

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

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

ABSENT: None

Mayor Skelly called for a moment of silence in commemoration of Pearl Harbor Day for all Americans lost 79 years ago.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. A public hearing regarding a Local Law authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law §3-c was held. No one being present to speak, the hearing was declared closed.

2. A public hearing regarding the adoption of the Preliminary 2021 Budget was held.

- a) David Price said monies were still being shifted around in the preliminary budget and questioned when the public will have the opportunity to review where the money will actually be in the final budget. Mr. Price said the City Attorney represents the people and Council but not the City Manager. Mr. Price said the preliminary budget was irresponsible at best, and Council would be moving forward to eliminate positions that do not need to be eliminated. Mr. Price said the City plans to reach out to the State and Federal Governments for financial assistance after cutting taxes. Mr. Price said those actions will be seen as opposing concepts. Mr. Price explained entities are not going to provide funding when the City is cutting its own revenues. Mr. Price said a special meeting was being proposed for Wednesday even though there is a regular meeting scheduled for December 14th.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 400

Mr. Price said he believes the special meeting is being held to silence the public and move forward with their agenda to hurt the people of and take away their public safety. Mr. Price said the motivation is tax savings for a few individuals who happen to be members of Council and not for the greater good of the City. Mr. Price said the current City Manager has a history of being a hatchet man for public safety. Mr. Price said we sit with no answers, a lack of transparency and a Council who plans to vote on a budget in a special meeting without any input from the citizens. Mr. Price said citizens are the people who make the decisions in a democracy, not Council members. Mr. Price explained the members of Council represent the will of the people and suggested they start doing so. Mr. Price said a special meeting on Wednesday was not required, and the budget could be adopted next Monday. Mr. Price said he believes Council is afraid that when money was shifted around after the preliminary budget was accepted, and people will notice where it was put. Mr. Price said \$500,000 cannot be hid. Mr. Price explained everyone knows it is being set aside for the legal battles ahead that the City will lose.

- b) Michael Tooley said he wanted to discuss the City Manager's reorganization plan. Mr. Tooley said Councillor Rishe had stated that adoption of the 2021 budget is not an endorsement of the reorganization plan. Mr. Tooley said he hopes the Mayor and all other members of Council concur with the opinion of Councillor Rishe. Mr. Tooley said when City Manager Stephen Jellie introduced the 2021 preliminary budget, he stated there was no fund balance to take from to help with 2021. Mr. Tooley said he reviewed the 2019 audit, and the fund balance as of December 31, 2019 was \$2,572,000. Mr. Tooley said he believes this is a healthy fund balance and very close to the recommended number. Mr. Tooley said the purpose of a fund balance is to provide support to the budget in extenuating circumstances, and he believes such circumstances exist. Mr. Tooley recommended \$500,000 of the fund balance be used for the 2021 budget. Mr. Tooley said a new three-to-five-year plan should be developed without the restrictions imposed on the previous City Manager Sarah Purdy and previous City Comptroller Timothy Johnson who presented that plan to Council in January 2020. Mr. Tooley made suggestions for adjustments and changes in several areas of the 2021 preliminary budget.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 401

- c) Scott McRoberts said people have asked several questions in the past, and he hoped that answers would be available that night. Mr. McRoberts asked when taxpayers would be able to get some answers from Council with regards to questions being asked. Mr. McRoberts said Mr. Price and Mr. Tooley also had some valid questions that really need answers. Mr. McRoberts asked for an idea of when answers will be given. Mr. McRoberts said Mayor Skelly had posted his telephone number on Facebook and a note for people to feel free to ask any questions. Mr. McRoberts said he was asking questions that night and suggested the information be put out publicly for all taxpayers to hear. Mayor Skelly said it is not a question-and-answer session. Mr. McRoberts asked when the question-and-answer session is and when answers will be given. Mayor Skelly told Mr. McRoberts he has his telephone number. Mr. McRoberts questioned why Mayor Skelly was afraid to answer questions in public. Mr. McRoberts said reasonable questions are being asked, and Council keeps hiding behind it not being a question-and-answer session. Mayor Skelly said Mr. McRoberts was just grandstanding and asked if he had more to say about the budget. Mr. McRoberts said he was not grandstanding, and people have asked questions in the past and again that night and just wanted to know when they will receive answers. Mr. McRoberts asked why citizens should speak if they do not get any answers. Mayor Skelly said there are other members of Council who are welcome to answer Mr. McRoberts' questions if they wish to. Mr. McRoberts said he was asking Mayor Skelly, the three newly elected members of Council and the City Manager who developed the budget. Mr. McRoberts said he does not believe the other three Council members were included in the budget discussions and questioned why he would direct his questions to those members of Council who were not involved. Mayor Skelly said no one has been excluded. Mr. McRoberts said the public has been excluded because their questions are not being answered. Mayor Skelly said one can only be involved if one participates. Mr. McRoberts said he was participating then and wasn't getting any answers. Mr. McRoberts questioned if the next three years will be the same, and Council will not answer any questions for the public. Mr. McRoberts said Council members are so confident in their actions but yet won't answer any questions. Mayor Skelly said that was not the forum for questions.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 402

Mr. McRoberts asked where the forum for questions was. Mayor Skelly said previous Council members did not answer questions either. Mayor Skelly asked Mr. McRoberts if he had anything further, and Mr. McRoberts said he was waiting for his answer. Mayor Skelly advised Mr. McRoberts to continue or he would move on. Mr. McRoberts asked if specific line items will be noted when the budget revisions are made. Mr. McRoberts asked if the public will get to see the revised budget before Council votes on it on Wednesday. Mayor Skelly said the public will see everything in the finished budget. Councillor Powers asked when the public will get to see the finalized budget and when they will receive answers to their questions.

- d) Penny Sharrow said she does not understand if there is a grant to save the jobs of first responders why the City does not apply for it. Mrs. Sharrow said the safety of our City is very important. Mayor Skelly said the City will be looking into the grant funding in 2021. Mrs. Sharrow said she believes there is urgency to looking into the grant before the budget is approved so funds could be used in another area. Mrs. Sharrow said everyone needs to work together like a team. Mrs. Sharrow said she would be willing to help write the grant for the funding.
- e) Doug Loffler said the last speakers made some great points and asked some great questions. Mr. Loffler said he stopped at the City Manager's office and asked Mayor Skelly and City Manager Stephen Jellie if any changes had been made to the budget after all the work sessions. Mr. Loffler explained the City Manager told him no, but Mayor Skelly was posting figures that had changed on Facebook a few hours later. Mayor Skelly said it was still a proposed budget. Mr. Loffler said the City Manager lied to him, and Mayor Skelly silently lied to him. Mayor Skelly said no one lied to Mr. Loffler. Mr. Loffler said Mayor Skelly was a liar, and Mayor Skelly said Mr. Loffler would be cut off for those types of comments. Mr. Loffler experienced audio problems and then questioned specific line items in the budget. Mr. Loffler questioned why the City would not want to have its own Comptroller, the status of the Assessor and the funds added to the Planning Department. Mr. Loffler questioned if the City was financially in a position to add an additional Planner.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 403

Mr. Loffler said Director of Planning and Development Andrea Smith was doing a great job as Acting City Manager, and Mayor Skelly had made the statement in the past that she had too much on her plate to be the Planner and the Acting City Manager. Mr. Loffler said now Ms. Smith will be put in charge of the Comptroller's office, Parks and Recreation as well as adding another planning position and questioned why. Mr. Loffler questioned how much is being saved with the proposed restructuring. Mr. Loffler said the people in the community do not have an avenue to ask questions and that is unfair.

- f) Jason Bouchard addressed Council and read a prepared statement. (A copy of his statement follows these minutes.)
- g) Virginia McCarthy said she is an employee in this community, and her husband is employed at the Fire Department. Mrs. McCarthy said when members of Council are elected to represent and take care of all of the people, not just those who voted for them. Mrs. McCarthy described the community and the needs of the community. Mrs. McCarthy urged Council members to explore grants. Mrs. McCarthy said if the firefighters are bad or make mistakes, the City should go at them but when the firefighters are being attacked, the City should be supporting them.
- h) Felicia Dumas said it appeared that some members of Council had questions at the Budget Work Session regarding the line item in the proposed budget for the Ogdensburg Neighborhood Center. Ms. Dumas said the City Manager advised he was going to reach out to her, but she had not heard from him yet. Ms. Dumas asked that the City Manager reach out to her before the budget meeting on Wednesday if there are any questions.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 404

- i) Brian Mitchell said there were a lot of good questions that evening as well as a lot of unanswered questions. Mr. Mitchell said he heard Mayor Skelly comment to Mr. Loffler that he was welcome at his home for the afterhours meetings and questioned if the public was welcome as well. Mayor Skelly said he was not prepared for a large crowd and thanked Mr. Mitchell for his interest. Mr. Mitchell questioned Mayor Skelly on how many could attend, and Mayor Skelly said it was not a question-and-answer session.

- j) Jennifer Stevenson said she reviewed the budget on the City website and the proposed organizational restructure, and she has many concerns. Ms. Stevenson noted the proposed budget does not appear to be in line with the proposed restructuring. Ms. Stevenson said she hopes the public will be able to see the changes prior to the adoption of the final budget. Ms. Stevenson said taxpayers have the right to know where their tax dollars are going. Ms. Stevenson cautioned the members of Council against going forward with their plan for the Fire Department. Ms. Stevenson said her nephew is a member of the Fire Department and described how she had explained to him that while she was a member of Council, she would always base her decisions on what was best for the City. Ms. Stevenson described recent fires in her neighborhood and said multiple homes would have been lost if the City did not have a paid Fire Department. Ms. Stevenson said Council is jumping too fast and setting the City up for litigation. Ms. Stevenson said Council is gambling with taxpayer money, not their own money. Ms. Stevenson said there not only would be a loss of service but also an expenditure associated with it. Ms. Stevenson said promises were made when the newly elected members ran for office, noting one promise was City workers could sleep well and their families and they were not going to eliminate any officers.

No one else being present to speak, the hearing was declared closed.

3. A public hearing regarding a Local Law to allow for the changes in the Ogdensburg Municipal Code, Section 177 entitled Sewer Rates as dictated by the adoption of the 2021 budget was held.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 405

- a) David Price said public hearings are supposed to be the opportunity for the public to voice their opinion on information they have been given. Mr. Price said the public has not seen the budget yet so it is hard to give an opinion on the budget. Mr. Price explained Council can answer questions during a public hearing which is different from Personal Appearance. Mr. Price said Mayor Skelly has proven that he will answer some questions, just not all questions. Mayor Skelly asked Mr. Price if he had any comments on the sewer rates. Mr. Price said you cannot discuss the budget without discussing sewer rates. Mr. Price said the sewer rates are related to the overall budget. Mr. Price said he wanted to define grandstanding before he was accused of it. Mr. Price explained grandstanding is the act of behaving in an ostentatious manner in an attempt to attract favorable attention from spectators or the media. Mr. Price said the term gaslighting also needed to be mentioned and explained a victim of gaslighting can be pushed so far that they question their own sanity because the person manipulates their actions and thoughts. Mayor Skelly asked Mr. Price to please refer to the sewer rates. Mr. Price said he was in opposition to the sewer rates. Mr. Price said not one person since January has spoken in favor of the newly elected members of Council. Mr. Price said all you are hearing is disapproval from the citizens, and it is time to listen to the citizens. Mr. Price said the citizens run the City. Mr. Price asked Mayor Skelly to explain the sewer rates. Mr. Price asked Mayor Skelly if he could explain the Sunshine Law. Mayor Skelly instructed City Clerk Cathy Jock to terminate Mr. Price's remote access to speak.

No one else being present to speak, the hearing was declared closed.

4. A public hearing regarding a Local Law to allow for the changes in the Ogdensburg Municipal Code, Section 215 (Sections 39, 40 and 41) entitled Water Rates as dictated by the adoption of the 2021 budget was held. No one being present to speak, the hearing was declared closed.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

1. Michael Tooley addressed Council regarding City finances and thanked City Clerk Cathy Jock for providing all members of Council with a spreadsheet he prepared. (A copy of his spreadsheet follows these minutes.) Mr. Tooley reviewed the spreadsheet in detail with Council.

2. David Price addressed Council imploring Council to listen to Mr. Tooley. Mr. Price said Mr. Tooley is giving very good advice and knows more about municipal finances than anyone in the City. Mr. Price said Mr. Tooley is brilliant and agreed the City is not headed towards bankruptcy.

3. Penny Sharrow addressed Council and suggested the City explore the PILOT program again with not-for-profit agencies who are tax exempt as a source of revenue for a couple years.

4. Scott McRoberts suggested the bonus described in the City Manager's contract be offered to Mr. Tooley for his assistance with the City's finances. Mr. McRobert's asked if the Fire Chief stipend in the Fire Department budget makes up for the \$12,000 Mr. Jellie forfeited in the preliminary budget. Mayor Skelly said no.

5. Cynthia Layng started to address Council regarding weekend activities on social media. Mayor Skelly instructed City Clerk Cathy Jock to terminate Mrs. Layng's remote access to speak.

6. Doug Loffler addressed Council urging Council members to take the advice of Mr. Tooley, Mr. Price and Mr. McRoberts.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. City Clerk Cathy Jock read letters from David Price, Erin Reed Bechtel and Norma Finley. (Copies of the letters follow these minutes.)

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Skelly moved that the claims as enumerated in General Fund Warrant #20-2020 in the amount of \$549,533.43 and Library Fund Warrant #20-2020 in the amount of \$30,278.26 and Capital Fund Warrant #20-2020 in the amount of \$4,290,326.99 and Community Development Fund Warrant #20-2020 in the amount of \$9,252.95 and Community Renewal Fund Warrant #20-2020 in the amount of \$0.00 as audited, be and the same are ordered paid and Councillor Dillabough seconded the motion.

Councillor Powers questioned the payment to Ferguson Waterworks. City Manager Stephen Jellie explained the payment was made for two new hydro's and half of the total cost was paid by Lisbon. Councillor Powers questioned the payment to Terraform Power, Inc. Mr. Jellie explained the payment was made to a power supplier and advised he will provide Council with more specific details. Mayor Skelly suggested questions regarding payments be provided to staff in advance in the future. Councillor Powers questioned the payment to Tyler Technologies, Inc. Mr. Jellie explained the payment was made for the software used by the Comptroller's Office for billing.

Councillor Powers said he was having a hard time listening to citizens being cut off and not getting answers to their questions. Councillor Powers said some citizens have asked the same questions numerous times and still have not received answers. Councillor Powers said this is not a democracy, and Council is governing by fiat.

*Councillor Powers left the meeting.

The vote was:

AYES:	Mayor Skelly, Councillors Dillabough, Fisher Kennedy and Rishe
NAYS:	Councillor Skamperle

CARRIED, 5 TO 1

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Mayor Skelly moved a resolution to call for a Special Council Meeting of the City Council on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 7:00pm at City Hall, City Council Chambers, Ogdensburg, NY, and Councillor Fisher seconded to wit:

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, that there will be a Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 7:00pm in the City Hall Council Chambers, Ogdensburg, NY, on the following topic:

See attached Agenda.

AGENDA
Special Council Meeting
Wednesday, December 9, 2020
7:00 P.M.

- I. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Call to Order
- III. Items for Council Action
 1. A Local Law authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law §3-c. (Bill #108)
 2. A resolution to adopt the Preliminary 2021 Budget. (Bill #109)
 3. A Local Law to allow for the changes in the Ogdensburg Municipal Code, Section 177 entitled Sewer Rates as dictated by the adoption of the 2021 budget. (Bill #110)

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 409

4. A Local Law to allow for the changes in the Ogdensburg Municipal Code, Section 215 (Sections 39, 40 and 41) entitled Water Rates as dictated by the adoption of the 2021 budget. (Bill #118)
5. A resolution to accept the 2019 Audit. (Bill #123)

IV. Adjournment

The vote was:

CARRIED, 6 TO 0

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

1. David Price said democracy is the voice of the people and what Council is doing is the opposite. Mr. Price said Council is operating as a dictatorship and governing by fiat. Mr. Price said Council has failed to follow the will of the people. Mr. Price said the only purpose of the special meeting is to take away the voice of the citizens. Mr. Price said Council members will suffer the fate of not doing what people ask. Councillor Skamperle said it is clearly not a democracy. Councillor Skamperle said the meeting started with a moment of silence and has turned into a disgrace.

2. Ann Loffler said the First Amendment permits people to speak even if they do not agree with Mayor Skelly. Ms. Loffler said she does not agree with Council's proposal to make cuts at the Fire Department and remind Council of the recent fires at the towers and United Helpers. Ms. Loffler said she set up a food drive at City Hall that Mayor Skelly assisted with. Ms. Loffler said she was disappointed with Mayor Skelly's comments to her following the food drive.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 410

3. James McCarthy explained when tough decisions and layoffs were necessary at the school, the employees were shown respect and compassion. Mr. McCarthy said employees were not pitted against each other. Mr. McCarthy encouraged members of Council to show compassion for those losing their jobs. Mr. McCarthy said he keeps hearing that the voters voted last November. Mr. McCarthy said voters do not only have a say at election time. Mr. McCarthy explained campaign promises have been broken, and there is clearly a common goal to decimate the Fire Department.

4. Justyn McCormick said he has been a resident of Ogdensburg his entire life. Mr. McCormick described an encounter his family had with Councillor Dillabough on the evening of last November's election night at Hosmer's. Mr. McCormick said Councillor Dillabough looked at his father that night and said "Scott, I know you don't like us right now but your jobs will be safe with me". Mr. McCormick reminded Councillor Dillabough that he stated at a recent Council meeting that he did not agree with the elimination of ten firefighters and said he hopes Councillor Dillabough stays true to his word.

5. Debra Montgomery said she voted for the newly elected members of Council because of the promises that were made. Ms. Montgomery said the Police Department has been mutilated and now they are trying to do the same with the Fire Department. Ms. Montgomery said she used to see members of the Fire Department outside laughing with a sense of comradery, and now the atmosphere is awful because of the things being done. Ms. Montgomery said she asked questions this summer and received no answers. Ms. Montgomery questioned why no one receives answers. Ms. Montgomery said her Christmas wish was for members of Council to find their heart and put themselves in the position of the firemen and their families.

6. Maureen Brashaw said people who voted for the newly elected members of Council in the Fall do not agree with them now. Ms. Brashaw said those members of Council never listen to anyone and ignore the public. Ms. Brashaw explained safety should be the number one priority. Ms. Brashaw said the best Mayor Skelly, Councillor Fisher, Councillor Dillabough, Councillor Rische and City Manager Stephen Jellie could do for the City is resign.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2020

Page 411

7. Doug Loffler said the walls are falling in on this administration and they don't even know it. Mr. Loffler said in the end the taxpayers will be doing the clapping and laughing. Mr. Loffler said Council is very dysfunctional, unhappy and divided. Mr. Loffler said some members of Council have a vendetta against the Fire Department, noting a comment from City Manager Stephen Jellie indicating "the only people we are at war with is the Fire Department". Mr. Loffler said some members of the administration are acting like bullies, noting Mr. Jellie said "the City will be restructured my way".

8. Brian Mitchell asked that public updates from the City Manager resume. Mr. Mitchell said the public updates have fallen to the wayside. Mr. Mitchell asked Mayor Skelly to unblock him from Facebook.

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

Good evening – As I stated last week in our departmental budget hearing, violating our contract by cutting these jobs will cost our citizens. The first cost will be felt immediately in the year 2021. We have a lowball an estimate that taxpayers will pay over \$200k more simply to violate our contract, and leaving 10 local, dedicated public safety workers and their families without jobs and health insurance during a global pandemic.

The next set of costs is much more significant and far reaching. By deciding to breach our contract a legal fight will ensue. While an estimated amount that such litigation will actually cost is not currently being disclosed publicly, make no mistake, this fight, with an uncertain outcome, will not be cheap. We need to look only one hour away to see how much similar legal battles can cost a community, and how judges in New York State tend to rule when such contract violations are implemented. The citizens of Ogdensburg and their taxpayers money will be directed to fight a legal battle, with a questionable outcome, simply to reduce the services that they receive in Ogdensburg.

The costs associated with such a move are not simply monetary. It is patently false to indicate that cutting these positions will not impact public safety and our ability to do our job. There are aspects that go into providing our service that simply put cannot be provided safely, or at all, if we do not have the manpower to do so. Lessening the burden on taxpayers in the city as the main goal of this administration is noted. We however would like to point out that we provide our services to the entire city, taxpayer or not. Feeling safe and knowing you are being provided with the level of security that citizens of our city have come to expect is a benefit of living here, not the reason for mass exodus as has been portrayed. The most important aspect of running a municipality is doing what is necessary to keep it safe.

Another cost of this will impact your terms in office. One year is already in the books. During that year the overarching theme seems to be an attack on public safety workers. All of you ran for office in order to achieve positive change for our city. Do you really want the vast majority of your term, or the remainder for some, to be wasted mired in legal battles with the fire department? A decision which will undeniably take away from any truly positive change you had in mind when deciding to run.

Finally, another costly aspect of this move has to do with what it is currently like to be a resident of Ogdensburg. Think about the current state of our city. As a nearly lifelong resident, the turmoil, dissention and division within our city limits is at an unprecedented level. Ogdensburg has been politicized and polarized in a manner which it has never been. This type of disunity in our community is unhealthy for our city and its citizens. Neighbors, friends, and relatives alike have been living in a community divided. As city leaders and employees we should be working to unite this community and keep it safe. Rather than continue a contentious back-and-forth which does nothing but make our city an uncomfortable place to live in, work in, or visit. This is not what Ogdensburg is all about and not what it stands for.

In the true absence of a pre-determined political agenda, such drastic, community dividing, safety compromising cuts would only be entertained as a last-ditch effort. Such an action should only take place when all avenues, including but not limited to, grants, federal and state aid, cost reduction and most importantly revenue generation have been exhausted. I implore council to reconsider these cuts and to move forward into 2021 looking for solutions rather than scapegoats to our city's problems.

PRESENTATION TO OGDENSBURG CITY COUNCIL
 BY MICHAEL J. TOOLEY, 214 HAMILTON STREET, CITY
 7-Dec-20

Per Audited Financial Statements, December 31,

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	
General Fund Fund Balance	\$1,376,686	\$620,439	\$1,139,345	\$2,226,467	\$2,572,941	
Taxes Receivable - net of						
Allowance for Uncollectable Accounts	\$2,407,340	\$2,549,056	\$2,284,102	\$2,167,867	\$1,313,462	
Allowance for Uncollectable Accounts	\$0	\$0	\$250,000	\$4,703	\$500,000	
Fire Department expense	\$3,605,572	\$3,792,752	\$3,387,871	\$3,652,282	\$3,480,826	\$3,583,861 (5 -year average)
Police Department expense	\$3,792,752	\$3,605,572	\$3,732,563	\$3,847,373	\$4,022,168	\$3,800,086 (5-year average)
NYS Consolidated Debt Limit	22.86%	17.32%	14.45%	15.40%	18.90%	
General Obligation Limited Tax Rating	Baa2	Baa1	Ba1	Ba1-	Ba1+	(2020 rating Ba1+)
NYS Constitutional Tax Limit	73.45%	70.12%	89.63%	87.28%	85.62%	(74.89% per proposed 2021 budget)

Per Audited Financial Statements, December 31, 2015 Through 2019
 Economic Factors

1. City worked with OBPA for airport expansion, to expand services.
2. City efforts to acquire and develop St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center, mention made of Cogenerator Plant.
3. City efforts in City Industrial Park for expansion/construction of:
 - a. Defelisko
 - b. MAXAM
 - c. ANSEN
 - d. Hoosier Magnetics (adjacent to City Industrial Park)
4. Cerebral Palsy of the North Country - new clinic - 40 employees
5. Contest: 20 employees
6. North American Forest Group acquisition of ACCO property (20 employees)
7. Community Health Center of the North Country: \$4.2 million renovation, \$13 Million annual economic impact, 40 employees
8. \$8.3 million in grant funding to rebuild critical infrastructure, expand city opportunity for economic growth along the city waterfront in response to 2017 and 2019 severe flooding.

Dear Mayor, Council, and City Manager,

Defenders of democracy such as Pericles and Thomas Jefferson have always believed in the will of the people and popular sovereignty. Pericles' funeral oration outlined the greatness of democracy, and Thomas Jefferson, of course, authored a famous document attesting to its demands. And now, as in times past, we are in need of a reminder of the principles which provide the basis for the democratic system that we all cherish.

In any democratic form of government, there are many offices. Some of the important offices are called President, Senator, Congresswoman, Congressman, Assemblywoman, Assemblyman, Justice, Governor, Mayor, and Councillor. But, the most important office of all, the one with the most power and to whom we entrust real decision making, is the Office of the Citizen. Citizens make all of the decisions in a democratic society. We let our wants and needs be known, to our elected representatives, through various media, and they are expected to carry out our will. The citizens' role is to remain informed on the issues, and hold the representatives accountable to the will of the people. Citizens' voices are not only heard on Election Day, but every day, regardless of who is sitting in the representative's seats. The foundation of the Office of the Citizen is bolstered with access to accurate information, provided by the elected representatives. When that foundation is corrupted with lies, deception, and restriction from access to information, the entire system fails.

- When you promise that jobs will be safe if you are elected, and then systematically work to purge those jobs now and for future generations, you have failed the Office of the Citizen.
- When you set aside the system of law, the City Charter, in order to move forward your personal agendas, you have failed the Office of the Citizen.
- When you hire a city manager without the proper qualifications or through due process, and pay him with public funds, our money, you have failed the Office of the Citizen.
- When you claim that the City Attorney only works for a few of you, and the city manager claims "attorney client privilege" to withhold information regarding taxpayer funds from councillors, and the people, you have failed the Office of the Citizen.

You, councillors and mayor, work for us. It's not the other way around. The city manager is an employee of the City, we the citizens are the City, and he works for us as well. He has no business telling us the way things will be, that's in our power to tell him. The city attorney works for us. We demand that all councillors, and the public when appropriate, have access to what the taxpayer pay him to do.

It has come time to resurrect the words that demonstrate the principles of a democratic society, so that you all may reflect upon who you serve and how you serve. Because as sure as we measure the years in your terms, we will measure the recompense for the way you served them.

Thomas Jefferson's famous Declaration to the tyrannical government which threatened the livelihoods of the people that it served, provides us with a clear vision. As we address this city government, which has lost its duty of responsibility to the Office of the Citizen, which continues to ignore our requests, and which chooses to embrace personal goals over public safety, let these eloquently drafted words serve as your reminder.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of

Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

Thomas Jefferson's words inspired the entire world to rise up and be heard. We will be heard as well. We will not relent. We will not forfeit our Office of the Citizen. We the people of the City of Ogdensburg, demand that you serve us justly, and end this tyrannical rule, so that we can receive the services that we deserve, and for which we duly pay our tax dollars. We the citizens are the City, and you serve us at our collective will.

David Price

Members of the Council -

Recently it's been decided that the only way to save our city from complete financial ruin is to terminate 10 positions from the Ogdensburg Fire Department. I, along with many, many members of our community, are completely opposed to this. I've heard over and over that people are willing to pay higher taxes just to keep the department fully staffed, and that speaks volumes about what OFD means to this city.

I have to wonder what other options were discussed. As it stands, so many people have shared ideas and asked legitimate questions, and all have gone unanswered. Which, at this point, no one is shocked at. We learned very early on it was your way or no way.

I'm confident that many other citizens have relied on the fire department, as I have. I'd like to offer a few examples of just why the fire department means so much to not only my family, but our entire city.

Two years ago, my son had an allergic reaction to his medicine while he was at the doctors office. He had to be transported to the emergency room immediately as he was struggling to breathe. The doctors office called the rescue squad. 15 minutes later, when they had not yet arrived and my son's condition was quickly deteriorating, they called again. Another 10 minutes went by, when finally two older gentleman came slowly walking in. They spoke zero words to me. I rode in the ambulance with them and they wouldn't even respond to my questions. This isn't to bash the volunteer rescue squad, this is simply to point out that any longer and things could've taken a deadly turn for my son.

In a completely opposite direction, my uncle was experiencing what we thought may be a heart attack this past summer at a local restaurant. As the manager called 911, my mother called me. I live 2 blocks from the fire station, and by the time I raced to the establishment, Jason Bouchard and Jared Wells were already on scene, assessing my uncle and giving him oxygen. Both Jason and Jared were completely professional, and kept my family in the loop of everything that was going on. It was less than 2 minutes from the time 911 was called to the time they were on scene. About 15 minutes later, the squad came. Please keep in mind that the squad and the fire department are dispatched at the same time from 911, yet there was at least a 20 minute response difference.

My point is this - the Ogdensburg Fire Department serve as first responders for our city. If we start cutting positions, we are playing with fire - pun intended. If there is a fire, and an emergency call at the same time, who goes where? Do we rely solely on OVRs to respond to emergency calls from now on, so OFD is free in the case of a fire? Look at the poor time management at the two examples I gave. This is unreasonable and putting the safety of our citizens in jeopardy. The reason the OVRs takes so long to respond is that they are a volunteer agency - and if you move forward with your attempts to make our fire department fully volunteer, the same thing will happen. Extended response times lead to disasters.

Five years ago I was on the market for a new home. One of the factors in searching was the proximity to OFD and OPD. The reason behind this is my 11 year old daughter. She has drug resistant epilepsy, among a host of other health impairments. If you don't understand what that is, it means that she has seizures everyday, all day long, and there are no medications that are helpful to her. We have required medical intervention more times than I can count, and knowing that OFD is two blocks away and could be here immediately, is what sold me. Epilepsy can be fatal, and if I lose my daughter because you are trying to save taxpayers a mere \$80 a year? Completely unacceptable.

I'm sure most, if not all of you, know the connection that our family has with OPD and OFD. So yes, this is personal. Your treatment of our family when Scott passed, as well as your treatment of Gerry's "insubordination" have both been disgusting. Scott and Gerry have both dedicated their lives to our city; they risk personal safety day in and day out and what do they get for their sacrifices? Both of their jobs on the line.

Council, thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak today. Councilors Powers, Kennedy, and Skamperle, keep fighting the good fight - you have an entire community behind you.

Sincerely,
Erin Reed Bechtel

To the Ogdensburg City Council and the Citizens of Ogdensburg –

Grow up! Stop fighting!

Ancient history there used to be four fire stations – so a crew for each station.

1) Now there is better equipment and one station – we don't need that many to run the station

2) There is now a volunteer rescue squad which is not volunteer – for your information a 6 block rescue is \$700 plus to Potsdam is over \$2,000

3) Every time a 911 call is made a firetruck and crew rush to the same call as the squad does. Now if the squad was in the fire department that would not be necessary.

Think about this, we are the only City in New York State boarding on another country – a huge country and we are only 50 miles from its Capital. We were once a nice little City with industry – now we are a little border city with very little industry and lots of problems.

We need to solve our own problems. We do not need someone from Albany who does not know anything about us except for unless its election and their picture is in the paper.

We don't need 20 firemen – we have one station, very few industries and homes with fire alarms. Why can't the Fire Department be run the same as any other business – 12 hour shifts, a week at a time, no cooking or sleeping.

This is the 21st century. We do not need Albany people who have relatives and friends in the Fire Department coming and tell us what to do. The last time she helped, she dumped the State Hospital property on us.

Norma Finley