

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
AGENDA
Monday, November 3, 2025
7 p.m.

This shall serve as notice that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council will be held on Monday, November 3, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 245 Washington Street, Watertown, New York.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

COMMUNICATIONS

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

PUBLIC HEARING

7:15 p.m.	Amending the Code of the City of Watertown § 310: Zoning Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail
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RESOLUTIONS

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Resolution No. 1 – | Authorizing a Fire Vehicle to Be Declared a Surplus Vehicle and Authorization to Repurpose the Vehicle as a Training Tool |
| Resolution No. 2 – | Authorizing the Standardization of Traffic Signals Equipment, Ancillary Components, and Software for the Department of Public Works |
| Resolution No. 3 – | Readopting Fiscal Year 2025-26 General and Capital Fund Budgets – Central Garage Lift |
| Resolution No. 4 – | Finding That Amending Municipal Code § 310: Zoning Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail Will Not Have a Significant Impact on the Environment |

- Resolution No. 5 – Re-Authorizing Fund Raising Through the Northern New York Community Foundation For the Construction of a Skate Park (Extended Fund Raising Period)
- Resolution No. 6 – Authorizing the Initiation of a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program
- Resolution No. 7 – Requesting Congressional Assistance to Re-Evaluate EPA Filtration Mandate

ORDINANCES

LOCAL LAW

- Proposed Local Law of 2025 – A Local Law Establishing a Charter Review Commission

OLD BUSINESS

- Ordinance - Amending the Code of the City of Watertown § 310: Zoning Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail

STAFF REPORTS

1. Board and Commission Report and Letter of Interest

NEW BUSINESS

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To discuss the employment history of a particular individual.

ADJOURNMENT

WORK SESSION

Next Work Session is scheduled for Monday, November 10, at 7:00 p.m.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING IS MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025.

Res. No. 1

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Deputy Chief - Michael Kellogg

Subject: Authorizing a Fire Vehicle to Be Declared a Surplus Vehicle and
Authorization to Repurpose the Vehicle as a Training Tool

The City of Watertown Fire Department is requesting that the Fire Department's 2008 Chevrolet Tahoe, identified as Vehicle ID 8-12, be declared surplus. The vehicle has exceeded its serviceable life and is no longer suitable for operational use within the department.

Staff recommends that the surplus vehicle be retained and repurposed as a training tool for the Fire Department. It will be utilized for hands-on training exercises such as vehicle extrication techniques or live vehicle fire simulations. Upon complete use of the vehicle, it will be disposed of as deemed appropriate.

A resolution authorizing this action is attached for City Council consideration.

RESOLUTION

Page 1 of 1

Authorizing a Fire Vehicle to Be Declared
a Surplus Vehicle and Authorization to
Repurpose the Vehicle as a Training Tool

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

WHEREAS the City of Watertown Fire Department currently owns a 2008 Chevrolet Tahoe, identified as Vehicle ID 8-12, and

WHEREAS said vehicle has exceeded its serviceable life and is no longer suitable for regular department operations, and

WHEREAS City staff recommends that the vehicle be designated as a surplus vehicle and be retained for training exercises,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby declares the 2008 Chevrolet Tahoe (Vehicle ID 8-12) as surplus, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the vehicle shall be retained by the Fire Department and used as a training tool.

Seconded by _____

Res No. 2

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Eric Wagenaar, City Manager

Subject: Authorizing the Standardization of Traffic Signals Equipment, Ancillary Components, and Software for the Department of Public Works

The Superintendent of Public Works recommends standardizing certain equipment for Traffic Signal Equipment to minimize repair and maintenance time and to establish an inventory of spare parts.

A resolution authorizing the standardization of specific equipment has been prepared for City Council consideration.

RESOLUTION

Page 1 of 1

Authorizing Standardization of Traffic Signals
Equipment, Ancillary Components, and
Software for the Department of Public Works

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

WHEREAS the City of Watertown owns and operates the pedestrian safety system within the limits of the City, Watertown, NY 13601, and

WHEREAS based upon proven field performance, product compatibility, staff efficiencies, technical support availability, and reduction in inventory costs, the City desires to standardize its pedestrian safety equipment, ancillary components and software for the various equipment listed below, and

WHEREAS THE City Council deems it to be in the best interest of the City of Watertown to authorize the standardization of certain equipment at the City of Watertown Department of Public Works to minimize complications with respect to repair and maintenance of equipment and also to establish a proper and accessible inventory of spare parts, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York that it hereby authorizes the Purchasing Department of the City of Watertown to standardize the pedestrian safety equipment and purchase as necessary.

Pedestrian Safety Equipment, Ancillary Components and Software for Standardization

Equipment

Pedestrian Safety Systems including (button assembly, signage,
Brackets, software and all associated components
involved)

Make

Marblelite Equipment Corp.

Seconded by _____

Res. No. 3

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Eric Wagenaar, City Manager

Subject: Readopting Fiscal Year 2025-26 General and Capital Fund Budgets – Central Garage Lift

The current lift at the Department of Public Works' garage that services the bus fleet was removed from service back in June and just recently put back into service. DPW was waiting on parts that the vendor had to make because the lift is obsolete. The lift is now back in service, but it has not been determined how long the fix will last. The lift was fixed temporarily with some replacement parts, and DPW electricians working with them to replace some faulty wiring.

Staff recommend replacing the existing lift with the same-sized unit with the same capabilities. However, doing so will also require new concrete work to accept the installation. The new lift will be procured from a county contract. The present lift will either be declared surplus and sold through an online auction service or used as parts for the rest of the lifts in the garage.

The project will be funded from the Federal Transit Administration (80% or \$400,000), New York State Department of Transportation (10% or \$50,000), and the City's 10% share of \$50,000 funded from appropriated fund balance.

A resolution to authorize the capital equipment purchases and fund the local share has been prepared for City Council consideration.

RESOLUTION

Page 1 of 1

Readopting Fiscal Year 2025-26 General and
Capital Fund Budgets – Central Garage Lifts

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

WHEREAS on June 2, 2025, the City Council adopted the Fiscal Years 2025-26 through 2029-29 Capital Budget as well as the Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget, and

WHEREAS the current lift at the Department of Public Works’ garage that services the bus fleet was removed from service back in June and just recently put back into service as a temporary fix. DPW was waiting on parts that the vendor had to custom-make due to the lift being obsolete, and

WHEREAS the City has available Federal and New York State aid, which can cover 90% of the cost,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby re-adopts the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Capital Budget to add the lift replacement project at an estimated cost of \$500,000 and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby re-adopts the Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget to provide funding for the local share of the project:

A.0000.0909 Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 50,000
A.9950.0900 Transfer to Capital	\$ 50,000

Seconded by _____

**FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026
CAPITAL BUDGET
VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT
A1640 CENTRAL GARAGE**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
Equipment Lifts This request is to replace the existing 2005 drive-on equipment lift utilized by the Citibus (FTA) to maintain the fleet of city buses. The current lift was been removed from service back in June waiting on parts that the vendor must make because the lift is now obsolete. The lift was just recently put back into service but it cant be determined how long the fix will last. The proposed lift will be the same size and have the same ability as the old one but will require new concrete work to accept the installation. The new lift will be procured from a county contract. The present lift will either be declared surplus and sold through an online auction service or used as parts for the rest of the lifts in the garage. Existing:  Proposed:  Funding to support this project will be the Federal Transit Authority (80% - \$400,000), New York State Department of Transportation (10% - \$50,000) and from a transfer from the General Fund (\$50,000 – A.9950.0900).	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$500,000

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director

Subject: Finding That Amending Municipal Code § 310: Zoning Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail Will Not Have a Significant Impact on the Environment

At its October 7, 2025, meeting, the City Planning Commission adopted a motion recommending that the City Council amend Chapter § 310: Zoning of the City Code. The City Council has scheduled a public hearing on the proposed amendment for Monday, November 3, 2025, at 7:15 p.m.

The City Council must complete Part 2 and Part 3, if necessary, of the Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) and adopt the attached resolution before it may vote on the Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

To aid the City Council in completing Part 2 of the Short EAF, Planning Staff has reviewed the questions contained in Part 2 and provided recommended answers to those questions based on Staff's knowledge of SEQRA law and the proposed action.

If the City Council concurs with Staff's recommended answers, it should adopt the attached resolution, which states that the proposed Zoning Amendment will not have a significant impact on the environment

RESOLUTION

Page 1 of 2

Finding That Amending City Municipal Code
 § 310: Zoning, Article III, District Uses, Article VII,
 Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI, Definitions
 Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail Will Not
 Have a Significant Impact On the Environment

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York, has before it
 an Ordinance to amend various sections of § 310: Zoning of the City Code, and

WHEREAS the City Council must evaluate all proposed actions submitted for its
 consideration in light of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the
 regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, and

WHEREAS the adoption of the proposed ordinance constitutes such an “Action,” and

WHEREAS the City Council has determined that the proposed Ordinance is an
 “Unlisted Action” as that term is defined by 6NYCRR Section 617.2 (b), and

WHEREAS there are no other involved agencies for SEQRA review as that term
 is defined in 6NYCRR Section 617.4 (a), and

WHEREAS Staff has prepared Part 1 of a Short Environmental Assessment Form,
 a copy of which is attached and made part of this Resolution, and

WHEREAS Staff has prepared recommended answers to the questions contained
 in Part 2 of the Short Environmental Assessment Form for City Council consideration.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of
 Watertown, New York, that the City Council has reviewed and concurred with Staff’s
 recommended answers to Part 2 of the Short Environmental Assessment form, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

1. Based upon its examination of the Short Environmental Assessment Form and comparing
 the proposed action with the criteria set forth in 6NYCRR Section 617.7, no significant
 impact is known and the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment will not have a
 significant impact on the environment.

RESOLUTION

Page 2 of 2

Finding That Amending City Municipal Code
§ 310: Zoning, Article III, District Uses, Article VII,
Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI, Definitions
Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail Will Not
Have a Significant Impact On the Environment

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.
Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.
Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.
Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.
Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.
Total

YEA	NAY

2. The Mayor of the City of Watertown is authorized to execute Part 3 of the Environmental Assessment Form to the effect that the City Council is issuing a Negative Declaration under SEQRA.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Seconded by _____

Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 1 - Project Information

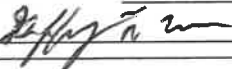
Instructions for Completing

Part 1 - Project Information. The applicant or project sponsor is responsible for the completion of Part 1. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification. Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information.

Complete all items in Part 1. You may also provide any additional information which you believe will be needed by or useful to the lead agency; attach additional pages as necessary to supplement any item.

Part 1 - Project and Sponsor Information							
Name of Action or Project: City of Watertown Zoning Ordinance Amendment							
Project Location (describe, and attach a location map): City of Watertown; City-wide							
Brief Description of Proposed Action: The City of Watertown proposes to amend Chapter 310 - Zoning, of the City Code. The City proposes to amend Article III, District Uses to change the level of review for "Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail" in the Commercial District from Site Plan Review to Special Use Permit. The City proposes to amend Article VII - Supplemental Regulations to add restrictions prohibiting on-site consumption of Cannabis products, prohibiting on-site Cannabis Consumption Lounges, restricting hours of operation, and locally codifying existing New York State Regulations related to distances from schools and houses of worship. The City proposes to amend Article XVI - Definitions, to add definitions for Marijuana, Cannabis Products, Cannabis Consumption, Retail Sale of Cannabis Products and On-Site Cannabis Consumption Lounge as well as amend the definition of Marijuana Dispensary, Retail.							
Name of Applicant or Sponsor: City of Watertown, New York		Telephone: (315) 785-7741 E-Mail: planning@watertown-ny.gov					
Address: 245 Washington Street							
City/PO: Watertown		State: New York	Zip Code: 13601				
1. Does the proposed action only involve the legislative adoption of a plan, local law, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation? If Yes, attach a narrative description of the intent of the proposed action and the environmental resources that may be affected in the municipality and proceed to Part 2. If no, continue to question 2.			<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">NO</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">☐</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">☒</td> </tr> </table>	NO	YES	☐	☒
NO	YES						
☐	☒						
2. Does the proposed action require a permit, approval or funding from any other governmental Agency? If Yes, list agency(s) name and permit or approval:			<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">NO</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">☐</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">☐</td> </tr> </table>	NO	YES	☐	☐
NO	YES						
☐	☐						
3.a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action? _____ acres b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed? _____ acres c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor? _____ acres							
4. Check all land uses that occur on, adjoining and near the proposed action. ☐ Urban ☐ Rural (non-agriculture) ☐ Industrial ☐ Commercial ☐ Residential (suburban) ☐ Forest ☐ Agriculture ☐ Aquatic ☐ Other (specify): _____ ☐ Parkland							

5. Is the proposed action, a. A permitted use under the zoning regulations?	NO ☐	YES ☐	N/A ☐
b. Consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan?	☐	☐	☐
6. Is the proposed action consistent with the predominant character of the existing built or natural landscape?	NO ☐	YES ☐	
7. Is the site of the proposed action located in, or does it adjoin, a state listed Critical Environmental Area? If Yes, identify: _____	NO ☐	YES ☐	
8. a. Will the proposed action result in a substantial increase in traffic above present levels?	NO ☐	YES ☐	
b. Are public transportation service(s) available at or near the site of the proposed action?	☐	☐	
c. Are any pedestrian accommodations or bicycle routes available on or near site of the proposed action?	☐	☐	
9. Does the proposed action meet or exceed the state energy code requirements? If the proposed action will exceed requirements, describe design features and technologies: _____	NO ☐	YES ☐	
10. Will the proposed action connect to an existing public/private water supply? If No, describe method for providing potable water: _____	NO ☐	YES ☐	
11. Will the proposed action connect to existing wastewater utilities? If No, describe method for providing wastewater treatment: _____	NO ☐	YES ☐	
12. a. Does the site contain a structure that is listed on either the State or National Register of Historic Places? b. Is the proposed action located in an archeological sensitive area?	NO ☐ ☐	YES ☐ ☐	
13. a. Does any portion of the site of the proposed action, or lands adjoining the proposed action, contain wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state or local agency? b. Would the proposed action physically alter, or encroach into, any existing wetland or waterbody? If Yes, identify the wetland or waterbody and extent of alterations in square feet or acres: _____	NO ☐ ☐	YES ☐ ☐	
14. Identify the typical habitat types that occur on, or are likely to be found on the project site. Check all that apply: ☐ Shoreline ☐ Forest ☐ Agricultural/grasslands ☐ Early mid-successional ☐ Wetland ☐ Urban ☐ Suburban			
15. Does the site of the proposed action contain any species of animal, or associated habitats, listed by the State or Federal government as threatened or endangered?	NO ☐	YES ☐	
16. Is the project site located in the 100 year flood plain?	NO ☐	YES ☐	
17. Will the proposed action create storm water discharge, either from point or non-point sources? If Yes, a. Will storm water discharges flow to adjacent properties? ☐ NO ☐ YES b. Will storm water discharges be directed to established conveyance systems (runoff and storm drains)? If Yes, briefly describe: ☐ NO ☐ YES _____	NO ☐	YES ☐	

18. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that result in the impoundment of water or other liquids (e.g. retention pond, waste lagoon, dam)? If Yes, explain purpose and size: _____ _____ _____	NO ☐	YES ☐
19. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the location of an active or closed solid waste management facility? If Yes, describe: _____ _____ _____	NO ☐	YES ☐
20. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the subject of remediation (ongoing or completed) for hazardous waste? If Yes, describe: _____ _____ _____	NO ☐	YES ☐
I AFFIRM THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE Applicant/sponsor name: <u>Geoffrey Urda, Senior Planner</u> Date: <u>10/9/25</u> Signature: <u></u>		

Project:

Date:

Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 2 - Impact Assessment

Part 2 is to be completed by the Lead Agency.

Answer all of the following questions in Part 2 using the information contained in Part 1 and other materials submitted by the project sponsor or otherwise available to the reviewer. When answering the questions the reviewer should be guided by the concept “Have my responses been reasonable considering the scale and context of the proposed action?”

	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
1. Will the proposed action create a material conflict with an adopted land use plan or zoning regulations?		
2. Will the proposed action result in a change in the use or intensity of use of land?		
3. Will the proposed action impair the character or quality of the existing community?		
4. Will the proposed action have an impact on the environmental characteristics that caused the establishment of a Critical Environmental Area (CEA)?		
5. Will the proposed action result in an adverse change in the existing level of traffic or affect existing infrastructure for mass transit, biking or walkway?		
6. Will the proposed action cause an increase in the use of energy and it fails to incorporate reasonably available energy conservation or renewable energy opportunities?		
7. Will the proposed action impact existing:		
a. public / private water supplies?		
b. public / private wastewater treatment utilities?		
8. Will the proposed action impair the character or quality of important historic, archaeological, architectural or aesthetic resources?		
9. Will the proposed action result in an adverse change to natural resources (e.g., wetlands, waterbodies, groundwater, air quality, flora and fauna)?		
10. Will the proposed action result in an increase in the potential for erosion, flooding or drainage problems?		
11. Will the proposed action create a hazard to environmental resources or human health?		

Project:

Date:

Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 3 Determination of Significance

For every question in Part 2 that was answered “moderate to large impact may occur”, or if there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action may or will not result in a significant adverse environmental impact, please complete Part 3. Part 3 should, in sufficient detail, identify the impact, including any measures or design elements that have been included by the project sponsor to avoid or reduce impacts. Part 3 should also explain how the lead agency determined that the impact may or will not be significant. Each potential impact should be assessed considering its setting, probability of occurring, duration, irreversibility, geographic scope and magnitude. Also consider the potential for short-term, long-term and cumulative impacts.

Check this box if you have determined, based on the information and analysis above, and any supporting documentation, that the proposed action may result in one or more potentially large or significant adverse impacts and an environmental impact statement is required.

Check this box if you have determined, based on the information and analysis above, and any supporting documentation, that the proposed action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

Name of Lead Agency

Date

Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Title of Responsible Officer

Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Signature of Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer)

Res. No. 5

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Eric F. Wagenaar, City Manager

Subject: Re-Authorizing Fund Raising Through the Northern New York
Community Foundation For the Construction of a Skate Park (Extended
Fund Raising Period)

The attached resolution has been written and submitted for Council consideration at the request of Council Member Clifford Olney.

RESOLUTION

Page 1 of 1

Re-Authorizing Fund Raising Through the
Northern New York Community Foundation
For the Construction of a Skate Park
(Extended Fund Raising Period)

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

WHEREAS, Ryan Starr has offered to raise funds for construction of a city skate park,
and

WHEREAS, the Northern New York Community Foundation was previously designated
to serve as a vehicle through which individuals, organizations, and businesses can make
charitable contributions in support of City programs, projects and initiatives, and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Watertown believes that it is in the best
interest of the citizens of the City to authorize fund raising for the construction of a city skate
park,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown
authorizes fund raising through the Northern New York Community Foundation for the purpose
of providing resources to construct a skate park on Sewall's Island, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the period for raising funds to completely pay for the
construction of the skate park is hereby extended to three years from the date of this resolution. If
sufficient funds are not raised within that period, then the money will be used for the alternative
of making improvements to the current city skate park, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown is willing to accept the
donated funds from the Northern New York Community Foundation for said purpose.

Seconded by _____

Res. No. 6

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Eric F. Wagenaar

Subject: Authorizing the Initiation of a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)
Program

The attached resolution has been written and submitted for Council consideration at the request of Council Member Clifford Olney.

RESOLUTION

Page 1 of 2

Authorizing the Initiation of a Community
Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

WHEREAS the City of Watertown seeks to strengthen its fiscal health through sustainable, locally generated revenue while supporting clean energy and energy independence, and

WHEREAS Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs, authorized under the New York State Public Service Commission's Order in Case 14-M-0224, allow municipalities to aggregate electricity demand on behalf of residents and small businesses to secure competitive energy supply options and services, and

WHEREAS by choosing to serve as its own CCA Administrator, the City of Watertown could collect administrative fees ranging between \$150 and \$300 per participating customer per year, which for approximately 5,000 participants could yield an estimated \$750,000 to \$1,500,000 annually in local, recurring revenue, and

WHEREAS CCA programs provide municipalities with tools to stabilize energy costs, promote renewable energy use, and keep local energy dollars circulating within the community, and

WHEREAS coordination with the New York State Department of Public Service (DPS), staff to the Public Service Commission (PSC), is required for program approval, and the City will work directly with DPS to ensure full compliance with PSC regulations, including the development of an Implementation Plan, mandatory public outreach, and annual program reporting, and

WHEREAS the City Council recognizes that long-term prosperity is achieved through innovation, investment, and reinvestment — not austerity — and that establishing a CCA program aligns with Watertown's goals of fiscal responsibility, local control, and environmental leadership;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the initiation of the process to establish a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program, including the following actions:

RESOLUTION

Page 2 of 2

Authorizing the Initiation of a Community
Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

1. Engage with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and/or qualified CCA experts to assist with program design, funding opportunities, and implementation guidance.
2. Notify the New York State Department of Public Service (DPS) of the City's intent to establish a CCA program and coordinate directly with DPS staff to ensure regulatory compliance and procedural transparency.
3. Direct City staff to conduct a preliminary analysis of municipal and residential energy usage, potential participation rates, and projected program revenues.
4. Conduct public outreach and education sessions in accordance with PSC requirements to inform residents and businesses of the program's structure, benefits, and opt-out provisions.
5. Prepare and submit a draft Implementation Plan to the Department of Public Service for review and approval.
6. Report back to City Council within 90 days with findings, recommendations, and a timeline for full program implementation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council affirms its commitment to proactive fiscal management through innovation, local empowerment, and the pursuit of new sustainable revenue streams that enhance the quality of life for Watertown residents.

Seconded by _____

Res. No. 7

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Eric F. Wagenaar, City Manager

Subject: Requesting Congressional Assistance to Re-Evaluate EPA Filtration
Mandate

The attached resolution has been written and submitted for Council consideration at the request of Council Member Clifford Olney.

RESOLUTION

Page 1 of 1

Requesting Congressional Assistance to
Re-Evaluate EPA Filtration Mandate

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown was directed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to construct a disinfectant byproduct (DBP) filtration facility with an estimated cost of approximately \$70 million, and

WHEREAS, since implementing operational adjustments in the city’s water treatment process, including reducing chlorine levels used for disinfection, the City of Watertown has maintained full compliance with federal and state DBP standards for more than three consecutive years, as verified on the EPA’s ECHO database, and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that continued pursuit of a costly filtration facility may no longer be necessary or financially responsible given the City’s demonstrated compliance and improved water quality, and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that the EPA’s original directive may warrant re-evaluation in light of new data and current performance metrics,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Watertown City Council respectfully requests the assistance of U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten E. Gillibrand, and U.S. Representatives Elise Stefanik and Claudia Tenney, in engaging with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider or suspend the requirement for the City of Watertown to construct a DBP filtration plant, and to pursue a political and administrative resolution that reflects the City’s proven compliance and continued commitment to safe, high-quality drinking water, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, and Representatives Stefanik and Tenney, along with supporting documentation verifying Watertown’s compliance record.

Seconded by _____

Proposed Local Law of 2025

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Eric F. Wagenaar, City Manager

Subject: A Local Law Establishing a Charter Review Commission

The attached proposed Local Law Establishing a Charter Review Commission has been drafted and submitted for Council consideration at the request of Council Member Clifford Olney. Council Member Olney initially presented this matter in the form of a resolution requesting the establishment of a Charter Review Commission. Upon review by the City Attorney and staff, it was determined that a local law is the appropriate and legally required mechanism for initiating a Charter Review Commission in this circumstance.

During the legal review of the draft, the City Attorney advised that language originally included in Council Member Olney's proposal which would have disqualified members of Council and City employees from serving on the Charter Review Commission could not be retained. Section 36(6)(d) of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law expressly prohibits a municipality from disqualifying any person from membership on a charter commission "by reason of holding any other public office or employment". Accordingly, this provision was removed from the proposed local law to ensure compliance with state law.

If the City Council wishes to proceed with the adoption of the proposed local law, a public hearing must be scheduled as required under the Municipal Home Rule Law. It is recommended that a public hearing be scheduled for 7:15 p.m. on Monday, November 17, to receive public comment on the proposed establishment of a Charter Review Commission.

LOCAL LAW

Page 1 of 2

A Local Law to Establish a Charter Review
Commission

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C..

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by _____

A Local Law to Establish a Charter Review Commission

BE IT ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Intent

It is the intent of this local law to establish a commission to examine the current Charter of the City of Watertown to assess whether the Charter meets the needs of the City of Watertown and its residents, and to prepare a draft of a proposed new or revised Charter for submission to the City's electors pursuant to Section 36 of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law.

Section 2. Authority

This local law is adopted pursuant to Section 36 of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law, which authorizes cities to enact a local law providing for the establishment of a charter review commission.

Section 3. Establishment of Commission; Membership

- A. The Watertown Charter Review Commission (the "Commission") is hereby created to oversee and administer a review of the Charter of the City of Watertown in accordance with Part 2 of Article 4 of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law.
- B. The Commission shall be comprised of nine (9) members designated and appointed by the City Council by majority vote at a public meeting. In addition to the nine (9) voting members of the Commission, the City Council may designate and appoint one (1) non-voting liaison to facilitate communication between the City Council and the Commission.
- C. The terms of office of the members of the Commission shall expire on the day of the election at which any proposed new Charter or Charter amendments prepared by the Commission are submitted to the qualified electors of the City of Watertown, or on the day of the second general election following the organization of the Commission if no such questions have been submitted by that time.

Section 4. Commission Powers and Duties

LOCAL LAW

Page 2 of 2

A Local Law to Establish a Charter Review
Commission

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C..

Total

YEA	NAY

- A. The Commission shall review the entire Charter of the City of Watertown and prepare a draft of any proposed changes to the Charter where a simple majority of Commission members find such changes to be advisable.
- B. The Commission shall conduct public hearings at such times and at such places within the City as it shall deem necessary. The Commission shall hold no less than three (3) public hearings in different locations in the City to solicit community input.
- C. The Commission shall publish all meeting notices, minutes, and draft recommendations on the City's website for public review.
- D. The Commission shall prepare a written report of findings and recommendations, which shall accompany any proposed changes to the Charter and explain the Commission's rationale for its proposed changes. Such written report and proposed changes to the Charter shall be completed and filed in the office of the City Clerk by June 15, 2026.

Section 5. Severability

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this local law, or the application thereof to any person, individual, firm or corporation or circumstance shall be adjudicated by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this local law or in its application to the person, individual, firm or corporation or circumstance directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment or order shall be rendered.

Section 6. Effective Date

This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.

Seconded by _____

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director

Subject: Amending Municipal Code § 310: Zoning Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail

At its meeting on September 2, 2025, the City Council repealed, in part, the Local Law that opted out of permitting the licensing and establishment of dispensaries within the City, effectively opting back in.

At its meeting on September 15, 2025, the City Council directed Planning Staff to work with the City's attorneys at Bond, Schoeneck & King as well as the City's Planning Commission to develop local Zoning regulations to govern dispensaries within the City. While the New York State Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) issues licenses to dispensaries, the state does allow municipalities to pass local laws and regulations governing the time, place, and manner that dispensaries operate in the municipality.

Staff presented a draft Zoning Amendment to the Planning Commission at the Commission's October 7, 2025, meeting. Following detailed discussion regarding the proposed language, the Planning Commission determined that regulations governing distance from cemeteries and wider landscaped buffers than the Commercial District would otherwise require when abutting a Residential District were both unnecessary. After removing these two lines of Code, the Planning Commission voted 4-1 to recommend that the City Council approve the proposed Zoning Amendment as written.

Staff also referred the amendment to the Jefferson County Planning Board pursuant to Section 239-m of New York State General Municipal Law. The board adopted a motion at its October 28, 2025, meeting finding that the Zoning Amendment Ordinance had no countywide or intermunicipal issues and was of local concern only.

The City Council has scheduled a public hearing on the ordinance for 7:15 p.m. on Monday, November 3, 2025. Staff has also prepared a SEQRA resolution for City Council consideration at that meeting. The Council must hold the public hearing and adopt the SEQRA Resolution before voting on the Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

A copy of Staff's original report to the Planning Commission on this topic, as well as an excerpt from the minutes of the Planning Commission's October 7, 2025 meeting, are attached to this report.

ORDINANCE

Page 1 of 3

Amending the Code of the City of Watertown § 310, Zoning; Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

BE IT ORDAINED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby amends the City Municipal Code § 310, Zoning as follows, with **bold** text added and struck through text eliminated:

§ 310-18. Use Table

	D	UMU	NMU	C	R	PC	IND	P&OS
Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail				S SUP				

and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that Chapter § 310 of the City Code of the City of Watertown is amended as follows, with **bold** text added and struck-through text eliminated:

§ 320-75. Marijuana Dispensary, Retail

A. On-site Consumption

(1) **No on-site consumption of Cannabis Products shall be permitted at a Marijuana Retail Dispensary.**

(2) **On-site Cannabis Consumption Lounges are prohibited.**

B. Hours of Operation: A Marijuana Retail Dispensary shall not be allowed to operate between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

C. Proximity to other uses:

(1) **A Marijuana Retail Dispensary shall not be located on the same road and within 500 feet of a building and its grounds occupied exclusively as school grounds, as defined in Section 409(2) of the New York State Education Law. The distance between the dispensary and the school shall be measured from the door of the Marijuana Retail Dispensary to the property line of the school.**

ORDINANCE

Page 2 of 3

Amending the Code of the City of Watertown § 310, Zoning; Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

- (2) **A Marijuana Retail Dispensary shall not be located on the same road and within 200 feet of a building and its grounds occupied exclusively as a house of worship. The distance between the dispensary and the house of worship shall be measured from the door of the Marijuana Retail Dispensary to the property line of the house of worship.**

and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that Chapter § 310-150 (C) is amended as follows, with **bold** text added and struck-through text eliminated:

MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, RETAIL

A business that is registered to operate in the State of New York that ~~sells or otherwise distributes marijuana.~~ **engages in the Retail Sale of Cannabis Products.**

MARIJUANA

All parts of the plant of the genus Cannabis, whether growing or not; the seeds thereof; the resin extracted from any part of the plant; and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant, its seeds, or resin. Cannabis does not include the mature stalks of the plant, fiber produced from the stalks, oil or cake made from the seeds of the plant, any other compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the mature stalks (except the resin extracted therefrom), fiber, oil, or cake, or the sterilized seed of the plant which is incapable of germination. Neither hemp nor cannabinoid hemp are included.

CANNABIS PRODUCTS

Cannabis, concentrated Cannabis, and Cannabis-infused products for use by a consumer.

CANNABIS CONSUMPTION

The use of a cannabis product in, on, or by the human body for the product's cannabinoid content.

ORDINANCE

Page 3 of 3

Amending the Code of the City of
Watertown § 310, Zoning; Article III –
District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental
Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions
Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail

Council Member KIMBALL, Robert O.

Council Member OLNEY III, Clifford G.

Council Member RUGGIERO, Lisa A.

Council Member SHOEN, Benjamin P.

Mayor PIERCE, Sarah V.C.

Total

YEA	NAY

RETAIL SALE OF CANNABIS PRODUCTS

To solicit or receive an order for, to keep or expose for sale, and to keep with intent to sell, made by any licensed person, whether principal, proprietor, agent, or employee, of any Cannabis or Cannabis Products.

ON-SITE CANNABIS CONSUMPTION LOUNGE

Any person or business that is licensed under the provisions of New York State Law to permit adult-use on-site consumption of cannabis products at a specified location.

and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this amendment shall take effect as soon as it is published once in the official newspaper of the City of Watertown, or printed as the City Manager directs.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 305, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
PHONE: 315-785-7741 – FAX: 315-782-9014

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Amending Chapter 310 – Zoning, of the City Code; Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions, regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail

DATE: October 2, 2025

When the City Council adopted the City's current Zoning Ordinance on February 21, 2023, the Use Table contained in Article III – District Uses identified "Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail" as a potential use, subject to opt-in/opt-out status under the New York State Office of Cannabis Management. On the above date of adoption, the City was opted out. The Zoning Ordinance contains the following definition for the use:

MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES, RETAIL: *A business that is registered to operate in the State of New York that sells or otherwise distributes marijuana.*

On September 2, 2025, the City Council repealed in part the Local Law that opted out of permitting the licensing and establishment of dispensaries within the City, effectively opting back in. However, by subjecting "Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail" to opt-in/opt-out status, the Use Table accounted for the possibility that the City might opt-in, and regulates where they would be allowed accordingly.

Specifically, the Use Table allows "Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail" in the Commercial District only, an area which primarily encompasses Arsenal Street, Western Boulevard, Commerce Park Drive and a small segment of State Street at the east end of the City.

The Use Table also contains a column titled, "Supplemental Regulations," which appears at the far-right side of the table. If a use is marked with an "X" in this column, that indicates that there are additional rules governing that use to ensure proper oversight. The Zoning Ordinance identifies these rules in Article VII – Supplemental Regulations.

In the weeks since the City Council opted in to allowing dispensaries, Planning Staff has worked with the City's attorneys at Bond, Schoeneck & King to write Supplemental Regulations for dispensaries within the City of Watertown, as well as other proposed additions and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to help the City appropriately regulate cannabis sales within the City boundaries.

First, the Supplemental Regulations proposed include:

- Locally codifying the prohibition of on-site consumption of cannabis products
- Prohibiting On-site Cannabis Consumption Lounges
- Limiting hours of operation to 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.
- Locally codifying the New York State prohibitions regarding proximity to schools and houses of worship
- Prohibiting dispensaries within 100 feet of a cemetery
- Requirement for a 30-foot landscaped buffer when abutting a Residential District

A second proposed change is to require a Special Use Permit for a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use. Although dispensaries are currently allowed in the Commercial District, they are only subject to Site Plan Approval. Modifying this to require a Special Use Permit would provide the City with additional oversight authority.

Finally, there are five new proposed definitions, including:

- “Marijuana”
- “Cannabis Products”
- “Cannabis Consumption”
- “Retail Sale of Cannabis Products”
- “On-site Cannabis Consumption Lounge”

A full copy of a draft Zoning Amendment containing all proposed changes and additions is attached to this Staff Report.

Any Zoning Amendment would require referral to the Jefferson County Planning Board pursuant to Section 239-m of New York State General Municipal Law. Barring any unforeseen issues, Staff will refer this amendment to the County for consideration at its Tuesday, October, 28, 2025 meeting, six days prior to the City Council meeting on November 3, 2025.

However, while the City Council may not act on a Zoning Ordinance Amendment until after the County Planning Board considers it, the City Planning Commission is not similarly restricted from voting on a recommendation to City Council. If the Planning Commission concludes that the amendment is acceptable either as written or with minor changes, it may vote at its October 7, 2025 meeting to recommend that City Council approve the amendment.

If the Planning Commission determines that the proposed amendment is unacceptable as written, and requests significant changes or presents Staff with inquiries that require extensive additional research, then Staff would recommend scheduling a special Planning Commission meeting later in October.

cc: City Council Members

City of Watertown
Ordinance No. __ of the Year 2025
An Ordinance Establishing Zoning Requirements for
Marijuana Retail Dispensaries

Be it ordained by the Common Council of the City of Watertown (the “Council”) as follows:

WHEREAS, the purpose of this Ordinance to establish rules governing the time, place, and manner of the operation of Marijuana Retail Dispensaries in the City of Watertown, and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown is authorized to enact this Ordinance by the authority and power of New York State General City Law, General Municipal Law, Municipal Home Rule Law, and the Statute of Local Governments, and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance shall: (1) add Section 310-75 to the City of Watertown Zoning Ordinance, related to the regulation of the time, place, and manner of the operation of Marijuana Retail Dispensaries and On-Site Cannabis Consumption Lounges; (2) amend the Use Chart found at Section 310-18; and (3) add definitions at Section 310-150, and

WHEREAS, the Council has considered the provisions of Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law (“SEQRA”) and the regulations adopted thereunder at 6 NYCRR Part 617 and finds that the proposed amendments to the Zoning Law will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, no further review is required under SEQRA, and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED that Section 310-150 (Definitions; word usage.) of this Ordinance shall be amended as follows (additions in **bold red underlined** type):

MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, RETAIL

A business that is registered to operate in the State of New York that ~~sells or otherwise distributes marijuana.~~ **engages in the Retail Sale of Cannabis Products.**

MARIJUANA

All parts of the plant of the genus Cannabis, whether growing or not; the seeds thereof; the resin extracted from any part of the plant; and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant, its seeds, or resin. Cannabis does not include the mature stalks of the plant, fiber produced from the stalks, oil or cake made from the seeds of the plant, any other compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the mature stalks (except the resin extracted therefrom), fiber, oil, or cake, or the sterilized seed of the plant which is incapable of germination. Neither hemp nor cannabinoid hemp are included.

CANNABIS PRODUCTS

Cannabis, concentrated Cannabis, and Cannabis-infused products for use by a consumer.

CANNABIS CONSUMPTION

The use of a cannabis product in, on, or by the human body for the product's cannabinoid content.

RETAIL SALE OF CANNABIS PRODUCTS

To solicit or receive an order for, to keep or expose for sale, and to keep with intent to sell, made by any licensed person, whether principal, proprietor, agent, or employee, of any Cannabis or Cannabis Products.

ON-SITE CANNABIS CONSUMPTION LOUNGE

Any person or business that is licensed under the provisions of New York State Law to permit adult-use on-site consumption of cannabis products at a specified location.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that Section 310-18 (Use Chart) of the Zoning Ordinance shall be amended as follows:

c. COMMERCIAL	D	UMU	NMU	C	R	PC	IND	P&OS	Supp Regs
Adult Use							SUP		X
Amusement, Recreation, or Entertainment (Indoor)	S	S		S		S	S		X
Amusement, Recreation, or Entertainment (Outdoor)				S		S	S	SUP	X
Bar, Restaurant, Café, Brewpub	DR	S	SUP	S		S	S		
Brewery/Distillery/Winery (Micro)	DR	S	SUP	S		SUP	P		
Brewery/Distillery/Winery		SUP		SUP		SUP	SUP		
Day Care Center	S	S	S	S		S	S		
Day Care Center, Accessory	S	S	S	S		S	S		
Day Care, Adult		S	S			S			
Day Care, Family	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Walk-up Window, Accessory	P	P	P	P		S	P	P	
Drive Through, Accessory		SUP	SUP	S			S		X
Funeral Home		DR	DR	DR	DR	DR			
Retail, Neighborhood	DR	S	S	S		SUP	S		X
Retail, General and Service	S	S	S	S			S		
Shopping Center	S	S		S			S		
Golf Course					S			S	
Hospital						S			
Clinic	S	S	SUP	S		S	S		
Mixed-Use Building	S	S	SUP						
Nightclub	SUP			SUP					X
Offices	S	S	SUP	S		S	S		
Private Clubs	DR	S	SUP	DR				S	
Theater	DR	DR		DR		DR			
Vending Lot		DR	DR	DR			DR		X
Marijuana Dispensaries/Retail* subject to opt-in/opt-out status				SUP S					X

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that Section 310-75 (Marijuana Dispensary, Retail) shall be added to the Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Sec. 310-75 Marijuana Dispensary, Retail

A. On-site Consumption

(1) No on-site consumption of Cannabis Products shall be permitted at a Marijuana Retail Dispensary.

(2) On-site Cannabis Consumption Lounges are prohibited.

B. Hours of Operation: A Marijuana Retail Dispensary shall not be allowed to operate between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

C. Proximity to other uses:

(1) A Marijuana Retail Dispensary shall not be located on the same road and within 500 feet of a building and its grounds occupied exclusively as school grounds, as defined in Section 409(2) of the New York State Education Law. The distance between the dispensary and the school shall be measured from the door of the Marijuana Retail Dispensary to the property line of the school.

(2) A Marijuana Retail Dispensary shall not be located on the same road and within 200 feet of a building and its grounds occupied exclusively as a house of worship. The distance between the dispensary and the house of worship shall be measured from the door of the Marijuana Retail Dispensary to the property line of the house of worship.

(3) A Marijuana Retail Dispensary shall not be located on the same road and within 100 feet grounds occupied exclusively as a cemetery. The distance between the dispensary and the cemetery shall be measured from the door of the Marijuana Retail Dispensary to the property line of the cemetery.

D. Landscape and Buffer requirements:

(1) A landscaped strip must be provided to separate a Marijuana Retail Dispensary from any parcel zoned Residential (R). The required landscaped strip shall be a minimum of thirty feet (30') wide.



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

ROOM 305, WATERTOWN CITY HALL

245 WASHINGTON STREET

WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380

(315) 785-7741

MEETING: October 7, 2025

PRESENT:

Michelle Capone, Chair

Peter Monaco

Scott Garrabrant

Maryellen Blevins

Lynn Godek

ALSO:

Geoffrey Urda, Senior Planner

Joseph Albinus, Planner

Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary

ABSENT:

T.J. Babcock

Linda Fields

Planning Commission Chairperson, Michelle Capone, called October 7, 2025, Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Ms. Capone asked for a motion regarding the minutes of the September 3, 2025, meeting. Lynn Godek made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Maryellen Blevins seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – AMENDING CHAPTER 310 – ZONING, OF THE CITY CODE; ARTICLE III – DISTRICT USES, ARTICLE VII – SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS AND ARTICLE XVI – DEFINITIONS, REGARDING MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES, RETAIL.

The Planning Commission considered a proposal to amend Chapter 310 – Zoning, of the City Code; Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions, regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail.

Ms. Capone began by explaining that while the City Council may not act on a Zoning Ordinance Amendment until after the County Planning Board considers it, the City Planning Commission is not similarly restricted from voting on a recommendation to City Council. If the Planning Commission concludes that the proposed amendment is acceptable, either as written or with minor changes, it may vote on its October 7, 2025, meeting to recommend that City Council approve the amendment.

She then said that if the Planning Commission determines that the proposed amendment is unacceptable as written, and requests significant changes or presents Staff with inquiries that require extensive additional research, then Staff would recommend scheduling a special Planning Commission meeting later in October.

Ms. Capone then stated there would be privilege of the floor at this meeting and asked Staff to explain the drafted recommendations for City Council.

Geoffrey Urda emphasized that this is not a public hearing, but a meeting to go over recommendations for the City Council, and the public hearing for this will likely be scheduled for November 3, 2025. He further said that any Zoning Amendment would require referral to the Jefferson County Planning Board pursuant to Section 239-m of New York State General Municipal Law, and that barring any unforeseen issues, Staff will refer this amendment to the County for consideration at its Tuesday, October 28, 2025, meeting, six days prior to the City Council meeting on November 3, 2025.

Mr. Urda recounted the history of the Zoning Ordinance and said that between August 2020 and February 2023 countless meetings and hundreds of Staff hours went towards the new ordinance. He then said that New York State had legalized marijuana during 2021, and Staff added retail marijuana to the Use Table, but because the City was opted out, not much more was done regarding regulations for retail marijuana.

Mr. Urda then said that on September 2, 2025, the City Council repealed, in part, the Local Law that opted out of permitting the licensing and establishment of dispensaries within the City, effectively opting back in. However, by subjecting “Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail” to opt-in/opt-out status, the Use Table accounted for the possibility that the City might opt-in and regulates where they would be allowed accordingly.

Mr. Urda said, that in the weeks since the City Council opted in to allowing dispensaries, Planning Staff has worked with the City’s attorneys at Bond, Schoeneck & King to write Supplemental Regulations for dispensaries within the City of Watertown, as well as other proposed additions and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to help the City appropriately regulate cannabis sales within the City boundaries.

Mr. Urda said that the Use Table specifically allows “Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail” in the Commercial District only, an area which primarily encompasses Arsenal Street, Western Boulevard, Commerce Park Drive and a small segment of State Street at the east end of the City.

Mr. Urda further explained that the Use Table also contains a column titled, “Supplemental Regulations,” which appears at the far-right side of the table and that if a use is marked with an “X” in this column, that indicates that there are additional rules governing that use to ensure proper oversight. The Zoning Ordinance identifies these rules in Article VII – Supplemental Regulations.

Mr. Urda then began discussing the content of the proposed Zoning Amendment, beginning with five new proposed definitions, including: “Marijuana”, “Cannabis Products”, “Cannabis Consumption”, “Retail Sale of Cannabis Products”, “On-site Cannabis Consumption Lounge”

Mr. Urda said that the second proposed change is to require a Special Use Permit for a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use. He explained that although dispensaries are currently allowed in the Commercial District, they are only subject to Site Plan Approval and that modifying this to require a Special Use Permit would provide the City with additional oversight authority.

Mr. Urda then said that the final proposed change was to add supplemental regulations to include locally codifying the prohibition of on-site consumption of cannabis products, prohibiting

On-site Cannabis Consumption Lounges, limiting hours of operation to 8 a.m. – 9 p.m., locally codifying the New York State prohibitions regarding proximity to schools and houses of worship.

Mr. Urda said that additionally proposed supplemental regulations included prohibiting dispensaries within 100 feet of a cemetery and a requirement for a 30-foot landscaped buffer when abutting a Residential District.

Mr. Urda explained that the rationale for the prohibition around cemeteries was out of consideration for the survivors of deceased relatives that would visit and tend to their loved ones' resting places on cemetery grounds.

Mr. Urda also mentioned that for the landscape buffer for the Supplemental Regulation, this was a larger buffer than the Commercial District, otherwise required when abutting a Residential District but specified that this was just a landscaped buffer Staff was recommending, and not a proximity prohibition.

Ms. Godek asked about proximity to other dispensaries, and if it was mentioned or specified within the proposed recommendations. Mr. Urda replied that it would default to the State distance. Mr. Garrabrant asked if that would be 1,000 feet. Mr. Urda replied that it would be whatever the State has specified, which is population based and confirmed 1,000 feet is correct, and that it would be part of licensing through the State.

Mr. Monaco then brought up his concern about limiting the retail dispensaries to the Commercial District. He said that he feels it is too restrictive and Urban Mixed Use should allow dispensaries as well, specifically mentioning Factory Street.

Mr. Urda then displayed the Zoning Map for the audience in attendance and explained what the different colors of the map meant.

Mr. Monaco then said that the presence of the Children's Home of Jefferson County's property on State Street would limit the available spaces for dispensaries in the Commercial District at the east end of the City.

Mr. Monaco then said he felt the cemetery proximity prohibition was an overreach and was adamant that the only cemetery this would affect is not visited or maintained, and its current population would not be bothered by a dispensary. He reiterated his desire to allow dispensaries in Urban Mixed Use.

Ms. Capone then asked what the thought process was for only allowing dispensaries in the Commercial District, and if Mr. Urda could clarify if dispensaries could get Special Use Permits in any of the districts, or a variance through the ZBA.

Mr. Urda confirmed Special Use Permits could only be granted in Zoning Districts that allowed a given use via a Special Use Permit. He then explained that the Zoning Rewrite Committee felt that Commercial Districts were most appropriate for dispensaries due to the large parcels with plenty of available space for the dispensaries and the existing character of Arsenal Street and Western Boulevard was conducive to establishing dispensaries. He pointed out the Urban Mixed-Use Districts are a transitional district from Downtown to Residential and that most Urban Mixed-Use Districts directly abutted Residential Districts.

Mr. Monaco then went on to say that not all Urban Mixed-Use abuts Residential, and that some streets such as Factory Street and Jefferson Street have store fronts that could be used.

Mr. Urda then went on to explain that the most permissive districts are Industrial, Commercial and Downtown, and there are more uses allowed in the Downtown District than in Urban Mixed Use. Mr. Monaco then mentioned that Syracuse allows dispensaries in their downtown.

Ms. Capone then stated that dispensaries could be established in other districts through Use Variances granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. She then asked if the Commission wanted to remove the recommendation to allow Special Use Permits in the Commercial District and clarified that the Special Use Permit is an 'As of Right, Allowed' in this matter, and the Planning Commission would not be able to deny anything without reasonable cause.

Mr. Urda agreed that Ms. Capone was correct in her explanation and that once it is allowed with Special Use Permit, it is allowed.

Ms. Capone then asked the Commission for their opinions on the recommendations.

Ms. Godek stated she was concerned about the higher number of residences around Urban Mixed-Use and said that if there is a good location and logical place for a dispensary to be, then they can apply for a variance. Mr. Garrabrant agreed with Ms. Godek and mentioned that there does not seem to be a true need or demand to allow dispensaries in additional zoning districts. Ms. Capone agreed that they would not forward Mr. Monaco's recommendation to allow dispensaries in Urban Mixed Use.

Ms. Blevins asked about the operating hours, and why we are allowing 91 hours of available hours of operation for dispensaries when the State set the minimum at 70 hours.

Mr. Urda specified that 91 hours was not the driving factor. He said that Staff and the City legal team came up with the available hours of operation being from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. so that the shops would be closed prior to when local drinking establishments typically emptied out, and because the State does not allow dispensaries to open prior to 8 a.m.

Ms. Blevins then asked if Staff were expecting them to be open seven days a week. Mr. Urda replied it would be up to the owners if they wanted to be open seven days a week or not. He also specified that the stores do not need to stay open for the full thirteen hours every day. The hours from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. are the hours in which they would be allowed to be open for operation.

Ms. Blevins then asked if they had to operate a minimum of 70 hours a week. Mr. Urda replied that they must be granted a minimum of 70 operating hours per week, but it would be the owner's discretion for their hours of operation.

Ms. Blevins then said she wanted to see the hours more limited and proposed 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. for closing time. Ms. Godek said that it would cause too much limitation on their business hours since not everyone's work hours are an 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. shift.

Ms. Capone then brought up that with it being Commercially zoned, most commercial businesses have later hours of operation, and with not allowing dispensaries in Urban Mixed Use, limiting the hours does not seem reasonable. Ms. Capone then said she would like to see the hours extended to midnight to be consistent with the other businesses in the Commercial District. She then asked for thoughts on the matter.

Ms. Godek said she was in favor of extending the hours for when customers are more available.

Following a discussion about values, Ms. Capone then stated that the Commission did not need to argue the morality or legality of the situation due to it already being approved by City Council and the Commission just needs to look at the zoning changes and make a recommendation. She mentioned that if anyone has comments then they will be sent forward, and the Council can review it. She said that the Commission seems to all have different opinions about the hours of operation.

Mr. Urda said the commission can vote to make changes or keep the draft as written. Ms. Capone then said that since the Commission couldn't agree, they should send it to Council as written for them to decide. Mr. Urda acknowledged Ms. Capone's logic.

Ms. Godek then asked about the process for public comments on proposed changes for altering zoning. Mr. Urda replied that the City Council would conduct a formal public hearing prior to voting.

Ms. Capone then said that she did not fully understand the cemetery restriction and recommended that it not be included. Mr. Urda then said that it was entirely the Commission's purview to make that decision. Mr. Monaco commented that he could not remember the last time anyone paid any attention to the cemetery on Arsenal Street.

Ms. Blevins said she felt similar, and then said her concern was the 30-foot buffer from Residential Districts. She said that people who bought a house in Residential Districts would not want to be right next to a dispensary.

Mr. Urda then reiterated that it was the Commission's prevue to recommend to the City Council what they wanted. He also commented that the proposed 30-foot buffer would require landscaping in the 30 feet on the Commercial side of the property line.

Ms. Capone then clarified that it was the Commercial parcels that abut Residential parcels that would have to worry about this. Mr. Monaco then clarified it was the backside of Arsenal Street that would mainly be affected. Mr. Urda then displayed a GIS map to provide a visual explanation of the landscaped buffer.

Ms. Capone asked what the landscape buffer required. Mr. Urda replied that minimally grass, but that 310-83 of the Zoning Ordinance contained the full explanation of the requirements for a landscape buffer. Ms. Capone then stated she wanted to make sure that there isn't a requirement for trees that would become a problem to clear or maintain.

Mr. Urda then looked for a definition to provide clarity and cited page 74 of the Zoning Ordinance, Commercial, Downtown, UMU, and NMU Districts, which stated:

“A landscaped strip shall be provided to separate the C, D, UMU and NMU Districts from the Residential (R) District. The landscaped strip shall be a minimum of 15 feet wide. Within the landscaped strip, one large deciduous tree (two inches DBH minimum) shall be provided every 35 linear feet, along with planting beds in between the trees containing assorted shrubs or one small to medium deciduous tree (1.5 inches DBH minimum) shall be provided every 20 linear feet, along with planting beds in between the trees containing assorted shrubs or one large coniferous tree (six feet minimum), stagger planted, shall be provided every 15 linear feet. In addition to the required trees and shrubs, a six-foot-high opaque fence (stockade or equal) shall be provided.”

Mr. Urda then gave a visual representation using the same parcel from the GIS map he had used earlier. Mr. Garrabrant asked if that included a potential fence after the visual representation was complete. Mr. Urda replied that a fence did not replace a required landscape buffer, nor would a fence confer any relief from a buffering requirement.

Ms. Capone then asked why Staff chose a 30-foot buffer instead of a 15-foot buffer. Mr. Urda replied that Staff felt the use was different than average restaurant or drive through use, and that while it is not classified as an adult-use, it is an adult-oriented use. Mr. Urda elaborated that the 30-foot buffer is not as wide as what the Zoning Ordinance requires for other businesses such as auto-shops and outdoor dining. He clarified that it was a buffer opposed to a requirement to locate farther away.

Mr. Garrabrant asked what supplemental regulations applied for a bar. Mr. Urda referred to the Zoning Ordinance and read the from the regulations in Section 310-63 applying to a Nightclub use:

“Loitering/queuing shall not obstruct the public right-of-way. Areas designated for smoking shall be provided, and they shall not obstruct the public right-of-way. All noise shall be contained within the building.”

Mr. Urda mentioned auto repair and outdoor dining as uses with stricter supplemental regulations, and Ms. Capone felt that they did not apply here as they are not close enough to dispensaries to use as guidance.

Mr. Urda then said that it was well within the Commission’s purview to change that buffer and it was at their discretion if they wanted to stay at the fifteen-foot buffer for Commercial-Residential Districts.

Ms. Capone stated that she felt most comfortable recommending the 15-foot buffer, as it is what the Zoning Ordinance already requires for the Commercial District. She also supported removing the cemetery restriction.

Ms. Capone then asked if the Commission felt comfortable with removing the cemetery comment from the proposed changes. Mr. Garrabrant asked for confirmation that only the Arsenal Street Cemetery could be applied to this, and that it is for the most part unvisited.

Ms. Capone asked if the Planning Commission's changes would be included in the Ordinance advanced to City Council. Mr. Urda then replied that the City Council would receive the proposed Zoning Amendment exactly as the Planning Commission recommended it, and if the Commission recommended removing certain language, then Staff would remove that language before advancing the Amendment to Council.

Ms. Capone then asked if the Commission was okay with the buffer being 15 feet instead of 30 feet. Mr. Garrabrant added that as Ms. Godek had mentioned before, there would be no on-site consumption. Ms. Capone agreed that the hours of operation should remain as proposed.

Mr. Urda displayed the proposed changes on the display screen for the audience to explain what the Commission was speaking about. Ms. Capone then pointed out that the buffer should be a minimum of 15 feet. Mr. Urda then clarified that they would not need to do anything more than strike out the line of Code from the draft because then the existing 15-foot buffer for Commercial/Residential district boundaries would already apply.

Ms. Capone then opened privilege of the floor to any members of the public that wished to speak.

Brandon Blount, owner of Black River Supply Company of West Carthage, came up to speak. He distributed a packet to the Commission that broke down how he felt the State would interpret the draft Zoning Amendment.

Mr. Blount said that the 30-foot buffer was excessive, and that the New York State Office of Cannabis Management would throw it out. He continued that these were unrealistic distance requirements and said that the Planning Commission had to follow the State Requirements for proximity. He also discussed case law about municipal overreach. Mr. Blount stated that limiting dispensaries to enter Commercial Districts only amounted to a categorical ban.

Mr. Blount then stated that the language "Same road as" in the proposed Code was legally ambiguous. Mr. Urda clarified that it was a direct copy and paste from State language.

Mr. Blount then brought up the case of Tink & E. CO., Inc. v Town of Riverhead as a precedent. He said it was included in the packet that he handed to the Commission. In his closing statement, he stated that limiting cannabis dispensaries to Commercial Districts only and requiring a 30-foot landscaped buffer zone would limit dispensaries.

Ms. Capone then stated that the Commission is not creating a new buffer zone, they are referring to the existing buffer zone within the Zoning Ordinance. She clarified that it will be consistent with the 15-foot existing buffer requirement that all businesses in Commercial Districts must pertain to.

Mr. Blount asked if it is in Urban Mixed Use, if there was a chance to get a variance for it.

Ms. Capone stated that any request for a variance would go through the Zoning Board of Appeals. She added that it would not be an as of right use, and the Commercial Districts are an as of right use, only requiring a Special Use Permit. She said that locating a dispensary in any other zoning district would require a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Urda then explained the 15-foot landscaped buffer when abutting a Residential District applies to the Commercial, Downtown, Urban Mixed Use, and Neighborhood Mixed-Use Districts. He elaborated that the buffer requirement applied to all uses in those four districts and did not single out any use in particular.

Ms. Capone then said that was entirely fair, and agreed upon keeping it fair, and thanked Mr. Blount for his comments.

Mr. Monaco then asked Mr. Urda if dispensaries could go into the Industrial District. Mr. Urda replied that the current Use Table would not allow that.

Ms. Capone asked if anyone else would like to speak.

When no one else stood to speak, Mr. Urda clarified that the Jefferson County Planning Board would receive a copy of the recommendations as well.

Ms. Capone asked for a motion to recommend that City Council approve the proposed Zoning Amendment without the cemetery restriction nor the 30-foot landscaped buffer, but otherwise as written.

Mr. Godek moved to recommend that the City Council approve the proposal, to amend various sections of Chapter 310, Zoning, of the City Code, Article III – District Uses, Article VII – Supplemental Regulations and Article XVI – Definitions, regarding Marijuana Dispensaries, Retail, as amended.

Mr. Garrabrant seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Ms. Capone then asked for a vote to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Monaco made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Blevins seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary



Department of Planning
175 Arsenal Street, 3rd Floor
Watertown, NY 13601

Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, AICP
Director of Planning

315-785-3144
315-785-5092 (fax)

October 29, 2025

Geoffrey Urda, Senior Planner
City of Watertown
245 Washington Street
Room 305
Watertown, NY 13601

Re: City of Watertown, Zoning Law Amendment, City-wide, JCDP File # C 12 - 25

Dear Geoff,

On October 28, 2025, the Jefferson County Planning Board reviewed the above project, after it was referred to the County for comment. The Board determined that the proposal does not raise significant county-wide or intercommunity concerns, and it is therefore mainly a local matter for your board to decide.

As part of its review, the Planning Board noted the following consideration:

- New York State General City Law requires zoning amendments to be made in accordance with the community's Comprehensive Plan.

In addition, the Board offers the following advisory comments for your consideration:

- The local board should consider expanding the zoning districts in which marijuana dispensaries and retail uses are permitted to include areas such as the Downtown and Urban Mixed-Use Districts, consistent with how comparable uses, such as liquor stores, are regulated.
- While the proposed amendment would regulate dispensaries through a special use permit process, the board may wish to evaluate whether site plan review, supplemented by the proposed appropriate use-specific standards, would provide a more consistent regulatory framework for these establishments within designated commercial districts.

Please note that the advisory comments are not a condition of the County Planning Board's action. They are listed to assist the local board in its review of the project. The local board is free to make its final decision.

State law requires that the County Planning Board be notified of your board's action within thirty (30) days after a final decision.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel C. Wilson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Samuel C. Wilson
Community Development Coordinator

November 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Eric Wagenaar, City Manager

Subject: Board and Commission Report and Letter of Interest

Below is a listing of vacant and expired seats on City Boards and Commissions for City Council review.

Board or Commission	Appointed By	Term	Name of Member	Date of Appt.	Term Expires
Transportation Commission	Council	3 Years	VACANT		04/01/2027
Board of Assessment Review	Council	5 Years	VACANT		09/30/2027
Board of Assessment Review	Council	5 Years	VACANT		09/30/2028

The City has received an application from Amit Raina, a resident expressing interest in serving on the Transportation Commission. If Council is agreeable, a resolution will be prepared for the November 17th, 2025 meeting.