

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
September 12, 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: Kurt Hauk, Elliott Nelson, Ken Mix, Jim Mills, Chief Goss, Chief Herman, Shawn Mc Wayne, Eugene Hayes

Presentation:

Interoperable Communications Grant Update - Mark Hoppe, Blue Wing

Chief Dale Herman introduced Mark Hoppe, Principal Consultant of Blue Wing and stated Blue Wing was hired one year ago to assist in the Interoperable Ability Grant. In addition, Chief Goss and Joseph Plumber, Jefferson County Fire and Emergency Management Director were present for this presentation.

Mark Hoppe wanted to thank the Council for the opportunity to work on this project and commended Chief Goss and Chief Herman for their assistance. Blue Wing's goal was to design a system to benefit the City of Watertown and surrounding areas today and throughout the future. Mr. Hoppe reviewed Blue Wing's history, methodology, and recent projects.

Blue Wing's plan for Jefferson County was to start researching the existing system. They developed an understanding of the current equipment, towers, operations and resources available before formulating the design alternatives. The 1.6 million dollar budget is not sufficient to provide a county wide system. The long range plan is to provide the foundation and give long term direction. Therefore if all the goals cannot be accomplished, it is set up for the future so that as more funding is available additional improvements can be made to this system

The systems review revealed an aged radio system with multiple types/vintage equipment as well as various sites with wide range of development and installation methods. The goal should be to be more cohesive with reduced number of sites and have common user equipment. The Dispatch

system for the different departments has limited channels which lead to congestion. The goal would be to eliminate simplex dispatching on low-band and add additional channels for all services. A Centralized Dispatch would save money and save resources. The current system is lacking security so the plan would be to add unique identification for user and encryption. The encryption will give a higher level of security but comes at a much higher cost. The Sheriff's department has limited mobile and poor portable coverage while the City Fire and Police departments have good mobile coverage but limited portable with numerous location of poor coverage.

Council Member Burns asked Mr Hoppe to define poor portable coverage and if the City or the County was worse.

Mr. Hoppe responded that it is 5 watts and the County system is worse.

Chief Herman commented that mobile is more powerful than the portable handhelds.

Council Member Butler asked if the mobile coverage is the communication from the vehicles.

Mr. Hoppe confirmed that the vehicle communication is mobile.

Interoperability for the intra-county is spread across VHF-Low to UHF. VHF-Low is used by many county Town Fire and EMS, VHF-High is used by County Sheriff, EM, Watertown Fire, Police and various other Town Villages and UHF is used by Town DPW and Schools. The desire is to unify County and City onto one common band. Interoperability for Non County/City is spread across multiple UHF, VHF-Low, VHF-High and UHF 380-420. This includes NYS Border Counties, NYS Police, DEC Parks, Corrections, US Federal, Coast Guard, Customs, DOI, Canada and Fort Drum. The focus should be on Intra-County operations and maintain the ability to operate on VHF due to the significant Federal presence.

Difficulties arise in the Spectrum. VHF-Low is being eliminated due to growing noise issues. VHF-High has limited ability to expand existing channels due to difficulties in licensing rules and additional channels not available in Canada. UHF allows for additional channels for both City and County and is the next best band. During mobile and in-building testing UHF generally out performed VHF and had much less noise. The goal would be to eliminate the use of VHF-low and unify into one common band for Jefferson County. Additional channels should be set up and have licensing in place for future expansion. During this transition, the ability for cross-band communication must be maintained.

Several sites were tested throughout the City of Watertown and Jefferson County but the County Office Building and the Dulles State Office Building provided the best results. The County has no fiber connectivity but the City does have fiber. The focus should be to use the funding towards the site first then fiber connectivity.

Funding of 1.6 million dollar budget comes from Stone Garden and PSIC Grants. Stone Garden intent was to provide better interoperability between Federal border and County public safety. This is for equipment only and the funds need to be used by August 31, 2011. PSIC Grant was to provide better interoperability between public safety entities. This could be used for both equipment and services and the project needs to be completed by June 30, 2012. This value is well below the cost to complete any type of County-wide initiative. The interim solution must stay within budget with the ability to expand the system as more funding is available.

Overall, the current system provides a basis for the future. Frequencies need to be communized for the future so that mobile and portable purchased through the grant could be used on the system. Dispatching should be able to meet its goal with the exception of Fire that is still on low band outside the city. System security will provide UID, Emergency and Location. Digital convention P25 has the ability to use system security and encryption but again at a higher cost. We have 12-15 channels of UHF. This will provide the foundation for the system for the next 15-20 years. Portable coverage for the City can be provided by one site using UHF. Current sites in the County are using UHF coverage and could not provide coverage better than expanded VHF coverage using current sites. Budget did not allow for the construction of additional sites so it was decided to expand VHF coverage for the Sheriff Department. During transition, cross-band communication will be maintained. Sheriff and City Police still need the ability to operate on VHF because of the significant Federal presence. Radios that can operate on both VHF and UHF will be needed. Current VHF resources used by the City will be maintained and allow groups to transition over time. Also Cross-band audio between VHF and UHF systems will allow both radio users to hear calls. The County Office Building (COB) was chosen as best site for consolidation. Power backup updates have already been made to COB. Equipment purchases will be of the most current version and upgradeable to the next generation. This plan is on schedule to ensure use of grant money. The City system is scheduled to be completed by the end of December 2011 or beginning of January 2012 and the County system is scheduled to be completed by March 2012.

Mrs. Corriveau mentioned that it stated that the system is P25 capable but questioned that it was to be P25 complaint.

Mr. Hoppe stated that it is one in the same.

Discussion Items:

1. Regional Economic Development Council: City Council's Role in the Strategic Plan Development Process

John Bartow, Executive Director of the Tug Hill Commission and Chairperson of Watertown Advantage was asked to present a brief overview of the Regional Economic Development Council and the City Council's role in the Strategic Plan Development Process. The North Country is 1 of 10 regions within New York State and each is charged with developing five-year Regional Strategic Plans that will define the strategies that will begin to transform their regions. Funds totaling 2 million dollars is available to be granted towards these strategic plans. The top four Councils will be chosen to split \$ 160,000 and then 6 will compete for the remaining \$40,000.

Public Forum will be held in Plattsburgh, Tupper Lake and Watertown. Watertown is scheduled for September 19th at 6:00pm. These are designed for citizens seeking input and feedback for Council Members. Mr. Bartow announced that Mayor Graham has been asked to serve as a member of this Council.

Mr. Bartow stated that this process is moving quite quickly and stressed the importance of submitting our list of projects for review. The Vision Statement was published today and is open for discussion but comment period is very short. City Council needs to review our upcoming projects in our five year capital plan so we can submit a list of projects that we believe meet and support the Development Council's strategic plan. If successful at the Regional Council's level then the strategic plan goes to Albany for the funders to look at. Sometimes the focus changes so we need to know what the funders are looking to accomplish.

Council Member Smith asked if we are only competing with the North Country Region.

Mr. Bartow responded that this is statewide. Therefore, we need to look for a project that will affect the regional large scale in terms of jobs generated, increase tourism and have a larger economical benefit.

Mayor Graham stated that City Council needs to act fast.

Mr Bartow stated not everyone has the advantage of a representative on the Council or a representative from Advantage Watertown to assist and agreed that this needs to be acted upon quickly.

Mayor Graham commented that a list of a handful of projects needs to be gathered. It will be tough to compete with places with large staff such as Plattsburgh.

Council Member Butler asked about the strengths of each region.

Council Member Smith asked if City Council should meet with the Regional Council.

Mr. Bartow responded that it is very difficult to meet with the Regional Council because it is working with such a fast time table. Council Members might want to correspond with the chair people on the Regional Council individually.

Council Member Smith asked when strategies needed to be submitted and Mr. Bartow suggested early October.

Mayor Graham suggested the City look at projects that need to be finished and then big projects such as Mercy.

Mr. Bartow suggested we convey a letter immediately to all six representatives. He also mentioned that there is a lot of DOT projects needed here and they are very complex.

Mr. Corriveau mentioned the Factory Street project in which there was funding for the design but not for the construction. She would like to see this on the list.

Mr. Bartow mentioned I-98, the roof top highway, which will be very high on the list.

Mayor Graham commented that City of Watertown views itself as the North-South Corridor between Canada and Syracuse and I-98 is not very important of us.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that it doesn't benefit the City it is more of a benefit to region.

Mayor Graham asked Mrs. Corriveau what the next step is in the process and what areas are most relevant.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that we have a vision statement that is going to be adopted in 2 days. It should be commented on and changed because it is too general. The statement on the third page only mentions the "splendor of the Adirondacks" but it should include all areas such as the St. Lawrence River and Black River.

Council Member Butler asked where to direct comments on the Vision Statement.

Mr. Bartow said that people could go on the website.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that comments would carry more weight if it came from the Council.

Mayor Graham suggested that Council have impact categories and list projects under each category.

Mrs. Corriveau suggested that a descriptive paragraph be included for each project.

Council agreed upon the following categories Legacy Sites (Woolworth Building, Mercy, Masonic Temple, Van Duzee Street Factories, and the Library), Recreational/Cultural/ Tourism/Economical Growth (Fairground Location and Arena Upgrades), Transportation

(Public Transit, Street Development, and Rail System) and Green Energy (Water system and Hydro Plant).

Mayor Graham mentioned that representation should be at the Public Forum on 9/19/11.

Mr Bartow agreed that council member should attend the Public Forum and mention the preliminary ideas.

2. Review of Zoning Regulations, Fences

A complaint from a resident in regards to the fence at 157 Haley St. has led to this discussion of zoning regulations for fencing.

Mayor Graham presented pictures of this fence during winter and summer seasons. This fence does impair the view of a vehicle backing out of the adjacent driveway and makes snow removal difficult in the winter. It does comply with the ordinance and the property owner was given a fence permit. He commented that maybe the 33% transparency and 3 to 4 foot height is not a good idea. He also questioned the need for a fence in the front yard.

Council Member Macaluso agreed that the fence regulations need to be changed and that fences should be set back.

Council Member Smith suggested that the transparency be increased to 50% and the height lower. In addition, there is a need to look at transparency of the fence in a perpendicular angle.

Mrs. Corriveau commented that any fence will not have transparency at some point.

Mayor Graham commented that originally a chain link fence was not preferred for the front yard but may be the better fence.

Council Member Macaluso commented that fencing should not be allowed to go all the way to the sidewalk.

Council Member Burns agreed that this is not an acceptable situation. She also mentioned that some fences decrease in height as they go towards the sidewalk. She suggested that the Planning Board look at the regulation and give the Council their recommendations. She commented that she personally would not like to see any fence all the way to the sidewalk.

Council Member Smith wondered if Codes Department should be permitted to reverse the fence permit if the fence causes visibility issues.

Council Member Macaluso felt that this is too much responsibility on the Codes Department and it would be subjective. She questioned if there should be a separate standard for fences next to driveways.

Council Member Butler commented that the height of fences should be shortened and a step back should be done. He referred to a fence on Holcomb Street in which this was done.

Council Member Burns stated that the purpose of the fence needs to be considered. Planning Board should listen to the concerns discussed tonight and give input.

Council Member Butler did not object to getting Planning Board's input but wants the Council concerns with set backs, height and transparency considered.

Council Member Butler and Smith agreed that chain link fencing looks bad and should be prohibited.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that the Council needs to define set back if the property does not have a sidewalk.

Mr. McWayne stated that in this case 50% transparency would not have made a difference. The problem is more due to the fence being too close to the neighbor's driveway.

Mr. Mix commented that if the property is only 60 ft wide and the set back is defined as 5 ft then the property owner would lose access to 10 ft of their yard.

Mayor Graham suggested that the set back from the neighbor's driveway should be defined to assist in snow removal.

Council Member Burns stated that the concerns need to be related to the Planning Board and have them report their recommendation back to Council.

Mayor Graham stated staff should prepare a proposal to be reviewed by Council before it is submitted to the Planning Board.

Mayor Graham asked if there was anything that could be done in this case since the fence permit was granted.

Council Member Macaluso stated that Codes Department already looked at this fence and it passed.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that the resident with concerns could ask for a review through the ZBA.

Council Member Butler stated that ZBA will only interpret the code as written in black and white. He does not feel this process will work. He suggested that Council try speaking with the owner of 157 Haley Street.

Mayor Graham was agreeable to this and will try to speak to the property owner.

3. Demolition of City Owned Properties

Reports on two city owned properties, 522 Mohawk Street and 111 South Orchard Street, were presented to Council for review by Shawn McWayne, Code Enforcement Supervisor. Both properties were recommended for demolition.

Council approved these properties for demolition. Mrs. Corriveau reminded Council that a 3rd property, 1 Boyd Place, had already been approved for demolition as well.

4. Crow Hazing Options

Mr. Nelson discussed his report with Council and summarized the three options available to the City.

Council Member Macaluso asked if the private organization could provide training to the City employees as well.

Council Member Smith asked Mr. Nelson to confirm the total cost of Option 1 if the employees were trained and if this would be overtime.

Mr. Elliot said the hope is not to use overtime.

Council Member Butler mentioned that the hazing is done in the evening.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that hazing would be done in the evening depending on weather during the plowing shift.

Council Member Smith thought USDA was more long term and most efficient.

Council Member Burn stated that there was not much participation by City employees and felt Option 3 was more cost effective.

Council Member Butler questioned how many nights were involved and Mr. Elliot stated the quote is for 5 nights with additional hours if needed.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that Loomacres Wildlife Management in Option 3 offers a phone tree in which residents can call in and report sightings of crows. This would decrease the amount of time used to find the crows.

Council Member Burns mentioned that Loomacres Wildlife Management offers a Public Relations aspect.

Council Member Butler mentioned that Loomacres Wildlife Management might offer education to the public in regards to devices available for use similar to the one Council Member Smith uses.

Council Member Smith explained that the device has a flashing light and sends sonic waves. He thought that it was quite effective.

Council Member Smith asked if Loomacres Wildlife Management uses lethal means and Mr. Elliot responded that it does not use lethal means.

Council Member Burns mentioned that Loomacres Wildlife Management had a good track record at the Airport and other areas within Jefferson County.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that this would be professional services and once it reaches a certain threshold, the City needs to get quotes for those services. Her staff is working on this and she will report back to Council once finalized.

Work Session ended at 9:08 pm

Ann Saunders
Deputy City Clerk