

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
July 11, 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

City staff present: Michael Delaney, Scott Weller

DISCUSSION

William J. Flynn Pool and Bathhouse Report

Mayor Smith welcomed the representative from C&S Companies, Patrick Currier and gave him the floor. Mr. Currier noted that Ron Jackson would join the meeting shortly. He offered a summary of the two options proposed for the Flynn Pool. Option A consisted of a renovation designed to get the pool up and running with a minimal scope which would include addressing various code issues and updating the ADA compliance. Option B would be a renovation of the existing bathhouse with construction of a new pool. He noted that Option B would allow for a zero-grade entry and the replacement of the current splash area with a picnic area. He explained that ADA compliance standards have changed over the years and much of the renovation in Option A would be to reach those new standards. Mr. Currier informed Council that Option B addresses the exposed mechanicals in the bathhouse by raising the roof and walls 24 inches so that the duct work, electrical, plumbing and piping could be covered with housing. He went on to note that the costs on each option is based on the scope in the written report and, as the scope evolves, the costs will change. He advised Council that they can pare down the options or add more but that will affect the costs.

City Engineer Michael Delaney clarified that the cost estimates were prepared by a company, Trophy Point Construction Services and Consulting, that specializes in estimation, tracking costs and industry standards monthly, so their estimates are extremely accurate, since estimating is all they do.

Mr. Currier agreed with Mr. Delaney, noting C&S could do the estimating themselves but they opt to use Trophy Point because of their accuracy.

Ron Jackson of C&S arrived at the meeting with a display showing the Flynn Pool site with the Thompson Park Pool drawing placed on the lot, so that Council could see how a pool that size would fit there.

Mayor Smith noted that there is an expense in Option A to remove the curbing around the current Flynn pool for safety reasons and then add a liner. He asked what the useful life of the Option A repairs would be.

Mr. Jackson explained that the sprayed gunnite in the pool has at least four cracks and explained they would pressure inject grout into the cracks and then install the liner. He noted the curbs around the pool are unsafe and a trip-and-fall hazard, so they would be replaced with a gutter system, which would chop the top off the pool and lower the pool 14 inches.

In response to Mayor Smith's question about addressing the current pool's leakage, Mr. Jackson indicated the pool liner would remove all leaks and, responding to the Mayor's earlier question, estimated a 5–10-year warranty on the liner. He added that the liner is plastic, but it is industrial grade plastic.

Mayor Smith inquired about the drain and how that would be treated.

Mr. Jackson stated that the drain would be re-done entirely.

Council Member Olney asked if the problem with the drain had led to the discovery of the cracks and noted that there is currently six feet of water in the pool. He asked if it was the cracks that were allowing the pool to fill up with ground water.

Mr. Delaney informed Council that a full inspection of the pool had been done while the pool was drained and that both drains and piping need to be replaced.

Council Member Olney mentioned that he had discovered a bubble in the Marsite when he was touring the pool and explained that when he stood on it, the bubble broke. He asked if the proposal would remove all of the concrete.

Both Mr. Currier and Mr. Jackson indicated that they would remove all of the concrete.

Council Member Ruggiero noted a discrepancy in the Options with the size of the pool, pointing out the current pool is listed as 4,900 square feet in the existing conditions portion of the facility assessment and 5,500 square feet in the overview portion.

Mr. Jackson suggested that the 5,500 may have come from an old specification and indicated all the cost estimates were based on the 4,900 square feet figure.

Council Member Ruggiero questioned whether a pool that large was needed, as she believed the Thompson Park pool came in at around 3,900 square feet. She further inquired if a rectangular pool, rather than a u-shaped pool would be less expensive.

Mr. Currier confirmed that a rectangular pool would cut the costs down.

Mr. Delaney pointed out that if you go with a rectangular shape, you lose depth for swimming.

Council Member Ruggiero wondered if the City needed to have a pool with a deep end, noting that people had been telling her that children had to do a swim test to swim in the deeper portions of the other two pools. She wondered if this was new.

Mr. Currier responded that the rule is not new as he recalled his son doing swim tests and his child is now 33 years old.

Mr. Delaney confirmed that all pools with a deep end, including the YMCA, require swim tests.

Council Member Hickey questioned if a zero-grade entry was available in Option A.

Mr. Jackson said that it was not as the Option was written, but that both Options can be adapted any way Council wished. He suggested an "Option A Prime."

Council Member Ruggiero commented that when Council did this before, with the Thompson Park pool, they cut down on costs by picking and choosing items within the Options. She noted she was surprised to see \$100,000 for a kitchen and concession area as she did not believe that was something the City desired. She suggested eliminating that cost and bringing in food trucks.

Council Member Hickey agreed that he would like to see food trucks rather than a concession area.

Council Member Olney expressed concerns over the lack of an outdoor entrance to the bathhouse restrooms. He noted the playground has port-a-potties but the bathhouse could offer a better option.

Mr. Currier suggested those could be offered in either "Option A Prime" or "Option B Prime." He reminded Council that the proposal can be altered in any direction Council wants to go.

Council Member Olney asked the lifespan of a brand-new pool.

Mr. Jackson advised that the structure should last about 50 years, the mechanicals around 20 years and the individual mechanicals, like pumps and motors, would depend on the item.

Council Member Ruggiero noted the City got 50 years out of the last pool constructions.

Council Member Olney questioned C&S about line items regarding ADA compliance in the bathroom, explaining he had measured all the doorways and they were compliant.

Mr. Currier informed Council that there are other standards for compliance than door width.

Council Member Hickey questioned the 15% design contingency.

Mr. Currier noted that is an industry standard for the design phase with the contingency levels dropping as the project progresses and becomes more clearly defined.

Mr. Delaney confirmed that 15% is standard industry practice.

Council Member Pierce asked if it was expected that when the work commenced there would be a lot of issues that were not previously observed that would impact costs.

Mr., Currier stressed that their assessments were based solely on a visual inspection and they did not disrupt any of the current pool structure.

Mr. Delaney clarified that it was a very thorough visual inspection.

Mr. Jackson stated that pools always have damage, noting that chlorine is a very harsh chemical that does a lot of damage and that is why they always make allowances for issues that will develop throughout the project.

Council Member Ruggiero asked how they would prevent the liner from shifting and tearing.

Mr. Jackson explained that pool contractors have a felt product they lay first, similar to how floor tilers lay a product under the tile, to compensate for shift.

Council Member Ruggiero questioned whether Council could agree to Option A for the bathhouse and Option B for the pool.

Mr. Jackson noted he would have to check to see if the regulating authorities would allow a completely new pool build without the ADA compliance features added to the bathhouse.

In response to Council Member Ruggiero's question as to why the Department of Health (DOH) had not cited the City for ADA violations since the bathhouse is out of compliance, Mr. Currier said that ADA compliance is a Civil law and the D.O.H. would mainly only inspect things like sanitation. He noted that once a building is constructed to code, no one comes around to inspect it. He added that the City should be trying to meet current accessibility standards.

Council Member Ruggiero asked Mr. Delaney about his \$735,000 estimate presented to Council last year.

Mr. Delaney explained that estimate was for getting the pool up and running for the next season and did not include replacements for equipment that was repurposed to the Alteri pool to cut costs and save taxpayer money.

Council Member Olney questioned the repurposing of a Flynn pool pump in the Alteri pool, wondering if anyone had ever mentioned the need for this pump.

Mayor Smith indicated that pump had been malfunctioning for years

Council Member Ruggiero asked if C&S expected supply chain issues or time delays.

Mr. Currier explained that those issues affect every job, explaining delivery times change all the time and costs are volatile. He added that sometimes things can change in the middle of a day. He stated that is why he tries to get clients to lock in prices by signing contracts and ordering as soon as possible.

Council Member Olney suggested that, in Option B, there was no need to raise the walls and replace the roof. He said he had taken an associate, Todd DeMar, who he felt was knowledgeable in the field since he had worked as a Fire Captain and did inspections through the City's Code Enforcement Office, to tour the building including the rooftop. He commented that the roof-raising to cover the mechanicals in the bathhouse was purely for aesthetic reasons as the roof is in good condition.

Mr. Currier stressed that covering the mechanicals is a matter of safety, noting a four-foot-tall child could stand on a bench and reach the fans or pipes. He added that he was thinking of his grandchildren when he suggested covering up those ducts and pipes.

Mayor Smith suggested it might not be code compliant.

Mr. Currier stated there were other things to consider besides codes and he felt this was a safety issue.

Council Member Olney asked if there were any records of anyone ever being hurt by touching the mechanicals in the bathhouse.

Mr. Mix said there were not.

Council Member Olney stressed that he and Mr. DeMar had walked that roof and the roof was fine. He stated it was his opinion that there was no reason to replace the roof and raise the walls to cover those mechanicals other than for aesthetics.

In response to Council Member Hickey's inquiry about why the HVAC cost was only \$33,000, Mr. Jackson said that was just to get it operational again as the pool had not been used for several seasons.

Council Member Olney asked if there had been a problem with the Thompson Park pool that had caused it to be closed

Mr. Mix said the CO had gone up but it had since been repaired and the pool was open.

Council Member Olney expressed concerns that the estimates provided by C&S contained a "good, better, best" scenario and that the City might get the lowest grade materials to keep costs down.

Council Member Ruggiero asked if an L-shaped pool had been considered and asked about the costs.

Mr. Jackson said he could not answer that.

Council Member Olney stated that it was his feeling that a majority of Council Members wanted to build a new pool and that they would be interested in building the best pool that would last the longest, adding the previous pool had been left in neglect.

Council Member Ruggiero requested a summation of the process and timeline for Option B.

Mr. Currier said they could not propose a schedule yet as they did not yet know what Council would want to do. He added the basic process would be to be for his company to be hired to perform the project, then they would prepare a design, have a review and discussion period, then public bidding and

finally construction. He stressed he had no idea of a time frame at this point noting his purpose tonight was to offer the Council options.

Council Member Ruggiero asked if C&S was given the go-ahead today, what would be the timeline.

Mr. Currier indicated that it would most likely not be ready for next season but maybe the season after.

Mayor Smith reminded Council that nothing would be done tonight as there is no Resolution in front of them.

Mr. Mix informed Council that they would also need to decide how to pay for this, whether through bonds or cash.

Council Member Ruggiero commented that it made no sense to fix the current pool and that she would rather rebuild to get the zero-grade entry. She asked if a splash pad was included in Option B.

Mr. Currier stated that the splash pad suggestion was not made until earlier this evening and their proposal had a picnic area in place of the current kiddie pool.

Council Member Olney stated that he wanted the bathhouse upgrades from Option A with the full pool replacement in Option B. He noted he would like to see costs for various pool sizes.

There was some debate about whether or not the raising of the roof and walls was necessary for safety.

Council Member Olney suggested using the money that would have been spent to raise the roof to add a splash pad.

Mayor Smith noted that if Council wanted C&S to prepare more options, Council would have to agree to pay them more money. He suggested coming up with several proposals Council wanted to see so it could be determined how much money would need to be spent.

Mr. Delaney reminded Council that C&S need to know a budget amount and a direction Council would like to go in to prepare options.

Mayor Smith asked Mr. Mix if he needed a request for proposal.

Mr. Mix noted the scope of services contract with C&S could be amended to pay for alternative proposals.

The representatives from C&S agreed that they could prepare further options if their contract was amended and extended.

Mr. Delaney added that Council would just need to let C&S know how many proposals they would like to see.

Council Member Ruggiero called for a summary of what Council Members wanted out of the pool.

Council Member Hickey asked for zero-grade pool entry but not a full reconstruction of the bathhouse.

Council Member Olney asked for a splash pad.

Mr. Mix summarized that what he is hearing from Council is that they want a complete rebuild of the pool but a less aggressive repair of the bathhouse that would consist of just the minimum necessary to update it, and a suggestion that the City not “cheap out” on the mechanicals.

Council Member Olney stressed he did not say “cheap out.”

Mr. Mix clarified that those were his own words.

Council Member Ruggiero stated that she felt the zero-grade pool was very important but suggested a smaller pool could cut costs.

Mayor Smith thanked the representatives from C&S who left Council chambers.

Mayor Smith admonished Council Member Olney for taking a non-City-employee on to City property without proper insurance and liability paperwork signed.

Council Member Olney claimed he had every right to do so and had asked for permission.

Mayor Smith asked Mr. Mix the proper insurance and liability processes for contractors working for the City.

Mr. Mix noted it is common practice to get a contract in place before work like that is done and reminded Council of the situation with Convalt exploring Sewall Island. He noted that Council required Convalt to show proper liability and insurance.

Council Member Olney asked if the City was self-insured.

Mr. Mix replied that it is.

Mayor Smith turned the discussion to pool attendance, referencing a chart provided (on file in the City Clerk’s office.) He noted that attendance at the Fairgrounds pool seems very low and asked Parks and Recreation Director Scott Weller how much use the pool has seen this summer.

Mr. Weller admitted that attendance has been very light.

Council Member Ruggiero asked when the road construction would be done and suggested people thought the pool was closed due to that road work.

Mr. Delaney stated the goal was to be done in one more week.

Council Member Ruggiero suggested doing more to get the word out that the pool was open.

Mr. Weller noted there were signs on the doors at the Arena, as well as signs at the Thompson Park pool reminding people that the Alteri pool is open. He also noted that pool information is posted on Parks and Recreation's social media.

Council Member Ruggiero asked if the Fairgrounds' electronic billboard indicated the pool was open.

Mr. Weller said he was not sure but, if it was not on there, he could add it.

Council Member Pierce mentioned that there was a lot of media support when the pool opened, noting both the Watertown Daily Times and WWNJ had done spots on the opening.

Council Member Olney asked Mr. Weller if his advertising budget was adequate to cover promotional costs.

Mr. Weller noted that advertising was a new item in his budget this year and they would have to wait and see how much it will cover.

Council Member Olney asked if Parks and Recreation had enough lifeguards for the season.

Mr. Weller said that they were set for this year because they got ahead of it but suggested he had concerns for next year.

In response to Council Member Olney's question regarding wages, Mr. Weller indicated the combination of increased wages plus the City paying for the Lifeguard certification helped. He noted, however, that with the state wage for lifeguards going to \$20 an hour, the City might run into trouble in the future.

Council Member Olney suggested signs advertising pools in the City on roads and highways leading into the City.

Mayor Smith objected to spending taxpayer money to promote pools that have serviced the City for five decades, especially to promote the pool to people who live outside of the City.

Council Members Ruggiero and Hickey agreed that they thought the numbers for the pools were better than they expected since they opened in May when, it had been suggested, no one would want to use the pool.

Mayor Smith inquired how many ball fields were located on the south side of the City. He commented that he hears a lot of discussion about how every neighborhood is its own community and needs its own pool but he never hears the same about ball fields. He noted there were none on the south side, and yet, City residents managed to find their way to ball games at the north, east and west side fields.

There was some general discussion about ball fields and their locations.

Council Member Olney asked who had chosen to paint the City Hall sign black and gray.

Mr. Mix said the Maintenance department had painted it.

Council Member Olney expressed his appreciation for the color choice.

Mr. Delaney said he believed that staff just used some leftover paint that was available in City Hall.

Work session ended at 9:06 p.m.

Lisa M. Carr
Deputy City Clerk