



City Council Minutes
The City of Cortland
January 6, 2009

Council Meeting #1
January 6, 2009
Regular Session
City Hall
7:00 PM

Present: Alderman Benedict, Dye, Tobin, Quail, Feiszli, Hamilton and Michales

Staff Present: Director of Administration and Finance Andrew J. Damiano, Corporation Counsel Lawrence Knickerbocker and City Clerk John O. Reagan

Mayor Gallagher calls the first Common Council meeting of the year to order at 7:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was present to speak.

Minutes of December 16, 2008

RESOLUTION #1 OF 2009 – Approve the minutes of December 16, 2008 as amended.

By: Alderman Quail
Seconded: Alderman Michales

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

Bills were reviewed and received.

Mayor's Report

He interviewed with WHCU, he attended the Downtown Partnership Board meeting. He provided the Proclamation to St. Mary's for their Annual Cookie Day. He attended the Loaves and Fishes Christmas Party. He met with Dick Tupper to discuss ongoing shared services with the Town of Cortlandville. He attended the swearing in ceremony

for District Attorney Mark Suben. He performed the swearing in ceremony for Alderman Chuck Hamilton. He attended the First Night Celebration and he extended special thanks to the First Night Committee for organizing the event at the last minute after it had been cancelled. He thanked Cindy Ryan who provided the DJ program; Hairy Tony's for providing the confetti cannon; Cortland Standard for putting up and taking down the ball and a special thanks to Little Big Shots Fireworks for their contribution. They did the whole fireworks program for nothing. He attended the open house ceremony for Habitat for Humanity.

He spoke about the empty blue bags being tied to the large garbage containers and expecting that those containers will be picked up. He noted that the garbage placed out this way was not being picked up and that garbage had to be placed in the blue bags.

He announced the retirement of Director of Administration and Finance Andrew J. Damiano. The Mayor noted that he had provided seventeen (17) years of valuable service to the City of Cortland and that due to health reasons, has retired. The Mayor acknowledged Andrew Damiano's many accomplishments over the years. He noted that Andy was tough, but always fair. He thanked him for his service to the City. He would be working with Andy to appoint a successor.

Ward 2 – Alderman Benedict

He had a few concerns regarding the three (3) unrelated in regards to the Rental Permit Program. He is looking into the house on Pleasant Street, making sure that it is taken care of.

Ward 3 – Alderman Dye

He received a few e-mails regarding the Rental Permit Program. He received a couple of phone calls in favor of the budget and the bond issue and extended thanks for keeping the tax increase at a minimum.

Ward 4 – Alderman Tobin

He extended thanks to who ever used the crow machine near Tompkins and Pearl Street this past weekend. He urged that neighbors be contacted before the machine was used as some of the recorded sounds sounded like shotgun blasts. He also noted that he would like to find out if there was a recording of those sounds from that machine that perhaps could be played on a home stereo system and that speakers could be placed in a window to scare the crows away. He answered some questions from some residents about the plowing of the streets. He attended First Night as well as the Open House for Habitat for Humanity House on Tompkins Street. He is looking forward to a new year.

Ward 5 – Alderman Quail

He attended the First Night. They did a really nice job on the fire works given the snow storm. The crows are definitely a problem for the City. He thanked Rob Avery and Jim Sponaule for their efforts in moving the crow machine around. He noted that garbage is a growing problem. People miss the garbage truck and then leave the garbage out for a couple more days and something needs to be done about that. He asked if the City ordinance on that could be enforced as the crows are attracted to that garbage.

He noted that for the past seven (7) years he has had the pleasure to work with Andrew J. Damiano and during that time Andy has provided him with insight and knowledge of the city government and how it works. He has made many difficult decisions, but has always put the City's interests first. He thanked Andy and noted that he would be missed and he wished him well.

Ward 6 – Alderman Feiszli

Her Ward has been quiet. She noted that there was an article in the newspaper indicating that the Riverside Plaza has a new sign. She didn't realize that Andrew Damiano's retirement was going to be on tonight's agenda and she hadn't prepared anything, but she noted that her prayers continued to be with Andy and his family. She thanked Andy for being her mentor.

Ward 7 – Alderman Hamilton

He received a call last night regarding barking dogs. It seems two (2) or three (3) dogs that are being left outside most of the time. They bark continuously. Sunday night, January 4th, the dogs barked almost non-stop from 4:30 PM when the resident returned home until 10:30 PM. The resident also said at other times they had to turn the volume up on their television to drown out the noise and asked if something could be done about this problem. This brought to light the need for enforceable, comprehensive animal ordinance in the City of Cortland. Earlier this year, this need was brought up a couple of times at Council meetings, but with more pressing issues, it was put on the back burner. He asked that this be put at or near the top of the "To Do List" for 2009.

He received a call on December 24 regarding car parking at a rental property. He called to say what a quick response he had received from the City Police Department and said that very effectively and professionally handled the situation.

He is pleased to announce that the first meeting of the East End Strategic Plan Advisory Board will be held later this month. He also announced that the East End Community Center will host another program in its History and Heritage Series on Sunday, January 25. Rita Alcorn and Stephanie Passeri will present a program on St. Anthony's Church. He asked that those who wished to attend RSVP to the Cortland Youth Bureau for reservations as space is limited to fifty (50) people. He noted that although he has only known Andrew Damiano for a short time, it has been a pleasure and that he had always been a real professional.

Ward 8 – Alderman Michales

He also attended the Open House and Dedication Ceremony for Habitat for Humanity's first green construction here in Cortland. Over the holidays he received some complaints about garbage being left on the curb and being scattered all over the place, especially on Tompkins Street. He agreed with Alderman Quail, that the Council needed to get a handle on the situation.

He extended his warmest feelings to Andrew Damiano. He has known him over five (5) years. He thanked him for being there and he acknowledged some of the tough the decisions that had to be made over the years.

Alderman Quail acknowledged all the work Alderman Michales had done on the Habitat for Community house.

RESOLUTION #2 OF 2009 – Consideration of the appointment of Alderman Dye as Acting Mayor for 2009.

By: Alderman Benedict
Seconded: Alderman Feiszli

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

Item No. 1 – Continuation of a discussion regarding the Rental Housing Permit Program.

Alderman Tobin noted that the draft had been given to both the City and County Planning Departments. He hoped that over the next few meetings if there are questions that need to be hashed out, or answered, they can be addressed. He didn't expect that they would have it back by the first meeting in February. He did ask if anyone had questions or topics of concern, they should let him know and they would discuss them at tonight's meeting or the next. Alderman Feiszli noted that she had received a call from an owner occupied rental unit asking if he had to pay an inspection fee for his own apartment. It was noted that that was part of the self-inspection. She felt that the Committee had done a phenomenal job.

Chief Glover has organized some data on the location of rental properties, trying to determine the volume of rental properties. He has plotted the properties on a map and then overlaid the zoning map on that. Alderman Feiszli noted that she had received a call regarding the cost of the inspections checklist. She wanted to know if the Council wanted set up a website link for the proposed permit program as well as the inspection checklist for the landlords review. The Mayor noted that once there was a final approval, it could be placed on the web. Chief Glover showed the slide of the pinpointed locations of rental properties that the Code Office was aware of and answered some questions from the Council.

Item No. 2 – Consideration of a discussion regarding the Freeville contract and its expansion.

On September 30, 2008, Director of Administration and Finance Andrew J. Damiano sent each of the Council members a copy of the Freeville Analysis. Director of Administration and Finance Andrew J. Damiano noted that there was a lot of room to work with Freeville to free up the numbers in the interest of expanding the revenue generated from that project. He isn't sure, but he spoke briefly with Harvey Davis of Wastewater Management about the expansion of those numbers. Harvey Davis was present and he indicated that he didn't think that they would have a problem with an increase as they didn't have many alternatives. He gave a history of how they came to use Cortland Wastewater facilities, the reasoning for a cost increase and his suggestion for a rate. Alderman Feiszli asked when the last contract ran out. The Mayor noted that it ended in 2010, but the City could terminate it within one hundred twenty (120) days and renegotiate. Harvey Davis felt that they could just enter into a renegotiation and he would speak with them and report back to the Council. It was noted that the current contract did include an annual inflation increase. Harvey Davis felt it was approximately two (2) percent a year.

RESOLUTION #3 OF 2009 – Consideration of a Resolution designating the Cortland Standard as the official newspaper of the City of Cortland.

By: Alderman Michales
Seconded: Alderman Quail

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

RESOLUTION #4 OF 2009 – Consideration of a Resolution designating the following bank depositories for City funds:

- A. Alliance Bank
- B. J. P. Morgan Chase Bank N.A.
- C. HSBC Bank, USA
- D. MBIS – Class
- E. M & T Bank

By: Alderman Dye
Seconded: Alderman Benedict

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

RESOLUTION #5 OF 2009 – Consideration of a Resolution designating Elaine Doe and Lori Crompton as the signators on all accounts.

By: Alderman Dye
Seconded: Alderman Quail

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

RESOLVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS A PERSONEL ISSUE ON A SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL.

By: Alderman Benedict
Seconded: Alderman Tobin

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

RESOLVED TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AND INTO THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING.

By: Alderman Benedict
Seconded: Alderman Tobin

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays - 0

RESOLUTION #6 OF 2009 – Consideration of a Resolution to appoint Andrew J. Damiano as the Interim Director of Administration and Finance at a rate of fifty-five dollars (\$55) per hour on an “as needed basis” as determined by the Mayor.

By: Alderman Quail
Seconded: Alderman Feiszli

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

Adjournment

By: Alderman Michales
Seconded: Alderman Benedict

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 0

I, JOHN O. REAGAN, CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, HELD ON THE 6th DAY OF JANUARY 2009. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED.

JOHN O. REAGAN – CITY CLERK

MAYOR THOMAS GALLAGHER