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CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

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ERIC WAGENAAR
CITY MANAGER

City Manager's Annual 2025 Report

January 2026

Happy New Year!

The Watertown City staff completed another year of dedicated service supporting our residents and businesses. As you review the department reports, you will quickly see that we have an incredibly committed and busy team.

The year began with a classic North Country winter and concluded with what appears to be another one just as familiar. Department leadership remained stable throughout the year, with only one change: the appointment of Brandi Smith as our new Transit/CitiBus Director in October.

Our employees are hardworking, committed, and deeply invested in serving our city. Much of their work takes place behind the scenes—often in the cold of winter or the dark of night—and it does not go unnoticed.

Thank you for your continued support of the City team. We look forward to serving you and our community in the year ahead.

An overview of what the City Staff accomplished in 2025:

CitiBus/Transit

Transported a total of 92,650 passengers over a total of 134,704 miles throughout the year, and throughout all weather conditions

Placed three new buses on order for CitiBus

City Clerk's Office

Processed 2,409 Birth Certificates, Death Certificates, and Marriage Licenses

Performed 489 wedding ceremonies and 71 genealogy searches

Issued 8,949 certified copies of official documents

Issued 1,063 dog licenses, 473 handicap parking permits, and various business licenses

Prepared and typed Minutes for 25 Regular Meetings, 10 Work Sessions, and 6 Budget Sessions, as well as certified 198 Resolutions, 17 Ordinances, and 4 Local Laws for official filing into the City Records

City Comptroller's Office

Processed 16,685 property tax bill payments totaling \$20.3M

Processed 5,667 accounts payable checks totaling \$29.5M

Managed 7,843 water/sewer account payments totaling \$13.3M

Provided payroll for 537 employees for \$25.6M in wages

City Engineering Department

Major construction projects were completed or progressed, including the full reconstruction of Burlington, Grant, Seward, and Henry Streets, as well as the replacement of water infrastructure on Ohio and Winslow Street. Additional spot sanitary sewer repairs occurred across multiple streets, totaling over 400 feet of pipe replacement

The Engineering Department issued 63 permits in 2025, including city infrastructure, sewer, and sidewalk repair permits

Code Enforcement issued over 786 permits, and 1,501 violations (trash & debris, snow & ice, property maintenance, infestation, and unsecured building)

City Human Resources and Civil Service Office

Human Resources completed 52 orientations for 175 new hires and has processed 320 open enrollment applications

Civil Service processed 1,400 personnel action forms, administered 32 civil service exams, held 14 Civil Service Commission monthly meetings, and attended 6 recruitment events in 2025

Fire Department

Responded to approximately 6,000 incidents. This is approximately a 7% increase from 2024

Completed 7,376 man-hours of training

Achieved technical rescue team accreditations for Type 3 Hazmat Team and Type 3 Water Team

Fire also submitted documentation for accreditation as a Technical Rescue Team (Structural Collapse, Confined Space, and Trench)

Flower Memorial Library

Welcomed 95,825 patrons through its doors. A total of 81,883 books have been circulated, with 99,620 materials circulated

Hosted multiple programs for ages 0-adult with over 17,000 participants

Information Technology Department

Currently upgrading the City's financial management software and upgrading the City phone system

Installed TVs in Council Chambers to help display maps, presentations, and important information during Council Meetings

Getting ready to go live with CitiBus Mobile Ticketing

Continued computer replacements, as well as major upgrades/replacements to the City firewall

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation hosts a wide range of events and activities annually, attracting over 150,000 participants each year. Some of the different events include:

- Concerts
- Golf Tournaments and Events
- Football and Hockey tournaments
- School and Youth Organization Events

The Pools attracted 22,043 swimmers

Planning Department

Processed 22 development applications for Planning Commission review; reviewed and processed 104 Zoning Compliance Certificates and processed 11 applications for review by the Zoning Board of Appeals

Completed a comprehensive review of the City's Zoning Ordinance and worked with the Planning Commission and City Council on a series of changes to make the zoning ordinance function more efficiently. Also completed an amendment related to the regulation of cannabis dispensaries

Managed the City's urban forestry program, including the planning and implementation of numerous tree planting projects and Arbor Day

Continued to administer the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program through the development of the City's Annual Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, and management of over 25 CDBG projects

Assisted with the development and writing of numerous grant applications for various projects

Police Department

Responded to 28,005 calls during 2025

The Watertown Police Department welcomed Luna, our first therapy dog, and K9 Bach, our newest narcotics detection dog

Continuing to work on a coordinated effort with DPW, social services, and local organizations to improve the homelessness encampment problem throughout the city

Dedication of the Watertown Police Department Firing Range in honor of former member Leo Rutledge

Our biggest achievement is the dedication of our officers, as the PD is operating at critically low staffing levels all year round

Public Works Department

Maintained over 100 miles of streets, which also includes the maintenance of sidewalks, curbs, and street signs

Completed 7 CHIPS street projects – ranging from curbing, ADA ramps, sewer, storm, and paving work

214 sanitary sewer assets that range from 6 inches up to 20 inches in diameter pipe were cleaned in various locations around the city. Total length cleaned for the year is 44,519 feet

90 storm sewer assets that vary in size and length were cleaned in various locations around the city. Total length cleaned for the year is 5,539 feet

Installed 1,400 linear feet of curb, which is 10 times more than normal

Purchasing Department

The Purchasing Department solicited 17 Bids (11 awarded, 1 no proposals received, 1 rejected, 4 pending approvals); 4 RFPs (2 awarded, 2 pending approvals), and 10 RFQ's awarded for FY26. Additionally, we assisted departments in vendor outreach efforts for several informal requests for quotes and proposals as needed

Issued over 1,400 purchase orders totaling \$5,444,810 in anticipated spending

The Purchasing Department has completed six (6) auctions on Auctions International for the sale of declared surplus items. Sales totaled \$47,325.50

Staff Support to Council:

198 Resolutions processed in 2025

17 Ordinances approved in 2025

4 Local Laws passed in 2025

Adopted and passed the \$79,068,547 budget for 25-26

Water Distribution

Maintained over 100 miles of water pipes ranging from 4 inches to 24 inches and over 9,000 service connections off the distribution system, over 2000 gate valves, and 875 hydrants

While conducting the valve exercise program throughout the city, distribution crews discovered 8 valves that were either leaking or needed replacement. A total of 30 hydrants were repaired or replaced. 149 hydrants were repainted

Over 100 service repairs were conducted throughout the year and 15 service replacements or new installations were completed

10 lead service replacements occurred in 2025

Completed Ohio Water Main Retirement from the 2024 construction season

Water Treatment Plant

Serviced approximately 50,000 people for the year

Supplied water to the Towns of Watertown, Leray, Pamela, Champion, and Fort Drum

Filtered 6.5 million gallons of water daily, or about 2.3 billion gallons for the year

Provided 4,100 businesses with water

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Processed 3.9 billion gallons of water in 2024 (most recent full year of data)

Treated 5.7 million gallons of septic and municipal sludge, as well as 37.1 million gallons of leachate

New Control building generator installed and online

Installed a new chemical line to remove the line from underground for better leak detection

Rebuilt Final A Sludge Pumps

Congratulations to the following City Employees who have served our City for 30 or more years:

- Matthew Fiorentino – Fire Captain, Fire (30 years)
- Mark Esposito – Crew Chief, P&R (31 years)
- Ronald Gatch – Detective, PD (31 years)
- Mike Lumbis – Planning and Community Development Director, Planning (31 years)
- Mike Kellogg – Deputy Fire Chief, Fire (31 years)
- Rosemary Fredenburg – Senior Account Clerk Typist, Water (33 years)
- Charles Donoghue – Police Chief, PD (33 years)
- Troy Chisamore – Fire Captain, Fire (34 years)
- Stephan Ososkalo – Street and Sewer Maintenance Supervisor (35 years)
- Vance Trapp – Police Officer, PD (37 years)
- Patrick Keenan – Civil Engineer I, Engineering (39 years)
- Timothy McConnell-Sr – Refuse/Recycle Motor Equipment Operator, DPW (39 years)

In addition to normal operations, here is a quick look at some upcoming key activities for 2026:

- **City Court renovations begin in City Hall – Work should begin in early February, and if all goes well, it is scheduled to be completed by the end of December. The City Codes Department moved to the second floor at City Hall, and the City Clerk's Office will remain in its current location on the first floor. City Court will be held in the Jefferson County building until the project is completed. If you have a court**

date, please check with the court on when the move to the interim courtroom will occur.

- We received a \$24.4 million-dollar grant to support the construction of our new Water Treatment Facility that was required to address Disinfectant Byproducts in the EPA Administrative order. This grant, coupled with a \$14 million-dollar interest free loan, will help reduce the amount of our bond to complete the project.**
- We also received a \$5 million-dollar grant to apply against the cost of repairing and/or replacing the large 5-million-gallon Thompson Park Reservoir that has been leaking for decades. We continue to work with an engineering firm on the way ahead for this project.**
- More good news...we received a \$7.5 million-dollar grant to apply against the DEC-directed corrections to our storm water and sewer pipes in the western side of the city (also known as the Western Outfall Trunk Sewer – WOTS). We will continue to complete work in the WOTS throughout the year.**
- The complete street reconstruction work on Burlington Street will finish in early spring.**
- We plan on replacing the Huntington Street water main this year and are completing an engineering study partially funded by a \$50,000 Environmental Facilities Grant for a complete reconstruction of Newell Street.**
- The Engineering Department is working on the design for the reconstruction of Richards Drive, which we will be putting out for construction bids.**
- Additionally, the Engineering department will be requesting proposals for professional engineering services for the design of the 800-900 blocks of Bronson Street.**
- Final design is underway for the rehabilitation of the south span of the Mill Street bridge, and construction bids will go out late spring for the project.**
- Sidewalks on the south side of Division Street East, between Starwood Apartments and Woodbury Street, will be finished in the spring, providing a safe pedestrian connection between the apartment complex and the various nearby City recreational facilities.**
- Bid requests will go out for the complete rehabilitation of the south span of Mill Street Bridge.**

End of Report and thanks again - Eric Wagenaar, City Manager