



City Council Minutes The City of Cortland June 2, 2020

Council Meeting #12
June 2, 2020
Via Zoom
7:00 PM

Present: Aldermen Kat McCarthy, Katy Silliman, Bruce Tytler, William Carpenter, Troy Beckwith, Thomas Michales, John Bennett, Jacki Chapman

Staff Present: Corporation Counsel Ric VanDonsel, Director of Finance Mack Cook, Police Chief Catalano, Fire Chief Friedman, Interim Director of Code Enforcement Mike Tenkate, City Clerk Ray Parker, Superintendent of WWTP Bruce Adams, Director of Youth Bureau John McNerney

Regular Session:

Mayor Tobin called the twelfth Common Council meeting of the year to order at 7:00PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments:

Dr. Nagel spoke stating she is happy to be a part of the Mutual Aid program. Really appreciated the turnout at the rally. She thanked the Mayor for his help with rally and she appreciated the police being present. She also thought the City still need a Human Rights Commission. She read a letter that was sent to the Police Chief back in 2019 and still hasn't heard back yet.

Kristina Petrella stated that she is invested in the City and its community. She was encouraged to see the turnout at the protest. She stated that every Law Enforcement Officers should be a Community Based Police Officer. While the march offered Social Media worthy photo ops she would like to see Common Council member's statements on positions with BLM and their support for the blacks and persons of color in our community. There is racism deep within the community and we need work on this by listening and making time for one another. By doing so we can make the Cortland community aware of Black Lives Matter.

Ward Reports:

Ward 1: Last week there was some trash collection issues on Chestnut Street, thank you DPW for taking care of that. There will be a food giveaway on June 3rd from 4-6pm at 181 Main Street it is organized by Cortland Mutual Aid Group for Neighbors Helping Neighbors. She did attend EAC meeting where they discussed the Main Street DRI with regards to planting of trees downtown.

Ward 2: Relatively quiet. Bright light in these dark times is a young lady who is Junior at Cortland High wanted to create project to get her Girl Scout Gold Award. She noticed that some of her peers were experiencing food insecurity, so she wanted to create a pantry which she named The Purple Pantry. Then

COVID happened so she wasn't able to do it at the school and so she has been doing it from her home on Woodruff Street. The Cortland Standard wrote about her, the response was overwhelming, and she was thrilled with all the support she has received. Assumed the protest that happened was peaceful. Also hopes that people will get out and vote for the Parker School project to move forward and ballots need to be in on Friday.

Ward 3: Alderman Tytler stated that he attended the protest in the park on June 1st which was peaceful and enlightening. Would like to congratulate Chief Michael Catalano '79 Criminal Justice, he was one of Tompkins Cortland Community College's distinguished alumni award recipient. Secondly, would like to commend Bruce Adams and his crew for all the cool things they are doing over at the Waste Water Treatment Plant with renewable energy and testing for COVID-19. The DPW was a big help with some things in his Ward. Also would like to remind people of the School Board had some propositions that are coming up and the ballots have to be in there by Tuesday, June 9th. Congratulations to the Class of 2020.

Ward 4: Last Thursday house on Tompkins Street there was a car accident with no injuries and no power for about 3 hours in that area. Thank you to the City Police and City Fire Department for their quick response. Has been in contact with resident on Sands Street regarding the house next door to this person, the police have been involved and are currently handling this situation. Wants to commend the peaceful protestors.

Ward 5: Commented on how great the Cortland High Recognition Parade was, she joined the faculty, staff and employees to congratulate the seniors for all their accomplishments. Just reminding everyone to please vote for the Parker School Project.

Ward 6: All quiet in 6th ward. Did have an issue with someone's lawn in the Hickory Park area, the lawn is extremely long, been going on for couple years now, Tom Tobin has been very proactive, he didn't wait for a complaint, he went out and issued a citation. The lawn was mowed within 48 hours by the landowner. Thank you to the Code Office for being proactive.

Ward 7: Has had a lot of calls about grass being blown into the streets. There is still a lot of trash where people are still not getting it, please take it back and put out next week. A couple people called asking when Common Council meetings would be back to normal at City Hall. Mayor Tobin stated that he is waiting to keep it through Zoom until Phase 4. Would like to add item 16 to the Agenda making the parking lot at Dexter Park Odd/Even parking at night.

Ward 8: Protest was peaceful. Thank you Jesse Abbott for spearheading the walk. Thank you Mike Tenkate and his staff for fielding the phone calls regarding Code issues. Still having issues with Crowne Facility on Kellogg Road, staff is still having to smoke off property and the cigarette smoke is disturbing residents on the street and the cigarette butts in the street.

Proclamation: Recognizing Captain Jensen for his dedication to the City of Cortland Fire Department.

Mayor Tobin read the proclamation.

Mayor's Report:

There is a food distribution at 181 S. Main St. Also received an email alert from school district that at all its food drop off sites tomorrow courtesy of School District and CNY Food Bank that families who are

interested in vegetables they will have boxes again from 11am to 1pm. The City will be posting the website that the City is going to be applying to the State for another round of Microenterprise Funds. Microenterprise monies are used to help businesses to grow and develop. So anyone interested in starting a small business or looking to expand business they need to fill out a pre-application and those applications need to be submitted by June 19th to Linda Armstrong at Thoma Development. Linda Armstrong stated that the deadline might be extended. Mayor Tobin discussed the protest and thanked all the organizers of the protest which was peaceful. Thank you to the Fire Department for tables and chairs. Thank you to the Police Department who quickly diverted traffic for the march.

Resolution #110 of 2020 – Resolution to approve minutes from May 19, 2020 meeting.

Motioned by: Alderman Carpenter
Seconded by: Alderman Beckwith

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #111 of 2020 – Resolution to subordinate a City mortgage under the Middle Income Program to facilitate a refinance of a first and second mortgage by the property owner for a lower rate and shorter term.

Linda Armstrong with Thoma spoke about 1 individual in the City who wants to consolidate at a lower rate.

Motioned by: Alderman Carpenter
Seconded by: Alderman Bennett

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #112 of 2020 – Resolution to Authorize permission to the Community Restaurant to use the Groton Ave. parking lot on June 14, 2020 for their 90th anniversary and fund raiser for Loaves and Fishes.

Motioned by: Alderman Beckwith
Seconded by: Alderman Silliman

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #113 of 2020 – Resolution to authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with Xylem Incorporated of Brown Deer, WI for a research project to be conducted at the Cortland Wastewater facility. The costs of the research project are to be borne by Xylem with incidental in-kind support from department staff. The project is to test an AI-informed method of aeration control based on oxygen uptake rate.

Bruce Adams spoke about how when you stop aerating the oxygen level goes down, the speed at which it goes down is referred to as oxygen uptake rate, this process would use this information to control how the aeration cycles on and off and that is what give the nitrogen reduction.

Bruce Adams also updated everyone on what was happening at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman McCarthy

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #114 of 2020 – Resolution that Brian Tobin, Mayor of the City of Cortland, is hereby authorized and directed to accept funds from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in accordance with the provisions of Title 9 of the Environmental Protection Act of 1993, in an amount of \$443,445 and enter into and execute a project agreement with the State for such financial assistance to the City of Cortland for Fire Station Window Restoration-Project EPF #93513 and, if appropriate, a conservation easement/preservation covenant to the deed of the assisted property.

The grant money is for windows in the Fire Department.

Motioned by: Alderman Chapman
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #115 of 2020 – Resolution to lift the hiring freeze to fill an anticipated vacancy in the Fire Department.

This is a fill in for the vacancy of retiring Captain.

Alderman Beckwith stated he is fully supportive of the Fire Department but right now he cannot morally support this as we just furloughed City employees a he encourages them to hold tight until things are back to normal.

Alderman Carpenter asked if we could possibly wait until furloughs are done. Chief Friedman spoke stating he recognizes the concerns with the furloughs and the struggles City wide with this. This request doesn't come lightly. With Captain Jensen retiring he has an immediate opening in his training office, he has 2 recruit firefighters that just went back to the Fire Academy who are ironically doing some training remotely through Zoom. The importance of getting the training office filled is pivotal. As far as hiring of promotion or for a firefighter it will be at least 3 weeks out. The academy is scheduled to start August 1st. If he can hire by July 29th and get them to the academy by August 1st.

Alderman Tytler asked if he heard correctly that we wouldn't have someone on payroll until August 1st. Chief Friedman stated he would like to have someone hired by July 29th as the academy starts August 1st.

Alderman Silliman stated she was going to vote yes for the next three items as she hopes that by then we will have some of the people back to work by then.

Alderman Michales asked if we had reached out to the Union. Chief Friedman replied that he had spoken with them and they were understanding of the situation.

Motioned by: Alderman Silliman
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 1 (Alderman Beckwith)

Resolution #116 of 2020 – Resolution to commence with the promotional process specific to a Captain.

Motioned by: Alderman Carpenter
Seconded by: Alderman Silliman

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 1 (Alderman Beckwith)

Resolution #117 of 2020 – Resolution to commence with the hiring process to fill an anticipated Firefighter Position vacancy subsequent to the promotional process specific to a Captain retirement.

Motioned by: Alderman Silliman
Seconded by: Alderman Chapman

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 1 (Alderman Beckwith)

Resolution #118 of 2020 - Resolution to approve \$2,000 to be directed to the Cortland County BDC/IDA to assist with business promotion during the re-opening from covid-19.

There were concerns with how the money was going to help these businesses and how the City can afford to put forward this money when we have furloughed employees. There were many positive thoughts on how this will help bring businesses back to life.

Motioned by: Alderman Tytler
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Roll Call Vote was called
Ward 1 – Yes, Ward 2 – Yes, Ward 3 – Yes, Ward 4 – No, Ward 5 – Yes, Ward 6 – Yes, Ward 7 – No, Ward 8 – No

Approved: Ayes – 5
Nays – 3 (Ward 4, Ward 7, Ward 8)

Resolution #119 of 2020 – Resolution to authorize the encumbrance of the following amounts from the General Fund 2019 Budget to the General Fund 2020 Budget:

- \$3,851.50 POLICE DEPT. A3120-540800 Ballistic Vests Federal Grant Funds
- \$15,000.00 YOUTH BUREAU A7180-540700 Yaman Foundation donation for new roof
- \$5,000.00 YOUTH BUREAU Porch Fest Donation for Suggett Park

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Tytler

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #120 – Resolution that it shall be temporarily permitted for Commercial property owners and or tenants to use outdoor seating for the purpose of extending their ordinary and regular business to the outside portion of its business including the public sidewalk starting from when the State gives permission for Phase III of reopening with a conclusion date of August 22nd. The permission requires the business to

1. Comply with Chapter 208 of the Cortland City Code (Peace and Good Order)
2. Comply with any directive of the fire chief or his delegate as to issues of fire safety
3. Comply with any directive of the Police chief or his delegate for the safe passage of users of the sidewalk
4. Limit, unless with the permission of adjoining property owners, the area used to the frontage of the business.
5. Within the area utilized permit open containers.

Mayor Tobin stated that he would like to add that we would put starting dates from when the State Okays Phase III which is when sit down restaurant eating is supposed to be approved with a conclusion of August 22nd. This will give Council opportunity between now and then to see how it goes with potential expansion or not. Would look for plans to be submitted to the Mayor’s Office for safety approval. There are four businesses that have expressed an interest.

Motioned by: Alderman Beckwith
Seconded by: Alderman Tytler

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Item #11 – Consideration of a Resolution to establish a time, place, and method on adoption of a Local Law to authorized exceeding the Property Tax Cap.

A public hearing for July 7th or 21st for raising the Tax Cap Limit were voted on.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Fails: Ayes – 2
Nays – 6 (Alderman McCarthy, Silliman, Tytler, Chapman, Beckwith, Michales)

Item #12 – Update on the Parker School building inspection and phase 1 environmental audit

Council members were given the assessments via email. No major problems found environmentally. There were 3 issues that they weren’t able to knock off immediately, the first being the shooting range which was cleaned up, second was radon and the third was asbestos in the tiles of the floors. The building inspection that also didn’t raise any general concerns. Have received all the financial reports that were requested.

Item #13 – Parker School Task Force update (PSTF)

Alderman McCarthy stated that the vote is due Tuesday. This vote is to determine if the school district can sell the building or not. Alderman Silliman stated that the YWCA and CAPCO are doing early childhood development.

Item #14 – Discussion on the City’s plan for the Covid-19.

- Phase 1 (Manufacturing, retail, wholesale, agriculture, construction)
- Phase 2 (Professional Services, Retail, Administrative Support, Real Estate / Rental & Leasing, Hair Salons)
- Phase 3 (Restaurants / Food Services)
- Phase 4 (Arts / Entertainment / Recreation and Education)
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Mayor Tobin discussed what has/was going to be happening in each phase.

Adjournment

Motioned by: Alderman McCarthy

Seconded by: Alderman Bennett

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

I, RAYMOND A. PARKER, CITY CLERK FOR THE CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, HELD ON THE 2ND DAY IN JUNE 2020. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED FOR HIS CONCURRENCE IN ADOPTION OR REJECTION BY VETO POWER.

RAYMOND A. PARKER, CITY CLERK

MAYOR BRIAN TOBIN