

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
September 28, 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: Kenneth A. Mix, City Manager

City staff present: Patrick Keenan, Charles Donoghue

DISCUSSION

Pamelia Water District

John Condino, Senior Project Manager at Barton and Loguidice, began the discussion by presenting a slideshow (not on file in the City Clerk's Office) and pointing out that this is round two of discussions, the first being back in February. He explained that there are some updates and that he has also met with Vicky Murphy, Water Superintendent. He stated that he spoke with her and her staff about some of the configurations and that the project is in the final designs stage. Mr. Condino explained the layout of the map at length, noting that it is about a \$14 million dollar project and the Town of Pamelia has spent approximately \$1 million having the water tower refurbished and a new water treatment system installed. He told Council that when this project was conceived, it was just to be a water connection from the City to serve a Honda Dealership on Bradley Street Road and he explained at length the different routes and connections that are now proposed for the project. He pointed out that after talking to Ms. Murphy and staff he was told that the connection on West Main Street is no longer needed, which allowed Town of Pamelia's project to go forward.

Scott Allen, Town of Pamelia Supervisor, added this project is very good for the Town of Pamelia, as they will be getting water from the Development Authority of the North Country's (DANC's) water line that, in turn, gets its water from the City of Watertown.

Mr. Condino reminded Council Member Roshia that at the last meeting, he asked Ms. Murphy what the average daily use will be, and he advised that according to the preliminary engineering report, there are approximately 583 current users and there will be about 300 added for a total of approximately 900. He also informed Council there are currently approximately 180,000 gallons used per day. He showed Council the schedule for the project, which includes the final design set for February 2021, review agency approval in March 2021, project bid in April 2021, project construction in May 2021 and project completion in December 2022. Mr. Condino then concluded by telling Council that water will continue to be sourced from the Development Authority's Fort Drum line and there will be no additional allocation needed from the City of Watertown so there is no action needed from Council.

Mr. Condino told Council that City Manager Ken Mix alerted him that the Town of Pamelia is now looking into a sewer collection system improvement project (Sewer District No. 10) detailing at length the routes to be served. He explained that this project is in the very early stages. He also noted that this is just a preliminary for Council to see and noted he realizes there will be many more discussions

between DANC and Council. He said he is optimistic that there will be some sort of funding available for the project.

Mayor Smith asked what the proposed allocation for sewer would be.

Mr. Condino said they have not identified the exact area or how many people it will serve. He did confirm that it will be a fairly small project.

Mayor Smith drew Council's attention back to the DANC contract and stressed that there needs to be approval and the water contract with DANC needs to be amended. He also reiterated his concerns about people not wanting to move into the City if they are getting water cheaper outside the City while not paying City taxes. He pointed out that Council has some thinking to do in regards to people using the water through DANC at a lower rate and how this benefits the City, if at all.

Mr. Condino agreed that questions needed to be answered before the project begins and stressed that the quicker these questions and concerns can be answered, the better.

Transit System and Mobility Management

Frank Doldo, Regional Mobility Manager, started the presentation with a slideshow (on file at the City Clerk's Office) and update on the City bus transit and how things have been handled during COVID-19. He also introduced Brandi Smith as new Mobility Manager for the greater Watertown area. He informed Council that he and Ms. Smith met with Patrick Keenan, Superintendent of Public Works, and came up with some short-term goals for the next six months, which consist of getting the new AVL/Annunciator System installed in the next 60-90 days, getting all of the advertising on the outside of the buses up within the next 30 days and the inside advertising done by December 31st. He told Council that another goal is to get the approval of NYSDOT to operate a bus extension route to include BOCES, the industrial park on outer Coffeen Street and Outer Washington Street. He said they have put in a request for a camera on the Arsenal Street bus. He then spoke at length regarding the long-term goals with one of the main ones being a bus route to Thompson Park five days a week. He said he is hopeful about getting a bus route to Fort Drum and is working on the challenges to getting on base.

Mayor Smith asked if there has been any sort of survey done regarding how much usage there would be for people coming and going to Fort Drum, considering most people on post have vehicles. He suggested looking into routes to Sackets Harbor, Carthage or Clayton.

Mr. Doldo replied that the most recent transit study conducted showed Fort Drum, Clayton and Sackets Harbor were the most requested routes. He then informed Council that Ms. Smith will be meeting with Jefferson Community College in regards to providing services for the students which will help get them to class, employment and other services. Indicating that one of the key points in the long-term goals is the partnership between the City and the County, he stressed that this conversation needs to take place soon so that people in the outlying areas have access to transportation which can connect them to the City bus and so people within the City can be connected to the County-wide system for things such as employment, recreation and food sources. He summarized the importance of communication between the City and County leaders to work together to decide who will be responsible for what and how funding works to support both. He stressed the importance of people filling out the Census since this will greatly affect the decisions of funding for the buses. Mr. Doldo spoke at length about the timeline he would like to see, which would be to hire a County-wide Mobility Manager in November or

December and complete, as well as submit, the 5311 application for 2021/2022 between November and January. The application will include capital and operating expenses and mobility management. He explained that once these steps are done, the next step would be to order buses with a goal of December 2022 and then, after that, start the County-wide system by 2023.

Mayor Smith said a major factor is cost and that it is important the City does not end up bearing the cost for the County.

Mr. Doldo summarized the different steps that can be taken to ensure that everyone is on the same page, adding he is willing to work with all parties to make this as easy as possible to benefit everyone involved.

Police Reform

City Manager Ken Mix began by telling Council that Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order Number 203 back in June which stated all municipalities with a Police Department had to adopt a plan reforming the department by April 1st or risk losing any or all State funding. He explained that the purpose for tonight's meeting was to inform Council and the public that the process has started and is in the early planning stage. He said the guidance tells the types of things that need to be done and who should be involved, and he asked Council for input on who they feel should be involved in the decision making.

Mayor Smith said that the public needs to know that even though the order was signed back in June, the City just got information from the Governor on the guidelines and that the City was by no means delaying the process.

Mr. Mix agreed, stating that he just saw the guidelines in August and then started working with Police Chief Charles Donoguhe on putting the pieces together. He said it is a tight schedule to get things done by April 1st. Mr. Mix highlighted that one benefit is that the Watertown Police Department is already accredited, so many of the things being suggested have been done.

Chief Donoghue told Council that the last time he checked, only 24% of the agencies in the State were accredited, which makes Watertown way ahead in many ways. He told Council he does not believe a lot will need to be changed, but stressed that one of the most important things needed is access to body cameras. He reminded Council that these cameras were in the budget but had to be cut back in the recently passed budget due to the financial impacts of COVID-19.

Mayor Smith asked if there is any state or federal funding for the body cameras.

Chief Donoghue informed Council that there was none that he knew of at this time, but noted that in 2016-17, there was some funding for just the cameras. He advised that the biggest expense is the storage and licensing.

Council Member Roshia asked if Chief Donoghue remembers the total cost for the body cameras.

Chief Donoghue replied he believes it was around \$100,000 up front then \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year. He then summarized some of the other policies that were in the reform, noting that not all apply to Watertown because of the small size of the City.

Mayor Smith asked Chief Donoghue what he recommends for other stakeholders.

Chief Donoghue said he does not really know and thinks it should be left up to the City Manager, noting that there should not be too many though.

Mayor Smith told Chief Donoghue that he thinks he and all the City Police Officers are doing a great job.

Chief Donoghue stressed that the guidelines are used as suggestions and he, by no means, thinks the department is perfect. He clarified that even though they are accredited, there is always room for improvement and he said he is hoping that the reform will help them acquire the body cams.

In response to Council Member Ruggiero's inquiry of whether they should let Mr. Mix or Chief Donoghue know if they have any suggestions for stakeholders, Mr. Mix said they should and added that members of the community, as well as non-profit and faith-based community groups, would be welcomed.

Council Member Henry Wilkinson suggested feedback from groups such as members of the deaf and autism communities.

Council Member Roshia wanted to reiterate the Mayor's comments on the Police Department being accredited and noted what an honor it is for the City's Police Department. He thanked Chief Donoghue.

Pamelia Water District (readdressed)

Mr. Mix brought up the discussion on the Town of Pamelia water and sewer and asked Council if they wanted to discuss it more at the next work session amongst themselves.

Mayor Smith reiterated that the DANC contract specifically says that any new users have to have Council's approval for changes.

Mr. Mix said he will gather more information on what other municipality rates are.

Discussion then turned to whether Town of Pamelia had changed direction since the first work session in February.

Mr. Mix stated their current plan was similar but different.

Council discussed the different rates municipalities charged and all agreed that Town of Pamelia should not be paying less than a City resident for water.

Mayor Smith suggested having a work session just to discuss these policies and rates before having any meetings with DANC.

Work session ended at 8:10 p.m.

Margaret M. Puccia
Deputy City Clerk