

**Auburn City Council
Regular Meeting
Thursday, November 12, 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. Councilor Deb McCormick, Councilor Jimmy Giannettino, Councilor Terry Cuddy and Councilor Tim Locastro and Mayor Quill were all present.

The following City Staff was present for the meeting:

- City Manager, Jeff Dygert
- Corporation Counsel, Stacy DeForrest
- City Clerk, Chuck Mason
- Comptroller, Rachel Jacobs
- Police Chief, Shawn Butler
- Fire Chief, Mark Fritz
- Assistant to the Mayor and Council, Rhonda Miller

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**

Thanks, Mayor. We do have a couple of announcements this evening. The first is that the City Landfill Days are coming up for the fall. These are the days that city residents may take items to the city landfill to dispose of for free, with a couple of exceptions. These days will be this coming Saturday, November 14 2020, and then the following Saturday, November 21st. Landfill will be open from 7am till 2pm each one of those Saturdays and people can bring stuff down for free. Large furniture items, garbage yard waste. There's a whole list of rules and regulations pertaining to this and city residents will need to show proof of their residency with a driver's license which matches the vehicle registration that they're bringing the materials down with. And there is a charge everything's free except for the exceptions are Freon containing appliances and computer monitors or televisions. There will be a charge for those items. There's a limit of two computer monitors or TVs accepted. So that's the next two Saturdays and

all the rules and regulations for those events are on the City's website. And then we've been announcing all of our Community Development Block Grant meetings for the past several weeks, as some of those meetings have already been held. But there is an announcement about next week's meeting on November 18th at 6:30pm. Originally, this meeting was scheduled to be an in person meeting down at the Booker T Washington Center. However, it's been changed to where this will be an online virtual meeting. Rather than bringing people into the Booker T Washington Center with the different activity that's occurred in the community with the Coronavirus. The decision was made to change this to an online public hearing. People can find the link to register for the online public hearing on the City's website. And we'll be putting the word out about that to everybody over the next week. That meeting is next week, Wednesday Night November 18 6:30pm. That's all I had this evening, Mayor.

Mayor Quill

Thank you. Ceremonial Presentation. We do have a proclamation. Mr. Clerk.

Chuck Mason

Thanks, Mayor. We have proclamation from the Office of Mayor Michael Quill whereas the city of Auburn has great admiration, and the utmost gratitude for all of the men and women who have selflessly served their country and community as members of the United States military. And whereas veterans have paid the high price of freedom by leaving their families and communities, placing themselves in harm's way for the good of all. They whereas the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who serve the armed forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life and joy by citizens in our democracy and whereas the Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration and present use. It was initially created as the badge of Military Merit by General George Washington in 1782. And whereas the Purple Heart was the first American Service Award, or decoration made available to the common soldier and is specifically awarded to members the United States armed forces who have been wounded or paid the ultimate sacrifice and comment in combat with the declared enemy of the United States. And whereas the mission of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is to foster an environment of goodwill, among the combat wounded veteran members and their families, promote patriotism, support legislative initiatives, and most importantly, assure that we never forget it whereas the city of Auburn appreciates the sacrifices Purple Heart recipients made in defending our freedoms, and believe it is important that we acknowledge them for their courage and show them the honor and support that they have earned. Now therefore, on this Veterans Day week, Michael de Quill mayor, the city of Auburn, on behalf of the City Council and citizens of Auburn, do hereby proclaim our gratitude and urge our residents to join with us and recognize nicing the designation of the city of Auburn as a Purple Heart community, and secure Purple Heart recognition in the city of Auburn by perpetually designated August 7 each year as Purple Heart day in the city of Auburn. Back to you, Mayor.

Mayor Quill

Thank you. With us this evening, we have Mr. Menzo Case to accept his proclamation. So Mr. Case, if you'd meet me at the podium.

Menzo Case

Thank you very much. Wow. Well, I want to thank the Council and the Mayor, if I could, just I can't really see without with the mask on. Appropriately distanced, I hope. On behalf of those veterans organizations that contacted me over the last few years, we've been working with different representatives of towns, villages, counties, to make this similar proclamation to represent or to present a full support for those that have received the Purple Heart in recognition of wounds received in combat, and in some cases, their demise. And we truly appreciate you, the Council members and the Mayor and the City, standing up for this and making this proclamation. I'm here as a representative, one as a veteran and two, as a representative of Generations Bank, we have established a part of the Purple Heart trail in Seneca Falls, which is also has designated itself a Purple Heart town, and we pledge our support to assist a town or the City of Auburn in any way that they would like to establish as similar recognition for those that family members that would like to recognize their friends and neighbors and relatives that received the Purple Heart. So we're just so honored to be a part of this and we thank you, Mayor and Council members for passing this proclamation tonight. It means very much to us as corporate members of the community and also as veterans. Thank you.

Mayor Quill

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Case. Thank you, Happy belated birthday. Public to be Heard.

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

- October 29, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes
Motion to approve the October 29, 2020 minutes by Councilor McCormick, seconded by Councilor Locastro. Motion to approve carried 5-0.

Mayor Quill

Thank you. Mr. Dygert. City Manager's Report, please.

Reports of City Officials

A. City Manager's Report

City Manager Dygert

Thank you, Mayor. Didn't have time today to get into a whole lot of detail on things, but I'll give you a couple of updates and some current events. Bids: City of Auburn is currently accepting bids for Backflow Management Software. Those bids are due back on November 30th. We are also accepting bids for the South Street Corridor Enhancement Project. You'll have a presentation on that in the next week or so, from Christina Selvek and the engineering firm that did that. Bids for that project are due

back December 1st, and further information for both of those projects is available on the city webpage under the tab "Bids and RFPs". Couple project updates, the Parking Garage Project is moving along, as expected, no major problems there. Now, there's going to be a change over the next few days and traffic flow in the parking garage, the they demo'd part of the floor and repoured part of the floor now they're going to swap that over and do the other half of the floor. So there'll be some changes there. The garage will stay in service during that. Just a little inconvenient for folks. State Street Bridge Project is moving along and again still remains pretty much on schedule to be open to vehicular traffic by the end of the calendar year. And the Public Safety Building Project. If you haven't been by there in a while it might be worth a little trip by it's pretty impressive. The amount of work they've accomplished in the last four to six weeks there. It's, again, that project's on schedule, right at the moment, actually ahead of schedule. So we're pleased with that. Just a quick update, of sorts, on our situation with baseball. Even though we're not in the season, we're still in discussions with Major League Baseball, those discussions in the last week or two have accelerated quite, quite a bit. Which is a good thing. My concern throughout this is that we make some sort of a decision hopefully by the end of the calendar year so that we can have things in place so that we have some sort of activity there come next season. So the Mayor has been involved with some of those discussions and phone calls. We are receiving a tremendous amount of interest in the use of Falcon Park and the DoubleDays in general, from a variety of leagues and teams and things of that nature. And what we want to do is be able to sit down, take a good look at what the reality of Falcon Park and the DoubleDays is, what the future looks like, and try to make a good a sound business decision moving forward but also one that, you know, does the best we can to retain that the history and, and baseball in the City of Auburn. But the one thing we know for sure it's going to look different than it has in the past. But we've got a lot of great opportunities out there. I think the toughest part for us is going to be deciding which path to go down when the time comes. Just so that you all are aware, and the public can be aware, we continue to work with Cayuga County on a number of issues that are out there. The Police Department and the Sheriff's Department and the leadership in Cayuga County and the City of Auburn, continue to work on a Police Reform Initiative, set down through an executive order from New York State and the Governor. That PoliceReform Initiative is due to be adopted by April 1 of 2021 by the local elected body. So we're continuing to work through that and develop a package that will be presented to Council in the future, and the public in the future, to be adopted as a guidance document for our local law enforcement. Not a, not an end all, not a one time deal, but a guidance document that will be continued to be revised through years in the future. Along the way, the County has involved us also in another discussion referred to as The Alternatives to Incarceration. It's an ongoing project. And it just happens to be that it came due for a renewal refresher at this point in time. So that's another conversation that continues. I've mentioned before, the Cayuga County Hazard Mitigation Plan, which sets us up for the potential for federal funding for various projects and it also helps in other ways, as well to identify projects with Capital Projects in the City, that would help to alleviate problems, such as flooding and things like that. So that's an ongoing process. The Mayor's taking part in a couple of those planning sessions that we've had here recently, and will continue to work with the County and their consultant on that. About the same time as the Governor made the executive order to do a little Police Reform Project. Also, right along that same timeline, all municipalities are

required to have an updated Pandemic Plan. So we are working through that. We had an existing Pandemic Plan. But certainly it's, it's one thing to create a plan under what they refer to as a blue sky environment. When everything's nice and rosy, and everything's good, you think you know, all the problems that you're going to face. But now, we certainly have a better idea of some things that come up operationally, that can be a problem. So, we are fortunate that we had a plan to begin with and we're fortunate we were able to put a good team together here at the City to manage our way through the current situation. And a lot of the policies that have come out of our Corporation Counsel's Office, collectively with our Department Heads, are going to work really well in that and we can just essentially insert those into our plan and get an updated plan. That's also due in April of 2021. And this afternoon, I took part in another conference call with the County and representatives from several of the towns and villages throughout Cayuga County, related to the New York State Shared Services Initiative. We talked about that, on occasion. We've got a couple projects that are out there that have been completed and we have a couple others that are in the works. And so that that New York State Initiative for shared services is ongoing. And I believe that the County is required to submit their proposal after going through all the steps in December of this year, in order for it to be accepted by New York State for next year. Before I move on, any questions on that? Okay, the last thing I've got, and I feel like I'm preaching sometimes up here when it comes to COVID-19. We continue to work through COVID-19 with the Cayuga County Health Department, and various Cayuga County departments, as well as our departments. But what we are seeing, what we're seeing County wide, is this significant increase in the number of positive cases, a significant increase in the severity of symptoms, and those that test positive, and an exponential increase in the number of folks that are impacted by quarantine. And what that translates to us is, we are, are seeing a daily impact, and a daily increasing impact on our workforce. Mostly due to quarantines because they are exposures. But we also have had some positive cases, ourselves, which makes the situation even more problematic because of folks and their exposure to their coworkers. I believe that, in the spring, we dialed many things back, at first. City Operations based on guidance from guidance, or mandates, from New York State and we were in a situation that was far less impactful than what we're currently actually experiencing. So my suggestion is, and I am looking for your input, but my suggestion is that we seriously consider restricting some public access to City Hall, again, for the safety of our employees, but also to ensure some continuity of operations, as well. If I get too many people in this building, this administrative building, that kind of, it might not be the the backbone of the city, but it's the heart of the City where everything happens, right? The money flows through here and, and all that. If we end up with too many folks that are in quarantine. Here, our folks can work from home, and we've taken advantage of that to protect them to the extent that we can, but we still end up with an awful lot of just a general public in and out of the building every day. And I understand some of the reasons we have those visitors and provide those services to the public is because they need to be here to get things done so that they can live their life and conduct their personal business. But there are also situations where there isn't a need to be here in person. So as, for example, I mean, many, many of the bills that get paid here could easily happen with a check or, you know, online, something like that. And we could avoid that, and, and reduce the amount of traffic in the building. So I'm, I'm open to your your feedback on that. But

Councilor Cuddy

Mr. Dygert, I agree. I think being ahead of the curve, limiting access, beginning to draw that back, I think is a smart, especially, as we're reading on a daily basis, the amount of increases there are, and, you know, we, you know, months ago, we didn't know what, how this was going to manifest. And, you know, we were very cautious. But now, I think it's, it's good to be cautious again, so that we're, you know, we, as you said, we still have many ways for people to do business, city business, either online, or through the mail. So I, you have my support, and, you know, drawing back a bit and limiting access.

Councilor McCormick

I agree, I think, I trust, do whatever you think is necessary to protect our employees and the public. I think what we did in March, might have seemed harsh, but what from what you're saying, it's, it's more necessary now than it was then. So I think whatever you need to do, do.

Councilor Locastro

I'll agree with both of you. The same thing. Whatever's good to keep the employees safe?

Councilor Giannettino

I agree as well, the only thing I would ask is, you know, that we, not that we didn't previously, but, if we could put out communications on what the alternative methods are. You know, there was some misconceptions earlier, that Codes was shut down. Which wasn't the case, you could still get permits, but people just didn't know that. So we can use our online resources, maybe get an interview with the newspaper. If they're willing to do that, to explain to the public why we're doing this and that we're still going to function, it's just going to be a little bit, it's going to look different.

Mayor Quill

We spoke briefly this morning, and I'm in total agreement with our Council Members. Thinking ahead, it seems, when I'm here, the traffic I run into is, are folks coming in to pay a parking ticket, or paying their property taxes. If we could just maybe streamline that to a day or so a week or two days a week, that may force someone, hate to use that term, but maybe it would encourage someone to mail in a check or whatever. And at the same time, we should be looking into a policy of when there's a late parking ticket being paid or something like that, because of what's going on. Just something that, you know, I don't know what I wanted, what I want to do about it, Jeff, but just give them some leeway, and maybe a phone call to them saying look it, you can pay this by credit card or mail or send a check or whatever. So the most important commodity we have here is our employees. And I'll speak for all of Council. No one wants to jeopardize our staff members, or the general public, who are here. But we have to do a better job of closing this building down somewhat and working from there. So, I'm sure the employees have some great ideas. They always do. But I'll speak for myself, I'm sure the council agrees I'll be glad to work with you or staff or whatever. And anything you want to come up with ideas. So we're not, I'm not answering your question. And, and, and all of us are giving you full support to do what you feel is

appropriate. But let's take care of our employees and also the general public, who come in here continuously for for different services. So

City Manager Dygert

Right and again, I think what we'd be looking at is just a further restrictions but not a shutdown necessarily, like we did in March. That may be coming. You know, when I, when I look at the numbers and in that, if we don't see an improvement there, that may be something that's coming. It may even be something that's outside of our control, right? If we look at what's going on in Onondaga County. We lose control of some of those local decisions. I'd rather not do that. If we can have any part in avoiding that, I think that's important, and that's what this would do. In our discussions with the County Health Department, it's, I think it's important, every time we get a chance to make mention of it, is the spread of positive cases is largely due to social gatherings. It's important to mention that it's typically not workplace related. It's, the vast majority seem to be social gatherings. So we ask folks to, you know, keep that in mind. Our local hospital only has just so much capacity, and while I don't have all the fine details of what's going on at the hospital, I can tell you that our local hospital is extremely busy right now. And the local Cayuga County Health Department is beyond extremely busy trying to keep up with with all of this. So there there will come a point if we don't all take appropriate measures, where we're gonna have to be looking for help outside of our local community, and that's not a good thing. I'll leave it there. Thank you.

Mayor Quill

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, once again, myself, and I know members of council whatever you need from us, we'll be glad to assist but at the same time, I don't think any of us want to but in. That's your job, but we'll be glad whatever you need. We're there. So, Hmm. Reports from Members of Council. Councilors? Councilor.

Councilor Giannettino

Thank you, Mayor. This morning, we had our bimonthly Historical and Cultural Sites Commission meeting, and I just want to share with everybody that it was announced that a permanent superintendent has been hired for the Harriet Tubman Park and for the Women's Rights Park. She will oversee both of them. She's looking to relocate here and purchase a home. So that's that's good news.

Matters to Come Before Council

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

B. Ordinances – none

C. Local Laws – none

D. Resolutions - none

E. Staff Presentations –

- **CDBG-CV3 Amendment Presentation - Renee Jensen, Senior Planner and Tiffany Beebee, Senior Planner**
- **Biosolid Design Update Presentation – Seth Jensen, Director of Municipal Utilities with Eric Muir and Tom Wedham with Brown and Caldwell.**

TABLED ITEMS - none

OTHER BUSINESS – none

Second Public To Be Heard: Mayor Quill opened the second Public to be Heard portion of the Council meeting and the Clerk read the Public to be Heard rules. No speakers

ADJOURNMENT: By unanimous vote the Council adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m..

Minutes submitted by:

Chuck Mason, City Clerk