

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
February 14, 2011
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

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

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

City Staff Present: Gary Pilon, Kurt Hauk and Chief Goss

Prior to the regular work session, Council met with Library Board President Maxine Quigg and Library Director Barbara Wheeler for a tour and presentation. At 7:20 p.m., Mayor Graham opened the work session in the Council Chambers.

Presentation:

Disinfection By Products Study, Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant, Final Report

Mrs. Corriveau advising that the City has been working for a number of years on this project and has been using funding from a shared municipal incentive grant to support the project.

Mr. Pilon explained that the City and the Town of Watertown had passed a resolution to apply for the grant which pays for 90% of the project. He explained that the new regulations go into effect in 2014 and we need to be prepared to meet the more stringent regulations.

William Beck and Katie Hoek of Hazen and Sawyer as well as Douglas Miller of Miller Engineers presented the completed study on the Greater Watertown Water Quality Improvement Project to the Council. Dr. James Edzwald, Professor Emerit, UMass, also was involved with the study but was not present at the Council meeting.

Mr. Becker, project manager, explained that the agenda for this presentation would include: DBP Overview, Review of Project Goals, City of Watertown WTP, Existing DBP Conditions, DBP Formation, DBP Control Options, Bench-scale Test Results, Plan for Compliance, Next Steps and Discussion. He explained that disinfection byproduct is an important issue in the water industry. He also commented that the new regulations are hard for a lot of municipalities, but he applauded the City for the work that they do with the issue.

Mr. Beck discussed the complex mixture of organic compounds and the fact that they are derived from breakdown of animal and plant matter as well as made in the water body by algal processes. The concentration of this natural organic matter varies by source and season. He advised that wetlands are a major source of DBP precursors as they contribute color and organic compounds which form regulate contaminants even though wetlands help control runoff and nutrients. He reviewed the 4 THMs: chloroform, bromodichloromethane, chlorodibromomethane and bromoform and the fact that even though much research has gone into the study of byproducts, researchers only know about 50% of them.

Mr. Beck identified the project goals which are to identify methods to reduce system-wide DBP concentrations to ensure compliance with the Stage 2 D/DBP Rule (July 2014); describe and evaluate DBP concentrations in the City and its consecutive systems; sample and evaluate the City's in-river sedimentation basin and to recommend a plan for the Greater Watertown System to reduce DBP formation.

Ms. Hoek continued the presentation explaining that they did an analysis of existing data and looked at ways to remove the precursors and to devise a comprehensive plan. She advised that the City's plant does a good job with what is at the plant to remove the byproducts. The chart of the consecutive systems was shown to Council. It includes the City, the Town of Watertown as well as the Towns of Pamela, LeRay, Champion and Fort Drum. All of the later towns and military installation are on the DANC-Army Water line. Ms. Hoek explained that sampling method that was used included one year of DBP sampling as required at standard monitoring sites. The required number of monitoring sites is based on source water and population. Eight sites were monitored for the City and Fort Drum and four to six sites were monitored for the other systems.

Ms. Hoek explained the charts for the IDSE TTHMs and the fact that the critical seasons are summer or early fall and that we can expect the highest concentrations of THMs for locations with highest travel time and water age. The HAAs can degrade in summer so we may find the highest concentrations at locations with intermediate residence time. She reviewed the chart outlining the reductions for compliance.

Council Member Smith asked why the Towns of Watertown and LeRay need a larger reduction if the water is coming from the City.

Ms. Hoek explained that it is due to the travel time. With more water sitting in the pipe, more concentration can occur.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that the longest retention time is at the end of Rices Road and is where we tend to see the problem.

Council Member Smith remarked that if that were the case, we would also see it at Fort Drum.

Mrs. Hoek explained that Fort Drum is different in that they have a well system and it reduces the concentration.

Council Member Butler asked if he was correct in that the well water is combined with the water from the line and it essentially dilutes it.

Ms. Hoek responded that this is correct. She then went on to explain the options available for reducing DBPs. These include enhanced coagulation, physical removal of precursors, switching to an alternative disinfectant, system optimization techniques that can be done and removal of DPBs after formation.

Mrs. Corriveau mentioned the problems with the dam leakage which is causing more coagulation.

Council Member Smith suggested that ground water also would be causing this problem.

Mr. Beck responded that ground water only counts for less than 1% of it.

Council Member Butler made a comment to Council Member Smith about artesian wells. He asked Ms. Hoek about the balance in doing pH dosing.

Mr. Beck responded by stating that the plant does a great job and advised that one can always add more alum.

Ms. Hoek advised that the goal for YV (254) should be around 0.4.

Council Member Smith asked if the pH is too high or too low.

Ms. Hoek responded that it depends on the season.

Council Member Butler asked why it is seasonal.

Ms. Hoek explained that some portions of the ground water have a high alkalinity which is lower in the summer.

Council Member Macaluso asked if it had anything to do with the way the river flows.

Mr. Beck stated that it could.

Council Member Smith asked if we weren't getting more decay in the summer as a result of the winter.

Mr. Beck responded that the temperature is warm and the decay is faster.

Council Member Butler asked if the air pollution from the mid-west had any impact on the pH factor.

Mr. Beck responded that studies are just starting to be done on this. However, this would be a long term effect, not month to month changes.

Council Member Butler referred to the 5 to 10 percentages and commented that it seemed like a modest number to him.

Ms. Hoek explained that 5-10% is fairly significant and is enough that the City needs to do something.

Mr. Beck reviewed the plan for compliance outlining the recommended improvements. In order to optimize coagulation in the sedimentation basin, it is imperative that leaks in the dam, which allow raw water to enter the basin untreated, be repaired. They also recommended dredging the basin annually. At the present time it is dredged about every three years, with the exception of this past year because of other work being done. The recommendation was also made to optimize coagulation through installation of pH control facilities and to test the concentrations of disinfection byproducts formed across the filter at different seasons. The potential for trimming the chlorine dose and reducing system water age should be evaluated as well. The final recommendation is that the City and its consecutive system practice system optimization techniques. In addition to regular flushing programs in areas with significant water age or at the terminal mains in the system, installation of tank aeration systems or GAC adsorption contactors may be necessary to further control DBP concentrations. For Fort Drum and the Town of Champion, running on wells, especially during peak months of DBP formation will help ensure these systems meet the Stage 2 D/DBP Regulations.

Referring to the aerator, Mayor Graham asked if that was why we had an aerator at one time.

Mr. Pilon stated that it was for taste and odor control.

Mr. Beck explained that optimizing coagulation techniques is the big one. He reiterated the fact that City staff does a great job at the plant. However, this process would require the installation of caustic feed facilities and would require the City to dose coagulant based on the raw water UV254 absorbance. Operators need to be careful working with caustic materials. He also commented that the City has a baseline flushing program now. However, it will need to be more aggressive.

Council Member Butler asked how much the study cost.

Mr. Pilon responded that the study costs around \$90,886 – 90% being paid by the state and 5% paid by both the City and Town of Watertown.

Council Member Butler asked if these things will make the drinking water a higher quality.

Mr. Beck explained that the average person will see absolutely no difference in the water quality.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that this is being done to help us meet the new regulations.

Council Member Macaluso asked if the government will “kick in” with funding to help do the revamping.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that if there is a grant available, the City will apply.

Council Member Smith also remarked that the Town of Watertown would pay a percentage of the costs of improvement as that is in the agreement.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that the Town only pays a flat rate for usage and there is nothing in the agreement for costs of improvement.

Council Member Smith responded that he had it confused with the DANC agreement.

Mr. Beck reviewed the conceptual cost estimates for pH facilities as well as for all recommendations and explained that while this is a high end cost, it would be cheaper to put the tanks outside and pumps inside.

Mr. Miller also commented that there were a lot of variables in these costs.

Council Member Butler asked about the difference in the amount of \$610,000 on the chart and \$510,000 in the booklet.

Mr. Beck stated that the \$610,000 includes design.

Mr. Miller explained that the lab work was done on site in conjunction with City staff. The data mirrored what was going on at the facility and wasn't done in a vacuum.

Discussion Items:

Sterling Street Parking Recommendations

City Engineer Kurt Hauk and Police Chief Joseph Goss addressed the chair explaining the recommended changes for parking in the area of the 100 and 200 blocks of Sterling Street.

Mr. Hauk advised that there is no parking on either side of the street in these blocks, except for the north side of the street in front of the funeral home. However, there is a need for “no parking” signage to be put in place.

Council Member Butler asked what the problem was.

Mr. Hauk explained that the Codes doesn't allow for any parking from Washington Street to Franklin Street, other than in front of the funeral home. There are signs in front of City Hall designating official vehicle parking and police parking.

Council Member Burns remarked that according to City Code there is no parking in that area. Therefore the signs conflict with the Code.

Mr. Hauk remarked the answer is yes and no. Police vehicles can park wherever they want to. He explained that what is being recommended is no parking in front of City Hall and no parking in front of the City Hall parking lot and no parking from Goodale Street intersection to Franklin Street.

Mayor Graham asked about what the big rub is in having parking on this side of the streets for nights and weekends. There aren't police cars or official vehicles parked there during that time.

Mr. Hauk explained that the recommendation is being made because you can't see coming out of the lot or coming off of Goodale Street if there are vehicles parked there.

Council Butler questioned if people actually park on the street in front of the City Hall parking lot.

Mr. Hauk responded that on any given day, there are public and city vehicles parked there.

Council Member Burns remarked that she has never seen them.

Council Member Butler commented that he can't ever recall seeing vehicles parked there and he goes down Sterling 5 days a week.

Chief Goss remarked that he doesn't recall when the signage went up for the police and official vehicle parking. However, the police parking is needed for bringing prisoners in the side door.

Mr. Hauk advised that when looking at these plans, they took into consideration the usage of the building and put in a loading/unloading area. He also stated that they could re-evaluate the area at the side door to City Hall after the sally port had been put in.

Council Member Burns remarked that City vehicles have been parked in this area for years and questioned why the hazard and danger issue just came about now.

Mr. Hauk remarked that it can be a hazard issue especially with larger vehicles.

Council Member Macaluso commented that she was trying to turn right from the lot and there was a pick up truck parked on the street. It blocked her view and she couldn't see a car coming. She asked if there was ever any problem in finding a place to park in the lot, because she hasn't had any problem.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that there are times, such as farmers' market day, when it is very difficult to find a place to park.

Council Member Burns commented that it doesn't apply in the evenings and questioned what harm it causes with people parking where it says police vehicles. The signage should designate business hours.

Mayor Graham questioned if someone wanted to pull up at the side door at night and park because they don't want to park in the dark lot because it's a crappy neighborhood.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that it is not dark in the parking lot.

Council Member Butler asked about having no parking there Monday-Friday.

Mr. Hauk responded that if he is pulling out of the lot on Saturday, he still would not be able to see if there was a vehicle parked there.

Council Member Burns asked if there was a high incident of accidents there.

Chief Goss advised that there were 9-12 accidents in the area.

Mr. Hauk explained that they weren't attributable from coming out of the lot.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the entrance to the lot is much better now that it has been repaired.

Mrs. Corriveau asked if Council wanted an ordinance drawn to codify the parking.

Council Member Burns remarked that this would codify the signage for police vehicle parking and city employees parking.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that it would say official city vehicles, not city employees and it would also say police parking.

Council Member Butler asked Chief Goss what he would recommend.

Chief Goss responded that he would recommend the plan before Council.

Council Member Butler asked to have the ordinance prepared.

City Council Goals and Objectives

Mayor Graham asked what the end product would be of these listings.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that it was her intention to have discussions and then for Council to reach a consensus.

Mayor Graham responded that his goals are different from Council's and he didn't think he should put his goals into both sections.

Council discussed the various goals that each had listed.

Council Member Macaluso said that the City should be proactive with Mercy.

Council Member Burns commented that Mercy is the number 1 thread through most of these goals.

Mrs. Corriveau commented that it is her hope to define the goals of Council for the year so that staff knows the direction we are headed in. She remarked that to her it looks like Mercy is number 1, followed by the Canadian shoppers market as number 2. She questioned putting in continuing the sidewalk program as it has already been put in for the coming year. Instead, she asked if Council would like to put the sidewalk program in with Tree Watertown and street infrastructure.

Council Member Macaluso remarked that keeping taxes down should be in there.

Council Member Burns stated that she didn't list it because it is a given.

Council Member Macaluso remarked that Council needs to play nice with the county this year.

Council Member Butler commented that Council doesn't have enough face to face with a lot of organizations, not just the county. He commented that Council doesn't have enough meetings with the City legislators and should do so two or three times a year. He stated that we should reach out to them and see what schedule they would like.

Council Member Burns remarked that there should be a work session with the four City legislators in a round table discussion.

Mrs. Corriveau suggested meeting with DANC and the Town of Watertown as well.

Council Member Butler suggested meeting with the library and the zoo. He stated that Council tends to get Gene and Jim here a lot but doesn't talk with the library or zoo.

Mrs. Corriveau also commented that the aviary seemed to be on the lists.

Council Member Macaluso commented that she thought they were going to present a plan.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that they will.

Council Member Butler remarked that we should look at an outdoor skating rink. Folks have come up to him and told him how much fun it was to go skating outside at night.

Council Member Smith commented that the bath house for the pool was setup as a warming area for outside skating.

Council Member Butler remarked that we live here and it's cold. This would be good family time.

Mrs. Corriveau reviewed the list:

- Mercy
- Canadian shoppers
- Sidewalk program, Tree Watertown, street infrastructure
- Engaging other elected officials, DANC, Town of Watertown, Library Board and Zoo.
- Aviary
- Outdoor Skating

Council Member Smith remarked that he would like to see the City continue with renewable energy.

Council Member Butler suggested working with a student at one of the colleges for an intern position to look at a sustainability program.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that this had been done in the past with a student from Canton who is now a City employee.

Mayor Graham remarked that there seems to be a lot of common ground in the lists of goals.

Communications/Reports:

2009-10 Audit Report of the City of Watertown

Council Member Smith commented that this is self-explanatory.

Mayor Graham responded that as one looks at the numbers, the expenses are under and this trend has continued since July 1st. He remarked that the issue of increasing fund balance over time is a topic for discussion. He stated that the priority should be in the budget and we should look at the audit.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that she thinks Council should sit through a presentation of the audit report with the City's auditor.

Mayor Graham remarked that he has no problem listening to it. However, some of these things come down to philosophical issues.

It was agreed that the City Auditor would be invited to attend a meeting to give a short presentation.

Council Member Smith asked about using the extra fund balance to pay for more upfront and to borrow less.

Mayor Graham, in discussing the health insurance fund, asked what the optimum level would be if something is at an historic high and questioned if \$1.9 million was appropriate or if it was too high.

Referring to the transfer to the health insurance fund, Council Member Smith asked if it paid back to the general fund since it was a loan.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that it was not a loan, but a supplemental appropriate which was done by Council approval ten year ago. Therefore, it was not paid back. She also commented that the health insurance fund ebbs and flows as a result of claims.

Council Member Butler remarked that at some point, you reach a Mendoza line, where anything above it out of the comfort zone.

Mayor Graham remarked that the fund balance has been widely discussed at the County level.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that there are outside forces that will affect the fund balance. You have to be careful with lowering the tax rate because of the proposed state tax cap.

Mayor Graham referred to the Alcoa closing and the electricity allocations that were given to the other businesses at the time. Now, that the plant has reopened, businesses are receiving letters saying that the energy rates are going back up in March.

Council Member Macaluso remarked that some things have to be taken issue by issue.

Council Member Smith suggested instead of bonding for projects that have to be done, we should use the fund balance.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that the City used to be debt dependent in our operations. She explained that when she took over as City Manager, the City was even bonding for police vehicles. Since that time, the City has weaned itself off of the debt dependency.

Council Member Butler stated that if we are running at a surplus, we should be using the money for capital payments. 10% of our expenditures go to debt payment. He stated that he isn't certain if the credit rating was better with bonding for the debt or paying it from the fund balance.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that it looks as if we will be down \$600,000 for hydro, but up for sales tax based on Mr. Mill's projections.

Council Member Smith remarked that use of the fund balance and not bonding is smart in the long term.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that they have been trying to bond for shorter terms. She also commented that she would rather have Mr. Mills here for this discussion and she would be glad to phone him as he is downstairs.

Mayor Graham commented that there has to be recognition of what level is a correct amount to protect against cash flow short falls.

Council Member Butler asked about comparing an AA rated municipality's fund balance as a percentage as well as their debt ratio.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that you also have to consider the source of revenue as the volatility of the revenue will drive the rating.

Council Member Butler remarked that a friend of his is a bond analyst. He explained that when he threw out the numbers to him, his friend thought the fund balance was a high percentage and that the debt service was good, but not great.

Mrs. Corriveau asked him if he had shared the fact that the revenues come from sales tax and not real property taxes. She explained that when she and Mr. Mills talk with rating agencies, they want to know where the revenues come from.

Council Member Butler asked how often we get a report.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that they get one each year when they go out to bond.

It was agreed that Council Member Butler and Mrs. Corriveau will talk about what type or part of the report he would like to see.

Woodruff Professional Group Letter

Mrs. Corriveau advised that she, Mr. Hauk and Mr. Mix met with the doctors and Mrs. Slye and showed them the options that had been previously presented to Council. They indicated in their letter that they would be willing to exchange the real property necessary to accommodate Option 1.

Council Member Macaluso asked if it would still be as expensive since they are willing to exchange the land.

Mayor Graham responded that it would still be the same cost as those were construction costs.

Council Member Burns commented that she thinks we have discussed and discussed this. If a Council Member wants to make a change, they can bring the option up at a Council meeting.

Council Member Butler asked who, on Council, wanted Option 1.

Mayor Graham remarked that he didn't think it was the doctors' decision to pick an option. He stated that the City Engineer recommended the original proposal and it is hard to rationalize \$30,000 more.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that they hadn't asked the doctors' to pick an option. They merely shared the plans with them.

Council Member Macaluso remarked that she is not into spending a lot more money on this.

Council Member Butler commented that we are already spending \$3 million.

Council Member Burns remarked that we say we have to take Mr. Hauk's recommendations about parking on Sterling Street, but not on J.B. Wise.

Mayor Graham commented that if a member wants to see a change from the original plans, they can build a consensus and bring the proposal to the next Council meeting.

Fire Department Response in Town of Pamela

Mrs. Corriveau advised that the City Fire Department had responded to a general alarm for a garage fire, which they first were told was a house fire. Ten different departments responded. The City sent a pumper, a supervisor's vehicle, another vehicle and then the Chief also went. The property is located just outside the City on Route 3.

Council Member Butler remarked that no one was in the garage and this was a waste of resources.

Council Member Smith asked why were all of these resources used for a fire at a detached garage. He asked if this was going to be a trend that continues over time.

Mrs. Corriveau recommended that Chief Hermann be asked to come and talk with Council.

Council Member Burns remarked that she just wants to understand why 4 city vehicles responded.

Council Member Smith explained that he had gotten a copy of the dispatch logs. He questioned if the City was now going to subsidize the towns and asked if there was overtime involved.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that there was no overtime involved.

Council Member Butler commented to Council Member Smith that if he wanted to talk with the Chief and then come back to Council with the information, that would be fine with him.

Executive Session

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OF A PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BUTLER AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

Council moved into Executive Session at 9:28 p.m.

Work Session concluded at 10:45 p.m.

Donna M. Dutton

City Clerk