

**CITY OF ITHACA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
December 1, 2020
7:00 PM**

The regular meeting of the City of Ithaca City Council held and conducted via Zoom in conformity with Open Meeting Act (Pubic Act 228 of 2020) was called to order by Mayor Schafer at 7:00 p.m. and followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Mayor Schafer gave the invocation.

Present were Mayor Alice Schafer and Councilpersons James Andrew, Brett Baublitz, Scott Gray, James Gruesbeck, Clark Hubbard and Rick Koppleberger. Staff present were City Manager Jamey Conn, Clerk-Treasurer Barbara Fandell, Chief Dave Nelson- and DPW Director Bob Studt.

Absent was Councilperson and Attorney Jefferson Arnold.

Audience in attendance was Abby Whitford.

Moved by Hubbard, second by Gray to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of November 17, 2020. Motion carried.

Mayor Schafer asked for approval of the Agenda. City Manager Conn asked to add a dumpster request to the agenda. Mayor Schafer added Item 10B Dumpster Request. Moved by Gray, second by Hubbard to approve the Agenda, with the addition of Item 10B Dumpster Request. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Mayor Schafer asked for public comments. Miss Abby Whitford introduced herself as a student from Mrs. VanDeWeghe's class. Mayor Schafer welcomed her.

Moved by Andrew, second by Koppleberger to approve the Claims submitted to the Ways and Means Committee by City Clerk-Treasurer Fandell and recommended for payment: Accounts Payable Checks #47034-47054 and Payroll Checks #16027-16041, DD17360-DD1745, EFT #1196-1202 as listed in the Check Register Book. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Mayor Schafer reported the Committee of the Whole met to discuss a COVID Time Policy for employees during the pandemic. City Manager Conn expressed that the policy was drawn up for full-time employees and not part-time as part-time is backfilled with other staff so in theory the city would be paying double. Councilperson Hubbard remarked that if someone is forced to be quarantine, they should be paid. One issue with approving for part-time is the Council would be spending the library budget. Councilperson Gray agreed with Hubbard and should also try a revisit the Library personnel issue.

City Manager Conn furthered shared that Director Studt spoke with former retired employees, Jack Martin, Will DeVuyst and Mike Allen. All three would be willing to hired as temporary employees should COVID cause a loss of DPW staff and backup drivers needed in the event of a snow storm. A wage would have to be set. Two of three still have an active CDL.

Moved by Baublitz, second by Andrew to authorize the City Manager to hire Mike Allen, Jack Martin and William DeVuyst as temporary employees if needed, at a rate of \$20.00 per hour. Motion carried.

Moved by Hubbard, second by Gray to reinstate vacation or sick leave time used by full-time employees for COVID-19 sickness or required quarantining since October 14, 2020. Motion carried.

City Manager Report

City Manager Conn provided a written report which included policies on COVID Time, hiring practices, City Clerk position, Greater Gratiot Development Board representative appointment, SLIPR, GESA, GESA Services Contract, 2005 Trailblazer and the Annual Employee Appreciation Award/Dinner.

Moved by Gray, second by Hubbard to approve the Letter of Understanding to adopt the COVID Time Policy for the AFSCME Union employees. Motion Carried.

Moved by Hubbard, second by Koppleberger to Amend the Employee Personnel Handbook to include the COVID Time Policy for Non-Union employees. Motion carried.

City Manager Conn requested direction on adding a Hiring Policy for the City which would allow the City to post positions internally before posting to the general public, but still giving the City Council the option to bypass the internal posting for positions if it so chose. City Council instructed him to draft a policy and bring back for review.

City Manager Conn received a request from Jim Wheeler, President of GGDI, to have the City Council appoint a replacement for Councilperson Koppleberger as he is unable to attend the meetings due to his work schedule. The board meets on the third Friday of each month at 7:30am.

Moved by Hubbard, second by Gray to appoint Brett Baublitz to the Greater Gratiot Development Board. Motion carried.

City Manager Conn presented the Gratiot Emergency Services Authority (GESA) contract for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services for approval.

Moved by Gray, second by Koppleberger to approve the Gratiot Emergency Services Authority contract for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services contract and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign. Motion carried.

City Manager Conn informed the City Council that the building lease with Mindful Therapy was set to expire. He asked for direction on renewal or if the lease would be offered to GESA as they also have interest in it. The current agreement has a 90-day notification in the agreement. Chief Dave Nelson stated that GESA is interested in taking over the building for a permanent office. Mayor Schafer stated that Mindful Therapy has been a good tenant and would hate to end the lease, Councilperson Gray agreed that now is not the time to put any business in a position of having to relocate and could see GESA leasing the building in the long term as that would make sense. Councilperson Hubbard asked if GESA could hold meetings at another location and Manager Conn said it could. Chief Nelson said it is hard to find enough space in the fire hall and the office in the fire hall does not have enough privacy. General consensus of the City Council to have the City Manager discuss the lease renewal with Mindful Therapy.

City Manager Conn stated the GESA Board would like the use of the 2005 Trailblazer and then have it transferred with the other assets in April if the City Council still desired to transfer the vehicle at no cost. He discussed with Treasurer Fandell and at this time the Council could approve the asset transfer of the vehicle from the General Fund to the Fire Fund at book cost.

Moved by Andrew, second by Gray to transfer the 2005 Chevrolet Trailblazer from the General Fund assets to the Fire Fund assets at depreciated book cost. Motion carried.

City Manager Conn requested direction on the Employee Appreciation Dinner as it would not be allowed to be held this year. Options were to 1) move to the summer, 2) cancel it, 3) use the budgeted funds to create and provide DDA Dollars to all employees and board members to be used at a City of Ithaca business if approved by the DDA, or 4) other option as council proposed. Years of Service for employees would be held off until next year's dinner.

Moved by Gray, second by Baublitz to use the budgeted funds for the Employee Appreciation Dinner and give equal amount to all employees and Board members of the City in the form of DDA Dollars. Motion carried.

City Manager Conn informed Council that the light for the Pine River/Center Street intersection and signs have been ordered and will arrive within four weeks.

Clerk-Treasurer Fandell reported the Community Center doors quote is currently being updated and will be scheduled once the final quote is received to make sure it falls within the approved amount of \$15,000.

New Business

There was no new business.

Old Business

City Manager Conn updated the Council on the AFSCME Union contract renewal. He has talked with the stewards and they are in agreement and Robert Huber has no issues so the contract will be presented at the next meeting for approval.

City Manager Conn received a request from Ryan Smith for a space to place a dumpster behind the 146 E. Center Street building. Councilperson Hubbard shared that the Council discussed this in the past but no solution was made. Councilperson Gray added that the refuse trucks need access and the DPW needs room to plow also. Clerk-Treasurer Fandell shared that when the parking lot was paved and reconstructed with the CDBG grant, dumpster pads were put in to accommodate the buildings. Councilperson Koppleberger added that there is a pad there for a dumpster for the building. It was used when he owned the building and should be there for Mr. Smith's utilization. It is by the telephone pole.

Public Comment

Mayor Schafer asked for public comments.

Chief Dave Nelson thanked Manager Conn for the work he has done with getting GESA done. He was very instrumental as was the City Council and thanked them for their effort. He said he appreciated the current and previous City Councils' support. He stated as he transitions from the City to GESA, he knows there is a lot more work, but is proud to have worked for the City and for having an excellent fire staff.

Councilperson Hubbard asked that a Technology Committee meeting be set. The committee will meet December 10, 2020 at 6:00pm via Zoom meeting. Clerk-Treasurer Fandell stated a Committee of the Whole will meet on December 15, 2020 at 6:15pm to review the annual audit via Zoom meeting.

City Manager Conn informed Council that it was time for his annual review. Councilperson Gruesbeck and Chair of the Personnel Committee requested the review be delayed until such time that it can be done in-person. Mayor Schafer agreed.

Mayor Schafer asked for any additional business to come before the Council. None was offered.

Moved by Baublitz, second by Gray to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.

Barbara Fandell, City Clerk-Treasurer