

# Watertown City Council

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## ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,  
Vice President &  
District C Councilor

John M. Airasian,  
Councilor At Large

Caroline Bays,  
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,  
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,  
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,  
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,  
District B Councilor

Emily Izzo,  
District D Councilor

## Committee on Public Safety Report of the Meeting March 6, 2023

The Committee convened on Monday March 6, 2023 at 6:00 pm in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, as a hybrid meeting with remote participation by zoom. Present were John Airasian, Chair; Emily Izzo, Vice Chair and Vincent Piccirilli, Secretary. Also present were City Manager George Proakis, and John Parow of Parow Consulting & Associates. Present on zoom were Councilors Lisa Feltner and Anthony Palomba, retired Fire Chief Robert Quinn, and resident Elodia Thomas. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the desired qualities for next Fire Chief.

Mr. Proakis began with comments about the Civil Service hiring process, and introduced Mr. Parow, the Public Safety Consultant hired to run the Assessment Center for hiring the new Fire Chief. Mr. Parow gave a presentation on the Assessment Center process (see attached). Questions from the Committee clarified the following points:

- Once the position is posted, there will be an 8 week period for candidates to apply, and then the Assessment Center will be one day, and then the results must be submitted to Civil Service within 24 hours.
- There are 5 assessors including Mr. Parow, and the other four assessors are retired Fire Chiefs from around New England, none of which have any ties to Watertown.
- Candidates from outside the Watertown Fire Department can apply.
- No outside observers are allowed during the Assessment Center.
- Civil Service will submit to the City Manager the top 3 ranked candidates.

Next the Committee discussed the desired qualities for next Fire Chief.

Councilor Piccirilli offered a list with two major categories:

### Management Skills

1. Managing staff in a collective bargaining environment
2. Commitment to safe, inclusive, diverse, and productive workplace
3. Addressing employee mental and physical wellbeing, tailored specifically to the hazards faced by members of the fire department
4. Public outreach and feedback on community concerns and public communications skills
5. Budget setting and tracking, and departmental goal setting and metrics for progress
6. Commitment to policy and processes, and NFPA and other national standards
7. Department training, with an emphasis on emerging threats and new techniques, and preventing on-the-job injuries.

### Technical Skills

1. Firefighting operations and fire prevention strategies based on the science of fire and emerging threats, and new technologies for detecting and suppressing fire, and performing technical rescue.

2. Emergency medical services and best practices and emerging technologies for both basic life support and advanced life support.
3. Community wide emergency management to prepare for, and respond quickly and effectively, with focus on inter-agency and regional partnerships.
4. Hazardous materials risk management and emergency response, specifically with the growing life sciences business cluster in Watertown.

Councilor Izzo offered the following:

1. Cancer prevention for firefighters due to occupational exposure
2. Response to drug overdose calls by the Fire Department
3. Address increasing population growth and growing lab space

Councilor Airasian offered the following:

1. Budgeting skills
2. Effective response by the Fire Department
3. Safe and inclusive working environment
4. Community risk reduction as an emerging city with new industries
5. Leadership skills in the department and with the public
6. Hazmat response with new labs

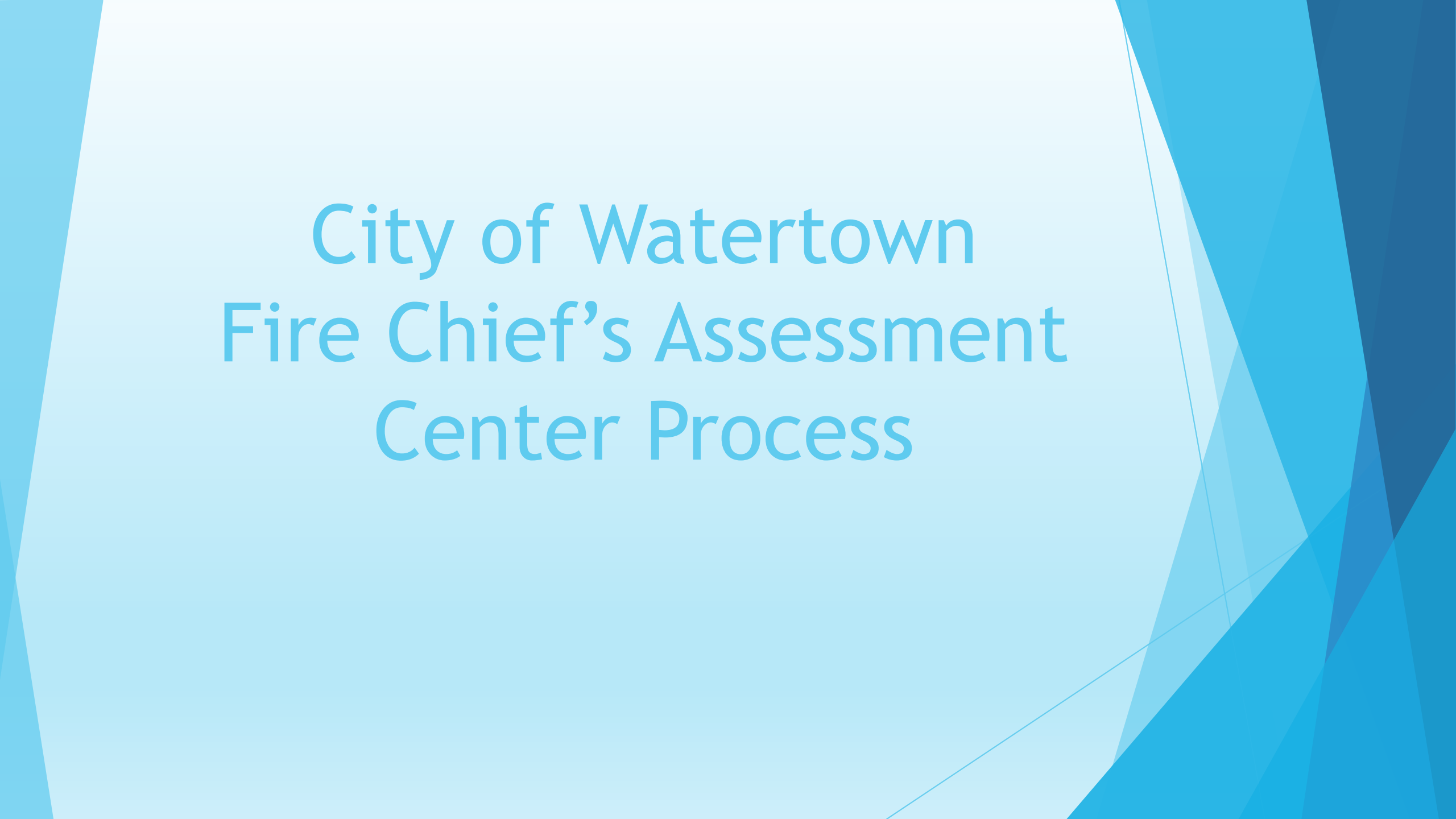
Councilor Palomba added: Diverse and inclusive environment in the department, and take reports of insensitive behavior seriously.

Councilor Feltner submitted by email: I would want our next Fire Chief to have experience in Emergency Management planning as this area deserves to have more attention in Watertown.

The Committee adjourned at 6:31 pm.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli

Attachment: Parow Consulting presentation



# City of Watertown Fire Chief's Assessment Center Process

# Assessment Centers are Based on:

- ▶ A specific and systematic analysis of the tasks associated with the targeted position;
- ▶ Needed knowledge, skills, abilities;
- ▶ Any other characteristics, as dictated, to perform the tasks of the target job

# The Assessment Center will consist of:

- ▶ Multiple, job-related exercises
- ▶ Typically, four of the following exercises are specially developed and administered
  - In-Basket – Out-Basket exercise
  - Role playing
    - Problem Employee
    - Community Meeting
    - Media Exercise
    - Etc.
  - Group exercise
  - Written/Administrative problem-solving exercise
  - Oral presentation
  - Emergency Incident Simulation
    - Incident Response
  - Rapid fire questioning
  - Interview

# Exercises and Development

Although the exercise titles are the same, the content is unique to the community and department

- ▶ We gather information from the City, HR, Fire Chief and others as City Administration sees fit
- ▶ We then develop a working profile for the position
- ▶ Look at current and future issues/needs facing the department
- ▶ Work with the City to decide on the best exercises to fit these needs
- ▶ Then develop the appropriate content for each exercise

# Assessment Center Itself

- ▶ The Assessment Center will take place over a one-day period and held at a location within City
- ▶ Candidate will be only known to the Assessors by a Candidate number
- ▶ Candidates will be scored by multiple Assessors on each exercise and against the same criteria
- ▶ Consensus scoring will be used in each exercise by the Assessors
- ▶ The Assessors all have significant municipal government experience and considered top in their field, at or above the position being tested for. All are well seasoned Assessors

# After the Assessment Center

- ▶ All scores will be submitted directly to Civil Service, within 24 hours of the Assessment Center

Questions?