

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

JULY 9, 2024 – 5:30 PM

City Hall – 2nd Floor Conference Room
47 Castle Street
Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Brennan, Clr. Lavin, Clr. Grimaldi, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Moracco,
Clr. Pealer, Clr. Whitfield

2. APPOINTMENT OF CITY COURT JUDGE

Mayor Valentino read a letter confirming his appointment of Louis Guard as City Court Judge

3. AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

ACTION TAKEN by Mayor Valentino; seconded by Clr. Brennan

MOVED THAT the agenda be amended to add resolutions: authorizing submission of grant applications NY Main St, NYS Climate Smart and NYS Pro Housing; support of Smith Center of the Arts grant application; and support reorganizational restructuring for Assistant City Manager and Coordinator

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZING SUPPORT OF GRANT APPLICATION OF A NEW YORK STATE CLIMATE SMART APPLICATION

City Manager Hendrix presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva hereby requests financial assistance from the New York State Climate Smart Communities Grant Program pursuant to Environmental Conservation Law Article 54, Title 15.

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva certifies that it has identified \$15,000 of matching funds from the general fund pursuant to the requirements of Environmental Conservation Law Article 54 Title 15.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva hereby authorizes Amie Hendrix, City Manager, an official or employee, to act on its behalf in submittal of an application through the Consolidated Funding Application for \$75,000, to be used for Castle Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study.

City Manager Hendrix explained that the 2 resolutions are being presented together for time consideration but will be

voted on separately. She explained the reason there are so many resolutions tonight is because different grant application has different requirements. The consolidated funding application is open now and closes on July 31. This is the last schedule meeting for July, and as previously shared there are a lot of grants that will align with what the council has committed to which require council resolutions.

This grant application would be for \$75,000 to continue the study which was recommended by the stormwater task force. We are looking at daylighting Castle Creek. If we receive \$75,000. We would have to match that with \$15,000, which would be used from our current study fundings sources. Because of where Castle Creek flows, a lot of it is in what's called a designated DAC or disadvantage community and because of this we only have to match 20%. The first grant application is a feasibility study for the work that the storm water task force had recommended. Before we can do any of that work, you're going to need feasibility and engineering study, if the city were to go in that direction.

Councilor Pealer asked about clarification of terms and daylighting of Castle Creek. City Manager Hendrix explained the purpose of daylighting Castle Creek is to open the banks of the creek back up, so you can access it more easily so debris doesn't get stuck under certain locations, it'll provide maintenance to the creek in areas that we wouldn't normally have access to. We have to have a feasibility study before we start engineering or doing all of those other pieces. That's a New York State policy that we have to go through a \$75,000 study and in order to get those resources, you need engineering and you need feasibility studies. With a lot of these grants, we have to do engineering reports and a lot of times there are other grant opportunities under climate smart communities we are not eligible for because I don't have engineering ready to go or feasibility study ready to go. This grant gives me that first step so we can get to the next step. It would be a feasibility on how it all goes together, it's got to be developed a lot further on that, but this is the first step. Councilor Brennan asked if the Madias market was included. CM Hendrix responded that she will check into this and commented that since a considerable amount of this is at that low point and presume most of the area that the resolution describes is in This is very prelim preliminary, and it also doesn't guarantee we'll get this funding or the application. It gives us the ability to put the application forward. If something were to come up where it doesn't align, then it won't go forward.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Brennan seconded by Clr.Petropoulis
MOVED THAT this resolution be approved
MOTION CARRIED: UNANIMOUSLY

5. RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZING SUPPORT OF GRANT APPLICATION OF A NEW YORK STATE PRO-HOUSING SUPPLY APPLICATION

City Manager Hendrix presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, New York State has created a Pro-Housing Supply Fund to help finance essential infrastructure projects – such as sewer and water system upgrades – needed to facilitate new housing development in certified Pro-Housing Communities; and

WHEREAS, The City of Geneva supports the development of housing infrastructure that aligns with the Pro-Housing approach; and

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva is a certified Pro-Housing Community; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva hereby authorizes Amie Hendrix, City Manager, and Steve Valentino, Mayor, to act on its behalf in developing and submitting all application materials up to \$10,000,000 to support 2025 applications for housing projects in the City of Geneva.

City Manager Hendrix began by explaining that the pro housing grant is actually an application that would be completed by one of or more of our housing partners, like Habitat for Humanity. The funding for the match would not be from the city. The

city is the lead applicant, meaning we support the application. What this resolution does is fulfill a requirement for the grant guidelines, it says they need is a letter of support endorsed by council and this allows us the ability to go ahead and move that forward should a project be baked. It's not fully baked at this point, but it would give us the discretion to review those projects and put in infrastructure for those housing projects which are in the pipeline. This could be a number of properties but I'm towards the Habitat and Cook properties because they're in proximity to each other and this funding is for 20 to 100 units. This grant is not fully written at this point, it is in process, but because this is your last council meeting, I wanted to get your approval that we're moving that forward so that the mayor can sign that letter giving them the support as they write the grant.

Councilor Peeler asked for clarification on what the 10 million is for and whether it is something we are authorizing the city to spend? Also, what are some for examples of the other developers that would qualify and are there any stipulations? City Manager Hendrix explained the grant application is infrastructure related to a development that will be built in a certain time frame and it has to be with 20 to 100 units. Developers that are working in the city that could qualify are Habitat for Humanity, Cook Properties, Home Leasing, and the folks working on OEO. This could also mean someone that is developing 10 units could qualify if they were in close proximity to one of those and they are ready to build within the next two years; they could qualify into this mix. The grant is not for single family homes; it has to be 100 units. The proximity is the whole city and depends on which projects we go forward with. I've met with some of the funders on this to see what makes sense at this point. It's still in development on what we can and can't do and if we can't make the proximity work, we won't go forward.

Councilor Petropolis commented that two of these projects are in his ward, one of them hasn't even gotten to the planning zoning board yet, but there's opposition to it. He asked, theoretically, if a project gets zapped by planning and or zoning or for some other reason if the project is scrapped so is the funding?

City Manager Hendrix further reiterated that this grant/resolution for funding is for infrastructure. A project has to have significant infrastructure work and needs to have sidewalks and some of these projects already have the infrastructure. It's up to the developers themselves to apply. This is just in the initial phase as they address other challenges they have ahead of them. All this commits to is allowing a developer to go forward with an application that meets the requirements on the application. It doesn't approve any infrastructure. It just says they're going forward because they need infrastructure to complete their project. They're going to be getting their infrastructure funding from the state, and they would be applying to the state directly.

Councilor Peeler asked what is the staff component? City Manager Hendrix explained the staff component is just ensuring that they have what they need from the city to apply for it. It does get administered similar to like the Restore New York grants. They come through the city. We make sure that all the materials are proper and that they're following the documentation. And whatever is needed. It is more on the administration side, which I don't want to minimize what that takes, but it's not panel review.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr Brennan.; seconded by Clr. Gillotte

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

ROLL CALL VOTE:

**Aye - Clr. Whitfield, Clr. Moracco, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte,
Clr. Grimaldi, Clr. Lavin, Clr. Brennan, Mayor Valentino**

Nay - Clr. Pealer

MOTION CARRIED

6. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF A NY MAIN STREET GRANT APPLICATION FOR RAILROAD PLACE, GENEVA, NY

City Manager Hendrix presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the New York Main Street (NYMS) Program, administered by New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), provides funding to assist with building renovations and streetscape enhancements in mixed-use commercial districts; and

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva is committed to the revitalization and economic development of its downtown and neighborhood commercial areas, including Railroad Place; and

WHEREAS, 1 Railroad Place, Geneva, NY is a prominently located building in need of improvements to support its productive reuse and contribution to the economic vitality of the area; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project at 1 Railroad Place includes the construction of a professional office and one apartment unit on the second floor, along with façade improvements that will enhance the building's appearance and contribute to the aesthetic and commercial appeal of the surrounding area; and

WHEREAS, the project aligns with the goals of the City of Geneva's revitalization efforts and supports the continued development of mixed-use properties that provide commercial and residential opportunities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva authorizes the submission of a New York Main Street grant application for building renovations and façade improvements at 1 Railroad Place, Geneva, NY; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Manager is hereby authorized to execute all financial and administrative processes related to the application and, if awarded, the implementation of the NY Main Street grant on behalf of the City

City Manager Hendrix presented the details of a Main Street grant for 1 Railroad Pl, which has to flow through the city, very similar to Restore New York grants. It is being compiled and created by an outside entity. This business grant is for renovation, construction, facade improvements, as well as creating a new residential apartment at 1 Railroad Place (Cosentino's) The City would be the lead applicant, there is administrative funding of which we will see some of that award for the staffing that it takes. "Typically, the city would put out this grant like this to interested businesses, but with all transitions happening I was unable to do this. They brought this grant to us and are requesting a resolution of support."

ACTION TAKEN by Clr Petropoulos, seconded by Clr.Grimaldi

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING TO CREATE THE ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER AND A COORDINATOR LEVEL POSITION

City Manager Hendrix presented the following resolution

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva is committed to providing safe, responsive, and forward-looking services that meet the evolving needs of our community; and

WHEREAS, the City has undergone thoughtful organizational analysis over the past several months to develop a leadership model that reflects our shared values and priorities; and

WHEREAS, the Assistant City Manager position was officially posted on July 1, 2025, in alignment with previous discussions with staff, City Council, and community partners; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the City Manager's innovative thinking to carry out a new vision for the City, reducing the number of Department Heads and streamlining organizational silos; and

WHEREAS, the creation of an Assistant City Manager (ACM) position and a Coordinator position, whose title and classification is currently pending, represents a strategic investment in coordinated, values-driven leadership that will enhance service delivery across multiple departments; and

WHEREAS, the ACM will provide leadership and coordination across core areas including economic development, parks and recreation, planning and zoning, building and facilities, and community development; and

WHEREAS, these two positions, will replace the current positions of Director of Planning and Economic Development and Recreation Director while rebalancing responsibilities across the broader team; and

WHEREAS, these organizational changes come at a natural transition point and follow thoughtful conversations with staff, City Council, and peer communities; and

WHEREAS, both new positions are fully funded within the existing 2025 budget, ensuring no additional cost to taxpayers while reflecting our commitment to fiscal stewardship and responsible service; and

WHEREAS, the ACM will work under the direction of the City Manager to lead cross-departmental projects, oversee key quality-of-life services, provide crucial support for facilities, parks, and recreation areas, strengthen grant readiness and fiscal planning, support transparent communication, and collaborate with partners including the IDA, LDC, and local organizations; and

WHEREAS, this organizational restructuring is designed to encourage innovation, ensure more respectful and coordinated service delivery, and bring greater consistency to work across departments; and

WHEREAS, the City's core values of care, integrity, and purpose guide this decision to provide clearer leadership and accountability across multiple service areas through both the ACM and Coordinator positions; and

WHEREAS, these new positions will help the City continue to respond to resident concerns, implement creative solutions to local challenges, and build strong, lasting relationships with community partners; and

WHEREAS, effective leadership starts with trust and respect, and these positions will strengthen the City's capacity to meet tomorrow's challenges with creativity, compassion, and accountability while embodying Geneva's core values of Safety, Innovation, Caring & Respect, Integrity & Honor, and Service & Stewardship in all community interactions;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GENEVA that the organizational restructuring to create the Assistant City Manager position and the Coordinator position is hereby supported and endorsed as a vital investment in the City's organizational capacity and service delivery, aligning with the City's core values of Safety, Innovation, Caring & Respect, Integrity & Honor, and Service & Stewardship while ensuring fiscal responsibility and enhanced community service. City Manager Hendrix explained the reason for the resolution is to endorse the new positions publicly. A lot of the applicants that we are hearing from want to know that they have that support of all leadership in place as they look at these opportunities.

City Manager Hendrix reminded that there was an executive session where the positions were discussed last week. Councilor Brennan commented he was under the assumption that we were taking two positions, moving them into one position, not making a bigger position and then having a second position again.

City Manager Hendrix went on to explain that we can have more discussion on the coordinator, but that this has been a question from these applicants of the day-to-day operations of recreation and economic development because this assistant city manager has a broader scope. I did send out the confidential draft of what that coordinator role looks like yesterday, as well with this.

Councilor Pealer asked about details of the resolution and who is asking for the resolution the CM or applicants? He commented by default, don't we already support this, I don't want to overstep with what the Charter says and not interfere with how you manage City Hall?

City Manager Hendrix responded that the support of the resolution would benefit both parties and show that the position is supported by the council. We've had applicants ask that question. They've seen restructuring before, they want to know before they leave a stable place to go somewhere unstable. I think they're doing their research and they just want to know there is confidence about the position itself and that you support this position as part of the organization. It's not a necessary resolution and we can move ahead with both of these positions without the support. It's just a nod to applicants that they have that support and that they have the resources they need to help make this transition complete.

Discussions were had about the succession of key positions and the need for changes in the Charter. Council Petropoulos asked for more details on what economic development's going to look like?

City Manager Hendrix responded that the assistant city manager will oversee recreation, zoning, economic development, and some building and grounds. They would also take on some of my day-to-day work since I am working in some different areas since the transition. The coordinator position will also do some of what the ACM does, so you'll have more of that alignment with the 2 positions, as well as the ice rink responsibilities. The job descriptions I sent divides it up into different areas, the idea behind having the coordinator position and the assistant city manager, is it gives you someone to have more day-to-day oversight, and aligning those areas into a more cohesive unit. Neither of these positions are department head level positions. When there is a new housing project, for example, where it's almost like courting at first with some of the developers, showing them around. Those pieces will go between the two of us. The same would happen if a manufacturer was looking for space in the city, we would coordinate with building and zoning in finding the right place, so it's marrying all of those components to work together.

Councilor Gillotte asked about the salary structuring. City Manager Hendrix explained that we are reducing one and increasing the other. It's cost neutral. Some staff are very positive and excited for the new positions and others are just waiting to see how it works out. She pointed out the positions were brainstormed and developed in coordination with the directors of all of those areas. There's some alignment there, and it also prepares for additional succession planning because if you have a team working on different pieces, you have more people in the know and you can keep moving forward. Most major organizations try to think ahead to reorganize or streamline as best they can, with the environment we've created with some of the conversations with the budget process.

The obvious perception is going to be that we cut taxes but added employees, when actually it reduces the number of department heads.

Councilor Lavin commented that he greatly supports the city manager and this reorganization makes a lot of sense. They're looking for confidence in their future employment, your expertise and your professionalism is saying to them, I'm going to get you on board. We may have to make other decisions later about what we're doing and how we're doing it. I see you as the hiring agent and have great faith in what you do and your expertise. City Manager Hendrix responded that this vote confirms the support of moving this idea ahead, how I make that occur and what the staffing structure looks like and how we do that, comes from me having those conversations with a couple of the applicants that are hesitant.

Mayor Valentino commented that reorganizational changes are always a challenge. Since he started here in '96, we've had a variety of different organizational structures and I think this change is a positive one. It creates succession planning; it delineates some of the structure that we have for management in our in our city and allows a better focus in different areas that we're looking for when it comes to economic development. It's forward thinking and creates changes that we need to implement whether it's reducing taxes, combined services or working with the surrounding municipalities. We have overloaded some of our staff with the ability to think forward. They're dealing with the day-to-day activities, which you can get caught up in the quagmire of that. You have to be able to free up your mind and be able to think forward like that. Unfortunately, we've kind of handcuffed staff in the past, whether it was because of fiscal responsibilities or COVID or whatever it might have been. I think this is an opportunity to kind of free that up and look forward.

Councilor Peeler asked about the rolling hiring freeze and that we have two previous position unfilled, and does this reconcile if we're already taking new applications? City Manager Hendrix explained the current openings we have are a police officer and a sergeant which cannot filled at this time. We are waiting on a Sargent's exam and with the police officer we're waiting for an academy and so these positions will be left open. The assistant city manager is now the open position moved forward. As soon as we get either a list or get close to an academy, one of those will move off of it. As of May 31st, we're at approximately \$138,000 of the \$200,000 in savings. Now that we are in July, we are much closer to that goal because of the additional vacancies.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr Gillotte.; seconded by Clr. Brennan

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

ROLL CALL VOTE:

**Aye - Clr. Whitfield, Clr. Moracco, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte,
Clr. Lavin, Clr. Brennan, Mayor Valentino**

Nay - Clr. Pealer, Clr. Grimaldi

MOTION CARRIED

**8. RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF A NY MAIN STREET GRANT APPLICATION FOR
1 RAILROAD PLACE, GENEVA, NY**

Councilor Petropoulos presented the following resolution

WHEREAS, the Smith Center for the Arts desires to apply for financial assistance through the 2025 Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) under the New York Main Street Downtown Anchor Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the application proposes funding to assist the Smith Center for the Arts to complete building renovations to its downtown "main street" building at 82 Seneca Street; and

WHEREAS, the Smith has identified the need to restore its magnificent facade and the hundreds of square feet of brickwork that make up the envelope of the building; and

WHEREAS, this project would advance downtown Geneva's ongoing revitalization efforts in that it will improve the appearance and safety of the city's downtown area;

WHEREAS, the grant application requires that the applicant obtain the approval and endorsement of the governing a body of the municipality in which the project will be located.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Geneva approves and endorses the 2025 New York Main Street Downtown Anchor Grant Application for assistance prepared and to be submitted by the Smith Center for the Arts.

Councilor Petropoulos explained was approached by Susan Monigan, the director of the Smith Center for the Arts to apply for a Main Street grant to restore their façade. There is no cost or financial to the City.
Councilor Lavin added that this grant if for masonry improvements to the facade and the envelope of the building.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr Petropoulos.; seconded by Clr. Gillotte TH
MOVED THAT this resolution be approved
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Gillotte; seconded by Clr. Moracco
MOVED THAT Council move to executive session at 6:30 pm to discuss proposed, pending or
current litigation and employment history of a particular person

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Whitfield; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos
MOVED THAT Council exit executive session at 7:45pm.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Gillotte
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 7:46pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Alicia Jean
Deputy City Clerk