

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
June 6, 2022
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith Presiding

Present: Council Member Patrick J. Hickey
Council Member Clifford G. Olney III
Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce
Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero
Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith

Also Present: Kenneth A. Mix, City Manager
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney

City staff present: Michael Lumbis, Kyle Meehan, Michael Delaney, James Mills, Patrick Keenan

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Establishing the “Adopt a Spot” Beautification Program
- Resolution No. 2 - Accepting Proposal for Insurance Broker, Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc.
- Resolution No. 3 - Accepting Proposal for Paratransit Bus Service, Cleveland Funeral Home, Inc.
- Resolution No. 4 - Approving the July 1, 2020-June 30, 2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Watertown Professional Firefighters Association, Local 191
- Resolution No. 5 - Authorizing Supplemental Agreement #2 for the Professional Services for the Public Square Traffic Signal Optimization and Coordination Project, PIN 7807.20, Fisher Associates
- Resolution No. 6 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Ryan Henry-Wilkinson
- Resolution No. 7 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Patricia Wetterhahn
- Resolution No. 8 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Michelle Appleby
- Resolution No. 9 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Bradford C. Riendeau
- Resolution No. 10 - Approving the Watertown Local Development Corporation’s Loan to Convalt Energy Inc.
- Resolution No. 11 - Accepting Bid for REBID Watertown Streetscape Design Improvements, CCI Companies, Inc
- Resolution No. 12 - Re-Adoption of Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25 Capital Budget – DRI Streetscape Project
- Resolution No. 13 - Re-Adoption of Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25 Capital Budget – C.C.I.P Stormwater Improvements
- Resolution No. 14 - Accepting Bid for Thompson Park Brush Clearing Project, B&R Tree Experts, LLC
- Resolution No. 15 - Accepting Proposal of Bowers & Company CPAs, PLLC, For Auditing Services
- Resolution No. 16 - Approving Salary Structure and Annual Pay Increase for Watertown Housing Authority Employees
- Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – April 2022
- Sales Tax Revenue – April 2022

- **NYSDEC Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Annual Report Complete Reports on file in the office of the City Clerk**

Meeting opened with a moment of silence and Mayor Smith asked that it be in remembrance of Police Chief Charles Donoghue's mother, Rae Donoghue and Human Resource Manager Matthew Roy's father David Roy.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of May 16, 2022, budget session of May 17, 2022, budget session of May 23, 2022, budget session of May 24, 2022, and budget session of May 31, 2022, was dispensed and accepted as written by motion of Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero, seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

COMMUNICATIONS

A notice of claim was received from Watertown Golf Club Incorporated regarding the February 22, 2022 decision to alter the parking arrangement in Thompson Park.

A notice of claim was received from Sandra Umstead, 27707 County Rt 192, Redwood, seeking reimbursement for damages occurring during a fall on the sidewalk adjacent to the parking lot at 175 Arsenal Street on April 18, 2022.

Above claims have been referred to the Board of Audit.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Patricia Whalen, 11 Public Square, thanked the Police for dealing with cars that speed on Public Square, but said more needs to be done. She also stated there still needs to be a traffic light at the intersection of Arcade and Arsenal Streets, a covered bus stop by the Walker Cancer Treatment Center and additional staffing in the Police and Fire Departments.

Jason Traynor, 424 Arsenal Street, said he is against Council Member Olney's proposal to increase Council's salary and asked how the City is going to afford everything when the extra funding is gone. He also said he is against the resolution approving an increase to Watertown Housing Authority's salaries and spoke of issues he has had with the Watertown Housing Authority in the past. Lastly, he asked the Council to invest more into roads and asked if there is a 10-year plan.

Frank Battista, 201 Palmer Street, spoke of the tree planting that he has done along the Wealtha Avenue frontage of his property. He asked if the City could repair the margins in front of VL 16 and 243 Wealtha Avenue and he offered to plant trees in this location as well. In regard to ARPA spending, he said he feels the money will run out so he would rather see the City create new positions in small increments and not all at once.

Mary Ellen Blevins, 719 Washington Street, talked about Council overspending, mentioning specifically the third flag pole, the increase in the number of employees and the proposed raise to

Council's salary. She said she feels that Council Member Olney does not represent everyone because he votes on things that do not affect him because he does not pay taxes.

Scott Gilbert, 7260 Sears Pond Road, Lowville, informed Council that he is a vendor at the Farmer's Market and that City staff is now performing inspections on mobile units. He indicated that food trucks are regulated by the New York State Department of Health and/or New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and asked Planning and Zoning staff to develop a system that works alongside the NYS agencies for the regulations to be all the same.

Jonathan Phillips, 735 Mill Street, said the Police Department needs to monitor Public Square more and needs more support from Council. He stated that the City bus system needs to extend their hours into the evening.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 1 - Establishing the "Adopt a Spot" Beautification Program

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City of Watertown is filled with residents seeking to make a difference in their community, and

WHEREAS, in addition, the City of Watertown is also home to dozens of parks, medians, islands and other public spaces that if tended to regularly, would help to enhance the beauty of our community, and

WHEREAS, the "Adopt-A-Spot" program would encourage residents, businesses, community groups and other organizations to adopt one of the aforementioned public spaces from a list of available locations, and

WHEREAS, in doing so, the adopter would see that the site remains free from trash and debris, and if appropriate, take other measures that would enhance its appearance, such as flower planting, mulching and other opportunities for beautification, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the "Adopt-A-Spot" program would accomplish two important goals—getting more people involved in community volunteerism and enhancing the overall appearance of our City, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown supports the establishment of the "Adopt-A-Spot" program and City Manager Kenneth A. Mix is hereby authorized to direct staff finalize its guidelines, as well as provide a way for those interested to register and participate.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Pierce thanked staff for putting this program together and said there has been a lot of interest from the community.

Council Member Olney agreed this is a good idea and thanked staff as well.

Mayor Smith suggested the Arsenal Street Cemetery be added to the list of locations available to adopt.

Motion was made by Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith to amend the draft Adopt-A-Spot Program to add the Arsenal Street Cemetery to the list of locations. Motion was seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 2 - Accepting Proposal for Insurance Broker, Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City Purchasing Department has advertised and received sealed proposals for an Insurance Broker for the City of Watertown's Property, Automobile, Equipment, and Fidelity Bond Insurance, New York, as per City specifications, and

WHEREAS invitations to provide a proposal were issued to ten (10) prospective brokers and one (1) response was submitted to the Purchasing Department, and

WHEREAS City Purchasing Manager Dale Morrow reviewed the proposals received with the City Comptroller Jim Mills, and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the proposal submitted by Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown accepts the proposal of Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to sign all contracts associated with implementing the award to Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 3 - Accepting Proposal for Paratransit Bus Service, Cleveland Funeral Home, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City of Watertown, as a public entity operating a fixed route transit system, is required by the Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations at 49 C.F.R. Section 37.121(a), to provide Para Transit or other special service to individuals with disabilities that is comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown Purchasing Department has prepared Request for Proposals to provide Para Transit Services in the City of Watertown, and

WHEREAS proposals were sent to eight (8) area service providers, with one (1) proposal submitted to the Purchasing Department, and

WHEREAS on Monday, May 2, 2022, at 11:00 a.m., the proposal received was opened, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown Purchasing Department and the Public Works Department have evaluated the proposals submitted independently and based on a written evaluation process ranked Cleveland Funeral Home, Inc. as the most qualified proposer, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown Purchasing Department and the Citibus Department have recommended that the City Council accept the proposal as submitted by Cleveland Funeral Home, Inc. in the amount of \$750,000 on a lump sum format to provide Para Transit services in the City for a three (3) year period from July 01, 2022, through June 30, 2025, and

WHEREAS after the three-year period, the City Manager may extend the contract for up to two (2) additional years based on acceptable performance with the annual cost of \$250,000 per year being increased each year by an amount not to exceed 6%,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the proposal of Cleveland Funeral Home, Inc. in the amount of \$750,000 on a lump sum format to provide Paratransit services for the City from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Manager Kenneth A. Mix is hereby authorized and directed to execute this contract on behalf of the City of Watertown, and any other certifications or documents required to implement the proposal and administer the program.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 4 - Approving the July 1, 2020-June 30, 2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Watertown Professional Firefighters Association, Local 191

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the 2016-2020 Employment Contract between the City of Watertown and the Watertown Professional Firefighters' Association expired on June 30, 2020, and

WHEREAS the parties agreed to a Tentative Agreement covering the two-year time period of July 1, 2020 thru June 30, 2022, which Tentative Agreement was approved by the City Council on May 2, 2022, and

WHEREAS the parties have now incorporated the terms of the Tentative Agreement into the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the parties covering the period from July 1, 2020 thru June 30, 2022,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022, between the City of Watertown and the Watertown Professional Firefighters Association, Local 191, is hereby approved and that the City Mayor, Hon. Jeffrey M. Smith, shall sign the same on behalf of the City.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea except Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith voting nay.

Resolution No. 5 - Authorizing Supplemental Agreement #2 for the Professional Services for the Public Square Traffic Signal Optimization and Coordination Project, PIN 7807.20, Fisher Associates

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City of Watertown is planning to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and improve access to the businesses around Public Square, and

WHEREAS on January 21, 2020, City Council approved a Professional Services Agreement with Fisher Associates for the amount of \$135,000 for the design of the Public Square Traffic Signal Optimization and Coordination Project, and

WHEREAS on October 4, 2021, City Council approved a Professional Services Supplemental Agreement #1 with Fisher Associates for the amount of \$156,000 for the construction inspection and administration, and

WHEREAS at the November 15, 2021, City Council approved structural design services for a traffic signal at the intersection of Arsenal St. and Arcade St. with Barton & Loguidice, and

WHEREAS in support of this project, the City Engineering Department has negotiated a Professional Services Agreement with Fisher Associates for the modification to the traffic signal timing software of the surrounding intersections signals to coordinate the Arcade Street signal in the amount of \$6,500,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the Professional Services Supplemental Agreement #2 in the amount of \$6,500 between the City of Watertown and Fisher Associates, a copy of which is attached and made a part of this resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council hereby authorizes the City of Watertown to appropriate funds from CHIPs to pay the cost for the modification to the traffic signal timing software of the surrounding intersections signals to coordinate the Arcade Street signal, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 6 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Ryan Henry-Wilkinson

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

RESOLVED that the following individual is appointed to the Transportation Commission for the remainder of a three-year term, such term expiring on April 1, 2025:

Ryan Henry-Wilkinson
520 Holcomb Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 7 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Patricia Wetterhahn

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

RESOLVED that the following individual is appointed to the Transportation Commission for the remainder of a three-year term, such term expiring on April 1, 2024:

Patricia Wetterhahn
13188 County Route 5
Clayton, NY 13624

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 8 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Michelle Appleby

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

RESOLVED that the following individual is appointed to the Transportation Commission for the remainder of a three-year term, such term expiring on April 1, 2024:

Michelle Appleby
205 N. Orchard Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 9 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission – Bradford C. Riendeau

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

RESOLVED that the following individual is appointed to the Transportation Commission for the remainder of a three-year term, such term expiring on April 1, 2023:

Bradford C. Riendeau
637 Academy Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 10 - Approving the Watertown Local Development Corporation's Loan to Convalt Energy Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS Convalt Energy Inc. has made a loan request to the Watertown Local Development Corporation (WLDC) in the amount of \$300,000 to help finance a proposed solar panel manufacturing facility in the Airport Business Park located adjacent to the Watertown International Airport, and

WHEREAS the WLDC Board of Directors approved the loan request at their April 28, 2022, meeting, and

WHEREAS the proposed project consists of the construction of a 315,000 square foot solar panel manufacturing facility that will supply solar panels for renewable energy projects throughout the world and will create 382 full time jobs over the next three years, and

WHEREAS the WLDC's lending policy requires for any projects located outside of the City of Watertown, that the WLDC request approval of the loan from the City Council of the City of Watertown, and

WHEREAS the City Council has determined that the proposed project will create jobs and reduce unemployment in the region and will have a substantial positive economic impact on the economic welfare and prosperity of the City and its inhabitants,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the loan request from Convalt Energy Inc. submitted to and approved by the Watertown Local Development Corporation (WLDC) Board of Directors on April 28, 2022, in the amount of \$300,000 to help finance a proposed solar panel manufacturing facility in the Airport Business Park.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Smith explained that Convalt plans to invest \$44 million and create 382 jobs, and he provided a summary of the project, which will be a substantial investment in the community.

Donald Rutherford, CEO of Watertown Local Development Corporation (WLDC), provided the background on the purpose of the WLDC and pointed out that, if a loan is given to a company located outside of the City limits, then Council must give authorization by basing their decision on the economic impact to the City. Noting the number of jobs this company will create in the Watertown area, he said this project will be a game changer for the area and a good investment.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 11 - Accepting Bid for REBID Watertown Streetscape Design Improvements, CCI Companies, Inc

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City Purchasing Department has advertised and received sealed bids for the REBID Watertown Streetscape Design Improvements in Watertown, New York, as per City specifications, and

WHEREAS bid invitations were also issued to qualified bidders with two (2) sealed bids submitted to the Purchasing Department, and

WHEREAS on Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 2:00 p.m., the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS City Purchasing Manager Dale Morrow reviewed the bids received with the Planning Department, and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the bid submitted by CCI Companies, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown accepts the bid of CCI Companies, Inc. in the amount of \$3,647,704.75, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to sign all contracts associated with implementing the award to CCI Companies, Inc.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Smith questioned the increase in the cost of the engineering and inspection services.

Mr. Mix explained that it has gone up because the project has been split over two years, so there is more cost associated with that. In regard to the design overrun, he said the engineering firm put in a request for that amount and the City does not agree with it all but put in the worst-case-scenario cost and will have discussions about reducing it.

Council Member Olney said that he was told there was lack of clarity as to what the scope of the bid was because it might include the Niagara Mohawk vaults in front some of the buildings.

Mr. Mix said he thinks that with the utilities and where they are located, the City runs into that problem with projects on Public Square.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 12 - Re-Adoption of Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25 Capital Budget – DRI Streetscape Project

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS on June 1, 2020 the City Council adopted the Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25 Capital Budget, and

WHEREAS the Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25 Capital Budget included the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Streetscape Project at an estimated cost of \$1,500,000, and

WHEREAS on March 1, 2022 City Council approved an expanded project scope at an estimated cost of \$3,700,000, and

WHEREAS bids have been received for the project which increase the estimated project cost to \$4,012,305, and

WHEREAS City Council desires to continue with the revised project scope and fund the funding deficit with New York State CHIPs and Touring Route funds,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby amends the Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25 Capital Budget to increase the estimated project cost from \$3,700,000 to \$4,012,305 and increase the New York State CHIPS/Touring Route funds from \$75,000 to \$387,305 to fund the additional project costs.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 13 - Re-Adoption of Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25 Capital Budget – C.C.I.P Stormwater Improvements

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS on May 24, 2021 the City Council adopted the Fiscal Years 2021-22 through 2025-26 Capital Budget, and

WHEREAS the re-adopted Fiscal Year 2021-22 Capital Fund Budget did not contain funding to make certain stormwater improvements at City Center Industrial Park,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby amends the Fiscal Years 2021-22 through 2025-26 Capital Budget to add the design and construction of certain stormwater improvements in City Center Industrial Park at an estimated cost of \$200,000 to the FY 2021-22 Capital Budget.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 14 - Accepting Bid for Thompson Park Brush Clearing Project, B&R Tree Experts, LLC

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City Purchasing Department has advertised and received sealed bids for Thompson Park Brush Clearing Project in Watertown, New York, as per City specifications, and

WHEREAS bid invitations were also issued to qualified bidders with one (1) sealed bid submitted to the Purchasing Department, and

WHEREAS on Thursday, May 26, 2022, at 2:00 p.m., the bid received was publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS City Purchasing Manager Dale Morrow reviewed the bid received with the Planning Department, and it is their recommendation that the City Council award the base bid and the four add alternate bids for the Thompson Park Brush Clearing Project to B&R Tree Experts, LLC,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown accepts the base bid and four add alternate bids of B&R Tree Experts, LLC in the total amount of \$36,774, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to sign all contracts associated with implementing the award to B&R Tree Experts, LLC.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Smith mentioned the bid came in lower than planned and hopes the additional \$13,000 could be invested in clearing more areas.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 15 - Accepting Proposal of Bowers & Company CPAs, PLLC, For Auditing Services

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of local municipalities to comply with Federal and State Single Audit requirements, and

WHEREAS the City has solicited proposals for an audit of the General Purpose Financial Statements and the Single Audit of the City's financial activities for the fiscal years ending 2021-22 through 2025-26, and

WHEREAS a proposal has been received from Bowers & Company CPAs, PLLC to perform an audit of the General Purpose Financial Statements and a Single Audit of the financial activities of the City of Watertown, as prescribed by the Comptroller General, in the amount of \$32,100 for Fiscal Year 2021-22, \$32,200 for Fiscal Year 2022-23, \$33,800 for Fiscal Year 2023-24, \$35,500 for Fiscal Year 2024-25 and \$37,300 for Fiscal Year 2025-26,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes and directs the City Manager to execute the annual engagement letter for each fiscal year's audit with Bowers & Company CPAs, PLLC, for the purpose of conducting an audit of the General Purpose Financial Statements, Single Audits of the financial activities of the City of Watertown for the Fiscal Years 2021-22 through Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Ruggiero mentioned that even though this proposal was a little more than the Syracuse company, she supports going with Bowers & Company for continuity and because they are local.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 16 - Approving Salary Structure and Annual Pay Increase for Watertown Housing Authority Employees

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS in conformity with the requirements of the New York State Public Housing Law § Section 32, Sub Division 1, compensation for Watertown Housing Authority employees can be fixed only upon the approval of the local legislative body, which is the City Council of the City of Watertown, and

WHEREAS the Watertown Housing Authority has reported that it is the desire of the Watertown Housing Authority Board to authorize a three percent (3%) cost of living increase for management employees and a five percent (5%) cost of living increase for non-management employees effective July 1, 2022, and

WHEREAS by resolution adopted on May 19, 2022, the Watertown Housing Authority Board approved a three percent (3%) cost of living increase for management employees and a five percent (5%) cost of living increase for non-management employees, effective July 1, 2022, by modification to its existing salary structure,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the 2022 salary structure for all employees of the Watertown Housing Authority which contains a three (3%) cost of living increase for management employees and a five percent (5%) cost of living increase for non-management employees, effective July 1, 2022, with salary structures attached and made part of this resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to forward a certified copy of the resolution to the Watertown Housing Authority.

Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Smith explained that the City has no input or oversight of the day-to-day operations of the Watertown Housing Authority, but NYS law requires the City to approve any salary increases.

Attorney Slye explained the same and added that it provides a check system on the Housing Authority.

Michael Robare, Executive Director of Watertown Housing Authority, spoke to Mr. Traynor's remarks made under Privilege of the Floor.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea.

STAFF REPORTS

Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – April 2022

A report was available for Council to review.

Sales Tax Revenue – April 2022

A report was available for Council to review.

NYSDEC Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Annual Report

A report was available for Council to review.

NEW BUSINESS

VL 16 and 243 Wealtha Avenue – Comments from Privilege of the Floor

Mayor Smith asked the City Manager to have City staff look into Mr. Battista's request.

Covered Bus Stop at Walker Cancer Treatment Center – Comments from Privilege of the Floor

In response to Mayor Smith's inquiry, Transit Director Kyle Meehan explained that there is not one at that location, but it is being looked at for the budget. He added that the bus drivers know to look for potential riders waiting under the building's overhang during inclement weather.

Inspection of Mobile Food Vendors – Comments from Privilege of the Floor

At the request of Mayor Smith, Mr. Mix explained that this is a new NYS requirement, and not a local requirement. He advised that the vendors need to have a fire suppression system and that Code Enforcement is working with the vendors.

Recent Meetings and Upcoming Events

Council Member Hickey announced the following upcoming meetings and events: AAA Ribbon Cutting on June 7, Planning Board Meeting on June 7, W.A.R.M. Directors meeting on June 7, Hounsfield Town Planning Board Meeting on June 7, Black River Watershed Conference on June 8, W.A.R.M. weekly meeting on June 8, Advantage Watertown Meeting on June 9, Cannabis Control Meeting on June 9, Community Prevention Night on June 9, Rapid Baseball Game sponsored by Youth Alliance and the Alliance for a Better Community on June 9, Comic Con on June 11-12, BOCES CDL Training Info Session on June 13, W.A.R.M. meeting on June 14, Eclipse Meeting on June 16, Pride Weekend Kick-off on June 17 and Thompson Park Workday on June 18.

Work Session Request

Council Member Hickey suggested holding a work session on July 25 for the Zoning Re-Write Steering Committee to do a full presentation of the new Zoning Ordinance. He noted this will be after the public comment period has ended.

Mayor Smith indicated that he is not available on July 25.

June Work Session

Council Member Hickey asked where the June 13 work session will be held.

It was noted that it will be held in the Council Chambers and begin at 6:00 p.m.

Homeless Issue

Council Member Olney asked what the City's role was in the homeless issue.

Mayor Smith replied that this should be addressed by the County and the services that they provide.

Council Member Olney suggested this be discussed at a work session.

Pay Raise for Council Members

Council Member Olney explained that his request to increase Council's salary is part of an ongoing process to look at all the wages within the City and compare them to the private sector in order to maintain staff.

Streetlights on Clinton Street

Council Member Olney said it was reported to him that the streetlights are in the middle of the sidewalk and questioned if they are ADA compliant.

Comments from Privilege of the Floor

Council Member Olney addressed comments made directly to him by Mr. Traynor during Privilege of the Floor.

Podium in Council Chambers

Council Member Olney thanked staff for obtaining a podium for Council Chambers so quickly.

Tax Abatement Proposal

Council Member Olney indicated that he will be introducing a tax abatement proposal and would like Council's support. He stated that there is fear among the residents that improvements to their home will cause their taxes to go up. He would like to propose a freeze on homeowner's taxes for improvements up to a certain dollar amount, to be determined, for the first ten years. He said this is to give an incentive for homeowners to invest in their homes.

Dairy Parade

Council Member Pierce stated the Dairy Parade was held last Friday evening and she passed along a thank you from Jay Madison, the organizer, to City staff for their help in putting this together.

Eclipse Meeting

Council Member Pierce announced the next meeting will be held on June 16 at 3:00 p.m. in Council Chambers and said that if anyone had ideas for the agenda to let her know.

July 5 Council Meeting

Council Member Pierce informed Council that she would be unable to attend the Council meeting to be held on July 5.

Additional Community Events Attended

Council Member Ruggiero mentioned the following events that she and other Council Members attended: Rapids Baseball Team's opening game, JCC Commencement Ceremony, Armed Forces Day Parade, DRI Tour of the Franklin Street Project by Neighbor's of Watertown and JCC, Friends of Thompson Park Meeting, Presentation of Proclamation to Julee Gorri for her 100th Birthday, and Memorial Day Ceremonies at the American Legion and Fort Drum.

Realtors Volunteer Day

Council Member Ruggiero announced that realtors will be cleaning up the area around the Fort Drum monument in Thompson Park on Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.

Thompson Park Pool

Council Member Ruggiero mentioned that the Thompson Park Pool opened for Memorial Day Weekend and was well-attended.

Proposed Council Raises

Council Member Ruggiero announced, for the public's benefit and for anyone that arrived late to this meeting, that Council decided to take the proposed raise to Council's salary out of the budget.

Armed Forces Day Parade

Mayor Smith thanked General Beagle and the Command at Fort Drum, as well as former Mayor Butler, for their efforts in putting the Armed Forces Day Parade together.

Phase 2 Environmental Study of the Former Parking Area Used by Watertown Golf Club

Mayor Smith announced, for the public's knowledge, that this report came back with no environmental issues. He added that this was an added cost to the City to please another developer.

Proposed Pay Raises

Mayor Smith mentioned that this was brought up earlier but advised that this is a negotiated item with the various unions. In regard to a salary increase for Council, he said he has a different philosophy to serving the community. Noting there is a small stipend for serving on Council, he said he is not in this for the money and reviewed his voting history on this and on health insurance benefits for Council Members.

Mayor Smith's Defense of Social Media Comments Made by Council Member Olney

A heated exchange occurred between Council Member Olney and Mayor Smith when Mayor Smith tried to defend himself in regard to Council Member Olney's social media post stating Mayor Smith wanted to "defund the police". Mayor Smith declared he had never made this statement.

Motion was made by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero to move into Executive Session to discuss proposed, pending, or current litigation and collective bargaining.

Motion was seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Council moved into Executive Session at 8:33 p.m.

Council reconvened at 9:10 p.m.

A D J O U R N M E N T

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 9:10 p.m. by motion of Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero, seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Ann M. Saunders
City Clerk