

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF WATERTOWN  
JANUARY 8, 2007**

**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**

**New York State Zoo**

Board President Deanna Nelson and board members Greg Couch, Dale Klock and Peter Schmidt were present to answer any question Council might have concerning the status of the zoo at this time. Ms. Nelson assured Council that the zoo is in extremely capable hands and the individuals working and volunteering there are very competent in their positions. She also assured everyone that the animals are being well cared for. Ms. Nelson also advised that the proper paperwork would be filed in a timely manner in the future.

**Polling Places**

Sandy Corey, Deputy Commissioner for the Jefferson County Board of Elections, was present to answer questions posed by Council concerning the fact that the polling places have been removed from the schools.

Mayor Graham commented that utilizing the neighborhood schools would not be a bad thing. He questioned if this was a state rule since the Clinton's voted in a school.

Councilman Smith questioned the handicap accessibility issue.

Mrs. Corey explained that in 2003, the high school was used for voting for four districts. Many complaints were received. The lines were long and the room was very small. In addition, at that time, the NYS Attorney General and various agencies working with the disabled, inspected all polling places and determined that the schools were not handicap accessible to the degree that they wanted them to be. Therefore, reports were filed by the Attorney General and these agencies as to the complaints that they had with using the school buildings. Mrs. Corey also expressed concern for the security of the children when the schools are open for voting and anyone can just walk in. She commented that in addition to these concerns, the schools charged for a janitor to keep the building open.

Mrs. Corey explained that the State Office Building has doors which are automatic and wide enough to meet the new requirements that have been instituted to aid the disabled. There is a mega room in the lobby and if there is a line, it is inside the building, not outside as it was at the school. Mrs. Corey said that she has nothing against the school. However, the State Office Building is a much better place.

Mayor Graham remarked that it does make sense to use the North Side League. He commented that polling places should be easy to find.

Mrs. Corey advised that they would not change anything this year. The machines are changing and the opticalscan machines will serve 2000 people in one day. The DRE machines, which they would prefer, will serve 300 people a day. She commented that as a result of new machines, they might very well pull more districts into one building. She also advised that the decision not to have polling in the schools is the Board of Elections, not the school district.

Mayor Graham thanked Mrs. Corey for attending the work session.

### **School Resource Officer**

WHS Superintendent Terry Fralick and School Board President Peter Monaco addressed the chair concerning the need for a School Resource Officer. Mr. Fralick commented that an SRO builds a rapport with the students and staff. The program helps with early intervention and is highly effective.

Chief Goss explained that this would be a full fledged officer who has already been trained. A car would be provided on campus and the officer would enforce the law as well as be a teacher and mentor. He also explained that an officer was called to the school 130 times in the 2006 calendar year. Each call was handled by different officers who would have no knowledge of prior cases. An officer on campus would know what is going on and could connect the events in many cases.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that the discussions that were held dealt with the fact that it is important to connect the dots.

Mr. Monaco commented that the SRO would be a liaison between the Police Department and school community. He stated that the Board of Education strongly supports this.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that arrangements have to be made between the City and the School District for reimbursement for the officer's time. During vacations and school breaks, the City would pay the officer and he would be working for the City. The schedule is for approximately 38 weeks at school. She also explained that they are looking for a seasoned officer who wants to volunteer for the position. She also explained that the Police Department will supply the vehicle.

Councilman Clough asked about the DARE officer.

Chief Goss explained that the DARE program is a 12 week program for 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

Councilman Clough asked about school counselors.

Mr. Fralik responded that there are young people who don't talk to the counselors but would talk to an officer. He explained that uniformed officers provide assurance and gives them hope that a situation will be corrected.

Yvonne Gebo addressed the chair explaining the importance of the SRO program.

Mayor Graham commented that this program is worth supporting.

Councilman Smith commented that the premise is for the benefit of the students. It is to help be proactive and to have someone for the students to turn to. He asked how many hours or days the officer would be at IHC.

Chief Goss remarked that, at this time, none. However, if IHC requested this program, he would be in favor of it.

Councilman Smith remarked that IHC has kids too. The families of the IHC students pay school taxes, also. Therefore, the benefit should be allowed for them as well.

Chief Goss remarked that he would talk with Mr. Fontana to see what could be done. He explained that the same officer would not be doing both WHS and IHC.

Mayor Graham commented that Councilman Smith raises a good point.

Councilman Smith responded that the issues facing the students are the same at each school.

Councilman Clough commented that IHC shouldn't have to pay twice since they pay school taxes.

Mayor Graham remarked that the SRO should have a presence in all schools.

Councilman LaBouf thanked Chief Goss, Mr. Fralick and the Board of Education for addressing this issue.

### **Neighborhood Complaints**

Mayor Graham referred to the recent closing of the Horizon on West Main. He explained that there was a 15 day suspension posted on their door by the State ABC board.

However, the electric and gas were turned off a week before. He remarked that this business has been the subject of a lot of neighborhood complaints. He also commented that it was never clear who was running the place and someone was also living in the back room. He asked Chief Goss how we reach out to licensees to stave off problems before it ruins their business or the neighborhood.

Chief Goss explained that the Police Dept. goes over the ABC regulations with them and they do submit referrals to the State. However, the State does not take any action until they receive a number of complaints.

Mayor Graham remarked that in some cases, these businesses are not good neighbors. He also commented that the neighbors had complained and felt frustrated with the system not working on their behalf.

### **Teen Center**

Mrs. Cavallario addressed the chair concerning the fiscal problems facing the Teen Center. She explained that this is a place where kids can feel safe and they can attend at no cost. She remarked that any consideration that Council could make would be appreciated. Mrs. Cavallario stated that Norm Wayte, a board member, was also present. She remarked that she was hoping the Council will come to a conclusion about the center, not necessarily a large financial conclusion.

Mayor Graham asked that the City Manager explore what options might be available.

Mr. Wayte addressed the chair explaining that it is important that these kids be able to continue to attend this center as they are being helped to be empowered.

Councilman LaBouf thanked the board members of the center for affording him an opportunity to be at the board meeting today. He explained that there has to be a redevelopment plan. He advised that there was going to be a future meeting with the various players involved. He also stated that CAPC is willing to take over the center. However, there is a funding component that needs to be in place. He also advised that he will be attending future meetings.

Mayor Graham remarked that Councilman Clough is the liaison for the Council to CAPC.

Councilman Smith remarked that the City was limited in how they could assist the Historical Society and the Miss NYS Pageant.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that this was because tourism dollars were being used. The City does fund CAPC, but not with tourism dollars.

Councilman LaBouf stated that Mrs. Gault had talked with him and said that CAPC does want to take over the center.

Mrs. Cavallario remarked that people have rallied to the center. However, it is a case that people don't want to give money unless it is a stable institution and the center can't be stable without the money.

Councilman Clough remarked that he went over to the center on Friday evening and he spoke with some of the youth. He stated that he was surprised that the school district provides dinner for them.

Mrs. Cavallario explained that this is a federally funded program. She also explained that this allows the youth to use internet access and to have counseling.

Councilman LaBouf stated that CAPC has a plan in place to increase programming and staffing.

Councilman Clough responded that CAPC has to have a long term solution, not a short term one.

Councilman LaBouf remarked that based on his conversation with the director, CAPC is willing to take it over and \$50,000 will allow for the grants to open up to the center.

Councilman Smith commented that the traditional role of City government hasn't been to fund individual programs and questioned where the gap would end and mentioned that the county has served in this role traditionally.

Mrs. Cavallario explained that the center is not getting the grants from the youth bureau anymore. She advised that there would be a meeting on Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the North Side League.

Councilman Smith commented that while he was at the county, the youth bureau used to count each attendee at a ball game as people served. At the teen center, each person would be served.

Mayor Graham remarked that the City Manager will explore the options.

### **Assessment**

Mr. Phelps presented the Council with a report concerning new assessments. (Report not on file in the Office of the City Clerk).

He explained that neighborhoods #608 and #517 had physical inspections and all others were trended. The trended neighborhoods have an increase of 17-24%. Neighborhood #608 had an average increase of 30% and #517 had an average increase of 17%. Mr. Phelps advised that the new rolls have been prepared the notices will be sent out by the end of the week. Hearings will begin on January 16<sup>th</sup> and will last for five days.

Work session ended at 9:20 p.m.

*Donna M. Dutton*  
City Clerk