

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY OF WATERTOWN  
February 18, 2020  
7:00 p.m.**

**Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith Presiding**

**Present:** Council Member Sarah V. Compo  
Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson  
Council Member Jesse C. P. Roshia  
Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero  
Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith

**Also Present:** Richard M. Finn, City Manager  
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney

**City staff present:** Jennifer Voss, Michael Delaney, Police Chief Charles Donoghue, Patrick Keenan, Matthew Roy

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Performance Review of City Clerk
- Resolution No. 2 - Authorizing Application for Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)
- Resolution No. 3 - Adopting Guidelines and Administrative Procedures for the Community Development Block Grant Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program
- Transit Operating Expense
- CDBG Citizen Participation Plan

**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 February 3, 2020 and work session of February 11, 2020, 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.

**PRESENTATION**

Mayor Smith interrupted the regular course of business to present a Certificate of Appreciation to R. Mark Crandall in recognition of his accomplishments and service to the wastewater industry, as evidenced by the City receiving the New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA) award for Beneficial Use of Biosolids, which recognizes significant contributions in the use of natural resources.

## **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

**Jason Traynor**, 142 Mechanic Street, discussed the benefits of expanding the bus system and the need to have bus service into the evening. He reminded Council that he plans to create a focus group to seek public input regarding the expansion of the bus system and mentioned some of the questions that he plans to ask.

**Jonathan Phillips**, 735 Mill Street, spoke to Council regarding the City bus system and his support for the expansion of it. He also expressed concerns over the condition of the City sidewalks and the traffic delays created by the lane reduction on lower Arsenal Street.

**Donnie Lee Barrigar**, 134 Union Street, stated that he is recording this for his Flat Earth YouTube Channel. He thanked Mayor Smith for speaking with him and asked if Council had made a phone call to the Congresswomen as he requested. He spoke of his belief that the earth is flat and stated it is a City issue which Council needs to address.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **Resolution No. 1 - Performance Review of City Clerk**

#### **Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson**

WHEREAS the Charter of the City of Watertown under Title III, Section 20-8 requires a performance review of the City Clerk annually with findings adopted by March 1 each year, and

WHEREAS the City Clerk, Ann M. Saunders, has provided City Council with a summary of her duties and accomplishments for the previous year, and

WHEREAS City Council determined the City Clerk has done an excellent job of carrying out the duties of her office and serving the public, and

WHEREAS the City Clerk has effectively led her staff in a professional and productive way, and

WHEREAS the City Clerk continues to work on improving the use of technology to make her office more efficient,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that following an assessment and review of the City Clerk's duties and performance, we find the City Clerk, Ann M. Saunders, has performed consistent with expectations and did an excellent job in the year.

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

### **Resolution No. 2 - Authorizing Application for Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)**

#### **Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson**

WHEREAS the City of Watertown Fire Department is seeking City Council approval to apply for grant funding under FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program, and

WHEREAS the purpose of this program is for acquiring additional equipment, including new fire attack hose in various sizes and necessary appliances, such as nozzles, intake valves and foam eductors, and

WHEREAS the application, in the amount of \$88,152, with the City match being \$8,815, would provide funding for much needed equipment,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the Fire Department to submit a grant application under FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Fire Chief Dale C. Herman is hereby authorized and directed to execute the grant application on behalf of the City of Watertown.

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

**Resolution No. 3 - Adopting Guidelines and Administrative Procedures for the Community Development Block Grant Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program**

**Introduced by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson**

WHEREAS the City of Watertown's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plans for the Program Years 2015-2019 have included the Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program which provides funding for the rehabilitation of substandard housing units within the City of Watertown, and

WHEREAS Guidelines and Administrative Procedures have to be developed for this and subsequent CDBG owner occupied rehabilitation programs, and

WHEREAS the City approved the Guidelines and Administrative Procedures for the Community Development Block Grant Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program on March 20, 2017, and

WHEREAS the Guidelines have been updated to be consistent with the requirements in the Homebuyer Program Guidelines,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that updated Guidelines and Administrative Procedures for the City of Watertown's CDBG Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program, a copy of which is attached and made part of this resolution, are hereby adopted and shall become effective immediately for all owner occupied rehabilitation activities conducted with CDBG funding in the City of Watertown.

**Seconded by Council Member Sarah V. Compo**

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Smith pointed out that page two of the guidelines indicated that Neighbors of Watertown will serve as part of the Project Review Committee. He asked if Neighbors of Watertown would have veto power over a project that the City wants to move forward on.

Senior Planner Jennifer Voss explained that Neighbors of Watertown is only involved with the housing projects and they present the files with the intake forms, work scope and bids for each housing project. She confirmed that Neighbors of Watertown could not veto a project as long as it met all the requirements and guidelines of the program.

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

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Transit Operating Expense**

Mayor Smith stated that this report will answer some of Mr. Traynor's questions regarding the cost of the bus expansion. He said the hourly cost is approximately \$87 per hour to operate each bus.

Public Works Superintendent Patrick Keenan explained that the document in the report was from the National Transit Database, which the City is required to submit all operating characteristics to each year. He clarified that the information and numbers are from 2018 because 2019 has not been finalized yet. Regarding the operating expense per hour per bus, Mr. Keenan explained that it is approximately \$87 so if the service was extended three and a half hours per day for six days per week, it would cost the City over \$200,000 per year. He confirmed for Mayor Smith that the bus fees collected would not match the cost of extending the hours. Regarding Mr. Traynor's comments, Mr. Keenan indicated that Mr. Traynor is referencing the transit study that was done through the MPO and all his issues are addressed within it, along with a roadmap for the way transit will change in the next few years. He advised that the next Council meeting will have a proposal for the Mobility Manager, which is a planning tool and avenue to move forward. In response to Mayor Smith's question about funding sources for the expansion, Mr. Keenan indicated there are Federal, State and local shares involved in this expansion and he added that County funds will need to come onboard once it is expanded into the rural areas.

### **CDBG Citizen Participation Plan**

Mayor Smith mentioned that at the last work session he questioned whether CDBG funds could be used for an additional School Resource Officer or additional foot patrols. He noted that the percentage of low income families within the school district is above 60%.

Ms. Voss stated she researched this further and thinks CDBG funds could be used towards foot patrols as long as the officers could track the hours that they were patrolling within the target area.

Police Chief Donoghue reminded Council that foot patrols are always done with two officers together. He indicated that the hours dedicated to the low income target areas could be easily tracked.

In regard to the School Resource Officer, Ms. Voss stated it would not qualify for CDBG funds because the school is not in a target area. She added that the City is working within the current Consolidated Plan, which is in the last year of the five years, so funds need to be used for the purposes outlined in the plan, but when the next plan is made for 2021 through 2026, the uses could be expanded for more public services.

More discussion occurred as to whether a School Resource Officer could be paid for by CDBG funds, especially if the officer only provided services to low income students. It was noted that more research could be done on this topic for the possible inclusion of it in the next five-year plan.

*Motion was made by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson to schedule a Public Hearing to hear public input on readopting the CDBG Citizen Participation Plan for Monday, March 15 at 7:30 p.m. Motion was seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Mr. Barrigar's Comments - Privilege of the Floor**

Council Member Compo offered to connect Mr. Barrigar with State representatives, as he requested, regarding his theory of a flat earth.

### **Crow Dispersal Program**

Council Member Compo stated she has continued to get complaints regarding the damage that is being done by the crows.

Council Member Ruggiero agreed, stating that she has received complaints and people seem to be in favor of lethal means

### **Sign Committee**

Council Member Henry-Wilkinson indicated that he had a conference call with the sign committee and has been asked to obtain Council's feedback regarding nonconforming billboards in the downtown area becoming digital LED billboards.

Mayor Smith said that the goal was to have language within three months which would allow the four billboards in the downtown area to be transitioned to digital. He added that if there is a separate issue with the State regarding this then that is a separate issue between the State and the billboard owner. He said he is in favor of the transition.

### **Watertown High School Boys Wrestling Program**

Council Member Roshia commented that he had an opportunity to watch the team at the Sectional competition and he noted that former Councilman Clough's grandson finished second place. He congratulated him and the team.

### **Neighborhood Watch Information Meeting**

Council Member Ruggiero announced that a meeting will be held on February 25, beginning at 6:30 p.m. and she reviewed the agenda and speakers who would be presenting.

### **Strauss Walkway**

Mayor Smith asked the City Manager to provide Council with an update on this walkway and the potential sale. He confirmed that the DRI money will be transferred to this project, and he said he would like to move forward and let the private sector develop it.

### **Budgetary Requests**

Mayor Smith asked Council to start thinking of any budgetary items or requests that should be included in the proposed budget. He said that staff has begun to work on putting the budget together.

**City Manager's Review**

Mayor Smith noted that the City Charter states the City Manager must be evaluated by March 1, but since Mr. Mix has recently stepped in as an interim City Manager, he asked the City Attorney if it was necessary.

Attorney Slye indicated that it was not.

**Motion was made by Council Member Ryan J. Henry-Wilkinson to move into Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular individual, proposed, pending or current litigation and collective bargaining.**

**Motion was seconded by Council Member Jesse C. P. Roshia and carried with all voting in favor thereof.**

Council moved into Executive Session at 7:43 p.m.

Council reconvened at 8:57 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 8:57 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