

City
Manager's
Update
Report

18 September 2006

ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT:

Six Year Annual Revaluation Plan – The last 12 months sales data is being compiled in order to determine what assessment changes need to be made in order to maintain 100% assessment in accordance with our 6 -year annual revaluation plan. With the continued increases in the sales price of residential properties, we are finding the average residential level of assessment to be approximately 82%. Not only has the volatile market led to a lower level of assessment, there is also a decrease in uniformity in many neighborhoods. This will require as many as 3,500 of the 6,500 residential parcels to be physically inspected and revalued, the remaining residential properties will be trended based on their individual neighborhood to reach 100%. Last year a total of 1,366 residential parcels were physically inspected and revalued, with the remaining being trended.

The shift of tax burden from the commercial to the residential properties was somewhat softened last year by some assessment increases to the commercial sector. Most of those increases were based on increases to rents and decreases to interest rates. Although analysis on the commercial sector is not complete there currently does not appear to be increases in value at the same level as the residential sector.

We do have a number of large commercial properties coming onto the tax rolls for the first time including two Walgreens, Starwood Apartments, Holiday Inn Express, Ruby Tuesday's etc. However, due to tax exemptions available to new businesses, it may be some time before we see increases to the total taxable value attributable to this growth.

Exemptions - 1,240 exemption renewal forms have been mailed and the department is currently processing those that have been received back.

CITIBUS:

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – Citibus will have a dedication ceremony for the Transit Facility on October 3, 2006 at 11:45. Representatives from NYS DOT in Albany will be in attendance, as well as other transit operators in New York State.

CITY CLERK:

International Institute of Municipal Clerks' Annual Conference - City Clerk Donna M. Dutton attended the IIMC's annual conference in Anaheim, California during the week of May 14th and was presented with a Special Award of Merit by the IIMC for her work as historian for the organization. Clerks in attendance numbered over 1200 and were from 15 different countries.

Training and Certification - Everyone in the Clerk's office has completed the necessary FEMA courses that were offered on line, and Mrs. Dutton has completed ICS 300. Mrs. Lewis recently received her Notary appointment. This means that everyone on the Clerk's staff is a Notary.

Community Presentations - The City Clerk Office staff was invited to the Italian-American Club dinner on June 28th and presented a program outlining the duties of the both the City Clerk's Office and the Historian's Room. In addition, the program highlighted citizen concerns of the past and how they relate to today's concerns.

Debit Card Payments – The Clerk's Office recently added a feature which allows customers to use debit cards to pay for certificates and licenses. Since 1990, the office has offered customers the ability to pay for certificates and licenses with credit cards. In each case, there is a small fee associated with the service through the Vital Check Network.

CIVIL SERVICE:

GI Bill – Elizabeth Morris is currently working on having the City's Police and Fire Academies become approved facilities and programs by the VA so that eligible military veterans can be paid benefits under the GI Bill while attending the academy and during their probationary period. Mrs. Morris will be meeting with a representative from the New York State Office of Veterans Affairs in September to get the ball rolling. For example, an eligible Veteran in New York City can receive \$1,034/month while in the Academy and \$878.90 per month for the six month period following the academy and \$465.30 per month during the remaining six months. Select Reservists may also be eligible for GI Bill benefits. We are hopeful to have gained approval by the time we receive the results of the City Police Officer exam that will be given on December 2, 2006

DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC WORKS:

Fall Drop Off – This year's fall drop off is scheduled for October 28th at the Fairgrounds Arena Parking Lot. A flyer for this event is attached.

State Place Reconstruction - Work on this reconstruction project is continuing. Storm and sanitary sewer systems have been constructed and a Roads crew has begun to box out the street for construction. Concrete curbing is expected to be poured the first week of September.



Street Paving- The street paving schedule is well underway with crews having completed the shim and overlay of East Lynde and Tilden Streets along with providing an overlay of Factory Street and the on-ramp to Huntington Street. The Tilden Street project also included the addition of 2,100 feet of pin-on curbing. Ohio Street project is currently under way having received a shim course. Sewer crews are currently at work resetting structure frames while the concrete crew is pouring approximately 4,000 feet of pin-on curbing. Ohio Street will receive a final top course of asphalt once structures are set and curbing is in place. To date crews have placed 5,700 tons and asphalt and poured 135 cubic yards of concrete.



Surfacing Milling and Paving - Franklin and North Indiana Streets milling and paving have been completed. This work completes the milling and paving portion of this year's paving schedule.

Heat Planing and Chip Coat - Court and Coffeen Streets have been heat planed along



with Whitewater Way. A train of equipment performed the heat planning operation, which heat the existing pavement to about 1” of depth, milled and scarified the hot asphalt, then added oils and additional asphalt as required. Recycled materials were then remixed, reprofiled and compacted in a continuous operation. Structure frames on Court and Coffeen Streets have been reset and the final wear course application is complete. Several parking layouts for Court Street were developed in response to concerns from downtown business owners. A final design has been completed. The final wear course for Whitewater Way has already been completed.



North Side Trunk Sewer ROW, Leray Street- In an effort to provide better access for maintenance activities, crews have begun to clear and grub this sewer right-of-way.



Fiber Optic Line - City’s Electric Department is trenching out and laying the new fiber optic line on Washington Street as the first phase of this years’ fiber installation project.

Plow Shed Repair – Repairs to the plow shed have begun. The shed has been cleaned, electrical gutted, and all structural steel has been painted. Replacement building panels and roofing have been ordered for a mid-September replacement start-up and a contract for the sprinkler system has been awarded. The Water Department will install the sprinkler main.



Snow Plow Repairs - All the plows involved in the April 2, 2006 fire have been cleaned and de-odorized to remove the smoke smell. Any equipment that was damaged is being scheduled for repair. All repairs will be completed by October 1st. The replacement plow is scheduled for mid-October delivery.

New Vehicle Deliveries - August 15, 2006 the new single axle dump truck sander (1-97) was delivered. In late August, a new four wheel drive pickup (1-26) was delivered and a new pickup (1-28) with utility tool body is expected shortly after Labor Day.



DPW Stand-by Generator - The new 230-kw/3-phase diesel generator has been installed and is ready for operation. The existing 60-kw/3-phase diesel generator will be relocated to Thompson Park.



Veteran's Memorial Walk Clearing- Clearing and grubbing was completed in order to provide access to proposed stairway entrance from the J.B. Wise parking lot.

Pavement Management - Photometric survey and road surface distress/condition evaluations for all 100+ miles of the City's streets have been completed. The study collected detailed assessment data on Linear Infrastructure, Intersection Infrastructure, and Pavement Distress Inventory. This data will be integrated with the Department's CarteGraph Management System this fall allowing the Department to immediately begin to analyze existing pavement conditions according to Federal Highway standards.

CarteGraph Management System - The Department has begun to use the WorkDirector function of the CarteGraph system to take requests for work, create work orders and track daily time. Labor, Equipment and Materials are being linked to work orders and work order reports are being generated.

NIMS Training - DPW Crews are working at completing the emergency management training program. Training was held at the beginning of August for the ICS100 course and again at the end of August for the ICS700 course. DPW is currently just over 50% complete with the training and now have individuals certified in each the 100, 200, 300, 400, 700 and 800 courses. DPW is on schedule to meet our mid-September deadline.

DOWNTOWN:

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) – Ms. Hoffman is in discussion with Behan Planning and the Department of State about required changes to our zoning. She is working with the Planning Department to draft changes to the zoning for approval.

2005 EPF Grant – The City was successful in receiving a \$500,000 grant for our 2005 EPF application. This will cover the expenses of improving access at the Route 3 wave and Hole Brothers, as well as the reconstruction of JB Wise parking lot.

Kayak Event – Ms. Hoffman worked with Blackwater Development and City departments to coordinate assistance for annual kayak event. Event took place from September 8-10, 2006. Broadcasts of the event can be seen on Outdoor Life Network on October 21st at 2:00 p.m.; October 25th at 2:00 a.m.; and October 26th at 3:00 p.m.

Downtown Banner Program – Working with DBA to implement a new banner program for Downtown that will be implemented with the completion of the Public Square Streetscape Project.

North Shore Access – Ms. Hoffman looked at unused bridge in Croghan with City Engineer Kurt Hauk. We are currently awaiting preliminary design plans from GYMO and Recreation Engineering and Planning.

Center for Community Studies – We are working with Denise Young to prepare for Building and Business Inventory to take place in the fall of 2006.

Grants – The City has received a \$2,000 grant from Jefferson County Steps to a Healthier NY which will provide funding for guided walking tours of historic areas in the downtown area during the summer of 2007.

The Black River Fund controlled by Erie Boulevard Hydropower has made a \$12,000 award to the City in support of the design and construction of Black River access and tourism amenities.

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.

Progression of the project is dependent on the ability these National Grid and Verizon crews to relocate utilities in advance of the construction work. The current critical path for this is two sections of a Verizon main duct bank. The first is located between N. Hamilton St. and High Street and is projected to be cleared by 1 Oct. 2006. The second

is located from High St. to Public Square and is projected by Verizon to be cleared by 1 March 2007.

Sanitary sewer mainline and laterals are complete east of High St. Storm sewer mainline work: progressing from Rutland St. to High St. Road Reconstruction work is currently underway from Eastern Blvd. to California Ave. Paving started 6 Sep 06. Substantial completion of this project is scheduled for the Fall 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 and construction started in May 2006. Areas designated for 2-hour parking and expanded Handicap Parking in the J.B. Wise Lot were added to assist businesses during the course of construction. Water main work is complete along the east, south and west side of the Square. Work continues along the north side. Lateral work is also underway. Vault infill work is progressing and projected to be complete in Oct 06.

Storm sewer and street reconstruction work is delayed until utility relocations can be completed by Verizon and National Grid. Verizon: Relocation work for the main duct along the south side will start in Sep 06, the work will take several months and Verizon is developing a schedule. 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.

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 and a public hearing was conducted on June 5, 2006. There were 10 properties from the previous assessment district that required "warranty" work. Work started in July 06 and is progressing along E. Hoard Street.

Anthony Street From 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. Received SHPO approval for Anthony St. curb work. Engineering Department is currently developing the scope with the following options: Full reconstruction with a change order to Villager Construction through the Public Square contract; Villager performs the curb work within the current project limits, DPW constructs to gravel grade, complete the work as part of the scope of the J.B. Wise project; include design and construction as part of the scope of the J.B. Wise project.

DEC approval will be required for a temporary combined sewer tie-in if the work is completed before the J.B. Wise reconstruction.

Connector Road From Arsenal Street To Coffeen Street - Topographic and boundary survey work has been completed 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. The preliminary design will continue to be progressed by the Engineering Department with the detailed design work being performed by a consultant. An RFP will be developed in November for consultant selection.

WWTP Roof Replacement - Bid awarded to Welch Construction with a bid of \$96,867. Construction is scheduled to start in Sep 06.

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 - Developing preliminary design and initial site plan for review by stakeholders prior to starting detailed design. Prepared an order of magnitude estimate for the grant application.

N. Michigan - Project survey is complete. Preliminary design scheduled to start Oct 06.

Ten Eyck Ph-I & II - Project survey is complete. Preliminary design was started in May 06. Detailed design is projected to be complete in winter 06. Coordination w/ utilities along the project is required and possible relocations may delay the project start until they are complete.

Hydro Plant - A FERC inspection was conducted on 2 Aug 06. No major issues arose from the inspection. We are awaiting receipt of the inspection packet.

DPW Project Support (calendar year to date)

The Engineering staff assisted in the project survey and/or construction layout to enable construction by DPW crews for the following projects: Multi purpose Field, Jefferson Street Playground, Ohio St., and Tilden St.

DPW facility parking lot: Ordered geotechnical services for the site to assist in the design. Assisted w/ site survey. Grading plan to be developed in Sep 06.

Provided survey and design support for storm drainage improvements along Huntington St. prior to paving work.

Developed the project scope using County bids to execute the Washington Street milling and paving project.

NYSDOT Arsenal Street Project Support - Six meetings were held with the NYSDOT from March 2006 to the present to assist the project progression. The drainage easement across City property on Haney St. has been completed. Provided assistance to the NYSDOT Real Estate Division in conjunction with Slye & Burrows to develop the acquisition map and property transfer regarding the Vision Development private sewer across the project area.

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. Speed counts were taken 16-23 May 2006. Findings and recommendations were presented to the Superintendent of Schools on 28 June 06.

CSO Long Term Control Plan- Met with the DEC on 18 May 2006 to restart the CSO LTCP process. Anticipate DEC approval of the plan in late summer/early fall 2006. Developed an RFP for engineering services to perform the characterization and modeling of the initial drainage basins. Proposals due 19 Sep 06.

Storm/Sanitary System Study - Stearns and Wheler was retained in Mar 06 to conduct storm water and sanitary sewer capacity investigations of four areas in the City with planned or proposed development. The draft study was submitted in June 06, and comments were forwarded for revision. The final report is scheduled to be published in Sep 06.

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, and Starwood. Development with capacity under review: Liberty, Columbia Development, Black River Dev., Dorr Farm, and Pleasant Acres.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Training Exercises - On July 20th the City of Watertown Fire and Police Departments actively participated in a highly successful joint training exercise along with the U.S. Postal Service, the Watertown Postal Center, Jefferson County Emergency Management and a variety of other County, State and Federal agencies. This training exercise was the culmination of over two (2) years of pre-planning and involved the simulation of the biological detection system activation at the Watertown Postal Facility and response of emergency and support agencies to mitigate the situation encountered. This training exercise meets 2006 NIMS requirements for an interagency drill.

The Department's Swift Water Rescue Team on August 8th participated in a joint hands-on Black River Water Rescue exercise with the Jefferson County Star Team and a New York State Police helicopter. The training scenarios included the actual extrication of personnel from the Black River by the State Police helicopter assisted by rescuers in the river in boats. This was a highly successful opportunity for rescuers to hone their river rescue skills.

Rescue Truck - During much of July, the Department's rescue truck was out of service for continuing repairs. It was sent by American LaFrance to R.D. Murray, in Hamburg, NY, a subsidiary of American LaFrance for repair of noted deficiencies since the 2005 total refurbishment. A loaner vehicle was provided however it was found to be completely inadequate as it had severe electrical problems. Since its return to the Department in early August the following problems have arisen with the rescue truck; replace water pump, replace fuel pump, trouble getting the automatic transmission to engage, and experiencing problems with warning light not operating.

The Department and City have requested a meeting with American LaFrance Corporate Headquarters to resolve the issues with this vehicle and we are in the process of scheduling a meeting.

Knox Box System - The Department has initiated its phase-out of our X-Card system to be replaced by the implementation of the Knox Box System. Currently, the following facilities within the City have been outfitted with the Knox Box System: Watertown Housing Authority Residential Facilities; City of Watertown Facilities, City Hall, Library, Fire Stations; Jefferson Community College; Ponderosa; Walgreen Pharmacy and First Baptist Church.

Personnel - Captain David Lachenauer recently completed an advanced hazardous materials training course at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg MD.

The Department recently promoted two individuals to the position of Fire Captain. Fire Fighter Christopher Hayman and Fire Fighter James Holland were promoted to fill two vacant Captain positions.

Grant Award - The Department has been awarded another grant of 200 free smoke alarms which will be provided by the New York State Department of Public Health for free distribution within the greater Watertown and Jefferson/Lewis/St. Lawrence County region.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

Infrastructure – With the help of the City Electric department, conduit is being placed on Washington Street as the first phase of this year's fiber installation project.

Internet Connections - The City's internet connection has been moved to a new circuit and additional circuits are being installed between sites.

Software Implementation - The City's spam protection software has been upgraded resulting in a fewer false positives and reduced management overhead. The Engineering Department is now using the Hansen system for Sidewalk permits. The Codes Department is completing entry of historical complaint cases and permits into the Hansen system. WebQA has been chosen to develop an Internet/Intranet system to connect to Public Works CarteGraph Asset and Work Order Management System. Selection of a vendor for the Real Property Tax Administration Technology Improvement Grant Program (RPTATIP) is in its final phase.

Personnel - Interviews for the new IT Staff position are being conducted.

PLANNING:

Downtown Watertown Streetscape Enhancement Project - Phase V – On June 30, 2006 an application was filed with the New York State Department of Transportation under the Transportation Enhancements Program for this project. If funded, the grant will provide for streetscape enhancements along Arsenal Street, Court Street and Franklin Street as well as improvements to Lachenauer Plaza. The grant will provide \$2,000,000 of the total project cost of \$2,500,000. Announcements are anticipated in late October.

Black River Parks Project (BRPP) – A contract for design services was approved in July for this project with Environmental Design and Research, P.C. (EDR). EDR has started working on conceptual designs for improvements at the Abe Cooper site, the Veterans Memorial Riverwalk, Hole Brothers on Newell Street and at the Fairgrounds. The conceptual designs will be refined and presented to the public sometime this fall. The project is funded by a grant administered by the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Street Tree Program – The summer tree watering and maintenance program concluded in late August. The program was staffed by one college student hired by the City and one employee hired through Jefferson County's Summer Youth Employment Program. Between May and August, 150 trees planted last spring were watered weekly while other recently planted trees were watered on a rotating basis. In addition, the crew re-mulched over 1,700 street trees, beautifying neighborhoods and protecting trees. Over the last two months, Staff also conducted hazard tree evaluations on 12 trees located throughout the City.

National Grid Tree Grant – A grant application was recently submitted to National Grid under their "10,000 Trees and Growing" grant program. The program reimburses municipalities \$50 for every utility compatible tree (small maturing) planted underneath power lines. The City submitted 68 trees for reimbursement. If fully funded, National Grid will provide the City with \$3,400 that offsets our tree purchase costs for the year.

Waterworks Park – Design plans for the extension of Waterworks Park are nearly complete and it is anticipated that the project will be let for bid in September with construction occurring thereafter. The project will provide a 1,100’ extension of the Waterworks Park trail along land that the City owns located to the west. Also included in the project will be site amenities, landscaping and signage.

SIGN PROJECTS :



City Hall Sign Project - This project includes modifications to the City Hall sign, new flagpoles and bases, repair of existing concrete sidewalk, and handicapped access ramps. Existing flagpoles have been removed and new flagpoles bases are installed. Concrete work to the sign and the areas of sidewalk around the sign are now complete. Marble salvaged from the old sign has been installed and lettering on the sign should be completed within the next two weeks. Upon completion of the

sign work, city crews will be in to install the new flagpoles and replace existing sidewalk in front of City Hall along with the handicapped access ramp located on the corner of Sterling and Washington Streets.

Welcome to Watertown Sign – The construction of the welcome sign located at the intersection of Pearl Street and Main Street East has been substantially completed. The stone columns were constructed by a local mason and the sign was designed and built by a local sign company. The concrete footings and electrical conduit work has been completed by the City Electric Department. Once National Grid establishes electrical service to the site, the sign will be illuminated. The site has been topsoiled and seeded by the DPW Buildings and Grounds crew and formal landscaping is planned for the spring of 2007.

