

The regular meeting of the Mechanicville City Council was held at the Senior Center, 178 North Main Street, Mechanicville, NY on Wednesday, December 4, 2013. Mayor Sylvester opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

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

Sam Carabis led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Sylvester, seconded by Comm. Chauvin, moved that the minutes of the regular meeting of November 20, 2013 be accepted as prepared. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Mayor Sylvester had nothing to report at this time.

Comm. Seber said there will a budget workshop here next Wednesday on the 11th at 7:00 to start working on the budget. Said January 1st will be a swearing in ceremony of the new city officials, their deputies, fire department officials he believes. Said that's a Wednesday and normally that's a meeting night but they will move the regular meeting to the 2nd which is Thursday night, there is a resolution on to do that. Said to Val, his office gets tax searches and they give them a certified copy of all the back taxes they owe or don't owe and they can take that to a closing. Said they have been charging \$50.00 for that forever, he wants to raise that to \$75.00 starting January 1st. Asked if he needs a resolution to do it. Said if he does, he will do it next time.

City Attorney Serbalik said no, it's an administrative action.

Comm. Seber said on January 1st they will raise the rates. Said they do about 100 to 150 a year so they are talking about 7, 8, 9 or \$10,000 in potential additional revenue.

Comm. Chauvin had nothing to report at this time.

Comm. Higgins said a couple of weeks ago he met with the State about flooding on Central Avenue. Said in 2015 they might be paving where they stopped down at the south end of town and finish paving Central Avenue. Said they are looking into the piping to see if they can do something to stop the flooding. Said before they pave, the State didn't know, they are going to help them by putting a camera in the line to see what they have. Said on Park Avenue one side the lights are out, they have a short there, they are trying to find it, it's under the blacktop somewhere so they are trying to trace it. Said as soon as they find it they will have the street all lit.

Comm. Hipwell said this whole city council wants to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday.

City Attorney Serbalik asked for an executive session to discuss litigation.

Chief Waldron gave his department stats through November: they investigate 212 accidents; found 44 open doors; investigated 5673 police calls and 830 rescue squad calls for a total call volume of 6680; 471 people arrested; 753 traffic tickets and 132 parking tickets issued; talked about revenue and how they brought in \$75,229.87 said they are short about \$5,000 from what he said they would bring in.

Chief Alonzo said Merry Christmas to everyone and wished everyone a safe holiday. Said through November the fire department responded to 280 calls, assisted Hillcrest at Cascade's Peppermill; reported all the calls they responded to. Said they continue to be busy. Said he will not keep harping on a new truck, he had emailed all of the council and he certainly understands the budget constraints. Said he does have confirmation that ISO will be here next year doing their audit and he hopes they do okay. Said if they don't their insurance will go up. Said he understands the spending freeze that is going on now but he had already scheduled prior to that OSHA physicals for the department that are required and he has no choice and he hopes that bill will be paid when he submits it. Said he is doing his best to keep things in check. Said he would appreciate a budget workshop, he wonders why it is taking so long. Said they have a couple of areas in their budget that they can work with them on. Said the fire department represents 4% of the city budget, this is your volunteer fire department that comes out all hours of the day and he's very sympathetic to the financial condition but this fire department didn't cause any of it and they certainly need a budget to continue operating. Said fortunately their manpower is tremendous and they have to equip that too. Thanked them all for their time on that.

Mayor Sylvester said they have some gentlemen from Bryant Stratton College located in Malta who have a proposal for us.

Brian Gregory, Director of the Malta Site for the college, introduced Mike Markou of the college. Said as the Mayor alluded to a couple of months ago they had their grand opening at the new site. Said he had a conversation with the Mayor and Comm. Hipwell about the ability to transport citizens from Mechanicville to the Malta site to attend college. Said they are now working with the Community Center who have identified 4 individuals who would like to attend their college. Said they would like to partner with the City of Mechanicville to utilize the van to bring citizens once a day to Malta and then return them at the end of the day. Said Bryant Stratton is a two year Associates Degree bearing college, several different disciplines. Said what they are doing in Malta is mostly tied to health care. Said with Global Industries and the Esplanade coming in health care will be a bigger issue in this community in the near future. Said there are job opportunities up here. Said Bryant Stratton only deals with degrees and certifications that prepare people for a job. Said they educate for employment not liberal arts. Asked if they could have the man bring the students to them and return them at the end of the day.

Mr. Markou said one other thing is Bryant Stratton would pay all of the added on expenses in terms of any payment that the student would have to give to the town if any as well as the gas so that there is no additional cost to the residents of Mechanicville.

Comm. Seber asked what the schedule would be.

Mr. Gregory said it's only for day classes that start around 9:00 and the last class ends at 3:30. Said they would pick them up around 8:30 and bring them to the campus and then it will come at 3:30 to bring them back home.

Comm. Seber asked Tim if he planned on using the same driver.

Comm. Hipwell said the game plan is to not have it interfere with the routine of the city. Said they will use one bus driver and the kids will meet at the Community Center and then the bus will bring them up to the college. Said if the kids want to stay past 3:30 they have to get their own ride home. Said he is all for this.

Mayor Sylvester and the council all agreed they are for this.

Mayor Sylvester asked the City Attorney if they need a resolution for this.

Attorney Serbalik asked if they are going to commit to a specified time period, say a year. Asked Mr. Gregory how they want to work it as well.

Mr. Gregory said the contract they would have with the student would go for 16 months so they would tell a student that this service is available for 16 months.

Attorney Serbalik said it should be a contract then if the city is going to commit itself for the 16 month period.

Comm. Hipwell said he wanted to make one thing clear, the bus they are using is a city owned bus, not the state funded because they cannot use that bus to go out of the city limits so the bus they are using the city bought. Said it's a 13 passenger bus.

Discussion was held on contracts, fees, reimbursement, etc.

Comm. Seber said they can work it out and then they will pass it at our next meeting.

Emilia Izzo asked if they would provide this service for 1 or 10, however many sign up.

Mr. Gregory said the cap is only 13.

Mrs. Izzo said if they only get 1 or 2 kids will they still do this.

Mr. Gregory said yes.

Comm. Seber said the cost to the city will be the same.

4. Comm. Hipwell said it's got to be more than 1. Said he was told tonight they have

Sam Carabis said the topic was brought up last night at the Community Center that there were 20 scholarships.

Mr. Markou said each person that becomes part of this program will get \$1,000 scholarship per semester.

Comm. Seber said they said health related, is it the business end of the health industry.

Mr. Gregory said they have degrees in medical assisting and medical administrative assisting, they have a 4 year degree in health services administration and several different certification programs which they will be launching down the road.

Joanne Zinc said it's not really kids, its 18 or older right.

Mr. Markou said yes, they have to have a high school diploma or GED.

Mayor Sylvester said it sounds like a win, win situation for them. Said when they approached them in the summer, they donated 50 backpacks to the Community Center.

More discussion was held on attendance.

Comm. Chauvin made a motion to close the regular meeting to go into a PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEEKING PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ENACTING LOCAL LAW 2013-3 AUTHORIZING A PROPERTY TAX LEVY IN EXCESS OF THE LIMIT ESTABLISHED IN GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW {3-C, at 7:22 P.M., seconded by Mayor Sylvester. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Mayor Sylvester said the hearing was published in the local newspaper. Opened up the meeting to public comment.

Kim Dunn 50 South Main Street, said they said they would do it at this meeting but they don't get to have a say on it, said they must have some guess of what they will be asking for as they said we were \$400,000 in the red and that would require a 20% tax increase just for that. Said the work shop isn't until next week. Said it seems like they are just throwing something out there that would be judgmental to the tax payers come next year.

Comm. Chauvin said the main purpose of this is if they have to they can. Said if they don't get this done they will be shut out by the state and if they have to raise taxes they can't because they are shut out then they don't have a budget.

Mrs. Dunn asked what their allowable tax cap is right now.

Comm. Chauvin said the formula for the state is around 2% give or take. Said they want to exceed that possibly because they will have to recoup 3 or \$400,000 someplace.

Mrs. Dunn asked what their guess is, 5%, 10%, 20% was thrown out but that is alarming.

Comm. Chauvin said it is but it may be very well what it is. Said for the last 3 years he has been here has been bare bones, no departments have gone up in their spending, very little other than what is necessary or mandated. Said they have been using their fund balance to the tune of 3 or \$400,000, we don't have that money now. Said they can't cut enough out of the budget so they will have to raise it at least 20% maybe more.

Mrs. Dunn said that's her concern. Said she lives here, her kids live here so they need to know what's going on because you are saying you are not spending more, you are cutting back, said something is not gelling here and people keep moving out of Mechanicville.

Mayor Sylvester said there are other reasons why people are moving out of here other than taxes, taxes in Mechanicville are the cheapest around. Said when you here percentage, everyone thinks it's enormous.

Comm. Chauvin said if you are paying \$1,500 for taxes you are talking \$300.00. Said when you look at in terms of money, it's not a lot of money. Said a percentage seems like a lot of money, when you think 20% that's a big amount but the houses in Mechanicville aren't assessed that high. Said like he said if your taxes are \$1,500 you are going up \$300.00.

Mrs. Dunn said hers are way over that. Said they are overlooking the fact, look at the demographics of Mechanicville, we are not a fluid community, we have a lot of elderly population, we have a lot of low income, we have a lot of people that haven't gotten pay increases at their jobs and their health insurance premiums have gone up and gas has gone up. Said we have what 70 or 68 houses going out for tax auction and even if half of them come in and pay you are still talking about 30, 35 houses. Said she hates to see that keep happening, she would like to see Mechanicville become a better place. Said the fire department has needs, you don't want to slight them but on the other hand the taxpayers would have to pay for the truck. Said something has to give somewhere, she's just looking for answers, she doesn't know why people are selling their houses, she is sure there are various reasons. Said her point is the less attractive they make it to live here, people will go elsewhere, they are already going elsewhere.

Mayor Sylvester made a motion to close the public hearing to re-open the regular meeting at 7:28 p.m., seconded by Comm. Chauvin. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Mayor Sylvester opened up the meeting to public comment.

Mrs. Izzo said the overpass that the Lion's Club decorated looks beautiful.

Mayor Sylvester said he would relay that to them.

Deputy Comm. Proper said when they talk about the underpass that is a state owned road, you are talking about them doing it and you guys just helping.

Comm. Higgins said they will just run cameras through there to see where the pipes go.

Deputy Comm. Proper said then this just regular manpower hours to help them out. Said even if they pave that's all of them right.

Comm. Higgins said yes, it's all on them.

Mrs. Dunn said at the last meeting she talked about the John Ahearn Rescue Squad and with Halfmoon, Clifton Park coming in at Station 2 there will be a lot more traffic there. Said Mr. Santiago said it would expand up to and include Hillcrest Fire Department said who is going to respond.

Mayor Sylvester said he thinks right now most of that will be between John Ahearn and Halfmoon. Said they are still working on a contract and are waiting for paperwork to come back to them and they will go into executive session to discuss that.

Chief Alonzo said as Mr. Santiago said this City Council isn't even obligated to provide emergency services luckily they are willing to get into a contract because this was kind of jammed down their throat. Discussion was held on the fire department's involvement with this. Said as far as traffic, there's a slight concern because these guys are professional. More discussion was held on this.

Mr. Carabis asked if the bridge on Central Avenue would be replaced next year.

Mayor Sylvester said yes.

Comm. Seber read LOCAL LAW 2013-3 AUTHORIZING A PROPERTY TAX LEVY IN EXCESS OF THE LIMIT ESTABLISHED IN GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW {3-c

Comm. Seber said it's allowing the city to exceed the 2% tax gap that the State mandated a couple of years ago. Said there is no ceiling, you can go as high as you want. Said 3/5ths of the council would have to vote on it to accept it, 3/5ths of the council would have to vote on the budget anyway so it doesn't make any sense. Said as Pete said it is just giving the council the ability to do this. Said two years ago there was a resolution that was defeated to do this. Said last year the resolution was accepted to do this. Said he voted yes for the last two years to do this and he will vote tonight to do this because unfortunately they will need to exceed the cap. Said he hasn't seen the budget yet but he's not going to vote for a budget that just balances the budget with tax

increases we have to see some cuts along the line to do this.

Mrs. Izzo said she can't understand how they can pass this before you have a budget.

Mayor Sylvester said State law tells you to do that, that's the way they do it.

Mrs. Izzo said then a budget should have been passed two months ago so you would know about how much you will raise these taxes or if you have to raise the taxes.

Mayor Sylvester said this is if we have to raise taxes.

Mrs. Izzo asked when the budget was due.

Comm. Chauvin said by the first of the year.

Comm. Seber said last year they did it in October.

Mrs. Izzo said she complained about it last year.

Comm. Seber said the way it works is, it is a little late this year, after the vote tonight and if it is adopted, then the Local Law has to be filed with the State within 10 days. Said they couldn't have passed the budget before the 19th or 20th of the month anyway if they exceeded the tax cap. Said it's going to be late in the month before it's passed because they haven't seen the b=budget yet.

Mrs. Izzo asked if everyone files this late.

Comm. Chauvin said it's all the same when you get down to it, whether they passed their budget in October or January, it doesn't make a difference, you will have to have the numbers from the previous year to figure your budget out for the next year, you can't do it too early because you don't have numbers.

Mrs. Dunn said you haven't even seen the budget Mark, if she were him that would scare her because you will have what 5 minutes to look at it then vote on it. Said how can you look it and have time to absorb it and make suggestions and you have to hurry up before December 31st to get that voted on. Said that puts them in a really bad position, you will be making decisions for other people coming in. Said they should maybe start on it a lot earlier like October, just a suggestion.

Comm. Chauvin said hopefully with their new commissioner she will take care of that.

More discussion was held on the budget.

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

Comm. Seber read RES. NO. 80-13 MECHANICVILLE CITY COUNCIL
APPOINTING JOHN H. CIULLA, JR., ESQ. TO
REPLACE JUDGE KEITH M. FERRARA AS ACTING
CITY COURT JUDGE

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

Comm. Seber read RES. NO. 81-13 RESCHEDULING THE MECHANICVILLE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF JANUARY 1, 2014 TO
JANUARY 2, 2014 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

Comm. Seber read RES. NO. 82-13 CITY COUNCIL ACCEPTING THE
ATTACHED CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN AND
AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSIONER OF FINANCE
TO FILE THE PLAN WITH THE OFFICE OF THE STATE
COMPTROLLER

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

Comm. Chauvin read RES. NO. 83-13 PAYROLL AND VOUCHERS

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

Mayor Sylvester made a motion to close the regular meeting at 7:47 to go into an
executive session for a litigation matter, seconded by Comm. Seber. Roll Call:
Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Comm. Chauvin, seconded by Comm. Hipwell, moved that the executive session
be adjourned at 8:29 p.m. to re-open the regular meeting. Roll Call: Affirmative – all.
Negative – none.

Mayor Sylvester, seconded by Comm. Chauvin, moved that the regular meeting
be adjourned at 8:30 p.m. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.