

# CITY OF WATERTOWN NEW YORK



JEFFREY M. SMITH  
MAYOR

## PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS the day of June 19<sup>th</sup> has been celebrated by Americans since 1865 as Juneteenth and has come to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS in 2004, New York State established June 19<sup>th</sup> as an annual commemoration, a state holiday in 2020; it has been voted a Federal holiday in America this year, and Juneteenth has been commemorated in the North Country since 2014, when Fort Drum Soldiers, Veterans, and Local Community members came together and offered a free program at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds in Watertown; and

WHEREAS the observance of Juneteenth honors the previous and ongoing achievement, perseverance, and sacrifice of African Americans, including the 200,000 who volunteered for military service during the Civil War, making up 10% of the Union Army and 25% of the Union Navy, when they were 1% the Northern population, to fight for their own freedom and the preservation of the United States; and

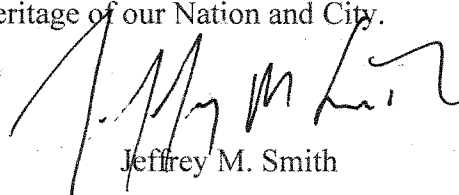
WHEREAS the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment of 1865 prohibited slavery in the United States, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of 1868 and 1870 recognized citizenship and voting rights regardless of race, and the Civil Rights movement was started by African Americans nearly a century later, who, with their allies, believed in our Constitution enough to stand up against post-slavery racial discrimination and violence, serving as an inspiration for subsequent movements that have benefitted all; and

WHEREAS flying the Pan-African flag at City Hall in honor of Juneteenth further symbolizes the City of Watertown's recognition of the past and present contributions of people of African descent in Watertown and across our nation,

NOW THEREFORE, I Jeffrey M. Smith, Mayor of the City of Watertown, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2021, as

## JUNETEENTH DAY

in the City of Watertown and urge all citizens to become more aware of the significance of this commemoration of American History and in the heritage of our Nation and City.



Jeffrey M. Smith