

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
May 18, 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
Will Wolfe, Harrison Beach Murtha, City Attorney

City staff present: James Mills, Thomas Compo, Kim Johnston, Aaron Harvill, Amber Fowler, Dana Aikins, Matthew Timerman, Brian MacCue, Suzie Renzi-Falge, Michael Lumbis

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Establishing Standard Workday and Reporting for Elected Officials, NYS Retirement System, Council Member Shane A. Garrabrant
- Resolution No. 2 - Establishing Standard Workday and Reporting for Elected Officials, NYS Retirement System, Council Member Douglas E. Osborne, Jr.
- Resolution No. 3 - Appointing Kimberly A. Wood to Part-Time City Court Judge for the City of Watertown (AMENDED)
- Resolution No. 4 - Authorizing the City Attorneys to Enter into Stipulation & Order with Dollar Tree
- Resolution No. 5 - Accepting Bid for Disinfection Chemicals – Pollution Control Facility (PCF) Slack Chemical Company, Inc.
- Resolution No. 6 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Pollution Control Facility (PCF) Kemira Water Solutions, Inc.
- Resolution No. 7 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Brenntag Northeast LLC
- Resolution No. 8 - Accepting Bids for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) ChemTrade Chemicals US
- Resolution No. 9 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) George S. Coyne Chemical Co., Inc.
- Resolution No. 10 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Kemira Water Solutions, Inc.
- Resolution No. 11 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Slack Chemical Co., Inc.
- Resolution No. 12 - Authorizing Federal Aid Local Project Agreement - Bridge NY Master, Supplemental No. 1, with New York State Dept. of Transportation, Contract No. D040966; PIN 775418 US Rt. 11 (Mill St.) Over Black River Overflow, BIN 2220230, Detailed Design
- Resolution No. 13 - Authorizing the Submission of a NYS Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Sub-Application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant Program
- Ordinance No. 1 - Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, Chapter 161: Garbage, Rubbish and Refuse

- Old Business – Tabled Proposed Local Law - A Local Law Overriding the Tax Levy Limit Established by New York General Municipal Law §3-c
- Old Business - Proposed Local Law - A Local Law Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, Chapter 260: Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control
- Sales Tax Revenue – April 2026
- Sale of Surplus Hydro-electricity – April 2026

Meeting opened with a moment of silence.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of May 4, 2026, budget session of May 6, 2026, work session of May 11, 2026 and budget session of May 13, 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 Donnie Lee Barrigar, expressing concern about a recent drag show held at Garland City Beer Works on April 25.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Suzie Renzi-Falge, Director of Flower Memorial Library, spoke in support of the current staffing level at the library. She discussed the benefits the library provides the community and the negative impacts that cutting staff will have.

Jonathan Phillips, 735 Mill Street, discussed his concerns with the Citibus pilot program, the proposal to increase the trash sticker fee, and loss of City refuse customers due to the recent policy changes.

PUBLIC HEARING

At 7:15 p.m. Mayor Pierce asked the City Clerk to read the notice of Public Hearing concerning Proposed Local Law - A Local Law Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, Chapter 260: Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control

Mayor Pierce declared the hearing open at 7:15 p.m.

No one spoke.

Mayor Pierce declared the hearing closed at 7:16 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 1 - Establishing Standard Workday and Reporting for Elected Officials, NYS Retirement System, Council Member Shane A. Garrabrant

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Watertown hereby establishes the following as the standard workday for elected and appointed officials and will report the following days worked to the New York State and Local Employees’ Retirement System based on the Record of Activities maintained and submitted by these officials to the Clerk of this body.

		Elected Officials			
Title	Name	Standard Workday (Hrs/day)	Term Begins/Ends	Employer Record of Time Worked (Y/N)	Days/Month (based on Record of Activities)
Council Member	Shane A. Garrabrant	6 hours	01/01/26-12/31/29	N	5.08 days

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Garrabrant stated that he will abstain from voting and left Council Chambers.

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.

Council Member Garrabrant returned to Council Chambers.

Resolution No. 2 - Establishing Standard Workday and Reporting for Elected Officials, NYS Retirement System, Council Member Douglas E. Osborne, Jr.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Watertown hereby establishes the following as the standard workday for elected and appointed officials and will report the following days worked to the New York State and Local Employees’ Retirement System based on the Record of Activities maintained and submitted by these officials to the Clerk of this body.

		Elected Officials			
Title	Name	Standard Workday (Hrs/day)	Term Begins/Ends	Employer Record of Time Worked (Y/N)	Days/Month (based on Record of Activities)
Council Member	Douglas E. Osborne, Jr.	6 hours	01/01/26-12/31/29	N	2.71 days

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Osborne stated that he will abstain from voting and left Council Chambers.

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. abstaining.

Council Member Osborne returned to Council Chambers.

Resolution No. 3 - Appointing Kimberly A. Wood to Part-Time City Court Judge for the City of Watertown (AMENDED)

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the Mayor of the City of Watertown is empowered by the laws of the State of New York to appoint to the office of Part-Time City Court Judge for the City of Watertown, subject to the consent of City Council, and

WHEREAS a vacancy occurred on January 1, 2026, and

WHEREAS the Mayor, Sarah V.C. Pierce, appoints Kimberly A. Wood, Watertown, New York, to the position of Part-Time City Court Judge, and

WHEREAS on March 2, 2026, City Council of the City of Watertown adopted a resolution confirming the appointment of Kimberly A. Wood, Watertown, New York, to the position of Part-Time City Court Judge effective immediately on March 2, 2026, for a six (6) year term ending December 31, 2031, and

WHEREAS the NYS Office of Court Administration is requesting that the expiration of the term be changed to March 1, 2032,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby reconfirms the appointment of Kimberly A. Wood, Watertown, New York, to the position of Part-Time City Court Judge effective March 2, 2026, for a six (6) year term ending March 1, 2032.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Pierce explained that this amended resolution was to adjust the expiration of the term based on the date of the appointment and not the date of the vacancy.

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

Resolution No. 4 - Authorizing the City Attorneys to Enter into Stipulation & Order with Dollar Tree

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS certain premises owned by Watertown Rite Aid, LLC and operated as a Dollar Tree in the City of Watertown at 842 State St, Parcel No.: 12-06-326.000 are assessed for the following tax years:

2025	Parcel # 12-06-326.000	\$1,402,100
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And,

WHEREAS Dollar Tree Management Inc D/B/A/ Family Dollar and Watertown Rite Aid, LLC (Dollar Tree) have heretofore duly instituted in the Supreme Court proceedings to review the assessment for tax year 2025-26 and are expected to soon institute a proceeding challenging tax year 2026-27, and

WHEREAS the parties have agreed that the assessment for the following years shall be reduced and set as:

2025 Parcel # 12-06-326.000 \$1,125,000

And,

WHEREAS Dollar Tree and the City agree to be bound to the provisions of RPTL §727 limiting the ability to challenge or change future assessments for tax years 2026, 2027, and 2028, and

WHEREAS a compromise and settlement of the aforesaid proceedings upon the above basis is deemed in the best interest of the Respondents,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York that the City attorneys of the City of Watertown be and are hereby authorized, empowered and directed to enter into a formal Stipulation & Order of the aforesaid proceedings with counsel for Dollar Tree on the following terms and conditions:

1. The total assessment of the subject property shall be set for the following years as follows:
2025 \$1,125,000

The above adjustments will result in rebates for taxes paid in excess of the amounts that would have been due based on the adjusted assessments.

2. That an Order of the Supreme Court shall be made and entered settling the aforesaid proceedings to review said assessment without costs to either party as against the other and upon the terms and conditions set forth above

And,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City Assessor and all other municipal officers, agents, or employees be, and they hereby are directed to do such acts and things as may be necessary to give full force and effect to the aforesaid settlement, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Secinded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Garrabrant asked whether it was staff's recommendation to move forward with this settlement.

City Assessor Kimberli Johnston stated that both she and the attorney are recommending Council agree to this settlement. She also confirmed for Council Member Kimball that the assessment cannot be challenged again for three years, unless there is a reevaluation.

Council Member Shoen mentioned that he would like to see the City go through a full reevaluation. He said he knows that it would be expensive but thinks it would be worth it and to increase the City's equalization rate.

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

Resolution No. 5 - Accepting Bid for Disinfection Chemicals – Pollution Control Facility (PCF) Slack Chemical Company, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City desires to purchase the Disinfection Chemicals, on an as needed basis, for use at the City's Pollution Control Facility (PCF) located at 700 William T. Field Drive, Watertown, NY 13601 for fiscal year period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received three (3) sealed bids for the Disinfection Chemicals, and

WHEREAS on April 23, 2026, at 2:45 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Water Superintendent and Chief Operator and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted Slack Chemical Company, Inc.,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Slack Chemical Company, Inc. per the pricing schedule proposed, for the purchase of Disinfection Chemicals.

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

Resolution No. 6 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Pollution Control Facility (PCF) Kemira Water Solutions, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City desires to purchase the process chemical Phosphorus Coagulation – Ferric Chloride, on an as needed basis, for use at the City's Pollution Control Facility (PCF) located at 700 William T. Field Drive, Watertown, NY 13601 for fiscal year period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received two (2) sealed bids for the Process Chemicals – Phosphorus Coagulation – Ferric Chloride, and

WHEREAS on April 23, 2026, at 3:15 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Water Superintendent and Chief Operator and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Kemira Water Solutions, Inc.,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Kemira Water Solutions, Inc. per the pricing schedule proposed, for the purchase of Phosphorus Coagulation – Ferric Chloride.

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

**Resolution No. 7 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP)
Brenntag Northeast LLC**

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City desires to purchase various process chemicals, on an as needed basis, for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant (WTP) for fiscal year period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received ten (10) sealed bids for Process Chemicals, and

WHEREAS on April 23, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Water Superintendent and Chief Operator and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted Brenntag Northeast LLC as detailed below,

Chemical	Est. Annual Usage	UOM	Unit Price	Total Price	Recommended Vendor
Powdered Activated Carbon	4	Ton	\$3,200.00	\$12,800.00	Brenntag Northeast LLC

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Brenntag Northeast LLC. per the pricing schedule proposed, for the purchase of Powdered Activated Carbon for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant.

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

**Resolution No. 8 - Accepting Bids for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP)
ChemTrade Chemicals US**

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City desires to purchase various process chemicals, on an as needed basis, for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant (WTP) for fiscal year period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received ten (10) sealed bids for Process Chemicals, and

WHEREAS on April 23, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Water Superintendent and Chief Operator and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept

the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted ChemTrade Chemicals US LLC as detailed below,

Chemical	Est. Annual Usage	UOM	Unit Price	Total Price	Recommended Vendor
Aluminum Sulfate Liquid (PER DRY WT.)	560	Ton	\$698.00	\$390,880.00	ChemTrade Chemicals US LLC

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from ChemTrade Chemicals US LLC. per the pricing schedule proposed, for the purchase of Aluminum Sulfate Liquid for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant.

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

Resolution No. 9 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) George S. Coyne Chemical Co., Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City desires to purchase various process chemicals, on an as needed basis, for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant (WTP) for fiscal year period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received ten (10) sealed bids for Process Chemicals, and

WHEREAS on April 23, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Water Superintendent and Chief Operator and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted George S. Coyne Chemical Co., Inc.as detailed below,

Chemical	Est. Annual Usage	UOM	Unit Price	Total Price	Recommended Vendor
Sodium Silicate Liquid	343	Ton	\$496.00	\$170,128.00	George S. Coyne Chemical Co., Inc.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from George S. Coyne Chemical Co., Inc. per the pricing schedule proposed, for the purchase of Sodium Silicate Liquid for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant.

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

Resolution No. 10 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Kemira Water Solutions, Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City desires to purchase various process chemicals, on an as needed basis, for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant (WTP) for fiscal year period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received ten (10) sealed bids for Process

Chemicals, and

WHEREAS on April 23, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and

WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Water Superintendent and Chief Operator and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted by Kemira Water Solutions, Inc. as detailed below,

Chemical	Est. Annual Usage	UOM	Unit Price	Total Price	Recommended Vendor
Polyaluminum Chloride	65	Ton	\$557.00	\$36,205.00	Kemira Water Solutions, Inc.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Kemira Water Solutions, Inc. per the pricing schedule proposed, for the purchase of Polyaluminum Chloride for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant.

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

Resolution No. 11 - Accepting Bid for Process Chemicals – Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Slack Chemical Co., Inc.

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City desires to purchase various process chemicals, on an as needed basis, for use at the City’s Water Treatment Plant (WTP) for fiscal year period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and

WHEREAS the Purchasing Department advertised and received ten (10) sealed bids for Process Chemicals, and

WHEREAS on April 23, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. the bids received were publicly opened and read, and WHEREAS Purchasing Manager, Tina Bartlett-Bearup reviewed the bids received with the Water Superintendent and Chief Operator and it is their recommendation that the City Council accept the lowest responsive responsible bid submitted Slack Chemical Company, Inc.as detailed below,

Chemical	Est. Annual Usage	UOM	Unit Price	Total Price	Recommended Vendor
Chlorine Liquid	30	Ton	\$3,882.90	\$116,487.00	Slack Chemical Co., Inc.
Hydrofluosilicic Acid Solution	22	Ton	\$1,890.00	\$41,580.00	Slack Chemical Co., Inc.
Soda Ash	130	Ton	\$534.54	\$69,490.20	Slack Chemical Co., Inc.
20% Sodium Permanganate Solution	75	Ton	\$2,787.19	\$209,039.25	Slack Chemical Co., Inc.
Polymers-8102 Plus.61 CAT-FLOC	15	Ton	\$2,900.00	\$43,500.00	Slack Chemical Co., Inc.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby accepts the bid received from Slack Chemical Company, Inc. per the pricing schedule proposed, for the purchase of Chlorine Liquid, Hydrofluosilicic Acid Solution, Soda Ash, 20% Sodium Permanganate

Solution, Polymers-8102 Plus.61 CAT-FLOC and Nalco Polymers 8181 for use at the City's Water Treatment Plant.

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

Resolution No. 12 - Authorizing Federal Aid Local Project Agreement - Bridge NY Master, Supplemental No. 1, with New York State Dept. of Transportation, Contract No. D040966; PIN 775418 US Rt. 11 (Mill St.) Over Black River Overflow, BIN 2220230, Detailed Design

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS a project for the US Route 11 (Mill Street) over Black River Overflow, P.I.N. 775418 (the Project") is eligible for funding under Title 23 U.S. Code, as amended, that calls for the apportionment of the costs such program to be borne at the ratio of 95% Federal funds and 5% non-Federal funds, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown will design, let and construct the Project, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown desires to advance the Project by making a commitment of 100% of the costs of the work for or portions thereof,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Watertown does hereby approve the above-subject project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the City Comptroller to pay 100% of the Federal and non-Federal share of the cost of the preliminary engineering design for Project or portions thereof, with the understanding that qualified costs may be eligible for Federal-aid, State-aid, or reimbursement from Bridge NY funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a sum of \$275,000 is hereby appropriated from the City of Watertown Capital Budget and be made available to cover the cost of participation in the above phase of the Project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council hereby agrees that the City of Watertown shall be responsible for all costs of the Project which exceed the amount of the Federal-aid, State-aid, or NY Bridge funding awarded to the City of Watertown, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in event the Project costs not covered by Federal-aid, State-aid, or NY Bridge funding exceed the amount appropriated above, the City Council of the City of Watertown shall convene as soon as possible to appropriate said excess amount immediately upon the notification by the City Manager's Office thereof, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Council hereby agrees that construction of the Project shall begin no later than twenty-four (24) months after award and the construction phase of the Project shall be completed within thirty (30) months, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager of the City of Watertown, or their designee is hereby authorized to execute on behalf of the City of Watertown all necessary agreements, certifications or reimbursement requests for Federal-aid and/or State-aid with the New York Department

of Transportation in connection with the advancement or approval of the Project and providing for the administration of the Project and the City of Watertown's funding of Project costs and permanent funding of the local share of Federal-aid and State-aid eligible Project costs and all Project costs within appropriations therefore that are not so eligible, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be filed with the New York State Commissioner of Transportation by attaching it to any necessary Agreement in connection with the Project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, City Engineer Thomas Compo provided Council with details of the scope of the project, at the request of Council Member Garrabrant. He said it will be a full rehab of the bridge and he noted that it includes storm sewer and sanitary sewer work. He added that paving will be done further up Mill Street to the bridge upon completion of this project.

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

Resolution No. 13 - Authorizing the Submission of a NYS Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Sub-Application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant Program

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown's Western Outfall Trunk Sewer (WOTS) Priority Basin Inflow and Infiltration Implementation Project proposes inflow and infiltration improvements to reduce Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) within Sub Basins 1, 4, 7, 8, 9N, and 9S including targeted spot repairs, followed by system-wide cured-in-place lining of mainline piping and manholes, as well as grouting of all lateral to main connection points, and associated improvements, and

WHEREAS, the WOTS Project is located within the City of Watertown and benefits all sewer users within the City, and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has published Notice of Funding Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2024 & 2025 for Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), and

WHEREAS, the NYS Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (NYS DHSES) is accepting sub-applicant applications from eligible sub-applicants including local governments, and

WHEREAS, the City has adopted an Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance of \$29,740,000 Bonds to pay the cost of the rehabilitation of the WOTS, including inflow and infiltration improvements on September 2, 2025, and

WHEREAS, the City has been awarded NYS Water Infrastructure Improvement (WIIA) Grant in an amount not to exceed \$7,435,000, and

WHEREAS, the City proposes to meet the financial obligations necessary to fully and satisfactorily complete the project through Environmental Facilities Corporation Short Term and Long-Term Financing,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the submission of a FEMA BRIC grant sub-application to NYS DHSES and directs the City Manager to submit the application on behalf of the City and execute all contracts and documents associated with the grant application and financial assistance, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

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

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 1 - Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, Chapter 161: Garbage, Rubbish and Refuse

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS on September 15, 2025, City Council adopted an Ordinance amending the Code of the City of Watertown Chapter 161: Garbage, Rubbish and Refuse, and

WHEREAS the amendment required refuse bags utilizing a “city blue sticker” to be placed within a personally procured tote or garbage can placed within the margin area in an effort to reduce refuse spread caused by wildlife, weather, and exposed trash bags, and

WHEREAS since implementation of the amended code provisions, the City has experienced operational improvements related to refuse containment, street cleanliness, and reductions in loose refuse within the margin areas of City streets, and

WHEREAS recent discussions have identified a desire to provide additional flexibility for customers utilizing the City's blue refuse sticker program by allowing properly prepared blue refuse sticker bags to be placed for collection in accordance with City guidelines, and

WHEREAS the City of Watertown continues to encourage customers to utilize refuse totes issued through the City’s refuse program or a personally owned garbage cans/totes properly marked with an approved City of Watertown Refuse label whenever possible in order to further minimize refuse spread, improve neighborhood cleanliness, and reduce refuse exposure caused by animals and weather conditions, and

WHEREAS the proposed amendment is intended to provide additional collection options for customers while maintaining the overall refuse collection framework established by Chapter 161 of the Code of the City of Watertown,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED that §161-1 of Chapter 161: Garbage, Rubbish and Refuse be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

§ 161-1. Rubbish creating nuisance prohibited.

No person shall place or deposit or, as owner, agent or tenant, allow or permit to remain In or upon any land or the surface of the same any rubbish, as defined in §248-1 and §161-1.1, which tends to or does create a nuisance or which tends to or does serve as a breeding place for flies or mosquitoes or as a source of food for animals or which tends to or does increase the fire hazard of neighboring property. Rubbish shall be contained in approved watertight trash/garbage cans, trash/garbage totes, or refuse bag properly marked with a refuse sticker in accordance with City regulations and set out for collection pursuant to this chapter.

And,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that §161-1.1 of Chapter 161: Garbage, Rubbish and Refuse be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

§ 161-1.1. Dumping of rubbish prohibited; definition.

- A. No person shall place or deposit or, as owner, agent or tenant, allow or permit to remain in or upon private property or any property of the City of Watertown, particularly the margin between the sidewalk and the street, any rubbish, as set forth herein, except on the day of regularly scheduled trash pickup for that property in an approved watertight trash/garbage cans, trash/garbage totes, or refuse bag properly marked with a refuse sticker in accordance with City regulations.
- B. "Rubbish" shall mean any refuse, filth, dirt, waste matter, sweepings, garbage, putrescible matter, decomposable or organic matter, carcass, sewage, excrement, swill, slops, malodorous or obnoxious liquids or substances, compost, ashes, soot, tin cans, leaves, brush, weeds, grass, straw, hay, excelsior, shavings, barrels, crates, boxes, litter, easily combustible matter, used furniture or appliances or other substance or material offensive or dangerous to the public or detrimental to its health.

And,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that § 161-5 of Chapter 161: Garbage, Rubbish and Refuse be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

§ 161-5. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

CITY REFUSE STICKER – A sticker available from the City or its agents which shall bear an identification mark established by the City.

CITY REFUSE TOTE – A tote owned and issued by the City of Watertown for lease to residential and approved commercial properties for the deposit and storage of garbage and refuse.

CITY USER – A person who is a legal occupant of a residential or approved commercial property of the City of Watertown and who purchases City refuse stickers or leases a City refuse tote and uses them in accordance with this chapter.

CONTAINERS – Approved watertight trash/garbage cans or trash/garbage totes.

GARBAGE – Animal and vegetable waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking and serving of food, exclusive of liquid.

MULTIPLE DWELLING — Such premises as are rented or leased, which are occupied as the residence or home of three or more families, living independently of each other, as further defined by the Multiple Dwelling Law of the State of New York, pursuant to §4 of that law.

OWNERS OF MULTIPLE DWELLINGS — Such individuals, corporations or other legal entities who or which own residential properties which are defined as multiple dwellings, pursuant to §4 of the Multiple Dwelling Law of the State of New York.

RECYCLABLES – Newspapers, magazines, junk mail, office and school paper, plastic bottles with the "1," "2," "3" or "5" designation, metal cans, clear, green and brown glass bottles and jars.

REFUSE – Garbage and ordinary household rubbish such as nonrecyclable cans, bottles, paper, rags, cartons, and similar household articles which accumulate daily. It shall not include demolition materials, large quantities of lumber, construction, building and roofing materials, stones, bricks, dirt, used automobile chassis, tree limbs in excess of four inches in diameter and four feet in length and unbundled brush in excess of one inch in diameter and four feet in length.

REFUSE BAG – Any plastic bag intended for the use of refuse, which is of less than 33 gallons and bears a City refuse sticker. This shall be the only means by which a City User, not leasing a City refuse tote, can dispose of their refuse through the City collection service.

And,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that §161-22 of Chapter 161: Garbage, Rubbish and Refuse be deleted in their entirety and replaced with the following:

§ 161-22. City refuse bags and tote service; requirements; fees; penalties for offenses.

- A. Established rates. The City will purchase refuse stickers and refuse totes meeting specifications set by the City Council. The price of the refuse sticker and refuse tote to the City users shall be established at least annually by the Watertown City Council through a budget resolution that adopts a City Fees and Charges Schedule. Said schedule shall be available to the public at the office of the Watertown City Clerk.
- B. Preparation and collection of garbage and rubbish.
 - (1) City residential and approved commercial properties utilizing the City refuse

collection service shall be required to dispose of all garbage and rubbish in the refuse bag which must bear a City refuse sticker or in a leased City refuse tote.

- (2) In the event that a City resident decides to utilize a private garbage and rubbish pickup service, the resident is subject to the below-stated City enforcement collection fees in the event that the private pickup fails to remove the resident's garbage or rubbish and such garbage and rubbish is nonbagged as required by this section.
- (3) Refuse bags cannot exceed 33 gallons. In no instance shall the refuse bags be packed so as to contain more than their intended weight. Collectible material must be properly sealed and presented and set at curbside no sooner than 7:00 p.m. on the day before scheduled collection and not later than 7:00 a.m. the day of scheduled collection. All non-bagged garbage and rubbish will be left and will be subject to prosecution as litter and also subject to a special collection fee as established by the City Council of the City of Watertown at least annually through a budget resolution that adopts a City Fees and Charges Schedule for the amounts available. Such schedule shall be available to the public at the office of the Watertown City Clerk.

And,

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

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.

Council Member Shoen explained that he requested a change to the container requirement as long as an acceptable garbage bag is used. He also noted that this changes the policy back to what it was so that everything will be picked up, although, the use of garbage cans/totes is encouraged.

Mayor Pierce said that she is torn on this decision because the comments seemed to have dissipated and residents have either gotten used to the new requirement or have obtained a proper container in order to comply with the requirement. She said that if this ordinance does pass, she would encourage people to use a garbage can because it is operationally better for workers and it looks nicer than having trash bags everywhere.

Council Member Osborne agreed with the encouragement to use containers but said this offers a level of flexibility. He said he is pleased with the proposed changes.

Council Member Garrabrant noted that the decision to require personal containers came from a good place, but the market ultimately spoke on the need for flexibility.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Tabled Proposed Local Law - A Local Law Overriding the Tax Levy Limit Established by New York General Municipal Law §3-c. *(Introduced on April 6, 2026; public hearing held on April 20, 2026; tabled April 20, 2026 and May 4, 2026; appears in its entirety in the 2026 Minutes Book on page 10-11 of the 4/6/2026 minutes).*

In response to Council Member Shoen's request, City Comptroller James Mills provided clarification as to how fund balance is used, the minimum amount needed and how the City obtains fund balance. He said fund balance is obtained when the City does not spend as much as was needed when the budget is adopted and when revenues come in higher or expenses come in lower. He explained that fund balance is needed due to the volatility of the City's revenue sources, mentioning 40% is dependent on sales tax and 10% on hydro revenue. He stressed that hydro is down approximately \$1 million year-to-date and the City does not have reserves to cover that, so fund balance serves as a good fiscal tool to help. He further explained that fund balance is needed for cash flow, noting that the City does not receive the State-aid of \$4.7 million until June 15 and large sales tax and hydro payments within June and July for the previous fiscal year. He estimated that he needs to start the fiscal year with approximately \$10-\$12 million to cover the City's cash flow requirements until those payments are received. He advised that with the hydro cliff coming, the City needs to use as little fund balance as possible, and he estimated that the City will start next year's budget approximately \$2 million in the hole.

Council Member Shoen said the City is looking at the fund balance running out next year and discussed the tax cap limit. He noted that he would prefer any savings from cuts made to the proposed budget to go back into the fund balance versus lowering the tax rate.

Discussion turned to revenue projections and Mr. Mills reviewed how he determines his projections. He also confirmed for Council Member Shoen that contractual pay increases and the increase in benefit costs is the biggest driver of the budget.

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

Proposed Local Law - A Local Law Amending the Code of the City of Watertown, Chapter 260: Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control. *(Introduced on May 4, 2026; public hearing held this evening; appears in its entirety in the 2026 Minutes Book on page 11 -12 of the 5/4/2026 minutes).*

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

STAFF REPORTS

Sales Tax Revenue – April 2026

A report was available for Council to review.

Sale of Surplus Hydro-electricity – April 2026

A report was available for Council to review.

NEW BUSINESS

Refuse Program

Council Member Garrabrant discussed the projected revenue loss of this program and commented that it might be due to the loss of customers. He said he is in support of keeping the sticker prices the same in an attempt to get back customers and he advised there needs to be more marketing of the service. He mentioned ideas, such as having a refuse truck in the Dairy Parade with refuse staff handing out informational pamphlets regarding the service offered by the City. He also advised Council of his proposal, which he called the Clean Watertown Initiative. He said he would be sending information about this initiative to staff and Council for review, and he provided a brief summary of the ideas included in it. These included free stickers to new customers, discounts for multi-property owners and a customer referral program.

Armed Forces Day Parade

Council Member Kimball said the Armed Forces Day Parade was held last weekend and that it was a great event.

Advantage Watertown Meeting

Council Member Kimball said he attended a recent meeting of this group and Reg Schweitzer from Neighbors of Watertown (NOW) presented. He said Mr. Schweitzer discussed a \$5 million grant for local home improvements and a grant for rental properties. He noted that NOW is still accepting applications for these programs.

Budget/Tax Cap

Council Member Kimball pointed out that Council just approved \$1.1 million worth of chemical bids for the Water Department. Noting that the cost of operation is increasing, he discussed the tax cap limit and said it is below the rate of inflation. He discussed other operational costs that have increased, such as pay increases with the union contracts, health insurance and retirement costs. He summarized that the tax cap set by the State is unrealistic.

Budget Office Hours

Council Member Osborne thanked the public for their participation and suggested holding more Office Hours events such as these in the future.

Budget/Tax Cap (continued)

Council Member Osborne agreed with Council Member Kimball, noting that the City will be in a tough position in the coming years, so Council has had to make some difficult decisions through this budget process. He advised that the City would need to expand its revenue sources in the future and that Council did its due diligence to not place a burden on the taxpayers every year.

Refuse Program / NYCOM Award

Council Member Osborne congratulated the refuse staff for receiving an award from NYCOM regarding the recent route changes and efficiencies.

Budget Office Hours (continued)

Council Member Shoen echoed Council Member Osborne's sentiments regarding the Budget Office Hours and said they were very informative.

Announcements

Council Member Shoen announced that the splash pads are opening, and he mentioned that Burlington Street will be closed for road work. He also stated that the VFW held their 100th year anniversary ceremony, which he was invited to attend.

Golf Course

Council Member Shoen commented that he thinks Council agreed to adding the closing costs of the golf course into the budget, but he would suggest taking out \$5000 that was allocated to blade sharpening.

Refuse Program / NYCOM Award (continued)

Mayor Pierce also congratulated the refuse staff for receiving this award and she provided further details of the award and why the City was chosen.

America's 250th Birthday

Mayor Pierce announced a youth contest that she is holding to celebrate the 250th birthday of America. She is asking the City of Watertown's youth (ages 3-18) to reflect on what makes them proud to be American through art, writing and creativity. She stated that all entries must be received by June 15 and that more information can be found on the City's website.

Budget Office Hours (continued)

Mayor Pierce said these are a great opportunity to talk to the public one-on-one. Noting that she has held office hours in the past during her time on Council, she agreed that it would be good to schedule more in the future.

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to move into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining and 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.

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

Council moved into Executive Session at 7:52 p.m.

Executive Session Minutes, with Mayor Sarah V.C. Pierce acting as the scribe.

During the May 18, 2026, executive session, the following personnel-related changes to the budget were discussed:

- Fire Department: Council unanimously agreed to reduce the number of firefighters to 70 through attrition.
- Codes: Council discussed the proposed removal of one Code Enforcement Officer. Councilmembers Shoen, Osborne and Mayor Pierce stated their support for doing so. Councilmembers Kimball and Garrabrant opposed the proposal.

- Management pay increases: Council discussed proposed management pay raises in the budget. Mayor Pierce, as well as Councilmen Kimball, Shoen and Garrabrant, agreed to freeze steps for the upcoming fiscal year, but to move forward with the COLA as originally proposed. Councilman Osborne stated support for freezing steps and reducing the COLA to 0.5%.

Council reconvened at 10:15 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 10:15 p.m. until Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 3:30 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