

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
May 21, 2026
3:30 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: James Mills, Erica Anderson, Erica LeClerc, Scott Weller, Aaron Harvill, Dana Aikins, Brian MacCue, Charles Donoghue, Karen Overton, Matthew Timerman, Michael Lumbis

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 14 - Approving 2026-27 Operating Budgets, City of Watertown, New York
- Resolution No. 15 - Establishing Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2026-27
- Resolution No. 16 - Approving 2026-27 through 2030-31 Capital Program Budget, City of Watertown, New York
- Resolution No. 17 - Establishing Annual City Fees and Charges Schedule
- Resolution No. 18 - Adopting the Annual Rates of Pay for Management Employees for Fiscal Year 2026-27
- Ordinance No. 2 - Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, §301-17 Water Rates and Charges, §301-19 Fire Service Charges and §301-28 Bulk Water Charges
- Proposed Local Law - A Local Law Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, §253-17 Sewer Service Charges, and Surcharges, §253-28 (G) Trucked or Hauled Pollutants, and §253-77 Tanker-Hauled Sewage, Septage and Slurries

Mayor Pierce opened the adjourned meeting from May 18, 2026.

Mayor Pierce reported what was discussed in executive session at the last meeting on Monday, May 18, 2026, and said that minutes from that discussion will be available on the City's website. She noted that it was a personnel discussion and provided the following summary: Reducing two positions in the Fire Department via attrition, reducing one position in the Code Enforcement Office and a freeze in pay on the management wage chart. She also said there was one outlying item, which was Council Member Garrabrant's proposal to keep refuse stickers at \$5.00. She advised that she polled Council Members individually and the majority would like the price of the stickers to remain at \$5.00.

City Comptroller James Mills said that these changes resulted in a tax levy increase of 8.14% and a tax property increase of 8.38%. He noted that the fund balance appropriation changed from \$1,920,710 to \$1,694,799, which is a reduction of \$225,911.

Mayor Pierce said that she has received feedback regarding the decision to freeze the steps on the management wage chart, noting that its effect totaled approximately \$26,000 to the General Fund. She said she understands the goal of the decision, but she does have some reservations as to what it may do

to employee morale. She asked whether any other members of Council had heard anything or felt different and would like to discuss this further.

No one spoke.

Prior to considering the resolutions, Mayor Pierce noted there will need to be a waiver on all of the resolutions and mentioned that this could be done with just one motion.

Rules waived on Resolution No. 14 through Resolution No. 18 by motion of Council Member Robert O. Kimball, seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 14 - Approving 2026-27 Operating Budgets, City of Watertown, New York

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York has met and considered the Proposed Budget for the City of Watertown for Fiscal Year 2026-27 and it has conducted public hearings on the Proposed Budget and has determined that revenues and appropriations for the several funds in the Budget for 2026-27 will be amended as indicated in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Detail of Changes in Revenues, Expenditures and Fund Balance Appropriations to the Proposed Budgets, which detail is attached and made a part of this resolution,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York that it hereby adopts the Budget for the City Government for Fiscal Year 2026-27 in the total amount of \$83,208,866 of which in the General Fund \$47,544,102 is to be raised by estimated revenues other than real property taxes, \$1,694,799 is to be appropriated from fund balance, \$20,161 is to be appropriated from the sidewalk program reserve, \$12,301 is estimated to be received from omitted taxes and \$12,443,777 is to be raised by the real property tax levy. In adopting the Budget, the City Council hereby appropriates \$83,208,866 for all operating funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in adopting the Budget, the City Council hereby appropriates \$13,529,592 for all reserve funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in adopting the Budget, the City Council approves the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Detail of Changes in Revenues, Expenditures and Fund Balance Appropriations to the Proposed Budgets, which is attached and made a part of this resolution.

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

Resolution No. 15 - Establishing Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2026-27

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York has adopted the General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 to be in the amount of \$61,715,140, and of this amount \$12,456,078 is to be raised by taxes on real estate and \$12,301 is to be collected in omitted City taxes,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the tax on real estate in the amount of \$12,456,078 is hereby levied and the rate to produce \$12,443,777 of this levy is hereby established at \$11.1304 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, and the remaining \$12,301 is to be collected in omitted taxes.

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

Resolution No. 16 - Approving 2026-27 through 2030-31 Capital Program Budget, City of Watertown, New York

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York has met and considered the Proposed Budget for the City of Watertown for Fiscal Year 2026-27, including the Proposed Capital Program for the years 2026-27 through 2030-31 and has conducted public hearings on the Proposed Capital Program Budget, and has determined that the projects as listed in the Proposed Capital Program shall constitute the Capital Program Budget with the exception of the changes referenced herein this resolution,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York hereby makes the following changes to the Proposed Capital Program for the years 2026-27 through 2030-31:

<u>Capital Project</u>	<u>Proposed FY</u> <u>2027-28</u>	<u>Adopted FY</u> <u>2027-28</u>
Baseball stadium lighting project	\$ 350,000	\$ 0 (Moved to Fiscal Year 2030-31 of the Capital Program Budget)
Fairgrounds YMCA parking lot	\$ 120,000	\$ 0 (Removed from the Capital Program Budget)
Golf course clubhouse roof	\$ 100,000	\$ 0 (Removed from the Capital Program Budget)

And ,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York hereby adopts the Capital Program Budget for the years 2026-27 through 2030-31.

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

Resolution No. 17 - Establishing Annual City Fees and Charges Schedule

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS 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 Local Law No. 2 of 2016 requires that the “City Fees and Charges Schedule” be established at least annually by the City Council of the City of Watertown through a budget resolution, and

WHEREAS through budget deliberations, fees being collected by the City have been reviewed for the FY 2026-27 and are reflected in the City Fees and Charges Schedule,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby adopts the City Fees and Charges Schedule attached and made a part of this Resolution for FY 2026-27. **Secinded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting yea.**

Resolution No. 18 - Adopting the Annual Rates of Pay for Management Employees for Fiscal Year 2026-27

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City Council has held budget meetings to review the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget and approves a 2.00% increase to the current Annual Rates of Pay for Management Employees, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby adopts the Annual Rates of Pay for Management Employees chart that is attached and made part of this resolution, effective July 1, 2026, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that management employees’ step as of June 30, 2026 shall remain the same for the entire Fiscal Year 2026-27, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager is authorized to start individual employees at the step he/she determines to be appropriate at the time of hire.

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

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 2 - Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, §301-17 Water Rates and Charges, §301-19 Fire Service Charges and §301-28 Bulk Water Charges

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council that Chapter 301 of the Code of the City of Watertown is hereby amended by deleting Sections 301-17 (A), (B), (D), (E) and (H), Sections 301-19 and Sections 301-28 and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the City Council that the Code of the City of Watertown, Chapter 301 is hereby amended by adding thereto new Sections 301-17 (A), (B), (D), (E) and (H), Section 301-19 and Section 301-28 as follows:

301-17. Water Rates and Charges.

The rate for both domestic and industrial metered water within the City of Watertown shall be as follows:

A. Meter rates:

(1) Quarterly meter rates

<u>Usage</u>	<u>Rate [(per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons))]</u>
First 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons)	\$ 49.19 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)
Over 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons)	\$ 33.25 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)

(2) Monthly meter rates

<u>Usage</u>	<u>Rate [(per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons))]</u>
First 400 cubic feet (2,992 gallons)	\$ 49.19 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)
Over 400 cubic feet (2,992 gallons)	\$ 33.25 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)

B. Minimum charge for City use:

(1) Quarterly charge for City use

<u>Meter Size (inches)</u>	<u>Cubic Feet</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Minimum Charge</u>
5/8	900	6,732	\$ 44.27
3/4	1,500	11,220	69.00
1	2,700	20,196	108.89
1 1/2	5,100	38,148	188.68
2	8,400	62,832	298.37
3	15,900	118,932	547.68
4	26,400	197,472	896.70
6	51,900	388,212	1,744.34
8	84,000	628,320	2,811.35
10	120,000	897,600	4,008.02

(2) Monthly charge for City use

<u>Meter Size (inches)</u>	<u>Cubic Feet</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Minimum Charge</u>
5/8	300	2,244	\$ 14.76
3/4	500	3,740	23.00
1	900	6,732	36.31
1 1/2	1,700	12,716	62.89
2	2,800	20,944	99.45
3	5,300	39,644	182.56
4	8,800	65,824	298.91
6	17,300	129,404	581.45
8	28,000	209,440	937.12
10	40,000	299,200	1,336.01

D. Where water is supplied to premises situated outside the City and not covered by contract, the rates for both domestic and industrial metered water shall be as follows:

<u>Usage</u>	<u>Rate [(per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons))]</u>
First 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons)	\$ 59.03 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)
Over 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons)	\$ 39.91 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)

E. Minimum Charge Quarterly for outside City use:

<u>Meter Size (inches)</u>	<u>Cubic Feet</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Minimum Charge</u>
5/8	900	6,732	\$ 53.13
3/4	1,500	11,220	82.81
1	2,700	20,196	130.68
1 1/2	5,100	38,148	226.41
2	8,400	62,832	358.06
3	15,900	118,932	657.16
4	26,400	197,472	1,076.03
6	51,900	388,212	2,093.20
8	84,000	628,320	3,373.63
10	120,000	897,600	4,809.61

H. Partial tax exemption rates:

- (1) For those customers who qualify under the partial tax exemption for real property of aged persons and who reside within the City of Watertown, the quarterly basis on which they will be billed for water usage shall be the amount of water actually used by such a property owner. The rates set forth in §301-17A, B and C shall not apply to these property owners.
- (2) The rates set forth within this subsection shall only apply to that portion of a residence which is actually inhabited by the elderly property owner who qualifies for the partial tax exemption of real property. If other portions of the residence are occupied by non-qualified rate payers, they shall pay the standard City rates.
- (3) The rate structure for this subsection shall be as follows:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Charge</u>
1	\$ 4.93
2	\$ 9.86
3	\$ 14.79
4	\$ 19.71
5	\$ 24.65
6	\$ 29.57
7	\$ 34.51
8	\$ 39.42

301-19. Fire Service Charges.

The charge for fire service pipes shall be as follows:

<u>Size of Service (inches)</u>	<u>Monthly Charges</u>	
	<u>Inside City</u>	<u>Outside City</u>
2	\$ 4.44	\$ 8.88

3	\$ 8.99	\$ 17.98
4	\$12.97	\$ 25.94
6	\$26.09	\$ 52.18
8	\$38.82	\$ 77.64
10	\$52.14	\$104.28

301-28 Bulk water charges.

A. The charges for water obtained from the bulk fill station at the Water Treatment Plant, 1707 Huntington Street, or through fire hydrants, if proper permits have been obtained and authorization has been given by the Department for such use, or from any other authorized source within the City shall be as follows:

(1) Zero to 1,000 gallons: \$ 8.64

(2) For each additional 100 gallons or fractional portion thereof: \$0.88

B. There shall be a minimum charge of \$8.64 plus a service and processing fee of \$2.50 for each bill sent to a consumer or user of bulk water. Bills shall normally be sent once per month for each month in which water is obtained. Payment is due within 30 days from the date of the invoice. Failure to pay the outstanding balance within 30 days will result in termination of service. There shall be a fee of \$10 to reinstate the bulk-fill-station account after the outstanding balance has been paid in full.

And,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this ordinance shall be instituted with the water bills dated on or after July 1, 2026 and contained on all bills after it has been published once in the official newspaper of the City of Watertown, or as the City Manager directs.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Motion for unanimous consent was 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.

LOCAL LAW

Proposed Local Law - A Local Law Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, §253-17 Sewer Service Charges, and Surcharges, §253-28 (G) Trucked or Hauled Pollutants, and §253-77 Tanker-Hauled Sewage, Septage and Slurries

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

A Local Law Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, §253-17 Sewer Service Charges, and Surcharges, §253-28 (G) Trucked or Hauled Pollutants, and §253-77 Tanker-Hauled Sewage, Septage and Slurries

WHEREAS a public hearing was held on this amendment on June 1, 2026, at 7:15 p.m. in the City Council Chambers;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York that §253-17 of the City Code of the City of Watertown is modified to read as follows:

C. Rates.

(1) The basis for the normal sewer service charge shall be the volume of water consumed from the Public Water Supply System by the individual property owner. The rates for both domestic and industrial metered sewer service within the City of Watertown shall be as follows:

(a) Quarterly meter rates:

<u>Usage</u>	<u>Rate [(per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons))]</u>
First 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons)	\$42.75 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)
Over 1,200 cubic feet (8,976 gallons)	\$24.94 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)

(b) Monthly meter rates:

<u>Usage</u>	<u>Rate [(per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons))]</u>
First 400 cubic feet (2,992 gallons)	\$42.75 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)
Over 400 cubic feet (2,992 gallons)	\$24.94 per 1,000 cubic feet (7,480 gallons)

(c) Minimum charge for quarterly inside City use:

<u>Meter Size (inches)</u>	<u>Cubic Feet</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Minimum Charge</u>
5/8	900	6,732	\$ 38.47
3/4	1,500	11,220	58.78
1	2,700	20,196	88.70
1 1/2	5,100	38,148	148.54
2	8,400	62,832	230.82
3	15,900	118,932	417.83
4	26,400	197,472	679.65
6	51,900	388,212	1,315.47
8	84,000	628,320	2,115.88
10	120,000	897,600	3,013.51

(d) Minimum charge for monthly inside City use:

<u>Meter Size (inches)</u>	<u>Cubic Feet</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Minimum Charge</u>
5/8	300	2,244	\$ 12.83
3/4	500	3,740	19.59
1	900	6,732	29.56
1 1/2	1,700	12,716	49.51
2	2,800	20,944	76.94
3	5,300	39,644	139.28
4	8,800	65,824	226.54
6	17,300	129,404	438.50
8	28,000	209,440	705.29

10 40,000 299,200 1,004.51

(2) Elderly Exemption

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Charge</u>
1	\$ 4.27
2	\$ 8.55
3	\$12.83
4	\$17.10
5	\$21.37
6	\$25.64
7	\$29.92
8	\$34.20

And,

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York that §253-28 of the City Code of the City of Watertown is modified to read as follows:

- G.(1) Six point three cents (\$0.063) per gallon for hauled waste less than or equal to 5.6% solids by weight.
- G.(2) For all leachate: six point three cents (\$0.063) per gallon.
- G.(3) Thirteen point seven cents (\$0.137) per pound (dry weight) for all deliveries over 5.6% solids by weight.
- G.(4) Minimum charge of \$45.38 per delivery.

And,

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York that §253-77 of the City Code of the City of Watertown is modified to read as follows:

- A.(1) Six point three cents (\$0.063) per gallon for all sewage, septage and slurries less than or equal to 5.6% solids by weight.
- A.(2) For all leachate: six point three cents (\$0.063) per gallon.
- A.(3) Thirteen point seven cents (\$0.137) per pound (dry weight) for all deliveries over 5.6% solids by weight.
- A.(4) Minimum charge of \$45.38 per delivery.

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that the Sewer Service Charges shall be instituted with the sewer bills dated on or after July 1, 2026 and contained on all bills, and

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that this Local Law shall take effect immediately upon its being filed in the Office of the Secretary of State.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to schedule a Public Hearing on the foregoing local law for Monday, June 1, 2026 at 7:15 p.m. Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

NEW BUSINESS

Each member of Council commented on the budget process, decisions and compromises that were made, and how the City should move forward with future budgets, especially in light of the fiscal challenges ahead.

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 3:51 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