

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
February 8, 2010
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH M. BUTLER, JR.
COUNCIL MEMBER TERESA R. MACALUSO
COUNCIL MEMBER JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR GRAHAM**

ABSENT: **COUNCIL MEMBER ROXANNE M. BURNS**

ALSO PRESENT: **MARY M. CORRIVEAU, CITY MANAGER**

Mayor Graham opened the work session.

Presentations:

2010 Real Property Revaluation – Brian Phelps, City Assessor

Mrs. Corriveau noted this presentation is to review real property revaluation and to look at the current status.

Mr. Phelps reviewed the history of the program dating back to 1999. He made special note that in 2006, the City enrolled for another six year annual reassessment program. Mr. Phelps pointed out that the current assessment status is up 2.5% from last year and that he does not recommend moving forward on a revaluation program for 2011.

Council Member Smith inquired which neighborhoods will be inspected.

Mr. Phelps referred to the neighborhood map and listed the regions that will be inspected from the exterior to correct any inequities in comparison with other residential properties.

2009-2010 General Fund Budget Update – Mary Corriveau, City Manager & James Mills, City Comptroller

Mrs. Corriveau referred to the spreadsheet given to Council listing revenues, expenditures, savings and freezes and their impact on the budget in reference to revised and projected figures.

Mayor Graham questioned where the \$2-million-dollar figure came from in media reports.

Mrs. Corriveau noted it was an anticipated balloon payment from the 801 PILOT.

Mr. Mills compared the budget figures year to year.

Council Member Butler inquired about spending \$25,000 on training DVDs for the fire department.

Mrs. Corriveau replied that when firefighters are not responding to calls, they spend a lot of time training. She noted that she cannot speak to the content, length or number of DVDs used.

Council Member Butler stated that he would like to see an example of these training tools.

Council Member Smith asked if the use of these videos means that there is less travel required for training.

Mrs. Corriveau said that some travel is still required and that she will have the Chief compile some information for Council.

Mayor Graham asked if there are other vacant positions and when the vacancies become permanent.

Mrs. Corriveau noted that there are openings in the police and fire departments. She added that she would like to have the planner position filled and to hire a fire chief. Mrs. Corriveau also mentioned that the City has had significant savings in overtime for DPW due to the lower snowfall totals this winter.

Mayor Graham commented that an excellent job has been done on tracking the ups and downs of expenditures during the recession.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that the credit goes to the department heads.

In reference to de-watering the canal, Mr. Hauk told Council that divers found little debris there and that nothing needs to be fixed or replaced immediately.

Mayor Graham questioned if the freezes will stay in place if there is no improvement this spring.

Mr. Mills replied that it depends on what the figures show.

Mrs. Corriveau reminded Council that there is no resolution in front of them because these figures are just estimates. She noted that a resolution will come before Council on the sewer fund expenditures.

Council and staff discussed security at City Hall and installing a sally port, which would cost approximately \$67,000.

Mayor Graham noted that the situation in the lobby of City Hall can be grim at times.

Mrs. Corriveau noted that security for City Hall and a few other City projects fall under non-defense appropriation and the applications for this funding are due this Friday.

Proposed Capital Projects – Kurt Hauk, City Engineer & Ken Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator

Mr. Hauk reviewed the proposed timeline for Breen Avenue.

Mrs. Corriveau a public meeting is needed with the residents in the area.

Mayor Graham asked about starting the J.B. Wise Parking Lot project this year or next.

Mr. Mix said the project is \$700,000 over what was budgeted.

Council Member Smith noted that J.B. Wise should be left out and Breen Avenue should be done instead.

Council Member Macaluso inquired if an extension can be put on the grants.

Mr. Mix said that should not be a problem to extend the grants for another year.

Mayor Graham noted that both the Breen Avenue and J.B. Wise projects have been engineered.

Mr. Hauk reminded Council that other projects farther out have been engineered as well.

Mayor Graham commented that Breen Avenue was not chosen as a staff idea but rather by political suggestion.

Mrs. Corriveau added that staff would not recommend Breen Avenue as a high priority project.

Council Member Smith said after discussions, he believes roads should be done over parking lots.

Mayor Graham asked how far the Breen Avenue project will reach.

Mr. Hauk said that connections will need to be made to storm sewers and work will extend down Prospect Street.

Mayor Graham inquired if a portion of this should be paid for with general fund appropriations.

Council Member Smith stated that the City should benefit from low interest rates now on a high-ticket project that will get a lot of use and stressed the importance of improving streets, roads and existing infrastructure.

Council Member Macaluso asked how long the Breen Avenue project would take.

Mr. Hauk said from late May until the end of October, weather permitting.

Mayor Graham inquired if J. B. Wise could be bid this year for work to start next year.

Mrs. Corriveau suggested getting the utilities completed first.

Mr. Hauk said an option is to do the separation work regardless of whether the parking lot is completed.

Council Member Butler stated that other streets are more traveled and in poor condition as Breen Avenue and if the financial situation is really so poor, don't do either project.

Council and staff discuss the debt service concerning work for the two projects in question.

Mayor Graham commented that it seems risky to incur so much debt this year.

Council Member Macaluso said that residents seem to understand that Breen Avenue may not be completed but that she feels the street should be done before others in the City.

Mrs. Corriveau reminded Council that work on Factory Street is driven by the State DOT.

Mayor Graham noted that he has not ever had anyone say anything to him about Breen Street and the need for improvements.

Mrs. Corriveau asked if it is the Council's wish to move ahead with the Breen Avenue project.

Council Members Butler and Smith said they are in favor of the project.

Council Member Butler noted that Mayor Graham and Council Member Burns have expressed some opposition.

Mrs. Corriveau said a bond ordinance can come before Council for the March 1 meeting.

Council Member Butler questioned what happens if it is defeated.

Mrs. Corriveau replied that the project would be shelved.

Council Member Smith commented that if the City is looking at a tax levy increase, the J. B. Wise Parking Lot project will have more impact.

Council and staff discussed the use of the fund balance and whether it is a good idea long-term.

Mr. Mills noted that it is not a good plan.

Mrs. Corriveau said this project can be brought to a vote in a bond ordinance for March 1.

JCIDA Economic Development Inducements

Mrs. Corriveau wished to bring to Council's attention the public hearing notice on Millennium Development request to JCIDA for assistance with the construction and equipping of a new

Hilton Garden Inn Hotel. She asked Council if they wished to have a representative from the City attend the meeting.

Mayor Graham noted that some Council members went to the committee meeting and that the City is being supportive of this endeavor. He noted that there is no PILOT to this program. Mayor Graham also questioned why public hearing notices were not received before this one. In addition, he inquired if Council thinks the City Manager should fill out an application.

Council Member Butler asked for more detail.

Mrs. Corriveau replied that it would include preparing a letter indicating that the topic was discussed at this meeting and what the City's net cost was in rebuilding Gaffney Drive.

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Mayor Graham referred to the two reports submitted by staff, including Salt Usage and Equipment Auction updates.

Meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.

Amanda C. Lewis
Deputy City Clerk