

November 17, 2014

City Council

Proceedings by Authority

State of New York
City of Jamestown ss:
City Council Chambers

A Public Hearing of the City Council of the City of Jamestown, New York was held on Monday, November 17, 2014 at 6:00 PM.

Members Present: Council Members, Brent Sheldon, Tony Dolce, Alfonso Pagan, Marie Carrubba, Maria Jones, Paul Whitford, Kim Ecklund, George Spitale and Gregory Rabb

Members Absent:

Other Present: Director of Financial Services/City Clerk James N. Olson, Comptroller Joseph Bellitto, Deputy Fire Chief Chet Harvey, Police Chief/Director of Public Safety Harry Snellings, Executive Assistant to the Mayor Matt Hanley

201411B00.01

LEGAL NOTICE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that pursuant to Section C-39.E. of the Charter of the City of Jamestown, New York the City Council’s Budget and Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2015 is available for public inspection in the Office of the City Clerk, 200 E. 3rd Street, Jamestown, New York, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (legal holidays excepted) and at the Prendergast Library, 509 Cherry Street, Jamestown, New York. A summary of the City Council’s Budget and Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2015 is as follows:

City of Jamestown
2015 General Fund Budget

Expenditures

Salaries	\$15,987,855.00
Benefits	10,496,000.00
Contractual	4,760,450.00
Debt Service	2,103,720.00
Agencies	395,500.00
Capital	895,629.00
Equipment	<u>71,000.00</u>
Total	\$34,710,154.00

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Revenues

Property Taxes	\$15,079,560.00
Misc. Revenues	18,776,709.00
Unassigned Fund Balance	390,000.00
Non-Spendable Fund Balance	<u>603,885.00</u>
Total	\$34,710,154.00

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the City Council will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, November 17, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, Municipal Building, 200 E. 3rd Street, Jamestown, New York on the City Council’s Budget and Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2015.

Gregory Rabb
City Council President

Publication Date: November 8, 2014

OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

201411B00.02

Todd Trnum: Good Evening, Todd Trnum, President of the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director Manufacturer’s Association of the Southern Tier located at 512 Falconer Street and I also have a residential property in Jamestown at 345 Crossman. Good evening Chairman and Council members, thank you for your time this evening. Cities are very important. Cities provide a sense of place, a gathering location for community and cities are the hub of economic activity connecting businesses with consumers, businesses with businesses and connecting residents to a variety of services. Cities are essential to our regional economy. Cities are the building blocks of a strong region. We have two cities in Chautauqua County and they have long been the foundation of our economy. Unfortunately, that foundation is cracked and it’s deteriorating. Part of that deterioration is being brought about as we face a national drug epidemic. There’s no doubt that that epidemic is thriving in our county and right here in Jamestown. On this note, I would like to thank Chief Snelling for his leadership in putting up the good fight along with Sheriff Gerace. Yet they know, and we all know, they are dealing with a symptom of a problem that is killing our residents and our children on a monthly basis. Eradicating the drug problem at its root will be done by disabling the demand. Why has this Council and this Mayor sat in practical silence on this issue? Do you have any plan on how to address both the causes and the symptoms of the drug epidemic here in our community?

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Many of the problems we face in this community, including the drug issue, have their roots in the deterioration of the economic and social fabric of our neighborhoods. Critical to improving our economic outcomes and with that improving the livelihood of our citizens is through education, through job retention and creation and by creating an environment where businesses and residents want to invest in this community. Now we don't believe that it is by intent, however the City is undermining the opportunity for businesses and residential property owners to invest. You've created an environment where we face the highest taxes per capita in the nation. That is not a list we want to be on if we truly want to have a progressive city. No longer can you afford to blame the City's financial predicament on union contracts that were negotiated thirty years ago, poor budgeting decisions made in the 1990s, nor is there any place in this discussion to put the blame on not for profits in the community, many of whom are filling service gaps that the City does not have the ability or capability to fill. Blaming unions, prior mayoral administrations, prior Council members and not for profit organizations is not leadership and it's not the leadership we need. What we need is a vision.

These past two years, in an act of desperation, you've gone to the BPU to plug budget deficits instead of making hard choices. If you proceed with approving yet another dividend payment from the BPU to the City General Fund, as contemplated in the executive budget, you will have taken \$1.5 million in three years from the BPU. The allocation you are seeking this year is in addition to over \$4.2 million that would transfer from the BPU to the City General Fund this year. When does it end?

Jamestown's utility rates are competitive and attractive to businesses and homeowners however what you are doing through this repeated process of seeking dividend payments is endangering the retention and attraction of businesses and the retention and attraction of homeowners to this community. You cannot tax and fee your way to prosperity. So our question to you is this, what's the endgame? Is there a plan for growth? What's your vision for the future of the City and what is your strategy to lead this community forward? Thank you.

Councilman Pagan arrived.

201411B00.03

Doug Champ 225 Bowen Street: My experience with the City goes back a long time. I've worked with some of you and now I have some major concerns about the investment strategy that the City has on taking dividend payments from the Board of Public Utilities and I'll tell you why. I've been involved in energy for a long time. I helped build and develop the district heating system which is, I guess, a prime example of what initiative can be done within a city this size in terms of energy efficiency. That project took investment. It took capital investment to make it a reality. And as I've left and been retired for over ten years, I've been involved in a lot of energy development issues on the County, Western New York level and in Florida. What I find very saddening is the way that we rely on funding sources without really looking at the investment strategy of what it takes to provide energy either in distribution or generation. Because energy projects require a lot of capital investment over time because you deteriorate. Equipment becomes obsolete. So with that in mind, by taking money from a utility which you own and you have the right to do, you actually mortgage the future on further energy investment. You can actually argue that point because what's going to happen, when the BPU files a rate increase, they will take a look at the reinvestment of the utility and that rate increase will be looked at regarding what you're doing here in relieving the utility of funding and transferring into the

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General Fund within the City of Jamestown. Now, I know why you do it and you have a difficult job at hand in trying to manage this City with revenues that aren't enough. The Police Department does a remarkable job in what they do to fight the crime that we have and the drug problem. I commend them wholeheartedly as a father and as a grandfather. It's remarkable what they do with what they have. But my problem is how you're misguiding the use of these funds and the after facts will happen with energy investment in a community. Todd has indicated what the dollars are, I won't need to go into that.

My other point of view is this: We have a very antiquated leaf-removal program in the City of Jamestown. It doesn't work anymore. And what I suggest that you do because the seasonality of picking up leaves and the high cost of transferring a piece of equipment and a snowplow truck back to a leaf removal truck is next to impossible. I suggest that you roll the leaf pick-up program over to the Board of Public Utilities. And buy a vac-air truck and pick up the leaves on that cycle so you no longer have the seasonal problem associated with leaf pick up. It's antiquated it doesn't work as you can see with the early snowfall. With the leaves in the street, they become nothing but slurry and mortar. They get pushed down on the street. It doesn't work here anymore. You're doing a system that was in play fifty years ago. For the cost, I'm asking you to evaluate this through a special commission or body to look at the cost of leaf removal and how well it's working in the City of Jamestown. It's not working. It's too immense of a cost associated with that process. So that's my point. Again, I thank you for the job that all of you do. It's difficult at best. And as citizens we can only come forward and suggest. We're here to suggest. Whether you take any advice at all, it's entirely up to you, but as citizens who love this city, we can do that by these public hearings. So you can take these ideas, massage them, throw them away, it's entirely up to you. But I guarantee you, if you do take money out of the BPU, the rates will increase over time. Thank you.

President Rabb asked three times if there was anyone who wanted to address the Council this evening with respect to the proposed 2015 Budget.

There being no one who wished to speak, the Public Hearing was adjourned.

Director of Financial Services/
City Clerk
James N. Olson