

**ADJOURNED CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
August 25, 2014
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Jeffrey E. Graham Presiding

Present: Council Member Roxanne M. Burns
Council Member Joseph M. Butler, Jr.
Council Member Stephen A. Jennings
Council Member Teresa R. Macaluso
Mayor Graham

Also Present: Sharon Addison, City Manager

City staff present: Jim Mills, Ken Mix, Ann Saunders, Russ Randall, Beth Morris

NEW BUSINESS

Advantage Watertown - John Bartow, Chairman

Mayor Graham introduced John Bartow and invited him to have a seat at the table. Mayor Graham stated that Mr. Bartow is the Chairman of Advantage Watertown which has been a committee for 13 years. The group meets one Thursday a month. The Mayor, City Manager and Mr. Bartow have been meeting to try to simplify and formalize the relationship between the City and Advantage Watertown.

Mr. Bartow stated that he had committed to come back yearly to let Council know what Advantage Watertown has been up to. He stated that over the last couple months the typical meetings involved a number of civic individuals, business people, and they would pick topics of discussion. Many of the topics over the past year have focused on housing, downtown redevelopment and various projects. Committee members had suggested nominating City Council Members to the Advantage Watertown Committee. He stated that they have tabled that and decided to talk to Council before they go ahead and appointment anyone. Mr. Bartow stated the group does not want to create a division between them and the City Council. He also said that Council has access to the Advantage Watertown minutes. Mr. Bartow shared a list of the Advantage Watertown Committee members (on file in the City Clerk's Office) and there are about 20 members. He mentioned that a few weeks ago he met with the City Manager and the Mayor to discuss how we could combine City Council and Advantage Watertown. The group is open to discussion of how people can be appointed and that Council could all be exofficio members.

Mayor Graham thanked Mr. Bartow and stated it is important to codify the committee by some sort of resolution and create an advisory council with approximately 15-20 people appointed by Council. Council should feel that they do not have to be there yet should not be made to feel they are barging in.

Mr. Bartow stated that the first meeting was a small committee that met regarding the water front and the state required an advisory committee.

Council Member Burns said that was correct and she said it was tied into the downtown street scape project. It was a combination of those two incentives that the city and people who cared about the city realized a group had to be formed and that is how Advantage Watertown was created. There was

specific Council Members appointed at that time and Council Member Burns was one of them. She remarked that it was a very dynamic group at the time and it still is.

Mayor Graham stated he finds the group helpful and proposes getting a resolution drafted for a future meeting and keep it simple, no need for formal minutes to be taken.

Council Member Burns stated that the group meetings are valuable and that in time could look to the state or federal government for support or grants. She mentioned the group is an advantage to Council because it is a sounding board in a less formal atmosphere as opposed to a formal Council Meeting.

Council Member Jennings stated that since his short time here he has found the group to be very valuable. The meetings and members are very diverse and dynamic. They bring a lot of expertise from a lot of different spheres and he supports formalizing the relationship between Advantage Watertown and City Council.

Council Member Butler thinks Council needs assistance in certain areas and welcomes the input and research the group has. He stated he has attended a few meetings and welcomes the idea of formalizing the relationship. He thinks Council and Advantage Watertown need to align their objectives and goals. He hopes the two groups can have better communication so the work being done is not futile. He plans on attending more meetings.

Mr. Bartow stated that although Mayor Graham does not think minutes need to be taken at the meetings he plans on still keeping notes so people that could not attend a meeting can still know what took place. Mr. Bartow mentioned that the group meets during the day and understands it can be an inconvenience. He said they can always have a different meeting or a work session.

Mayor Graham said they will get something drafted up and will get back to him on that.

Mr. Bartow ended the discussion by stating the next meeting is September 11th.

Marketing Proposal - Greater Watertown Chamber of Commerce - Lynn Pietroski, President and CEO and Sara C. Carpenter, Marketing Director

Mayor Graham asked Chamber President and CEO Lynn Pietroski and Chamber Marketing Director Sara C. Carpenter to come forward to present their presentation.

Ms. Pietroski thanked Council for having them back again. She said she hoped Council had the chance to review the material they submitted about a week ago. Ms. Pietroski stated that over the past few weeks they noticed the website that they original spoke about has been revised and looks wonderful. She stated it is very user friendly and contributes to a lot of what our area has.

Mayor Graham asked if the website was from the T.I. Council.

Ms. Pietroski stated it was VisitWatertown.com and it is the City's website.

Council Member Burns asked if it was updated by the T. I. Council.

Ms. Carpenter stated that it was.

Ms. Pietroski said they did not want to rehash the same things but instead wanted to make sure Council saw the proposal as well as ask any questions and discuss things Council would like to see in conjunction with the current website.

Ms. Carpenter mentioned they have specific Watertown ideas that the Chamber would like to implement such as marketing the Zoo, Black River, Historical Society, Library and Snowtown USA. Their focus is more city centric. She mentioned there is more to marketing than just the website.

Council Member Macaluso wondered why the Walking Tour Brochure and the Bike/Walking Trail/Fishing Access Brochure could not be one entity instead of two separate ones.

Ms. Carpenter said it would end up costing more because you would have to have multiple pieces but it could be arranged and that anything is possible. Ms. Carpenter explained that the walking tour specifically focuses on downtown while the other is more focused on bike and walking trails around the park and fairgrounds.

Ms. Pietroski mentioned there could possibly be an app that could be downloaded and utilized with the website.

Council Member Butler asked whether money should be spent on printing brochures if information can be accessed on the website.

Ms. Pietroski said they get calls at the Chamber and people will stop in looking for printed materials. She mentioned that not everyone has a smartphone or things of that nature and that is why they are trying to include all facets of marketing. If it had to be one or the other then it would be up to Council to decide.

Council Member Butler thinks the website for \$3500.00 is a good idea and supports it.

Ms. Pietroski stated that the Visit Watertown website is broader; it covers the 1000 Islands and surrounding areas. She suggests utilizing the City of Watertown's website or using social media to expand the website.

City Manager Addison mentioned expanding and sharing content with the T.I. Council. She would focus city centric marketing to the Chamber because the T.I. Council is focused more on the region. She also mentioned that the city does not maintain the website and that the City pays the T.I. Council to maintain it.

Council Member Burns questioned when the Chamber first approached Council about the website the Chamber had mentioned how outdated it was. She noted how important it is to have an updated website. She is concerned about putting current businesses on the website or brochures because if they close or go out of business, the website's information will have to be updated and it costs money to update all the time. She asked why the city cannot just have a link to the Chamber that would have all the same information that would be on our own website. She pointed out that the Shop Stay and Play brochure had been promoted very well through the Chamber and hotels, motels and shopping venues. It has been a big success as she has discussed it with many people involved in the industries.

City Manager Addison intervened that the TI Council has done a very good job at promoting the Shop, Play and Stay brochure.

Council Member Butler asked how much was budgeted for tourism.

James Mills, City Comptroller stated that for 2014-2015 \$60,000 was budgeted.

City Manager Addison said she had specified \$5,000 for the Summer Marketing Program, \$5,500 for the 2015-16 International Travel Guide, \$5,000 for the Watertown/Canadian Shop, Stay and Save Program and \$5,000 for the Winter Visit Campaign.

Council Member Jennings asked if everyone has been happy with the T.I. Council.

Mayor Graham thought a lot of the materials were outdated and looked like the 1960's.

Council Member Burns said things became complacent. She stated that the T.I. Council would come to Council at budget time with a presentation and it was accepted, then there was no more communication. She thinks the time has come for change with there being a new city manager and maybe Council needs to look at alternatives. She was excited at first but as time has gone on the city was contributing money but surrounding municipalities were not but still reaping the benefits. She does not think the union has turned out the way she originally thought it would.

Council Member Macaluso stated that the City is dishing out all the cash and everyone is riding on the City's coat tails. She has been hesitant for the last 2 years to approve the T.I. Council's budget; she did not see where the City is getting its bang for our buck with them. She would like to see more attention brought to local businesses and not just the City of Watertown. As a former business owner, she knows what it is like to pay for advertising. She also commented that she would like to see the Chamber focus more on local business and restaurants and maybe offer discounts or anything to get people into the local businesses. She said she is not as concerned about the St. Lawrence River, Clayton and Cape Vincent areas as she is with the City of Watertown.

Ms. Pietrowski stated that the Chamber receives an influx of calls from people looking to establish business here. Potential business owners want to know about the demographics of Watertown and are having a difficult time locating that information. The Chamber is trying to gather statistics because the calls and questions are very interesting. For example, they might ask about traffic flows on certain roads. She noted that the Chamber is not just about tourism but also economic development.

Ms. Carpenter stated that she recently received a call from an investment firm in NYC that was asking for photos of the city and marketing material. She added that they requested the actual print materials to hand out to their investors. She mentioned that this was the third call in the past 6 months requesting this kind of information.

Ms. Pietrowski said that whatever the Council, as a group, sees fit is what the Chamber will do within reason of marketing. She stated that it is important that everyone is on the same page.

Council Member Butler asked Ms. Pietrowski if when she receives those calls from investors, does she refer them to the City's Planning Department. Ms. Carpenter said that she did not know to do that.

Council Member Butler mentioned he would love to receive calls like that and so did Council Member Macaluso.

Ms. Pietrowski pointed out that Welcome Packets are another good option and would include a welcome letter either from the City Manager, City Council or the Mayor. Ms. Carpenter contacted a California firm to do a mailing list of the last 2 years of new residents which includes not only new homeowners but renters as well. There were approximately 3000 new addresses and many Fort Drum spouses request this kind of Welcome Packets.

Mayor Graham thinks the City should collaborate with the Town of Watertown for some sort of marketing.

Council Member Jennings asked the City Manager if it is possible to do less with the T.I. Council.

City Manager Addison said she has scaled back by about 50%.

Council Member Macaluso mentioned that a lot of information from the T.I. Council is very vague.

Council Member Butler sees this as an opportunity to partner with the Chamber and transition completely to them if we feel results are better than the T.I. Council.

Council Member Jennings noted that he is very impressed with the Chamber's proposal.

Council Member Burns is also pleased with the proposal and suggested utilizing a Work Session to discuss the options. She stated that a partnership with the Town of Watertown is a smart idea and the Downtown Business Association should be included in this.

Council Member Butler pointed out that he likes the lamp pole banner idea with businesses sponsoring them.

Mayor Graham noted that he likes the billboards that light up. He also commented that the billboards on Route 81 can be a waste of money but thought the one on the Arsenal Street Bridge would be money well spent. Mayor Graham also commented on the fact the Water Tower needs to be painted, and suggested that it could be done in some artistic way with bright colors.

Ms. Carpenter noted that the electronic billboards can cost up to \$75,000.

Ms. Pietrowski indicated that the ball is in the hands of Council. The Chamber can do any or all of the options.

Ms. Carpenter mentioned that all these ideas are like package options, pick a few or all; she stated this is a 10 year plan. Council could pick 2 this year and another 2 next year and some will remain the same while some will change. She stressed that it is a future plan.

Court Street Property

Mayor Graham commented on a particular property on Court Street and the owner's proposed plan. He urged Council, at their leisure, to stop in and see Supervisor McWayne at the Code Enforcement Office in City Hall to view the plan.

Library Sign Ideas

Mayor Graham mentioned that the Library is considering some sort of sign for the front of the Library between the sidewalk and the road. They are trying to come up with some ideas, and wanted Council to be aware of this in case they should hear about it.

Monument Project

Mayor Graham noted that per the discussion from last week, it has been referred to the City Planning Department and is being worked on by City Planner Mike Lumbis.

Motion was made by Council Member Roxanne M. Burns to move into Executive Session to discuss Collective Bargaining and the Employment History of Particular Individual.

Motion was seconded by Stephen A. Jennings and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Council moved into Executive Session at 7:59 pm.

Council reconvened at 8:42 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 8:42 p.m. by motion of Mayor Jeffrey E. Graham, seconded by Council Member Teresa R. Macaluso and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Margaret M. Puccia
Deputy City Clerk