

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL
JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

November 6, 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 Whitfield

Absent: Clr. Moracco

2. PROCLAMATION - Veteran's Day

3. DISCUSSION – Parking

City Manager Hendrix opened the parking discussion with the intention to set goals for next year, and address questions, complaints and concerns related to city parking. She noted that Article 4 and 5 within the city's code need updating noting some obsolete language, and wondered what Council's concerns are.

Councilor Brennan noted typographical errors in the code and wondered how far staff would go into the process. City Manager Hendrix explained that ideally if updates are to be made, they will be thorough, noting that it will take months to get a complete package back to Council. Partners would include the Police Department, DPW, Planning and Economic Development, the County and the State. Councilor Petropoulos wondered about speed limits in parts of Ward 5, and traffic controls. Councilor Lavin added his concerns related to parking and speeding on South Main Street. Mayor Valentino complimented staff for their attention to the subject, and explained that changing speed limits in the City would be a challenge; he further shared his hope that updates would remain digestible, completed in a short amount of time, and that he'd be relying heavily on staff expertise to achieve the updates. Councilor Pealer wondered why parking updates would be a priority, as he isn't receiving feedback from residents on the matter, and that if staff dives in with man hours, he hopes the updates are really necessary. City Manager Hendrix explained that the project would take time and energy of staff. She further explained that the updates could be made in a piecemeal fashion, but the ordinance would at that point continue to lack clarity. Councilor Pealer noted that he'd rather see funds spent on infrastructure. Councilor Petropoulos noted that safety is a priority, and he'd like to see flashing signage at crosswalks, similar to the City of Canandaigua's Main St. Mayor Valentino suggested revisiting the matter in December.

4. PRESENTATION - Quarter Three Financial Updates

Comptroller Blowers provided the following update:

Comptroller Blowers reviewed the General Fund including behaviors of spending and revenues. Meetings are occurring with department heads related to year end expenditures. Overall, Comptroller Blowers shared that he

is happy with where the general fund is now, noting that it looks very similar to last year at this time. City Manager Hendrix added that Ontario County sales tax is down slightly compared to last year. Councilor Pealer wondered where the shortfall is coming from, Comptroller Blowers explained that the County doesn't share that type of data with municipalities, noting that sales tax revenues are down state wide. Discussion followed about the appearance of other revenues lagging, Comptroller Blowers explained some accounting that occurs at the end of the year balancing everything out.

Comptroller Blowers then reviewed the Water Fund, which is on track. He also noted that the Sewer Fund is expected to exceed projected revenues for 2024. Discussion followed about spending for both of these budgets occurring mostly in the beginning of the year, to build up inventory.

Investments were then reviewed, and Comptroller Blowers explained regulations about comingling certain municipal funds and reviewed CDs with Lyons National Bank, Money Market accounts, and some bonded funds in interest bearing accounts.

Councilor Lavin asked for a report on those funds, which the Comptroller will provide. He then went on to request information related to what Town residents pay for water and what the Town is subsidizing. Discussion followed. Mayor Valentino wondered why revenue looks different between water and sewer, despite 50/50 billing. Comptroller Blowers explained some big water users like Seneca Foods have metered sewer. City Manager Hendrix added that Waterloo and the Town of Seneca only purchase sewer from the City. Mayor Valentino noted that state and federal aid payments are expected in December, discussion followed around the state holding and investing funds earmarked for municipalities and not for profits. Councilor Pealer then wondered about water and sewer being different funds, discussion followed around their physical and financial separation. Councilor Lavin then asked for addresses of Town water and sewer accounts. Comptroller Blowers explained that most of their billing goes right through the town, and that in the past the town had shared readings information with the City.

5. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

ACTION TAKEN by Mayor Valentino; seconded by Ctr. Lavin

MOVED THAT the minutes of the September 16, October 2, October 9, October 16, and October 23, 2024 Council Meetings be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anne Hoyt spoke on behalf of the Green Committee, encouraging Council to spend some money on Lakefront Park, noting disappointment with budget cuts to maintain the space, while spending fund balance to redo the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Hoyt then shared that the Ontario County Landfill meeting was quite informative, and that the Q&A afterwards was very revealing. She explained that it's important for the City to pay attention to what's going on with the landfill and shared the consultants' five options moving forward: do nothing and let it keep going, allow expansion, reduce what it takes in by half, stop taking anything in from outside of Ontario County, and to close the landfill. She shared that Casella, under its current contract is obligated to maintain the site for 30 years after closure, while the site dries out and becomes inert, noting that if the amount of trash going into the landfill is reduced, Casella can renegotiate that agreement. She wondered if they would stay for 30 years after the half that may be kept open stops operating. Ms. Hoyt also added that closing the landfill will raise garbage collection rates in the City, that would then depend on Seneca Meadows, which would cost more. She also noted that the recycling facility at the landfill in Seneca is the largest in the area, and can bring in more business. Ms. Hoyt explained the investments made in the recourse recovery center in the City, and wondered if it could also be used as a transfer station if the landfill closes. She encouraged Council to look closely at what the County is considering, and prepare for whatever the County may do.

7. CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Hendrix provided the following report:

NYSEG Smart Meters

NYSEG has begun smart meter installations in the Auburn and Geneva service divisions. They have prepared a Smart Meter presentation that we have available should anyone want to understand more about the installation. Tim Winderl is available to further discuss this launch.

Finger Lakes Rail Road

Director Venuti continues to reach out to and have conversations with Finger Lakes Rail Road regarding failed crossings and potholes on their property. We have been able to find a few remedies locally, and will continue to work with the regional and federal representatives at FLRR.

Water Bills

Water Bill payments are due by Friday, November 15th or they will be re-levied onto the 2025 tax bills. Please remind your constituents of this important deadline.

Fall 2024 Yard Debris & Leaf Pick Up Schedule

The City of Geneva's fall collection and removal of bagged yard debris began on Monday, October 21st and ends Friday, December 6th.

After December 6, collection will be weather permitting with no set schedule.

Please place leaves and yard debris between the sidewalk and behind the curb for city removal. Please do not block storm drainage units. Please place all leaves and other suitable debris in paper bags. No plastic bags are allowed.

The city will provide a limited amount of paper leaf bags, at the Clerk's office, located on the first floor of City Hall, 47 Castle Street. Leaf bag pickup will be available during normal business hours Monday – Friday 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

You are encouraged to bring all yard debris to the Resource Recovery Park at 41 Doran Avenue on Wednesday 7:30AM - 3:00PM & Saturday 8:00AM - 12:00PM where a limited amount of FREE MULCH will be available to residents.

Additional hours may be posted based on weather conditions.

Two to Three Upcoming Work Sessions will be held at the end of this month and the beginning of next month to review:

Storm Task Force Recommendations, the Economic Development Strategy, Committee Formation, and 2025 and Beyond Strategic Thinking with Department Heads and Council

8. RESOLUTION – Authorizing a Public Hearing for a Local Law Amending Sewer Rates

Comptroller Blowers presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, a public hearing is required pursuant to the General Municipal Law for the purpose of establishing a local law for sewer rental rates.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York that a public hearing shall be held on December 4, 2024 at 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as it may be held, which public hearing shall be for the purpose of receiving comments on a proposed local law establishing sewer rental charges for the use of public sewers; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that notice of said public hearing shall be posted in accordance with law.

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

9. FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 341 OF THE GENEVA MUNICIPAL CODE – WATER AND SEWERS

Comptroller Blowers presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City's Comprehensive Plan charges us with financing necessary infrastructure and service delivery in a fiscally responsible manner; and

WHEREAS, a robust water treatment and distribution system is critical to attracting and retaining residents and industry; and

WHEREAS, in order to maintain the highest level of service possible for the best value, City Council needs to adjust water rates from time to time to reflect changes in costs of treatment and distribution.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Geneva City Council, hereby and in due form, does amend Section 341-17 and 341-18 to affect the changes to water rates for residents and non-residents, as is outlined on the schedule below. This change to become effective upon two readings of this Ordinance.

Water Rate Table

2025 Water Rate Table			
Size of Meter in Inches (In)	Water Allowance in Gallons	Minimum Charge	Per Gallon Over Min.
5/8	4,000	\$33.29	\$0.00603
3/4	8,000	\$66.57	\$0.00621
1	15,000	\$124.85	\$0.00639
1.5	34,000	\$282.96	\$0.00659
2	60,000	\$499.34	\$0.00678
3	120,000	\$998.69	\$0.00698
4	184,000	\$1,531.31	\$0.00720
6	371,000	\$3,087.60	\$0.00741
8	634,000	\$5,276.38	\$0.00763
Size of Meter in Inches (Out)	Water Allowance in Gallons	Minimum Charge	Per Gallon Over Min.
5/8	4,000	\$57.84	\$0.01000
3/4	8,000	\$115.68	\$0.01000
1	15,000	\$234.33	\$0.01050
1.5	90,000	\$531.15	\$0.01050
2	105,000	\$937.33	\$0.01102
3	120,000	\$1,874.63	\$0.01102
4	210,000	\$2,446.76	\$0.01102
6	419,000	\$4,933.40	\$0.01102
8	715,000	\$8,430.66	\$0.01102

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

MOVED THAT this ordinance be approved for second reading

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

10. RESOLUTION – Setting a Public Hearing for the Adoption of a Local Law Reducing the Number of Members of the planning Board from Nine to Seven

Clerk Tillotson presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Section 13.3 subdivision 1 of the Geneva City Charter, approved by referendum, effective January 1, 1974, as amended thereafter, states that the Geneva City Planning Board shall consist of nine (9) members, and

WHEREAS, reaching a quorum of five (5) members in attendance at meetings of the Geneva City Planning Board has been difficult, and

WHEREAS, General City Law Section 27 subdivision 1, authorizes creation of a City Planning Board consisting of five or seven members.

WHEREAS, reducing the number of members of the Geneva City Planning Board from 9 to 7 would facilitate the operation of the Planning Board and align its membership with General City Law Section 27 subdivision 1.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that a public hearing be held on December 4, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. pursuant to the Municipal Home Rule Law concerning proposed local law # 2-2024 submitted herewith.

Councilor Brennan wondered why seven members, and suggested changing the number of members of the Planning Board to five. Discussion followed. City Attorney Hou will come back with guidance around reducing the board to five members.

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be tabled

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

11. **RESOLUTION** – Setting a Public Hearing on Zoning Map Amendment to Increase CB-5

Director West resented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva City Council did direct the Department of Planning & Economic Development to review parcels within downtown for development potential to efficiently use limited downtown land and maximize the benefit of future infill development; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Economic Development has recommended amending the zoning map to expand the CB-5 zone to parcels where infill buildings up to 5 story would fit within the existing urban context and contribute positively to the future of the community; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Geneva has expressed its interest and intention to undertake an environmental assessment of the proposed adoption under the auspices of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA"); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the City Council of the City of Geneva declares it's intent to act as Lead Agency in the review of the Zoning Update for the purposes of State Environmental Quality Review, and directs staff to publish appropriate notifications and notice to potential involved and interested parties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York that a public hearing is set for 7pm on December 4, 2024, for the Zoning Update and appropriate notification and publication shall be made by the City Clerk.

Councilor Petropoulos shared that he'd like to see concept drawings and take time before moving forward with the proposed expansion of CB-5 in the Downtown area. Mayor Valentino reminded Council that this expansion of CB-5 would give the City more development options, building up, adding density, tax revenue, and development potential. Director West explained that approving the update doesn't approve any particular building project.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Brennan; seconded by Clr. Gillotte
MOVED THAT this resolution be approved
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

12. RESOLUTION – Supporting 2024 Restore NY Round 9 Application and Setting a Public Hearing

Director West presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva is eligible for funding under Round 9 of the Restore NY Communities Initiative Municipal Grant Program, and

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva has considered proposals that qualify for funding under the program and selected a project to be included in an application that will be submitted to Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC); and

WHEREAS, the project to be included in the application will be a redevelopment of the DeSales High School located at 90 Pulteney Street, Geneva, NY 14456, which will renovate the vacant and abandoned 25,376 square foot property into a mixed-use building containing 17 market-rate units on the upper stories and 4 commercial offices in the basement; and

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva submitted to Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) an Intent To Apply letter for this project which was officially accepted by ESDC on October 28, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that this project is a priority project that will contribute to the renewal of this downtown area, strengthen the local economy, and increase the quality of life for residents; and

WHEREAS, the City has worked with the property owners/developers to ensure that this project is aligned with local development plans and is seeking ways to find funding avenues to complete this project with public and private funds; and

WHEREAS, the funding is a 10% minimum equity match grant program and the City is working with the relevant property owners to meet that match requirement;

WHEREAS, this project is consistent with all existing local plans, the proposed financing is appropriate for the project, the project will facilitate effective and efficient use of existing and future public resources so as to promote both economic development and preservation of community resources, and the project develops and enhances infrastructure and/or other facilities in a manner that will attract, create and sustain employment opportunities in Geneva; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby supports and will sponsor an application for Restore NY funding for the property at 90 Pulteney Street and will administer the grant in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations established by ESDC; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Geneva supports this Restore NY application submission and the \$250 application fee that is required for the application which will be reimbursed by the developer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Geneva schedules a public hearing for December 4, 2024 obtain citizens' views and comments relative to the submission of an application to Empire State Development for financial assistance under the Restore NY Communities Initiative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is authorized to sign the applications and any agreements required by ESDC for grant funding that results from the application.

Director West explained that Restore NY Round 9 is a bonus round for 2024, noting that the DeSales project is the most shovel ready unfunded project and likely to be awarded funding. Councilor Pealer voiced his support. Mayor Valentino explored the tie in with the County's Housing Study goals. Discussion followed. Director West clarified that this project isn't senior specific, but does lead to attracting seniors, noting that the project is for market rate two-bedroom apartments in a great walkable location, and will be a taxable property. Councilor Grimaldi wondered if the project will have resident income limitations, Director West clarified that it will not.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Grimaldi; seconded by Clr. Pealer
MOVED THAT this resolution be approved
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

13. RESOLUTION – Adoption of Ontario County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan
City Manager Hendrix presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva recognizes the threat that natural hazards pose to people and property within the City of Geneva; and

WHEREAS, the County of Ontario has prepared a multi-hazard mitigation plan, hereby known as Ontario County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Ontario County Hazard Mitigation Plan, identifies mitigation goals and actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property in the City of Geneva from the impacts of future hazards and disasters; and

WHEREAS, adoption by the City Council demonstrates their commitment to hazard mitigation and achieving the goals outlined in the Ontario County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, adopts the Ontario County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan. This plan, approved by the community, may be edited or amended after submission for review, but will not require the community to re-adopt any further iterations. This only applies to this specific plan and does not absolve the community from updating the plan in 5 years.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Grimaldi
MOVED THAT this resolution be approved
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

14. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Grimaldi
MOVED THAT Lowell Dewey be reappointed to the Industrial Development Agency Board
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

15. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Whitfield shared that there will be a Success for Geneva's Children and Geneva 2030 meeting will be held on November 13th at Club 86 from 3:30-5:00. All are welcome to attend.

Councilor Petropoulos shared that the LDC met today. There are three Hobart marketing interns helping the LDC to design a logo. He also shared the Geneva 2030 and Success for Geneva's Children event at Club 86 on November 13. The Bozzuto Center tunnel painting project is facing a delay due to the discovery of lead paint. The LDC is holding a community networking event at the Bozzuto Center on November 18th from 6:30-8:00pm. Councilor Petropoulos complemented the efforts of those involved in the Halloween Parade. He also extended an invitation to the dedication of the Veteran's Talking Bench near Long Pier on Veterans Day at 10am. Councilor Petropoulos also shared that the lights on Castle Street that have been out for a while are now repaired. He also shared that there will be a Town Hall style community meeting at the library on November 16 from 9:30-12:30, which will be an open meeting.

Councilor Gillotte shared that the Police Budget Advisory Board offered revisions to the Police Department budget, is having challenges with the human services/social worker position, and is experiencing fleet issues. He encouraged the community to stay involved with the 2025 budget, and noted that they will be reaching out to the County for help with the human services position. He also shared that everything is business as usual with the BID, noting that the met with Executive Director Catherine Price who is being innovating with the budget and exploring grant opportunities.

Councilor Gillotte shared that everything is going well with the Geneva Housing Authority. He shared frustrations of Castle Street residents in the area of the old Media's building which is unoccupied and in unsafe condition.

Councilor Pealer offered a heartfelt thanks to Recreation for the Pumpkin Roll and Halloween Parade, as well as thanking first responders for their presence and assistance then and on Halloween. He further shared that the Child Advocacy Center had a successful gala fundraiser recently, and thanked Ray Ciancaglini and The Second Impact for the Police and Fire gala fundraiser.

Councilor Lavin explained that Geneva is in a unique position between two landfills, and believes damage has been done to the City, suggesting that if they keep taking money from garbage people the City should get involved. He wondered how much scrutiny the railroad gets for the enormous tax write off they get annually, and encouraged more aggressive scrutiny of them including their use of weedkillers. He also noted the increasing number of churches that no longer have their original reason for being tax exempt, wondering why they should still be given a tax exemption.

Councilor Brennan thanked Tom Burrell for the generous donation of \$375 from firewood sales. He shared that the Shade Tree Committee coordinated with Director Venuti, for the planting of 50-60 trees before winter. The Historic Districts Commission has been busy via email, and noted that the church at 5 Genesee Park was recently painted. He then wondered if the City is an interested party for the landfill, which it is. Councilor Brennan then expressed an interest in lowering the speed on South Main to 25 miles per hour, and will be working with Director Venuti on this.

Mayor Valentino shared that the Ontario County Rail Corridor hosted an open house at the Welcome Center this evening. The group's goal is to improve rail access to sites that need the access, driving recommendations to State and Federal officials for improvements. The mayor announced the Annual Tree Lighting to be held on December 6th at 5:30pm, recalling what a great evening it always is. He also shared that the Shields of Honor gala was a great event driving funding to support our first responders. Mayor Valentino thanked the City Manager for the excellent job she does providing input and updates to City Council related to shared services, which he reminded everyone is not a new concept, noting that the City is currently involved in many shared services that go unknown, while creating efficiencies.

16. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Brennan; seconded by Clr. Pealer
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:34pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nicole Tillotson
City Clerk