

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
November 17, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Sarah V.C. Pierce Presiding

Present: Council Member Robert O. Kimball
Council Member Clifford G. Olney III
Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero
Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen
Mayor Sarah V.C. Pierce

Also Present: Eric F. Wagenaar, City Manager
Kristen E. Smith, Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC, City Attorney

City staff present:

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission, Amit Raina
- Resolution No. 2 - Nominating Ryan Henry-Wilkinson for Membership on the Board of Directors of the Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc. (CAPC)
- Resolution No. 3 - Nominating Stanley Zaremba for Membership on the Board of Directors of the Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc. (CAPC)
- Resolution No. 4 - Approving Request for Shuttle Bus Service, Northern Choral Society
- Resolution No. 5 - Approving Change Order No. 1 for the Ohio Street Water Main Replacement Project, EDGE Civil Corporation
- Resolution No. 6 - Approving the Support of Fort Drum as a Candidate Site for the Department of War's Advanced Nuclear Microreactor Initiative and Collaboration with NYSERDA and NYPA
- Resolution No. 7 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 1 Asbestos Abatement: DSA Services, Inc.
- Resolution No. 8 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 2 General Construction: Black Horse Group, LLC
- Resolution No. 9 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 3 Roofing: RSI Roofing, Inc.
- Resolution No. 10 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 4 Mechanical: Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc.
- Resolution No. 11 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 5 Plumbing: Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc.
- Resolution No. 12 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 6 Electrical: Watson Electric, Inc.
- Resolution No. 13 - Approving Change Order No. 2 for Design and Construction Services for the City Court and Other City Hall Renovations, GYMO Engineering
- Resolution No. 14 - Authorizing Professional Services Agreement for Special Inspection Services Associated with the Watertown City Court Renovation Project with Atlantic Testing Laboratories

- Resolution No. 15 - Authorizing Professional Services Agreement for Air Monitoring Services Associated with the Watertown City Court Renovation Project with Energy & Environment, LLC
- Resolution No. 16 - Authorizing Professional Services Agreement with GYMO Architecture, Engineering & Land Surveying, D.P.C. for Construction Management of the Watertown City Court Renovation Project
- Resolution No. 17 - Directing the City Manager to Fill the Deputy City Comptroller Position in Accordance with the City Charter §42-4
- Ordinance No. 1 - An Ordinance Amending the Ordinance Dated December 15, 2014, as Amended September 16, 2019, Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,900,000 Bonds of the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, to Pay the Cost of City Court Renovations, in and for Said City, to Change the Scope of the Project to Include Certain City Hall Improvements, and to Increase the Estimated Maximum Cost Thereof and the Amount of Bonds Authorized to \$7,300,000
- Tabled Resolution – Re-Authorizing Fundraising Through the Northern New York Community Foundation For the Construction of a Skate Park (Extended Fundraising Period)
- Proposed Local Law of 2025 – A Local Law Establishing a Charter Review Commission
- Staff Report – Annual Board and Commission Appointments
- Staff Report – Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – October 2025
- Staff Report – Sales Tax Revenue – October 2025

Meeting opened with a moment of silence.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of November 3, 2025 and work session of November 10, 2025, was dispensed and accepted as written by motion of Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero, seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

COMMUNICATIONS

No Communications.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Patrick Hickey, 394 Pawling Street, asked Council to support Resolution No. 1 for the appointment to the Transportation Commission.

Jonathan Phillips, 735 Mill Street, expressed his disappointment in Council, as well as his concerns regarding the use of shopping carts by the homeless, the recent theft of his bicycle, recent drug busts and issues facing the City bus drivers.

PUBLIC HEARING

At 7:15 p.m. Mayor Pierce asked the City Clerk to read the notice of Public Hearing concerning A Local Law Establishing a Charter Review Commission

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

Brian Ashley, Thompson Boulevard, expressed his support for a Charter Commission, noting that he supports expanding the size of Council to have ward representation and creating more committees under Council to do more work prior to the Council meetings.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 1 - Appointment to the Transportation Commission, Amit Raina

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York, hereby appoints the following individual to the Transportation Commission, for a three-year term, such term expires April 1, 2027.

Amit Raina
389 Pawling Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 2 - Nominating Ryan Henry-Wilkinson for Membership on the Board of Directors of the Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc. (CAPC)

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

BE IT RESOLVED that the following individual is hereby nominated for membership on the Board of Directors of the Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc. (CAPC), **as the designee of Mayor Sarah V.C. Pierce**, for a term expiring on December 31, 2027:

Ryan Henry-Wilkinson
520 Holcomb Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 3 - Nominating Stanley Zaremba for Membership on the Board of Directors of the Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc. (CAPC)

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

BE IT RESOLVED that the following individual is hereby nominated for membership on the Board of Directors of the Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc. (CAPC), **as the designee of Council Member Lisa Ruggiero**, for a term expiring on December 31, 2027:

Stanley Zaremba
247 Wealtha Ave, Apt 647A
Watertown, NY 13601

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 4 - Approving Request for Shuttle Bus Service, Northern Choral Society

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the Northern Choral Society has performed a holiday concert at the Asbury United Methodist Church for the benefit of the citizens for years, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown had graciously provided shuttle bus service for this concert at no charge to the riders or the Northern Choral Society since 2004, and

WHEREAS it is the recommendation of the Transit Director to continue this service as part of the City of Watertown's Charter Bus Policy,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York, approves providing the shuttle bus service at no charge for the Northern Choral Society concert planned for Saturday, December 6th and Sunday, December 7, 2025, at the Asbury United Methodist Church on Franklin Street.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 5 - Approving Change Order No. 1 for the Ohio Street Water Main Replacement Project, EDGE Civil Corporation

WHEREAS at its January 16, 2024, meeting, the City Council approved a bid from EDGE Civil Corporation in the amount of \$834,974.00 for the Ohio Street Water Main Replacement Project, and

WHEREAS there have been various price adjustments to field and contract items that need to be addressed before a final payment can be issued, and

WHEREAS EDGE Civil Corporation has now submitted Change Order No. 1 for a decrease of \$39,910.91, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves Change Order No. 1 from EDGE Civil Corporation for a decrease of \$39,910.91, a copy of which is attached and made part of this Resolution, bringing the total contract amount to \$795,063.09, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager or their designee is hereby authorized and directed to execute Change Order No. 1 on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Not introduced.

Resolution No. 6 - Approving the Support of Fort Drum as a Candidate Site for the Department of War's Advanced Nuclear Microreactor Initiative and Collaboration with NYSERDA and NYPA

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the United States Department of War (DoW), through the Defense Innovation Unit and the U.S. Army, has launched the Advanced Nuclear Power for Installations (ANPI) initiative to enhance energy resilience and mission readiness at military installations, and

WHEREAS microreactor technology offers scalable, emission-free, dispatchable, and resilient power generation with reduced reliance on fossil fuels, supporting critical infrastructure and defense operations in all conditions, and

WHEREAS Fort Drum, located in Jefferson County, serves as a key power projection platform for the U.S. Army and has been identified by Army assessments and federal leadership as a strong candidate for deployment of advanced nuclear technology, and

WHEREAS Fort Drum possesses unique infrastructure advantages, operational control of its utilities, and a skilled workforce capable of supporting such technology, and enjoys longstanding public, state, and federal support for energy security initiatives, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown recognizes the significant economic and strategic benefits of this initiative, including job creation, long-term workforce development, and enhanced regional energy security, and

WHEREAS New York Governor has directed New York Power Authority (NYPA) to develop at least 1GW of new nuclear power and tasked New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) with the production of a Master Plan for Responsible Advanced Nuclear Development in New York State as part of its clean energy strategy,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Watertown fully supports Fort Drum as a host site for the Department of Defense's microreactor program under the ANPI initiative, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown formally expresses its willingness to collaborate with NYSERDA, NYPA, and federal partners in evaluating and supporting the deployment of advanced nuclear energy technologies within the County.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 7 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 1 Asbestos: Abatement DSA Services, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City desires to renovate the existing city hall office building and court room. This includes demolition and asbestos abatement. A reconfiguration of the first-floor space with new gypsum and metal stud partitions, terrazzo, tile, carpet and LVT flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, new wood and metal doors, and new windows and insulation. Additionally, the building will receive a new EPDM roof, a new aluminum storefront main entrance, new side entrance ramp with roof, new exterior stone paneling, updated lighting, HVAC, plumbing and electrical, and all other associated work, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received nine (9) sealed bids for Contract #1 – Asbestos Abatement for Watertown City Court Renovation Project, and

WHEREAS on October 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by DSA Services, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from DSA Services, Inc. in the amount of \$307,000.00, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that acceptance of this bid is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Pierce introduced District Executive Donald Doerr and District Administrative Justice Deborah Karalunas of the 5th Judicial District, as well as City Court Chief Clerk Benjamin Cobb, who were in the audience and available to answer Council questions regarding this project.

In response to Council Member Olney noting that the amount of the bond for this project has increased significantly, City Comptroller James Mills explained that the original bond ordinance needs to be amended to the new cost of the project. He added that the original bond was reflective of the original design costs.

Council Member Shoen said that he sent an email to the City Manager for which he received a response today with a copy of a letter from the Unified Court System. He said he still questioned whether there was a mandated completion date for this project.

There was further discussion regarding the history of this project, the timeline that has occurred, and whether there is a definite mandate to when it needs to be completed. City Manager Wagenaar and Administrative Justice Karalunas both offered summaries of correspondence and discussions that have taken place between the City and the Unified Court System. It was noted that, although there may not be a firm deadline set, there is the expectation that this renovation will occur, especially given its 10 year history.

Council Member Shoen asked if there was any consideration to build a new City Court at a new location instead of trying to retrofit it into City Hall, and he noted that it might be a less costly option.

Mr. Wagenaar assured him that option has been discussed and reviewed, but the decision was to move forward within the current site.

Council Member Ruggiero offered some historical knowledge of the earlier stages of the project and the prior discussions regarding proposed locations and costs.

Council Member Olney commented that there was a lot a paperwork and material that needed to be reviewed in a short time, especially since the agenda is not received by Council until Thursday prior to

the meeting. He expressed concern that the public may feel the same and not be able to get a full understanding of large projects like this, so he suggested offering more public outreach programs in the future for projects of this size and cost.

Expressing concern for the business model of the City, especially with a declining population, Council Member Shoen said he worries about spending this amount of money and the possibility of the City Court becoming unused if the structure of the City were to change.

Stressing that he has more faith in the future existence of the City, Council Member Kimball stated that City Hall is 60 years old and the building has issues which should be addressed in order to make the environment better for the people who work in it.

Further discussion occurred regarding the history and timeline of this project.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea except Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen voting nay.

Resolution No. 8 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 2 General: Construction Black Horse Group, LLC

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City desires to renovate the existing city hall office building and court room. This includes demolition and asbestos abatement. A reconfiguration of the first-floor space with new gypsum and metal stud partitions, terrazzo, tile, carpet and LVT flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, new wood and metal doors, and new windows and insulation. Additionally, the building will receive a new EPDM roof, a new aluminum storefront main entrance, new side entrance ramp with roof, new exterior stone paneling, updated lighting, HVAC, plumbing and electrical, and all other associated work, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received five (5) sealed bids for Contract #2 - General Construction for the Watertown City Court Renovation Project, and

WHEREAS on October 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Black Horse Group, LLC, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Black Horse Group, LLC in the amount of \$2,766,075.00, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that acceptance of this bid is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen voting nay.

Resolution No. 9 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 3 Roofing: RSI Roofing, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City desires to renovate the existing city hall office building and court room. This includes demolition and asbestos abatement. A reconfiguration of the first-floor space with new gypsum and metal stud partitions, terrazzo, tile, carpet and LVT flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, new wood and metal doors, and new windows and insulation. Additionally, the building will receive a new EPDM roof, a new aluminum storefront main entrance, new side entrance ramp with roof, new exterior stone paneling, updated lighting, HVAC, plumbing and electrical, and all other associated work, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received two (2) sealed bids for Contract #3 - Roofing for the Watertown City Court Renovation Project, and

WHEREAS on October 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by RSI Roofing, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from RSI Roofing, Inc. in the amount of \$549,290.00, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that acceptance of this bid is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Ruggiero pointed out that she recalled a previous Judge with the Unified Court System had stated that if the City did not complete the renovations as requested, then the Unified Court System would do it and then send the bill to the City for reimbursement.

Administrative Justice Karalunas said that she could not speak to that, however, she is aware of the State reviewing the funding to cities who have not brought their court facilities into compliance with the requirements.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen voting nay.

Resolution No. 10 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 4 Mechanical: Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City desires to renovate the existing city hall office building and court room. This includes demolition and asbestos abatement. A reconfiguration of the first-floor space with new gypsum and metal stud partitions, terrazzo, tile, carpet and LVT flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, new wood and metal doors, and new windows and insulation. Additionally, the building will receive a new EPDM roof, a new aluminum storefront main entrance, new side entrance ramp with roof, new exterior stone paneling, updated lighting, HVAC, plumbing and electrical, and all other associated work, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received three (3) sealed bids for Contract #4 - Mechanical for the Watertown City Court Renovation Project, and

WHEREAS on October 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$1,933,878.00, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that acceptance of this bid is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen voting nay.

Resolution No. 11 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 5 Plumbing: Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City desires to renovate the existing city hall office building and court room. This includes demolition and asbestos abatement. A reconfiguration of the first-floor space with new gypsum and metal stud partitions, terrazzo, tile, carpet and LVT flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, new wood and metal doors, and new windows and insulation. Additionally, the building will receive a new EPDM roof, a new aluminum storefront main entrance, new side entrance ramp with roof, new exterior stone paneling, updated lighting, HVAC, plumbing and electrical, and all other associated work, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received one (1) sealed bids for Contract #5 - Plumbing for the Watertown City Court Renovation Project, and

WHEREAS on October 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Hyde-Stone Mechanical Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$163,800.00, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that acceptance of this bid is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen voting nay.

Resolution No. 12 - Accepting Bid for Watertown City Court Renovation Project – Contract No. 6 Electrical: Watson Electric, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS the City desires to renovate the existing city hall office building and court room. This includes demolition and asbestos abatement. A reconfiguration of the first-floor space with new gypsum and metal stud partitions, terrazzo, tile, carpet and LVT flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, new wood and metal doors, and new windows and insulation. Additionally, the building will receive a new EPDM roof, a new aluminum storefront main entrance, new side entrance ramp with roof, new exterior stone paneling, updated lighting, HVAC, plumbing and electrical, and all other associated work, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received seven (7) sealed bids for Contract #6 - Electrical for the Watertown City Court Renovation Project, and

WHEREAS on October 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Engineering Department and in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Watson Electric, Inc., and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Watson Electric, Inc. in the amount of \$477,000.00, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that acceptance of this bid is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen voting nay.

Resolution No. 13 - Approving Change Order No. 2 for Design and Construction Services for the City Court and Other City Hall Renovations, GYMO Engineering

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS at its April 17, 2023, meeting, the City Council approved the Professional Service Agreement from GYMO Engineering for the Preliminary Design Services for the City Court and Other City Hall Renovations in the amount of \$84,411.60, and

WHEREAS at its October 16, 2023, meeting, the city Council approved the Proposal from GYMO Engineering for the remaining design and construction services for the City Court and Other City Hall Renovations in the amount of \$337,646.40, and

WHEREAS at its January 14, 2024, meeting, the city Council approved Change Order No. 1 from GYMO Engineering for a decrease of \$25,200.00, bringing the total contract amount to \$396,858 and

WHEREAS additional items were included in the Scope of Work during the design and bid documents phases, and

WHEREAS GYMO Engineering has now submitted Change Order No. 2 in the amount of \$87,173.00 to include the addition of those items in the bid specifications and drawings, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves Change Order No. 2 from GYMO Engineering in the amount of \$87,173.00, bringing the total contract amount to \$484,031 a copy of which is attached and made part of this Resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Manager, or their designee is hereby authorized and directed to execute Change Order No. 2 on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 14 - Authorizing Professional Services Agreement for Special Inspection Services Associated with the Watertown City Court Renovation Project with Atlantic Testing Laboratories

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown Engineering Department has included this in the Watertown City Court Renovation Project in the 15-year Capital Budget Plan, and

WHEREAS, in support of this project, GYMO D.P.C. solicited professional service proposals for Special Inspection Services as required by New York State regulations, and

WHEREAS, the Purchasing Manager and Engineering Department, in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC, and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive fee schedule proposal submitted by Atlantic Testing Laboratories and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the Agreement between the City of Watertown and Atlantic Testing Laboratories amounts as provided in the fee schedule proposal, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the acceptance of this proposal is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City Council authorizes the City Manager or their designee is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Agreements on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 15 - Authorizing Professional Services Agreement for Air Monitoring Services Associated with the Watertown City Court Renovation Project with Energy & Environment, LLC

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown Engineering Department has included this in the Watertown City Court Renovation Project in the 15-year Capital Budget Plan, and

WHEREAS, in support of this project, GYMO D.P.C. solicited professional service proposals for Air Monitoring Services as required by New York State regulations, and

WHEREAS, the Purchasing Manager and Engineering Department, in consultation with GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying DPC, and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive fee schedule proposal submitted by Energy & Environment, LLC, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the Agreement between the City of Watertown and Energy & Environment, LLC amounts as listed in the fee schedule proposal, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the acceptance of this proposal is contingent upon the passing of the bond ordinance to finance the project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City Council authorizes the City Manager or their designee is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Agreements on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 16 - Authorizing Professional Services Agreement with GYMO Architecture, Engineering & Land Surveying, D.P.C. City for Construction Management of the Watertown City Court Renovation Project

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown Engineering Department has included this in the Watertown City Court Renovation Project in the 15-year Capital Budget Plan, and

WHEREAS, the New York State Unified Court System has mandated renovations of the existing facilities, and

WHEREAS, in support of this project, the City Engineering Department has negotiated a professional services agreement with GYMO Architecture, Engineering & Land Surveying D.P.C., for the construction management of this project in the total amount of \$397,000 and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the Agreement between the City of Watertown and GYMO D.P.C., a copy of which is attached and made a part of this resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City Council authorizes the City Manager or their designee to authorize and direct Agreements on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 17 - Directing the City Manager to Fill the Deputy City Comptroller Position in Accordance with the City Charter §42-4

WHEREAS Section 42-4 of the City Charter expressly establishes that the administrative staff positions of the Municipal Comptroller's Department "shall consist of the Department Head, who shall be the City Comptroller, and one Deputy City Comptroller", and

WHEREAS the Charter further provides that the Deputy City Comptroller, in the event of the absence of the City Comptroller, "shall have all the powers and duties of and shall appear on behalf of the City Comptroller," ensuring continuity of fiscal oversight and uninterrupted financial operations of the City, and

WHEREAS the position of Deputy City Comptroller has remained unfilled since 2023, creating a gap in the City's administrative succession and leaving the Comptroller's office without its charter-mandated deputy, and

WHEREAS filling this position is necessary to comply with the City Charter, maintain the integrity and resilience of municipal financial management, and provide operational support for the City Comptroller's Department,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby directs the City Manager to initiate and complete the process of advertising for, interviewing, and appointing a qualified candidate to the position of Deputy City Comptroller in accordance with the City Charter and applicable civil service rules, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager shall provide to the City Council, within 30 days, a report detailing the timeline and process for filling this position to ensure compliance with the City Charter and continuity of operations within the Comptroller's Department.

Motion was offered by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III to introduce the foregoing resolution, however, there was no second this resolution.

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 1 - An Ordinance Amending the Ordinance Dated December 15, 2014, as Amended September 16, 2019, Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,900,000 Bonds of the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, to Pay the Cost of City Court Renovations, in and for Said City, to Change the Scope of the Project to Include Certain City Hall Improvements, and to Increase the Estimated Maximum Cost Thereof and the Amount of Bonds Authorized to \$7,300,000

Introduced by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero

WHEREAS, by ordinance dated December 15, 2014 (the “2014 Ordinance”), the Council of the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, authorized the issuance of \$948,000 bonds of said City to pay the cost of City Court renovations, in and for the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, including incidental expenses in connection therewith, a specific object or purpose, at an estimated maximum cost of \$948,000, in and for the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York; and

WHEREAS, by ordinance dated September 16, 2019, the Council of the City amended the 2014 Ordinance to increase the estimated maximum cost and the amount of bonds authorized to pay the cost of the City Court renovations from \$948,000 to \$2,900,000; and

WHEREAS, the Council now wishes to (i) include in the scope of the project certain improvements to the City Hall building, including air handler replacements, and (ii) increase the estimated maximum cost and the amount of bonds authorized for the updated project to \$7,300,000, an increase of \$4,400,000; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Council of the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, as follows:

Section A. The title and Sections 1 and 2 of the ordinance of this Council dated and duly adopted December 15, 2014, as amended September 16, 2019, authorizing the issuance of \$2,900,000 bonds to pay the cost of City Court renovations, in and for the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, including incidental expenses in connection therewith, a specific object or purpose, at an estimated maximum cost of \$2,900,000, in and for the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, are hereby further amended, in part, to read as follows: “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$8,000,000 BONDS OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, JEFFERSON COUNTY, NEW YORK, TO PAY THE COST OF CITY COURT RENOVATIONS AND CERTAIN CITY HALL RENOVATIONS, IN AND FOR SAID CITY.”

....

Section 1. For the specific object or purpose of paying the cost of City Court renovations and certain City Hall renovations, including air handler replacements, in and for the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, including incidental expenses in connection therewith, there are hereby authorized to be issued \$7,300,000 bonds of said City pursuant to the provisions of the Local Finance Law.

Section 2. It is hereby determined that the estimated maximum cost of the aforesaid specific object or purpose is \$7,300,000 and that the plan for the financing

thereof is by the issuance of the \$7,300,000 bonds of said City authorized to be issued pursuant to this bond ordinance, provided however, that the amount of bonds to be issued shall be reduced by the amount of any grant funds received therefor.

Section B. The validity of such bonds and bond anticipation notes may be contested only if:

- 1) Such obligations are authorized for an object or purpose for which said City is not authorized to expend money, or
- 2) The provisions of law which should be complied with at the date of publication of this ordinance are not substantially complied with, and an action, suit or proceeding contesting such validity is commenced within twenty days after the date of such publication, or
- 3) Such obligations are authorized in violation of the provisions of the Constitution.

Section C. Upon this ordinance taking effect, the same shall be published in summary in the Watertown Daily Times, the official newspaper, together with a notice of the City Clerk in substantially the form provided in Section 81.00 of the Local Finance Law.

Section D. This ordinance is effective immediately.

Seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III

Motion for unanimous consent moved by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero, seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and defeated with all voting yea except for Council Member Clifford G. Olney III voting nay.

In response to Council Member Kimball's inquiry about the estimated annual payment of the bond, Mr. Mills explained that the total cost of the project would be divided into two separate bonds, one for the Court renovations and one for the improvements to City Hall. He provided estimated yearly payments minus the reimbursement amount from the court system.

Council Member Ruggiero questioned a point of order regarding unanimous consent not being achieved and it was noted that this ordinance could not be considered until the next Council meeting.

Laid over under the rules.

OLD BUSINESS

Tabled Resolution - Re-Authorizing Fundraising Through the Northern New York Community Foundation for the Construction of a Skate Park (Extended Fundraising Period). *(Introduced on November 3, 2025; tabled; appears in its entirety in the 2025 Minutes Book on page 5-6 of the 11/03/2025 minutes).*

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

Discussion ensued about the amendment that was made at the last meeting and additional items that Council wanted further clarified.

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to amend the fifth paragraph of the foregoing resolution to replace the words “to three years” to “for one year”. Motion was seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

The resolution now reads as follows:

Re-Authorizing Fundraising Through the Northern New York Community Foundation for the Construction of a Skate Park (Extended Fundraising Period)

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 fundraising 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~~ **new skate park**, 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~~ **for one year** 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.

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

The Proposed Local Law of 2025 - A Local Law Establishing a Charter Review Commission.
(Introduced on November 3, 2025; public hearing held this evening; appears in its entirety in the 2025 Minutes Book on page 9-11 of the 11/03/2025 minutes).

Council Member Ruggiero thanked Mr. Ashley for his thoughts expressed during the public hearing. She discussed the last Charter Review that was done a few years ago and the proposed changes. She asked if all changes to the Charter need to be made through the referendum process.

Attorney Smith explained that it depends on the topic of the change, noting some changes can be made by a local law, and she discussed examples of changes that would need to go to referendum. In response to Council Member Ruggiero's concerns about the Deputy Comptroller and removing the position from

the Charter, Attorney Smith advised that it is possible to have a position filled that is not listed in the Charter.

Council Member Ruggiero asked who besides the City Comptroller can sign checks on behalf of the City, and upon being advised that currently only the City Comptroller has that authority, she expressed concern should the City Comptroller become unexpectedly unavailable.

Council Member Kimball indicated why he was not in support of establishing a Charter Commission at this time, noting it would take up a lot of staff and citizen time. He also stated, in response to comments made during the public hearing, that the five members of Council are elected at-large and represent the City as a whole.

Council Member Shoen said he was surprised to hear that only the City Comptroller can sign checks for the City and asked if a Charter Commission is required to change that. He also responded to the comments made during the public hearing.

Attorney Smith advised that a Charter Commission is not necessary to change this.

Further discussion took place regarding the Deputy Comptroller position not being filled and check-signing authority.

Council Member Olney added to the discussion stating the Deputy Comptroller position is one of the reasons he feels there is a need for a Charter Commission review, and he suggested that if a position is listed in the City's Charter, then he feels the City has a legal responsibility to fill it. He offered other possible changes to the Charter that could be reviewed by a new Charter Commission, and he discussed the benefit of public involvement.

Council Member Kimball read from the Charter the appointed positions that are officers of the City and noted it did not include a Deputy Comptroller. He also offered a possible solution should the City Comptroller become unavailable.

Mayor Pierce suggested that Council should start with piecemeal changes to the Charter that could be accomplished by Council based on the last Charter Commission. She agreed with Council Member Kimball that a Charter Commission would take up a significant amount of staff time and Council time. She mentioned that there would be two new Council Members beginning in January and perhaps it would be appropriate to let the new Council make a decision on a potential Charter Commission.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing Local Law and defeated with all voting nay except for Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and Council Member Clifford G. Olney III voting yea.

STAFF REPORTS

Annual Board and Commission Appointments

Mayor Pierce reviewed this memo and advised Council Members to speak to the City Manager if there are any concerns or questions regarding the proposed reappointments.

Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – October 2025

A report was available for Council to review.

Sales Tax Revenue – October 2025

A report was available for Council to review.

NEW BUSINESS

Airport Expansion Ribbon-Cutting

Council Member Kimball noted he had attended this event at the Airport and commented that Jefferson County has done a wonderful job on the new terminal. He indicated there were plans to turn the old terminal into a restaurant and mentioned additional upgrades in the works which could lead to more flights to the facility. He mentioned the project had received State funding.

Golf Course

Council Member Olney asked for confirmation that there would be a teleconference meeting on December 1st with Kyle Kressler regarding the golf course and noted he was looking forward to it.

Response to Privilege of the Floor Comments – Jonathan Phillips

In response to Mr. Phillips' comments about his stolen bike, Council Member Olney suggested the City institute a bike registration program to deter bike theft. Responding to Mr. Phillips' concerns about the homeless using shopping carts, Council Member Olney suggested the real root of the problem would be to provide the homeless with a place to store their belongings.

Homeless Shelter

Council Member Olney mentioned that the current shelters can only accommodate 20 people and the last count done by Health and Human Services showed there were 120 homeless people in the City.

ZBA

Council Member Olney expressed his concern that, since the City has opted in to cannabis dispensaries, the special use permit requirement appeared to be deterring businesses' plans for opening. He commented that the zoning board should exist to facilitate the opening of businesses. He also stated his belief that people should be able to use their own property as they would like, noting people used to run businesses out of their homes. He questioned why the ZBA asks the questions they ask and why it is so difficult to get special use permit approval.

Airport Expansion Ribbon-Cutting (continued)

Council Member Ruggiero indicated she had also attended this event at the Airport and suggested the public visit the state-of-the-art facility.

Veterans' Day

Council Member Ruggiero noted that she had attended the Veterans' Day ceremonies along with Mayor Pierce and Council Member Kimball.

Christmas Parade

Council Member Ruggiero announced that the annual Christmas parade would be held on December 12 and she noted organizers were still looking for additional entries.

ZBA (continued)

Council Member Shoen commented that he did not believe it was the ZBA's fault for asking questions but blamed the zoning re-write for issues with the various zoning districts. He cited an example of a credit union moving into the former Walgreen's on State Street and the difficulties they are having with zoning compliance. He indicated that Council should consider making some changes to what he feels are areas that are zoned incorrectly.

Charter Review

Council Member Shoen indicated that he would be willing to consider a Charter review if he was presented with enough reasons to call for one.

Shopping Carts

Noting his position on shopping carts has been well-documented, Council Member Shoen commented that he does not believe their illegal use should be justified as a convenience. He noted he did not believe this was discriminatory against any one group.

Bail Reform

Council Member Shoen expressed frustration regarding a recent drug bust and bail release, which he felt was unjust. He wondered if a new way to approach this would be to suggest the City collect sales tax on fentanyl sales. He also commented that a 17-year-old doing "adult business" should be charged as an adult.

Sales Tax/Hydro Reports

Council Member Shoen noted his hope that these figures would even out by the end of the year.

On-Street Parking

Council Member Shoen reminded the public that the seasonal parking prohibitions were now in effect.

Airport Expansion Ribbon-Cutting (continued)

Mayor Pierce advised that she had been unable to attend the ribbon-cutting but had visited the new facility today and invited the public to visit as well.

Golf Course Feedback

Mayor Pierce indicated that she has been compiling all the various feedback she has received from the public regarding course conditions and suggestions for improvement. She noted she will share the information with City Manager and other members of Council.

Turkey Giveaway

Mayor Pierce advised that there would be a drive-thru Thanksgiving turkey giveaway Saturday, November 22 at 10 a.m. at the Butler pavilion. She indicated the event is sponsored by several not-for-profits and there were some requirements to participate. She added that information would be posted on the her social media.

Medical Arts Building Cleanup

Mayor Pierce mentioned she has received continued complaints about the condition of the property at the corner of Sherman and Mullin streets. She suggested staff look into the problem, noting unfairness to surrounding property owners.

Motion was made by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero to move into Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular individual.

Motion was seconded by Council Member Clifford G. Olney III and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Council moved into Executive Session at 8:27 p.m.

Council reconvened at 9:02 p.m.

A D J O U R N M E N T

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 9:02 p.m. by motion of Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen, seconded by Council Member Lisa A. Ruggiero and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Ann M. Saunders
City Clerk