

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

October 23, 2024 – 7:00 PM

City Hall – 2nd Floor Council Room

47 Castle Street

Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

1. ROLL CALL

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

Absent:

PUBLIC HEARING – Property Tax Cap Override

Mayor Valentino opened the public hearing at 7:00 pm. With no comment at this time, he closed the public hearing at 7:01pm.

2. AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

ACTION TAKEN by Mayor Valentino; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos

MOVED THAT the agenda be amended to include a resolution overriding the property tax levy limit

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. DISCUSSION – 2025 Budget

City Manager Hendrix distributed and explained proposed cuts to the 2025 Proposed Budget bringing the levy increase to 6% to include:

- \$5,000 reduction in funds for staff training
- \$52,100 to remove the position of Safety Coordinator, and return to the previous system of providing a stipend to a central staff person to take on the responsibility
- \$25,000 to delay electronic time keeping to late 2025
- \$30,000 Lakefront Building Shade Structure replacement. DPW will continue to repair as able.
- \$200,000 Remove vegetation management planning funds.
- \$16,500 Code Enforcement software
- \$85,000 Tree Inventory
- \$45,000 DPW Relocation Study
- \$72,000 DPW Admin Position
- \$50,000 DPW Asphalt Roller
- \$75,000 Replacement of Police Car

- \$25,000 Improvements to the firing range
- \$16,200 Fire Department Turn Out Gear replacement – reduced by three sets
- \$17,000 Fire extinguisher simulator
- \$25,000 Jaws of Life
- \$10,000 eliminate City funding of Cornell Agri-Tech
- \$5,000 Grant writing support
- \$54,000 Recreation Department Van replacement
- \$16,800 Remove senior programming partnership with the YMCA
- \$90,000 x 2 = \$180,000 Reduce workforce by attrition, hold two vacancies all year
- \$15,000 Reduce BID maintenance services, no weed eating, hardscape, no mowing
- \$15,000 Remove economic support provided to the BID
- Revenue increase \$200,000 sales tax revenue increase, based on projection change

City Manager Hendrix then offered two more reductions that would bring the 2025 Proposed Budget to 5% levy increase:

- \$62,500 DPW tree removal – limit tree work occurring city wide, will be responsive and complaint driven only.
- \$34,000 IT position – remove shared position with City of Canandaigua

Discussion followed related to some items to include implementing a regular rotation of fleet vehicle replacement, the implication of range repairs being put off, the condition of GPD's Durango's, implications of reducing fire turn out gear replacement, fire extinguisher simulator, Jaws of Life, positions left vacant, planned retirements, and sales tax projections.

Mayor Valentino thanked the City Manager, Comptroller, and staff for the budget work they were asked to complete in the last week, and asked council for direction between the 5% and 6% options, or if they'd rather choose individual items to remove from the proposed budget. Councilor Pealer appreciated the options and accepted all of them. Councilor Brennan accepted all, but wondered if grant writing should be brought back in, as it promotes economic development. Councilor Lavin thanked staff for the reductions, and noted that answers are far beyond "cut, cut, cut," collaboration, consolidations, including school district consolidations, are long term answers to government costs; further noting that the Town survives with services they don't have to pay to get. Councilor Grimaldi offered to go through levies and equalization with Councilmembers, noting that the problem that exists is more than 50% of the City's property being off the tax roll. Councilor Gillotte acknowledged that it's a hard decision to make this year, and that this is a year to regroup and move forward, he encouraged council to stay engaged with the budget and not to leave the City Manager on an island by herself, he also noted that he prefers the 6% option. Councilor Petropoulos shared that he's fine with the 5% option, and suggested adjusting fire after the fact, and encouraged council to stay engaged. Councilor Morocco had no preference or comments. Councilor Whitfield prefers 5%, which he sees as better than 20%, which would cause a lot of turmoil, he further shared that he's not worried about friends, he's worried about the people.

Mayor Valentino asked Councilmembers if there were any comments on the Water, Sewer, and Workers Comp budgets before a brief recess. There were none. Councilor Lavin would like to require management to bring any requests to increase water or sewer usage from the town be brought before council for approval.

Council recessed from 7:01 to 7:12

4. LOCAL LAW 1-2024 – Overriding the Property Tax Levy Limit

Comptroller Blowers presented the following local law:

WHEREAS, it appears that the General Fund budget as it is presently presented should be adopted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, that the General Fund budget as presently presented be and it hereby is adopted, and that a copy of the General Fund budget as hereby adopted be set forth in full in the minutes of this meeting, and **FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED** that the several sums in the General Fund budget for the year 2025 as appropriations for expenditures, in the total amount of **\$20,989,780** be and the same hereby are appropriated in the amounts provided for in the attached Chart of Accounts.

Councilor Lavin shared that he will be voting against the resolution, but appreciates the effort, and believes we're missing the opportunity of a lifetime. Mayor shared that he's been on Council since 1996, and lived in the City in the 70's and 80's, and has been challenged every year to make the City better. He believes if you build it they will come, and noted lots of private investment in the City, leading him to believe that taxes aren't keeping businesses away. He further shared that he will support the resolution, but is disappointed in the lack of vision moving the City forward.

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye - Clr. Brennan, Clr. Pealer, Clr. Grimaldi, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Moraco, Mayor Valentino

Nay - Clr. Lavin, Clr. Whitfield

MOTION CARRIED

6. RESOLUTION – Approving Water Fund Budget for the Year 2025 and Appropriating Monies Therefore

Comptroller Blowers presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Water Fund Budget of the City of Geneva for the year 2025 has been submitted to the City Council for its approval, and

WHEREAS, it appears that the Water Fund Budget as presently presented should be adopted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, that the Water Fund Budget as presently presented be and it hereby is adopted, and that a copy of the Water Fund Budget as hereby adopted be set forth in the minutes of this meeting, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the several sums in the Water Fund Budget for the year 2025 as appropriations for expenditures, in the total amount of **\$3,316,999** be and the same hereby are appropriated in the amounts and for the several purposes therein specified in the attached Chart of Accounts.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. RESOLUTION – Approving Sewer Fund Budget for the Year 2025 and Appropriating Monies Therefore

Comptroller Blowers presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Sewer Fund Budget of the City of Geneva for the year 2025 has been submitted to the City Council for its approval, and

WHEREAS, it appears that the Sewer Fund Budget as presently presented should be adopted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, that the Sewer Fund Budget as presently presented be and it hereby is adopted, and that a copy of the Sewer Fund Budget as hereby adopted be set forth in the minutes of this meeting, and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the several sums in the Sewer Fund Budget for the year 2025 as appropriations for expenditures, in the total amount of **\$5,534,798** and the same hereby are appropriated in the amounts and for the several purposes therein specified in the attached Chart of Accounts.

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

8. RESOLUTION – Approving Workers’ Compensation Fund Budget for the Year 2025 and Appropriating Monies Therefore

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

9. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 7:20pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nicole Tillotson
City Clerk