

SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

February 15, 2011

Paul Stoelting, President, called the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Other council members present were Jeff Morgan, Bill Musser, Larry Siegel, and Brian Woody. Town Manager Henry DeJulia, Town Attorney Mike Reed, and Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline were also present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Paul asked for public comment on agenda items; there were no comments.

The minutes of the January 18, 2011 meeting were presented. Bill moved to approve the minutes; Brian seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. Jeff abstained. The motion carried.

Claims #115 through #238 were presented for payment. Jeff moved to approve the claims; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Resolution 2011-1, an Economic Development Income Tax Fund Capital Improvement Plan, was presented. Henry advised in the past we have spent this on industrial development; with this plan, we would continue that. Brian moved to adopt Resolution 2011-1. Larry seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

The trail easement agreement with Paragon-Klc Syracuse LLC was presented. Larry moved to accept the easement agreement and authorize Paul to sign the document on behalf of the town; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Paul announced Bill Dixon, of the Fire Territory Board, was present and needs to leave early; he suggested we move discussion of the Fire Territory appointment to now. Larry made a motion to move the Fire Territory discussion; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried. Marc Henn was present and spoke about his interest in serving on the Fire Territory Board; he presented his qualifications on power point printouts. Mr. Henn explained he was asked by Mr. Dixon what he hoped to accomplish. Mr. Henn stated he is interested a high quality, safe, and always in the best interest of the community and firefighters, fire protection service, with a budget that balances this with tax payer interest and looks forward to the future. Paul asked Mr. Henn if he would be available every month; Mr. Henn replied typically he is gone two or three weeks a year. Paul asked him about his knowledge of equipment and construction; Mr. Henn advised he has some knowledge of equipment, not much knowledge of construction. Paul added there needs to be agreement with the township on the appointment. Bill asked Mr. Henn if he originally remonstrated against the Fire Territory. Mr. Henn explained he was not against the fire territory, but the tremendous budget. Bill asked if he has changed opinion. Mr. Henn stated he likes what has been done; he does not want to see the Fire Territory go backward. Larry asked Bill Dixon if he had any questions for Marc; Bill Dixon explained he was present to explain the process the township went through. He explained he will not comment tonight, since he is just one member of the board. There needs to be discussion on the record in an effort to improve the relationship with the town. He advised the Township sought an individual with skills that were relevant that the existing four members don't have. He added John Heckaman (township designee) didn't seek

the position. The township advisers sought him for his mechanical ability and his work with employees doing physical jobs. Mr. Dixon stated the council needs to make their own decision.

TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Henry DeJulia announced the design proposals for onsite improvements in the Industrial Park are due February 18, and the grant administration services proposals are due February 28. Henry stated he has previously asked council permission to do a Phase I Environmental. He noted he gets different answers on when this should be done; the banks and economic development directors suggest it should be done now. Henry added the study is good for 6-12 months. Wightman Petrie suggests we do the study later. Henry would like to do it now because of the investment we are making. Henry recommended spending \$2,000.00 to get the study done. Bill asked what the Phase I covered. Henry explained the study goes back in time to see what has been there; for example, they are especially looking for leakage of oil or burial grounds. Henry advised we need to know what is there. Discussion followed on the need and what has already been done. Paul asked when we will we start the project. Henry stated once the design engineering is done, we will then put the entire project out for bids. He expects the design to take anywhere from one to four months. Henry again stated when we are investing the kind of money that we are; we need to know.

Brian moved to approve hiring Wightman Petrie for a Phase I environmental study for \$2,000.00. Jeff seconded. Bill agreed with Paul that we might consider waiting. After discussion, five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Henry introduced discussion on hiring an engineer to work with the construction engineer at an hourly rate as needed. Henry feels this would protect us. Brian disagreed; he feels that would be double paying. Larry agreed with Henry; Larry stated it provides oversight. Discussion followed on situations in the past. Paul asked if we aren't putting the horse before the cart. Larry noted we have this in the budget. Henry stated it would be for change orders or issues that may come up. Paul questioned why Henry is asking for this now. Henry stated he would like to have everything lined up. Larry would like to have someone familiar with the project. Brian asked if we can discuss this later; Henry stated the council does not have to act on it today. Mike Reed suggested we see who would be available and what their rates would be. Jeff questioned how we can hire an engineer today; it could be the same person that bids on construction engineering. Henry asked the council if they agree with the concept. After further discussion, Henry agreed to check with engineers on availability and rates.

Henry advised for the EDI grant, he is waiting on materials from them.

Henry discussed the consulting proposal from London Witte; their charges are based upon the work completed. Brian moved to approve the engagement letter from London Witte with the scope as listed for a cost not to exceed \$21,250.00; Henry is authorized to sign the document. Larry seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

POLICE

Police Chief Tony Ciriello advised there were 316 calls for service in January. Tony went over the arrests from January. Tony presented his Five Year Crime Comparison report; he noted there are 212

more calls than the year before. Tony explained the drug cases are down due to our participation in the drug task force; previously we worked more independently. Larry asked about making ephedrine a prescription. Tony explained there are two bills. One is a tracking bill sponsored by Senator Yoder; there is also a hearing tomorrow on Representative Kubacki's bill on making it a prescription. Tony expects the two bills to be combined. Larry asked about synthetic marijuana bills; Tony stated there is currently a federal ban. In addition, there are several bills that have been introduced in the state. Bill asked why we are the hotbed here. Tony advised meth is primarily a rural drug.

Tony commended the public works department for the fine job they did during the major snowstorm that we had. This helped the police and kept traffic accidents down.

Tony updated the council on the hiring process for the new officer. There were about forty applicants; that was reduced to a couple of dozen. The physical agility test is scheduled for Saturday. Tony hopes to present a candidate at the March council meeting.

Tony advised a couple of weeks ago a police car was totaled by an intoxicated driver. He has been working with that driver's insurance company. We were offered a reasonable settlement for the car and the equipment; he noted if we asked for more money it could tie things up. Tony explained that vehicle is used by Officer Denton, who is our crime scene tech. He had a lot of equipment crammed in trunk. Tony is looking into an SUV with more room; we can build an organizer in the vehicle. He noted this would also give the department a four wheel drive vehicle if it is needed. Tony provided several options and prices. If we went with a regular patrol vehicle the cost would range between \$22,000.00 and \$23,000.00. If we went with an SUV, the cost for the Dodge Durango police package is about \$26,000.00, and the Ford Explorer police package would be about \$25,000.00. The insurance company will pay us \$12,892.00 for the 2007 Crown Vic; the police department would need about \$13,000.00 more. The price of the Durango is \$25,997.00. There will be eight to ten weeks for delivery for either vehicle. Larry asked Tony which vehicle he would like; Tony answered he would like Dodge Durango from Country Auto out of Plymouth. Tony noted the purchase would be through the QPA from the state, so we don't need to bid again.

Brian moved to approve the purchase of a 2011 Dodge Durango from Country Auto for \$25,997.00. Larry seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

PARK

Park Superintendent Chad Jonsson advised a \$10,000.00 Harkless Grant was received for Vega Field. The Park Department is using that money for design of the field. They have also applied for an \$80,000.00 grant from the K-21 Foundation for Vega Field.

The Cabin Fever Indoor Yard Sale held last Saturday had 26 booths and there were 300 to 350 shoppers. The adult basketball league began last Sunday; twelve teams are participating.

Chad discussed the two openings on the Park Board. The Park Board recommends Jeff Nicodemus and Paula Kehr-Wicker. One of the park board terms expires at the end of 2011, and a second appointment expires in 2013. Brian asked if Paula could serve, since she is employed in the clerk's office. Mike Reed advised he did already check into that, and she can serve. Larry moved to appoint Paula Kehr-Wicker to the Park Board for the term ending 2011 and Jeff Nicodemus to a term ending in 2013; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS

Brian complimented public works on their work during the January snowfall; Larry praised the teamwork of all town employees. Public Works Superintendent Jeremy Sponseller announced the new bar screen is up and running. VRCM has ground the brush pile. There are now four large piles of mulch that residents can take for free. Jeremy hopes the Louie's Lift Station repair will begin at the end of this week or the beginning of next week. Jeremy reported for streets and sidewalks, he is recommending a continuation of last year. Last year we paved the areas where people park on the side of the access roads. Jeremy would like to top coat the access roads and the newly paved areas. Jeremy also recommended paving Chicago St. Those projects would take up close to the amount of funds allocated. He asked the council for input on areas they would like to see paved. For sidewalks, no new large areas are planned; a bunch of repairs are needed, especially in the older part of town. Jeremy advised he is working on the design of sidewalk bridge. Brian asked about the bucket truck; Jeremy stated it is still on order. Larry asked Jeremy if he has looked into grinding uneven sidewalks. Jeremy answered he will look into it.

Jeremy advised street lights are needed in Forest Park. NIPSCO has approached Jeremy and told him that previously there were private lights in that area and those have been removed. Jeremy recommended the town install two 150 watt dusk to dawn lights @\$248.70 each per year. Brian made a motion to install two streetlights in Forest Park at the appropriate wattage; Bill seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

Jeremy discussed the purchase of a vehicle lift that was approved last month for a cost not to exceed \$10,000.00. He explained he has found a lift in Indianapolis for about \$2,700.00; however, the business is a cash and carry place. He would have to make payment when he picks up the lift. Brian authorized Julie to write a check for \$2,695.00 to Greg Smith Equipment for the lift; Jeff seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

CLERK

Clerk Treasurer Julie Kline discussed additional appropriations for the council to consider. The first would be \$900,000.00 of EDIT funds; \$800,000.00 is for our match for the EDA grant, \$40,000.00 for contingencies, and \$60,000.00 for grant administration. Paul moved to have Mike Reed advertise for an additional appropriation of \$900,000.00 from the EDIT Fund; Brian seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

The contract with London Witte and the purchase of the new squad car, which were approved earlier in the meeting, will also require additional appropriations. Also, Henry would like the council to consider allowing him to buy a different vehicle. Henry explained his 2001 Ford Explorer has 83,000 miles on it. Tony advised it used to be a police vehicle. It is top heavy and shimmyes when it is driven; it is not safe for police pursuits. Mileage is 10 mpg or less; we will need to spend money on it if we keep it. The trade in value is about \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00. Paul questioned spending \$20,000.00 on a new vehicle. Tony advised Henry is looking at a lightly used vehicle for about \$18,000.00; less trade in, the total cost would be \$15,000.00 to \$16,000.00. Larry would like to wait on deciding that purchase; the

rest of the council agreed. Julie also asked the council if they would like to appropriate additional money for sidewalk improvements, since the trail bridge over Harkless Dr is expected to cost up to \$50,000.00. Julie noted a total of \$54,000.00 is budgeted for sidewalks this year. The council will wait for more information before considering budgeting more for sidewalks.

Larry made a motion to advertise for additional appropriations from the Rainy Day Fund totaling \$34,355.00; Brian seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney Mike Reed had nothing further to report.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Ben Plikerd commented he represents the uptown businesses; the street department does a phenomenal job cleaning up winter snowfalls. There is a problem on S.R. 13, because it is a state highway. The crosswalks on S.R. 13 are bad. Ben asked if town personnel could get snow off the sidewalks when S.R. 13 is plowed. Jeremy advised he is trying to get a hold of the state to determine what our options are. Henry stated we are looking at making no parking areas and cleaning as much as we can before the businesses open, and then moving to the other side the next day. Larry asked if we can make emergency snow routes. Tony advised a snow emergency covers the whole town; we can restrict parking section by section until it is cleaned up. Jeremy advised on Main St they blade off the snow into the street and then clean it up. On S.R. 13, we cannot do that. Tony and Jeremy will continue to work on it and put a contingency plan together.

OLD BUSINESS

Paul introduced discussion on the Fire Territory issue. He stated at some point we need to make a recommendation. Discussion followed. Brian stated he can live with John Heckaman or Marc Henn. Larry stated his preference would be Marc Henn. Paul said Marc Henn made a good presentation. He would like someone who will be fiscally responsible; Paul added he doesn't know Mr. Heckaman. Jeff stated Marc's level of interest is something we shouldn't turn down. Bill asked what the next step is; does the council vote or is it the duty of Bill and Larry as Fire Territory board members to make the appointment. Mike Reed advised it is a council appointment. Larry moved to appoint Marc Henn to the Fire Territory Board; Jeff seconded. Brian asked what is next. Mike Reed advised we notify the township; if they agree, they would also appoint Mr. Henn. If they do not agree, there is no mechanism in the agreement. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried. Henry was instructed to write a letter to the township about the appointment.

NEW BUSINESS

Brian advised he received a complaint about telephone trucks parking in the alley behind Wawasee Interiors; the trucks are blocking exit from the garage. Tony agreed to check into it and report

back. Brian noted the snow piles are very high at the intersection of S.R. 13 and Boston St; visibility is blocked. Jeremy agreed to trim down the piles; he asked council members to notify him if they find any other areas that need attention.

Paul move to adjourn the meeting; Jeff seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

The Syracuse Town Council adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

Paul Stoelting, President

Julie Kline, Clerk Treasurer