

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

November 23, 2009

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

PRESENT: Mayor Nelson, Councillors Hannan,
Morley, Powers, Sholette and Vaugh

ABSENT: Councillor Flynn

PUBLIC HEARING

1. A public hearing regarding an ordinance to amend Chapter 203, Taxicabs § 203-12, Taxicab license fee of the Code of the City of Ogdensburg was held. No one being present to speak, the hearing was declared closed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Nelson moved that the claims as enumerated in General Fund Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$441,260.72 and Library Fund Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$24,652.14, Capital Fund Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$35.00 and Community Development Fund Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$19,937.60 and Community Renewal Fund Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$4,370.00 and HOME Fund Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$4,400.00 and AHC Funds Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$12,568.00 and RESTORE Program Warrant #20-2009 in the amount of \$5,800.00 as audited, be and the same are ordered paid and Councillor Powers seconded the motion.

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Councillor Powers introduced an ordinance amending Chapter 203, Taxicabs, § 203-12. "Taxicab license fee", of the Code of the City of Ogdensburg, and Councillor Morley seconded to wit:

ORDINANCE # 14 of 2009
AMENDING CHAPTER 203 ENTITLED "TAXICABS"
OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF OGDENSBURG

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK, AS FOLLOWS:

ITEM ONE: That Chapter 203, Taxicabs, § 203-12. "Taxicab license fee" be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

§ 203-12. Taxicab license fee.

The following license fee shall be charged for each taxicab licensed: \$75.

ITEM TWO: This ordinance shall take effect January 1, 2010.

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

Mayor Nelson moved to amend the order of the agenda to move the Executive Session to this part of the meeting, and Councillor Vaughn seconded the motion.

The vote to amend the order of the agenda was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

Mayor Nelson moved to adjourn to Executive Session and Councillor Vaughn seconded the motion.

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

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

2. Councillor Sholette introduced a resolution to authorize the City Manager to execute a labor contract with the P.S.U. for 2010 and 2011, and Councillor Morley seconded to wit:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE
THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A LABOR CONTRACT
WITH THE POLICE SUPERVISORY UNIT
FOR 2010 and 2011

WHEREAS, a tentative labor contract has been negotiated between the City Manager and representatives of the Police Supervisory Unit for 2010 and 2011, and

WHEREAS, said agreement has been authorized by the membership of the Police Supervisory Unit,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Manager is hereby authorized to execute said labor contract with the Police Supervisory Unit, as negotiated in the tentative agreement.

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

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OLD BUSINESS

1. Councillor Morley stated that he read an article in the newspaper that we owe the School District back taxes. City Manager Arthur Sciorra stated technically we don't owe the school anything and explained the New York State Real Property Law process. Mr. Sciorra advised that the school district collects their taxes until a certain date and then give us a tax warrant for uncollected taxes. Mr. Sciorra explained that the property owner has one year to pay taxes, after that year the property goes to tax sale and they have another year (until the following June) to redeem their property by paying the full amount of taxes outstanding. Mr. Sciorra said that article was about the school not wanting to wait two years for their money, and the \$420,000. of the \$500,000. mentioned in that article are part of these tax sale properties that don't come due to be paid until June, 2010.

Councillor Morley questioned if we paid outstanding school taxes with the TAN (Tax Anticipation Note) funds. Mr. Sciorra said yes we paid \$327,000. in June, and explained that Alliance Energy is in court disputing that they owe \$330,000. in taxes. Mr. Sciorra added that if they win, the \$330,000. they're disputing will be reduced by what the court says is the value of their property and that \$330,000. won't be due the School, City or County.

Mayor Nelson suggested sending the City Manager to a School Board meeting to educate the board. Mr. Sciorra stated that he and City Comptroller Phil Cosmo are meeting with School Superintendent Tim Vernsey and School Business Manager Jeff Swanson tomorrow to go over this process. Mr. Sciorra added that he had a conversation with County Administrator Karen St. Hilliare today and the County is not interested in taking over this process.

2. Councillor Vaugh stated that he appreciated Public Works' Director, Kit Smith's help with the new school signage and action plan.

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3. Councillor Vaugh stated that a St. Lawrence County Housing Council meeting was held on November 10 regarding Downtown Main Street Grants and asked for an update.

Director of Planning and Development, Justin Woods advised that 25 property owners attended and showed interest in the program. Mr. Woods stated that the City Manager appointed the following three citizens to review applications; Tim Vernsey, Kathy Wade and Mindy McNamara. Councillor Sholette questioned if the target area for these grants is commercial or residential. Mr. Woods said commercial or mixed use properties.

4. Councillor Vaugh stated he received an email report from Molly Wolahan, Housing Consultant. Councillor Vaugh added that at a recent NYCOM session, the Mayor of Hornell set up an agreement with BOCES and the local trades for job training to build houses on vacant land. Mr. Woods said the Cooperative Energy Alliance will be incorporating job training in the next phase of their report.

5. Councillor Powers said the 2009 cash flow analysis Council received in their packet showed the 2009 payoff to the County as \$1,909,000. and in the update \$682,000. City Manager Arthur Sciorra said that amount included the TAN and other monies we collected over the tax period and paid to the County. City Comptroller Philip Cosmo said we also paid \$1,200,000. for 2008 outstanding taxes and 2009 taxes collected in the current year. Mr. Sciorra added that \$2,300,000. was paid the County in May.

6. Councillor Hannan requested an update on the Park Plaza building demolition. Mr. Sciorra stated that everything is in position for the demolition permit and all conditions set by the Planner have been met.

Mayor Nelson questioned if staff has contacted neighbors to advise them of a definite date of when demolition will start and end. Mayor Nelson requested letters be sent to neighbors within one to two blocks of the demolition area.

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Mr. Sciorra stated that GYMO will be overseeing the buildings' environmental issues and Code will also be on site for the demolition. Councillor Hannan questioned if the demolition will be completed by December 31st. Mr. Sciorra stated the demolition permit is valid for one year.

7. Councillor Sholette said he would like to revisit the TAN (Tax Anticipation Note) and asked for a breakdown of how the \$2,000,000. was spent in the next Council update. City Comptroller Philip Cosmo advised that the money was spent on everyday expenses, such as payroll and withholding taxes.

8. Councillor Morley stated he was approached by a Heuvelton resident who suggested Heuvelton loan the City their curbing machine as a possible shared service. Public Works Director Kit Smith explained that Heuvelton's machine is too small and we have no money for curbing.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Councillor Vaugh stated that in a recent Watertown Times there was an article about the Ogdensburg Public Library forming a tax district, which he knew nothing about. Councillor Vaugh requested that the City Manager provide Council with information and discussions he has had with the Library Director regarding the Library forming a tax district. Mr. Sciorra stated that Library Director Wayne Miller is exploring the concept of a library district which would allow them to go directly to the taxpayers with a referendum requesting millage for the cost of operating the library. Mr. Sciorra said the City would no longer need to provide funding, they would get funding through direct taxation. Mr. Sciorra added that the one thing that attracts the Director is that the library can form a taxing district within the entire Ogdensburg School District which is larger than the City and can include people that aren't currently contributing to the cost of the library.

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