

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
January 7, 2002
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JOSEPH M. BUTLER PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS
COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH
COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR BUTLER**

ALSO PRESENT: **CITY MANAGER JERRY C. HILLER
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU
CITY ATTORNEY ROBERT J. SLYE**

Assistant City Manager Corriveau presented the following reports to Council:

- 1 - Approving Appointment as Commissioner of Deeds
- 2 - Appointment to the Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library Board of Trustees – Stephanie McGuire
- 3 - Authorizing Sale of Real Property, Known as 110 Highland Avenue, Parcel No. 2-10-103.000
- 4 - Approving Superceding Marchiselli Aid Local Agreement, Bellew Avenue Reconstruction, City of Watertown, PIN 775272
- 5 - Approving Agreement for Professional Engineering Services, Watertown International Airport, Runway 10-28 Rehabilitation, Bernier Carr and Associates
- 6 - Local Law No. 1 of 2002, Establishing Real Property Tax Exemption of Capital Improvements to Residential Buildings
- 7 - Public Hearing -7:30 p.m. – Approving the Special Use Permit Request Submitted by James L. Desormeau to Park Dump Trucks and Other Equipment at 739 Morrison Street, Parcel No. 1-03-103
- 8 - Tabled Resolution – Authorizing Sale of Real Property, Known As A Portion Of 234 Bellew Avenue, Parcel No. 8-13-107.003
- 9 - Tabled Ordinance – Local Law No. 2 of 2001, Establishing Real Property Tax Exemption of Capital Improvements to Residential Buildings
- 10 - FY 2002 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Public Hearings

COMPLETE REPORTS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

Meeting opened with a moment of silence.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of December 17, 2001 was dispensed with and accepted as written by motion of Councilwoman Burns, seconded by Councilman Simmons and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

COMMUNICATIONS

From Christine Thompson, a member of the Residents Against Salt Storage Pile Committee, thanking City Council for the attention to their concerns and inviting Council to attend the committee's next meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2002 at 6 p.m. at the A.M.E. Zion Church, 715 Morrison Street.

ABOVE PLACED ON FILE

From Larry and Carol Allen concerning the new one-hour parking signs that have been placed in the 300 block of Academy Street, across from their property and asking council to consider removing the signs as it is a residential area with little or no parking

ABOVE PLACED ON FILE

Supplemental Summons was received concerning a foreclosure action on property owned by the heirs of Elizabeth Nixon.

ABOVE REFERRED TO THE BOARD OF AUDIT

Claim against the City was received from Imrich Zakovic for wrongful arrest.

ABOVE REFERRED TO THE BOARD OF AUDIT

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Capt. David Lachenauer, President of the Watertown Firefighters Association, addressed the chair expressing his concerns with Council wanting to close fire stations and doing a study. He stated that the 1986 Cresap study cost \$86,000.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that it cost \$32,000.

Capt. Lachenauer stated that while his cost figure may be wrong, the fact is that the City hired a Fire Chief to do the job and he asked that Chief Gaumont be allowed to do just that. He remarked that the Cresap study indicated that there should be three stations with 90 men. The City now has three stations with 82 men. He stated that Council complains about overtime. However, it is a result of the cuts in 1986 and injuries that have occurred since those cuts. He also commented that North Tonawanda is a bedroom community and should not be used as a comparison for Watertown. He stated that the needs of Watertown should be addressed. He suggested doing a study with the fire union and the Chief. He also commented that the International Firefighters Association would do a

study for free. He advised Council that many of the volunteer departments have gone to a paid force. He stated that the information that has been given does not give an accurate picture. He stated that if the State Street station were closed, Council would be putting the public at risk. He stated that the fire department wants to work with Council and would give them a list of ways to save money. He also referred to the July 13th study, which was done indicating that the people in Watertown appreciate and want the fire protection.

Mayor Butler responded that Council recognizes the professional Fire Fighters and the professional Police Officers. He stated that it is important to have cooperation from both departments. However, he stated that if the City goes through with a comprehensive study, it may get down to what the public wants to pay for. He stated that much of the information in the Watertown Daily Times was inaccurate. He also commented that this is a monumental task before the Council and they will be working with the departments.

James E. Brett, Scheley Drive, addressed the chair stating that no fire station should be closed. He stated that the taxpayers want the best in fire and police protection. He questioned the number of studies that had been done over the years and questioned why the Council and City staff couldn't make the decision. He also stated that he voted no on approving the Cresap study in 1986. Mr. Brett also commented that he is sick of seeing property being torn down. He stated that property owners should be forced to pay their taxes and fix up their properties. He commented that three homes on Washington Street were torn down and turned into a parking lot for SMC. As a result, there will be a loss in tax revenue for the City. He questioned the spending habits of the Council and asked if an inventory of equipment and machinery had been done.

Robert McLean, representing Guilfoyle's union, addressed the chair explaining that while he appreciates what the Council has done in the City and while he doesn't envy them with the situation being what it is, he is distressed that the issue of ambulance service has made a conflict between Guilfoyle and the Fire Department. He stated that Guilfoyle continues to offer excellent service and has done so for 100 years. He stated that Guilfoyle employees and Fire Department members work closely together and fortunately the conflict has not caused problems at this point.

JoAnn Hughes, 1033 State Street, addressed the chair explaining that during the 1998 ice storm, they had a chimney fire and the State Street station responded immediately. She stated that she works near the Mill Street station and it takes her between four and seven minutes to get to work each day. She questioned what would have happened if the Mill Street station had been the one to respond to her fire.

Mayor Butler questioned what she was basing the time on and stated that this would be a reason to have a study done.

Mrs. Hughes suggested closing the community policing stations as a way to save the money as she feels they are not needed.

Edward Richardson, no address given, addressed the chair stating that the buildings on the east side are older buildings. He stated that he doesn't want to see the State Street station close and suggested that the Council look at other departments for cuts.

Mayor Butler responded that they are looking at all departments and stated that Council has made no recommendations for any cuts or closures at this time.

David Johnson, 308 Park Drive West, addressed the chair remarking that Chief Piche and Chief Gaumont are experts and could certainly provide data for an in-house study. He stated that he finds it incomprehensible why the City would hire an outside consultant or why they would even consider closing the State Street station. He stated that if the Council cuts these services, it would have a long-range effect in which insurance rates would rise for both residential and business properties.

Ed Cox, a community policing volunteer, addressed the chair in support of keeping the community policing offices open.

Mayor Butler thanked Mr. Cox for his volunteer service and thanked all of the individuals who volunteer at these facilities. He stated that without their help, these offices would not be able to operate as they do.

PUBLIC HEARING

AT 7:30 P.M. MAYOR BUTLER ASKED THE CITY CLERK TO READ THE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING THE "SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST TO PARK DUMP TRUCKS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AT 739 MORRISON STREET, PARCEL NO. 1-03-103".

MAYOR BUTLER DECLARED THE HEARING OPEN.

Charles Desormeau addressed the chair expressing his opposition to the granting of the permit.

Olivia Russell, 728 Morrison Street stated that she was also opposed this. She explained that she has safety concerns for the children on the street with the large trucks being located there. She also explained that on one side of her home is the salt pile and on the other would be the dump trucks.

MAYOR BUTLER DECLARED THE HEARING CLOSED AT 7:35 P.M.

RESOLUTIONS

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH

RESOLVED that the following individuals are named Commissioner of Deeds for the term ending December 31, 2002:

Non-City Employees

Peggy Ann Randall
Roland J. Charlton III

SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS

RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that Stephanie McGuire, 212 Thompson Boulevard, Watertown, New York, is hereby appointed to the Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library Board of Trustees for an eleven (11) year term commencing January 1, 2002 and expiring on December 31, 2012.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS

WHEREAS there has heretofore been bid in by the City of Watertown at a tax sale a certain parcel known as 110 Highland Avenue, approximately 51' x 121' in size, and also known and designated on the map of the Department of Assessment and Taxation of the City of Watertown, New York as Parcel No. 2-10-103.000, and

WHEREAS titles to said lands have since been retained by the City of Watertown as acquired at said tax sale, which titles were retained by reason of the failure of anyone to redeem the same, and

WHEREAS said real property has never been assigned by the Council for a public use,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 23, Subdivision (b) of the General City Law, Section 247 of the Charter of the City of Watertown as amended by Local Law No. 1, 1985, adopted December 3, 1984, effective January 17, 1985, and the ordinance, Municipal Code, Chapter 16 adopted by the Council on June 6, 1977, that the offer of \$925.00 submitted by Mary Frances Plumpton, for the purchase of Parcel No. 2-10-103.000 is a fair and reasonable offer therefore and the same is hereby accepted, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor be and he hereby is authorized, empowered and directed to execute and deliver a Quit Claim Deed of said real property to Mary Frances Plumpton upon receipt of the above mentioned sum of money in cash only by the City Comptroller.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH

WHEREAS on March 5, 2001 the City Council of the City of Watertown adopted a resolution approving the Master Federal and Local Aid Agreement for the reconstruction of Bellew Avenue, and

WHEREAS the reconstruction of Bellew Avenue, PIN 775272, is eligible for funding under Title 23 U.S. Code, as amended, that calls for the apportionment of the cost of such program to be borne at the ratio of 80% federal funds and 20% non-federal funds, and

WHEREAS on December 3, 2001 the City Council approved Supplemental Grant Agreement #1 for this project, in the amount of \$13,500, for work associated with Right – of – Way Incidental work, and

WHEREAS the State has applied for and received Marchiselli funding for this project in the amount of \$68,500, this amount combined with the federal aid of \$366,800, leaving a local project cost of \$23,200, and

WHEREAS the State has forwarded for City Council consideration the Marchiselli Aid Superseding Project Agreement, and

WHEREAS as provided for by agreement with the NYS Department of Transportation, Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way Incidentals and/or Acquisition work performed by the City for the federal aid-eligible construction project covered by the attached agreement, the costs of such work that are approved in writing by NYSDOT as applicable to the federal aid and Marchiselli aid eligible construction work shall be credited following FHWA's construction phase closeout audit of the project to project costs that are eligible for federal aid and Marchiselli aid, and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown desires to advance the project by making a commitment of 100% of the non-federal share of the costs of the reconstruction of Bellew Avenue,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City

of Watertown hereby approves the reconstruction of Bellew Avenue, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council hereby authorizes the City Comptroller, James M. McCauley, to pay in the first instance 100% of the federal and non-federal share of the cost of the Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way Incidentals and/or Acquisition for the Project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the total cost for the above mentioned phase of the project is now \$458,500; with Federal funding of \$366,800 and non-federal funding of \$91,700 and that the City Council authorizes the appropriation of \$91,700 from the Capital Fund to cover the City's cost of participation in the above phase of the project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the event that the full federal and non-federal share costs of the project exceeds the amount appropriated above, the City Council of the City of Watertown shall convene as soon as possible to appropriate said excess amount immediately upon notification by the Assistant City Manager thereof, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor of the City of Watertown is hereby authorized and directed to execute all necessary agreements, certifications or reimbursement requests for Federal Aid and/or Marchiselli Aid on behalf of the City of Watertown with the New York State Department of Transportation in connection with the advancement or approval of the project and providing for the administration of the project and the municipality's first instance funding of project costs and permanent funding of the local share of federal-aid and state-aid eligible project costs and all project costs within appropriations therefore that are not eligible, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Marchiselli Aid Superseding Project Agreement on behalf of the City of Watertown, a copy of which is attached and made a part of this resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be filed with the New York State Commissioner of Transportation by attaching it to any necessary Agreement in connection with the project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution will take effect immediately.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS

WHEREAS the Federal Aviation Administration has tentatively allocated a 90% grant in the amount of \$150,000 to support the design of a rehabilitation of runway 10/28 at the Watertown International Airport, and

WHEREAS in order to move forward on this grant, the City needs to submit an approved Engineering Agreement that contains a work scope and schedule, and

WHEREAS the attached Agreement with Bernier Carr and Associates has been negotiated in support of this project, and

WHEREAS as required by FAA, the City had an independent estimator prepare a fee proposal, and that proposal was used as a guide during negotiations with Bernier Carr and Associates,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown approves the Agreement for Professional Engineering Services with Bernier Carr and Associates in the amount of \$165,215, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the approval of this Agreement is contingent on the City receiving \$150,000 in funding from the FAA, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mayor Joseph M. Butler is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City of Watertown.

SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS

Mr. Hayes, DPW Superintendent, addressed the Council explaining that this grant would allow for the design of a rehabilitation of runway 10-28. He stated that this would be taking a proactive approach and when the federal government releases monies for construction purposes, the City would be first in line.

Mayor Butler stated that the City's portion, which is \$8,000, could be spread out over a number of years.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the money would be paid out of operating monies.

Mayor Butler asked if Council had a choice of putting it in the capital budget instead.

Mr. Hiller explained that while the money could be put in the capital budget, he wouldn't recommend doing that for anything under \$10,000.

Mayor Butler stated that it is important to complete this work as otherwise; the City could face a liability issue with the condition of the runway.

Councilman Smith asked what would happen if the City decided to close the airport and what if they wanted to turn it over to Jefferson County, DANC or the T.I Bridge

Mr. Hayes remarked that if no one took the airport over, the infrastructure would continue to decline if improvements were not made.

Councilman Smith remarked that the City funds the airport for about \$365,000 a year and the City is paying for a community facility.

Mr. Hayes explained that if the City abandons the airport and it is closed, no business promoter would consider this area if we did not offer air service.

Councilman Smith stated that he doesn't think the City should be paying for this airport, which benefits the County and the region. He questioned why the City should continue to fund an airport when the County benefits but pays nothing for it.

Mayor Butler stated that he recognizes what Councilman Smith is saying. He stated that he will contact the County and DANC to tell them that the City needs their assistance. He stated that he will try to get them to recognize that it is a regional airport.

Councilman Clough remarked that the point is that this resolution is for a grant. The City would be responsible for repaying grant monies if the City closes the airport.

Mr. Hiller explained that the City would be responsible for the recapture of the value of any improvements funded by grant monies if the City were to close the facility.

Councilman Clough asked what that figure would be.

Mr. Hiller explained that he would have to sit down with the FAA and Congressman McHugh to arrive at a figure. He stated that a municipality has never closed an airport on their own and he doesn't know of any instance whereby the federal government came back to a municipality for grant funds. He stated that while he agrees the City should continue talking with the County, we are reaching a point where the City cannot continue to fund the facility on its own.

Councilman Simmons remarked that he is hard pressed to support this resolution. He stated we need to get the airport off our back and if it were turned over to another entity, the City wouldn't have to pay back the grant funds. He commented that Council has asked for these figures for the past two years and it is time that the City quits paying for this.

Councilwoman Burns asked what would happen if the City were to close the airport and then at a later date, another entity wanted to open it.

Mr. Hayes explained that our airport is a 139 airport, which means it is a commercial airport. The FAA does annual inspections and that makes us eligible for improvement grants and allows for federal funding. The airport has been grandfathered in and is not up to standards in all areas. Any entity taking it over in the future, if the City closed it down, would have to bring it up to 2002 standards at incredible costs. He explained that this

resolution is not a study. It is for plans and designs. He stated that if we lose the runway, we have lost the airport and if we neglect our duties, the cost will be far greater than the \$165,000.

Councilman Smith commented that everyone agrees that it is a regional airport, but no one wants to pay for it. He stated that he thinks the City should operate it until May 31st and then remove it from the City budget.

Mr. Hayes commented that he would be remiss to say that this is not a crucial project, because it is.

Councilman Simmons commented that this is a crucial time.

Mayor Butler commented that he would support the resolution and would do everything he could to make the facility be funded regionally. He stated that if Council doesn't pass this resolution, we increase our liability and it is the City's responsibility to keep the maintenance done on the facility.

Councilwoman Burns remarked that everyone agrees that it is a regional facility. She remarked that she doesn't think Council can make a decision that air travel to the North Country should be cut off tonight. She commented that we need to make a last ditch effort to fund the airport regionally as transportation is one of the biggest problems in the North Country.

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA EXCEPT COUNCILMAN SIMMONS AND COUNCILMAN SMITH VOTING NAY

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN CLOUGH TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE THE RESOLUTION "AUTHORIZING SALE OF REAL PROPERTY, KNOWN AS A PORTION OF 234 BELLEW AVENUE, PARCEL NO. 8-13-107.003. (Introduced on December 17, 2001; tabled; appears in its entirety on page 250 of the 2001 Minutes Book).

MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN SIMMONS AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA

The resolution for a "SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST TO PARK DUMP TRUCKS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AT 739 MORRISON STREET, PARCEL

NO. 1-03-103”was presented to Council. (Introduced on December 17th, public hearing held this evening; appears in its entirety on page 252 of the 2001 Minutes Book).

Councilman Clough questioned why the opposition was now surfacing, when during the zone change no one opposed it.

Attorney Slye commented that Council has also indicated that it depends on the business itself. That is why a special use permit is required.

James Desormeau, the applicant for the permit, addressed the chair explaining that he has lived on Morrison Street all of his life and has had the business there for over ten years. He stated that his brother, Charles, is angry with him over his position concerning the salt pile issue.

Howard Sprague, on behalf of the Elks Club, addressed the chair explaining that Mr. Desormeau’s land abuts the Elks Club land. He stated that Mr. Desormeau has been a good neighbor and they have had no problem with him

Councilman Simmons remarked that Mr. Desormeau came to Council wanting to rezone his property. At that time, Council sent him back to rezone the entire side of the street. He stated that Mr. Desormeau has been caught up in the salt pile issue through no fault of his own. He stated that Mr. Desormeau had signed petitions from all the neighbors in favor of the zone change.

Councilman Smith remarked that he was opposed to the original proposal and is still opposed.

Councilwoman Burns remarked that because Council did grant the zone change and there was no opposition to it at that time, she would support the permit.

Attorney Slye answered questions concerning placing conditions on the permit and stated that Council could put conditions on it.

Mr. Desormeau explained that he did have plans to place a stockade fence around the property and would not object to that being made one of the conditions for issuing the permit. He commented that the Elks Club was supposed to be putting up a fence on the property that is next to his. He stated that if they don’t, he would do it anyway.

Motion was made by Mayor Butler to make the special use permit contingent upon a 6’ stockade fence being constructed around the property by the owner. Motion was seconded by Councilman Simmons and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION AS AMENDED AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF EXCEPT COUNCILMAN SMITH VOTING NAY

LOCAL LAW

The following local law is the amended version of Local Law No. 2 of 2001, which was returned, to staff for amendments following the public hearing. As a result of the timing of this law, it now becomes Local Law No. 1 of 2002.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN CLOUGH TO AMEND LOCAL LAW NO. 2 OF 2001 TO REFLECT THE CHANGES INCORPORATED INTO LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2002.

MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN SIMMONS AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown is concerned with the general condition of the City's residential neighborhoods, and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown recognizes that real property tax exemption programs can serve as an incentive for the improvement of residential real property in the City, and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown deems it in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Watertown to establish a Local Law which provides for real property tax exemptions on certain capital improvements to residential buildings to serve as such an incentive, and

WHEREAS at the December 3, 2001 City Council meeting, a Local Law which establishes a real property tax exemption of capital improvements to residential buildings was introduced, and

WHEREAS a Public Hearing on this Local Law was held on December 17, 2001 at 7:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, and

WHEREAS as a result of this Public Hearing and discussion by the City Council, it was determined that the Local Law needed language added that would make it clear that this exemption should only be applicable to residential buildings that upon completion of the reconstruction, alterations and improvements, are one or two family residences, and to limit the exemption to only \$50,000,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City

of Watertown that a Local Law is hereby enacted in accordance with Section 421-f of the New York State Real Property Tax Law and entitled as follows:

“Real Property Tax Exemption of Capital Improvements to Residential Buildings”

Section 1. The purpose of this law is to establish real property tax exemptions on certain capital improvements to residential buildings pursuant to Section 421-f of the Real Property Tax Law of the State of New York.

Section 2. Pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 1 of Section 421-f of the Real Property Tax Law of the State of New York, the exemption from Real Property Tax Law is established as follows:

- (i) The per centum of exemption shall be as established pursuant to section 421-f (2).
- (ii) Eligibility for the exemption shall be limited to those forms of reconstruction, alterations or improvements as defined at Section 421-f (2) (b) and (c). Eligibility for the exemption shall only apply to residential buildings that upon completion of the reconstruction, alterations and improvements, are one or two family residences. Exemption shall not apply to residences that are have been changed from a one family residence to a two family residence.
- (iii) The exemption shall also be applicable to those improvements which would otherwise result in an increase in the assessed valuation of the real property but which consist of an addition, remodeling or modernization to an existing residential structure to prevent physical deterioration of the structure or to comply with applicable building, sanitary, health and/or fire codes.
- (iv) The minimum exemption amount is \$3,000 and such exemption is limited to \$50,000.

Section 3. This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA EXCEPT COUNCILWOMAN BURNS VOTING NAY

** *** **

COUNCIL DISCUSSED THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

CDBG Program Public Hearings

Motion was made by Councilwoman Burns to schedule public hearings for the CDBG Program for Tuesday, January 22nd and Monday, February 4th at 7:30 p.m.

Motion was seconded by Councilman Clough and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Budget Concerns

Referring to a report compiled by Chief Gaumont, Mayor Butler remarked that Council had not had time to review the report and asked that this be discussed at the work session on Jan. 14th.

Mayor Butler asked if there was Council consensus to go ahead with an outside consultant to study police and fire. He stated that it would be irresponsible to the taxpayers if the Council didn't make an informed decision.

Councilwoman Burns commented that while fire and police make for more media coverage, the Council is looking at all departments. She stated that all departments must be studied before any decisions are made. She remarked that she was leaning toward an outside firm and would have to rely on the information from the professionals in making a decision. She commented that the \$30,000 or \$40,000 cost would not balance the budget shortfall.

Councilman Clough remarked that the closing of the State Street station is not written in stone. He stated that the Council has gone on record stating that a study would be done. He commented that it becomes tainted when the Chief is out talking to the media about not being able to cut. He stated that this shouldn't be dragged out. He also commented that he feels the Council got a bad rap with the \$100,000 traffic study. He stated that these funds were grant funds and not from the city taxpayer directly.

Councilman Simmons commented that every department should have a study done every ten years. He stated that what was best for Watertown 15 years ago may not be what is best for the City today. He stated that he asked if this study needs to be done before the end of this fiscal year and he has been assured that it does need to be done as soon as possible. He stated that he would rather have an outside firm do the study, as it would take the pressure off both Chiefs.

Councilman Smith remarked that a lot has changed since 1986 and he agreed a study should be done. He commented that if anyone was asked if they wanted a reduction in service they would say no but they also would say that they don't want higher taxes. He also commented that if we use other cities for comparisons for salary purposes, why shouldn't we use the same comparisons for fire protection. He stated that he would support a study of all departments.

Mayor Butler commented that the City has an outstanding Fire and Police Department. He stated that the consulting firm he has looked at has more experience and more expertise than the City has in-house and will help us make informed decisions. He stated that he doesn't believe that an in-house study could be unbiased. He stated that the City couldn't wait 8 months. He stated that he would welcome a study by the American Fire Fighters Association, but not by itself.

Councilwoman Burns asked if there were other quotes from other firms.

Mr. Hiller explained that this is the firm he used for the Fire Chief recruitment. He stated that there are others and by doing RFP's, additional time would be incurred. He explained that through phone conversations, he was advised that Municipal Management Associates could do the study for costs, which would not exceed \$45,000.

Mayor Butler asked Chief Piche and Chief Gaumont for any comments they might have.

Chief Gaumont stated that this is not their area of expertise. It is the Council's choice.

Chief Piche stated that he agreed with Chief Gaumont.

Councilman Smith asked the Chiefs if they had comments on the pros and cons of a study and if they had the time and knowledge to do the study in-house.

Chief Piche commented that the question of a study is a Council decision. He stated that he would hope that a consultant would be familiar with New York State procedures.

Chief Gaumont explained that they would both tell Council exactly how it is if they did the study. They would also be giving the same figures to a consultant if it were done outside.

Councilman Simmons asked what the advantage would be to going outside if staff was going to be collecting the facts and figures anyway.

Mr. Hiller explained that consultants have the expertise and analytical skills for interpreting the data and reaching conclusions.

Councilman Clough commented that in-house would know the City better.

Councilman Smith questioned how the Chiefs would make a recommendation to Council concerning a ratio of officers that the City needs compared to what they want.

Chief Gaumont stated that the Council would choose the acceptable risk to the community based on the data that a study would present to them.

Questions were raised as to whether or not Mr. Hiller or Chief Gaumont could do the study, if done in-house.

Capt. Lachenauer commented that they would rather have Chief Gaumont do the study.

Mr. Hiller commented that either way, in-house or outside, they would want the union setting in on it. He also commented that this study is not a focused study on EMS.

Councilwoman Burns asked if Council could get price quotes from other firms.

Mr. Hiller stated he could have them for the next work session.

Councilman Clough stated that this is not a study to close the State Street station.

Councilman Smith question if the International Association of Fire Fighters would be doing a comparative study.

Capt. Lauchenauer stated that this is guaranteed.

Mayor Butler polled Council members as to what their decision was for the study. Councilwoman Burns, Councilman Simmons and Mayor Butler opted for an outside study. Councilman Clough and Councilman Smith wished to have an in-house study conducted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN SIMMONS TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE WATERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT.

MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN CLOUGH AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

Council moved into Executive Session at 9:25 p.m.

Council reconvened at 10:38 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR MEETING WAS DULY ADJOURNED AT 10:38 P.M. BY MOTION OF COUNCILWOMAN BURNS, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN CLOUGH AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF

Donna M. Dutton, City Clerk