

**Auburn City Council
Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 30, 2020 5:00 P.M.
City Council Chambers
Memorial City Hall
24 South St.
Auburn, NY 13021**

Minutes

The meeting of the Auburn City Council was called to order at 5:00PM in the City Council Chambers, 24 South St. Auburn NY by Mayor Quill.

ROLL CALL – The City Clerk called the roll. Mayor Quill, Councilor Terry Cuddy and Councilor Tim Locastro were all present. Councilor Debra McCormick and Councilor Jimmy Giannettino were excused.

The following City Staff was present for the meeting:

- City Manager, Jeff Dygert
- Corporation Counsel, Stacy DeForrest
- City Clerk, Charles Mason
- City Comptroller, Rachel Jacobs
- Police Chief, Shawn Butler
- Fire Chief, Mark Fritz

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag – Mayor Quill led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silent Prayer or Reflection – Mayor Quill asked for a moment of silent prayer.

Public Announcements –

Chuck Mason

- On the screen, I've got a picture of some of the volunteer activity that's happened earlier in the week, down at the Permaculture Park, and there's still one day left tomorrow that they're looking for volunteers to continue the installation of that project. There's a couple of pictures that I'll scroll through here so you guys can just see it. It's quite an impressive undertaking down there. And if you go right to the homepage of the city website AuburnNY.gov, there's a link that you can see what the volunteer shifts are or call Planning Office here at City Hall or just show up tomorrow. I think they'll be down there probably from 10 until two or three in the afternoon.
- And then secondly, is that the Planning Board will not be meeting in the month of August. There were no applications to go in front of the Planning Board. So there's no Planning Board next week for the month of August. The planning board will meet again, come September, 1st Tuesday of September.

Ceremonial Presentations and Proclamations. None.

PUBLIC TO BE HEARD – Mayor Quill opened the Public to be Heard portion of the Council meeting and the Clerk read the Public to be Heard rules. No speakers.

Approval of Meeting Minutes -

- July 16, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes
Motion to approve the July 16, 2020 minutes by Councilor Cuddy, seconded by Councilor Locastro. Motion to approve carried 3-0.

Reports of City Officials

A. City Manager's Report

- The City of Auburn is accepting bids for the Wholesale Sewer Metering Project which is made up of three components – Flow Meter Supply and Installation, General Construction, and Electric Construction. Bids are due back August 4 and more details are available on the City of Auburn webpage under the tab “Bids/RFPs”.
- The City of Auburn is accepting bids for the 2020 Water System Improvements Project. Bids are due back August 4 and more details are available on the city webpage under the tab “Bids/RFPs”.
- The City of Auburn is accepting bids for an Unmanned Aerial System – Public Safety Drone. Bids are due back on August 5 and more details are available on the city webpage under the tab “Bids/RFPs”.
- The City of Auburn is accepting bids for the construction of a new Public Safety Building. Bids are due back on August 11 and more details are available on the city webpage under the tab “Bids/RFPs”.
- The City of Auburn is accepting bids for the structural repair of the Lincoln St. Parking Garage due to fire damage. The bid documents will be posted on the city webpage and are due back August 18.
- The city is accepting bids for chemicals utilized at our water filtration plant. Bids are due back August 18.
- Auburn Civil Service has announced a new Police Officer test. The test is scheduled for September 26 and those interested must apply by August 26. More information is available on the City of Auburn webpage under the tab “departments”, then “Civil Service”, and finally “Job Opportunities.” A short cut and announcement will be displayed on the main page soon.
- Yesterday there was a mandatory onsite prebid meeting for contractors interested in bidding on the proposed public safety building.
- Today there was a meeting for MWBE subcontractors interested bidding on the public safety building project. A portion of the project funded by grants is required to meet minimum goals for MWBE.

B. Reports from members of Council –

Councilor Cuddy

Yes, Mayor, thank you. The City Clerk did show some images from the Living Willow project. I had the opportunity to volunteer yesterday and I worked with City Staff and other volunteers and it was really a positive experience for myself and my son. The artist there knows what she's doing and knows how to give orders. And being an art teacher, now I know how my students feel when I tell them to do something. She was very, very, very frank in making sure that the project was looking good and it's looking great. So, it's a very positive experience. And I encourage everyone, if they can to go down and look and see what's happened at that site. So, did you say tomorrow's the last day to volunteer? So? Yeah, so tomorrow morning from 10 to 2, I believe. And there's two hour slots that they can volunteer. Very good. Thank you.

Matters to Come Before Council

A. State Environmental Quality Review Act Resolutions (SEQR) - none

B. Ordinances – none

C. Local Laws – none

D. Resolutions - none

TABLED ITEMS - none

STAFF/VENDOR PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Quill

Budget update for fiscal year 2019 - 2020. Comptroller Rachel.

City Manager Dygert

Mayor and Councilors, we decided to do this. It's kind of an odd time of the year to do this. But based on the fact that we did the State of the City and we talked about sales tax, and we have that most recent sales tax report, we thought that there was going to be some interest from the Council and the public to kind of see where it is that we stand right now with what the impact of the COVID situation has been on things and take a brief look at where we're headed.

Comptroller Jacobs

Okay. So the first slide we have is the General Fund Revenues. This is showing the 2020 revised budget versus the actual. As you will see, there is a footnote on the bottom that states that these figures are prior to year end enclosure and they are unaudited. We still have several things to do before we can close out the year. So these figures are very fluid at this point. This takes a look at the General Fund Expenditures. Again, that's the 2020 revised budget versus the actual. Those will change again, we do have another check run next week. That includes prior year expenditures. So once that hits that will change that as well. Taking a look at the revenue side, based on the budget versus actual, we're seeing an unfavorable amount of approximately 1.2 million. Looking at the current expenditures, we have a favorable balance of 1.3, which gives us approximately \$100,000 net fund balance change at this point. Again, those figures are very fluid and will be changing. The reason for the unfavorable revenues at this point. A big portion of that is related to the AIM funding. As you're all aware, we only received

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80% of that. So we're waiting on \$986,000. The Foreclosure Auction without having a foreclosure auction, there'll be no revenues to potentially offset those unpaid taxes. I'm sure most of you are aware, but the City is required to make the School and County whole each year. So that does cause a little bit of a headache in some aspects. As far as our expenditures go, all of the departments are currently tracking under budget for all of the expenditures. Sales Tax - so this shows the sales tax revenue trend for the budgeted versus actual. I also included the 2021 budgeted amount just to show that we did decrease that, based on the discussions that we had during the budget talks. We did end up having a surplus this year, again, with the 2020 actuals being higher than the budgeted amount. AIM Funding - this just looks at the trend of AIM funding for the budget versus actual. Normally we budget the same amount every year because that's the amount we receive. But again in 2020, we have not yet received that 20%. We're waiting on that at this point to determine whether we're going to receive it in the future. Some brief updates. The first FEMA reimbursement for the COVID-19 was submitted today. That is for materials and contract work from March through June 30. It's approximately \$94,000, we're requesting. Currently the departments are working on the Overtime Reimbursement Forms, and I will be submitting those for reimbursement in August. Working on fiscal year end closure at this point, we're hoping to be closed out August/September. The audit process will begin in September and October, and then the annual update document the AUD is required to be submitted to the state no later than October 30. That's all I got.

Mayor Quill

Rachel, could you back up? We go through this every year and just so I'm on the correct path. The City pays to County and the School taxes, and then we are reimbursed eventually. Am I correct? Could you go over it a little bit.

Comptroller Jacobs

Technically we're not reimbursed. The way that it happens is when the properties are foreclosed on and we take them to auction at that point. Anything that's owed on them is written off in our books. And then once we sell the properties, we recoup money and we put that in a separate revenue account for Sale Property.

Mayor Quill

You know, this comes up every year.

City Manager Dygert

So to that point, Mayor, to speaking of tax foreclosures. There had been some discussion here during budget development, things like that, related to what the City's stance was going to be on doing tax foreclosures. So typically, that tax foreclosure auction typically happens around June-ish, right. And this year, the County didn't do what we normally piggyback on top of. Along with the County, the county didn't do theirs. We didn't do one. The thought behind that was because there were potentially so many people in dire fiscal straits because of their employment situation that we weren't going to push that. As we've looked at things though, we have a significant number of properties where they are, you know, the tax situation, when things come to foreclosure. It's not that it's happened this year, it's in prior years. So we've taken a better look at that. We're continuing to look through that. We have commercial properties. We have vacant properties. We also have bank owned properties that technically should fall into that category. And staff has discussed this at length and we are moving forward with moving ahead with tax foreclosures on those properties, where it's not going to result in somebody being actually kicked out of their home or things like that. So these are pre existing conditions, pre existing circumstances, and things that won't affect people and their home. But if not for that, we lose out on the potential revenue that we would

create by that tax auction and the other thing as we create a significant expense by having to reimburse the County in the School District. So we're going to try to mitigate that a little bit and move forward. We'll probably do some sort of a tax auction for those properties, more than likely in September, something like that. So, City Manager, you're describing, in essence, if they're owned by the bank, or they could be like zombie properties, so that's where we're focusing on and as you said, not places where people actually live in. Correct.

Councilor Cuddy

Thank you.

Mayor Quill

Rachel. Last question. Is that state mandated? that we make the County and the School District whole? Is that mandated?

Comptroller Jacobs

I believe that it's based on being a city that is required? Okay.

Mayor Quill

Well, Council, all set? All set, Rachel. Thank you. Mr. Dygert, bar graph.

City Manager Dygert

Now that Rachel's done her thing, that bar graph report seems kind of moot at this point. But as Rachel mentioned, all of our departments came in under budget, varying degrees of under budget for last year. So that's a good thing again. Typically, around May we really start to tighten things up. We scrutinize purchases pretty extremely come May and June of every fiscal year. This year, we pretty much shut things down in March. As soon as we knew there was going to be a problem we shut down spending and our departments and department heads did a great job of that as we can see, I mean, we came in significantly under budget and that was, you know, even on top of everything that happened with COVID, you know, certain operations slowed down, other options spun up. There are other expenses that we had to incur in order to continue doing business under a different model. And we've done really well, again, we'll still have some bills continuing to trickle in for the next probably 30 or 60 days. And we'll see how that goes but a really good job. I appreciate that. Thank you.

OTHER BUSINESS –

Mayor Quill

Other business from the council? Councilor?

Councilor Cuddy

Yes, Mayor. Thank you. I just wanted to follow up on on last week, and propose that we that we do a work session on the Code. Particularly how it relates to some of our boards and commissions. In particular, you know, there was a few people in the public and on the Historic Resources Review Board that wanted to be notified, as far as, when, say the Planning Board was taking on a project in the Historical District. I do think it would be valuable to, you know, have a work session to talk about how some of the boards and commissions may overlap and that that notices can be sent out so that the very unique situation that we had last week could be prevented

and, and there be that kind of communication codified in the Code and Ordinances. So if it would be beneficial to my colleagues and the City Manager, if we could put that in into a work session sometime in the future.

Mayor Quill

Councilor Locastro is in agreement. I'm in agreement, I would ask the City Manager and staff when we can get back to it, I would prefer we have a full council.

Councilor Cuddy

Yes a full Council. Yes, definitely don't want to do it tonight. But yes.

Mayor Quill

I think this is kind of the anomaly today, but we should be able to do it in the near future. Fair enough.

Councilor Cuddy

No rush, very good. That's it.

Mayor Quill

Thank you. Councilor.

Councilor Locastro

Just wondering how the Road Program and the State Street Bridge are going. I mean, are we in line with the budget bids?

City Manager Dygert

Last update I had on State Street Bridge - things are moving along. Well, there was one surprise with the State Street Bridge. And that was the corner location by Garden Street. It used to be the location of an old gasoline station, fuel station. The surveys, environmental surveys had come back that there was one underground tank still there. Turns out there was two. So there was some added cost there. But there's a little bit of an offset because, had to remove one tank, but by that tank taking up space had to remove less contaminated soil. So there's an offset. I'm not sure exactly what that looks like right now. It's not a huge deal. But it was a little bit of a surprise when they got down there. But that's moving forward, still on track. And I believe the paving contractor has been around town and they've been wrapping up the Road Program. So over the last few weeks, they've been leveling out the structures, the manholes and catch basins and things like that. And I know today when I went down Owasco Street, they were doing finish coat.

Councilor Locastro

I think they're doing a good job and hope to keep up the good work.

City Manager Dygert

We got to roll out a little sooner than we typically do.

Councilor Locastro

I think it shows, the workmanship looks great.

City Manager Dygert

I will set it to that point I haven't received, in my office, which the complaint line goes to my office. I haven't received a single complaint on the project this year. Great season. So that's a good thing. I don't know what you all have heard, but I haven't had any.

Mayor Quill

Everything else but not the Road Program.

Councilor Cuddy

Yeah. Yeah, I agree with Councilor Locastro. The work is really, really great. So they're doing a good job.

Councilor Locastro

And because of doing it in the warmer weather, I believe that will last a little bit longer than doing in inclement weather. So time will tell. Thank you

Mayor Quill

We have our second public to be heard. Is there anyone that did not speak earlier that would like to speak now? (no speakers) Do we have a request for Executive Session?

Executive Session. Councilor Cuddy made a motion to enter Executive Session, seconded by Councilor Locastro. Council voted to enter an executive session regarding the following matters:

- Two matters pertaining to the sale, lease or acquisition of real property

The motion to enter executive session carried 3-0. The Council entered Executive Session at 5:22 p.m.

Executive session adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: By unanimous vote the Council adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m..

Minutes submitted to the City Council on August 13, 2020 by:

Charles Mason
City Clerk