

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC SAFETY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 25, 2022**

Attendance: Jenn McMurrer, Chair; Dominique Johnson; Nicol Ayers; Heidi Alterman; Bryan Meek

Staff: Michele DeLuca, Deputy Director Emergency Management; Deputy Chief Susan Zecca, Deputy Chief of Police; Tina Fogell, Director, Personnel and Labor Relations; Paul Sotnik, Senior Engineer, DPW

I. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Ms. McMurrer called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES-JUNE 23 AND JULY 12 (SPECIAL)

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 23, 2022, AS SUBMITTED.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION- MR
MEEK.**

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 12, 2022, AS SUBMITTED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Lauricella said in the past the members of the Personnel Committee were usually accorded performance interviews from the mayor's office before being asked to vote for automatic pay plan increases and asked that this occur because performance reviews are needed.

Ms. Lauricella said in the 1990's there was a Local Emergency Planning Committee in which she chaired and it was a committee that involved community outreach and asked when the item is discussed that it also include the possible use of civilians beyond the committee that Ms. DeLuca puts together for public health emergencies that would include hazardous materials emergencies and climate emergencies, and she is happy to speak with anyone offline on how successful the Local Emergency Planning Committee was.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Police Department

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE UNDER THE FY 2022/23 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$32,235.00. ACCOUNT #TBD

Deputy Chief Zecca said this is a routine grant that is usually awarded every year and is used towards selective enforcement, patrol etc. Based on the needs of incidents that are occurring at the time.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. AUTHORIZE THE CHIEF OF POLICE, THOMAS E. KULHAWIK TO EXECUTE AN AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS AND /OR AMENDMENTS THAT MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT. \$33,235.00. ACCOUNT TBD.

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE AN AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENT, AND INSTRUMENTS WITH THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION FOR THE USE AND IMPROVEMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES IN WILTON, CT.

Deputy Chief Zecca said this is part of the overall radio system project and are leveraging an existing state tower to install equipment and will need an agreement with the state.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT, SHARON CONNORS, TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER UNDER STATE CONTRACT PRICING FOR TEN VEHICLES PER NORWALK PURCHASING GUIDELINES NOT TO EXCEED \$420,000. ACCOUNT# 092230105777

Deputy Chief Zecca said getting vehicles has been difficult due to the supply chain issues so this authorization is very generic. She said in the capital budget the police department was allocated for ten marked patrol cars and the state contract bid was extended until September but is only for the 2022 Ford Explorers which can longer be ordered but are expecting that the state will be going back out to bid for vehicles and once that bid is awarded will use the vendor that is awarded the state contract. She said the lead time to purchase vehicles is increasing to extended lengths of time and they would like to order the vehicles as soon as the contract is awarded to mitigate the delays as much as possible. Ms. Ayers asked if these are the same vehicles that were discussed during the budget when purchasing electric vehicles was discussed. Deputy Chief Zecca said “no” these cars are part of the allotment for July 1, 2022, and they currently have ten hybrid vehicles on order. Mr. Meek asked once received if the vehicles will still need

to be fitted out for safety gear. Deputy Chief Zecca said “yes” and the outfitting the vehicles is under a different contract and different vendor. Ms. McMurrer asked if the hybrid vehicles are difficult to get if regular gas-powered vehicles would be purchased. Deputy Chief Zecca said “yes” if they need to, but the intention is to order hybrids.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1. AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TO HAVE SOUTH NORWALK ELECTRIC AND WATER INSTALL TWO (2) NEW STREET LIGHTS ON THE EXISTING UTILITY POLES ON BATES COURT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ATTACHED PLAN AT AN APPROXIMATE ONE-TIME FIXED COST OF \$960 AND AN APPROXIMATE COST OF \$40 PER MONTH, TO BE PAID FOR FROM ACCOUNT NO. 0140 86-5266

Mr. Sotnik said that DPW will periodically receive requests from the public to add additional streetlights to the existing grid system and have received a request from M.F. Discala and Company to have streetlights added on Bates Court. Mr. Sotnik presented the proposed location and said the lighting in the proposed area. He said the cost to install the light will be \$960 and electricity cost per month is approximately \$20.00 per light for a total of \$40/month. Mr. Meek asked if there is a revenue component to this. Mr. Sotnik said “yes” and that it is in the overall taxing rate. Ms. Ayers asked if there is a standard rate that is charged. Mr. Sotnik said monthly fee is based on the kilowatts that are used per month but is an approximate cost of \$20/month, but the fixed rate fluctuates as SNEW charges to install the light fixture and arm and there is no contract in place to cover those costs.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TO HAVE EVERSOURCE ELECTRIC INSTALL THREE (3) NEW STREET LIGHTS ON THE EXISTING UTILITY POLES AT THE NORTH, SOUTH AND WEST APPROACHES TO THE INTERSECTION OF DOVER STREET AND PROSPECT STREET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ATTACHED PLAN AT AN APPROXIMATE COST OF \$60 PER MONTH, TO BE PAID FOR FROM ACCOUNT NO 014021-5241

Mr. Sotnik said this is another request that was received, and a petition was submitted by the residents of both Dover and Prospect Street and is in the Eversource territory and presented the proposed locations and said that unlike with SNEW there is a contract in place to cover the installation of the lights there will be no fixed cost and the cost for the light will also be \$20/month.

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PERSONNEL AND LABOR RELATIONS

1. 2022 ANNUAL SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR ORDINANCE EMPLOYEES: IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REVISED PAY PLAN FOR NON-UNION, APPOINTED AND ELECTED OFFICIALS, THE CITY IS REQUESTING THE COMMON COUNCIL'S AUTHORIZATION AND APPROVAL FOR THE MAYOR TO ADJUST THE PAY SCHEDULE OF EMPLOYEES COVERED BY THIS PLAN BY 2.35% EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022.

THIS ADJUSTMENT TO THIS PAY SCHEDULE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PAY RATE ADJUSTMENTS RECEIVED BY THE CITY'S UNIONIZED WORKFORCE IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 22 CITY EMPLOYEES COVERED BY THIS PAY PLAN, AND THE FUNDING HAS BEEN ALLOCATED IN THE APPROVED CITY BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 22-23

Ms. Fogell said she is requesting the 2.35% salary increase be instituted for the 22 ordinance employees retroactive to July 1, 2022. Mr. Meek asked if evaluations were done for the 22 positions and requested a list of the 22 positions not including personal identifiable information. Ms. Fogell said she will send the list of the positions and that she is still in the assessment period but at this point there does not seem to be a formal robust evaluation for ordinance or any other staff members in the city and she and the mayor have spoken about this extensively and she is in the process of presenting him a proposal for evaluations and will implementing a process in the very near future. Mr. Meek asked if the increase is more related to COLA rather than based on performance. Ms. Fogell said "yes" and are inline with the increases in the collective bargaining contracts. Ms. Ayers asked if evaluation process will be based on the evaluations that the union employees are going or if she is looking at a different metric of evaluation. Ms. Fogell said as part of the efficiency study a recommendation was made institute an evaluation process for the bargaining union employees and would probably do something similar for ordinance employees. Ms. Ayers said because these are public administrators the evaluation should include looking at the deliverable of services and the interaction with other employees as well as the public. Ms. McMurrer asked how long before the evaluation process is in place. Ms. Fogell said her first priority has been recruitment and her second priority will be the evaluation process and she is planning on presenting something to the mayor at the end of September or the beginning of October. Ms. McMurrer thanked Ms. Fogell for bringing this to the attention of the committee because it is very important to give constructive feedback and praise to our employees.

**** MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**** THE MOTION WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) OPPOSED- MR MEEK.**

V. DISCUSSION- TIME PERMITTING CAN BE MOVED TO SEPTEMBER'S AGENDA

- **SEPTEMBER-NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH/ HOW COMMON COUNCIL AN ASSIST IN EMERGENCIES.**

Ms. Deluca presented and said that September is National Preparedness Month and focuses on making preparedness easy and accessible for residents and encourages residents to have plans for all family members and to have a meeting place outside of the home and to build a kit with everyone in mind. She said that at least once year residents should review their home/renters insurance policies to understand what is and what is not covered and take a home inventory along with photos and to visit www.flash.org for resources to protect their property before, during and after a severe weather. She also suggested

teaching the youth as well as adults to prepare for disasters and how to stay safe and navigate through a potentially scary situation and suggested visiting www.ready.gov/kids.

Ms. Deluca said events that are done throughout the city such as the annual Norwalk Public Safety Open House and Touch a Truck and also work with the Police Department on their National Night Out and this year she is working with the libraires and senior centers to promote safety as well as with Mr. Lamont to get the information out to his community's partner groups.

Ms. Deluca presented the city's priorities after a storm and how the Common Council members can help and said the first 24-48 hours after a storm, they work with the utilities to be sure that all roads are open for emergency vehicles, conduct search and rescue operations, conduct damage assessments and shelter operations and public information. She said that 48-72 hours after a storm they continue to clear roads and debris, continue damage assessments, work with the utilities on restoration, provide access to potable water and continue shelter operations and public information/communication. She said that beyond the 72 hours they continue with debris management, continue to work with the utilities on restorations, track costs for possible FEMA assistance and coordinate with the state and other partners on response and recovery needs.

Ms. Deluca said before the event the way the members of the Common Council can help is to encourage their constituents to prepare and remind them to contact their electric providers if they have any electric discrepancies, sign up for text alerts/apps from their electric/utility providers, encourage them to stay informed about weather updates and where the shelter is located if it opens and share information from trusted sources.

Ms. Deluca said after the event the way the members of the Common Council can help is if residents are contacting them directly to encourage them to contact customer service to help that the issue is documented and tracked, remind residents to report outages to their provider, encourage residents to stay off of the roads so that DPW and others can work, remind residents not to drive thorough deep standing water or walk around downed power lines and assume all power lines are active and if there is a major disaster to encourage their constituents if they had damage to report it and share information from trusted sources.

For additional resources visit:

- www.ready.gov (information in multiple languages/formats)
- www.FLASH.org – Federal Alliance for Safe Homes
- www.FEMA.gov
- **City's website:** Hurricane Spotlight/ Snow center

- **Helpful Apps:**
- FEMA
- ARC- Emergency
- CT Prepares
- Accuweather

Mr. Meek said that cellular service is a vital part of the emergency response system said the cellular providers need to partner with the city because there are parts of the town where the cellular service is miserable and asked if there is anything that the city can do to bring this to a forefront. Ms. Deluca said

there have been some conversations with AT&T and Verizon but can follow up and agreed it needs to improve.

Ms. McMurrer said that everyone should at least be following the police department on social media but also suggested following the city, fire department and emergency services on social media because there are a lot of really great resources and encouraged the Common Council members to share those on their social media pages.

Ms. Ayers asked about volunteering for disaster emergencies and what it entails. Ms. DeLuca said the health department received funding to have a staff person to focus on volunteers and the Emergency Response Team is through the health department and have a dedicated staff person that manages that team and are also trained in sheltering to work with the Red Cross.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd