

SYRACUSE TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

January 17, 2017

Town Council President Tom Hoover called the Regular Meeting of the Syracuse Town Council to order at 7:02 p.m. Council members also present were Larry Siegel, Bill Musser, Paul Stoelting and Larry Martindale. Town Manager Henry DeJulia, Town Attorney Vern Landis, and Clerk-Treasurer Paula Kehr-Wicker were also present.

Tom Hoover opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Tom asked for a moment of silence to pay respects to four wonderful people that the Town has lost within the last couple months; Jeffrey Rostochak, Dana Arthur, Kim Conrad, and Stephen Conrad II.

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

The minutes of the December 20, 2016 meeting were presented for approval. Larry Siegel moved to approve the minutes; Bill Musser seconded. Four voted for the motion; none against. Paul Stoelting abstained. The motion carried.

Claims #'s 1 through 136 were presented for payment. Paul moved to approve the claims; Larry Martindale seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Henry DeJulia referred to discussions regarding the effluent flow from and billing to Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District. He reminded the council that the 40-year municipal agreement between Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District and the Town of Syracuse was enacted on December 29th, 1987. In the contract, both parties agreed to a division in the expenses of processing sewage from Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District. He explained that the total cost of treatment is the sum of Debt Service charges, the strength of waste, volume of flow, and a proportionate share of operation and maintenance expenses of the treatment plant. This has been calculated the same way for 30 years. Henry stated that the only things that have changed in the billing costs come from the increase of flow and the extensive repairs needed at the sewer plant. He stated that we have notified Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District prior to the start of our wastewater treatment plant rehabilitation. He announced that Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District has only paid 50% of the past two billings. Henry states that Turkey Creek did not inform us that they were not going to be paying the full of amount of their bills. Henry also states that the contract benefits not only residents in the Town of Syracuse, but the 600 – 800 units in the Turkey Creek district to which we provide treatment. It was stated that in previous years the flow from Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District was excessive enough to cause sewage back-ups on Medusa Street. That also forced us to put in check valves at no cost to them. Henry stated that Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District requested information from us and we have provided them our appropriation report for both 2014 and 2015 that shows the total amount received and disbursed for each appropriation in each Wastewater Fund. We also gave them a History by Fund report that shows every claim paid from each appropriation. Larry Siegel stated that we have never refused treating their sewage. Henry explained that we have met with Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District a number of times. Rob added that they met with the board president one time and he set up a time to meet with him and their attorney but the attorney called and cancelled. Since then, we have not had any communication with Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District. Rob added that Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District was quoted in the newspaper as saying that they had requested that we attend their meeting but we refused; which is false. Larry Siegel explained that if Turkey Creek would like to talk to us, they are more than welcome to come to our meetings or even stop by and talk to Henry. He stated that we are very accessible and very open to any type of communication and resents the inflammatory comments in the newspaper. Bill Musser stated that he believes Henry should be responsible in setting up a meeting with them. Rob informed the council that, although he has a good working relationship with him, the operations manager for Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District,

Tim Woodward, was instructed not to have any contact with the Town of Syracuse after they hired Umbaugh and Associates. Larry Martindale questioned whether we could cut them off. It was explained that it would be a lengthy process to legally do so. Paul agreed with Bill's suggestion on having Henry set up a meeting with Turkey Creek Regional Sewer District within the next 30 days, which would include Rob and the president of the Town Council. Confirmation was made that the charges on their bill had gone up temporarily. Rob explained that a portion of their bill is based on previous years' expenditures. Since a majority of the construction project was paid for last year, that would explain the increase in their bill this year. Larry Siegel stated that Turkey Creek was made aware of the construction project before it even happened. Rob mentioned that the price variable per gallon of sewage has not changed since the start of the contract, but our cost of treating the sewage has gone way up.

Henry stated that we still need to appoint someone to replace Larry Martindale for the Board of Zoning Appeals term from 2016-2020.

Henry announced that we received \$4,000 from the Harkless Grant for beautification.

Henry informed the council that the department heads would like to increase their spending limits from \$1,500 to \$6,000. Henry explained that there are certain cases that a good deal has come up for a limited time that the town would lose money on due to the time it would take to request permission to make a purchase for more than \$1,500. Henry gave the example of the Police Department needing to purchase a \$300 item for each officer. They would have to split up the order which would cause them to lose out on discounts or bulk pricing. Henry also gave an example of Public Works needing to buy a pump or maintenance items. Paul stated he believes this was discussed before and agreed that if it was a depreciable item or a maintenance item, it was to be an exception. Jim explained that purchasing certain items in pieces also requires more shipping charges. Paula suggested to have a policy written up in the form of an ordinance or resolution so that it would be clearly spelled out and available to reference back to. It was agreed to expect a proposed ordinance or resolution for next months meeting.

POLICE

Police Chief Jim Layne asked for any questions from the council regarding his monthly report or the yearly report. Bill asked how close we were to exchanging vehicles that have high mileage. Jim stated he will be sending a packet out next month referencing some issues with the older vehicles. He explained that he has more problems with the Chevy Impalas than he does the older Ford that has 123,000 miles on it. He believe he could keep the Ford running and working longer, therefore, he will be requesting to change out one of the Impalas before replacing the Ford.

Jim announced that the police department is currently taking applications for Reserve Officers until next month. He currently has 3 but would like to increase manpower in preparation for summer. It would require physical agility and other similar testing as required for full time officers.

Two ADA complaints have been received. First is the main doors on the west side of the building. Elderly and disabled people are having difficulty opening these doors. And the second complaint is the Clerk's Office door, which gets the most traffic, is a fireproof door which makes it too heavy for some to open. Jim is requesting permission to get quotes on installing automatic openers for these doors. Council has agreed to allow Jim to get quotes.

PARK

Park Superintendent Chad Jonsson reported that the basketball league has started. They are anticipating 10 teams this year. Since the weather has not been cooperative, we have had issues with the ice rink at the athletic complex. A smaller, temporary, ice rink has been installed at the Lakeside Park Pavilion. The Winter carnival, scheduled for the 27th and 28th, may have some events delayed by a couple weeks due to the unseasonably warmer weather. The Chamber of Commerce's events will remain as scheduled. Chad asked if there were any questions on that or for Park items in general. There were none. Chad discussed the Tree Summary that will be submitted to the Arbor Day Foundation for our Tree City USA application.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Superintendent Rob Merchant reported that the Water Plant metering is still going on. He also reported that the Water Plant filters were inspected and has shown some water loss. He stated that L. A. Electric has repaired some wiring for the sludge press. R.E. Crosby has shown up to work on the U.V. channel. Rob stated that there are 5 street lights that are not working up town. Temporary wiring has been installed and they are currently working on getting quotes for boring under the road and installing new wiring. Triad is working on getting us quotes on a replacement for the current aeration system. Larry Siegel asked who was going to pay for the cost of the replacement. Rob replied stating that it will be an issue that needs to be discussed and resolved. He believes that Aeration Industries is not at fault since they sized the equipment according to the specifications they were given from the engineer. Henry stated that he feels we can't make much of a decision until we get quotes for a product that will actually work.

FIRE TERRITORY

Mickey Scott asked if there were any questions on his report. He is requesting approval to purchase 3 I.V. Pumps that are needed. \$10,500 was budgeted for them at \$3,500 a pump. They would be purchased from Horizon Medical and delivered within 30 days. Larry Siegel moved to approve the purchase of the I.V. Pumps; Bill Musser seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried. Mickey stated that they have the Insurance Service Office coming in April. Home Owner's Insurance companies use the I.S.O. ratings to establish their premiums. Larry Siegel asked who is responsible for the lake hydrants. Mickey answered that it would be the Fire Department. They are inspected in the fall and spring. The Fire Department does not have certified ice divers that would be able to inspect them in the winter. Bill Musser commented that there is no fire hydrant in the downtown area of Syracuse. The Council advised Public Works to install hydrants on Main or Huntington Street. It was stated that the School maintains their own hydrants, similar to industrial parks and housing communities.

CLERK

Clerk-Treasurer Paula Kehr-Wicker reported that she will be voiding checks that are over 2 years old. Paula also requested a motion to approve the list of Purchase Orders to be paid from 2016 funds. The total amount is \$247,771.87. Larry Siegel made the motion; Bill Musser seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried. Paula stated that she received R. E. Crosby's Pay Application number 11 in the mail on Friday, after the deadline for the claims docket. She is requesting approval from Council to pay R.E. Crosby for \$15,206.65 and the Retainage Fund for \$800.35. Discussion followed on the process of the retainage. Bill Musser made the motion to approve payment to R. E. Crosby and the Town of Syracuse Retainage Fund. Tom seconded the motion. Five voted for the motion; none against. The motion carried.

TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney, Vern Landis, had nothing to report at this time.

DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Sharon Fowler asked if there is a state law that requires municipalities to keep tape recordings of all proceedings. Vern answered that he does not believe they have to record them on tape. But they do have to keep minutes. Vern and Paula stated that municipalities can keep tape recordings but it is not required to do so. She stated that "they" do not keep "half way decent" minutes and do not include certain things. She asked if that constituted a situation where it would possibly be a misdemeanor. Vern stated that there wasn't any that he was aware of. Sharon asked what the council feels about black mold in homes and wanted to know if there should be an ordinance on the books. Larry Siegel mentioned that he thinks it is a Board of Health issue. Sharon stated that she called the Board of Health and asked them why there weren't any advertisements in regards to drug

infiltrated homes that are closed up, when there is meth in the home, much less black mold. She stated that the Board of Health responded that anyone could call them with an address and they could inform the person if there have been any issues. Sharon stated that was not satisfactory and that people need to know about those types of homes. Sharon then asked if the Town of Syracuse has an ordinance against family working for the community or the city. She asked if that would be a conflict of interest. Henry stated that there are a few employees that are related to one another but there isn't an ordinance against it. Sharon stated that maybe there should be. The Council then asked her why. She explained that she has a feeling that other people have one and that Syracuse isn't any different. Tom explained that he knows many communities that have family members working for them. Sharon stated that she knew that but feels it creates a conflict. She mentioned family consisting of ex-husbands and ex-wives. Tom stated that if there is a problem, it gets handled. Sharon stated that it isn't a problem that she has, but that she feels it could be. Tom relayed that it hasn't been a problem with the Town, and asked the other members if they think it is a problem. Larry asked Jim and Paula if they had a problem with it, and both responded that they did not. Larry commented that Sharon may be referring to Nepotism, and that the state already has laws in place regarding that. Sharon claimed that we want to be a good community here and feels we shouldn't allow certain situations to happen. Discussion followed.

Another resident made a comment that she really appreciates that the Town leave the Christmas lights up a little while longer in the winter.

OLD BUSINESS

There is nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS

There is nothing to report.

Larry Siegel moved to adjourn; Paul seconded. Five voted for the motion; none against.

The Syracuse Town Council adjourned at 8:06 pm.

ATTEST:



Tom Hoover, President



Paula Kehr-Wicker, Clerk-Treasurer