

CITY OF BATAVIA – CONFERENCE MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2020

Meeting was held via Zoom video conferencing and was live on Facebook to allow public viewing of the meeting. Present on Zoom were Council President Jankowski and Councilmembers Bialkowski, Briggs, Christian, McGinnis, Pacino, Canale, Karas, and Viele.

In attendance via Zoom from the City of Batavia were Matt Worth, Ray Tourt, Shawn Heubusch, Stefano Napolitano, Rachael Tabelski, Lisa Neary, Lisa Casey, and City Attorney George Van Nest.

Call to Order

Council President Jankowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilmember Pacino led a prayer regarding the coronavirus situation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Communications

None.

Council President Report

Council President Jankowski announced the next City Council Business meeting to be held on Monday, June 8, 2020 at 7:00pm at the City Hall Council Board Room, 2nd Floor, City Centre.

There was supposed to be a discussion brought by Councilmember Bialkowski but we are waiting for information from the BID who discussed the topic at their meeting this morning. This item is postponed.

Investment Policy

Mr. Moore noted that the City wanted to add BankonBuffalo, formerly Bank of Akron, to the investment policy as a designated depository so we could take advantage of favorable rates they were offering in this time of very low interest rates. He noted that the current investment policy didn't include that bank and want to move this item to the business meeting immediately following so it can be added and we can proceed timely. Council President Jankowski noted that the City Clerk prepared the memo and ultimately wanted to open up the policy to allow any financial institution for investments. Mrs. Parker explained that eventually we want the City Manager to be authorized to allow the use of any established financial institution, not for operations, but for investments so those investments can be made timely and without the need to change the investment policy each time a new financial institution is needed. She stated that for now, we are just looking to add BankonBuffalo but will eventually change the policy to be less restrictive. Council President Jankowski thought that there should be consensus from the City Clerk, the Deputy Director of Finance and Assistant City Manager in addition to the City Manager so if there are any issues with the chosen bank, at least one of those people would probably

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be aware before any funds were transferred. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting immediately following.

Fund Balance Policy

Mr. Moore noted that there have been discussions internally to determine what we can do to get ourselves in a better financial position. He noted that because of challenges we are facing that the City needs to increase the allowed amount of unassigned fund balance from 10% to between 15 and 25%. Mr. Moore stated that our lower target should be to hit the 15% but want to be able to have 25%. He noted that this extra unassigned fund balance would give us some funds in case no money comes in and that 10% provides about five weeks of cushion but 25% gives us about three months. Mrs. Neary, Deputy Director of Finance, stated that this needs to be a policy that meets our best interest so we just the policy to allow us to make this change. Council President Jankowski noted that there could be a point where it is too much but it is money we can protect ourselves with. He noted that we can't use reserves because that money is restricted for specific use. Mr. Moore noted that there have been some discussions about possibly having some flexibility with the reserves and he would update Council by the end of the week as he had more details. Council President Jankowski stated that it was frustrating to see the money in reserves and not be able to use it, especially in emergencies. Mr. Van Nest noted that there are a very prescriptive set of requirements on what municipalities can do and further explained the proposed new legislation. Councilmember Canale wanted to make sure he was understanding correctly that we would be able to borrow our own money and then pay that fund back? Mr. Van Nest noted that capital reserves could be used for capital expenditures and some could be used for covid related expenditures and would have to be paid back, with interest, over five years. Council President Jankowski felt that it shouldn't be such a one-way trap and it was difficult to understand why we couldn't use that money for emergencies. Councilmember Christian asked if we borrowed from the sewer fund at one time. Mr. Van Nest didn't recall but noted that if we did borrow we would have to closely follow guidelines. Mrs. Neary noted that we could use sewer fund money but not money from the sewer reserve. She also noted that we may be able to not fund the reserves that were budgeted in the 2020-2021 budget. Council President Jankowski asked if Mr. Van Nest could look into our requirement to fund the reserves. Councilmember Canale wants to know for a fact what we can and cannot do. Council agreed to move the item forward.

Agreement with New York State Department of Health for the Replacement of Lead Service Lines

Mr. Moore noted that the City received a grant for \$554,112 to replace lead lines in the City and there were multiple steps to the process. Mr. Worth explained that this was a full grant and no match was required but the City crews would do in-kind investigations to get the most out of the grant. He noted that we want to replace as many lines with the funds that we have. He also wanted to remind the public that if water has not been used in a while there was always the possibility of contaminants in the water so run it a little bit before using to freshen it up. Council agreed to move the item forward.

Lead Services Grant Project Engineer Selection

Matt Worth, Director of Public Works, noted that the City had to do an RFP for these services, the selection team reviewed the submittals and selected GHD as the engineer. He noted that GHD has done a lot of this same work with Buffalo and Binghamton already and that is a benefit to the City. Council agreed to move the item forward.

Grant Consultant Jackson Square

Mr. Moore explained that he had been working with Mr. Worth on this project and was at the stage where we need help with the administration of the grant. He noted that they would be going out for an RFQ for this DRI project and the cost would go against the DRI funds. Mr. Worth noted that they would start receiving letters back tomorrow, the level of checks and balances were very cumbersome, and if you screwed it up you could lose funds. He stated that they would have information regarding cost in tomorrow, would get the details to Council well before the June 8th meeting, and there were a lot of moving parts that needed to be coordinated. Council agreed to move the item forward. Mr. Worth noted that mall roof work was 35-40% complete and may be done by the end of June.

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Conference Meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Heidi J. Parker
Clerk-Treasurer**

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