

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
February 17, 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
Joseph V. Frateschi, Harrison Beach Murtha, City Attorney

City staff present: Erica Anderson, James Mills, Brian MacCue, Aaron Harvill, Michael Lumbis, Thomas Compo, Angel French

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Acknowledging the Performance Review of City Manager, Eric F. Wagenaar
- Resolution No. 2 - Acknowledging the Performance Review of City Clerk, Ann M. Saunders
- Resolution No. 3 - Authorizing the Display of the Irish Flag at City Hall in Recognition of Irish American Heritage Month
- Resolution No. 4 - Accepting Proposal for Hydroelectric Plant - Consultation Services - Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, D.P.C.
- Resolution No. 5 - Authorizing the Standardization of Certain Equipment for the City's Pedestrian Safety Equipment
- Resolution No. 6 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget to Authorize Temporary Over-hire of a Line Crew Chief in the Traffic Control and Lighting Department
- Resolution No. 7 - Approving the 2024-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Watertown and Local CSEA Unit 7151
- Resolution No. 8 - Sponsoring an Application for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant Funding to Install Sidewalks as Part of the Newell Street Reconstruction Project
- Ordinance No. 1 - Removing VL Main Street West, VL-8, VL-6, VL-4, 476, 470, 444 and a 0.75-acre section of 424 Vanduzee Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 1-19-103.000, 1-19-104.000, 1-18-105.000, 1-18-101.001, 1-18-104.000, 1-18-103.000, 1-18-103.001 and a section of Parcel Number 1-18-102.000, from the Waterfront Overlay District on the approved Zoning Map
- Tabled Resolution - Authorizing City Manager to Perform Various Banking Actions
- Staff Report - Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – January 2026
- Staff Report - Sales Tax Revenue – January 2026
- Staff Report - Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operating Funds' Revenues and Expenditure Report

Meeting opened with a moment of silence and Mayor Pierce asked that it be in remembrance of William Stage, retired Fireman, who recently passed away.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 2, 2026 and work session of February 9, 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.

COMMUNICATIONS

An email was received from Clifford Olney, 847 Washington Street, providing Council with guidance and a framework for responsible budget stabilization and growth strategy.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Jonathan Phillips, 735 Mill Street, discussed his concerns regarding recent changes to the refuse system, noting that the stickers for private trash cans do not stick well and fall off, and that residents may switch from the City to private refuse haulers. He also expressed concern with the condition of the sidewalks on Arsenal Street and the lack of snow clearing.

Angel French, Theresa, stated she is the Chief Operator of the Wastewater Treatment Facility, and she spoke of her concerns regarding the proposed staff reduction during the upcoming budget process. She stressed the importance of maintaining infrastructure and quality staffing.

Frank Battista, 201 Palmer Street, addressed the chair concerning the difficulties in the City's financial situation and his opposition to the City funding the Zoo operations. He asked for Council to initiate something during this meeting to stop funding the Zoo.

PRESENTATION

Independent Auditors' Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025 – Liz Bush, CPA, and Lyndi Hill, CPA, Bowers & Company CPAs PLLC

Ms. Bush presented the Independent Auditors' Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025, a copy of which is available on the City's website and filed in the City Clerk's Office. She began by reviewing the Report of the Audit of Financial Statements and highlighted that they issued a clean, unmodified opinion of the audited financial statements. She explained this means the statements are presented in accordance with general accepted accounting principles and then she went on to explain the responsibilities of both management and the auditors. She referred Council to the Management's Discussion and Analysis (page 5-23), which is prepared by the City Comptroller and provides a high-level overview of the financial statements and the financial analysis of the City, and she encouraged Council to read through it.

Ms. Bush reviewed, in detail, the various Audited Financial Statements, which start on page 24, and then discussed the information listed under the various Notes to the Financial Statements, beginning on page 37. Drawing Council's attention to page 91, she reviewed the Budgetary Comparison Schedule – General Fund, which lists the budgeted and actual amounts, and she offered explanations as to why some of the items had variances.

The next section of the audit pertained to the Federal Awards Program and Ms. Bush stated the Government Auditing Standards Report (pages 95-96) indicated there were no significant deficiencies or

material weaknesses in internal controls or compliance findings. She indicated the Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance For Each Major Program and Internal Control Over Compliance Required by the Uniform Guidance (page 97) is the Single Audit Report and it shows a clean, unmodified opinion on the Federal Award Program. She mentioned the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (pages 100-101) and stated the major programs audited were the CDBG Program, the Federal Transit Cluster and EPA Grant. She reviewed the summary of the Auditor's Results (page 103), noting there were no findings to report, and the City qualifies as a low-risk auditee.

The last section of the report is regarding State Transportation Assistance Programs, and Ms. Bush advised that a clean, unmodified opinion was issued (pages 106-109). She also reviewed the summary of the Auditor's Results (page 112), stating that there were no findings to report.

Lastly, Ms. Bush reviewed the findings listed in the management letter and the communication report.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 1 - Acknowledging the Performance Review of City Manager, Eric F. Wagenaar

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the Charter of the City of Watertown under Title III, Section 20-6 requires the City Council to review the City Manager's contract and performance by March 1 of each year, and

WHEREAS the City Council has completed the annual review process of the City Manager as required by the Charter, and

WHEREAS the City Council has determined through completion of the annual review process that the City Manager is performing the duties and responsibilities required of the position,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby acknowledges completion of the annual City Manager review as required by the Charter of the City of Watertown.

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

Resolution No. 2 - Acknowledging the Performance Review of City Clerk, Ann M. Saunders

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the Charter of the City of Watertown under Title III, Section 20-8 requires the City Council to review the City Clerk's contract and performance by March 1 of each year, and

WHEREAS the City Council has completed the annual review process of the City Clerk as required by the Charter, and

WHEREAS the City Council has determined through completion of the annual review process that the City Clerk is performing the duties and responsibilities required of the position,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby acknowledges completion of the annual City Clerk review as required by the Charter of the City of Watertown.

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

Resolution No. 3 - Authorizing the Display of the Irish Flag at City Hall in Recognition of Irish American Heritage Month

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown has adopted a Flag Policy, effective February 3, 2025, to govern the display of flags on City property, and

WHEREAS the City has received a request to display the Irish Flag in recognition of Irish American Heritage Month, and

WHEREAS in accordance with the Flag Policy, the City Council may authorize the temporary display of flags recognized by the United States on the flagpole in front of City Hall, and

WHEREAS the City Council supports the recognition of March as Irish American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the significant contributions of Irish Americans to our nation's history, culture, and community, and

WHEREAS the City Council desires to approve the request and authorize the display of the Irish Flag for a period of 48 hours,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the display of the Irish Flag in front of City Hall for 48 hours, commencing on March 15, 2026, in recognition of Irish American Heritage Month, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager, or their designee, is directed to ensure compliance with the City's Flag Policy and coordinate the proper display of the flag.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Garrabrant indicated that, although he has no issue with the current flags that have been flown in front of City Hall, his concern is that there may be a flag requested in the future that causes more division or controversy. He said that for this reason he will be voting no on this resolution.

At the call of the chair, a vote was taken on the foregoing resolution and defeated with all voting nay except Council Member Robert O. Kimball and Council Member Douglas E. Osborne, Jr. voting yea.

Resolution No. 4 - Accepting Proposal for Hydroelectric Plant - Consultation Services - Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, D.P.C.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City is seeking sealed proposals (RFP's) from qualified firms and experienced vendors to provide professional oversight, regulatory support, and strategic advisory services for the ongoing operation and development of its municipal hydroelectric generating facility, and

WHEREAS the facility operates under a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license and requires expert support in compliance, inspections, stakeholder engagement, and municipal energy strategy development. The selected consultant will act as a trusted advisor to City staff and elected officials, providing guidance to ensure decisions serve the best interests of the City and its residents for a period of three (3) years commencing upon contract signing, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received three (3) sealed proposals for Hydroelectric Plant – Consultation Services, and

WHEREAS on December 9, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. the proposals received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the proposals received with the Engineering Department and Water Superintendent to ensure compliance with the specifications. The proposals were further evaluated by a selection committee, and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the proposal submitted by Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, D.P.C.,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the proposal received from Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, D.P.C., per the fee schedule proposed, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager of the City of Watertown 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, Council Member Shoen stated that he received a copy of the proposals yesterday and would like more time to review them.

Motion was made by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen to table the foregoing resolution.

Motion was seconded by Council Member Douglas E. Osborne, Jr. and carried with all voting in favor thereof, except for Council Member Robert O. Kimball voting nay.

Resolution No. 5 - Authorizing the Standardization of Certain Equipment for the City's Pedestrian Safety Equipment

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

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

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

WHEREAS the City Council deems it to be in the best interest of the City of Watertown to authorize the standardization of certain equipment at the City of Watertown Department of Public

Works to minimize complications with respect to repair and maintenance of equipment and also to establish a proper and accessible inventory of spare parts, and

WHEREAS on November 3, 2025, City Council of the City of Watertown adopted a resolution authorizing the standardization of equipment for traffic signal operation, and

WHEREAS staff has discovered there was an error in the listing of the “Make” of the standardized product within the November 3, 2025 resolution,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby repeals the resolution dated November 3, 2025 for the standardization of equipment for traffic signal operation, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the City of Watertown to standardize the pedestrian safety equipment as listed below and purchase as necessary.

Pedestrian Safety Equipment, Ancillary Components and Software for Standardization

Equipment

Make

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

Guardian APS

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

Resolution No. 6 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget to Authorize Temporary Over-hire of a Line Crew Chief in the Traffic Control and Lighting Department

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, which authorized one Line Crew Chief in the Traffic Control and Lighting Department, and

WHEREAS the City has been notified that the current Line Crew Chief will be retiring on April 25th, and

WHEREAS the Superintendent of Public Works is requesting authorization to temporarily add one additional Line Crew Chief to allow for sufficient time for training the successor before the pending retirement occurs,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby re-adopts the Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund budget to temporarily add one additional Line Crew Chief to the Traffic Control and Lighting Department until the pending retirement occurs, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the following adjustments be included in the re-adopted General Fund Budget:

GENERAL FUND

A.5186.0130	Traffic Control and Lighting – Wages	\$ 13,570
A.5186.0810	Traffic Control and Lighting – Retirement	\$ 1,725
A.5186.0830	Traffic Control and Lighting – Social Security	\$ 1,040
A.5186.0850.0015	Traffic Control and Lighting – Health Insurance	\$ 4,115
A.8160.0130	Refuse and Recycling – Wages	(\$ 13,570)
A.8160.0810	Refuse and Recycling – Retirement	(\$ 1,725)
A.8160.0830	Refuse and Recycling – Social Security	(\$ 1,040)
A.8160.0850	Refuse and Recycling – Health Insurance	(\$ 4,115)
	Total	<u>\$ -</u>

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Pierce explained that this over-hire is due to a pending retirement and it allows for bringing on a new person with a small overlap for training.

Council Member Shoen said he appreciates the resolution showing how this additional expense will be covered by a savings from another account.

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

Resolution No. 7 - Approving the 2024-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Watertown and Local CSEA Unit 7151

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the 2022-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Watertown and the Local CSEA Unit 7151-00 expired on June 30, 2024, and

WHEREAS negotiations have concluded on a successor Agreement, a copy of which is attached and made a part of this resolution,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the 2024-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City and the Local CSEA 7151-00, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mayor Sarah V.C. Pierce is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City of Watertown, as well as City Manager Eric Wagenaar, and Human Resource Manager Erica LeClerc.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Garrabrant questioned the increase in longevity pay and wondered if it was a one-time payment.

City Comptroller James Mills explained that it is equated down into an hourly stipend as part of the employee’s regular hours plus this additional amount.

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

Resolution No. 8 - Sponsoring an Application for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant Funding to Install Sidewalks as Part of the Newell Street Reconstruction Project

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown is eligible for grant funding under the New York State Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown intends to reconstruct Newell Street in the near future, a key artery in a mixed-use district with surrounding residential, commercial, recreational, and municipal uses, and

WHEREAS the TAP funding is eligible for any non-motorized form of surface transportation, and therefore could assist in the cost of installing sidewalks in the project corridor, and

WHEREAS said application will be submitted to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) with the City of Watertown as applicant and project sponsor, and

WHEREAS any funding awarded under a TAP Grant requires a 20 percent local match, and that the TAP program is a reimbursement-based program that will require the City of Watertown to pay for the project in its entirety prior to obtaining reimbursement from NYSDOT,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby supports and will sponsor an application for TAP funding to install sidewalks as part of the Newell Street Reconstruction Project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown will administer the grant in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations established by NYSDOT, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is authorized to sign the application and any agreements required by NYSDOT for grant funding that results from the application, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown commits to providing the required 20 percent local share if the TAP application is successful.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Shoen wondered if this grant would tie the City to a required amount of sidewalk to be completed.

City Manager Wagenaar replied that the funds could be used for whatever amount of sidewalk is put into the design.

Planning and Community Development Michael Lumbis explained that it would depend on what is specified in the application, but that the application could be written vaguely, so that it would work with

the design. In response to Council Member Shoen's inquiry of whether this would tie into Howk Street, he confirmed that it would.

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

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 1 - Removing VL Main Street West, VL-8, VL-6, VL-4, 476, 470, 444 and a 0.75-acre section of 424 Vanduzee Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 1-19-103.000, 1-19-104.000, 1-18-105.000, 1-18-101.001, 1-18-104.000, 1-18-103.000, 1-18-103.001 and a section of Parcel Number 1-18-102.000, from the Waterfront Overlay District on the approved Zoning Map

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

BE IT ORDAINED where City Staff has made an application by petition filed with the City Clerk, pursuant to Section 83 of the New York General City Law, to remove VL Main Street West, VL-8, VL-6, VL-4, 476, 470, 444 and a 0.75-acre section of 424 Vanduzee Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 1-19-103.000, 1-19-104.000, 1-18-105.000, 1-18-101.001, 1-18-104.000, 1-18-103.000, 1-18-103.001 and a section of Parcel Number 1-18-102.000, from the Waterfront Overlay District on the approved Zoning Map, and

WHEREAS the Planning Commission of the City of Watertown considered the Zone Change request at its February 3, 2026, meeting and adopted a motion recommending that the City Council approve the Zone Change, and

WHEREAS a public hearing was held on the proposed Zone Change on March 2, 2026, after due public notice, and

WHEREAS the City Council, as Lead Agency under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), has made a declaration of Negative Findings of the impacts of the proposed zone change, subsequent sale of land and subdivision approval, and future site development 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 VL Main Street West, VL-8, VL-6, VL-4, 476, 470, 444 and a 0.75-acre section of 424 Vanduzee Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 1-19-103.000, 1-19-104.000, 1-18-105.000, 1-18-101.001, 1-18-104.000, 1-18-103.000, 1-18-103.001 and a section of Parcel Number 1-18-102.000, are removed from the Waterfront Overlay District on the approved Zoning Map, 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, March 2, 2026 at 7:15 p.m. Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof except Council Member Shane A. Garrabrant abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS

The Resolution “Authorizing City Manager to Perform Various Banking Actions” (Introduced on February 2, 2026; tabled; appears in its entirety in the 2026 Minutes Book on page 4 of the 2/2/2026 minutes).

Attorney Frateschi explained that at the last meeting he was asked to look at the process of how this should be presented to Council. He said he looked at the Charter and this would be adding a power to the City Manager, so the proper way to do this is through an ordinance requiring a public hearing. He recommended this resolution be withdrawn from consideration.

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to remove the foregoing resolution from the table. Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to withdraw the introduction and second for the foregoing resolution. Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Resolution Withdrawn.

STAFF REPORTS

Sale of Surplus Hydro-Electricity – January 2026

A report was available for Council to review.

Sales Tax Revenue – January 2026

A report was available for Council to review.

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operating Funds’ Revenues and Expenditure Report

A report was available for Council to review.

NEW BUSINESS

Water Department

Council Member Garrabrant offered his thanks to the staff of the Water Department for their hard work and dedication repairing recent water main breaks. He also asked if residents experiencing water issues should still call the department if they can see that staff members are already working on their street.

City Manager Wagenaar suggested residents should call the Water Department and make their water concerns known, in case the department is not aware of the full extent of the situation.

Hydro Consultant

Council Member Garrabrant stated that he planned on supporting the hydro consultant resolution prior to it being tabled, and he wanted to emphasize that the energy market is very complex and always evolving, so it is important to get a consultant on board.

Response to Privilege of the Floor – Mr. Battista’s Comments

Council Member Garrabrant indicated that he supports the Zoo and is glad they received donations due to a recent New York Times article. He indicated that he did not plan to support additional funding in the upcoming budget but noted that he did support distributing funds to the Zoo that were already part of the previous year’s budget.

Passing of Bob Sturtz

Council Member Kimball noted the recent passing of Bob Sturtz, owner of Slack Chemical, and cited his accomplishments and contributions to the community.

Refuse – Tote Stickers

Council Member Kimball mentioned that his daughter had reported that her trash sticker fell off the tote she was using. He suggested possibly using a stencil instead. He also requested the members of the public have patience adjusting to the new refuse rules.

Response to Privilege of the Floor – Ms. French’s Comments

Council Member Kimball stated that members of Council do value the contributions of the City’s employees but that they have to consider strategic reduction of staffing to control spending as retirement and health costs continue to rise.

Response to Privilege of the Floor – Mr. Battista’s Comments continued

Council Member Kimball informed Mr. Battista that demanding a proposition be proposed and acted upon within the meeting is not the appropriate process to accomplish things. He also noted his support of the Zoo.

Flag Raising

Council Member Kimball expressed his surprise at the Council’s concerns and ensuing vote on the raising of the Irish flag. He commented that he had never found flag-raising to be divisive and intended to continue to vote “yes” going forward.

Audit Presentation

Council Member Osborne thanked Bowers & Co. for their presentation, but also thanked the City Manager, the City Comptroller and staff for keeping such tight records and showing such strong accounting principles.

Response to Privilege of the Floor – Mr. Battista’s Comments cont.

Council Member Osborne inquired as to whether it was even possible to rescind funds for the Zoo or if they had already been spent.

Mr. Mills indicated some of the money was still available.

City Attorney Frateschi warned of the legal implications, since the resolution approving the agreement was already adopted and he questioned whether the contracts had been signed.

Response to Privilege of the Floor – Ms. French’s Comments continued

Council Member Osborne thanked Ms. French for her comments but echoed Council Member Kimball’s statement that tough decisions would have to be made to trim the budget.

Refuse Policy

Council Member Osborne noted there had been a lot of issues regarding the roll out of the new refuse policy. He indicated he supports the new tote/bin policy but noted that some residents either do not know about policy or are just not complying. He said this results in stickered bags sitting out at the curb, which the DPW will not pick up, and adds to the problem that the policy is trying to fix. He wondered if the policy could be repealed or modified. He also mentioned recurring complaints about the tote stickers falling off.

Flag Raising continued

Council Member Osborne expressed dismay that the raising of flags has turned into a political issue. He noted that it has been a City tradition, and he does not believe it needs to be readdressed.

Budget Kickoff

Council Member Osborne commented that during the budget process it is imperative that Council receive as much public input as possible, and noted residents need to be engaged.

Response to Privilege of the Floor – Mr. Battista’s Comments cont.

Council Member Shoen indicated that he had opposed the Zoo funding but commented that it would be disingenuous not to distribute funds that had already been allocated in the current budget.

Frozen Water Pipes

Commenting that this winter has seen a rash of frozen water pipes throughout the City, Council Member Shoen suggested that it could assist City staff to have a list of plumbers who thaw water lines. He indicated that he was not sure if these services would require a City plumbing license.

Snow on Sidewalks

Council Member Shoen offered the suggestion for a possible community service project, possibly through the schools, which would have volunteers assist with seniors needing help clearing their sidewalks. He commented that the State is responsible for plowing Arsenal Street and wondered whether they help with sidewalks.

City Manager Wagenaar stated that even though the responsibility lies with the property and business owners on Arsenal Street, DPW staff had been dispatched to clear prominent intersections of snow for safety reasons.

Council Member Shoen suggested requesting help from the State.

Refuse Policy continued

Council Member Shoen advised that he had heard the same complaints about the tote stickers falling off in the cold. He stated that he had supported the container requirement, thinking it would not be that much of an issue, but admitted the policy might need modification. He commented that when the policy passed, no City ordinance prohibited trash bags for those not using the City service.

City Manager Wagenaar clarified by explaining that when the City adopted the new code, it applied to everyone including the commercial vendors. He noted that the City is doing the best they can in getting the word out to the private haulers and commercial vendors. He said the City had spent the last four months attempting to inform the public using every means available, including work sessions, media outlets and fliers distributed to residents. He admitted that one issue is that the City has no way to track sticker-customers, so outreach is complicated. Mr. Wagenaar also commented that it is good to get feedback from Council, noting that tonight's meeting was the first time he had heard about tote stickers falling off.

Council Member Shoen pointed out that one of the benefits of the position of Council Member is hearing public feedback.

Budget Discussion

Council Member Shoen commented that it would be nice to keep everything in the City the way it is and not worry about the impact, but it is not realistic in the current financial situation.

Grant Street Complaints

Mayor Pierce informed Council that she had received a number of complaints about Grant Street regarding the removal of the stairs and other safety concerns.

Response to Privilege of the Floor – Mr. Battista's Comments cont.

Mayor Pierce indicated her personal support of the Zoo but pointed out she had opposed additional funding in this year's budget. She noted, however, that it would not be right, and perhaps not legal, to not distribute the funds that have already been allocated in the current budget.

CDBG Funding Meeting

Mayor Pierce advised there would be a public meeting regarding the distribution of City CDBG funding held at Hilltop Towers on Tuesday, February 24 at 7 p.m. and invited the public to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 8:25 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