

**MINUTES
CITY OF PORT WASHINGTON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
February 3, 2009**

A duly convened meeting of the Common Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Scott Huebner in the Council Chambers. Council members present: Aldermen Paul Neumyer, Jim Vollmar, Burt Babcock, Tom Hudson, Dave Larson and Chris Ross. Absent & excused: Alderman Haacke. Also present: City Administrator Mark Grams, City Planner Randy Tetzlaff, City Engineer Rob Vanden Noven and City Attorney Eberhardt. Mayor Huebner had the Boy Scout Troop #875 lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. The boy scouts are working on a Citizenship in Community Badge.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the Previous Meeting – January 20, 2009
- B. Approve Original Operator's License Applications – Richard J. Merritt and E. Molly Quinn
- C. Approve Cabaret License Application – 200 Grand Restaurant & Pub, LLC (Angel Tello) Tello's/200 W. Grand Avenue/February 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009

MOTION BY ALDERMAN HUDSON, SECONDED BY ALDERMAN LARSON TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. **Motion carried unanimously.**

MAYOR'S BUSINESS

- A. Mayor Huebner reported that we've installed plaques for the artwork in the Council Chambers. The City is very grateful for the donations.
- B. Consider Mayoral Veto Of Resolution 2009-1 – Mayor Huebner referred to his letter to the Council about the reasons for his veto of Resolution 2009-1. He highlighted some of the points in the letter. He said it has nothing to do with the quality of work of the employees. They go far and beyond what is expected of them. However, we are facing three things: 1) we raised taxes in the last year, 2) we cut services to the citizens and 3) we are facing a budget deficit for 2008. He said he weighed this item on his conscience for a long time and doesn't think it's fair to approve a 3% increase across the board. The country is in a recession. These are the reasons why he vetoed the resolution. The bottom line is he is against a 3% across the board raise because it is not justifiable. We have to be more fiscally prudent and send a message to our citizens that we understand the fight they are going through.

Alderman Babcock voted for it, but after more thought, is not in favor of it. He said this country is facing something we haven't faced in a long time. The private sector is trying to make a lot of adjustments in their budgets and feels the City has to be more prudent. Citizens are going through tough times. Alderman Hudson said that this is a cost of living adjustment increase. Everybody understands the cost of living is going up. These employees are working side by side with people in the union who are getting a raise and he thinks it's unfair for us to provide a raise for some and not for others. You're comparing the City to the private sector and you can't do that. Our City staff has to attend various meetings and don't get paid for their time. He is against giving raises to some and not to others. His suggestion was that we should all turn our salaries back to the City and apply it to this. In that way, 80% of that increase could be covered.

Alderman Neumyer said he is also very cognizant of economic conditions. However, he referred to a letter from the Police Chief concerning the lieutenants with the Police Department. The lieutenants originally were sergeants and came out of the union at the encouragement of the City with an agreement that they would always be covered as the union employees were. I think we are encouraging the lieutenants to go back to the union as well as setting a bad precedent. He said we all agreed on this originally. He didn't receive complaints from any citizens. It is unfair to do this to these people at this point.

Alderman Ross said he is very heavily involved in the Milwaukee area in the private sector as well as the government sector. How can we say that we have a \$200,000 budget deficit to pay off in 2008, that we don't have a problem now, but we have a problem that we can take care of in a year? Someone already said that our tax levies are set for 2009, but house values are going down. Do you want to give a 3% cost of living to people now and then take away their jobs down the road because we can't afford to keep them? I think they would pass up the 3% cost of living increase. Alderman Vollmar – if we do across the board denial of an adjustment of any kind, we're not taking into account those people who are not managerial, but who are just doing a good job within City Hall or at the library. We're not separating the people who are excluded, who could easily be unionized.

City Administrator Grams commented that he did go back and looked at the City's tax rate and looked at several homes in the community as far as what they're paying in taxes this year compared to what they paid in taxes going back to 2000. Looking at a typical home in Port Washington, that homeowner is paying fewer taxes this year than what they paid in 2000. Looking at all the projects we've done over the years, we probably spent in capital projects close to \$15 million dollars over the last 10-15 years. To do the amount of projects that we've done and keep taxes basically the same over the last 9 years is quite an accomplishment for everybody. To me it's worth some reward for everybody who has worked on that. Alderman Babcock said he doesn't see the City being in a position to give across the board increases. He thinks we should be looking at individual merit increases when we look at adjustments. MOTION BY ALDERMAN HUDSON, SECONDED BY ALDERMAN NEUYMER TO OVERRIDE THE MAYOR'S VETO OF THE SALARY RESOLUTION. 1 aye, 1 abstain (Neumyer) and 4 nays (Vollmar, Babcock, Larson, Ross) **Motion fails.** City Administrator Grams suggested that we have the Personnel Committee take a look at a merit system for pay increases. Mayor Huebner said he believes in a merit system because it rewards those people who will work extra. What's the incentive to do any extra work if you get the same as everyone else? The Mayor said he would be open to that if that's what the Council wants. Then we are encouraging people to work harder. MOTION BY ALDERMAN BABCOCK, SECONDED BY ALDERMAN HUDSON TO SEND THIS ITEM BACK TO THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE TO LOOK AT MERIT INCREASES. **Motion carried unanimously.**

OFFICERS'/STAFF REPORT

- A. City Administrator Grams reported that the Spring Primary Election would be held on Tuesday, February 17th, so the next City Council Meeting would be on Wednesday, February 18th.

B. Update On Projects:

1. Fisherman's Park Bridge – Contractor will be back on Tuesday filling in the abutment that they poured. They will be placing the bridge next week and the bridge should be back in service by the end of the month.
2. Coal Dock Design Project – There was a meeting last Friday with the various regulatory agencies interested in the project. They included WE Energies, DNR, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Public Lands and the Fish & Wildlife. After a coal dock is retired, it reverts back to public usage for recreational and navigational purposes. These stipulations have to be followed. They were very impressed with the Hitchcock Design Group. It was a positive meeting. We're moving forward. The next Coal Dock Meeting is scheduled for February 9th in the Lower Level Conference Room. The next public workshop will be on February 16th at Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

- C. Update On Proposed Discussions With Port Harbor Investments, LLC Regarding Their Building At 122 N. Franklin St. – City Administrator Grams reported that Randy, the Mayor and himself had a conference call today with representatives from Port Harbor Investments, LLC regarding the building on Franklin Street. Basically we are trying to find out where that's at and what their plans are. We indicated to them that something has to be done immediately. They did agree that something has to be done and said that they are in the process of interviewing architectural firms to look at the building and come up with some type of plan to make the exterior part of the building acceptable to the City. They gave a deadline of having something put together by the end of the month. City Administrator Grams indicated that the deadline date for plans to be submitted to the Design Review Board is by the 1st Tuesday of the month. They indicated that financing has been a problem to bring the building up to code. They need to secure the building and fix the front façade. Their long term plan is to remove the building.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/APPEARANCES – Pat Wilborn, 233 E. Pier Street – He indicated he is a Port resident who has worked on a number of community projects. He would like the Council to consider an aquaponics center for the south coal dock area. Aquaponics is a merging of aquaculture, or raising fish, and hydroponics, or growing plants in systems without water. He said it would benefit the City in four ways. There would be traffic in and out of an aquaponics complex and would represent an anchor for downtown, adding people visiting the facility and stopping at city restaurants and shops. It would also provide an opportunity to provide local, sustainable foods in an urban setting as well as provide employment for about 100 people. Mr. Wilborn asked the Council if it was reasonable to ask for comments from the Council. Mayor Huebner said because it is not an agenda item, they can only listen to comments at this point.

COMMITTEES

A. Finance and License Committee

1. Update on 2008 Budget Deficit – City Administrator Grams reviewed his memo with the Council regarding the 2008 Budget Deficit. He indicated that at this time we have a deficit of \$200,000. He said he talked to the Department Heads as far as taking their capital projects that they

purchased last year and charging them back to the capital borrowing fund. By doing that, it would basically wipe out what the deficit could be. He said that hopefully we should have final numbers by the next meeting or the first meeting in March and then make a recommendation as far as what to do.

BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Report On Main Street Program (Sara Grover) – Sara Grover, Main Street Director, gave a presentation to the Council on the Main Street Program. She said they are moving at a very rapid rate. Four Committees are in place: 1) Design, 2) Promotions, 3) Organization, and 4) Economic Restructuring. She said one of the reasons they are off to an excellent start is that there are many people who have volunteered to serve on these committees. Currently there are 92 volunteers under the Main Street Program. The Main Street office has been established in the building just west of City Hall at 116 W. Grand Avenue. She reported that the four committees and Board Members will meet with State staff who will be in town on February 12th from 5 – 9 p.m. at St. Peter's Church to put together the 2009 work plan. An event that is coming up on February 24th, put together by the Promotions Committee, is the "Kiss of Indulgence – Ladies Night out". Thirty-nine businesses are participating and everything is complimentary.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/APPEARANCES – None.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – City Engineer Rob Vanden Noven reported that before the next Board of Public Works Meeting next Tuesday, there would be a public information meeting from 5 – 7 p.m. regarding St. Mary's neighborhood project of reconstructing certain streets with an open house format. Alderman Ross expressed condolences to the Nicholas Waranka Family. Also, we said we need to re-evaluate and do the budget process for 2009 over again and start from scratch.

ADJOURNMENT – MOTION BY ALDERMAN ROSS, SECONDED BY ALDERMAN NEUMYER TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL AT 8:28 P.M.

Motion carried unanimously.