



City Council Minutes March 5, 2002

The City of Cortland, New York

COUNCIL MEETING #4
March 5, 2002
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
CITY HALL
7:30PM

PRESENT: Mayor Mary Leonard
Council Members Faraoni, Tobin, Morey, Guido, Quail, Testa, Partigianoni, and Hennessy

Staff present: City Clerk, William J. Wood, Deputy City Clerk, Jodi M. McLyman, Assistant Corporation Counsel, Stacy L. Whitney, Director of Administration & Finance, Andrew J. Damiano

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Steve Muka of 73 Evergreen St. speaks regarding what he feels is Mayor Leonard's refusal to formally appoint Corporation Counsel and City Clerk. He reads the powers and duties of the City Charter.

John Savastano, Public Relations Director of the SUNY Cortland Student Government, speaks on behalf of a festival downtown in which the SUNY Cortland Student Government is sponsoring April 7, 2002 at the County Office Building. This is a family event and he hopes all of the community will attend.

REPORT OF CITY OFFICIALS

None

Approve Common Council Minutes of February 19, 2002.

By: Council Member Hennessy
Seconded: Council Member Partigianoni

Discussion: Council Member Morey asks what benefit the City of Cortland has by not including discussion. Mr. Wood feels we are using the program the State has and we are using the same format as other Cities to allow the Clerk's Office to move into the 21st century. She states this is the State minimum. She feels this is the only record we have and more discussion should be included. She notes we are doing so much more and we should not minimize our standards. The Mayor states she does not feel we are minimizing the standards. Council Member Tobin mentions Bill Allen's comments. A discussion ensues.

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Motion Denied: Ayes – 2
Nays – 6, Faraoni, Tobin, Morey, Guido, Quail, Testa

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor attended the NYCOM conference. It was a good opportunity for her to meet a lot of the other Mayors. She will be hosting the next small Cities group in Cortland. She feels we should be paying close attention to the NYCOM Legislative Agenda. There are some issues regarding expediting Code Enforcement and making it easier and more efficient. Mandate relief was also an important topic. She announces the winners of the Youth Bureau Essay Contest and praises them for their work. She attended the Cortland Counts meeting this morning and the topic was a report on community health and how it effects policy decisions. Thanks Amy Simrell for hosting the Council meeting. There will be a BDC conference on March 25. It will include a breakfast, panel discussions, and speakers. The Business Showcase is March 16. There will be an unveiling of the new downtown logo.

Ward 1 – Council Member Faraoni

Thanks everyone for the get-well wishes. He is concerned about parking on Groton Ave. in front of the Elks Club. He remembers it was discussed at previous public safety meetings. Council Member Hennessy notes it was brought up in the past but voted down.

Ward 2 – Council Member Tobin

Thanks public safety for taking care of a tree limb on Hamlin St. He welcomes John's ideas on the Community Festival.

Ward 3 – Council Member Morey

The essay contest was wonderful. Cortland Counts is doing a great job collecting data. The meeting was wonderful this morning. Thanks the YWCA for letting her be a guest judge. She held her first ward meeting in which the topics were birds and barking dogs. Her next ward meeting will be March 20th at the YWCA. She discusses the crow issue and when the noisemakers will sound off. She inquires about the Grow Cortland Brochure. The Grow Cortland Committee has not yet made a presentation and no money has been paid to them. The City is also working on the traffic patterns during the Empire State and Senior Games.

Ward 4 – Council Member Guido

Congratulates the YWCA on the success of the Winterfest. He thinks the festival at the County Office Building is a great idea. Discusses the structural concerns of the Fire Station. He feels we need to start looking at an alternative site. Andy Damiano explains the study includes \$75,000 for a facilities study that will look at the Main Fire Station. Council Testa asks about the old report. Andy explains the old report does not address the apparatus floor. Ward meeting March 11 at the Barry School Library at 7:00pm.

Ward 5 – Council Member Quail

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Thanks the YWCA for hosting us. He had 45+ people at his ward meeting at City Hall. A copy of the ward report and minutes of the meeting are attached hereto and made a part thereof. (Thank you). Thanks Dan and David McNeil. They had many suggestions as to what to do with the Wickwire building. He thanks the election office for looking into new voting places. He attended the seminar on Land Uses and Zoning Amendments at the County Office Building. He is concerned that we have no site plan review for the City. He notes the student rental signs on properties and feels they are a disgrace. Code issues are a concern in his ward. He would like to assign Common Council Members to Commissions so they can attend the meetings and brief the Council on what is going on. He really wants to look at the acoustics in the Common Council Chambers.

Ward 6 – Council Member Testa

What do people do with the Styrofoam now that Tuscarora Plastics isn't taking them? Discusses trees that need to be taken down. He also attended the Zone and Land Use meeting at the County. Discusses the Aged Exemption and if an adjustment is possible. He is in favor of the Alderman attending Commission meetings.

Ward 7 – Council Member Partigianoni

He agrees about the Aged Exemption but someone will have to pick up the tax burden. He had over 40 people attend his ward meeting. The issues were the Marietta development and the River Trail. Linda Hartsock and some of her staff attended and they cleared up any misinformation that was out there. This is a long-term project. The residents of Peaceful Drive were in attendance and concerned. Homer will be the first phase of this. He has had Code issues. He is concerned about the property on Crandall Street. He briefs the Council. Congratulates Rita Wright from AWWV who recently received an award from Governor Pataki.

Ward 8 – Council Member Hennessy

She asks if anyone has contacted the Library with regard to keeping minutes there. Council Member Morey has and it's okay. She attended a meeting of the Cortland Business Network. They had a Director from the Small Cities Office who talked about the money available. Approx. 50% of the applicants actually get money. She is interested in the rear façade program especially the downtown buildings. If there is money for that she feels it is worth looking into. A discussion regarding the South Main Street project ensues. The pothole problem on that street is bad. Thanks John for coming and speaking about his project. The Cortland Counts Report is on line.

GUEST SPEAKER

Amy Simrell, Director of the YWCA addresses the Council. She thinks the YWCA is the largest downtown employer. The annual operating budget is about \$2,000,000.00. Every week they generate between 120 and 130 paychecks. They employ approx. 30-40 SUNY Cortland students and generate over 300 W-2's every year. This is primarily because the students come and go during summer breaks, etc.

There are four major programs. A large childcare program which takes care of about 1000 children a year. They operate three summer day camps. They run a domestic violence

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program. The YWCA also operates a large fitness program. They run a big brother big sister program. They are in need of volunteer's especially positive adult male role models. We have a waiting list of about 30-40 children they need matches for. She is delighted to host the Council this evening.

RESOLUTION #25 of 2002 - - Appointments to Board and Commissions as amended. (Attached)

By: Alderman Faraoni
Seconded: Alderman Tobin

Approved: Ayes - 7
Nays - 0

RESOLUTION #26 of 2002 – Directing the City Clerk's Office to provide copies of the Common Council meeting minutes and City Charter to the Cortland Free Library effective January 1, 2002.

By: Alderwoman Hennessy
Seconded: Alderman Partigianoni

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays - 0

RESOLUTION #27 of 2002 - Authorize the increase of the price of the small (13 gallon) blue bags to \$1.50.

By: Alderman Testa
Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

Discussion: Council Member Partigianoni feels these bags should not go up 50% if the others went up 25%. Council Member Testa feels this is an accommodation that were making to a specific population. Council Member Partigianoni wants it to be \$1.25. Andy Damiano explains there are fixed costs and variable costs or dumping and the fact it costs the same to pick up a 13-gallon bag as it does a 30-gallon bag. A discussion ensues.

Approved: Ayes – 6
Nays – 2 Partigianoni, Tobin

RESOLUTION #28 of 2002 – Authorize the adoption of the Community Development 2002 Miscellaneous Revenue Budget.

By: Alderwoman Hennessy
Seconded: Alderwoman Morey

Discussion: Council Member Tobin asks who does the web maintenance site. The Mayor notes Sue Reynolds is maintaining the web site on a monthly basis. That money was allocated as to what it could cost. Sue Reynolds was doing this on a contract with Graphics Plus. Council

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Member Tobin states this is the first time he has heard this. Andy states she has been doing this. Council Member Testa feels she is good. This cannot exceed \$10,000. If it is less this money will be considered unappropriated. They will be meeting with her and discussing costs. A discussion regarding tree and stump removal ensues. The Mayor would like to implement a program, which other cities have done whereas they make a memorial to somebody. Council Member Quail would like to see a web page instant messages for instance when South Main Street is under construction.

Discussion regarding the minutes: Council Member Morey reads the memo from the Clerk's Office. She feels it is ridiculous that they have to turn in a typed ward report. The Mayor asks how you resolve the problem of discretion which inevitably occurs when a person has to write down what he/she feels is important about what is being said. She asks Mr. Wood what lead to this? The Mayor states she has asked to have things included and essentially what we are having is a transcript of proceedings, which is not what the point of minutes is. Council Member Morey feels this is what always has happened. She gives examples. She offers these to the public and shows the audience. A lengthy discussion ensues. Council Member Testa does not feel he should have to type his ward report and hand it in.

Council Member Tobin makes a motion for verbatim minutes, Council Member Faraoni is asking for the way the minutes were done before, not verbatim minutes.

Council Member Morey is asking not to go backwards. She is not complaining about the minutes that your presently doing, the concern is not verbatim its accuracy. This is the State minimum. Mayor Leonard asks is it going to be the practice of everyone to not pick out one word or another. The Council states no. Council Member Testa asks it be written in the proper spirit. Mr. Wood notes one of the problems is when people are talking there are two or three different conversations going on with interruptions. It makes it very difficult to record what's going on. He won't change what one Council Member says someone else said. If that person has a change, that's fine. He does not want to be interpreting what the Council is saying. When the problem occurred, he looked into other Cities to see what they were doing to try to rectify the problem. This is what other Cities are doing. More discussion ensues. Council Member Guido wants to know why the Council was not included in the discussion with the City Clerk. Council Member Hennessy feels this is what we are discussing now. Council Member Tobin wants Cortland minutes.

Council Member Tobin makes a motion that he wants the minutes accurately.

Motion is withdrawn.

Council Member Tobin wants word by word minutes.

Motion is withdrawn.

Council Member Morey makes the motion;

RESOLUTION #29 - The minutes will be prepared reflecting the resolutions, the official acts, the discussion that takes place together with the ward reports, Mayor's report, and public comments.

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More discussion by Council Member Partigianoni, Quail, Testa, Morey, Hennessy.

By: Alderwoman Morey
Seconded: Alderman Faraoni

Approved: Aye – 8
Nay - 0

Mike Dexter of Cedar Street addresses the Council regarding Niagara Mohawk and the trees they are cutting. He is appalled at the job they did cutting the trees. He understands that they have to trim trees but the City should not plant trees underneath the wires if 10 years down the road NiMo is going to come and cut the trees. There are a number of trees in the City that are trimmed terribly.

LOCAL LAW - None

ORDINANCE - None

Adjournment

By: Alderman Partigianoni
Seconded: Alderwoman Hennessy

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 5TH DAY OF MARCH 2002. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED.

WILLIAM J. WOOD – CITY CLERK
