

City

August 2005

Manager's

Update

Report

## **Engineering:**

**Pearl Street Bridge Project** - Work on the Pearl Street Bridge was completed in June 2005. The original contract amount was \$1,889,527.40 and the final contract amount was \$2,065,013.44 after change orders.

**State Street Reconstruction Project** - Bids were opened on May 25, 2005 and the City Council awarded a contract in the amount of \$9,669,669. to Villager Construction, Inc. of Fairport, New York at the June 20, 2005 Council meeting. Construction began on 7/5/05, with the clearing of trees, which has now been substantially completed. Water main work began near Eastern Blvd. and the main line has been installed to Indiana Avenue. Water main and service installations are scheduled for completion to Public Square by November 25, 2005. Niagara Mohawk and Verizon crews are relocating their utilities ahead of the contractor. Sanitary and storm sewer work will commence in April of 2006. Completion of this project is scheduled for the fall of 2006.

**Transit Bus/DPW Maintenance Facilities** - Transit Bus Garage - CitiBus took occupancy of this facility early in June of 2005. The contractors still have some minor punch list items to complete in this building. Maintenance Garage and Bus Wash Building The department is continuing to address issues that have arisen since the flooding of this building in early June. A specialist has been enlisted to remove the mold and the general contractor will then replace the sheetrock and ceiling tiles under a change order to the original contract. Reimbursement for this work will be from insurance claims against the culpable parties' insurance carriers. The specialist's personnel started the remedial work on Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Main Avenue Reconstruction** - A contract in the amount of \$554,554. was awarded to Luck Bros., Inc. of Plattsburgh on June 6, 2005. The contractor mobilized on July 11, 2005 and work is progressing well. The street has been closed to all but local traffic. The contractor is working with the businesses on the street to maintain ingress and egress and minimize inconvenience. Storm sewer work is nearly completed, over 800 l.f. of curbing has been placed, and most of the road area has been boxed out. This work is scheduled for completion on or about October 7, 2005

**Flower Memorial Library Renovations** - The City Council awarded the contracts for the Library renovations on August 1, 2005. Work is scheduled to begin on September 9, 2005 and be completed by February 15, 2006. A second phase, covering restoration work will be bid in the spring.

**Green Street** - Work on removal of the asphalt and repairs to catch basins began the week of August 8<sup>th</sup>. Pin on curbs will be installed, and then the asphalt overlay and top soil will be placed. This work is scheduled to be completed before school starts.

**Sidewalk Program** - Work on the final properties is expected to be completed by the middle to the end of September. Washington Street properties are being completed this week and there are a few properties in the project area that we have to go back on, as the owners had originally stated that they would do them themselves or hire a contractor, and the work was not done. A survey of potential areas for next year's program has been completed and will be reviewed by staff. Mike Burgess, the sidewalk project coordinator resigned effective August 15th to take a position with the NYSDOT.

**Arsenal Street Parking Lot Entrance Reconfiguration** – Final design work is 99% complete on the reconfiguration of the Arsenal parking lot entrance at the intersection of Sherman Street and Arsenal Street. This project will provide a new entrance to the North Country Children's Clinic in the former Kriff's Furniture building, while making it easier to define the area of the lot that is available only to Stream employees. At the same time, the current design will allow for 12 parking spaces for use by the general public on the west side of the existing parking lot. The project design also calls for replacement of the traffic signal at the Sherman Street and Arsenal Street intersection. Work on this project is expected to begin after Labor Day and be substantially completed in October.

**Connector Road From Public Square To J.B. Wise Parking Lot** - The Engineering Department has made a preliminary survey and begun initial design/layout work on the proposed connector road from Public Square to the J.B. Wise parking lot. A final proposal for design and an estimate of costs should be completed by the end of September. Depending on the final design, property acquisitions may need to take place in order to accommodate this new entrance road.

## **Police:**

**Police Academy** – On July 29<sup>th</sup> the four new Police Officers completed the classroom phase of their training and began the field training phase that provides actual street experience with members of the department who serve as Field Training Officers. The new City Police Officers are expected to be street ready around October 10, 2005.

**National Night Out** – The National Night Out event was held on Tuesday, August 2, 2005. The Watertown Police Department participated with a K-9 demonstration held at Truscott Terrace.

**Promotion** – On August 1, 2005, Detective Charles Donoghue was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and assumed duties on the road patrol. Sgt. Donohue has been a member of the Watertown Police Department since February 1, 1993.

## **Code Enforcement:**

**Statistics** - There have been about 167 building project permits issued in the last 3 months at a construction value of \$5,665,802. About 330 complaints in various stages of progress have been received since the beginning of the year. There are about 12 property code issues in legal proceedings ranging from letters issued to owners to Supreme Court action. Other permits issued in the last 3 months are: 30 furnace permits; 16 sign permits; 25 plumbing permits; 18 certificates of occupancy issued.

**Training** - This department has completed 36 of 48 mandatory in-service training hours and all additional code-training requirements have been met since the first of the year.

## **Planning/Downtown Development:**

**CDBG/HOME Award** – On August 18, 2005, Governor George Pataki announced several grant awards for housing programs in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties. Among the awards were the City's 2005 CDBG grant for \$400,000 and Neighbors of Watertown's 2005 HOME grant for \$600,000. Both of these grants will be used to fund a city-wide homeowner/rehabilitation program for low and moderate income first-time homebuyers. Other homebuyer programs that the City has had (including the 2005 North Country HOME Consortium grant) were designed for homes that were in "move-in" condition and needed little or no work after they were purchased. For this year's program Neighbors of Watertown will purchase the homes and invest \$25,000 – 30,000 in necessary improvements before selling to an eligible buyer. Up to \$20,000 in CDBG funds will be available to each homebuyer as a low interest loan. HOME financing, up to \$40,000, will be available as a deferred payment loan that will not be repaid if the owner occupies the property as a principle residence for 15 years. The Development Authority of the North Country and the Watertown Local Development Corporation will provide interest free construction financing like we do for the NDC Program. We estimate that 17 houses will go through this program. All of the housing grant applications that were prepared this year by teaming up with Avalon Associates and Neighbors of Watertown have been funded. The three applications brought in \$1,230,000 into the City for housing programs.

**Training** - Christine Hoffman attended the National Trust For Historic Preservation's Main Street conference in Baltimore, Maryland to learn about Downtowns that have succeeded in turning themselves around by adhering to the Main Street's Four Point Approach. While at the conference, Christine toured neighborhoods and markets in Baltimore and attended training sessions on various topics, including one on Entrepreneur Centers. Last week, Christine also attended a NYS Economic Development Council workshop that focused on marketing and attraction of businesses to the community. Speakers focused on new technology like Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the need to unlink business incentives with job creation. This seminar is the second in a series of nine that will be held.

**Walkable Communities** – In concert with Penny McGrath, who heads the North Country Steps Forward Program for the Jefferson County Department of Public Health, we've decided to combine efforts to design/create a walking tour brochure for the Downtown area. This new brochure will be available for the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Public Square and will feature both a long and short historic walking tour in Downtown.

**Downtown Awareness Grant** - Ran a survey in the newspaper and on the City's website asking people how they perceived Downtown and how they wanted it to be in the future. A majority of the respondents found the Downtown to be quiet when they wanted it to be vibrant. Several ideas for attaining vibrancy were discussed, including a mural program. We are currently researching mural programs in other cities and we are also discussing wayfinding signage and new banners.

**200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Public Square/150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the YMCA** – Christine, working in coordination with the YMCA to plan a block party on September 17, 2005 that will celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Public Square and the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the YMCA. The Downtown Business Association, the American Kang Duk Won, Jefferson County Bicentennial Committee, Jefferson County Historical Society, and the North Country Steps Forward are also helping with this event. City Historian, Donna Dutton, wrote a skit for the reenactment of the dedication of Public Square which will take place at 2:00 pm on the day of the event.

**2005 Kayak Event** - This office has been working with Blackwater Development on the 2005 North American Freestyle Kayak Championship to coordinate city assets in support of this event. The Downtown Business Association will be hosting the Opening Ceremonies on August 24<sup>th</sup>, and the competition will take place from August 26<sup>th</sup> through August 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Entrepreneur Center** – Ms. Hoffman has had several meetings and telephone discussions with Eric Constance, Director of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Jefferson Community College (JCC). She has researched other centers both in-state and out-of state and discussed possible locations in and around Downtown.

**Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)** - The LWRP continues to move forward. Behan Planning conducted their second public meeting this summer. They are currently working on proposed zoning changes and revisions to earlier chapters. Camoin Associates is working on the Economic and Market Condition Analysis. They have completed the historic aspects of the analysis and are currently working on the four identified priority areas, to assess economic impacts made by both the public and private sector. These priority areas were identified in part from the familiarization bus tour we took. Recreation Engineering and Planning received plenty of feedback at their public meeting and went back to redraw their diagrams and redo their list of recommendations accordingly. They are planning their second public meeting in either September or October 2005.

**Black River Events Committee** – Christine Hoffman is working with Dave Zembiec from the Tug Hill Commission on the creation of a Black River Events Committee. Dave

was instrumental in getting the Black River designated as a *Blueway* and with that the Town of Martinsburg received a small grant to fund a River Development Plan. Dave's efforts also led to two recent articles about the Black River, "The Black River" appeared in the June 2005 issue of the New York State Conservationist (which featured photographs by Christine Hoffman), and "Building Business Around the Black River" in the June issues of Absolutely Business (which featured quotes from Christine Hoffman).

## **City Comptroller:**

**Personnel** - City Comptroller James Mills has been selected by the Greater Watertown Chamber of Commerce to be a member of the Jefferson Leadership Institute Class of 2006.

## **Public Works:**

**Ice Arena Dehumidification & Air Conditioning System** - This system has been fully commissioned and energized. Some outstanding work associated with this project includes the placement of protective chain link fencing around the external units.

**Fairgrounds Multi-Purpose Field Drainage** - This system is for the most part complete. While we will continue to monitor the drainage in this area, results following the rain events in July and August demonstrated this system's ability to handle the roadway runoff and water collection problems experienced in the past.

**Thompson Park Paving** - The base and binder course for the reconstruction of 930 feet of the Franklin Street entrance was completed in early July just before the Concert in the Park event, allowing us to open up this section of roadway for public use. Our DPW work crews will install the pin on curbing and top asphalt wear course later in the season as they complete street projects and their work schedule permits.

**Dogipot Installation Program** - Ten of these units were installed at the following City maintained facilities: Strauss Memorial Walkway, Waterworks Park, Veterans Memorial Riverwalk, Academy Playground, Thompson Park (3) Kostyk Field, and the Fairgrounds (2). We will monitor the usage of these units to determine their effectiveness and acceptance by the public.

**Sewer Operations** - Cooper Street Outlet Sewer Main Repair - Repair/replacement of approximately 175 feet of the 24-inch diameter sewer main located between Davidson and Thompson Street adjacent to the DPAO building construction site. While unplanned, this work was identified during the camera inspection of this section of sewer main conducted in response to concerns about the impact that the construction project might have due to its footprint in relation to the sewer main location.

**Street Maintenance Operations** - Mill & fill work has been completed on the following streets: West Ten Eyck Street(400 Block), Paddock Street(400 Block) and St. Mary Street(100 Block). Over the summer pin on curbing has been installed on South Massey

Street(200, 300 & 400 Blocks) and West Mullin Street(400 & 500 Blocks). Paving of the Ice Arena parking lot has been completed along with Meade Street(500 & 600 Blocks) and Mohawk Street(500 & 600 Blocks). Upcoming projects include Green Street reconstruction, Stream/Children's Clinic parking lot entrance, and top course paving of those sections of South Massey Street and West Mullin Street that have the pin on curbing. Mill & fill work to be completed includes William Street(100, 200 & 300 Blocks) and Winslow Street(100 Block).

**Airport - Emergency Deer Deprivation** - Following the recent deer strike involving an aircraft taxing off the runway, airport personnel, working closely with DEC, FAA, TSA, as well as with the commercial air carrier and local pilots, an Emergency Deer Deprivation Work Order was initiated on Sunday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this action was to aggressively and systematically comb the overgrowth areas of the secured runway areas to seek out and eliminate the final remnants of the existing deer herd. During the first three days of this program, a total of nine (9) deer were removed. It is our intent to continue the program, until such time as we feel that the entire deer population has been removed. **Emergency Generator**-The switch gear has been delivered and our electric department is starting installation. The actual generator is scheduled to be shipped on Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, with delivery sometime during the following week. We hope to be able to complete the installation and commissioning of this unit by the end of August. **Contaminated Soil Removal** - During the recent Airport Improvement Projects, apron work excavations revealed two points of contamination that required immediate remediation procedures. The affected areas were excavated and the contaminated soils transported to the regional landfill for disposal. The areas were certified clean and the construction contractor has since completed the apron rehabilitation with no further problems or construction impact.

**Winter Operations-** Cargill Ice-Deicing Technology was the successful bidder for the 2005/2006 Road Salt Contract with a delivered price of \$35.05 per ton. By comparison 2004/2005 had a unit cost of \$33.74 and 2003/2004 of \$23.49. We currently have \$120,000 budgeted for road salt, abrasives and de-icers in the 2005/2006 Budget

**Bus** – We have received notification that we can expect delivery of the two new paratransit buses on August 31, 2005.

## **Civil Service:**

**Technical Assistance Review** - The Civil Service Office has recently undergone a Technical Assistance Review conducted by Mary Carli, Personnel Consultant for the Municipal Services Division of the NYS Civil Service Office. The purpose of this review is to assess civil service administration for the City. This review is useful because it presents a good indication of the way programs are being administered. A formal report will be sent to the Civil Service office within the next few weeks and will be presented to the Civil Service Commission at their next meeting.

**Minimum Qualifications Police Department** – Civil Service Commission approved revisions to the minimum qualifications for all job specifications in Police titles. Much

work went into obtaining information from other municipalities to assist in comparing their expectations with ours. A comparison of the old and new minimum qualifications is attached for your review.

**Rules** - Executive Secretary Beth Morris is currently in the process of reviewing and revising the current copy of the Rules of the Commission.

### **City Clerk/City Historian:**

**Customer Service** - With July's deployment of soldiers from Fort Drum, we had a dramatic increase in marriage licenses and wedding ceremonies. Over 600 marriage licenses have been issued and the department has performed almost 300 wedding ceremonies since January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Passport applications and birth certificate requests have increased due to new cross border travel requirements.

**Training** - Deputy Clerk, Amanda Lewis, began her duties on July 25<sup>th</sup> and is being trained on all the front office duties by Deputy Clerk Elyse Frezzo. Due to the number of customers that we assist each day, it has truly been "on the job training".

**Historian's Office** - has supplied information to several "genealogy hunters" We are also assisting a gentleman who is working on a book project on Warren & Wetmore, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural firm that designed Grand Central Terminal as well as designing the Watertown Railroad Terminal along with the architecture firm of Reed & Stem. The Department completed writing a "skit" to be used at the celebration of the rededication of Public Square to be held in September.

As City Historian, Donna Dutton completed another article for the Jefferson Co. Historical Society's Fall Bulletin concerning John Dutton (a very distant relation through marriage) that deserted the British army and joined the Union Army during the Civil War and then wrote a book about his journeys. Charles Shaw, a Croghan resident and avid Civil War historian, was a great help to Mrs. Dutton in this endeavor.

### **City Assessor's Office:**

**Customer Service** - 2005 Final Assessment Roll is now available on the City's website.

**Information Technology** - Assessment GIS reference data has been updated to reflect the conversion to the Nad87 projection standard. This makes our data compatible with and easier to update from other City data sources.

**Training** - Richard Holley, Real Property Tax Appraiser completed a one week class at Cornell on V4 computer valuation.

**Data Collection – Property Sales** - Property sales up to the valuation date of July 1<sup>st</sup> have been processed. Home prices appear to be increasing at the same rate as in the previous 6 months with a slight decrease in the number of sales, however, the number of sales are still greatly above historic numbers. **Commercial Properties** - Commercial data questionnaires were prepared and sent out to all commercial properties in the City. The questionnaires are an effort to obtain rental income, expenses and vacancy rate information. The forms were developed by this office with the intent to make them as easy to complete and understand as possible. **Not For Profits** - Annual Not For Profit exemption renewals (110) have been mailed to determine continuing eligibility

**Annual Reassessment Plan** - Our “Annual Reassessment Plan” document has been completed and submitted to the NYS Office of Real Property Services.

### **Fire Department:**

**Grant Awards** - The City of Watertown Fire Department, in conjunction with the Town of Watertown Fire Department, received notification that Senator James Wright has secured \$65,000 in funding for the purpose of completing the procurement and installation of traffic pre-emption devices on traffic signals in immediate City of Watertown area. This funding, along with funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) “Assistance to Fire Fighters” grant program will allow the City to purchase and install 57 traffic pre-emption devices for signals within the City of Watertown for use by the City and Town fire departments.

The Fire Department was recently notified by the NY State Department of Health that it has scored high enough based upon an application submitted by Captain Todd DeMar, to receive at least 200 free smoke alarms as part of the 2005 NY State Program for the Prevention of Fire Related Injuries. This will allow the Fire Department to provide at least 200 smoke detector free of charge to the community in an effort to reduce fire injuries and death in Watertown.

**Personnel** - The Fire Department is pleased to announce the promotion of Fire Fighter Dennis Gardner to the rank of Fire Captain. Fire Chief Dan Gaumont was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Fire Chiefs’ Safety, Health and Survival Section. This is a new section of International Association of Fire Chiefs intended to improve the safety health and survival of fire service personnel worldwide

### **Information Packets Included:**

Police Department Minimum Qualifications Summary Package, with job descriptions.

Metropolitan Development Authority, *The Essential New York Initiative- Transforming Central Upstate to a Knowledge-Based Economy*. July 2005

Fort Drum 2005-2006 Post Guide & Telephone Directory