

**ADJOURNED COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
January 22, 2007
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCILMAN STEPHEN J. BRADLEY
COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH
COUNCILMAN TIMOTHY R. LABOUF
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR GRAHAM**

ALSO PRESENT: **CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU
ATTORNEY ROBERT J. SLYE**

Mayor Graham opened the adjourned session.

Mayor Graham thanked Councilman Clough for filling in as Mayor Pro Tem during the last Council meeting.

THE ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$135,000 BONDS OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, JEFFERSON COUNTY, NEW YORK, TO PAY THE COST OF THE ACQUISITION OF A STREET SWEEPER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE PURPOSES, IN AND FOR SAID CITY WAS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL. (Introduced on January 16, 2007; laid over under the rules; appears in its entirety on page 22 of the 2007 Minutes Book).

Mayor Graham inquired about shifting from bonding for police vehicles toward a 'pay-as-you-go' policy. He added that he believes the City's cash flow shows it is not necessary to bond.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the City issues bond anticipation notes and that while police vehicles are purchased on a more regular basis, this equipment is different.

Mayor Graham mentioned that there is still a large quantity of vehicles being purchased each year.

Mr. Mills briefly explained the spending plan regarding bonding for vehicles.

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA, EXCEPT COUNCILMAN BRADLEY WHO VOTED NAY.

THE ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$114,000 BONDS OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, JEFFERSON COUNTY, NEW YORK, TO PAY THE COST OF COMBINED SANITARY SEWER REPLACEMENT BETWEEN CHESTNUT AND HOLCOMB STREETS, IN AND FOR SAID CITY WAS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL. (Introduced on January 16, 2007; laid over under the rules; appears in its entirety on page 23 of the 2007 Minutes Book).

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

THE ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$326,000 BONDS OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, JEFFERSON COUNTY, NEW YORK, TO PAY THE COST OF SANITARY SEWER REPLACEMENT FROM BUTTERFIELD TO BARBEN AVENUES, IN AND FOR SAID CITY WAS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL. (Introduced on January 16, 2007; laid over under the rules; appears in its entirety on page 24 of the 2007 Minutes Book).

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

THE ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$240,000 BONDS OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, JEFFERSON COUNTY, NEW YORK, TO PAY THE COST OF THE PURCHASE OF A NEW FIRE RESCUE TRUCK FOR USE BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, IN AND FOR SAID CITY WAS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL. (Introduced on January 16, 2007; laid over under the rules; appears in its entirety on page 26 of the 2007 Minutes Book).

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH

WHEREAS the City of Watertown has previously entered into an agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) for the Downtown Watertown Streetscape Enhancement Project, PIN 780392 and

WHEREAS the OSC Municipal Contract # D017824 has to be modified in order for the City of Watertown to receive additional Federal funding appropriated under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and to extend the agreement completion date, and

WHEREAS the NYSDOT has prepared Supplemental Agreement No. 2 for the project, a copy of which is attached and made part of this resolution, and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown must authorize 100% first instance payment of the total project cost,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves Supplemental Agreement No. 2 to OSC Municipal Contract # D017824 and authorizes 100% first instance payment of \$4,430,000 for the total project cost, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor of the City of Watertown is hereby authorized and directed to execute Supplemental Agreement No. 2 on behalf of the City of Watertown, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be filed with the New York State Commissioner of Transportation by attaching it to Supplemental Agreement No. 2, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution will take effect immediately.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN TIMOTHY R. LABOUF AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF

RULES WAIVED BY MOTION OF COUNCILMAN CLOUGH, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN LABOUF AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

THE RESOLUTION APPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN POMCO AND THE CITY OF WATERTOWN SELF FUNDED HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM WAS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL(Introduced on January 16, 2007, no second at that time; appears in its entirety on page 20 of the 2007 Minutes Book).

AT THIS TIME THE RESOLUTION WAS INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN CLOUGH, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BRADLEY

Councilman Smith asked about the historic trend of medical CPI.

Mrs. Robbe explained that certain components of the CPI are based on several issues such as demographics and more aggressive treatments for illnesses.

Councilman Clough suggested looking for other contracts.

Mrs. Robbe mentioned that the last time an RFP was done was January of 2001. She added that there were approximately six to eight responses from that RFP.

Councilman LaBouf inquired when the last RFP was done prior to 2001 and if enough

changes have been made to justify another RFP process.

Mrs. Robbe replied that it was in July of 1992 and that it would be up to Council to go through the six to nine month process.

Councilman Smith commented that it would be advantageous to have Council representation on the City's insurance committee and asked what would happen if the contracts stipulated that a Council person be on the committee.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that the committee is established contractually.

Attorney Slye said that would have to be phased in and negotiated in the next round of contracts. He suggested giving Mrs. Corriveau a chance to further review this issue.

Councilman LaBouf added that it might be prudent to do an RFP to get similar coverage at a discount price.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN CLOUGH TO TABLE THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BRADLEY AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN SMITH TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE THE RESOLUTION APPOINTING DAVID BUSH TO THE ASSESSMENT BOARD OF REVIEW, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN LABOUF AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF

(Introduced on January 16, 2007, and appears in its entirety on page 18 of the 2007 Minutes Book)

Councilman Clough told Council he would be voting against this resolution. He commented that he thinks it is important to have a representative from the North Side on the Assessment Board of Review. Councilman Clough also mentioned that Mr. Bush does not own property in the City and said he thinks there would be other qualified candidates.

Mayor Graham reminded Council that Mr. Bush was recommended to the Board and that his involvement in community functions is commendable.

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA, EXCEPT COUNCILMAN CLOUGH WHO VOTED NAY.

LOCAL LAW

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH

WHEREAS pursuant to the provisions of Subdivision 2(d) of § 458-a of the Real Property Tax Law of the State of New York, the City of Watertown is permitted to adopt a Local Law establishing the veterans' exemptions in and for said City, and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown desire to increase the exemptions provided to veterans,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED that Chapter 271: TAXATION, Article VI, Ratio of Veterans' Exemption to Assessed Value is hereby amended as follows:

§ 271-78. Establishment of exemption.

Pursuant to the provisions of Subdivision 2(d) of § 458-a of the Real Property Tax Law of the State of New York, the maximum veterans' exemption from real property taxes allowable pursuant to § 458-a of the Real Property Tax Law is established as follows:

A. Qualifying residential real property shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of 15% of the assessed value of such property; provided, however, that such exemption shall not exceed the lesser of \$15,000 or the product of \$15,000 multiplied by the latest state equalization rate of the City of Watertown, New York.

B. In addition to the exemption provided by Subsection A of this section, where the veteran served in a combat theater or combat zone of operations, as documented by the award of the United States campaign ribbon or service medal, qualifying residential real property also shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of 10% of the assessed value of such property; provided, however, that such exemption shall not exceed the lesser of \$10,000 or the product of \$10,000 multiplied by the latest state equalization rate of the City of Watertown, New York.

C. In addition to the exemptions provided by Subsections A and B of this section, where the veteran received a compensation rating from the United States Veterans' Administration because of a service-connected disability, qualifying residential real property shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of the product of the assessed value of such property multiplied by 50% of the veteran's disability rating; provided, however, that such exemption shall not exceed the lesser of \$50,000 or the product of \$50,000 multiplied by the latest state equalization rate for the City of Watertown, New York, and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED this Local Law shall take effect upon filing with the Secretary of State.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN TIMOTHY R. LABOUF

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN SMITH TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FOREGOING LOCAL LAW FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2007 AT 8:15 P.M.

MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN LABOUF AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

Councilman Bradley stated he had a few questions he wanted to bring to the public's attention prior to the public hearing scheduled for February 5. He asked where the difference in assessed value came from and if it would be at the expense of the rest of the taxpayers in the City. Councilman Bradley also questioned where the exemptions would end and if the City should give the same exemption to those whose limited incomes are not being raised to meet the rising taxes.

Mayor Graham commented that he would like to stay away from a debate during this meeting but that stimulating interest in the public hearing is a good thing.

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Assessment Plan

Councilman LaBouf asked about the six-year assessment plan and where the monies are directed.

Mrs. Corriveau said the total figure for the five dollars per property is between \$40,000 and \$45,000. She added that the funds go to the revenue side of the general budget.

Teen Center

Councilman LaBouf inquired on the meeting between the City and Mrs. Cavallario and Mr. St. Croix regarding the Teen Center.

Mrs. Corriveau replied that she has met with them on two occasions including once with CAPC to discuss funding opportunities. She added that they would like to ask the City for funding but it would be more appropriate when they can define their funding needs.

Councilman Clough told Council that the topic was discussed at a CAPC meeting.

Councilman LaBouf mentioned that the meeting held at the North Side Improvement League had approximately 70 people attend which, he said, shows a strong positive feeling toward the Center.

Factory Square

Councilman Smith asked when Council will discuss a letter received regarding Factory Square.

Mrs. Corriveau said it is something Council should discuss. She added that Factory Square LLC is looking at building a storage space on that parcel. Mrs. Corriveau also said that Brian Barr has shown interest a number of times in purchasing the property.

Mr. Gardner addressed Council asking about the process to go through in acquiring the property.

Mayor Graham asked what his group's plan was.

Mr. Gardner replied that they are looking at storage space or apartments.

Mayor Graham suggested having interested parties reach an agreement or putting the land up for auction.

Mrs. Corriveau said she needs to check with Mr. Mix and Assessment to see who else is interested.

Mr. Gardner and Attorney Slye discussed the Gaffney Street expansion.

Property Progress

Mayor Graham asked about the progress of the property North of the City.

Mrs. Corriveau said she has not heard and that further progress will be made when the timing for tax credits is right.

Assessments

Mayor Graham commented that it has been a pleasure fielding inquiries on Assessments. He said he had a conversation with Mrs. Burns and Mr. Warneck regarding the topic. The Mayor added that Mrs. Burns was a proponent of the annual assessment plan and that the Council has to wrestle with the advantages of staying with this on a year to year basis. Conversely, he said at some point they will have to look at whether to go through this every year.

Mr. Mills briefly explained tax figures to Council.

Councilman Smith asked what Mr. Phelps' job would be if the City were to opt out of annual assessments.

Mrs. Corriveau replied that Mr. Phelps' job would be to see that the property values are assessed equally.

Attorney Slye reminded Council that the best evidence of assessed value is the sale price and to make sure the houses are equal.

Councilman LaBouf said that the City is in competition with other communities in this area and an exemption would be an added incentive to come to the City.

Mrs. Corriveau reminded Council that there will be a meeting held on Saturday, January 27, at 10 a.m. at the North Side Improvement League to discuss assessments. She added that this is not the time to talk about individual properties but rather the annual reassessment plan.

Staff Presentation – State Street and Public Square Update

City Engineer Kurt Hauk presented to Council an update on construction work in Public Square and on State Street.

Mr. Hauk reviewed work being done by National Grid and Verizon and the schedule to complete the State Street project. He added that the Public Square project is 37% complete.

Councilman LaBouf asked if the manholes will be flush with the pavement or depressed.

Mr. Hauk said that manholes should be a little depressed and added that the ceiling of some vaults need to be lowered to accomplish that.

Mr. Hauk shared his concerns about the speed tables on Public Square with Council. He pointed out that moderate rutting, heaving or settlement will render drainage inoperable. Mr. Hauk also stated that the speed table will not be elevated that much but would be more of a visual difference and mentioned that the table would be made of a synthetic asphalt.

Councilman Smith asked if the consultants were wrong.

Mr. Hauk replied that theoretically something may work on paper but not in practice.

Councilman Bradley asked why the issue with drainage was not seen on paper. He added that he does not think traffic coming from Factory Street through Public Square to Court or Arsenal Streets will slow down much for that speed table.

Councilman Smith suggested adding a catch basin to collect water in that area.

Councilman LaBouf commented that there are several communities around the City that have bustling walkable areas with no speed table.

Mayor Graham said it would be appropriate to have a resolution by Council to remove the speed table.

Councilman Clough asked about design changes from Mill Street and onto Washington Street.

Mr. Hauk said left-hand turns will be added at those intersections which will affect traffic timing.

Mayor Graham commented that many people do not know about the speed tables or 'calming zones' to be placed on Public Square.

Councilman Bradley invited the Mayor to attend a DBA meeting to hear discussions on the topic.

Councilman LaBouf asked if Mrs. Hoffman would offer her professional view on the topic.

Mrs. Hoffman said a speed table would not make or break the project and said if it is something that would be beneficial to the area then use it, if not do not use it.

Mr. Hauk told Council that what the City has planned is more of an elevated walkway since it is a six-inch change over 30 feet.

Councilman Bradley asked about using a standard speed table.

Mr. Hauk said that cannot be used since Public Square is on the national highway system.

Mrs. Corriveau told Council that the Downtown Business Association meets on February 1, and that staff should talk to businesses downtown to get feedback from them.

Councilman Smith suggested inviting Clough-Harbor to a Council session to hear why the speed table would not work.

Mrs. Corriveau said she would be interested in what the inspector has to say as this is the person out in the field.

City Planner Mike Lumbis told Council that downtown has been the location for several events and a speed table would make the downtown area more accommodating.

Councilman LaBouf questioned the safety of the sloping areas, at the ends of the speed table next to the crosswalks, especially in the wintertime.

Mayor Graham said he hopes Council is prepared to resolve this issue at the next Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR MEETING WAS DULY ADJOURNED AT 9:20 P.M. BY MOTION OF COUNCILMAN BRADLEY, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN CLOUGH AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

Amanda C. Lewis
Deputy City Clerk