



City Council Minutes
The City of Cortland
April 13, 2020

Council Meeting #8
Special Meeting
April 13, 2020
Via Zoom
4:30 PM

Present: Aldermen Kat McCarthy, Katy Silliman, Bruce Tytler, John Bennett, Jacki Chapman, William Carpenter, Troy Beckwith, Thomas Michales,

Staff Present: Mayor Brian Tobin, Corporation Counsel Ric Van Donsel, Director of Finance Mack Cook, Police Chief Catalano, City Clerk Ray Parker, Confidential Secretary to the Mayor Devon Rainbow, Superintendent of WWTP Bruce Adams, Youth Bureau Director John McNerney

Special Session:

Mayor Tobin called the eighth Common Council special meeting of the year to order at 4:32PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Item #1 – Consideration of a Resolution to authorize the Mayor to modify the City budget to compensate for a decrease in revenue projections. Council is asked to also approve the furlough of up to 19 City employees, and to approve the Mayor and staff notifying employees. Dates of the furlough are from April 16 12:01am through July 30, 11:59pm. Job descriptions of impacted positions will be shared after discussion with affected employees.”

Dealing with Covid-19 has forced us to change our operations within city government, the same way we are asking everyone to change how they live. With the changes to people’s habits, there is a sharp decline in the city’s anticipated revenue from the State, sales tax, and other revenue generators. In order to keep the City fiscally sound, we have to make tough financial decisions about expenditures for 2020- our current budget year.

I tasked Mack Cook with coming up with a projection for our shortfall, and to suggest potential cost savings. As the chief officer for the city, it falls to me- the Mayor- to recommend to Council steps that we can take. The budget adjustments are based upon our current reality- that we have money we anticipated spending for services that we currently are not providing, and do not see circumstances changing in the near future.

Also, we are looking at cost reductions through changes in personnel. These decisions are not easy- I’ve stressed the importance of people first, and these changes will have a major impact on everyone. However, with the actions that the federal government has taken to assist people who are collecting unemployment, our employees will be OK. I also know that without these changes, our budget planning for next year will be even more difficult. I asked Council to consider the recommendations and to accept them all.

Council approved the furlough of 18 employees through July 30. At the July 21st Council meeting, I will have recommendations about what we can do regarding further budget modifications. By taking these steps today, I anticipate our ability to bring back our employees. We will give our employees who are furloughed all the information they need to navigate the process, and we will work with them to make sure their needs are met. People first.

If there are changes to the current situation, and our financial outlook becomes better, I will ask Council to bring back employees sooner. Every employee we have is essential to the city's functioning. This action will hurt our ability to provide strongly desired services to the public, and will stress our systems internally. By taking this decisive step now, we are going to create additional strains on our operating systems. However, we will be able to continue to provide our essential services, and we will protect our ability to return to normalcy in the future.

I know that we will be one of the first governmental bodies making this type of tough decision. But in coming weeks, we will hear about other cities, towns, villages, counties, and states doing the same. Private industry has already made these tough decisions. Non-profits have already made these tough decisions. As our neighbors struggle to deal with the changes we are all facing, we need to also make changes, and work to be responsible and accountable to the general public.

Emergency services will still be there when there is a need. We will keep our citizens safe. We are going to endure this, and we will be stronger, together, for it. Please continue to practice social distancing, to protect yourself and your neighbors. We will persevere.

Motion to consider initial resolution

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Chapman

Alderman Beckwith asked if doing this as one vote or can they vote by line items. He stated he they should vote by line item.

Alderman Silliman stated it appears to be a package deal and suggested vote together as a package.

Mayor Tobin stated that if the situation gets worse, they will need to revisit.

Alderman Tytler suggested voting on the staffing and non-staffing items separately.

Mayor Tobin discussed various budget cuts throughout the various departments within the City. Council raised concerns with CHIPS funding, it was explained that CHIPS funding is not guaranteed because it is reimbursed by the state but the work has to be done first and then submitted for reimbursement.

Motion to consider by each Department by line item

Motioned by: Alderman Beckwith
Seconded by: Alderman Tytler

Roll Call

Ward 1 – N, Ward 2 – N, Ward 3 – Y, Ward 4 – N, Ward 5 – N, Ward 6 – N, Ward 7 – Y, Ward 8 – N

Fails: Ayes – 2

Nays – 6 (Alderman McCarthy, Silliman, Bennett, Chapman, Carpenter, Michales)

Motion to consider separating by Non staffing and staffing.

Motioned by: Alderman Tytler
Seconded by: Alderman Beckwith

Roll Call

Ward 1 – Y, Ward 2 – Y, Ward 3 – Y, Ward 4 – Y, Ward 5 – Y, Ward 6 – Y, Ward 7 – Y, Ward 8 – Y

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

Resolution #93 of 2020 – Resolution authorizing the Mayor to modify the city budget by approving furlough of up to 18 full time City employees.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Roll Call

Ward 1 – Y, Ward 2 – Y, Ward 3 – N, Ward 4 – Y, Ward 5 – Y, Ward 6 – Y, Ward 7 – N, Ward 8 – Y

Approved: Ayes – 6
Nays – 2 (Alderman Tytler & Beckwith)

Resolution #94 of 2020 – Resolution to authorize the Mayor to modify the city budget by decreasing part time personnel lines and all other lines outlined in the attached document.

Motioned by: Alderman Bennett
Seconded by: Alderman Carpenter

Roll call:

Ward 1 – Y, Ward 2 – Y, Ward 3 – Y, Ward 4 – Y, Ward 5 – Y, Ward 6 – Y, Ward 7 – N, Ward 8 – Y

Approved: Ayes – 7
Nays – 1 (Alderman Beckwith)

Adjournment

Motioned by: Alderman McCarthy
Seconded by: Alderman Bennett

Approved: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0

I, RAYMOND A. PARKER, CITY CLERK FOR THE CITY OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT SAID RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL AT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORTLAND, HELD ON THE 13TH DAY IN APRIL 2020. I FURTHER CERTIFY THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR IN THE TIME REQUIRED FOR HIS CONCURRENCE IN ADOPTION OR REJECTION BY VETO POWER.

RAYMOND A. PARKER, CITY CLERK

MAYOR BRIAN TOBIN