City-owned property at public auction, and Councillor Kennedy seconded to wit:

ORDINANCE #10 OF 2020  
AN ORDINANCE TO OFFER CITY-OWNED PROPERTY FOR SALE AT  
PUBLIC AUCTION

BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Ogdensburg, New York, as follows:

SECTION ONE:

The following property shall be offered for sale at public auction by the City of Ogdensburg:

TAX MAP #	LOCATION	MINIMUM PURCHASE PRICE	RESTRICTIONS
TBD	Former paper Curtis Street	\$1,500.00 (includes Attorney fee, survey fee and filing fees)	Nonconforming parcel, Single-Family Residential zoning district

SECTION TWO: The City does not guarantee clear property title in the transfer of property by auction and conveyance will be made by Quit Claim Deed. The City Council reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to withdraw any parcel from sale.

SECTION THREE: This ordinance shall become effective ten days after publication.

Councillor Rishe said he does not think it is a good procedure and process for the City regarding the dissolution and sale of paper streets and thinks it could be done better. Councillor Rishe said there should have been a right-of-way. Joseph Bresett said the trees can be cut to provide access from the other side. Councillor Kennedy called for a point of order. Councillor Rishe said a three-quarters vote is required whenever property is sold. Interim City Manager Stephen Jellie said the proposed sale will be presented to Council for approval after the auction.

The vote was:

AYES: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher, Kennedy, Powers and Skamperle

NAYS: Councillor Rishe

CARRIED, 6 TO 1

4. Councillor Rishe moved a Local Law to amend the City Charter in regard to the powers and duties of the City Manager, and Mayor Skelly seconded to wit:

LOCAL LAW #2 OF 2020

A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND THE OGDENSBURG CITY CHARTER IN REGARD TO THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CITY MANAGER

Be it enacted by the City Council of the City of Ogdensburg as follows:

Section 1. Article IV, § C-19, Paragraph (2) of the City Charter is amended as follows:

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(2) After an affirmative vote of a majority of the City Council, appoint and, when necessary for the good of the City, suspend or remove any City department head, except the City Attorney, provided for by or under this Charter, except as otherwise provided by law, by this Charter or by personnel rules adopted pursuant to this Charter. The City Manager may authorize without Council approval any administrative officer who is subject to the City Manager's direction and supervision to exercise these powers with respect to subordinates in that officer's department, office or agency.

Section 2. Effective Date. This local law shall take effect 20 days after the date of filing with the New York State Secretary of State.

Councillor Skamperle said the proposal gives the power to hire and fire employees to Council and changes the City's form of government. Councillor Skamperle explained politics will rule instead of merit which is the point of Civil Service. Councillor Skamperle said Council will micromanage, and this move would set the City back years. Councillor Skamperle explained the City Manager form of government was created to stop nepotism and politics. Councillor Skamperle said he will not be voting for any employee to be hired or fired if this proposal passes. Councillor Skamperle quoted a Watertown Daily Times article which indicates Council trusted the individual put into the City Manager's position and now Council doesn't trust him. Councillor Skamperle said no one on Council is qualified to fill the City Manager position, noting Mr. Jellie is a professional. Councillor Skamperle said the community has spoken, and people are not happy. Councillor Skamperle said the proposal is nonsense and a service to ego for power. Councillor Powers agreed and said there is no transparency, and he cannot believe the proposal was seconded. Councillor Powers said the proposal is a slight to the community and taxpayers. Councillor Powers questioned how Civil Service would come into play with this proposal. Councillor Powers questioned how many special meetings would be held. Councillor Powers said the City Attorney is not present and questioned why the City Manager was even brought in if this was the plan. Councillor Powers said it is power grab.

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Councillor Kennedy said she was voted into office, and it is her job to listen to the people. Councillor Kennedy said she has voted in the past for proposals that she did not personally agree with because she listens to the public and votes for what is best for the City. Councillor Kennedy said after listening to people she has to do due diligence and cannot vote for the proposal because it is not what people are asking for.

Councillor Rishe said this is the same way St. Lawrence County government works, and the City is the only one that does it this way. Councillor Rishe said it is a very good resolution. Councillor Rishe said he has all the confidence in who he put into the City Manager's office. Councillor Powers questioned if the proposal would call for a referendum and said it is changing the Charter on the fly. Mayor Skelly said the Charter has been broken before. Councillor Powers said that matter could have been addressed but wasn't. Councillor Rishe said the proposal may be subject to a referendum. Councillor Powers asked how much it would cost the City for a referendum and noted the goal was to save money. Councillor Kennedy said some members of Council were quick to cut, noting the quality of public safety. Councillor Powers said morale is in the toilet. Councillor Skamperle questioned who will want the permanent City Manager position when the person will be expected to kowtow to reflect a vote of 4 to 3. Councillor Rishe said that is not the case at all. Mayor Skelly said a previous DPW Director tortured citizens and taxpayers for years and was buddies with the City Manager. Mayor Skelly said one night he stood at the podium and spoke. Mayor Skelly said that night Council voted to fire that person, and the City Manager was directed to do it or she would be let go. Councillor Kennedy said Mayor Skelly was not present in that Executive Session.

The vote was:

AYES: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher and Rishe

NAYS: Councillors Kennedy, Powers and Skamperle

CARRIED, 4 TO 3

5. Councillor Skamperle moved a resolution to approve the sale of surplus property located at 116 Oak Street to Mr. Michael Pribnow, and Councillor Powers seconded to wit:

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE OF SURPLUS CITY-OWNED  
PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the City of Ogdensburg has acquired 116 Oak Street in accordance with property tax sale foreclosure proceedings; and

WHEREAS, on February 26, 2018 said parcel was declared surplus and listed for sale on the City's website with an established minimum price of \$1,500 by the Ogdensburg City Council; and

WHEREAS, City staff have reviewed the parcel and find no conflict with the proposed sale, having no infrastructure, or known easements of public benefit; and

WHEREAS, sale of this property promotes the return of surplus property to the taxable roll for the greater public benefit in keeping with comprehensive planning goals;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council approves the following sale of:

Tax Map #:	59.030-4-10
Location:	116 Oak Street
Restrictions:	This is a nonconforming parcel in the City's Moderate Density Residential (MDR) zoning district.

To Michael Pribnow at the price of \$1,500, including estimated attorney fees and filing fees, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the sale of said City-owned real property shall be subject to review and approval by the City Attorney.

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Interim City Manager Stephen Jellie said the property has been on the surplus property list, and the previous City Attorney issued a legal opinion on the process permitted to sell this property outright. Mr. Jellie explained it makes no sense for anyone else to own the parcel, and the City is well within its legal bounds to sell it in the manner proposed. Councillor Rishe said he is all in favor of getting property back on the tax roll, but he is uncomfortable voting for the sale. Councillor Rishe said he would like a policy in place for when it makes sense to sell property in this manner. Councillor Rishe said the City should follow State law and auction the parcel. Mayor Skelly said it is a house with no driveway. Councillor Rishe said it is just not being done right. Councillor Skamperle said the City has a policy established and has done it for years. Councillor Skamperle said State law permits the sale in this manner.

The vote was:

AYES: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher, Kennedy, Powers and Skamperle

NAYS: Councillor Rishe

CARRIED, 6 TO 1

6. Councillor Skamperle moved a resolution to extend the Airport Security Agreement with the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority for four months and instructing the City Manager to prepare a proposed Airport Security Agreement for the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023 for Council review at the September 14, 2020 City Council Meeting, and Councillor Powers seconded to wit:

**AUTHORIZE EXTENSION OF THE AIRPORT SECURITY AGREEMENT AS MODIFIED WITH THE OGDENSBURG BRIDGE AND PORT AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, the current Agreement between the City of Ogdensburg and the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority for the provision of Airport Security services by the City of Ogdensburg Police Department expires on August 30, 2020, and

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WHEREAS, the City of Ogdensburg and the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority desire to continue these services for an additional four month period.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ogdensburg City Council hereby authorizes the extension of the Agreement with modifications allowing for remittance of payment within 60 days, for an additional four months, to expire on December 31, 2020, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager will prepare a proposed Airport Security Agreement for the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023 for Council review at the September 14, 2020 City Council Meeting, and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be given to the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority.

Councillor Kennedy said she is supportive of the airport but questioned how the City would be able to provide the service with the current staffing level at the Police Department. Councillor Kennedy said the City cannot commit if there is not staff available. Councillor Kennedy said the Police Department is running ragged, and we need to give something to that department. Interim City Manager Stephen Jellie agreed. Mr. Jellie said he is planning a proposal to Council on the reimbursable positions, noting those positions are not considered part of the Police Department staff. Mr. Jellie explained Council will need to understand and decide how to proceed. Mr. Jellie said under the current staffing level there is a lot of overtime. Mr. Jellie explained the City needs to provide this critical service to the airport and continue to do so. Councillor Kennedy said the citizens are used to a certain level of public safety and deserve it. Councillor Powers said he is genuinely concerned about public safety, and the subject needs to be on the forefront. Councillor Skamperle said he also supports public safety and noted the City does not need to lose the airport. Councillor Skamperle said an agreement should be in place by September. Councillor Skamperle explained Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority is looking to make further improvements to the airport which would depend on a long term security agreement.

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The vote was:

AYES: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher,  
Kennedy, Powers and Skamperle

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Councillor Rishe

CARRIED, 6 TO 0

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

1. Doug Loffler said as a taxpayer he is very disappointed. Mr. Loffler said he had asked for information at a previous meeting and was told it would be provided at the next meeting. Mr. Loffler said he has not received that information so he would make the request again. Mr. Loffler asked for the status of the Police Chief position, the status of the Fire Chief position and the process the finding a permanent City Manager.

2. Mike Tooley requested that in the future proposed legislation be redlined for ease of reading.

3. Rick Polniak said he had heard discussions that some members of Council were carrying out personal vendettas but now he is convinced. Mr. Polniak said he could not believe Councillor Fisher turned on his own Police Department. Mr. Polniak said Councillor Dillabough was a liar who personally told him there would be no cuts to the police department.

4. Scott McRoberts questioned the wording of the amendment and how the City Attorney could not see the change will be directing the City Manager. Mr. McRoberts questioned if only four members of Council received the attorney opinion. Mr. McRoberts cautioned all members of Council that if they act under the directives of the change made they can forfeit their office.

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5. Samuel Fresina, President of the Professional Firefighters Union, said he had heard the news that the City expects volunteers that do not exist to cover the Fire Department if they get rid of the paid department. Mr. Fresina said he has worked with municipalities for many years and he has never heard of a municipality eliminating a paid Fire Department and replacing it with non-existent volunteers.

6. Sergeant Corey Maxner spoke regarding the Police Chief vacancy as President of the Police Supervisory Union. Sergeant Maxner questioned why the process isn't moving forward since interviews had been conducted. Sergeant Maxner said last week their leader stepped up and lead the entire department and that person was Lieutenant Rob Wescott. Sergeant Maxner said Lieutenant Wescott is a City resident and is acting as their current leader. Sergeant Maxner said Lieutenant Wescott is the correct decision because the entire department had leaned on him over the past week.

Mayor Skelly said there was a need for Executive Session to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation, and Councillor Dillabough seconded the motion.

The vote to adjourn to Executive Session was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

Upon returning from Executive Session, all members of Council were still present.

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Councillor Skamperle moved a resolution to lift the hiring freeze, and Councillor Powers seconded to wit:

RESOLUTION TO LIFT THE HIRING FREEZE

WHEREAS, the Ogdensburg City Council enacted a hiring freeze on January 6, 2020; and

WHEREAS, there are vacant positions within the City that must be filled.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the hiring freeze is hereby lifted.

Councillor Rishe said it was inappropriate for the resolution to be brought from the floor and believed it should be brought forward at the next Council meeting. Interim City Manager Stephen Jellie said the resolution could be approved by Council from the floor with six affirmative votes.

The vote was:

AYES: Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher, Kennedy, Powers and Skamperle

NAYS: Councillor Rishe

CARRIED, 6 TO 1

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.