



## CITY OF WAUWATOSA

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### CITIZENS ADVISORY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 15, 2006 – 7 p.m.

PRESENT: J. Albert, K. Barry, T. Brown, F. Defrain, R. Deuel, J. Engelhardt, M. Kreiter, R. Lau, P. Matthews, M. Moylan, Ald. J. Stepaniak -11

EXCUSED: C. Graupner, J. Kasdorf

ALSO W. Kappel, Director of Public Works; W. Wehrley, City Engineer; J. Plass, Acctg. Mgr.;

PRESENT: Chief D. Redman, Deputy Chief R. Rice, Fire Dept.

Ald. Stepaniak as Chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Following introductions of committee members and staff, Ald. Stepaniak outlined the agenda for this meeting and the next on August 29 at which Hart Park and Water Department proposals will be discussed.

#### **Fire Department Facility Study—Proposals for Fire Station #1**

Chief Redman reported on the background and recommendations of a Fire Department Facility Study presented to the Common Council in May by Zimmerman Design Group. He said that for many years, the Capital Improvements Program contained a note about fire station #1; and when he became chief in 1996, he recommended starting the process of evaluating the building and deciding what to do. He was instead directed, however, to do a study of how little could be spent to just fix up the building and “get by.” A subsequent \$7,000 study by Zimmerman Design Group did find that the building should be replaced and estimated the cost of doing so at \$4 million, a complete renovation at about \$3 million, and limited renovation at \$1.5 million at that time. The city ultimately spent \$330,000 for a very limited renovation that involved none of the mechanical or structural issues. About half of that cost went to satisfy ADA requirements such as elevators or bathrooms; the remainder went to redesign of the dormitory and office space to make it functional. So, that renovation provided some valuable use but did not solve underlying problems.

Chief Redman said that a structural engineer has recommended that the entire east wall be taken down and reconstructed. Other concerns include a structural beam over the boiler room, structural columns in the middle of an apparatus bay, a stairway that is pulling away from the building, and other design features that wouldn't be seen in a modern fire station. One of the issues that refocused concerns was the 1998 purchase of two trucks specifically designed on a low profile chassis because of limitations at fire station #1. There have been major problems related to functionality and service of those trucks. Unfortunately, due to discussion about the low-profile trucks, door height at the station has become the focus issue. The door height at station #1 is 10 ft. 6 in. Modern fire stations generally have 14 ft. doors, and fire trucks normally are around 12 ft. in height. The underlying issue really is the mechanical and structural problems. From an engineering standpoint, Chief Redman said, it makes no sense to put money into the building and he has stopped requesting any repair funds.

The study commissioned last year focused on several options: renovation on site with construction of a new apparatus bay, complete new construction on the current site, or complete new construction on one of two recommended sites. The consultant's recommendation was new construction at a site at Harwood Avenue and Mower Court, which would provide a level piece of land with more space for better configuration. A consideration in that recommendation was the belief that it would be much more efficient for operations to continue at the current site and then move to a new site when construction is completed than to try to operate at a site where construction is taking place. Reconstruction at the current site would be extremely disruptive and would make a one-year project last two years. Renovation of the existing building and partial new construction was estimated to cost about \$9.4 million including property acquisition, the cost of phased construction, and other factors. The biggest savings for that option would be that only two relatively small properties would have to be acquired as opposed to 8-9 at the recommended Mower site, where \$1.6 million is estimated in acquisition costs. Chief Redman said that he would not favor the other new site option at 68th and Milwaukee, feeling it would not offer any significant improvement over the current site for site layout and would involve significant traffic flow problems. Also, it is at the extreme far eastern part of the defined good response area.

Chief Redman explained that the Harwood and Mower site was selected as indicative of the amount of property needed, to identify property cost, and to identify the process. Any similarly sized area of individual properties in the proper response area could be identified for consideration. He described the response area, or the area within which fire station #1 should be located, as a diamond-shaped area starting at North and Wauwatosa Avenues, extending to 68th and Milwaukee Avenue, then to Ludington and Milwaukee Avenue, then to the south, cutting off at the railroad tracks. A station cannot effectively be sited south of the railroad tracks.

Chief Redman reported that this matter has been reviewed at three meetings of the Common Council's Community Development Committee. They concurred that there is a need to take action to either replace or renovate the station, and they are expected to next decide whether to recommend renovating existing or construct new and, if the latter, at what site.

Ald. Stepaniak said that the question of financing may require a referendum, but that cannot be addressed until plans and costs are known. Questions and discussion continued as follows:

Potential financial gain on future uses of the current site: Chief Redman said that the value of the current site was not included in the study. New construction on that site would cost around \$10 million vs. \$11.4 million at the Mower site, but staying at the current site involves at lot less property acquisition. In moving to a new site, higher property acquisitions could be offset by the value of the existing site. The real value to the city isn't what the property sells for but the value of new development, which he felt would more than offset any taxes lost from acquired properties. Deputy Chief Rice said that the city will also consider the value of the use of the site on the Village area and the impact of a different use on the neighborhood. The City Development Director has described this site as a "critical mass of commercial property in the Village area." Mr. Stacey later advised caution about the value of the existing site for development. There are often differences between what city planners think will be developed and what the market will yield, he said. Mr. Kappel reported that the Community Development Director did get input on the site's potential from some developers.

Other possible sites: Mr. Kappel said that many sites have been mentioned. Staff met as a group to consider locations, looking at the footprint needed and what else is going on around the city. Chief Redman said that he expects other ideas to come forward and would be open to considering them. Asked about industrial sites along State Street, he said that they are marginal, being too far east. The Greek church site on Wauwatosa Avenue may be revisited, although there are significant concerns about the width of the street and potential backups.

The advantage of the Harwood and Mower site is that it is on a wide street that isn't heavily traveled and allows safe entrance and exit.

Time frame: Chief Redman referred to Schedule I, page 20, of the Capital Improvements Program draft where \$840,000 is projected for architectural design services in 2008 and \$1.6 million for property acquisition. In 2009, \$9.6 million is designated for construction. Construction at the current site would probably take two years, but the period would be much shorter at a new site. Typically, the issue would first go for bonding, which would be worked out when the matter goes to the Budget and Finance Committee. Chief Redman noted that door height at station #2 would be addressed in 2010 at an estimated cost of \$609,000. He confirmed that all estimated costs include inflationary increases through the year of construction.

History: The building was originally constructed as a laundry in 1927 and was taken over by the police and fire departments in 1942. The police department moved out in 1970, and part of the building was removed at that time. Station #2 on Mayfair Road is a 1955-56 building constructed for a volunteer department. The city added a new apparatus bay and dormitory space when it annexed that area. Station #3 on Watertown Plank Road has the best modern design. It was built in 1981 by Milwaukee County and turned over to the city under a 60-year county grounds fire protection contract.

Life expectancy of low profile vehicles: The vehicle housed at station #1 has an 18-year life extending to 2016. The other truck housed elsewhere but serviced at station #1 has a 15-year life to 2013. Deputy Chief Rice noted, however, that the equipment is very problematic and not meeting life expectations.

Size of new vs. existing: Chief Redman said that the biggest thing is orientation of the apparatus bay. It currently dumps out to a large driveway area to the south where there is plenty of room to work on equipment. A new equipment bay would be located where that driveway is now and would face the street. With an 80-ft. deep apparatus bay, there would only be 30-40 feet in front for a 25-ft. long truck. That property is only about 100 ft. deep; ideal depth would be about 175 feet. Current space is a little over 18,000 sq. ft., and the consultant says a proper size is 31,000 sq. ft. The Community Development Committee will probably look at total footage and could suggest less in some areas.

Deputy Chief Rice noted that West Allis had a similar problem with a long narrow lot when they built a new station. When they pull their main engine out onto the apron to do equipment testing, the front bumper is in traffic. That is a good example of what the department is trying to avoid. They need to be able to use the apron area as something of a workbench area. Chief Redman added that reorienting the bay also requires more room to swing into the street, probably requiring elimination of all parking on the east side of Underwood Avenue adjacent to businesses. The current site is very well located for the service it provides but would be less desirable for the way it would be used. If there isn't another option, acquisition of only one additional property there would probably serve the department's needs. Mr. Kappel added that he is aware that every municipality with old engine houses is encountering the same problems with accommodating modern equipment.

In ensuing discussion, committee members expressed considerable support for construction at a new site but were somewhat concerned about the success of a referendum. Mr. Albert recommended building a credible station at this time and not wasting money on something that is not. It is important to invest money to do it right and not spend the same amount on a second-rate option, he said. He suggested putting greater emphasis on the value of the existing station #1 property so as to not bias the cost comparisons.

Although there were several comments that the existing site might be more easily accepted by the community, Ald. Stepaniak observed that the community has supported expanding the police station, library, and school projects in the past. There was further discussion regarding a possible referendum. The need to clearly state the reasons for a new station and graphically depict the area in which it could be located was noted. Chief Redman will provide the committee with copies of a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article that had a good presentation of the response area. Ms. Matthews requested a summary of the consultant's report. Additional information is also available on the city website, <http://www.wauwatosa.net>.

Ald. Stepaniak advised committee members to consider the best option based on what they know but to also consider the larger context in which it is being decided. The view of the chief, the department, and the city is being presented, and discussion is also being dominated by the response from those who are affected by one of the sites. It would be helpful to the process for this group to determine what criteria to use and what position it takes, whether it is site specific or not. The committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the proper elective body. Additional requested information will be forwarded to committee members, and this matter will be discussed again at the next meeting.

Chief Redman asked the committee to address continuity of operations during construction, which he believes is a viable consideration and a huge operational issue. Members should call him or visit his office if they have any questions.

(The meeting recessed at 8:26 p.m. and reconvened at 8:33 p.m.)

**Schedule A, page 1 – Summary and Funding, 2005-2011**

Ms. Plass reviewed spreadsheet information on actual 2005, estimated 2006, and projected 2007-2011 capital improvement expenditures. Funding sources for long-term Capital Projects Fund projects and shorter-term General Fund projects are identified. Total program expenditures projected for 2007-2011 range from \$8.5 million in 2007 to \$16.5 million in 2009. Details appear in schedules on subsequent pages. Listed separately are projected 2008-2011 expenditures that would be subject to referendum because the costs are beyond the city's self-imposed \$3.5 million bonding limit.

The Ald. Stepaniak explained that the self-imposed limitation means that the city will not borrow more than that amount without a referendum. Changing that limitation would require Council action. State-mandated items are exceptions to that limit, and there also are projects that are CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) or TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) funded, which were also explained.

Mr. Wehrley provided a list of bonding ordinance changes leading up to the current \$3,500,000 limit established in 1998. A former cap on the amount of any one project was eliminated in 2002. Although changes were discussed at the Capital Summit last year, the Chair reported that no recommendation was made to the Common Council due to the need for further information on major upcoming projects.

Mr. Albert said it would be helpful to have information on the percentage of the city's budget that goes into capital improvements and how that has progressed over the years.

**Schedule L, page 23 – History of Capital Improvements, Debt Service and General Obligation Debt 1999-2005:**

This is a synopsis of financing of actual expenditures and how debt service comes into play. Debt service paid by the tax levy will decrease in 2007 due to payoff of library bonds this year. A jump in General Obligation Debt

in 2005 is due to a State Trust Fund Loan relating to pension liability. Ms. Plass noted that Wauwatosa historically always has had unused borrowing capacity based on equalized value. She indicated that additional financial information could be provided at the next meeting, if desired.

### **Schedule B, pages 2-3 – Summary of Proposed Projects**

Mr. Wehrley pointed out that proposed projects are summarized by type of work, year, estimated cost, and funding. Details follow on subsequent pages. Water utility costs will be provided at the next meeting in an updated Schedule B.

### **Schedule C, pages 4-11 – Street Related Public Works Projects**

Estimated Pavement Cost and Assessments per Foot, p. 4: This is the core page of tables from which costs for Type A, B, and C street construction on the ensuing pages are estimated. Mr. Wehrley explained that Type C resurfacing typically is done at the 36-40-year point and type A or B reconstruction 40 years later. The city's sealcoating and crack sealing programs help maintain that longevity. The 2007-2011 assessment rates per foot of frontage assume a 4% increase per year but are reviewed each year.

2007-2011 Pavement, p. 5-9: Every spring staff drives every city street and rates the surface condition, quality of the ride, quality of curbs, and condition of drive approaches and then ranks the streets. Three 2007 streets are carried over from 2006. Improvement of slightly over 2 miles of roads is proposed next year, which does not meet the 4-miles-per-year standard needed to maintain a 40-year reconstruction schedule citywide. Mr. Wehrley commented that we would, therefore, see a slow degradation in pavement quality since the key is doing maintenance while a street is still in good condition. Waiting longer leads to complete reconstruction because there is no base left to salvage.

Committee members commented on the importance of maintaining streets and infrastructure and prioritizing allocations for those projects. Again noting the \$3.5 million cap, Mr. Wehrley said that the road system drives the program but infrastructure is the greatest cost. If the amount of paving is doubled, for example, an extra \$1.5 million would likely be needed for utility work. Other capital costs each year include traffic signals, bridge repairs, and spot improvements. Fire trucks, which are very expensive, are also capital funded, and other parts of the capital program must be scaled back significantly in years that those purchases are scheduled. Committee members requested a breakdown showing allocation of the \$3.5 million annual bonding.

Mr. Wehrley reported that, following last year's Capital Summit, the city administrator put together a strategic plan for the water utility that mapped out their infrastructure including the age of the mains and their expected life, and projected a long term, sustainable, average annual expenditure for the utility that was presented to the Budget and Finance committee. Before resigning earlier this year, he had reached the draft level on a similar project for pavement, sanitary sewers, and storm sewers. Looming on the horizon is the city's NR 16 permit, which has some costly components, and the Department of Justice settlement against MMSD and 28 communities. The first requirement of the latter settlement is sanitary manhole inspections, which are in progress. Following that is peak wet weather flow management based on what is determined to be an acceptable level flow. These items are eligible for funding above the \$3.5 million cap but are part of increased overall expenditures. In two or three years, there may be a fundamental shift in the program from paving streets that are prioritized for repair to streets on which utility work is necessary in order to meet flow criteria.

The committee discussed the need to increase the bonding cap and possible options for doing so including some type of automatic indexing or grid methodology, perhaps tied to equalized value or some other factor.

**Schedule C, page 10-11 – Public Works Projects**

Drive approaches and sidewalks costs listed are those associated with repaving. The sanitary sewer work (p. 10) is in connection with mandate or permit compliance, which is outside the bonding cap. Other sanitary and storm sewer work (p. 11) funded by long-term debt is listed on streets within the annual street program as well as streets outside the program. The 2007 allocation includes funding for changing bypass pump discharges from storm to sanitary sewers to comply with current permit requirements. Another big amount next year is for Schoonmacher Creek safety grating.

**Schedule D, pages 12-14 – Public Works Projects**

Spot improvements, pavement repair on arterial streets, sealcoating, and crack filling (p. 12) become more important each year as repaving is pushed back. Every year the city does sidewalk and drive approach work (p. 13) in 10% of the city. That work is assessed to abutting homeowners except for handicapped ramps and repairs necessitated by tree roots. In 2007, a consultant will need to address structural repairs to the Harmonee bridge. Traffic signal improvements (p. 14) include continuing replacement of aging traffic controllers and installation of vehicle detectors at signalized intersections. Funding is also shown for Watertown Plank Road widening, miscellaneous projects, and outside designs. It was noted that the city has major traffic control issues that are related to state plans for Hwy. 45, but timing is questionable since there have been some delays at the state level.

**Schedule E, page 15 - Public Works Building, City Yard & Landfill Site**

Overhead door replacement and door openers in 2007 would replace rotting doors on the north side of the public works building. No other projects are projected.

**Schedule F, page 16 – Parks**

Tennis courts that have been crumbling since the last flooding are scheduled for replacement in 2007 along with general maintenance repairs and floodproofing of the Muellner and parks administration buildings. Partial funding through MMSD and DNR grants will cover some of the floodproofing costs.

**Schedule G, page 17 – Municipal Complex**

Phase I of carpet replacement is projected in 2007 as well as replacement of voting equipment, installation of a radio frequency identity system in the library, and replacement of an obsolete fire detection system.

**Schedule H, pages 18-19 – Water Department Projects**

The Water Superintendent will discuss this schedule at the next meeting.

**Schedule I, page 20 – Fire Department**

Vehicle replacements, emergency vehicle pre-emption devices, and work on the training roof simulator are projected in 2007.

**Schedule J, page 21 – Police Department**

Phase I of carpet replacement, a data storage solution, and replacement of the 30-year-old air conditioning system are listed in 2007.

**Schedule K, page 22 – Major Projects Beyond 5-Year Program**

Included here are sanitary and storm sewer projects in Meinecke Avenue from 81st Street to Swan Boulevard and in the Ruby Avenue area from 100th to 106th Streets. The cost of those projects would exceed the amount

of an entire year's program, and Mr. Kappel indicated that they may be delayed until there is an increase in the bonding cap.

Ald. Stepaniak announced that the next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on August 29, 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

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Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk  
City of Wauwatosa