

**CITY COUNCIL BUDGET SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
April 17, 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: Erica Anderson, James Mills, Aaron Harvil, Thomas Compo

DISCUSSION

Hydro – page 117

Water Superintendent Aaron Harvill reviewed this budget, stating not much has changed from last year. He mentioned that the operations and maintenance contract was being renewed, the arc flash study was carried over from last year because it was not completed, and that consulting services for \$50,000 is a pay-as-you-go expense. He responded to further questions regarding the consulting services, noting that the consultant was hired this year and will assist with the FERC relicensing and options for the termination of the National Grid contract. He also responded to questions about the arc flash study. Turning to the capital budget, Mr. Harvill discussed the fish bypass repair project listed on page 275 and said that it is required in order to maintain the FERC license. Lastly, he responded to Council Member Shoen's question about the cleaning gates, and said the current debris is not hindering the plant's production levels and that the debris cannot safely be removed at this time.

Water Fund – pages 181-206

Mr. Harvill proceeded to review the Water Fund beginning with the administration account on page 187.

Council Member Garrabrant asked if the new financial software would allow for any changes in the billing process.

City Comptroller James Mills said there is an option to send the bills electronically, which would eventually decrease postage costs.

Moving to the source of supply, power and pumping account on page 189, Mr. Harvill said the significant change is due to the increase in the cost of electricity. He then discussed the purification account on page 192 and indicated there was not a lot of change from the previous year. He noted the request for a zero-turn motor listed on page 198 and he pointed out that the latest estimate indicated the price would increase from \$11,500 to \$18,000. He also mentioned that the process chemicals bid was due to be opened next Thursday, so he may need to adjust the amount listed for expense based on the bid results.

Mr. Harvill drew Council's attention to the transmission and distribution account on page 199, and he pointed out the cost of the main entry door replacement. He also noted that the number of hydrants had

increased significantly because the lead time for receiving them is now 20 weeks. Turning to the capital budget, he discussed the main building roof replacement project, listed on page 192.

Council Member Kimball asked for more information regarding the passive leak detection sensors that are listed on page 203.

Mr. Harvill explained the details of these sensors, and he said it will be a pilot program to try to find leaks in the mains proactively, so that repairs can be done during business hours versus in the middle of the night at higher staffing costs. He also responded to Council Member Shoen's questions regarding the reservoir leak and the roof on the Huntington Street building.

Sewer Fund – pages 207-232

Regarding the Sewer Fund, Mr. Harvill commented that the administration account, beginning on page 211, is a mirror image of the water administration account. Turning to the sewage treatment and disposal account, beginning on page 220, Mr. Harvill pointed out the expenses for the trickling filter door and the contract lab. Lastly, he reviewed the projects listed in the capital budget as follows: storage barn for biosolids (page 300), biosolids hopper upgrade (page 301), polymer make-up system (page 302), and the effluent A ferric delivery upgrade (page 303).

Lastly, there was lengthy discussion about biosolids and the cost of shipping it to the landfill, as well as the savings of keeping the biosolids dry.

Next Budget Session

Council discussed their availability for another budget session, and it was determined that a session could be held on either May 5, May 6 or May 7 depending on the availability of staff and Council Chambers.

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to move into Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular individual or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation and to discuss proposed, pending or current litigation.

Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Council moved into Executive Session at 5:58 p.m.

Council reconvened at 7:38 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 7:38 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