

City
Manager's

28 December 2006

update

Report

ASSESSMENT:

Annual State Aid - The City has been notified that it will be receiving \$5 per parcel (excluding non taxable parcels) from the State of New York in the form of Annual State Aid for a sum of \$42,150. This aid was predicated on our successful completion of the 2006 annual reassessment.

Annual Reassessment Plan - As part of the City's 2007 annual reassessment, the Assessor's Office has completed residential inspections and valuation for 2 of the 13 residential neighborhoods representing 1,817 parcels. They have also developed trend factors to apply to the remaining 11. Work is progressing on commercial valuations and building permits in order to complete the tentative roll by January 15th.

State Grant - The City has received preliminary approval of a \$29,907 grant from the Office of Real Property Services to provide for upgrades to our website. While we are still awaiting final approval from the Office of the State Comptroller's Office, we look forward to implementing this technology and being able to more effectively serve the public by providing more complete property information, photographs of property, tax maps, sales comparisons, etc.

STAR Administrative Aid - The City has received notice that our STAR Administrative Aid payment will be \$5,017.31 this year. This is up slightly from last years \$4,813.68. This aid is intended to help offset some the costs of administering the STAR program.

CIVIL SERVICE:

Examinations - The Civil Service office has been very busy in preparation of giving decentralized clerical tests and the Police Officer exam.

Six decentralized exams were given on November 18th -- Clerk, Typist, Account Clerk, Account Clerk Typist, Senior Typist and Secretary I. 79 candidates took a total of 150 clerical exams. 40 individual typing tests have been given to candidates this past week to meet the requirements of those exams where proof of proficiency in typing is needed.

On December 2nd, 285 Police Officer candidates were tested at the North Side Improvement League. 12 people assisted in monitoring for this large group of candidates. The City received notification that 33 candidates took our exam at other locations within the State. On Monday, December 4th the exam was given to 5 candidates who had requested accommodations be made for test date because they were scheduled for Federal exams. 11 candidates requested test date accommodations due to military commitment. Those exams will be given as candidates return to Ft. Drum from the Middle East. Our efforts should result in an extensive list from which to select candidates. Historically, approximately 20% of candidates taking the exam do not receive a passing grade. Additionally, once a candidate is on the list, he/she must pass a physical agility exam. If a candidate fails the physical agility exam two times, his/her name is removed from the list. Approximately 40% of the candidates fail the agility exam.

The Battalion Fire Chief exam is being offered January 6 on a promotional basis.

CLERK'S OFFICE:

Wedding Room - The new wedding room is being used on an almost daily basis. To date, the Clerk's Office has performed 350 ceremonies. While weddings are down slightly from last year, we are seeing an increase as more soldiers return from overseas duty.

Historian's Office – This office has been busy doing research on the various carriage companies that used to be in Watertown. Several requests for this information have come in via email.

Customer Service Statistics- The number of passport applications the department processes continues to increase due to people traveling as well as due to the uncertainty of the need to have a passport to visit Canada. As we end another year of vital records, the births are down and the deaths are up slightly as compared to last year.

COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE:

Delinquent School Taxes - In accordance with Section 1322 of the Real Property Tax Law, delinquent 2006-07 school taxes have been turned over to the City Comptroller's Office for collection. The City Comptroller is the tax enforcing officer for unpaid taxes levied within the City limits. The City will earn 5% of the amount of principal and interest collected.

Watertown City School District

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Accounts</u>	<u>Amount Outstanding</u>
2006-07	666	\$411,008
2005-06	676	\$583,752
2004-05	631	\$609,714
2003-04	684	\$691,454

General Brown School District

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Accounts</u>	<u>Amount Outstanding</u>
2006-07	1	\$ 344
2005-06	0	\$ - 0 -
2004-05	0	\$ - 0 -
2003-04	0	\$ - 0 -

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT:

Grants - The City received notification of an \$80,000 grant from the City's Black River Fund to be used on the Hole Brothers access improvements. This money will be used in conjunction with money received from the Department of State in our 2005 EPF grant application.

Work was completed on all aspects of our 2003 Quality Community Grant. The final paperwork was submitted to the Department of State for approval for close out of this grant.

North Shore Access – Work is progressing on the permitting process and the final design. Plans are to have this construction project out to bid in March 2007, for construction to begin in May 2007.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT:

State Street Reconstruction Project - Storm sewer work is complete with the exception of some work along Rutland St. and Hamilton St. This is scheduled to be completed in April 07. Street reconstruction work is progressing from Eastern Blvd. to California Ave. Paving is to binder grade. The contractor has some sidewalk and landscape work remaining in that area. Substantial completion of this project is scheduled for the fall of 2007 with punch list items completed in the spring of 2008.

Streetscape/Public Square Reconstruction Project - Vault infill work is progressing and projected to be substantially complete by mid Jan 07. Two vaults have yet to be completed. Storm sewer and street reconstruction work is delayed until utility relocations can be completed by Verizon and National Grid. Verizon has started the design process to relocate the duct systems that are in conflict with the construction. They are projecting that the design will be completed by 1 April 07. National Grid is currently evaluating a list of areas where their electric ducts are in conflict with the street reconstruction. The major areas are along the curb line from the American Corner along the north side of the Square to the intersection of Mill St. and City Center Drive, and along the curb line along the south side of the Square from Washington St. to Franklin St. They are working to develop costs, scope and schedule for the relocations. They will meet with the project representatives in the first week of January 07.

Sidewalk Program - Work is completed along E. Hoard Street and was started along S. Massey Street before shutting down for the winter. The remaining 06-07 district work will be completed in April, May and June of 2007. Inspections are completed in the areas outlined for the 2007-2008 district. The public hearing is set for 5 Feb 07 for the 2007-2008 Special Assessment District.

Sherman Street/ Arsenal Street Intersection - The roadway and traffic signal system has been re-designed to allow for a left turn onto Sherman Street when traveling westbound on Arsenal Street. Final pavement work, installation of signal loops, and ADA compliant corner ramps will be programmed for completion by the DPW.

Anthony Street From Public Square To J.B. Wise Parking Lot - We are proceeding with the plan to have Villager perform the curb work within the current project limits, and include the design and construction of the remaining portion as part of the scope of the J.B. Wise project.

Connector Road From Arsenal Street To Coffeen Street - The preliminary street corridor has been developed by the Engineering Department. Two meetings have been held with the owners of the Stateway Plaza. The proposed corridor was presented to the Council at the 11 Dec 06 Work Session. The detailed design work will be performed through a consultant. An RFP will be developed in January for consultant selection.

Capital Project Design

Sterling Street - Final plans are complete. Received DOH plan approval 19 June 06. A preconstruction meeting will be held based on the programmed work schedule.

Municipal Parking Lot- Project on hold pending funding and final design.

North Michigan - Project survey is complete. Preliminary design is scheduled to start in winter of 2006.

Ten Eyck Phase I & II: Detailed design is projected to be complete this winter. Coordination with utilities along the project is required and possible relocations may delay the project start until they are complete.

CSO Long Term Control Plan - Stearns & Wheler were selected as the consultant for the CSO computer modeling from submittals from the RFP. The resolution approving the consultant agreement was before the Council at the 18 Dec 06 meeting.

DEC Sewer Extension Requirements- 6 NYCRR Subpart 750-2 requires DEC approval of sewer extensions with flows greater than 2500 gal/day or more than one connected lateral. Part of this approval is assurance from the City that adequate sewer capacity exists in the system. Developments with assurance letters submitted to the DEC: City Center Plaza, Towne Center, Pine Woods, Hampton Inn, Maple Park, Starwood, Leray Commons, Pleasant Acres, Columbia Development and Dorr Farm. Development with capacity under review include Liberty, Black River Dev., and Eagle Ridge.

Iroquois Cosgrove Sewer Upgrade - Letters of Interest from consultants are due to the Engineering Office by 15 Dec. 06. The projected schedule is to have the consultant on board with a resolution signed by the Council in January 07.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Rescue Vehicle - Chief Gaumont and Deputy Chief Sayre continue to confer with representatives of the American LaFrance LLC to resolve issues with the current rescue vehicle.

Computer Aided Dispatch - Chief Gaumont and IT Director Peter Keenan met with representatives from Mobile-Tech the contractor for the new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system to receive an update on the system implementation and establish a training schedule for City Fire Fighters.

Pumper – Department representatives met with Tyler Fire Equipment, LLC to finalize the plans for the new fire pumper on order. This vehicle should be delivered in early April.

Emergency Response - Fire crews responded and controlled a major fire at 230 Central Street confining the fire to three structures and two private motor vehicles. City fire crews responded to mutual aid to the Town of Watertown and extricated the victim of a serious motor vehicle accident on Tuesday, December 12th.

Emergency Response Plan - Chief Gaumont and Bryan White have developed an updated City Emergency Plan and distributed to department heads for comment.

Flower Memorial Library:

Historic Restoration Project - Advertisement for bids for the restoration work in the Flower Memorial Library went out in late November. Bids will be received on January 4, 2007. The proposed project will consist of restoration of the dome, stained glass work, historic decorative painting and art work, marble cleaning, and woodwork refinishing in the original portion of the Library building. The project is being supported by grants from various state and local funding sources, as well as from private donations.

Historic New York, Architectural Journeys in the Empire State – The Flower Memorial Library was included in a recent book detailing architecturally significant buildings in New York State.

PLANNING:

Black River Parks Project (BRPP) – A public meeting was held on December 7, 2006 at which Environmental Design and Research, P.C. (EDR) presented conceptual designs for improvements at the Abe Cooper site, the Veterans Memorial Riverwalk, Hole Brothers on Newell Street and at the Fairgrounds. The meeting’s purpose was to obtain feedback from the public regarding the proposed improvements. The meeting was well attended and the public offered some valuable input that will be incorporated into the final plans. EDR will now be proceeding with the more detailed design work in anticipation of letting the project for bid later this winter. The anticipated completion date for the construction is the fall of 2007.

Waterworks Park Trail Extension Project – Work on the extension of the Waterworks Park Trail system started with the clearing of a 20’ wide path along the centerline of the



proposed trail. The trail will extend from the existing park approximately 1100’ to the west behind property owned by Blackwater Development. The brush clearing and grinding was completed by a local contractor while the Department of Public Works assisted with debris removal, site clean up and minor grading. The trail will be paved in the late spring of 2007 and will include the installation of picnic

tables, benches and trash cans. The picture to the left shows the clearing completed at the main overlook area located just west of the existing trail system.

Street Tree Program – On November 7, the Arsenal Street (Stream) Parking Lot Tree Planting Project was completed. A total of 22 trees were planted along the perimeter of the parking lot and in a recently constructed landscaped island. The tree planting was funded by a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Urban and Community Forestry Program.

The Planning Office also assisted with the site inspection for the tree planting portion of the State Street Reconstruction Project. A total of 55 trees were planted between North Indiana Avenue and Eastern Boulevard.

On December 19, the City's 2006 Tree City USA Application for Recertification was submitted to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation and recognizes communities across the country who meet certain criteria and have exceptional community forestry programs. An announcement regarding our application will be made in the early spring in time for Arbor Day, which will be held on Friday, April 27, 2007.

Downtown Watertown Streetscape Enhancement Project - Phase V – The City recently received notification from the New York State Department of Transportation that our grant application for funding under the Transportation Enhancements Program was **not** among those selected for funding. The funding would have provided for streetscape enhancements along Arsenal Street, Court Street and Franklin Street as well as improvements to Lachenauer Plaza.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Academy - The Department started its police academy November 20th at the State Office building. We have four recruit officers attending the 22 week academy. They are Mr. Kenny Noone, Mr. Michael Maney, Mr. Joshua Davis and Mr. Andrew Neddo. Also attending are members of Carthage Police Dept. and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department.

Toys for Tots – Members of the Police Department worked collecting toys for the Marine Corps Reserve "Toys for Tots program" and collected over 50 new toys to be handed out for Christmas.

Department Retirements - The Chief's Secretary Sharon Thompson will be retiring December 29th after 17 years of service. She has served with four (4) Chiefs during her career, Chief Hennegan, Chief Brothers, Chief Piche and Chief Goss. We all wish her the very best in her retirement.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Holiday Decorations - Decorations were placed around the City the week of November 13th in preparation for the Tree Lighting Ceremony that took place



on November 25th. This year's placement of the decorations was at the direction of the Downtown Development Coordinator with the installations coordinated jointly with the Building & Grounds Department and the Electric Department.



First Major Snow Event -

The first significant snowfall of the year occurred early December 5th. Approximately 10" of snow fell on Watertown during that storm and it took 586 man hours, 433 equipment hours, and approximately 125 tons of salt in order to complete the plowing and removal of snow that fell.

Fairgrounds YMCA Drainage Project -

This project is currently underway and includes the installation of a storm water system to allow surface water drainage of the area west of the JCC entrance road located between the Fairgrounds YMCA and the Horse Arena.



Crack Sealing - The lack of winter weather conditions has allowed crack sealing operations to continue. To date crews have crack sealed Bugbee Dr, Cadwell St, Flower Ave East, Harris Dr, Hoard St East & West, Lachenauer Dr, Lansing St, Myrtle Ave, Ontario Dr North & South, and S. Rutland Street.

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure- Sanitary Sewer crews installed a sewer lateral for the Habitat for Humanity house constructed at 1022 Erie Street and televised the sewer system located on Iroquois Street to identify any maintenance issues in this neighborhood. Crews also cleaned the sanitary sewer on Arsenal Street between Bellew Ave and the City Limits.



New Vehicles and Equipment - Several new vehicles have been added to the fleet within the past couple of months. Vehicles received include the following: two 2007 Ford F350 pickups with utility tool bodies (1-25 & 1-28), a 2007 Freightliner side load refuse packer with 23-yard body (1-2), and a 2007 International bucket truck with a 70ft bucket (1-59).



Jefferson Street Playground – As reported in November, the Jefferson Street Playground is now substantially complete. In the spring Building & Grounds crews will return to seed this site.



Plow Shed - The plow shed was damaged

during a fire this past spring and work to restore the plow shed has continued throughout the fall. The building is now substantially complete with new siding, roofing, electrical, and sprinkler systems. Crews and equipment will be ready to move in upon the receipt of a certificate of occupancy. Receipt of the certificate is expected before January 1st.

State Place Reconstruction - All of the ornamental streetlights associated with this project have been installed. The placement of streetlights completes the State Place Reconstruction project.



Training - On December 7th & 8th representatives from CartêGraph were on-site to train the entire Department on using the CartêGraph software. Public Works employees were trained on taking

and logging calls into the system, converting call requests into work orders, writing and closing work orders, and entering employee's time into the system.

WATER DEPARTMENT:

Thompson Park Pump Station - The new pump station to supply water to Thompson Park and the upper Gotham Street area is nearly complete. We are still waiting for National Grid to install the gas service so the heat and emergency generator can be activated.

Coagulation Basin Dredging - The dredging of the Coagulation Basin was completed December 1, 2006. The City Council on July 17, 2006, awarded the bid for the dredging, in the amount of \$104,500, to HYDROPRESS, LLC of West Hatfield, MA. Final closeout of this project should be done by the end of December.