


City  
Manager's  
Update  
Report

10 May 2006



**ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT:**

**2006 Final Roll** - The 2006 final assessment roll has been completed. The total taxable value for the City of Watertown has increased from \$622,263,617 to \$833,777,630, a 34% increase.

**Board of Assessment Review** - The Board of Review has completed its work and handled over 200 cases this year. As of April 28<sup>th</sup>, we have received only one small claims petition and just a few more than the average number of Article 7 petitions.

**Equalization Rate** - New York State has issued a 100% special equalization rate for the City. It is my belief that this will be our final rate once the State is through with its process.

**Property Sales** - Recent sales of single-family homes are still showing significant price increases with the number of sales starting to slow slightly from last year's record numbers.

**COMPTROLLER'S DEPARTMENT:**

**Sidewalk Special Assessment Program** - The City Comptroller's Office has completed the borrowing phase for the recent sidewalk special assessment district. In total 161 property owners elected to participate in the special assessment district and pay their invoice over 10 years with interest. The City borrowed \$250,000 at a net interest cost over the life of the serial bond at 4.7437%. The City received only one bid on this bond issue.

**ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT:**

**State Street Reconstruction Project** - Bids were opened on May 25, 2005 and construction began on this project on 7/5/05. The water main and water service work from Eastern Blvd. to Public Square was completed in November 2005, with the

exception of the replacement of a 16" water main crossing at Monroe Avenue and Fairmont Avenue, which was completed in April 06.

National Grid (NIMO) and Verizon crews are relocating their utilities ahead of the contractor. Progression of the project is dependent upon National Grid and Verizon crews to relocate utilities in advance of the construction work. The current critical path items are two Verizon duct banks. The first is located at Michigan Avenue, the second is located on N. Hamilton. Delays associated with this work could be up to 2 ½ months.

Sanitary sewer work commenced in April of 2006. Storm sewer mainline work is projected to commence in May 2006. Road Reconstruction work is currently scheduled for completion from Eastern to California prior to the suspension of work for the winter of 2006. Substantial completion of this project is scheduled for the spring of 2007.

**Streetscape/Public Square Reconstruction Project** - Bids were opened on March 8, 2006 and Villager construction was awarded the contract. A preconstruction meeting was held on April 6, 2006. The first project meeting was held at the Project Engineers Office on State Street on April 20, 2006. The construction contractor is on site starting this week. An area is being developed to allow 2-hour parking and expanded Handicap Parking in the J.B. Wise Lot during the course of construction.

**Sidewalk Program** - The 2006-2007 special assessment district has been inspected and notification letters sent out to the property owners. The district is comprised of 160 properties. The public hearing is scheduled for June 5, 2006. There are currently 10 properties from the previous assessment district that require "warranty" work. Letters to these property owners are being sent out. DPW has initiated the hiring of the sidewalk crew. If approved by the City Council, work is projected to start the week of 19 June.

**Stream Parking Lot Entrance - Sherman/Arsenal Street Intersection** - This project provided a new entrance to the North Country Children's Clinic in the former Kriff's Furniture building, while making it easier to limit access to the Court/Arsenal parking lot to Stream employees. The design also allowed for parking spaces for use by the general public on the west side of the existing parking lot. Work on this project was substantially complete by October 27, 2005.

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 completed once overhead utilities are relocated by National Grid. We are currently waiting to hear from National Grid on their timeframe for this removal.

**Connector Road Public Square to J.B. WISE Parking Lot** - The Engineering Department made a preliminary survey and completed initial design work on the

proposed connector road from Public Square to the J.B. Wise parking lot. This work was coordinated with the Downtown Development Coordinator and the Planning Department to include potential J.B. Wise Parking Lot improvements, Downtown Streetscape interface, and LWRP initiatives. Various design alternatives were presented to the City Council in February. Currently awaiting funding through a grant, pass-through, or multi-modal monies. After funding is secured, the project will be prepared for a consultant design.

**Arsenal Coffeen Connector Road** - Topographic and boundary survey work has been underway for use in developing a preliminary street design and order of magnitude estimates for construction of a connector road between Arsenal and Coffeen Streets in the vicinity of the Stateway Plaza. The proposed connector road will compliment the work that the NYSDOT is performing on Arsenal Street.

Three meetings have taken place with the NYSDOT since March 06 to facilitate both the Arsenal Street and Connector Road projects. The preliminary design will continue to be developed by the Engineering Department until design funding can be secured. After funding is secured, detailed design will be performed through a consultant.

**Capital Project Design** - Final Plans for the **State Place** project are complete. A preconstruction meeting was held with DPW and Planning on 3 May 06. Start of construction is awaiting relocation of National Grid utilities.

Project survey for **N. Michigan** is complete, preliminary design is scheduled to start in May 06.

Project survey work for **Ten Eyck Phases I & II** is complete, preliminary design is scheduled to start in May 06.

**Survey Equipment, Software Upgrades and Staff Training** - The Department has installed a new GIS data collector with help from the IT Department. Final calibration is being accomplished. This instrument will allow the department to get survey grade GIS information. The Department has ordered a new Leica TCR803 Total Station survey instrument. This instrument will further enhance the survey capability of the department.

One half of the Autocad and Civil 3D design software training was completed on 24 & 25 April. The second half of the training will be completed in May. The IT Department has installed the software onto all departmental computers.

**HydroElectric Plant** – Contractors will work to clear debris collected on the canal intake racks from the spring runoff during the first week of May '06. This will reduce restrictions at the intake and help maximize generation at the facility.

**DPW Project Support - Alteri Spray Pool** - Engineering personnel conducted a site visit with DPW employees to develop stamped plans for construction. The DPW Sr. Eng. Tech prepared plans based on review comments by Engineering. Plans are currently

stamped, and submitted for approval. Multi purpose Field Survey & Layout - Engineering staff assisted in the project survey and construction layout to enable construction by DPW crews. Jefferson Street Playground Survey -Engineering staff assisted in the project survey and will assist, if required, with construction layout to facilitate construction by DPW crews.

**Knickerbocker Drive** - A public meeting was held with property owners and school board members to get feedback on possible alternatives. A presentation of the alternatives was presented to the Council on 10 Apr 06. Initial traffic counts were taken 7-14 Apr 06. The second round of traffic counts were taken from 24 Apr to 1 May 06. Findings and recommendations will be presented once the data collected hgas been reviewed and analyzed.

**Iroquois Avenue** - Initial traffic counts were taken in October 2005. The Police Department conducted speed checks with radar in Sep & Oct 2005. An update was presented to the Council on 10 April 06. Traffic counts will be taken along adjacent streets, and speed counts will be taken along Sherman & Iroquois. This will be done after the Knickerbocker Drive counts are taken. DPW has been asked to install Stop bar at the intersection of Sherman St and Iroquois Avenue.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT:**

**2006 Fire Fighter of the Year** - Fire Captain Todd DeMar was honored as the 2006 Fire Fighter of the Year by American Legion Post #61 at their Law and Order Night.

**Confined Space Rescue Equipment** - The Department purchased, through the FEMA "FIRE Act," \$150,000 worth of confined space rescue equipment and a trailer to haul the equipment. Over the past month instructors from the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control have been providing training to all Department members on the use of that equipment.

**Traffic Signal Pre-Emption Detectors** - The City Electric Department along with personnel from the New York State DOT have installed traffic signal pre-emption detectors on all traffic signals in the greater Watertown area. The Fire Department with the assistance of the DPW garage hope to have the vehicle emitters installed on fire apparatus within the next couple of weeks to complete the system.

**New Pumper** - Expect delivery new fire pumper in mid-May. When the pumper arrived in Elmira from Wisconsin, it had a damaged engine. Cummins, the manufacturer of the engine is replacing the damaged engine with a new engine and will be increasing our warranty from 5 years/100,000 miles to 10 years/200,000 miles at no cost to the City. Once the replacement engine is installed the pumper will be re-inspected by Pierce to ensure it is delivery condition and will be re-tested by an independent third party testing organization (UL). Upon delivery, the department training to commence immediately.

**Knox Boxes** - The Department has received a number of Knox Boxes for installation in City facilities. Captain DeMar is coordinating with Mr. McWayne to get these entry boxes installed.

**NYS DOH Grant** - The Department was notified on March 30th that it has been awarded a State of New York Department of Health grant to receive 200 smoke alarms from the 2006 New York State Program for the Prevention of Fire-Related Injuries. This is the second year we have been awarded this grant. The grant provides free smoke alarms for distribution to the community. .

**NIMS Training Exercise** - The Department has scheduled the evening of July 20th as the date for the U.S. Post Office "BDS" exercise. This will involve a consolidated response from City Fire and Police, as well as County, State, and Federal agencies to a simulated activation of the Watertown Postal Center's Biological Detection System (BDS). This exercise meets the requirement for a multi-agency exercise for NIMS compliance as well. The exercise is scheduled to begin at about 7pm and will have a duration of about 2-3 hours.

## **FLOWER MEMORIAL LIBRARY:**

**Renovations** - The renovation project has been completed. A dedication ceremony was held on Thursday, April 27, 2006. Staff is now working on the historic restoration phase of the project.

**Summer Reading Program** – July 10 – August 25 the Library will host a Summer Reading Program with games, crafts, and stories. All events are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is recommended.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT:**

**Police Recruits** - All three police recruits are due to graduate from the Canton Police Academy on May 19th 2006. All are doing fine and will be a welcomed addition to the patrol division. The recruits will now begin the Field Training phase of their training and will be ready for the street on August 18, 2006.

**Police Officer of the Year** - Detective Jerry Golden is this year's recipient of the Police Officer of the Year award and he was honored at the American Legion's Law and Order night on April 13th. Det. Golden's selection was based on his contribution in our fight against methamphetamine labs.

**Annual Report** - The Watertown Police Department's Annual Report for 2005 has been completed. Lt. Ted Wells was the main author, gathering the needed stats and creating

the various graphs and charts etc. The report was put together with input from the various units and division within the department.

**Police Chaplain Program** - The Police Chaplain Program is underway after introductions to the City Council at the February 20th 2006 meeting. Father Shane Lynch has volunteered his services to the police department and the citizens of Watertown.

**Jefferson Community College Interns** - The Watertown Police Department is once again providing an intern site for students who have an interest in pursuing careers associated with law enforcement. This semester three students participated in the program which concluded the last week of April.

## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:**

**Street Sweeping Program** – This year’s program commenced on April 3rd and we have completed our first pass of the City including four passes of the Downtown Business District. Working on a 16 hour/day, double shift schedule a total of 568 man and equipment hours has been spent in this initial sweep. Following our standard operating procedures we will now sweep on a day to day basis predicated upon manpower availability. The Downtown Business District will be swept every Friday during the midnight to 8:00 A.M. shift throughout the season.



**Street Patching** - The local asphalt plants have begun limited production thereby allowing our patching crews to begin regular repair of potholes and utility ditches. The current cost of Type 7, Top Course asphalt is \$40.80 per ton as compared to \$23.81 for this same product this time last year.

**Arena Drainage** - This project consisted of the installation of approximately 450 linear feet of 12 inch storm sewer and three manholes. Commencing at the rear of the arena the new line runs northerly, intercepting an existing 18 inch storm sewer outfall.



**Fairgrounds Spray Pool** - This project has been designed and the plans are being reviewed and approved by the NYS Department of Health. We have proceeded with the removal of the old pool and the prep work for the new installation.



**Snow Plow Fire Damage** – Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> we experienced a vehicle fire at our Newell Street Facility. While we are still working with our insurance carriers over defining the total loss we have placed contracts for the purchase of replacement plow unit thereby assuring an autumn delivery. The cleaning and inspection of our remaining 6 plows damaged during the fire is scheduled. We are still working with the insurance company to obtain quotes on repairs to this facility.

**Spring Drop Off** - This bi-annual event is scheduled for Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Fairgrounds Arena Parking Lot.

# SPRING DROP OFF



## FAIRGROUNDS ARENA



The City of Watertown will once again offer residents the bulk drop off program, an opportunity to dispose of bulk items such as furniture, appliances, old windows, bath cabinets, fencing, yard furniture, and small quantities of construction & demolition materials like siding, porch steps, scrap lumber, floor coverings, etc. The City shall also accept automobile truck batteries as well as automobile and pick-up truck tire casings (tires which have been removed from their rims/wheels).

~ NEW LOCATION ~  
Arena Parking Lot  
Coffee Street

**Saturday ~ June 3, 2006**

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



REQUIREMENTS: Residency Verification (valid driver's license or other appropriate ID).  
FEES: To be paid in cash or check prior to unloading.

UNLOADING of VEHICLES and placing of the bulk items into containers is the responsibility of customer.  
FEE STRUCTURE is based on size of vehicle used as shown in chart below. Excess loads will be subject to additional charges, depending upon estimated volumes and/or average weights of material brought in for disposal.

FEE STRUCTURE	ARENA PARKING LOT
Automobiles (1/2 cubic yard)	\$7.00
Mini Van/Compact Pick-up Truck	\$20.00
Pick-up Truck (no rack/extended sides)	\$25.00
Pick-up Truck (with side racks)	\$45.00
Utility Trailer (variable sizes)	\$25.00 - \$45.00
White Goods (large metal appliances)	FREE
Tires (autos/van/pick-up only)	\$5.00
Batteries (car, truck, boat)	\$5.00

**QUESTIONS:** Call Department of Public Works at 785-7770 or 785-7842 Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**RESTRICTIONS**

- NO HOUSEHOLD WASTE - pesticides, herbicides, driveway sealers, paint, thinners, etc. are prohibited.
- NO LIQUID WASTE OF ANY KIND
- NO YARD WASTE - brush, limbs, grass clippings, garden waste are prohibited.
- NO REFUSE - items that normally would be picked-up by your regular weekly trash collection are prohibited.
- NO DUMP TRUCKS - only cars, vans, pick-up trucks, and utility trailers will be allowed on site.



2006

**Tree Planting Program** - Once again this year, DPW has assisted Tree Watertown and the Watertown Rotary Club with the spring planting of 97 trees at various locations throughout the City.



**New Field Mower** - This unit was delivered in early April and we are already receiving compliments from the numerous baseball teams on the high quality and appearance of the field turf.

**Thompson Park Pinnacle Floor Replacement** - The floor of the pinnacle was replaced this spring. Given the increased usage of this facility for spring weddings and summer picnic events it was determined that improvements were required.



**Demolition of Field House at Knickerbocker and North** – At the request of the School District, we removed the old Skate Shack/Fieldhouse located on the grounds of the Knickerbocker Elementary. This removal will provide the district with greater use of their athletic fields. In addition to this structure, we removed a similar fieldhouse from the North Side Cemetery property formerly known as the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward Playground.



**Multi-Purpose Field Number 1 Parking Lot -**

Work has begun on the box out of this new parking lot which will service Multi-Purpose Filed Number 1 as well as out two softball fields located in the northeast quadrant of the Fairgrounds Complex.



**WATER DEPARTMENT:**

**Thompson Park Pump Station** - Bids were accepted by the Council on March 20, 2006. Contracts have been executed and a pre-construction meeting was held on May 4, 2006. Notices to proceed were presented to the contractors at that meeting. This project is currently scheduled to be completed in September 2006.

**Delinquent Water/Sewer Account Collection Program** - The spring shut-off process for collection of delinquent utility accounts was successful in bringing in over \$217,000 in outstanding revenue for the Water and Sewer Funds.

On March 13, 2006 the initial delinquent list consisted of 921 accounts totaling \$223,150.23. This included accounts with an outstanding balance of over \$65.00 that had been billed on or before February 1, 2006. By April 7, 2006, when we began shutting the remaining delinquent accounts, there were 187 accounts totaling \$50,606.63 that were subject to termination. 113 accounts were actually shut off. As of May 1, 2006 there were 23 accounts still shut, with outstanding balances totaling \$5,926.28. These outstanding balances will be re-levied on the tax roll for this year. This year a total of \$152,100.39 in outstanding bills were re-levied.

**DANC/City Water Sewer Study** - The Development Authority of the North Country and the City have jointly retained the firm of Stearns & Wheler, partnered with the local firm of Bernier Carr & Associates, to perform a joint water/sewer study to determine current capacities and commitments on our water and sewer infrastructure and potential future needs for expansion of these facilities.

A progress meeting was held on April 20, 2006 to review the draft report. Comments on that report have been forwarded to Stearns and Wheler to enable the final report to be prepared.