

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
May 17, 2021
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith Presiding

Present: Council Member Sarah V. Compo
Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson
Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero
Council Member Leonard G. Spaziani
Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith

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

City staff present: Michael Lumbis, Scott Weller, James Mills

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Reappointment to the Empire Zone Administrative Board - Joseph M. Butler, Jr.
- Resolution No. 2 - Reappointment to the Empire Zone Administrative Board - Anthony Doldo
- Resolution No. 3 - Accepting Bid for Janitorial Services for DPW, Meola Enterprises
- Resolution No. 4 - Accepting Bid for Fire Department Fire Apparatus Tools, Jerome Fire Equipment Co.
- Resolution No. 5 - Approving the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Watertown Downtown Business Association For the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk Mural Art Project
- Resolution No. 6 - Amending the Rules of Council Contained at Chapter A321 of the Watertown City Code to Establish Rules of Conduct for Privilege of the Floor
- Resolution No. 7 - Appointment to the Development Authority of the North Country, Mary R. Doheny
- Reduction of Fees for Bravo Italiano Festival
- Scheduling a Public Hearing on the Proposed Amendment to the City's 2020 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan
- 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.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of May 3, 2021, budget session of May 7, 2021, budget session of May 8, 2021 and budget session of May 10, 2021, was dispensed and accepted as written by motion of Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson, seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

COMMUNICATIONS

No communications.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Patricia Whalen, 11 Public Square, spoke to Council regarding the need for more speed limit signs within the City, a bus shelter at the Walmart bus stop and pedestrian safety at crosswalks.

Jason Traynor, 142 Mechanic Street, stated he was running for Council and asked what the City had planned for the end of the hydro contract and the replacement of that revenue. He also asked that the paper copy of the bus schedule be updated and expressed concerns over pedestrian safety in crosswalks.

Donnie Lee Barrigar, 134 Union Street, noted that he had sent Council an email containing papers from NASA which supports his theory that the earth is flat.

Mayor Smith advised Mr. Barrigar that he could only speak regarding topics of City business. After several warnings and requests to keep his comments to topics of City business and issues which Council could address, Mr. Barrigar continued to disturb the meeting and was ruled out of order by the Mayor. This continued while the Council took two five-minute recesses and eventually Mr. Barrigar was removed from Council Chambers by Police Officers.

Jonathan Phillips, 735 Mill Street, addressed Council about his concerns of grass clippings being put in the street, the need to extend the bus hours and the need for the bus stop to be closer to the Walmart building. He also discussed the ending of the hydro contract and suggested the City invest in solar energy.

Adam Ruppe, 316 Butterfield Avenue, expressed concerns with securing City Hall and implementing the requirement for a photo ID because many people do not have a photo ID. He said he understands the desire to secure the building but does not want the level to be too high and hopes the City can find a balance that fits the needs of everyone. He also expressed concerns regarding the definition of “politicking” and how it relates to Resolution No. 6.

S.G. Gates, 157 Dorsey Street, remarked that he has been trying to get a dog park in the City for 14 years and, since there was a new Council Member, he wanted to see if there was any interest in moving this forward. In regard to limiting the Privilege of the Floor, he said he understands the reason after seeing the events occurring earlier in the meeting, but thinks the problem is only related to one person.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 1 - Reappointment to the Empire Zone Administrative Board - Joseph M. Butler, Jr.

Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson

WHEREAS New York State has designated an Empire Zone pursuant to Article 18-b of the New York State General Municipal law within the Town of Watertown and the City of Watertown on July 27, 1994, and

WHEREAS Article 18-b of the New York State General Municipal law requires that an Empire Zone Administrative Board be in place to oversee the operation of said Empire Zone,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby reappoints to the Empire Zone Administrative Board, as the City representative, for a three-year term expiring May 31, 2024:

Joseph M. Butler, Jr.
335 Ten Eyck Street
Watertown, New York 13601

Seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 2 - Reappointment to the Empire Zone Administrative Board - Anthony Doldo

Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson

WHEREAS New York State has designated an Empire Zone pursuant to Article 18-b of the New York State General Municipal law within the Town of Watertown and the City of Watertown on July 27, 1994, and

WHEREAS Article 18-b of the New York State General Municipal law requires that an Empire Zone Administrative Board be in place to oversee the operation of said Empire Zone,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby reappoints to the Empire Zone Administrative Board, as an at large representative, for a three-year term expiring May 31, 2024:

Anthony Doldo
119 Breen Avenue
Watertown, New York 13601

Seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Smith explained that there are only a few administrative things left for this board to do and the time will be running out soon.

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

Resolution No. 3 - Accepting Bid for Janitorial Services for DPW, Meola Enterprises

Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson

WHEREAS the City Purchasing Department has advertised and received sealed bids for Janitorial Services for DPW, 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 6, 2021, at 11:00 a.m., the bid received was publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS City Purchasing Manager Dale Morrow reviewed the bid received with DPW, and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the bid submitted by Meola Enterprises,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown accepts the bid of Meola Enterprises in the amount of \$28,860 for Janitorial Services for DPW as the lowest qualified bidder meeting our specifications, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to sign all contracts associated with implementing the award to Meola Enterprises.

Seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 4 - Accepting Bid for Fire Department Fire Apparatus Tools, Jerome Fire Equipment Co.

Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson

WHEREAS the City Purchasing Department has advertised and received sealed bids for fire apparatus tools, 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 Wednesday, May 5, 2021, 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 Fire Chief, and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the bid submitted by Jerome Fire Equipment Co.,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York, accepts the bid submitted by Jerome Fire Equipment Co. as the lowest qualifying bidder meeting our specifications in the amount of \$7,536.20, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to sign all contracts associated with implementing the award to Jerome Fire Equipment Co.

Seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 5 - Approving the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Watertown Downtown Business Association For the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk Mural Art Project

Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson

WHEREAS last fall, the City Council informally agreed to allow the Downtown Business Association (DBA) to create a mural art program on the retaining wall on the east end of the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk, and

WHEREAS the Riverwalk Mural Art Project will be a mixture of professional, student, and community murals in a gallery meant to be enjoyed for years, and

WHEREAS the idea of creating murals on the retaining wall of the walkway was one of the Priority 2 Goals in the recently completed Downtown-Riverfront Connection Feasibility Study as a way to improve the aesthetics of the Riverwalk and make it feel more welcoming, and

WHEREAS a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Watertown and the Downtown Business Association for the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk Mural Art Program has been prepared,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that it hereby approves the Memorandum of Understanding with the Downtown Business Association for the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk Mural Art Program, a copy of which is attached and made a part of this resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor, Jeffrey M. Smith, is hereby authorized and directed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding for the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk Mural Art Program on behalf of the City.

Seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Henry-Wilkinson mentioned that this has been discussed for a few years, so he is happy to see it finally moving along.

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

Resolution No. 6 - Amending the Rules of Council Contained at Chapter A321 of the Watertown City Code to Establish Rules of Conduct for Privilege of the Floor

Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson

WHEREAS Chapter A321 of the Code of the City of Watertown establishes Rules of Council for the conduct of its regularly scheduled meetings; and

WHEREAS Section A321-3 of the Rules of Council establishes the "order of business" for each such meeting; and

WHEREAS the "order of business" includes an item identified as "privilege of the floor," whereby individual attendees of a City Council meeting are allowed to address the Council on matters of importance to them as it relates to City business; and

WHEREAS while "privilege of the floor" is encouraged by such organizations as the New York Conference of Mayors as a means of allowing persons to address their public officials, there is no requirement that an elected body extend that privilege; and

WHEREAS the City Council desires to continue the practice of allowing “privilege of the floor,” but desires to establish some boundaries concerning time limits, issues to be discussed, and the avoidance of “politicking” by speakers, the City Council and the City of Watertown hereby amends City Code Section A321-3 to add the following:

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR - RULES PERTAINING TO THE PRIVILEGE

- a. A speaker’s time shall be limited to three (3) minutes, which time may be extended, upon request of the speaker, at the Mayor’s discretion;
- b. Speakers are to limit the content of their comments to matters concerning which City Council, on behalf of the City, has discretion or control; and
- c. Speakers shall not engage in politicking for public office.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Watertown, that these rules shall take effect immediately.

Seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Smith provided an overview as to why this change is being proposed, stating the previous thought process was that there was a five-minute limit to the Privilege of the Floor but, upon researching it, there was no such rule. He explained that NYS Open Meetings Law allows for the public to attend the meetings, but there is no requirement to allow Privilege of the Floor, although it is recommended. He further explained the purpose of setting a time limit is to have some sort of consistency so that the people watching and people speaking know what the rule is, and three minutes seems to be the average for other communities. He added it could be extended if people wanted to legitimately talk about City business. He stressed that Council wants to hear the public’s concerns but if it is a topic that Council has no control of and cannot address, then it does not benefit the Council, public or staff to speak about it during Privilege of the Floor and is a waste of time which takes away from individuals who do want to speak about City issues. In regard to the term “politicking” being used in the resolution, he explained that there is no prohibition of anyone running from office during Privilege of the Floor and that it is “fake news” being reported in the community. He reiterated that there is no banning of candidates during Privilege of the Floor, but candidates are not allowed to announce that they are running for office and use Privilege of the Floor as a platform to discuss their campaign issues.

Council Member Henry-Wilkinson commented that this helps to create a sense of fairness for people in the gallery who should not have to have their time monopolized by individuals who want to speak on topics that have nothing to do with the City.

Council Member Ruggiero thanked the Mayor for his explanation and noted it was thorough. She said that this change makes it uniform.

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

Resolution No. 7 - Appointment to the Development Authority of the North Country, Mary R. Doheny

Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson

RESOLVED that the following individual is appointed to the Development Authority of the North Country for a four-year term, such term expiring on June 5, 2025:

Mary R. Doheny
303 Paddock Street
Watertown, New York 13601

Seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

Rules waived by Motion of Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson, seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Mayor Smith explained that the current representative on the Development Authority of the North Country, John B. Johnson, Jr., has served on this board on behalf of the City for 12 years but does not want to continue. He further explained that Mary R. Doheny is a nonvoting board member who lives in the City and would be willing to step in as Mr. Johnson's replacement. He advised that this was a last-minute addition to the agenda because Ms. Doheny needed authorization from her employer and she just received that this morning.

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

STAFF REPORTS

Reduction of Fees for Bravo Italiano Festival

Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Scott Weller informed Council that the Bravo Italiano Festival had a three-year contract which expires this year, but they were unable to hold the annual event last year due to COVID-19. He said they have requested a reduction in the rental fee for the arena to \$2,500 for this year due to the financial hardship of COVID-19 and they would be interested in renewing a multiyear contract starting next year. Mr. Weller informed Council that his recommendation would be to not reduce the rate and extend the current contract for one year since the event could not be held last year. He explained a similar approach had been taken with the Watertown Rapids.

A discussion over whether to reduce the fee and the effects of COVID-19 on this organization took place and it was noted that the American Rescue Plan funds could possibly be used to supplement the rate if the reduction were to be granted, since it qualifies as a loss of revenue due to COVID-19.

Council Member Compo said she would support this but pointed out that other groups may ask for the same.

Council Member Henry-Wilkinson agreed with Council Member Compo.

Mayor Smith advised that for each request of this type, the organization should be reviewed individually in regard to the pandemic effects and restrictions.

Council agreed to proceed with the reduction in this year's rental fee.

Scheduling a Public Hearing on the Proposed Amendment to the City's 2020 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan

Motion was made by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson to schedule a Public Hearing on Monday, June 7, 2021 at 7:15 p.m. to hear public comment on the proposed amendment to the City's 2020 CDBG Annual Action Plan. Motion was seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

NYSDEC Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Annual Report

Mr. Mix explained that the purpose of this memo is to inform Council that the report is out for public review and comments.

Sales Tax Revenue – April 2021

A report was available for Council to review.

Sale of Surplus Hydro-electricity – April 2021

A report was available for Council to review.

Proposed Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget

A report was available for Council to review.

NEW BUSINESS

Food Truck Event in Thompson Park

Council Member Compo advised that she had been contacted by Michelle Capone from the Planning Board and Kylie Peck from the Chamber of Commerce regarding holding a Food Truck event in Thompson Park, similar to what is done in Lewis County called Food Truck Friday.

A discussion regarding annual Vending in Public Streets permits and vending for individual events occurred. Mr. Weller commented that there is a vending permit for parks within the fee schedule.

Council Member Compo said she will relay the information and have them work with the City Manager.

Walmart Bus Stop

Council Member Henry-Wilkinson asked if staff could speak to Walmart about moving the bus stop closer to the building and whether a shelter could be installed.

Traffic Signs on Lower Arsenal Street

Council Member Henry-Wilkinson asked if directional traffic signs could be installed on lower Arsenal Street as it enters into Public Square indicating which traffic lane the driver should be in. He mentioned similar signs were installed on Public Square indicating which traffic lane goes to Mill Street, Factory Street and State Street.

Alliance for Better Communities Webinar

Council Member Ruggiero announced there will be a webinar held tomorrow between 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. on the legalization of marijuana and the impact to healthcare and criminality.

Armed Forces Day

Council Member Ruggiero mentioned the events that were held on Saturday in Thompson Park. She noted it was a nice event and thanked everyone who was involved in making it happen.

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 8:06 p.m. by motion of Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson, seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Ann M. Saunders

City Clerk