

The regular meeting of the Mechanicville City Council was held at the Senior Center, 178 North Main Street, Mechanicville, NY on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. Mayor Baker opened up the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call:	Mayor Baker	- present
	Comm. Seber	- present
	Comm. Gilheany	- present
	Comm. Higgins	- present
	Comm. Hipwell	- present

Mike Coleman led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Comm. Higgins, seconded by Comm. Hipwell, moved that the minutes of the regular meeting of November 19, 2014 be accepted as prepared. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.

Mayor Baker said he would turn it over to Mark because he knows he has several things he wants to talk about.

Comm. Seber said a couple of meeting ago they had mentioned they may have to look at doing a re-val this year. Right now their equalization rates which kind of control the assessments in the city are at 75% so if your house is assessed at full value at \$100,000, you pay taxes of about \$75,000. Next year it can go as low as 69% and the lower it goes the worse it is for the city tax payers, particularly on school taxes. The reason is when the housing values go up, they went up about 4% in the last year, and the assessments go down which they have, it decreases that gap. Feels they need to have a real honest discussion on doing a re-val in the city. Said part of it is gathering information and he spoke with our assessor and she will put us in touch with the woman at the State who actually handles this stuff for this region. At some point they will bring her in here, probably sometime in January because if we are going to do this we need to do it quickly. If we go to a re-val it won't affect the budget until 2017, it takes that long to do these types of things. He just wanted to give everyone a heads up that the numbers aren't moving favorably particularly on the school side, we will need to have serious conversation about whether we want to move forward with re-val in the city. It hasn't been done here in about 20 years and the problem with re-val is that some people will get hurt and some won't, it's usually 1/3, 1/3 and 1/3 that will probably pay more taxes and others will pay lower taxes, that's the way these things work out. So heads up, they will be having some serious discussions about this over the next month or so.

Mayor Baker said the State has been pushing us to do this.

Comm. Gilheany said she provided the Treasurer's Report, our cash position still looks good, we will still have a large State Aid payment come in, around \$600,000 and some minimal sales tax but we have approximately 1/2 million to pay out in retirement funds in December. We will still have cash at the end of the year to get us through tax collection time. We will have one more budget workshop which will be before the City Council meeting on the 17th at 6:30. They will have the water and sewer budgets in addition to the general fund budget and then they will

vote on it at the council meeting at 7:00. One other thing that she wanted to mention, she knows the Mayor has been getting questions on the rebate, right now they are looking at a 2.89% tax rate increase which is above the tax cap. Our tax levy is what they base the tax cap on and our tax levy is only .41% so we are under the tax cap for the tax levy so that does qualify residents for a rebate. She just wanted to clarify that.

Comm. Seber asked if anyone got a rebate from the school stuff.

Mayor Baker said a good portion of the reason for that tax going up is because Esplanade's buildings came down so they no longer pay the tax they were paying, they pay less. The bank was sold, it had an assessed value of \$400,000, we lost on that and we lost on several other things in the city.

Comm. Gilheany said that was correct.

Comm. Seber said assessments went down 3.6 million this year. Said if everything had been the same taxes would have actually been brought down so the rate would probably have gone down, it certainly would have been about even.

Mayor Baker said he has had several questions on that, he just wants to make sure people understood it. They did a lot to control the budget this year. The reason for it going up wasn't necessarily that, it was because of losing assessed value.

Comm. Seber said to follow up on what Jodie said at 6:30 they will talk about the water and sewer but there is also going to be a public hearing on the entire document, we need to have it to vote on it on the 17th as well.

Comm. Higgins said he was over to the bridge today and he said they were about a week behind. What's happening is the concrete has to be 45 degrees or the concrete won't set. He said they are about a week behind but he couldn't definitely say so it might be a little longer.

Mayor Baker said so we are looking at the 19th or a little longer.

Comm. Higgins said supposedly before Christmas.

Comm. Seber said did they think it was going to be warm the first week of December.

Comm. Hipwell said at the last meeting he announced that the 100th Year Celebration is coming up. Michele Duel's son won the \$100.00, he was the only one that put in the drawing so he won the \$100.00, he did the front page for the 100th Anniversary and the back page for the 40th Anniversary.

Chief Waldron said he had nothing to report; he just wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

Assistant Fire Chief Dave Zecca said they had 43 alarms for the month of November for a total of 559 for the year. Said one fire fighter was injured with minor injuries. That is all he had.

Mayor Baker opened up the meeting to public comment, giving them 5 minutes and asking them to go to the podium and give their name and address.

Dave Hicks, 241 First Avenue, said pay raises should be based on positive results by reducing taxes where they were before the previous administration raised them to keep them in check that would be a reason to warrant a pay increase. Tim's area, for safety reasons all traffic lights should be tied together at a single source point eliminating the need for emergency manpower to direct traffic. Said they could eliminate 8 meters saving over \$15,000 in a 10 year period. Asked if a call log is kept by animal control for calls and what action was taken. Should be done for insurance and liability. Asked about the basketball court at the playground. Feels that Esplanade is going to bankrupt the city because they will be tax free for 20 years. We also have to pay 5% of the bridges that are going in here so that will be an additional charge. There was a sheet put out that said a 41% water loss, has anything been done to alleviate these issues? Asked how the IDA was formed.

Comm. Hipwell said he wanted to answer him. The Park Avenue Playground, the guy that does the blacktop gave him 4 different dates and he is still waiting. He got another date that says they will be done by the 31st of this year and he honestly can't see it, doesn't think it will be done until next year. Said the second question was animal control, every time he goes out he logs it in there, it stays in his office. He gets called two or three times at a house, he tickets people and people will go in front of the judge. Nick does a heck of a job. Said they had one problem down the project where a dog bit somebody, we had the files and our lawyer said we did an outstanding job.

Comm. Seber said on the Pilot of Esplanade. For the first 5 years of the Pilot, they will pay the city about \$7,500. They were assessed about \$150,000 and they are paying 3, \$4,000, they are actually paying us more the first 5 years. Secondly over 20 years they pay more than twice of what they would pay because of the assessment because they are going to go up on the front, this is the agreement, they will pay more than twice than they would if the warehouse had stayed there for 20 years. Said he was a big proponent of this project, he still wants to see it come to fruition.

Mr. Hicks said but you are spending tomorrow, that's the issue.

Comm. Higgins said they will put one building up.

Comm. Seber said the IDA controls the Pilot Program, not them. He's hoping that what happens is that they pro-rate the whole thing, if they put up one building its 1/6 of whatever the agreement is. They had that conversation with the IDA and they are hoping they are moving in that direction.

Mayor Baker said they can't tell them what to do but they can mention what they feel should happen.

Mr. Hicks asked how the IDA was formed.

Mayor Baker said it was way before him.

Comm. Seber said there are 4 representatives from Mechanicville and 4 from Stillwater and then they elect a Chairperson themselves. They were appointed by the Mayor and Supervisor. More discussion was held on this.

Kim Dunn, 250 South Main Street, said the best case scenario would be the 19th of December but realistically it will be late December or January. Jodi said they will have money left at the end of the year. Asked when tax bills go out.

Comm. Seber said March 1st.

Mrs. Dunn asked if they are sure we won't borrow money.

Comm. Gilheany said payroll is about \$200,000 a month; we have money to cover that. We have regular income, it's not major, its taxes, sales tax and state aid.

Discussion was held on gas cards that everyone uses.

Comm. Gilheany said each department is charged for their own fuel bill.

Mrs. Dunn asked if they have an update on Clifton Park/Halfmoon moving into Station 2.

Mayor Baker said there was someone working there the other day. He knows they awarded contracts.

Mrs. Dunn said they talked about re-val and we have our own assessor, wanted to know why she couldn't do that.

Comm. Seber said it's a big job, she will be involved but no one person could do it.

More discussion was held on this.

Mrs. Dunn asked about a handicapped sign on 2nd Avenue that was put in for a person that is no longer there. Said there are a lot of problems parking on that street, can the sign be taken down because that place is not in operation.

Mayor Baker said they will look into it.

Dave DeMarco, 52 Warsaw Avenue, he's concerned because they are talking increase in tax and then they are talking about giving everybody a raise. Said he doesn't understand that, he doesn't get a raise when he does a bad job.

Mayor Baker said he doesn't think they do a bad job.

Mr. DeMarco said he will take that back. Said they've had a 17% increase in tax which means someone wasn't paying attention and things went up. Doesn't think it's right that everyone gets a raise from that. Asked how many guys did they use to do the paving for New York State Electric and Gas.

Comm. Higgins said it varied.

Michele DeMarco, 52 Warsaw Avenue, said she works for the State and 4 years ago when the State was in fiscal trouble they said to the State workers too bad, so sad, no pay raises for 3 years so she is having a hard time understanding their justification for pay raises when taxes are going up, you're losing tax revenue, you have bridge projects due and you want to give people pay raises. Said the State still took the money out of her paycheck and they made her give up days so they could get themselves squared away so she isn't happy about pay raises.

Comm. Gilheany read RES. NO. 104-14 PAYROLL AND VOUCHERS

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

Comm. Seber said this is a late resolution because they just received the official letter from Gene today. Read LATE RES. NO. 105-14 RETIREMENT OF EUGENE LECLAIR FROM DPW

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

Mayor Baker said under new business there is a walking group that talked to him, they don't have a lot of information yet, but they want to do a walking tour of the city in August. Their direction of travel will bring them down Main Street so he told her that they need to see what happens with the street being closed, he doesn't think it will be a problem if they walk on the sidewalk and not in the street. They want to come down and tour the dock; they want to take a look at the cemetery, we'll let them know there will be a foot bridge across Main Street. We'll give you more information as it gets closer but they just called us the other day.

No other new business, no old business.

Comm. Gilheany made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m., seconded by Comm. Higgins. Roll Call: Affirmative – all. Negative – none.