

**City of Port Jervis  
Finance/Insurance Committee  
Minutes for Meeting May 28, 2015**

Present: Committee Members Frank Bell, Kevin Cunningham and David Bavoso. Also in attendance were: Kelly Decker, George Belcher and Robin Waizenegger City Clerk-Treasurer .

Absent: Stanley Siegel

Finance meeting opened at 6:05 p.m. Chairperson Frank Bell opened the meeting and referred to the agenda.

**Tax Freeze** – Mrs. Waizenegger informed the committee that the Local Government Efficiency Plan was submitted so that our taxpayers can get the tax rebate checks which are slated to be mailed in October from NYS. She disbursed a paper copy and also distributed a soft copy via e-mail to the council.

Mrs. Waizenegger also reminded them about the need to pass a tax cap law to have available the opportunity to exceed the cap. The law would be repealed if the budget stays under the cap.

There was some discussion of the feedback from the west end beach closure. Most feedback came from Non-city residents. Kelly asked if the insurance company would bend from No swimming to swim at your own risk. Mrs. Waizenegger indicated that the insurance requirements are no swimming allowed.

**Audit** – Mrs. Waizenegger explained that the audit firm is scheduled to do their field work the first week of June whether we are ready or not.

**Water Collection** – Mrs. Waizenegger wanted the Council to understand the policy change necessary to re-levy the outstanding water receivables on the tax bills. She indicated that she will have no choice but to follow through with the tax lien sale process in November for 2014 water and then in December will re-levy the water to the tax bills so it will feel like it is being done twice this year. She really wants the Council to understand that this will result in lowered penalty revenues for the 2016 budget. The reduction cannot be recovered through the earlier collection as the interest rates on available cash flow is minimal at approximately 1%. With respect to the properties in Deerpark or only methods for collection are court action and/or shutoff.

**Human Resources** – Mr. Bell stated that he asked that Human resources be put on the agenda due to the visit by NYS DOL safety and health division. There recently was a fatality in Orange County due to a chainsaw accident and therefore they are visiting municipalities to check all required trainings. She noted that the City has been non-compliant with trainings with the exception of the police department. There is no established protocol; for monitoring this from an HR perspective within the City.

She indicated that through Chief Worden's relationship with an insurance carrier we will have access to free on-line training and we have already started to have people trained. However documentation of the training is still problematic. In addition Mayor Decker indicated that ISO should also be done as well.

Mrs. Waizenegger indicated that her office does not have the personnel capacity or expertise to be a full compliance human resource office. She warned that eventually you will suffer for not having a fully qualified and certified HR professional. Discussion ensued regarding the function of the Civil Service Commission versus an HR department like Orange County. Mayor Decker also indicated that working without appropriate IT support is also problematic in the City. George Belcher questioned how the City will afford these additional costs given our slumping revenues. Mayor Decker and Mrs. Waizenegger indicated that there is no easy solution and that a large increase in taxes, sever cuts or putting the City into receivership are some of the options, however distasteful.

Mayor Decker indicated that he believes that the Non-Homestead versus homestead tax laws killed the commercial business in Port Jervis.

Mrs. Waizenegger reminded the committee that the other users of the Civil Service Commission also have no qualified HR professionals either including the entire Port Jervis School District. It was discussed that there exists a need to do a shared HR service but it will be an added cost and as such would not qualify under the efficiency program as the current Civil Service Costs are minimal. It was noted that the current Civil Service authority performs no HR functions other than strict civil Service Administration.

**Old Business:** 2% tax cap law previously discussed.

**New Business:** Mrs. Waizenegger noted that Credit card processing will not be operational until July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Decker brought up the hire of part-time grass cutters to bill property owners. Mrs. Waizenegger indicated that DPW should have some flexibility to use his current staff due to the reduced hours they worked in earlier weeks. Mayor Decker was unsure of the availability due to the canal project in the upcoming weeks.

Mayor Decker indicated that he may have a few potential candidates for rental of the City owned property formerly known as the Wells property. Committee members are supportive of having building occupied via lease or sale on a first come first serve basis.

Mayor Decker questioned regarding the use of interns. Mrs. Waizenegger indicated that there is policy recently passed with respect to police that may be applicable.

Mrs. Waizenegger indicated that we are still operating the Senior Nutrition program without a contract.

It was noted that presently the two clerks have achieved the basics of A/P and Payroll. Mrs. Waizenegger noted that she will have to assign taxes and water to them with the full knowledge that these workloads are too heavy to handle. It was noted that the office right now has a part-time clerical assistant thru the end of July. It was noted that we do not have the budget available to hire any additional help. Mrs. Waizenegger discussed the need for an additional position at the Deputy level. There was discussion of the testing requirements for the Deputy position which is problematic for hiring.

There was discussion regarding the use of benefit time after resignation. It was noted that supervisors have to take a hard stand on approval of time off after resignation which circumvents the payout provisions in the Union contract. She gave several examples of how the provisions of the contract are being circumvented.

**Public Comment:** none

**Executive Session:** none

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. Next month's meeting - June 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.