

**CITY COUNCIL BUDGET SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
May 12, 2009
6:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

PRESENT: COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH M. BUTLER, JR.
COUNCIL MEMBER JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR GRAHAM

ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBER ROXANNE M. BURNS
COUNCIL MEMBER PETER L. CLOUGH

ALSO PRESENT: CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU
MR. JAMES MILLS

2009 Destination Marketing Proposal

Gary DeYoung, Director of Tourism, 1000 Island International Tourism Council outlining the buy-ins proposal for Destination Marketing for the City of Watertown. The total cost of the proposal is \$32,913.

Mayor Graham asked if the downturn in the economy will help our area with people visiting tourist attractions closer to home.

Mr. DeYoung responded that they were hoping that it would.

Council Member Smith asked if the Tourism Council had ever gotten together with Tom O'Reilly concerning the kayaking events.

Mr. DeYoung said that they had not as of yet.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that this kind of event could be promoted on a digital billboard. She also advised that they don't know if there is going to be an event this year.

Council Member Smith wondered if we should look at highlighting the City through an extra brochure or packet.

Mrs. Corriveau referred to the fold out of the walking trails in the parks which will be just for the City.

Mayor Graham commented that he is comfortable with Mr. DeYoung's presentation. Referring to page 230 of the budget, Mayor Graham asked Mr. Mills about the fund balance in the tourism account.

Mr. Mills explained that the beginning balance was \$186,470 and would have an ending balance of around \$167,000.

Mayor Graham remarked that to carry a fund balance in this particular account is not like carrying one for the general fund. He suggested that some of this fund be used for payment of bricks and mortar projects, thus helping the budget figures for this year.

Mr. Mills explained that it could be used for the projects that are being done that do promote tourism in the City.

Council Member Butler asked if the library could be incorporated into the proposal.

Mr. DeYoung responded that they will meet with City staff to re-balance the advertising.

Mrs. Corriveau commented that the library could be highlighted in the military component of the ads. She explained that they have also highlighted the Jefferson County Historical Society as well as Thompson Park, rafting and the downtown.

Council Member Butler, referring to the recently printed library brochures, asked where they were placed.

Mrs. Hoffman responded that they are in the downtown kiosks, distributed to local businesses, sent out by request, in the City Clerk's and Comptroller's Office and at the Chamber of Commerce.

Council Member Smith remarked that we could highlight the zoo and the library and tap into their existing marketing arm, but not recreate the wheel.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that there is terrific photography for the library that has already been completed and paid for by the City that could be used.

Council Member Butler asked if the Tourism Council collected data by zip code and if they used the survey from JCC.

Mr. DeYoung explained that they weren't at the zip code level, yet. In regards to the JCC survey, Mr. DeYoung explained that he has looked at it, but hasn't done any tourism questions for it yet.

Mayor Graham commented that he believes we could take \$100,000 out of the tourism fund and put it over to benefit the tax payers. The proposed tax levy would go down.

Council Members Smith and Butler concurred.

Mr. Mills remarked that this could be done and would be a one-shot revenue for this year.

Fee Proposal Update

Council Members and Mrs. Corriveau reviewed the report concerning the consensus from the May 11th Special Meeting for the various proposed fees. She explained that since there was a split consensus on the parking tickets, that was not changed in the report, nor were the false alarm fees added.

Mayor Graham remarked that he is agreeable to an increase in the parking ticket fees for more heinous violations and safety violations.

Council Member Smith remarked that while he agrees with the Mayor concerning increasing the fees for hydrant and handicap parking violations, he also agrees with Council Member Butler about increasing the fees for other parking violations as well.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that she left the \$70 fee in for the ice arena as there was no discussion on the amount, specifically.

Council Member Smith remarked that he is against the increase and indicated that he wanted to hear from the associations that use the ice.

Mrs. Corriveau also commented that Council Member Clough had indicated that if we need to hear from the associations, then we need to hear from all of the groups that use the fairgrounds and the arena.

Council Member Butler remarked that he understood that Council was going to wait until they heard back from the associations.

Mayor Graham responded that the \$62.00 fee was a rate set six years ago. He remarked that it seems to him that what is being proposed at the arena is just updating fees. He commented that he believes these things should be changed every year based on an overall expense structure.

Council Member Smith remarked that he is not against an increase. However, he compared an \$8.00 increase over 6 years to the bus fee increase of \$1.00 over 16 years.

Mayor Graham remarked that if the Council is going to hear from the associations, then they will also need to hear from the family that has a picnic in the park. He stated that he would hope the stakeholders would come to the public hearing. He also remarked that he has no problem with another number being placed in the fee proposal, if it would resolve the issue.

Mrs. Corriveau advised Council that \$15,000 has been eliminated from the General Fund from page 136 – City Parking Facilities- Shotcreek Repairs.

Mayor Graham remarked that we need to look at interest income on ladder investments over time. He explained that Don Rutherford would be glad to explain how the Watertown Trust does this. He remarked that we need to relook at investments and is convinced that we could raise the

amount of interest income. He asked that this be checked into by next week to see about other methods of laddering, longer terms and available rates.

Mr. Mills responded that he does do laddering investments. The City has 90 day CDs that come due every month. He remarked that he would be open to working with Mr. Rutherford, within the state guide lines. He also commented that some of the funds in the fund balance have to be used for cash flow when payments haven't been received from various funding sources.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the City is still waiting for New York State to pay for the State Street and Public Square projects.

Council Member Butler asked what the biggest check taken out of the fund was to cover cash flow.

Mr. Mills remarked that it was probably a couple of million dollars.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that if the economy is at the bottom and is coming back up, we don't want to lock into a lower rate.

Council Member Butler remarked that this won't happen. Rates don't raise that much per year. He explained that the philosophy of waiting for interest rates to rise, punish the short term investors.

Mayor Graham referring to sales tax, mentioned that Mr. Bernanke has indicated that there are improvements in the national economy. He remarked that he would like to go into executive session next week to discuss the labor negotiations with the two unions. He also commented that it is important to recognize the contribution of all the staff, union and non-union.

Police Department

Council reviewed pages 101-106.

Council Member Butler asked about the decrease in wages.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that there is one less officer on staff. In addition, there is a younger force, thus lower wages.

Council Member Butler asked if drug arrests had gone up.

Chief Goss explained that there are more file numbers than previous years and the increase is about 10%.

Council Member Butler asked about the replacement of four vehicles.

Chief Goss responded that 3 Crown Vics have been delivered within the last few weeks. He explained that DPW has hired a mechanic with 20 years of Ford experience. That is why the

department has switched to Ford. They polled the officers relative to Crown Vics vs. Dodger Chargers and it was about a 50-50 split. He explained that the department is limiting the Durangos. One is being used by the SRO. He advised that the department has leased vehicles for almost 10 years which are used by the Chief, detectives and administrative staff.

Council Member Smith asked about hybrid vehicles.

Chief Goss responded that they had looked at the Ford Escape. It wasn't available at the time. He remarked that he would let Mrs. Corriveau know what is available. He explained that only certain dealers would supply the vehicle. He will check with Mr. Cleaver and will make inquiries.

Mayor Graham asked how much longer the capital contribution would have to be made at the PSB. He also asked if we were best served by staying there.

Council Member Smith asked who takes the vehicles home.

Chief Goss explained that the Chief, the on call detective and the detective lieutenant, who is subject to call in at any time. It was explained that the furthest away that the vehicle would be driven home is Rodman. Chief Goss also explained that call ins come in spurts. It could be two or three times a month or sometimes every two or three months.

Council Member Smith suggested providing mileage for the individuals to use their personal vehicles instead.

Mayor Graham remarked that 1099 forms would have to be provided.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that this would not be done because it would be public safety instances.

Mayor Graham commented that the Alcohol and Beverage Control individual got into trouble with this because there wasn't a 1099 form.

Chief Goss explained that Alcohol and Beverage Control is not subject to call ins.

Council Member Smith commented on the fact that a detective is coming into a secured scene.

Chief Goss responded that this is not necessarily always the case. In addition, the detective vehicle has equipment for use at the scene.

Council Member Butler asked if they monitor gas usage.

Chief Goss responded that they monitor mileage.

Council Member Butler remarked that you have to have faith in your staff.

Mayor Graham asked about the estimated gas prices in the budget.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that what used to be a line item for dispatch, gas and phone services combined has been broken out into two codes in the budget.

Mayor Graham asked if we were spending less for phone service at the PSB because of the fiber.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that we haven't hooked up the fiber there yet.

Council Member Butler asked about the status of this year's overtime.

Chief Goss advised that they have spent \$175,000 through the end of April. There is \$100,000 remaining in the account for the remaining two months.

Council Member Smith asked if being pro-active for the police academy helps.

Chief Goss remarked that it does and holding our own academy is very beneficial.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the plan is to move the academy down to the PSB. She commented that it will give the recruits a real feeling of coming into the department.

Council Member Butler asked if Chief Goss felt the department was adequately staffed.

Chief Goss responded that they could always use more, but overall, the department is at a good number. He remarked that there are traffic issues that could be addressed with more staffing and they have to be reactive and prioritize.

Council Member Smith asked if the speed signs have worked.

Chief Goss responded that they are good as they make people aware of how fast they are going, especially in the school zone. He advised that, with the exception of the school zone, they shouldn't be left in any one place for too long as they will then start being ignored. He explained that it would be hard to put one on Arsenal Street where there are four lanes of traffic.

Responding to questions concerning busiest times, Chief Goss explained that it is probably from 3 p.m. to 2 a.m. In winter this changes due to the fact that there isn't quite the bar crowd.

Responding to questions concerning walking a beat, Chief Goss explained that we have become a mobile society and the police officers don't walk a downtown beat any more.

Chief Goss also advised that calls for domestic disputes have gone way up. He explained that the number increase is due to the term "domestic" being used to describe not only a married couple, but also same sex couples and people living together.

Council Member Butler asked about the drug use in schools.

Council Member Smith asked if the SRO program is effective.

Chief Goss explained that the SRO program is well accepted in the school. He explained that Officer Montrois has been very effective and has helped with drug information.

Fire Department

Council reviewed pages 107-112.

Council Member Smith commented that the department is doing a great job. He asked about recurring expenses and the fact that the trailer sits there and the need for a larger 4x4 vehicle to haul it. He stated that he would rather put money into thermal imaging cameras. He questioned the use of the rescue boat if someone fell into the river and asked where it would be launched. He commented that he would like to see the department focus more on fire and responding to fires.

Chief Sayre responded that the river rescue boat is paid for. It doesn't require a lot of maintenance and if it is needed, we have it.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that water and river rescue equipment isn't necessarily tied to the boat.

Responding to questions about the trailer, Chief Sayre explained that the safety trailer was used 1100 times this year. It is a good teaching tool and 1083 children went through it last year. More could go through, however what prohibits this is the time that the department has to do it.

Mrs. Corriveau explained the thermal cameras were put back in the budget this year after being cut out last year.

Council Member Butler asked if the funds for dues, memberships and publications were well spent.

Chief Sayre responded that they were. The department is currently waiting for a library grant for training books.

Council Member Smith asked if the Chief had suggestions for keeping the overtime down and how the minimum manning clause works in the contract

Chief Sayre explained that the department is down people.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that there will be 14 people on duty excluding the Battalion Chief, which means 15 on duty at all times.

Council Member Smith asked how the call in works and wondered about not having more senior people called in for overtime.

Chief Sayre explained that there is a comfort level to having senior people. There will not be totally junior officers on a truck or a shift.

Council Member Butler referred to the pension increases in future years. He asked how the City could tackle reducing expenses and maintaining the best department we could possibly have without reducing the number of fire fighters. He asked Chief Sayre if he would rather have 70 firefighters and better equipment or 90 firefighters and outdated equipment.

Chief Sayre responded that he would rather have 90 firefighters. He also remarked that in regards to the pension expense increase, the state will try to create tiers to lessen the impact.

Mayor Graham asked about the vacant Deputy Fire Chief position in the department at this time.

Chief Sayre responded that there needs to be two people and that the chief, deputy chief and battalion chief positions can not be combined as they all have separate duties that can not be combined.

Budget session ended at 8:55 p.m.

Donna M. Dutton
City Clerk