

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
March 1, 2021**

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilor Walker, Councilor McBrearty, and Councilor Corradino.

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilor Hill; Councilor Burrige; Councilor Plunkett; Christopher Baker, Director of Information Technology; Deborah Coad, City Chamberlain; Phillip Cady, Chief of Police; Jeff Hinderliter, City Engineer; Kevin Caraccioli, City Attorney; Mayor William J. Barlow, Jr.

MEDIA PRESENT: Randy Pellis, Oswego Shopper.

OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business.

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2020 meeting was made by Councilor Corradino and seconded by Councilor McBrearty. Minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Mayor William J. Barlow, Jr. seeks the approval of the Common Council in amending provisions of Chapter 224 of the City Code.** Mayor Barlow stated that this item is adding to our water and sewer bill reduction. Specifically, this is correcting a mistake that was made back in early 2019. Because we're adjusting the sewer and water rates now, it only makes sense to correct this at the same time. He explained that the City has a local law allowing exemptions to be made available to low income individuals who live in the City. There's a tax exemption and a reduction of water rates exemption. Back in 2019 we went to change the income threshold and amount of exemption, because before 2019 the last time it was adjusted was 1995. Our intention was to re-calibrate the income level and exemption level to reflect income generated in 2019. Previously the income level was \$17,500.00 or less and would be granted a 75% reduction of water rate or a 50% tax exemption. We raised that to \$22,500.00. Also, every threshold from \$22,500.00 to \$29,000.00 was altered before, and we actually expanded it to \$30,500.00, so we re-calibrated it all the way down. This was the right thing to do and helped capture more people to give them a larger break on the tax side. He explained that it was done on the tax side because the percent exempt back in 1995 was 50% to 10%. However, on the water side back then, it was 75% to 35%, so when we did that change in 2019, we increased the income and re-calibrated the income for both tax and water, but we wanted to make the schedule of exemption the same, so instead of 75% to 35% on water, we matched the tax and went from 50% to 10%. What we inadvertently did is reduced the exemption percentage for all the brackets but had the biggest negative impact on the lower income brackets. The lower income brackets saw a \$30.00 to \$40.00 increase in their water bill because even though the income increased and covered more people, they were charged more because they had a smaller

exemption. This item will allow us to do what we originally wanted to do and that is to raise the income and capture more people. We will undo what we did on the percentage of exemption for the water, so that we offer those making less money, a bigger break, and then as you make more money your break goes down. He reiterated that a \$22,500.00 annual income or less now gets a 75% exemption, as opposed to 50%, which brings us back to the level of exemption back in 1995, and it goes up all the way to \$30,500, where people making between \$29,500.00 and \$30,500.00 have a 35% exemption. He stated that the water and sewer bill reduction will take effect on April 1st, so you'll see your bills after April 1st reflect that reduction.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor McBrearty made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council to approve the proposal to adjust the City of Oswego flat rate and metered rate for water and sewer service. Councilor Corradino seconded the motion, unanimous approval.

THE RESOLUTION THAT WAS PART OF THE MEETING WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

2. **Councilor McBrearty, on behalf of Mercedes Neiss, requests discussion regarding a variance of the Noise Ordinance to allow bands to play live music for the "Maritime Music Night," on Sunday, August 15, 2021 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.** Mercedes Neiss explained that while COVID-19 is still prevalent, outdoor activities are still possible and she wants to expand on that. They are going to host two bands, Double V and P.K., for a couple of hours on a Sunday evening to listen to some soft rock and watch the sunset on the West Pier. She said they expect 60 to 100 people at the most. Colloca Winery, a possible brewery, and food trucks will be on site, along with desserts served by Girl Scouts. It will be a controlled event, quieter and more personal than Harborfest. She mentioned that they decided to go from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. instead of 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and the tickets will be \$15.00.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor McBrearty made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council to approve the variance of the Noise Ordinance to allow bands to play live music for the "Maritime Music Night," on Sunday, August 15, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Councilor Corradino seconded the motion, unanimous approval.

THE RESOLUTION (with correction) THAT WAS PART OF THE MEETING WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 7:11 p.m. by Councilor McBrearty. A second was made by Councilor Corradino, unanimous approval.

Respectfully Submitted,


Sydney Mangano