



City Council Minutes The City of Cortland September 1, 2020

Council Meeting #19
September 1, 2020
Via Zoom
7:00 PM

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

Staff Present: Corporation Counsel Ric VanDonsel, Director of Finance Mack Cook, Police Chief Catalano, Fire Chief Friedman, Confidential Secretary Devon Rainbow, City Clerk Ray Parker

Regular Session:

Mayor Tobin called the nineteenth Common Council meeting of the year to order at 7:02PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Hearing - Public Hearing on the Procedure for Painting of City Streets, Sidewalks and Curbs.

Steven Shoemaker spoke stating it is great to do street paintings and it allows freedom of speech.

Kristina F. stated that she thinks painting Back the Blue is a mistake. It is causing division within the community.

Melissa Kiser stated that painting Back the Blue is publicly announcing they are against BLM.

Sheila Cohen stated she is against painting Back the Blue sends a divisive message and should be reconsidered.

Christine Townsend stated that the Back the Blue was to solely support the Police and not against BLM. Our officers need our support more now than ever.

Danielle Winbush went out and researched the Back The Blue and that it an Act for American Activism campaign to build community support for local police officers with radical leftist protestors constantly vilifying our local Sheriff, it is our job to stand up to defend their honor.

Jo Schaffer would like to support what Sheila Cohen stated. We already support our PD. They are good and not under attack. Curbs belong to the City and she would like to know how these people are able to paint them.

Katy Silliman read a letter written by Abby Cleary stating she has had positive interactions with the Police Department. She supports the BLM.

Kristen spoke stating Back the Blue is to support our officers. She has heard a lot of hatred for those doing their jobs.

Sam Adams stated that she thinks that Back the Blue creates division. Being black doesn't mean you are a criminal.

Zahara F stated the statement regarding blacks being criminals is not ok.

Britt V. stated that she is a Back the Blue supporter. Have gathered over 500 signatures for support.

Mayor Tobin closed the Public Hearing at 7:26pm.

Public Comments

Reed Cleland stated he would like to offer a few comments regarding a commentary regarding the signs. He joined the "We won't be silenced" march in June. A blue life doesn't exist unless you're a smurf. You choose to be a Police Officer, but you are born black you don't get to choose not to be black.

Ward Report

Ward 8 – Only one issue that has popped up this week which was a resident was doing work without a permit and are now doing work with a permit.

Ward 7 – There was movement on Cooper Tools lot with hopefully getting that building tore down.

Ward 6 – Front Street has a house that is in bad shape and tickets will be issued if not cleaned up.

Ward 4 – Good to have students back and wearing masks. Thank you to all of those who spoke in the Public Hearing.

Ward 3 – Welcome back students. Had some concerns in some areas and thank you to those departments for helping.

Ward 2 – Welcome Back Students. Had a couple gatherings without masks in bigger groups.

Ward 1 – Storm brought a tree down on Chestnut and thank you DPW for your help. Has had concerns with Back the Blue painting and the timing is just not right.

Ward 5 – Has heard from numerous people stating it is not a good time for Back the Blue.

Mayor's Report:

Sidewalk replacement program conflict of disclosure read by Mayor Tobin. Matching program through Thoma for sidewalk repair. With regards to The City's Budget, we have taken multiple steps to help with loss. He is not proposing a budget to City Common Council yet as there are still uncertainty. Social Media is contributing to the issues we are seeing. Messages are not received how intended and Mayor Tobin is willing to meet and talk/conversate civilly.

Resolution #171 of 2020 – Resolution to approve minutes from August 18, 2020 meeting as amended.

Alderman McCarthy mentioned a few corrections.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Item #1 – Fred Pierce to discuss SUNY Cortland Plans regarding reopening.

Lorraine Lopez-Janove is SUNY Employee Chief Officer stated they are being very diligent with making sure students are distancing and wearing masks. Speak to understand not to be understood.

Resolution #172 of 2020 – Resolution to approve the exotic pet permit for a rabbit for a SUNY student.

Motioned by: Alderman Michales
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #173 of 2020 – Resolution to approve the Special event application for “Community Matters” on September 6, 2020 from 12PM – 5PM at Suggett Park.

Apryl Beatty stated Cortland has always been very community based. Looking to make it fair like with social distancing. There is going to be many games/events. There will be at least 30 volunteers helping to make sure people “Stay on Spot”, enforcing masks, hand sanitizer and strictly enforcing 25 people limit per station. This is a free event, completely supported by community businesses. There will be a station director and card member at each station. There is going to be more than a 100 feet between stations.

Alderman Silliman stated that this sounds exciting and wants to sign up. Alderman Silliman stated that she might have more people than expected. April stated that she has a backup plan for 50 people.

Two targeted groups of kids ages 2-10 and 10-16

Alderman Carpenter had questions regarding screening before entering.

Alderman Tytler suggested fencing off the park so there is one place to enter and one area to exit.

Motioned by: Alderman Silliman
Seconded by: Alderman Bennett

Approved: Ayes – 6
Nays – 2 (Alderman Carpenter & Alderman Beckwith)

Resolution #174 of 2020 – Resolution to approve Sound Device application for local radio station WXHC at “Community Matters” on September 6, 2020, from 12PM – 5PM at Suggett Park.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Chapman

Approved: Ayes – 6
Nays – 2 (Alderman Carpenter & Alderman Beckwith)

Resolution #175 of 2020 – Resolution to approve the waiving of the permit fee for the Sound Device Permit.

Motioned by: Alderman Silliman
Seconded by: Alderman Chapman

Approved: Ayes – 6
Nays – 2 (Alderman Carpenter & Alderman Beckwith)

Resolution #176 of 2020 – Resolution to approve 2d Request for Proposal for sale of property at 119 Pendleton Street. (See attached RFP)

Corporation Counsel is asking to change the deposit amount to be based upon the bid.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Michales

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #177 of 2020 – Resolution to transfer \$5,000.00 from Cortland City Police budget line A3120-5402.00 (Fuel) to budget line A3120-5416.00 (Firearms Training) to cover the cost of purchasing the necessary items required to complete fall firearms training.

Deputy Chief Sandy explained that they have a rigid training schedule to train and qualify with their firearms two times a year. Their policy requires this for accreditation.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #178 of 2020 – Resolution to approve Mayor to enter into agreement with a Thoma Development consultant for the Local Waterfront Revitalization plan.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Silliman

Approved: Ayes – 8
 Nays – 0

Item #7 – Consideration of a Resolution to approve the process sidewalk painting.

Discussion-

Alderman Carpenter stated that it is private property. Owner maintains it.

Alderman Beckwith agrees with Alderman Carpenter but need regulations on what they can paint and colors they can paint.

Alderman McCarthy has safety concerns for painting sidewalks. Spoke with Access to Independence and clarified that painting can cause problems with visual impairments/complications. There may also be traction concerns with certain paints.

Alderman Tytler agrees with Alderman Carpenter but sees Alderman McCarthy’s point.

Alderman Chapman is concerned with neighborhood division.

Alderman McCarthy also stated to possibly put a limit on time frame like with signage.

Alderman Silliman stated that there are already rules on what property owners can do with their property in the City. She suggested they use chalk.

Item #8 – Consideration of a Resolution to approve the process for curb painting.

Discussion on curbs. Need local law to have it not allowed. Municipalities use colors for parking.

Current curbs need to be as they were by April 1, 2021.

Item #9 – Consideration of a Resolution to approve the process for street painting.

Mayor Tobin stated that he believes the intentions of the Council and himself were the best of intentions with allowing people to express their opinions this evening. He recommends eliminating painting streets. Suggests resolution would be in the spirit of improving community relations with consideration of a resolution that paints over Black Lives Matter and postpone future potential street paintings until at the earliest April 1, 2021. This would allow Council the opportunity to thoroughly discuss and draft policy and procedures of how future streets should be painted.

Resolution #179 of 2020 – Resolution to paint over Black Lives Matter and postpone other painting until April 1, 2021.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman McCarthy

Approved: Ayes – 5

Nays – 3 (Alderman Carpenter, Alderman Beckwith, Alderman Michales)

Resolution #180 of 2020 – Resolution to approve 2 Vehicle charging stations in municipal lots.

Nic Dovi stated that it was part of the DRI and didn't make the cut. Mayor Tobin stated NYPA (New York Power Authority) is handling this and there is no cost to the City. There is a possible hosting fee and they will be looking into it.

Nic will look into other areas to get feedback on this.

Motioned by: Alderman Beckwith

Seconded by: Alderman Chapman

Approved: Ayes – 8

Nays – 0

Item #11 – Update on Cortland Forward Committee.

Alderman McCarthy stated that they would like to do a Community Read of the book “The Heat You Give”.

Item #12 – COVID19 and Response

Thank you to Residents for working with us.

Public Comments:

Amy Buggs wanted to say thank you to Council for the hard work done and thank to the response to the tree falling on Chestnut Street.

William Diescher stated that the BLM mural was approved after following all the guidelines. Back The Blue was approved and then denied after following all the guidelines. Money was spent on this already and they will want reimbursement.

Kristy stated the attack on police department is out of hand. You can't let one group paint a street and not another.

Kristen commented that the funding for BTB was raised and then the mural got denied.

Christine Townsend stated Back the Blue has been respectful and never once threatened Black Lives Matter.

Stephen Shoemaker stated that Back the Blue mural wasn't in response to the Black Lives Matter mural.

Resolution #181 of 2020 – Resolution to support a Community Read with Cortland Free Library this fall.

Motioned by: Alderman McCarthy

Seconded by: Alderman Michales

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Adjournment

Motioned by: Alderman McCarthy
Seconded by: Alderman Tytler

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 1ST DAY IN SEPTEMBER 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