

The regular meeting of the Mechanicville City Council was held at the Senior Citizen's Center, North Main Street, Mechanicville, NY, on Wednesday, May 1, 2013. Mayor Sylvester opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Roll Call:	Mayor Sylvester	- present
	Comm. Seber	- present
	Comm. Chauvin	- present
	Comm. Higgins	- present
	Comm. Hipwell	- present

Chief Waldron led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Sylvester, seconded by Comm. Chauvin, moved that the minutes of the regular meeting of April 17, 2013 be accepted as prepared. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Mayor Sylvester had nothing to report at this time.

Comm. Seber said he got notification from the National Center for Health Statistics starting the week of May 14<sup>th</sup> through July 29<sup>th</sup> they will be doing a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey of about 525 people in the County of Saratoga . Said people from the government will be knocking on people's doors wanting to know various health and nutrition, how people feel about them.

Comm. Chauvin had nothing to report at this time.

Comm. Higgins said on Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, they will start milling various streets in the city and on Wednesday and Thursday, the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>, they will start paving , weather permitting.

Comm. Hipwell said this coming Saturday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, they are going to put the Park Avenue Playground together, they have new stuff coming in and the Lion's Club will help them.

City Attorney Serbalik said there is a resolution on the agenda NO. 38-13 to enforce the city's claim for moneys expended to alleviate a dangerous condition on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Said a meeting is scheduled with Comm. Seber and them. Said secondly they have that draft code that we started and he just gave copies to everyone and also he made copies for all members of the board, Said if anyone in the public wants to take a look at it they can call his office. Said it's in preliminary draft and they will be working on it for the next couple of months.

Chief Waldron said the Police Department has been very busy. Said one area that he will stress right now is the Park Avenue Plaza, they have had a couple of fights in the plaza that have resulted in serious injuries to a couple of people, both have had significant injury to their heads, one was knocked out. Said it seems to be when they start to gather then they get some of those issues that take place. They also pulled over a

car that had 6 people stuffed in there and they pulled out vodka and beer and not one person was over 20 years old and one person got resistful and hurt one of his police officers. Said what will hopefully occur is that the Police Department will be taking a short stance of people loitering inside the Park Avenue Plaza. Said he is reaching out to General Schuyler, the owner of the plaza itself, to see if they would be willing to assist in purchasing cameras to put on the lights poles inside the plaza to help them monitor it a little bit better. Said the businesses have been very good to them around there, anytime he needed a camera or view they have come through for him and they allow them to take a lot of their time up in getting film. Said the fight was out of the view of McDonald's cameras but they did see some through Rite Aid's cameras in the drive through. Said he wants to make sure everyone understands it and that it goes into the press that the Police Department will be taking a strong stance in the plaza for loitering. Said no longer will they allow them to sit there, park their car and talk. Said they are gearing towards kids not two adults sitting next to each other having a conversation, he's talking about where one car pulls up and 8 cars park behind it. Said its right around the Rite Aid area that they congregate. Said he wanted to make sure everyone was aware of it and that a crackdown will be taking place. Said there will be DWI patrols over the next few weekends. Said as everyone is aware Mechanicville's prom is this Friday so they will have a DWI Patrol out there on Friday. Said they were out there the last couple of days and one person blew a 2.5 which was quite significant for being on the road. Said to please not drink and drive and help them keep the roadways safe. Said beginning May 20<sup>th</sup> they have seatbelt enforcement, the State of New York has given them \$2,000 to go out there and supplement their patrols with extra guys to enforce the seatbelt enforcement compliance. Said it will happen throughout the State of New York and will last for 3 weeks beginning May 20<sup>th</sup>. Said to please buckle up, it does save lives. Talked about the accident yesterday saying our police officers witnessed the whole thing and were on the scene when it occurred. Said a tractor trailer had pulled out from a parking spot and connected with a power line which snapped the power line down over 200 feet. Thanked the Fire Department and DPW for directing the traffic as all of the traffic lights were down, it's a big effort and he appreciates it. Said they are down positions in the Police Force since January which had a major impact on the overtime line items. Said they budgeted roughly \$68,000 for overtime and they have already spent 50% of it and there are not in their busy season. Said they have been doing interviews for police officers and unfortunately they have not been going well, it seems like they always get a snag in the middle of it. Said it is very busy and they are trying to keep the budget under control which is very difficult, they have to try not to save 5 cents by spending 20 cents which is happening right now.

Comm. Seber said they have had two resignations within the last 2 months so he's obviously not paying those salaries. Asked what he's filling those vacancies with, overtime police officers or part-timers.

Chief Waldron said for example one Sunday they had one full-time guy and all the rest were part-time. Said if that one guy gets a day off, it's all overtime and it doesn't matter how many part-timers they have because the department is always run with one full-time officer on duty, it's in the contract. Said they can only work part-timers so much, 19 1/2 hrs. in any given week. Said they try to schedule two days for each part-

timer.

More discussion was held on the police department using part-timers and about filling a position with a dispatcher.

Deputy Fire Chief Corrigan gave his report. Said they did take 4 new members in last month so they are addressing their staffing issues for manpower. They did hold a Group New York Statewide Program to recruit new members.

Mayor Sylvester thanked him and opened the meeting to the public.

Kim Dunn said at the last meeting she asked about the building on Park Avenue. Said Comm. Hipwell stated that he had looked at it and was checking on prices. Asked if he made any progress with that.

Comm. Hipwell said the people that own the building haven't gotten back to him so there is no report.

Comm. Seber said this is the third time he heard this, total, so it's not like it's a serious conversation going on in city hall about this whole thing, in fact he's yet to hear it inside the city hall building from any Commissioner or any staff member or anybody else. Said to him, this is something that he has no idea what anyone is talking about other than the fact that he heard it on the street one day, you brought it up at the last meeting, this is the third time so there is no serious, he hopes he would be part of the conversation, there is no serious conversation going on about this situation.

Mayor Sylvester said he found out about it today, the Chief was going up to take a look and asked if I wanted to take a ride.

Mrs. Dunn said she heard it in the community and she was curious.

Comm. Seber said it can't be very serious, sure she knows more about it because he only knew it from her.

Mrs. Dunn asked about talking in a car in the plaza.

Chief Waldron said they wouldn't get arrested talking to one person, said it's when a group gets together and they all fight and it gets out of control, that's what they are looking at. Said he talked to the proprietors there and they are all happy that they will be moving people along because it's not good for business when all those kids get out there and start swearing.

Mrs. Dunn said she likes having our own police department because things have changed in our community, we are seeing more and more crime and it is kind of scary. Asked if the police are going to go back to riding bicycles around.

Chief Waldron said they are actually going back to the foot patrol. Said he likes doing it himself. Said he's a Police Chief that believes in stopping in Stewarts for a cup of coffee and talk to the people. Said his table is always full with people. Feels foot patrol is a lot safer than bikes.

Mayor Sylvester said when he sends the guys out let them ride by the playground.

Dave DeMarco said on the dock improvement project they have coming up, it looks like they are going to spend \$41,000 for the sidewalk and curbing and then another \$65,000 for a retaining wall and then you're going to have another bid out there for electric and another for asphalt.

Mayor Sylvester said this is all part of the grant, some of it is matching.

Mr. DeMarco said this is almost 1/2 million dollars.

Mayor Sylvester said its \$400,000.

Comm. Seber said they bid 4 projects about 3 weeks ago; the total projects would have been about \$170,000 for all the work that they bid. Said they are doing two of the projects and rejecting two of the bids. Said it's a 50% match, it is a grant. Said they are only awarding two of the four bids here and the thought is maybe next year they can budget enough to do the rest so it's about \$100,000 and half of it would be from the state and half of it would be in some form from the city.

Mr. DeMarco asked what the total cost is for the building on the dock.

Comm. Seber said the grant was for \$247,000, the city's match would be \$247,000 over a period of 5 years, it's not a one year deal. So they have 2 years left on the grant. Said this resolution accepts two of the bids and rejects two of them.

Mr. DeMarco said the other thing is the railroad trucks are all parking up at the city garage, are they paying us rent to park there?

Comm. Higgins said no, they asked if they could park there, it's easier for them to park there and he told them it was all right.

Mr. DeMarco said it's a lot of wear on the driveway and parking lot; it's a lot of trucks.

Comm. Higgins said it's only a couple of trucks early in the morning; all the other trucks are usually out.

Mr. DeMarco said he was there one night and there were about 10 trucks coming in.

Lydia Tironi said he said he was going to step up the patrol thing. Said she is at the park a lot during the summer just on the swings and hanging out with her friends a lot. Said there is a lot of activity going on in the basketball court and sometimes it's not the best kind of things you want, there is cursing. Said there are a lot of little kids there and a lot of older kids and it's not a good match and they tend to destroy things. Said about the plaza sometimes she drive down to McDonalds and there are cars in a line next to each other, music is loud and its around 9:30 at night and most businesses are closed so they shouldn't have any reason to be there. Said when that flasher was around, they did a very good job with face book posting of pictures and stuff. Said she thinks there is a Mechanicville/Stillwater Neighborhood Watch on there where you can say something. Talked about parking on their streets and things, especially the trucks from the railroad which gives them no place to park.

Mayor Sylvester said it's a project that will probably move on, laying rail or something and then they will probably move on. He doubts they will be there all summer long.

Steve Desadore, Crystal Street, said he's acting in capacity as President of the Fire Department tonight, especially to ask about the rumor they are spreading that the city is looking into the Charter Rules especially regarding the Chief's Office and adding term limits to the Chief's Office. Said they have co-existed well over a 100 years with the city always abiding by whatever the fire department put up for officers. Said their present by-laws do not have term limits in there and if they are pursuing this, may he respectfully ask why.

Mayor Sylvester said it's a work in progress, it's a draft. Said he thinks it's a better opportunity for a younger man to move up the ranks rather than have someone there for 20 years. Said that was brought to his attention when he wanted to run again that Johnny Fascia was in here for almost 20 years, people don't like that. Said it's in progress and once they are done with it it will be brought to a public hearing and everyone will have a chance to talk about it.

Mr. Desadore asked if there will be a vote on it.

Mayor Sylvester said there will be a vote by us.

Mr. Desadore asked if they will take into account the input of the public.

Mayor Sylvester said yes.

Comm. Seber said weren't there term limits until recently.

Mr. Desadore said no, before the merger there was rotation every two years, two years they were Assistant Chief, two years Second Assistant Chief, Assistant Chief and then Chief and then the next company put up their man as low man on the totem pole who they thought was good and they went through the ranks for 6 years. Some ran again, Timmy ran again after that. Said no that they have merged it comes off the floor.

They have qualifications, they have to meet the strict qualifications and there's not too many out there that meet the qualifications, that's his concern with term limits. Said they didn't get anybody to sign up Saturday for the Fire House for the open house they had, so there is nobody knocking on their doors. Said the requirements for Chief is very strict, there's not too many out there right now. Said he understands what he is saying and respects his opinion but he has to know there are not too many that are there so they elect off the floor unlimited so if a person is interested, and people do run against each other, whoever gets the most votes wins.

Comm. Seber said when he came here a few years ago he was under the impression that there were term limits for the fire chief. Asked if that changed recently.

Mr. Desadore said the by-laws get rewritten two years ago with two year rotation.

Comm. Seber said so that is really term limits.

Mr. Desadore said yes.

Comm. Seber said so that no longer exists.

Mr. Desadore said correct.

Comm. Seber said then the reason they did it was because of the reason he just gave them, not enough qualified people.

Mr. Desadore said yes.

Mr. DeMarco said there are rumors that they will sell Station 2, is that true?

Mayor Sylvester said no.

Comm. Seber said he has gotten 3 calls from people who want to buy it. Said it would have to go to public auction, public bid.

No one else had anything to say.

Comm. Seber read RES. NO. 37-13 MECHANICVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
AUTHORIZES THE WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES WALK

Introduced by Comm. Seber, seconded by Mayor Sylvester. Roll Call:  
Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Comm. Seber said he spoke to the Police Chief and Fire Chief and staffing doesn't seem to be a big issue.

Comm. Seber read RES. NO. 38-13 DIRECTING THE CITY ATTORNEY TO INSTITUTE LEGAL ACTION IN THE APPROPRIATE COURT TO ENFORCE THE CITY'S CLAIM FOR MONEYS EXPENDED TO ALLEVIATE A DANGEROUS CONDITION

Introduced by Comm. Chauvin, seconded by Comm. Hipwell.

Attorney Serbalik asked if they want him to hold off until they meet with them.

Comm. Seber said this allows the attorney to move forward with the lawsuit. Said they are meeting with them on the 10<sup>th</sup> to resolve it if they can but if they can't this gives authorization to move forward with the necessary action to recoup the money.

Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Comm. Seber read RES. NO. 39-13 AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE ATTACHED RECOMMENDATION LETTER FOR THE CITY DOCK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Introduced by Mayor Sylvester, seconded by Comm. Chauvin. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Comm. Seber read RES. NO. 40-13 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO HIRE ROBERT J. MURPHY AS A FULL TIME POLICE OFFICER' EFFECTIVE MAY 2, 2013

Introduced by Comm. Chauvin, seconded by Mayor Sylvester.

Comm. Seber said he wants to be absolutely clear for the record, the newspaper, he's not proposing, he doesn't want to do away with the Police Department in the City. Said he discovered asking a question about the police department it tends to get around the city that you want to do away with the police department and that is no way the case and in fact he's hoping to strengthen the police department financially. Said they have had two resignations in the last couple of months and the idea is to replace one of them with a dispatcher and the second one there was some talk of replacing that one with a dispatcher as well. Said they know they have a retirement next year and that there are 2 or 3 officers that are certainly eligible to retire over the next two or three years, whether they will or not remains to be seen. Said he sees this as an opportunity to sit down and do an analysis of the police department and what they are doing might be perfect time to perhaps streamline or perhaps not but take a good look at the department from a staffing and budgeting level. Said adding an officer is around \$51,000 and next year will be around \$54,000 and with everything else it's around \$88,000 for a police officer. Said he's just saying this is a perfect opportunity to make changes. Said he's going to vote no on this because he thinks it's an opportunity for them to show some fiduciary responsibility and take a look at the police department over the next two or three years. Said it's about 32% of the budget, it's a big chunk of the budget and thinks it's something they need to look at.

Roll Call: Mayor Sylvester - yes  
Comm. Seber - no  
Comm. Chauvin - yes  
Comm. Higgins - yes  
Comm. Hipwell - yes

Mayor Sylvester said this police officer is somebody they don't have to spend \$15,000 on sending to school, he's already a police officer, it's basically a transfer type deal, he's already gone to school and they are transferring him up from being a part-time officer here to a full time officer. Said somewhere along the line here they will have to start sending somebody to school because in the next few years there is a possibility that 5 people might retire.

Chief Waldron said he knows they have talked about this as the council that they would like to start sending people to the academy because it's so much easier having them work for your part time and then move them into a full time slot. Said he respects the Commissioner's opinion, said this council has taken bold moves but putting a dispatcher on the A-Line. Said the C-Line is the busy shift there is. Said he wants them to understand that they are taking significant strides to reduce the burden on the tax payer. Said moving a dispatcher to the A-Line will save them \$25,000 each year. Said he wants to make sure the council gets recognized for that.

Comm. Chauvin read RES. NO. 41-13 PAYROLL AND VOUCHERS

Introduced by Comm. Chauvin, seconded by Comm. Higgins. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

No old or new business.

Mayor Sylvester, seconded by Comm. Hipwell, moved that the meeting be adjourned at 7:53 p.m. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.