

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY OF WATERTOWN  
October 3, 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 Delaney, Michael Lumbis, Patrick Keenan

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Approving Change Order No. 1 for the William T. Field Dr. Road Reconstruction Project - CCI Construction, Inc.
- Resolution No. 2 - Accepting Bid for Water Treatment Plant Pump House & Process Complex EPDM Roof Replacement Project - J & B Installations, Inc.
- Resolution No. 3 - Accepting Bid for Academy, High, Mill Streets Pavement Rehabilitation & ADA Ramp Project - Luck Bros., Inc.
- Resolution No. 4 - Accepting Bid for the Alex T. Duffy Fairgrounds Grandstand Steel Repair Project - Mattessich Iron Works
- Resolution No. 5 - Accepting Bid for the Thompson Street & Division Street East Water Main Replacement Project Edge Civil Corporation
- Resolution No. 6 - Supporting the Construction of a Multi-Purpose Event Center in the Town of Watertown Proposed by the 1000 Islands Regional Local Development Corporation
- Resolution No. 7 - Sponsoring and Supporting an Application for Restore NY Funding for the 75-79 Public Square Project
- Resolution No. 8 - Sponsoring and Supporting an Application for Restore NY Funding for the Globe Building, 302 Court Street - Special Project
- Public Hearing for Restore NY Grant Application Public Hearing – 302 Court Street- Special Project
- Public Hearing for Restore NY Grant Application Public Hearing – 75-79 Public Square
- Tabled Resolution - Approving Professional Grant Writing Agreement with MSPEN Consulting
- Grant St./Seward St./Henry St. Street Reconstruction Project

**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 September 19, 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**

An email was received from PJ Simao, 137 Main Avenue, seeking a response to prior emails sent to Council regarding a situation that was discussed at a prior Council meeting.

**Above communication was placed on file in the office of the City Clerk.**

## **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

**Joel Bartlett**, Town of Watertown Supervisor and Board Chairman of Thousand Island Regional Local Development, addressed the chair asking for Council's support for a multi-purpose event center, which would hold sporting and entertainment activities and events. He provided details of the proposed facility and the impact that visitors from outside the area would have on surrounding hotels, restaurants and local businesses. He stressed that this facility would not be in competition with anything that the City or YMCA currently offers.

**Bart Bonner**, no address given, spoke about his concerns with the proposed Warming Center to be built behind Shorty's Restaurant on Coffeen Street near Jefferson Community College. He asked how this facility, as well as other proposed facilities to help the homeless, would be funded.

After a brief interruption for the public hearings, Mr. Bonner continued with his suggestion to eliminate the City Police Department and provide funding to the Jefferson County Sherriff's Department for coverage. Lastly, he discussed his views of the homeless situation and suggested he believes it leads to crime and increased cost to the taxpayer.

**Jonathan Phillips**, 735 Mill Street, spoke of his recent visit to California and compared it to the City of Watertown, stating the roads and condition of the city were better in California. He said he feels Council does not do much to improve Watertown. He also mentioned that buildings in California had solar panels and they enforce violations, such as grass clippings in the road and front lawn parking. Lastly, he expressed frustration in Mill Street sewer line updates not being completed because his basement floods during storms and said he would like the buses to run longer hours.

**Seth Labarge**, Jefferson Street, discussed an issue that he has with his neighbor, noting he is upset with the way Code Enforcement is handling it. He said the work that is being done on his neighbor's property is leaving debris in his yard.

**Otis Emmert**, 847 Leray Street, stated that he is the secretary of Leray Street Tenants Association and represents the tenants of Leray Street Apartments and Midtown Towers. He discussed the recent announcement that the City buses will no longer enter the parking lots of the housing facilities. He said he is opposed to this because many elderly and disabled people live in these apartments. He asked for a meeting with CitiBus representatives to discuss ideas on how to address this further.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

**At 7:15 p.m. Mayor Smith asked the City Clerk to read the notice of Public Hearing concerning Restore NY Grant Application Public Hearing – 302 Court Street - Special Project**

**Mayor Smith declared the hearing open at 7:15 p.m.**

No one spoke.

**Mayor Smith declared the hearing closed at 7:16 p.m.**

**At 7:16 p.m. Mayor Smith asked the City Clerk to read the notice of Public Hearing concerning Restore NY Grant Application Public Hearing – 75-79 Public Square**

**Mayor Smith declared the hearing open at 7:16 p.m.**

No one spoke.

**Mayor Smith declared the hearing closed at 7:17 p.m.**

## **R E S O L U T I O N S**

**Resolution No. 1 - Approving Change Order No. 1 for the William T. Field Dr. Road Reconstruction Project - CCI Construction, Inc.**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS on May 16, 2022 the City Council awarded the contract for the William T. Field Drive Road Reconstruction Project to CCI Construction, Inc. for \$333,982, and

WHEREAS CCI Construction, Inc has submitted Change Order #1 requesting \$81,597.98 for additional work performed,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves Change Order #1, which is attached and made part of this resolution, in the amount of \$81,597.98.

**Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce**

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, City Engineer Michael Delaney confirmed for Council Member Olney that the change order was issued by the City engineers after discussion with the contractors.

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

**Resolution No. 2 - Accepting Bid for Water Treatment Plant Pump House & Process Complex EPDM Roof Replacement Project - J & B Installations, Inc.**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS the City desires to replace the existing roofs at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Pump House and Process Complex, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received three (3) sealed bids for the WTP Pump House & Process Complex EPDM Roof Replacement Project, and

WHEREAS on Wednesday, September 7, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by J & B Installations, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from J & B Installations, Inc. in the amount of \$519,750.00, and

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

**Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce**

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Olney inquired about the review of the roof.

Mr. Delaney indicated that a thorough inspection was done, even though this was a recommendation of his predecessor and the Water Department. He clarified that he did look at the roof and agreed with the determination, noting that he thinks there is damage to the under-layer, but it will be reassessed once it is removed.

Council Member Olney asked if Mr. Delaney can determine if the original roof was installed correctly.

Mr. Delaney said that it is hard to tell due to the age of the roof, but some areas may not have been. He assured Council that it will be done correctly this time with oversight and be inspected throughout the process.

**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 Academy, High, Mill Streets Pavement Rehabilitation & ADA Ramp Project - Luck Bros., Inc.**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS the City desires to rehabilitate Academy, High, and Mill Streets to include paving and reconstructing sidewalk corner ramps to comply with current ADA guidelines, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received three (3) sealed bids for the Academy, High, Mill Streets Pavement Rehabilitation & ADA Ramp Project, and

WHEREAS on Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Luck Bros., Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Luck Bros., Inc. in the amount of \$969,319, and

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

**Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce**

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Olney said that many people have asked when Leray Street would be done.

City Manager Mix explained that a section of the sewer needs to be rehabilitated prior to any paving projects being done. He advised that there has been discussion regarding doing a temporary fix if the extensive project cannot be completed in the near future. He added that staff is currently trying to finish the work being done on Massey Street and Cedar Street, which had been planned for this construction season. He reviewed other projects in the works and mentioned that some of the piping which had been delayed has been delivered.

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

**Resolution No. 4 - Accepting Bid for the Alex T. Duffy Fairgrounds Grandstand Steel Repair Project - Mattessich Iron Works**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS the City desires to remove and replace portions of all corroded angled Rakers and Main Supported Carrier Beams beneath the Fairgrounds Grandstand Bleachers at the Fairgrounds Complex, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received three (3) sealed bids for the Alex T. Duffy Fairgrounds Grandstand Repair Project, and

WHEREAS on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Mattessich Iron Works, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Mattessich Iron Works in the amount of \$100,985, and

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

**Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce**

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Olney noted this was under budget by \$200,000.

Mr. Delaney explained that the original budget was based on removing a larger amount of steel, but it was discovered that not all of it needed to be removed. He noted they found solid steel that could be welded to and patched. He clarified that was not an overestimate in terms of the budget, and that it was staff trying to get as close as they could without doing a detailed investigation.

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

**Resolution No. 5 - Accepting Bid for the Thompson Street & Division Street East Water Main Replacement Project Edge Civil Corporation**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS the City desires to replace approximately 2500 linear feet of water main and appurtenances on Thompson Street and Division Street East, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received four (4) sealed bids for the Thompson Street and Division Street East Water Main Replacement Project, and

WHEREAS on Friday, September 23, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and in consultation with Barton & Loguidice and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Edge Civil Corporation, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Edge Civil Corporation in the amount of \$914,790, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager of the City Watertown 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 - Supporting the Construction of a Multi-Purpose Event Center in the Town of Watertown Proposed by the 1000 Islands Regional Local Development Corporation**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS the 1000 Islands Regional Local Development Corporation proposes to build a 520,000 sq. ft. indoor Multi- Purpose Event Center to be a sports, recreation, entertainment, and special events venue on outer Arsenal Street in the Town of Watertown, and

WHEREAS the Center will serve the 1000 Islands and North Country Region and have a positive economic impact on the City of Watertown,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby supports the construction of the proposed Multi-Purpose Events Center.

**Seconded by Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce**

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Olney explained his support for this project, stressing that a large portion of City revenue comes from sales tax. He said that, even though this project is in the County and not the City, it will provide entertainment for the community and bring revenue from the people that come to the area.

Council Member Pierce commented that this project will be great for the community, and she has heard positive feedback from people, but she would like more time to review the project information.

Council Member Ruggiero agreed that this facility will bring people to the area, so she has no problem supporting it, but expressed concerns of losing the contract with the Red and Black and the Wolves.

Mr. Bartlett clarified that they have no plans of taking the Red and Black or the Wolves from the City. He explained that they want to form new leagues other than what the City offers, stressing that they want to enhance what the City already has.

Mayor Smith expressed his concerns about the investment that the taxpayers have made in the arena and that this may be in competition because there are only so many ice hockey and figure skating organizations in the area. He wondered if there is interest in having a work session to discuss the proposal further. He also suggested building the facility in conjunction with the City's arena.

Mr. Bartlett said the City never holds Division 1 ice events and that their main focus will be on training and clinics. He highlighted that this would provide youth with activities, and he reiterated that his organization does not plan on going after those groups because they want to focus on tournament play, such as at the college level.

Discussion turned to the DPAO concerts and other events held at the Fairgrounds arena and Mayor Smith expressed his concerns again about the taxpayer's investment into the City's ice arena.

Council Member Ruggiero pointed out that this facility will offer curling on one of the sheets of ice.

Council Member Olney restated his support, stating that he thinks it will complement what the City offers and bring people to the area.

**At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce voting nay and Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith stating present.**

**Resolution No. 7 - Sponsoring and Supporting an Application for Restore NY Funding for the 75-79 Public Square Project**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS the City of Watertown is eligible for grant funding under Round 6 of the Restore NY Communities Initiative Municipal Grant Program, and

WHEREAS the City Council has considered proposals that qualify for funding under the program and selected one regular project to be included in an application that will be submitted to the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) as follows:

Redevelopment of 75-79 Public Square, Parcel Numbers 7-01-108.000 and 7-01-107.000. The project will transform the vacant and blighted properties into a three-story above ground and one-story below ground mixed-use building. The new development will accommodate uses for commercial space for restaurants, breweries or pubs, as well as market-rate apartments and professional office space.

WHEREAS this project is consistent with all existing local plans, the proposed financing is appropriate for the project, the project will facilitate effective and efficient use of existing and future public resources so as to promote both economic development and preservation of community resources and the project develops and enhances infrastructure and/or other facilities in a manner that will attract, create and sustain employment opportunities in the City of Watertown,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby supports and will sponsor an application for Restore NY funding for the 75-79 Public Square Project and will administer the grant in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations established by ESDC, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is authorized to sign the application and any agreements required by ESDC for grant funding that results from the application.

**Seconded by Mayor Jeffrey M. Smith**

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Pierce stated that she would be abstaining because one of the applicants is her brother-in-law.

**At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Sarah V.C. Pierce.**

**Resolution No. 8 - Sponsoring and Supporting an Application for Restore NY Funding for the Globe Building, 302 Court Street - Special Project**

**Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero**

WHEREAS the City of Watertown is eligible for grant funding under Round 6 of the Restore NY Communities Initiative Municipal Grant Program, and

WHEREAS the City Council has considered proposals that qualify for funding under the program and selected one special project to be included in an application that will be submitted to the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) as follows:



Redevelopment of the Globe Building, 302 Court Street, Parcel Number 7-03-201.000.  
The project will transform the vacant and abandoned 28,000 square foot property into 13-14 market rate apartments and commercial/retail space.

WHEREAS this project is consistent with all existing local plans, the proposed financing is appropriate for the project, the project will facilitate effective and efficient use of existing and future public resources so as to promote both economic development and preservation of community resources and the project develops and enhances infrastructure and/or other facilities in a manner that will attract, create and sustain employment opportunities in the City of Watertown,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby supports and will sponsor an application for Restore NY Special Project funding for the Globe Building, 302 Court Street Special Project and will administer the grant in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations established by ESDC, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is authorized to sign the application and any agreements required by ESDC for grant funding that results from the application.

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

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Resolution - Approving Professional Grant Writing Agreement with MSPEN Consulting**

*(Introduced on 9/19/2022; tabled; appears in its entirety in the 2022 Minutes Book on page 8-10 of the 9/19/2022 minutes).*

**Motion was made by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III to take from the foregoing resolution from the table. Motion was seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.**

Council Member Olney mentioned that the procedure for which he brought this forward was thought through very carefully and he was warned that this might affect Morgan Spencer's reputation if it was to fail, but he did not realize the resistance that he would receive. He said her reputation was disparaged and there were questions asked about grants that she was involved with and innuendos made. He also mentioned that an editorial was written about the process, but he feels there are changes that need to be made in this City government and how it works. He advised that the best move at this point is to ask for a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a grant writer so that all eligible and competent grant writers can apply. He added he thinks the City needs a grant writer for various items which he feels the City needs in order to move it forward.

Referring to comments that she made at the last meeting, Council Member Pierce said she was not trying to disparage Ms. Spencer and was only trying to clarify the information regarding the grants that Ms. Spencer listed she had been involved with because, through Council Member Pierce's work with Senator Ritchie's Office, there were other companies requesting letters of support for these grants. She stressed that Council did not receive Ms. Spencer's resume, nor did she attend the Council meeting in-person to answer these questions. She then relayed that she has received messages from Ms. Spencer on her City Council Facebook page, reading the messages aloud for the public's benefit, and emails from Ms. Spencer demanding that she have two articles written about this process removed from the internet

and have her “friends at the Times” do so as well. She stressed that she does not have this authority and that the questions she asked at the meeting were part of her job as a Council Member to obtain clarification. She apologized if this offended Ms. Spencer, but noted that her comments on Facebook, as well as other comments, were unprofessional, so she has reservations about hiring her as a grant writer for the City. Lastly, she agreed that if the City is going to hire a grant writer, it should go through the RFP process.

Council Member Ruggiero agreed, stating that before this resolution was brought forward, she suggested that the normal process would have been to do an RFP. She explained that this allows the City to get the qualifications. She also suggested doing a six-month contract versus a year. She added they should develop a specific list of things that the City would like to see a grant writer obtain or projects that would benefit the City in order to narrow the scope of what the City is looking for.

Council Member Hickey suggested modifying the resolution to request the City Manager produce an RFP.

Mayor Smith commented that what was discussed at the last meeting was the lack of following a process, noting the Council, as a body, decides whether it should hire a grant writer for a position or hire a grant writer for a specific grant. He added that there was no review of the contract, and he had never seen an open-ended hourly contract during all his years on Council because a grant writer has been specific to a grant. He said he also questioned not knowing the qualifications of this individual because Council was not given a resume, which is not disparaging, and noted Council still has not received a resume even after it was requested. He then went on to describe emails that he has received from Ms. Spencer, which were screenshots of a LinkedIn page and copies of messages sent to the reporter of the Watertown Daily Times asking that her name and company’s name be removed from the story. He read parts of the emails aloud, as well as messages that he has received from Ms. Spencer through his Facebook page and questioned her professionalism. He summarized that if Council, as a body, desires to hire a grant writer, then that person should work for the City Manager and Council should define what the process would be and the contract should be reviewed by the City attorney. He added that Council should also identify what grants they want staff to apply for and suggested this could be discussed at a work session.

In response to Council Member Olney’s question, Attorney Slye confirmed that a Council Member has a right to ask for a resolution to be prepared.

Further discussion and debate occurred on whether the City should hire a grant writer, the role of Council in that process, the time each member puts towards fulfilling the responsibilities on Council, the authority and role of Council versus staff, and the chain of command.

Council Member Olney expressed frustration in how things have always been done and that he is not getting a faster response to his ideas and projects which he requests and brings forward for action, suggesting there is a power struggle.

Mayor Smith explained that, in terms of the process for certain things to take place, a majority of the Council must vote on it. He noted that the examples Council Member Olney listed as things not getting done, such as a waterslide or looking at other constructions companies for pools, are Council Member Olney’s requests and not ones Council, as a body, has asked for, or voted on, in order to direct staff to

work further at them. He reiterated these requests have not been from the majority of Council and staff acts upon the majority of Council, which is a standard policy. He said Council Member Olney specifically asked for this policy to be established through a vote on a resolution, but Council Member Olney does not follow his own policy. He summarized the options for a grant writer as follows: amend the budget to create a position within a department or put out an RFP to hire a grant writer for a specific grant directed by a majority of Council.

**Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero withdrew her introduction.**

**Council Member Clifford G. Olney III withdrew his second.**

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Grant St./Seward St./Henry St. Street Reconstruction Project**

Mayor Smith mentioned the memo that explained the estimate for this project came in much higher. He said he would leave in the decorative street lighting and stormwater mitigation and see how the bid comes in.

In response to Council Member Olney's question, Mr. Mix explained that this is an engineer estimate, which is put together for budget purposes and sometimes is done a long time in advance of the project. He added that this one was done before the inflation and supply chain issues occurred, so this is the current estimate based on design.

Planning and Community Development Director Michael Lumbis replied to Council Member Olney's questions and provided more details on what the projects entails.

Mr. Mix advised how the project engineers are chosen, noting that, because this project is funded by CDBG, it must go through an RFP.

Council concurred with staff's recommendation to put this to bid first with the options as alternatives to see if they come in lower than expected and then decided if some items should be eliminated.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Overdose Awareness Day**

Council Member Hickey mentioned that this event was held on September 21 in order to address the stigma for those that have lost, or are still struggling with, the fight against addiction. He said they provided resources on where to get help and places for healing and remembrances.

### **Veterans Clinic Open House**

Council Member Hickey advised there is a new clinic at the site of the old Planet Fitness in Stateway Plaza. He said there is space to serve the 4,000 veterans in the area.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

Council Member Hickey announced the following meetings and events: City Planning Board Meeting on October 4, Ethical Standards Training on October 4, German-American Flag Raising on October 6, Zoning Steering Committee Meeting on October 6, Fall Fest River Development/Local Arts Fall

Festival on October 8, Out of the Darkness Walk/Suicide Awareness Walk on October 9, Council Work Session on October 11, and Thompson Park Work Day on October 15.

### **NYS COVID Community Levels Map**

Council Member Hickey said the CDC updated the map showing areas where COVID is at different levels of risk. He noted there are nine counties in New York State, Jefferson County being one of them, that are now at high risk.

### **Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting**

Council Member Hickey announced this event will be held on December 2 at 6:00 p.m. in front of City Hall. He noted the parade route will be along Washington Street between Winslow and Stone Streets.

### **One-Chip Challenge**

Council Member Hickey advised that a local school district issued a warning to parents about a social media challenge, which can cause serious health problems including heart attack and esophageal damage.

### **CREDO Groundbreaking**

Council Member Hickey congratulated CREDO on their \$9.2 million renovation of 611 West Main Street into a 20,000 sq. ft. outpatient facility for substance abuse and mental health treatment.

### **Drug Issues**

Council Member Hickey warned that colored fentanyl pills are being disguised as Skittles and Nerds candy and being packaged in the original candy wrappers and he expressed concerns with children going door-to-door for Halloween candy. He discussed the amount of fentanyl powder being seized by the DEA in recent months and the number of overdoses due to fentanyl. Council Member Hickey indicated that Fort Drum and PIVOT were teaming up to teach parents on how to talk to their children about drug and alcohol use. Upcoming sessions will be held on October 11 and October 12 on Fort Drum. Lastly, Council Member Hickey spoke of recent drug seizures and drug involvement calls to the Fire Department in the past 3 days.

### **Moses Eames Memorial Fountain**

Mentioning there was an article in the paper recently about Mrs. Roswell P. Flower gifting this fountain to the City in 1906, Council Member Hickey asked for the location and condition of the remaining pieces.

### **Pool Attendance**

Council Member Hickey noted that pool attendance increased in 2022. He reviewed the numbers from 2021 and 2022 and offered suggestions on how to improve the data collection process in the future.

### **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

Council Member Hickey mentioned that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the Annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk will occur on October 22 at the Alex T. Duffy Fairgrounds.

### **Narcan Training**

Council Member Hickey announced CREDO is offering training the first Tuesday of the month and will accept walk-ins.

**Response to Privilege of the Floor Comments**

To Mr. LaBarge's comments, Council Member Olney said he does not understand why some people get letters of enforcement and some do not, but he said that Code Enforcement has been very helpful to him in other areas recently.

To Mr. Phelps' comments, Council Member Olney remarked that California's roads are smoother because they do not endure the effects of winter weather like the City of Watertown does.

To Mr. Bonner's comments, Council Member Olney agreed that tenants are damaging rental apartments, and something needs to be done.

Regarding homelessness, Council Member Olney said this is the City's problem as well as the County, but the County is working on a plan to address it. He also announced that the owner of 219 Arsenal Street is willing to let it be used as a warming center for the winter months. He said that he will continue to work with WARM on this and on the homeless problem.

In response to the comments about the buses not going into the parking lots, Council Member Olney said he agreed with Mr. Emmert and is interested in seeing what can be done to resolve this.

**Crime / Surveillance Cameras / Bail Reform**

Council Member Olney mentioned that the Police Department is shorthanded so he would like to suggest a resolution to invest in surveillance cameras for troubled areas in the City. He said they would be used to gather evidence of criminal activity. He also said that he has read the Bail Reform and thinks there is more that can be done by the judges instead of letting people back out on the street.

**Pool Attendance**

Council Member Olney remarked that it is not fair to look at the numbers for any political purpose, noting that if the numbers show that more people from the County use the pool then the City should ask for the County to contribute to the cost.

**Request to Purchase Property**

Council Member Olney advised that he has received a request from Jeff Roshia to purchase a parcel on Burlington Street and from John MacGregor to purchase a parcel on Morrison Street.

**Water Drainage Issue on Barben Avenue**

Council Member Olney said he was told of an issue on Barben Avenue with the water drainage.

**Skateboard Park**

Council Member Olney said the City cannot build a skateboard park in Watertown, even if there is enough support for it from Council, while there's a homelessness and crime problem. He stated it would not be feasible until the City takes care of these other priorities first.

**Budget for Public Service Message**

Council Member Olney recommended budgeting money for public service messages and suggested doing videos of city staff in various departments doing their jobs. He said this will allow the public to understand the work that is being done by the City.

**Dog Complaint**

Council Member Olney reported that he has heard of an issue of a vicious dog being tied up outside of a rental house and it does not allow the tenant in the upstairs apartment to exit their doorway. He wondered what could be done.

**Flynn Pool**

Council Member Olney spoke of the decision to open a third pool and said this was decided by the last election, so he does not understand why it is being discussed again. He discussed his support for this decision, noting that many people on the north side want Flynn Pool to open. He added that he will actively campaign against any candidate in the next election that does not support this.

**Solar Eclipse Meeting**

Council Member Pierce provided an update, mentioning that she has spoken to a city in Wyoming that hosted a similar event in 2017.

**Operation Greenlight**

New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) is having a program called Operation Greenlight, which encourages municipalities to light up their buildings with green lights to honor veterans during the week of Veterans Day.

**Adopt- A-Spot**

Council Member Ruggiero asked if the website could be updated to list what spots have been taken and which ones are still available.

**Thompson Park Master Plan**

Council Member Ruggiero said the Friends of Thompson Park met with Starr Whitehouse regarding the master plan. She said that it was a very informative and productive meeting and the representatives met with the City Manager and staff as well.

**Downtown Streetscape Project Concerns**

Council Member Ruggiero reported there are concerns that the cones are not lit at night. She also reported that one business owner is having trouble with the parking spots being blocked in front of their building. She asked if CCI could work better with staff and business owners, especially if they want to continue to do future projects with the City.

Mr. Delaney reviewed the issues that the City has seen and how they are being resolved. He said that staff will continue to pay close attention to this business owner's property and parking spots.

**CitiBus Concerns – Privilege of the Floor Comments**

In response to Mr. Emmert's concerns, Mayor Smith asked the City Manager to arrange a meeting with him to discuss this further.

**Motion was made by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero to move into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining, to discuss proposed, pending, or current litigation and to discuss the employment history of a particular individual.**

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

Council moved into Executive Session at 9:35 p.m.

Council reconvened at 10:55 p.m.

Mayor Smith advised that City Manager Mix's contract will expire on December 31 of this year. He said that he has been speaking with Mr. Mix regarding the contract renewal, but Mr. Mix has concerns about some issues and has decided to not renew his contract. He thanked Mr. Mix for his hard work, noting that he came out of retirement to help the City. He said, in his opinion, Mr. Mix has been a phenomenal City Manager, mentioning his demeanor, disposition, knowledge and dedication, and that he has the respect of staff and the community. He added that some things have happened in the past several months that the City Manager does not wish to tolerate or work with. The Mayor said the City will be in a worse position by losing Mr. Mix as the City Manager and he apologized that he could not do more to fix the problems that Mr. Mix has had to deal with.

Council Member Ruggiero commented that she definitely supports Mr. Mix staying on and she thinks there is unanimous support for him to continue.

Council Member Hickey agreed.

Council Member Olney said that he thinks city staff respects Mr. Mix and he respects him as well. Noting that he is passionate, he said sometimes people misconstrue what his interests are, but he would like Mr. Mix to stay because he has done a great job. He said the issue is not between him and Mr. Mix but that it is between him and the Mayor.

### **A D J O U R N M E N T**

**At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 11:00 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