

**CITY COUNCIL BUDGET SESSION  
CITY OF WATERTOWN  
April 16, 2026  
5:30 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

**City staff present:** Suzie Renzi-Falge, Michael Lumbis, Geoffrey Urda, Thomas Compo, Erica LeClerc, Aaron Harvill, Erica Anderson, Dana Aikins

**DISCUSSION**

**Library** – pages 233-240 and page 309

Library Director Suzie Renzi-Falge presented the proposed Library Fund budget and pointed out line items that had changed from last year. She also discussed the capital project listed on page 309 for the roof replacement and explained the need for it.

Council Member Garrabrant asked about the source of the grant revenue.

Ms. Renzi-Falge explained that some is received from the North Country Library System and some is received from New York State. She provided details of each and noted that if there is a need for construction to the building, then they seek out construction grants. In response to Council Member Osborne's question about overtime, she explained that it is usually paid when an employee is called in, which is on a rare occasion. She responded to questions about the Library's hours, indicating that the patrons seem fine with the current operating hours. Lastly, she confirmed that security officers are present 98% of the time the Library is open.

**Planning** – page 135, pages 169-170, pages 241-245 and page 283

Planning and Community Development Director Michael Lumbis pointed out the zoning account listed on page 135 and noted it is slightly lower than last year. He explained what is included in this account. He then turned to pages 169-170 and stated there are no major changes to the operating expense of the Planning Department, except for the elimination of a temporary part-time position. He also highlighted that the grant writer cost was decreased by \$30,000 and explained the decreases for the miscellaneous and equipment accounts.

Next, Mr. Lumbis referred Council to the Community Development account listed on pages 241-245 and explained that the City has been spending down the CDBG funds of previous Annual Action Plans. He also noted the staffing cost was decreased due to the elimination of the part-time position. He noted that all the expenses listed under this account are reimbursed by grant funding and he mentioned that CDBG funds pays for approximately one staff position. He reviewed the ongoing CDBG projects and provided an update of each.

Lastly, Mr. Lumbis informed Council that the only CDBG capital project in the proposed budget is listed on page 283 and is for sidewalks along Mill Street.

Council Member Garrabrant asked for more information about the \$500,000 line item for the Masonic Temple.

Mr. Lumbis explained that it is a passthrough grant from Restore NY, which was applied for in 2016. He updated Council on the work done by the property owner and stated that he is ready to start the next phase. He mentioned that the property owner also received grant funding from the DRI.

In regard to the Butterfield Avenue infrastructure upgrade and extension project listed under the transfer to the capital fund, Mr. Lumbis explained that it was related to the grant which was to be received by the County, but since the grant was not awarded to the City, this needs to now be removed from this account.

**Engineering** – pages 53-58

City Engineer Thomas Compo reviewed the Engineering budget and noted there was an overall \$63,000 decrease from last year's budget. He pointed out the decrease in salaries since the overhire, which Council approved, will no longer be necessary after one of the Civil Engineers retires in December. Otherwise, he said, the line items are very similar to what was presented in past years, and he explained various items. He said the only equipment purchase would be for the plotter listed on page 57 and explained how this equipment is used.

**Code Enforcement** – pages 97-100

Code Enforcement Supervisor Dana Aikins reviewed the Code Enforcement budget and mentioned that salaries were up slightly and there was a slight increase in overtime. He indicated there were no vehicle purchases requested and that vehicle expenses were slightly decreased. He reviewed several other line items within the budget and explained the changes from last year, and he mentioned that the overall operating expenses had increased approximately \$35,000. He highlighted that demolitions were estimated to be \$200,000 and private property cleanup expenses were estimated to be \$140,000 for next year.

Council discussed private property cleanups further. In response to Council Member Kimball's questions, Mr. Aikins advised that last year there were 1602 violation notices issued but only 25-30% of them resulted in further action being needed.

Budget session ended at 6:04 p.m.

**Ann M. Saunders**  
City Clerk