



City Council Minutes March 4, 2003

The City of Cortland, New York

COUNCIL MEETING #5
March 4, 2003
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
City Hall
7:00PM

PRESENT: Mayor Mary E. Leonard
Alderman Faraoni, Tobin, Morey, Guido, Partigianoni, Quail, Testa, and Hennessy

Staff present: City Clerk, William J. Wood, Corporation Counsel Mark Suben, and Director of Admin. & Finance Andrew Damiano

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mayor Leonard asks that everyone remain standing in honor of Harvey Kaufman who passed away over the weekend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Dexter of Cedar St. compliments Mick Lowie and the Cortland High Basketball team. He discusses the planting of the trees in the public right-of-way and on private property close to the right-of-way.

Ruth Grunberg of 70 ½ Elm St. speaks with regard to Time Warner and the Cable Commission. She expresses her frustration with each.

MINUTES of February 18, 2003

RESOLUTION #40 of 2003 – Motion to approve the amended minutes of February 18, 2003.

By: Alderman Partigianoni
Seconded: Alderman Testa

Approved: Ayes - 8
Nay – 0

BILLS

Bills are received.

MAYOR'S REPORT

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The mayor acknowledges Harvey Kaufman and the contributions and dedication he showed to the City and the Community. He will be missed. There will be a college community forum on March 20, 2003 at the Access to Independence meeting room at 7:00PM to hear citizens concerns and to discuss topics of interest. This would be a good start for communication enhancement throughout the community. There are vacancies on boards and committees. If anyone has names, please pass them along. The Mayor congratulates the Cortland High Basketball team for getting to the finals.

NYCOM was interesting and troubling in some respects. Senator Schumer is proposing a federal revenue sharing this year. Monies will go to the localities as well as to the State. He is cosponsoring it with Senator Snow from Maine. The positives were a focus on intermunicipal cooperation, i.e. a consortium for buying things on a bulk basis. Some of the bad things are the retirement pension contribution issue. A representative from the Comptroller's Office was there to explain how this happened and how it came about. We are facing a very large amount of money. What the market is at the end of March will be the indicator of what our percentage is going to be. This is measured by the DOW and the Russell 3000, which is one of the equities markets. Revenue sharing we believe will stay the same but we really need to tighten the belt at the local level. She thanks Andy for making sure we have the cushion there.

City Clerk Wood notes the pension issue has really come to the forefront. Like all the other municipalities and school districts we are going to have to tighten our belts. He also was in contact with Speaker Silver and Senate Minority Leader Bruno regarding CHIP funding and they assured him we would not be cut.

Mayor Leonard explains we are required to discuss openly an application by a relative of one of your employees for senior housing rehabilitation program. Marcene Sherman has made an application and her son, Charles Sherman, is an employee of the City Fire Department.

WARD REPORTS

Ward 1 - Alderman Faraoni

Alderman Faraoni mentions his wife and he attended the Loaves and Fishes dinner dance and wanted to commend all on the committee for the good job they did. The crows have been being chased around the 1st ward. Garbage is attracting these birds. If we can get the people in the City to put the trash in a covered receptacle it might help.

Ward 2 - Alderman Tobin

Crows are in the 2nd ward. He discusses the infrastructure and the roads. We need to make sure our roads are travelable. He hopes the monies we receive will remain in place.

Ward 3 - Alderman Morey

She has had numerous calls regarding Groton Ave. Supt. Preston, Chief Nichols, Supt. Bistocchi, Jim Place, Building and Grounds Supt. Jim Sponougle and Dir. of Admin. & Finance Andy Damiano has put forth a lot of effort toward the repair of Groton Ave. She discusses the patching process. Supt. Preston wrote a letter to Gary Stevens who is the traffic engineer for

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the NYSDOT requesting the street be used for local traffic only. There was a deer that was hit and killed in the Groton Ave. area.

Ward 4 - Alderman Guido

Alderman Guido thanks the SUNY Cortland crews for taking care of the pathway making it much less dangerous for the SUNY students. Thanks Supt. Bistocchi and his crew for taking care of a dangerous situation on the corner of Tompkins and Pearl St. He asks Andy Damiano on the progress of hiring new Firemen. Mr. Damiano states interviews have been complete and they are going through the process.

Ward 5 - Alderman Quail

He is going to have his 5th ward meeting at City Hall at 7:30PM on March 12, 2003. He is concerned with parking on Reynolds Ave. During the day the students are parking on the side. They are looking into moving the restricted signs farther back. Good job to the Cortland High Basketball team. His condolences to the family of Harvey Kaufman. His wife was actually hired by Mr. Kaufman. We lost a true hero of our community. Commends Mr. Damiano for his letter on the budget.

Ward 6 - Alderman Testa

Alderman Testa has crows in the 6th ward. He attended the River Trail meeting. Mr. Teeter had a good slide presentation. He also had photos from other communities. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done. There were individuals there that had been involved in other River Trails. They were most helpful with regard to signage, wildlife etc. He briefly discusses the River Trail. There will be a meeting on March 26, 2003 for public input and local officials.

Ward 7 - Alderman Partigianoni

All is quiet in the 7th ward.

Ward 8 - Alderman Hennessy

Alderman Hennessy thanks Supt. Bistocchi for attending with her the tenant's association meeting at 51 Port Watson St. Many of the tenants have trouble navigating the intersection at Port Watson and Church St. He also looked at the drainage in that area.

AGENDA

Item No. 1 - Communities that Care will speak at the next meeting.

Item No. 2 & 4 Thoma Development presentation.

Anne Hothkins of Community Development speaks with regard to the Beautification Program. To date we have applications for 14 senior owner occupants and only funds for 18 applicants. Mrs. Hothkins explains that at the public hearing we will ask for a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement. Alderman Tobin feels it is a good program.

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Anne Hothkins briefly explains the Tree Planting Program through D & L Landscaping. Unfortunately the trees have to be in the public right-of-way. They try to choose trees conducive to this the power lines, branches, trimming, etc. Mayor Leonard asks if this is because of the source of the money. Anne states yes because we cannot plant on private property. Alderman Quail asks for a copy of this ruling. Anne Hothkins notes that when you are dealing with public works projects you are dealing with working in the municipal right-of way whether it is sidewalks or trees. There are some places in the City that the right-of-way is on the other side of the sidewalk.

A brief discussion ensues. Alderman Morey is concerned regarding how these trees will be used and who will get these trees. Mayor Leonard suggests that if she wants to have the trees in a different program then decide to put them some place else. Anne Hothkins states the popularity of the program is three times greater than it has been over the last couple of years. There are not trees for every request that is why there is a lottery.

RESOLUTION #41 of 2003 – designating D & L Landscaping as the contractor for the 2003 Tree Planting Program and authorizing the Mayor to enter into contact with said company.

By: Alderman Tobin
Seconded: Alderman Hennessy

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0-

RESOLUTION #42 of 2003 – amending Section 193-4 of the Code of Ordinances in order to establish a minimum fine of \$100.00 for noise ordinance violations (Alderman Tobin tabled on 2/18/03).

A brief discussion ensues regarding the court system procedures.

By: Alderman Tobin
Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

RESOLUTION #43 of 2003 – amending Article XII, Section 11-111 of the Code of Ordinances in order to delete Graham Avenue and West Court Street from the list of “school speed zones”.

By: Alderman Faraoni
Seconded: Alderman Quail

Approved: Ayes –8
Nays – 0

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter, contract negotiations and acquisition of real property.

By: Alderman Tobin

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Seconded: Alderman Quail

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

RESOLUTION #44 of 2003 – creating the position of Chief Water System Operator: in the City's Water Department.

By: Alderman Guido
Seconded: Alderman Tobin

Approved: Ayes –8
Nays – 0

RESOLUTION #45 of 2003 – establishing a salary of \$70,181 for the current Chief Water System Operator and authorizing a list of fringe benefits for the person currently holding the position.

Alderman Hennessy has some concerns regarding the salary level because of the comparison of other department heads. This person is supervising 9 employees and is making almost the same amount of money as the Chief of Police who is supervising 62 employees. Making considerably more than the Fire Chief who has 32 employees and about the same as the previous DPW Superintendent is making and he has about 30 people working for him. She wonders if it really makes sense to fund the position at this level when the position has lost some duties over the previous reorganization. The Mayor notes this is a \$98,000.00 package. The salary is what Alderman Hennessy is questioning. Alderman Tobin explains the salary was adjusted a few years ago by the Water Board. It was quite a bit lower. A brief discussion ensues. Alderman Quail asks Andy if this is a comparable salary for this position. Andy notes if it were a full Superintendent's position. Alderman Quail questions Director of Admin. & Finance whether the salary is warranted. Director Damiano explains it is a little high. If it were a traditional full Superintendent's position where there are a lot of administration duties and the factoring in of years of service in the organization. There are a lot of variables. Alderman Faroni asks what range Mr. Damiano is envisioning. Dir. Damiano states approx. \$55,000-\$65,000. If you're hiring off the street then it would need to be reduced. Alderman Quail states we are basically we are going to quibble over 5 or 6 grand. Mayor Leonard notes the Water Superintendent was giving a 9% contribution (health insurance); the package totals over \$98,000.00 dollars. Alderman Hennessy thinks several years ago when the Code Department was moved out of the Fire Chief's responsibility, his salary was reduced at that time because of the change in duties. Alderman Hennessy questions the funding of this position at this level. It has to do with the position. Alderman Partigianoni states he gave the workers his word that they would not be victimized. He is not going back on his word. He is not in favor of reducing the salary. Alderman Morey states we are paying for 31 years of service for this department.

By: Alderman Quail
Seconded: Alderman Morey

Approved: Ayes –7
Nays - 1 (Hennessy)

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Adjournment.

By: Alderman Hennessy

Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

Approved: Ayes – 8

Nays - 0

I, WILLIAM J. WOOD CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED AT A MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, HELD ON THE 4th DAY OF MARCH 2003. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED.

WILLIAM J. WOOD – CITY CLERK
