

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
January 20, 2026
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Sarah V.C. Pierce Presiding

Present: Council Member Shane A. Garrabrant
Council Member Robert O. Kimball
Council Member Douglas E. Osborne, Jr.
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: Erica Anderson, James Mills, Thomas Compo, Michael Lumbis, Brandi Smith, Tina Bartlett-Bearup, Scott Weller

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Approving Procurement Policy Revisions
- Resolution No. 2 - Approving Agreement Between the City of Watertown and State of New York, Unified Court System
- Resolution No. 3 - Approving Changes to City Fees and Charges Schedule
- Resolution No. 4 - Approving Lease Agreement Between the City of Watertown and the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc.
- Resolution No. 5 - Approving Agreement for Public Benefit Services Between the City of Watertown and the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc.
- Resolution No. 6 - Declaring the City Council's Intent to Act as Lead Agency Pursuant to SEQRA in the Coordinated Environmental Review for the Proposed Sale and Site Development at 424 VanDuzee Street, Parcel Number 1-18-102.000
- Resolution No. 7 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget and Approving Police Department Over-hire
- Resolution No. 8 - Selecting Harris Beach Murtha as City Attorney
- Resolution No. 9 - Designating the City Manager as the City's Official Representative for the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation Engineering Planning Grant for the Newell Street Combined Sewer Evaluation Project and Appropriating Funding for the Project
- Ordinance No. 1 - An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance of \$7,500,000 Bonds of the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, to Pay the Cost of the Reconstruction of Newell Street, in and for said City
- Ordinance No. 2 - Changing the Approved Zoning Classification of 426, 430, 440 and 454 State Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 12-03-220.100, 12-03-220.200, 12-03-220.300, and 12-03-201.000 from Downtown to Urban Mixed Use
- Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – December 2025
- Sales Tax Revenue – December 2025
- Tree Watertown 2025 Annual Report and the City's 2025 Tree City USA Application Community Forestry Program Narrative
- CitiBus Route B (Arsenal Street) Schedule Change

Meeting opened with a moment of silence and Mayor Pierce asked that it be in remembrance of Father Pierre Aubin and Pauline Donato, community members who recently passed away.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of January 5, 2026, and work session of January 12, 2026, was dispensed and accepted as written by motion of Council Member Robert O. Kimball, seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Jonathan Phillips, 735 Mill Street, offered his support for the City participating in the care of the Zoo buildings and he expressed his desire to have flooding on Mill Street addressed during the Newell Street reconstruction project.

Frank Battista, Palmer Street, questioned whether the house within the Zoo property is being rented or utilized as a revenue generator. He also asked for a current list of City-owned properties and the status of the public auction process.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 1 - Approving Procurement Policy Revisions

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS on December 2, 2024, the City Council approved the latest revision to the City's Procurement Policy, and

WHEREAS the City's Procurement Policy has been established and adopted by the City Council, and

WHEREAS the Procurement Policy has been revised to update procurement best practices as recommended by Tina Bartlett-Bearup, Purchasing Manager, in consultation with the City's Comptroller, James Mills as part of our annual review, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the Procurement Policy, a copy of which is attached and made part of this resolution.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Pierce explained, for the public's awareness, that minor updates were made to the already adopted policy.

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

Resolution No. 2 - Approving Agreement Between the City of Watertown and State of New York, Unified Court System

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown is required by law to furnish and maintain adequate court facilities for use by Trial Courts of the State of New York, and

WHEREAS Chapter 686 of the Laws of 1996 was enacted to invest the State of New York with the fiscal responsibility of managing the interior cleaning of court facilities and performance of minor repairs therein, and with the ability to cover the cost thereof, and

WHEREAS Chapter 686 of the Laws of 1996 requires the State of New York to contract with political subdivisions of the State for the cleaning of court facilities, as well as minor emergency repairs thereof,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to execute this Annual Renewal Letter the budget incorporated as Appendix B on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting yea.

Resolution No. 3 - Approving Changes to City Fees and Charges Schedule

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City Council established a City Fees and Charges Schedule for the City of Watertown, as authorized by Local Law No. 2 of 2016, and

WHEREAS the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 City Fees and Charges Schedule was adopted by City Council on June 2, 2025 when the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget was adopted, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown operates an eighteen-hole golf course, and

WHEREAS the Parks and Recreation Department has proposed changes to this schedule to include the golf course fees for the 2026 golf season,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the below changes to the City Fees and Charges Schedule:

Thompson Park Golf Course	City Resident	Non-City Resident
Season Passes		
18 & Under	\$ 200	\$ 225
22 & Under	\$ 350	\$ 400
Adult	\$ 825	\$ 900
Senior (62)	\$ 675	\$ 750
Senior Couple (62)	\$ 950	\$ 1,025
Family (2 Adults)	\$ 1,050	\$ 1,150
<i>Additional Student</i>	\$ 90	\$ 100
Greens Fees		
9-Holes	\$ 22	\$ 24
18-Holes	\$ 30	\$ 33

Fall Rates (Effective post aeration)			
9-Holes	\$	15	\$ 17
18-Holes	\$	22	\$ 25
Carts (Per Golfer)			
9-Holes	\$	10	\$ 11
18-Holes	\$	15	\$ 17
Tournament Fees			
Per Entry – First 80 Players	\$	40	\$ 40
Per Entry – Over 80/No Cart Provided	\$	30	\$ 30
Driving Range			
Small	\$	8	\$ 8
Large	\$	11	\$ 11
Hole Signage			
Per Season, Per Hole	\$	500	\$ 500
Club Rentals			
Per Outing	\$	5	\$ 10
School Team			
Per School Season	\$	1800	
(Includes practices & matches)			

ID required in order to receive resident rate.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Shoen reviewed statistics of recent years' number of rounds and questioned the corresponding yearly revenues. He also expressed concern with limiting the size of the tournaments and he indicated that he supports the current fees that are in place without an increase.

Council Member Osborne stated he has heard concerns from residents regarding the increase in fees, especially from non-City residents. He said he would support having the same fee for both City and non-City residents.

Council Member Shoen mentioned that most of the use of the golf course is by City residents. He also said the City does not do enough to incentivize the sale of season passes, suggesting a discount on a bucket of balls or early bird purchase. He also proposed looking into naming rights for the golf course.

Mayor Pierce said she would support the naming rights idea and advised that a resident suggested doing dynamic pricing during hours that are slower.

Council Member Garrabrant said he compared the increase in fees to other golf courses in the area and felt the increase was in line with other courses, so he supports the fee increase proposal. He said he also supports looking into naming rights.

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

Resolution No. 4 - Approving Lease Agreement Between the City of Watertown and the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown, owns the facility known as Thompson Park, located in the City of Watertown, County of Jefferson, State of New York, and

WHEREAS the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc., desires to lease certain premises located within Thompson Park for the continued operation of Zoo New York, and the City of Watertown is willing to lease the same under the terms and conditions set forth in a new Agreement of Lease, and

WHEREAS the proposed Agreement of Lease establishes a new three (3) year lease term (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028) and updates provisions related to in-kind services by the City, and

WHEREAS the Agreement of Lease authorizes the City, in its sole discretion and subject to the availability of resources and City Manager approved priorities, to provide expanded in-kind services related to improvements within the leased premises, and expressly does not obligate the City to provide such services, and

WHEREAS the City Council has determined that approval of the Agreement of Lease is in the best interest of the City of Watertown and its residents,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the Agreement of Lease between the City of Watertown and the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc., in connection with the operation of Zoo New York, a copy of which is attached and made a part of this resolution, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, City Manager Wagenaar responded to questions posed by Council Member Shoen in regard to the house in the Zoo. He said there currently is not a rental agreement in place and he proposed using the first floor of the house for events, which staff could evaluate further.

Council Member Garrabrant pointed out section 4.3 of the agreement and asked if the semi-annual inspections are being done regularly.

Mr. Wagenaar replied that they had not been, but he assured Council that they will be going forward and that he would provide Council with regular reports. In regard to the recent review of the Little Tree Visitor Center's roof, Mr. Wagenaar provided details of the City Engineer's findings and he assured Council that it is safe for workers and patrons.

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

Resolution No. 5 - Approving Agreement for Public Benefit Services Between the City of Watertown and the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown, owns the facility known as Thompson Park, located in the City of Watertown, County of Jefferson, State of New York, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown has entered into a Zoo Lease Agreement with Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc., for the lease of certain premises located at Thompson Park for the operation of Zoo New York, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown and Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc. have negotiated a one (1) year term (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) for Public Benefit Services, including authorization for reimbursement-based payments in an amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00), as provided for in the City’s adopted Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget, and

WHEREAS the City Council has determined that it is in the best interest of the taxpayers of the City of Watertown to provide direct support to the Thompson Park Conservancy to assist with operations as detailed in the attached Agreement,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the Agreement for Public Benefit Services Between the City of Watertown and the Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc., a copy of which is attached and made a part of this resolution, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Osborne stated that he feels the lease agreement is very generous to the Zoo, so at this time he is having hard time justifying the additional \$100,000.

The funding amount of \$100,000 was discussed further and it was noted that this amount was already approved in the current adopted FY 2025-26 budget.

Mentioning that this public benefit service agreement normally would have been presented to Council shortly after the adoption of the budget, Mr. Wagenaar explained why it was delayed in coming to Council for approval.

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

Resolution No. 6 - Declaring the City Council's Intent to Act as Lead Agency Pursuant to SEQRA in the Coordinated Environmental Review for the Proposed Sale and Site Development at 424 VanDuzee Street, Parcel Number 1-18-102.000

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS Walldroff Properties, LLC has submitted an offer to purchase a portion of real property owned by the City of Watertown known as 424 Vanduzee Street, Parcel Number 1-18-102.000, consisting of an approximately 0.75-acre parcel, and

WHEREAS the purchasers wish to construct a parking lot expansion on the subject land involved in the proposed transaction, and

WHEREAS the proposed development would require, in addition to the property sale, a Zone Change, Subdivision Approval and Site Plan Approval, the latter two of which fall under the authority of the Planning Commission to approve, and

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

WHEREAS to avoid segmenting the SEQRA review, the City Council must evaluate the environmental impacts of the "whole action," which includes all the approvals identified above, and

WHEREAS the Planning Commission, having regulatory authority over Subdivision Approval and Site Plan Approval is an Involved Agency pursuant to SEQRA, necessitating a Coordinated Review, and

WHEREAS the City Council believes that it is the most appropriate body to act as Lead Agency under SEQRA, and

WHEREAS the City Council must formally declare its intent to act as Lead Agency in the SEQRA Review, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown formally declares its intent to act as Lead Agency for the Coordinated SEQRA Review for the proposed action involving the property sale of a portion of 424 Vanduzee Street and all required approvals necessary to construct a parking lot expansion on the site, minimally including, but not necessarily limited to, a Zone Change, Subdivision Approval, and Site Plan Approval, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council hereby directs Staff to initiate the Coordinated Review and to reach an agreement on the establishment of the Lead Agency.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Garrabrant stated that he will abstain from the discussion and vote since his employer is involved in the purchase of this property.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and carried with all voting yea except for Council Member Shane A. Garrabrant abstaining.

Resolution No. 7 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget and Approving Police Department Over-hire

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS on June 2, 2025 the City Council passed a resolution adopting the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26, of which \$58,342,043 was appropriated for the General Fund and,

WHEREAS the City of Watertown Police Department is presently operating under its FY 2025-26 Budget of sworn 71 police personnel, and

WHEREAS the Police Department currently has 4 vacancies and additionally has an expected retirement occurring at the end of January and another one at the end of March, and

WHEREAS the Police Training Academy will commence on March 2, 2026 and,

WHEREAS the Police Department is planning on filling its current vacancies at the end of February 27, 2026, and

WHEREAS the Chief of Police is requesting approval to over-hire for one Police Officer position which would result in an over-hire of 23 workdays at an estimated cost of \$11,153, and

WHEREAS the proposed over-hire request can be covered financially by vacancies that have occurred throughout the fiscal year,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves hiring one additional police cadet at this time, bringing the total Police Department personnel temporarily to one over the current budget of 71, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief of Police is hereby authorized and directed to proceed with the requested over-hire to enter the March 2026 Police Training Academy.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Pierce mentioned this is in preparation for upcoming retirements within the Police Department.

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

Resolution No. 8 - Selecting Harris Beach Murtha as City Attorney

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS Section 34 of the City Charter states that the City Council shall select an attorney or law firm to be retained on a contract basis to perform and discharge the usual duties of a City Attorney or Corporation Counsel, and

WHEREAS Kristin Smith of Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC has served as Acting City Attorney for the City of Watertown since September 2023, and

WHEREAS the City was notified in October 2025 that Attorney Smith intends to discontinue representation and has agreed to remain in her role on an interim basis until the appointment of a new City Attorney, and

WHEREAS a Request for Proposals for legal services was issued on October 25, 2025, with the opening date of December 16, 2025, and

WHEREAS two proposals were submitted, and

WHEREAS the City Council reviewed the proposals and interviewed both firms,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby selects Harris Beach Murtha as City Attorney effective February 2, 2026, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager, or their designee, is hereby authorized and directed to sign the Letter of Engagement with Harris Beach Murtha, a copy of which is attached and made part of this resolution, on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Kimball mentioned that he had heard concerns regarding the previous representation from this firm. He pointed out that the previous firm combined with another large firm extending into Massachusetts and that the attorney assigned to the City will now be an attorney from the Syracuse office. He noted that this firm was interviewed and has extensive experience with municipal law.

Council Member Shoen read the list of law firms that the Request for Proposal had been sent to.

Mayor Pierce said she is looking forward to working with Harris Beach Murtha and she said she appreciates the other candidate's interest in serving the City, but that Harris Beach Murtha had more municipal experience.

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

Resolution No. 9 - Designating the City Manager as the City's Official Representative for the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation Engineering Planning Grant for the Newell Street Combined Sewer Evaluation Project and Appropriating Funding for the Project

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS, the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) has awarded the City a Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant (EPG) for the Newell Street Combined Sewer Evaluation in an amount not to exceed \$50,000, and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown Newell Street Combined Sewer Evaluation Project proposes an engineering study to evaluate the combined sewer in the Newell Street area to identify best alternatives to evaluate inflow and infiltration, minimize combined sewer overflows, minimize future sewer main breaks during high precipitation events, and improve resiliency, and

WHEREAS, the study is proposed to include documentation of existing conditions as well as a hydraulics & hydrology study for Newell Street from Mill Street to Engine Street, portions of the Fairgrounds to the wastewater treatment plant and cross streets in proximity to Newell Street, and

WHEREAS, the proposed study and development of a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) will document in quantitative and qualitative terms the impact of the Newell Street combined sewer on the Black River and identify actionable improvements to improve water quality, and

WHEREAS, the proposed project budget of \$120,000 includes \$100,000 in engineering costs to complete the hydraulics & hydrology study and PER, and \$20,000 of in-kind services from the City, and

WHEREAS, the EPG program requires that awardees submit a certified resolution from the City Council that designates an authorized representative and commits to the local match amount,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Manager of the City of Watertown, New York, is hereby designated as the official representative of the City for the NYS EFC Engineering Planning Grant and is authorized to execute the Grant Agreement and any and all other contracts, documents, and instruments necessary to bring about the project and to fulfill the obligations under the Grant Agreement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council hereby commits to the required Local Match of \$10,000 which will be funded by a Bond Ordinance for the project and authorizes the use of the matching funds.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Osborne asked for clarification of the amount of the grant and the engineering study in comparison to the total bond amount. He also noted that he is not comfortable voting on the bond since he has not seen the details of the scope of the project.

Mr. Wagenaar explained the need for getting the bond approved early in the process based on the Engineering Department estimated cost of the project scope.

City Comptroller James Mills provided more details of the process and timeline used when bonding for a project.

Council Member Shoen said Council has not received an update on the project since the initial review in April, so he does not want to allocate \$7.5 million to the project at this point. He said he understands the need for this project, but he does not want to do more than what is required, stressing that he does not want curbing that will take parking away from businesses in that area. He reiterated that he would like to see more of the design before allocating \$7.5 million to the project.

City Engineer Thomas Compo explained how the project estimate was developed and the details of the work to be done. He assured Council that staff will continue to seek out grant funding. He also pointed out elements of the project that would be included due to the City's adoption of the Complete Street Policy and advised that Council has the authority to inform staff whether some of those elements should be eliminated.

Further discussion ensued about the bond amount and the current estimated cost, especially since the project design is not completed. Mr. Wagenaar pointed out that this is the first major street project since the ARPA projects and under his leadership. He stressed that he thinks it is important to communicate with Council throughout the whole project.

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.

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 1 - An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance of \$7,500,000 Bonds of the City of Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, to Pay the Cost of the Reconstruction of Newell Street, in and for said City

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS, all conditions precedent to the financing of the capital purposes hereinafter described, including compliance with the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act to the extent required, have been performed; and

WHEREAS, it is now desired to authorize the financing of such capital project; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

Section 1. For the specific object or purpose of paying the cost of the reconstruction of Newell Street, including street repaving, sidewalks, curbs, landscaping, water and sewer upgrades, related right-of-way improvements, in and for the City, and incidental expenses in connection therewith, there are hereby authorized to be issued \$7,500,000 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 \$7,500,000 and that the plan for the financing thereof is by the issuance of the \$7,500,000 bonds of said City authorized to be issued pursuant to this bond ordinance; provided, however, that the amount of bonds ultimately to be issued will be reduced by the amount of any State and, or federal aid or any other revenue received by the City from other sources for such specific object or purpose, which monies are hereby appropriated therefor.

Section 3. It is hereby determined that the period of probable usefulness of the aforesaid specific object or purpose is fifteen years, pursuant to subdivision ninety-one of paragraph a of Section 11.00 of the Local Finance Law, as said class shall consist of objects or purposes with a period of

probable usefulness of at least fifteen years under one or more of subdivisions 1, 3, 4 or 20 of paragraph a of Section 11.00 of the Local Finance Law.

Section 4. Subject to the provisions of the Local Finance Law, the power to authorize the issuance of and to sell bond anticipation notes in anticipation of the issuance and sale of the bonds herein authorized, including renewals of such notes, is hereby delegated to the City Comptroller, the chief fiscal officer. Such notes shall be of such terms, form and contents, and shall be sold in such manner, as may be prescribed by said City Comptroller, consistent with the provisions of the Local Finance Law.

Section 5. The faith and credit of said City are hereby irrevocably pledged for the payment of the principal of and interest on such obligations as the same respectively become due and payable. An annual appropriation shall be made in each year sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on such obligations becoming due and payable in such year.

Section 6. Such bonds shall be in fully registered form and shall be signed in the name of the City by the manual or facsimile signature of the City Comptroller and a facsimile of its corporate seal shall be imprinted thereon and may be attested by the manual or facsimile signature of the City Clerk.

Section 7. The powers and duties of advertising such bonds for sale, conducting the sale and awarding the bonds, are hereby delegated to the City Comptroller, who shall advertise such bonds for sale, conduct the sale, and award the bonds in such manner as the City Comptroller shall deem best for the interests of the City, including but not limited to, the power to sell said bonds to the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation; provided, however, that in the exercise of these delegated powers, the City Comptroller shall comply fully with the provisions of the Local Finance Law and any order or rule of the State Comptroller applicable to the sale of municipal bonds. The receipt of the City Comptroller shall be a full acquittance to the purchaser of such bonds, who shall not be obliged to see to the application of the purchase money.

Section 8. The power to issue and sell notes to the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation pursuant to Section 169.00 of the Local Finance Law is hereby delegated to the City Comptroller. Such notes shall be of such terms, form and contents as may be prescribed by said City Comptroller consistent with the provisions of the Local Finance Law.

Section 9. The City Comptroller is hereby further authorized, at the sole discretion of the City Comptroller, to execute a project financing agreement, and any other agreements with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and/or the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation, including amendments thereto, and including any instruments (or amendments thereto) in the effectuation thereof, in order to effect the financing or refinancing of the specific object or purpose described in Section 1 hereof, or a portion thereof, by a bond, and, or note issue of said City in the event of the sale of same to the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.

Section 10. The intent of this ordinance is to give the City Comptroller sufficient authority to execute those applications, agreements, instruments or to do any similar acts necessary to effect the issuance of the aforesaid bonds and, or notes without resorting to further action of the City Council.

Section 11. All other matters, except as provided herein relating to such bonds, including determining whether to issue such bonds having substantially level or declining annual debt service and all matters related thereto, prescribing whether manual or facsimile signatures shall appear on said bonds, prescribing the method for the recording of ownership of said bonds, appointing the fiscal agent or agents for said bonds, providing for the printing and delivery of said bonds (and if said bonds are to be executed in the name of the City by the facsimile signature of the City Comptroller, providing for the manual countersignature of a fiscal agent or of a designated official of the City), the date, denominations, maturities and interest payment dates, place or places of payment, and also including the consolidation with other issues, shall be determined by the City Comptroller. It is hereby determined that it is to the financial advantage of the City not to impose and collect from registered owners of such bonds any charges for mailing, shipping and insuring bonds transferred or exchanged by the fiscal agent, and, accordingly, pursuant to paragraph c of Section 70.00 of the Local Finance Law, no such charges shall be so collected by the fiscal agent. Such bonds shall contain substantially the recital of validity clause provided for in Section 52.00 of the Local Finance Law and shall otherwise be in such form and contain such recitals in addition to those required by Section 52.00 of the Local Finance Law, as the City Comptroller shall determine.

- Section 12. 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 13. This ordinance shall constitute a statement of official intent for purposes of Treasury Regulations Section 1.150-2. Other than as specified in this ordinance, no monies are, or are reasonably expected to be, reserved, allocated on a long-term basis, or otherwise set aside with respect to the permanent funding of the object or purpose described herein.

Section 14. This ordinance, which takes effect immediately, shall be published in summary in the Watertown Daily Times, the official newspaper of the City, together with a notice of the City Clerk in substantially the form provided in Section 81.00 of the Local Finance Law.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Motion for unanimous consent moved by Council Member Robert O. Kimball, seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

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

Ordinance No. 2 - Changing the Approved Zoning Classification of 426, 430, 440 and 454 State Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 12-03-220.100, 12-03-220.200, 12-03-220.300, and 12-03-201.000 from Downtown to Urban Mixed Use

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

BE IT ORDAINED where Kayla Kibling of Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C. has made an application on behalf of 454 State Street NNY, LLC, by petition filed with the City Clerk, pursuant to Section 83 of the New York General City Law to change the approved zoning classification of 430 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.200, 440 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.300, and 454 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-201.000 from Downtown to Urban Mixed Use, and

WHEREAS the Planning Commission of the City of Watertown considered the Zone Change request at its January 6, 2026, meeting and adopted a motion recommending that City Council approve the zone change, and

WHEREAS the Planning Commission also recommended that the City Council rezone 426 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.100, in addition to the above requested parcels, and

WHEREAS a public hearing was held on the proposed zone change on February 2, 2026, after due public notice, and

WHEREAS the City Council has made a declaration of Negative Findings of the impacts of the proposed Zone Change according to the requirements of SEQRA, and

WHEREAS the City Council deems it in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Watertown to approve the requested zone change,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED that the approved zoning classification of 426 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.100, 430 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.200, 440 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-220.300, and 454 State Street, Parcel Number 12-03-201.000 shall be changed from Downtown to Urban Mixed Use, and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the Zoning Map of the City of Watertown shall be amended to reflect the Zone Change, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to schedule a Public Hearing on the foregoing ordinance for Monday, February 2, 2026, at 7:15 p.m. Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

STAFF REPORTS

Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – December 2025

A report was available for Council to review.

Sales Tax Revenue – December 2025

A report was available for Council to review.

Tree Watertown 2025 Annual Report and the City’s 2025 Tree City USA Application Community Forestry Program Narrative

A report was available for Council to review.

CitiBus Route B (Arsenal Street) Schedule Change

Transit Director Brandi Smith explained that the Arsenal Street route continually runs late due to increased traffic and it is impossible to keep it on track. She explained the proposal to convert the route to a 60-minute turnaround versus a 40-minute turnaround. She said the proposed schedule will provide more efficiency and be more reliable. Lastly, she advised that this will be a pilot study for six months, which will start on February 16, and then be re-evaluated.

NEW BUSINESS

Advanced Nuclear Initiative

Council Member Garrabrant noted that this initiative is being promoted by New York State through NYSERDA and the NY Power Authority, and he wondered about the role the City could play in this initiative. He provided the background of the initiative, noting that the City passed a resolution of support for a small modular reactor to be located on Fort Drum. He said he believes that nuclear is the future of energy generation because it is reliable and clean and it will create long term jobs and economic development. He wondered if there were any potential sites in Watertown that could host a micro reactor or small modular reactor and he asked whether there is an interest in becoming a host community or supporting another community within Jeferson County.

Mayor Pierce expressed support for this, stating that Assemblyman Gray has been very active with this issue.

Mr. Wagenaar stated that he will have staff look into this further.

Council Member Kimball said there needs to be a broad range of options for energy generation, such as solar, wind and nuclear, because if not, there could be a continuation of rate increases. He stated nuclear could be more fast-tracked in development and said he could support the idea because anything within 50 miles of the Watertown would benefit the City.

Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity and Sales Tax Revenue – December 2025

Council Member Kimball pointed out that the staff reports indicate the sale of hydro is down, and even though sales tax is up, they balance each other.

Tree Watertown 2025 Annual Report and the City’s 2025 Tree City USA Application Community Forestry Program Narrative

Council Member Kimball advised that there is a dedicated group of volunteers involved in Tree Watertown and they do a good job addressing the needs of the trees in Watertown. He thanked all the people participating in this group and volunteering to plant trees, stressing that it is a large benefit to the City.

Advanced Nuclear Initiative (continued)

Council Member Osborne agreed with Council Member Garrabrant’s thoughts regarding this initiative.

Public Square Parking Concerns

Council Member Osborne said that a resident expressed concerns regarding the handicap parking on Public Square and the need to walk a distance in the road before there was an opening in the snowbank to the sidewalk.

Crows

Council Member Osborne said he received a complaint about crows migrating around trees on Massey Street near the fire station.

Mr. Wagenaar said he had heard from the same resident and staff met this morning on this matter. He indicated that Loomarces will be in the area next week, so they will be asked to look at this area.

Council Member Shoen said he received the same complaint and expressed concerns that the crow hazing efforts are only moving the crows so far, so he is not sure how successful this program is.

Advanced Nuclear Initiative (continued)

Council Member Shoen said he would like to hear what the residents think about this initiative and he wondered if the old landfill would work as a potential site.

List of City-Owned Public and Public Auction Process

Referring to Mr. Battista's comments during Privilege of the Floor, Council Member Shoen stated he would like an updated list of City-owned properties, and he would like the list to be available to the public.

Mr. Wagenaar provided an update to the status of the changes in the public auction process due to the change in the New York State law.

Golf Course Advertising/Naming Rights

Council Member Shoen asked whether the concession vendor for the golf course was interested in returning this year and whether there had been any interest in advertising at the golf course.

Mr. Wagenaar said he had received interest in naming rights for the golf course and some hole sponsorships and he advised that the Parks and Recreation Superintendent will be meeting with the concession vendor soon.

Farewell to Attorney Kristen Smith

Mayor Pierce thanked Attorney Kristen Smith for her time working as the City attorney.

Snowtown USA

Mayor Pierce announced that Snowtown USA will be kicking off their events next week. She noted that outdoor skating will not be around the Park Circle this year but will take place in the Park near the Rotary Pavilion.

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 8:12 p.m. by motion of Council Member Robert O. Kimball, seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Ann M. Saunders
City Clerk