

# **CITY OF BATAVIA – SPECIAL CONFERENCE MINUTES MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2021**

Present were Council President Jankowski and Councilmembers Bialkowski, Briggs, Christian, McGinnis, Pacino, Canale, Karas, and Viele.

In attendance from the City of Batavia were Raymond Tourt, Chief Napolitano, Chief Heubusch, Lisa Casey and Lisa Neary.

## **Call to Order**

Council President Jankowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

## **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilmember Briggs led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Bail Reform – Rose Mary Christian Discussion**

Councilmember Christian noted that in 2019, bail reform law went into effect and these laws have harmed the police and their ability to do their job. She asked Council to send a letter to the Governor, judges, etc to ask them to repeal the law. She felt that if it came from Council as a body it would mean a great deal. Mrs. Tabelski noted that the item was in the package to discuss in Albany but it was brought by the minority so was not addressed on the floor. Chief Heubusch noted that there were not a lot of violent crimes that took place here so it has been less of an issue than in bigger cities but he provided some statistics from NYC and noted that officers were very frustrated with the new laws. He noted the laws were tough on victims and there was a parole legislation package but only some parts passed. Councilmember Christian asked if a letter from them would help. Mrs. Tabelski didn't know if a letter would help because the legislature is basically done for the year but thought a letter to the police association may help. Council President Jankowski noted that no one seems to be listening to the complaints and COVID distracted any movement there was.

## **Police Station Feasibility Study Presentation**

Mrs. Tabelski noted that the police station feasibility study was complete for Alva Place, gave an update on the current condition of the station, and that no less than five studies had been done to determine the future of the police station starting in 1991. A power point presentation was made to highlight the study's findings. Chief Heubusch noted that the boiler system was 50 years old, the main entrance is where everyone from victims and guests to suspects enter, there is not elevator and the waiting room has a leaky roof. He also noted that there are heating and cooling issues, the officer's meeting room is adjacent to the administrative offices, and the exterior is in poor condition. Mrs. Tabelski noted that Alva Place was recognized as the second best location based on recommendations from the

review committee a few years ago but felt it was the best place because we already own that location. Ken Pearl from Architecture Unlimited, LLC was introduced and presented their findings. He noted that the first question was whether or not the police station would fit in the Alva Place location and there were four criteria that needed to be met including needing to make sure there was still enough parking for the public and there could be a secure parking area. They also considered how much underground infrastructure was needed. Mr. Pearl stated that, based on the study, yes, there was enough space on Alva Place to build a police station and it was a good location. He noted that he was a little less confident about the cost estimate because of the current fluctuations of the environment. He gave a bottom line estimate of \$10.8 million and noted that the schedule was based on estimates through 2023. He showed the floor plan in a separate rendering on the tripod to show how the building rooms would be laid out. Mrs. Tabelski noted that she had started analyzing the ability to finance this construction and we certainly have the ability to fund it but would also look for grant opportunities. She did explain that there would be little room for borrowings for other projects, however. Mrs. Tabelski went on to review the current costs to improve the building but noted we were trying to put as little as possible into the building while keeping the employees and visitors safe. She felt a new building at Alva Place was the right thing to do.

Council President Jankowski noted that this had been going on so long that if we had built this years ago it would have cost millions less. He stated that we have wasted tens of thousands of dollars on studies that keep telling us the same thing – we need a new station. He hoped that material costs would come down by the time construction began to save the City money but felt that if balanced properly, the debt would come off on some items so we could keep the debt level. Mrs. Tabelski noted that the next step would be obtaining RFQs for architectures, surveyors, etc. Councilmember Bialkowski asked if there were any plans for the old building. Mrs. Tabelski noted that the plan was to put it out to RFP so the City could control the use of the building. She noted that we didn't want to hold up the new police station project because of the old building but there were plans for the old station. Councilmember Bialkowski asked if there was any citizen committee on this. Mrs. Tabelski reminded him of the task force formed in 2015 that identified the Alva Place location as the second best location behind Swan St. Councilmember McGinnis was on the task force and noted that they spent a lot of time on the study, the current station was not up to code by any standards, we talk and talk and talk but do nothing. He noted that we keep kicking the can down the road but there was no more can and no more road. Councilmember Bialkowski asked if all rooms met minimum requirements that were needed for interview rooms, holding cells, etc. Chief Heubusch noted that they were and they worked painstakingly on this to make sure all requirements were met. Councilmember Canale noted that it must be frustrating to have leaky roofs but offered the left over buckets from the mall. Council President Jankowski noted that the citizens group made recommendations in 2015 and now it was Council's time to make a decision and move forward. He apologized that the public was upset that they couldn't be part of the police station design but that was done for security purposes. He felt if they waited any longer it may be even more expensive.

### **Police Station Flat Roof Replacement**

Mrs. Tabelski explained that the project estimate is now \$100,000 but it still could be

funded with reserves. She recommended moving it to the next business meeting. She noted that it was at least a 30 year old roof but the usual life was 15 years. Council suggested moving the item to the business meeting immediately following.

#### **Public Infrastructure Project – Ellicott Place – RLF Grant**

Mrs. Tabelski noted that the old Save-A-Lot project wants to replace sidewalks adjacent to the building and the owner was requesting a grant from the Revolving Loan Fund. She noted that the owner was responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalk per the agreement with Super Duper back in the 1980's. Council agreed to move the item to the next business meeting.

#### **Petition to Rezone 211 ½ East Main Street**

Mrs. Tabelski reminded Council that a few weeks ago they had approved the rezoning of 211 East Main Street and it was thought that the new building would fit on 211. However, it was subsequently determined that the new building was too big to fit entirely on 211 and 211 ½ now also needs to be rezoned. She noted that 211 ½ is the parking lot. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting immediately following.

#### **Year End 2020/2021 Budget Transfer**

Mrs. Tabelski explained that to close out the prior fiscal year there were a few budget transfers that needed to take place. She noted that the total of the adjustments could be covered by contingency. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting immediately following.

#### **Authorizing Budget Transfers for use of Reserves for Health Insurance Fund**

Mrs. Tabelski noted that there were several high value claims this year and thus was requesting use of reserves to cover these costs. She recommended putting more into reserves as we could to keep a strong balance. She noted there would be an actuarial study and was interested to see where the City stood regarding health insurance. Councilmember Bialkowski suggested increasing the premiums the employees pay. Mrs. Tabelski stated that was something that would have to be negotiated with the four unions. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting immediately following.

#### **Close Out Capital Projects**

Mrs. Tabelski suggested closing out several capital projects that were complete. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting immediately following.

#### **K-9 Committed Fund Balance**

Mrs. Tabelski noted that a portion of the fund balance was released for the K-9 program but reminded everyone that donations were always accepted for the K-9 fund. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting immediately following.

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**Special Conference Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Heidi J Parker  
Clerk-Treasurer**