

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
July 20, 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
Joseph V. Frateschi, Harrison Beach Murtha, City Attorney

City staff present: Erica Anderson, James Mills, Thomas Compo, Charles Donoghue, Michael Kellogg, Brian MacCue, Geoffry Urda, Aaron Harvill, Cristin Lyon, Brandi Smith

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Resolution No. 1 - Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Project Grant Program for the Western Outfall Trunk Sewer Priority Basin Inflow and Infiltration Implementation Project
- Resolution No. 2 - Approving a One-Year Extension of the Hydroelectric Operations and Maintenance Agreement with Ampersand New York Operations Company, LLC
- Resolution No. 3 - Finding that Changing the Approved Zoning Classification of 647 Flower Street, Parcel Number 4-19-101.000 from Residential to Industrial Will Not Have a Significant Impact on the Environment
- Resolution No. 4 - Adopting a Policy on Employee Notification of Disciplinary Records Requests Under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)
- Resolution No. 5 - Authorizing the Sale of Surplus DPW Vehicles and Equipment
- Resolution No. 6 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2026-27 General Fund Budget and Approving Police Department Over-hire
- Resolution No. 7 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2026-27 General Fund Budget and Approving Fire Department Over-hire of Five Firefighter Positions
- Ordinance No. 1 - Designating the Zoning Classification of a VL-3 Waterman Drive, Parcel Number 9-43-114.000, as Industrial
- Ordinance No. 2 - Amending City Municipal Code § 310, Zoning
- Old Business Ordinance No. 1 - Changing the Approved Zoning Classification of 647 Flower Street, Parcel Number 4-19-101.000, from Residential to Industrial
- Staff Report - Refuse Update and Request to Modify Two (2) Routes
- Staff Report - NYSDOT Roadway Department Safety Action Plan (RwDSAP) Grant Awards
- Staff Report - CitiBus Carry-On Items Policy and Passenger Code of Conduct Enforcement
- Staff Report - Sales Tax Revenue – June 2026
- Staff Report - Sale of Surplus Hydro-electricity – June 2026
- Staff Report - New York State Pro-Housing Community Recertification

Meeting opened with a moment of silence.

Pledge of Allegiance was given.

The reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of July 6, 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

A letter was received from Kenneth Mix, Board of Directors Chair for Zoo NY, requesting Council reconsider the elimination of Public Benefit Service Agreement funding and continue with a strategic partnership.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Christopher Tehonica, 735 Mill Street, commended the Parks and Recreation staff for their assistance in hosting hockey tournaments and requested to meet with the City Manager to discuss ways the City can make money in youth sports.

Lenny Dormio, assistant coach at Power Play Sports, advocated for the organization and the opportunities to use City facilities for hockey.

Ryan Blevins, head coach for Power Play Sports, spoke in support of the group and requested every organization be given a fair opportunity.

Jordan (no last name), Carthage, informed Council that his son played youth hockey and requested the City provide ice time for Power Play Sports.

Amelia Erhardt, Cicero, spoke in support of Power Play Sports and listed the benefits the organization provides children, including her stepson. She asked Council for a fair, transparent process in determining ice time for all organizations.

Karen Dalin, Parish, general manager at Power Play Sports, advocated for fair allocation of ice time for her organization and described several of the group's hockey programs.

Jessica Griffin, (no address given), director at Power Play Sports, spoke of the benefits of youth hockey and asked for equal ice time for her group.

Jonathan Phillips, Mill Street, addressed Council regarding the Jefferson County Fair, as well as his concern with the rules on City buses, the use of ebikes and the enforcement of the new laws.

Jeff Mosher, Cape Vincent, informed Council that he is a lifelong hockey player, as well as coach for Power Play Sports, and he advocated for more time on the ice for youths.

Randy Comenole, coach for Power Play Sports, requested Council assist in getting fair distribution of ice time.

Dan Drake, owner of Watertown Wolves and General Manager for Watertown Rapids, commended the Parks and Recreation department and asserted his wish to keep the Wolves and Rapids in the Watertown community. He offered his support of Power Play Sports and promised to work with them to share ice time.

Paul Trimper, Dexter, thanked Council for listening to the various advocates for Power Play Sports and said he feels that progress is being made toward the fair allocation of ice time.

John Roberts, Vice President of Watertown Hockey Association, offered his appreciation for Council's consideration of the pending contract and indicated delays would cause financial concerns.

P R E S E N T A T I O N

Mayor Pierce interrupted the regular course of business to announce the winners of the "America 250: Voices of the Future" contest held to celebrate the 250th birthday of America. Local children were asked to reflect on what makes them proud to be American through art, writing and creativity. The winners were Olivia Nguyen (age 11) from Immaculate Heart Central, Carson Missert (age 11) from Immaculate Heart Central, Genavieve Bartlett (age 14) from Immaculate Heart Central, and Liam Flowers (age 17) from Watertown High School.

P U B L I C H E A R I N G

At 7:15 p.m. Mayor Pierce asked the City Clerk to read the notice of Public Hearing concerning Changing the Approved Zoning Classification of 647 Flower Street, Parcel Number 4-19-101.000, from Residential to Industrial

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

Scott Phelps, stated he owned 647 Flower Street and discussed the need to have more space on his property for equipment and materials used in his contracting company. He said there would be no change in the usage of the property.

Mayor Pierce declared the hearing closed at 7:17 p.m.

R E S O L U T I O N S

Resolution No. 1 - Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Project Grant Program for the Western Outfall Trunk Sewer Priority Basin Inflow and Infiltration Implementation Project

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 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is accepting grant applications through the Consolidated Funding Application process for the Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Grant Program, 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 Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) grant application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for the Western Outfall Trunk Sewer (WOTS) Priority Basin Inflow and Infiltration Implementation Project, 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.

Resolution No. 2 - Approving a One-Year Extension of the Hydroelectric Operations and Maintenance Agreement with Ampersand New York Operations Company, LLC

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown entered into a Hydroelectric Operations and Maintenance Agreement with Ampersand New York Operations Company, LLC, effective July 1, 2023, for a three-year term ending June 30, 2026, and

WHEREAS, the agreement provides the City with the option to extend the contract for an additional one (1), two (2), or three (3) years upon terms and fees agreed to by the parties, and

WHEREAS, City staff has negotiated a one-year extension of the agreement through June 30, 2027, to ensure the continued operation and maintenance of the City's hydroelectric facility while providing sufficient time to prepare and issue a competitive Request for Proposals for these services during the coming year, and

WHEREAS, the proposed one-year extension includes an increase in compensation to reflect higher labor and operating costs following three years of fixed contract pricing, and

WHEREAS, the City Manager has recommended approval of the proposed one-year extension agreement with Ampersand New York Operations Company, LLC.,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the one-year extension of the Hydroelectric Operations and Maintenance Agreement with Ampersand New York Operations Company, LLC for the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, a copy of which is attached and made part of this resolution, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager or their designee is hereby authorized and directed to execute said Agreement on behalf of the City of Watertown.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Osborne asked for clarity regarding the contract fee, stating it appears that Ampersand is looking for a retroactive reimbursement to compensate for their loss during the previous three-year contract. He noted that a 12% increase for a one-year extension is too high.

City Manager Wagenaar commented that it is not retroactive and they are looking for a commensurate increase because they did not have an annual increase during the last three-year contract. He pointed out that this company has provided this service for over 20 years and stressed the importance of continuity while the City decides how to move forward with the hydro service and relicensing. He added that if this was to be bid out, there might be a higher than 12% increase.

Council Member Osborne said that it appears the City is doing an extension of this contract because the time threshold for doing an RFP has surpassed.

Council Member Garrabrant also questioned the increase and wondered what their justification was for a 12% increase.

City Manager Wagenaar stated the cost of business for the company has gone up, as well as the market demand for these highly skilled services. He said the rate increase calculates to approximately \$35,000 - \$39,000 and he confirmed the current contract expired on 6/30/2026, so the City is operating without a contract.

Council Member Kimball compared the significant rate increase after years of a stable rate to the similar situation which occurred with property taxes. He said he sees the logic in the increase.

Council Member Shoen mentioned that the last contract stated one fee and not a price for each year. He noted that he does not understand the justification for this and possibly the 12% increase was due to mismanagement on their part. He suggested asking Ampersand for the cost of a three-year contract, noting there may be an economy of scale.

Motion was made by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen to table the foregoing resolution.

Motion was seconded by Council Member Douglas E. Osborne, Jr. and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Resolution No. 3 - Finding that Changing the Approved Zoning Classification of 647 Flower Street, Parcel Number 4-19-101.000 from Residential to Industrial Will Not Have a Significant Impact on the Environment

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York, has before it an Ordinance to change the approved zoning classification of 647 Flower Street, Parcel Number 4-19-101.000 from Residential to Industrial, and

WHEREAS the City Council must evaluate all proposed actions submitted for its consideration in light of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, and

WHEREAS the adoption of the proposed ordinance constitutes such an “Action,” and

WHEREAS the City Council has determined that the proposed Ordinance is an “Unlisted Action” as that term is defined by 6NYCRR Section 617.2 (al), and

WHEREAS there are no other involved agencies for SEQRA review as that term is defined in 6NYCRR Section 617.2 (t), and

WHEREAS to aid the City Council in its determination as to whether the proposed zone change will have a significant impact on the environment, Part 1 of a Short Environmental Assessment Form has been prepared by the applicant, a copy of which is attached and made part of this Resolution,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York, that:

1. Based upon its examination of the Short Environmental Assessment Form and comparing the proposed action with the criteria set forth in 6NYCRR Section 617.7, no significant impact is known and the adoption of the zone change will not have a significant impact on the environment.
2. The Mayor of the City of Watertown is authorized to execute Part 3 of the Environmental Assessment Form to the effect that the City Council is issuing a Negative Declaration under SEQRA.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council considered the Part 2 of the Short Environmental Assessment Form.

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

Resolution No. 4 - Adopting a Policy on Employee Notification of Disciplinary Records Requests Under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS, the New York State Legislature amended Public Officers Law §87(6), effective in 2024, requiring public employers to provide notice to current and former employees prior to the release of disciplinary records in response to a request made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown has prepared a Policy on Employee Notification of Disciplinary Records Requests Under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) to establish procedures for complying with this statutory requirement, including the timing, method, and content of employee notifications, as well as the responsibilities of the City's Records Access Officer, and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the proposed policy and finds that its adoption will ensure the City complies with applicable provisions of the Public Officers Law while providing a consistent and uniform process for handling such requests,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby adopts the Policy on Employee Notification of Disciplinary Records Requests Under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the policy is attached hereto and made part of this Resolution and shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

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

Resolution No. 5 - Authorizing the Sale of Surplus DPW Vehicles and Equipment

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown's Public Works Department has surplus vehicles and equipment, the description of which is attached and made part of this resolution, and

WHEREAS the surplus vehicles and equipment may have some value best determined by an online auction,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York, hereby authorizes the sale, by online auction, of the surplus vehicles and equipment as described in the attached listing, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that final acceptance of such bids shall constitute acceptance of the same by the City Manager or their designee.

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Council Member Shoen questioned the 1985 Ford L8000 vehicle on the list and wondered if DPW could do without replacing it or use another vehicle within the fleet for the purpose of transporting a water supply.

Superintendent of Public Works Brian MacCue explained the multiple ways this water truck is used and noted that a container in the back of a dump truck would not be able to support the volume of water necessary for the various projects for which it is used.

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

Resolution No. 6 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2026-27 General Fund Budget and Approving Police Department Over-hire

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS on May 21, 2026 the City Council passed a resolution adopting the Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27, of which \$61,715,140 was appropriated for the General Fund and,

WHEREAS the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget authorizes the City of Watertown Police Department for 71 sworn officers, and

WHEREAS the Police Training Academy will commence on October 5th, 2026 and,

WHEREAS the Police Department is expected to have 5 retirements occur during the upcoming Basic Training Academy and Field Training Program, with three expected retirements occurring at the end of November, one at the end of December, and another one at the end of March 2027,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves hiring five additional police cadets at this time, bringing the total Police Department personnel temporarily to five over the current budget of seventy-one, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief of Police is hereby authorized and directed to proceed with the requested over-hire to enter the October 2026 Police Training Academy, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby re-adopts the General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 and makes the following adjustments in the re-adopted General Fund Budget:

Appropriated Fund Balance

A.0000.0909	Fund Balance	<u>\$ 105,600</u>
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Expenditures:

A.3120.0130	Police - Wages	\$ 67,325
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A.3120.0820	Police - Retirement	\$ 21,475
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A.3120.0830	Police - Social Security	\$ 5,150
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A.3120.0850	Police - Health Insurance	<u>\$ 11,650</u>
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\$ 105,600

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Mayor Pierce explained that this recommendation from staff is due to six upcoming retirements within the department.

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

Resolution No. 7 - Readopting Fiscal Year 2026-27 General Fund Budget and Approving Fire Department Over-hire of Five Firefighter Positions

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS, on May 21, 2026, the City Council passed a resolution adopting the Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, of which \$61,715,140 was appropriated for the General Fund, and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown Fire Department is presently operating under its Fiscal Year 2026-2027 authorized staffing level of seventy-one personnel, and

WHEREAS, the Fire Department is anticipating five retirements between August and December 2026, and

WHEREAS, it requires approximately five months to recruit, hire, and train new firefighters before they are available for duty, and

WHEREAS, delaying the hiring of replacement personnel until after these anticipated retirements occur would result in prolonged vacancies, increased mandatory overtime, and additional operational strain on the department, and

WHEREAS, the City Manager is requesting authorization to over-hire five firefighter positions in anticipation of these pending retirements, resulting in a temporary staffing level of five personnel above the authorized staffing level, and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the accompanying staff report and finds that authorizing the proposed over-hire is expected to reduce overtime expenditures, maintain operational readiness, and provide the most cost-effective means of replacing anticipated retirements,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby approves the hiring of five additional firefighter recruits at this time so that they may enter the Fall 2026 Fire Department Training Academy which temporarily increases the Fire Department staffing to five positions above the authorized staffing level of seventy-one personnel, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby re-adopts the General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 and makes the following adjustments in the re-adopted General Fund Budget:

GENERAL FUND:

A.0000.0909 Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 132,475
	<u>\$ 132,475</u>
 A.3410.0130 Fire - Wages	 \$ 85,160
A.3410.0820 Fire - Retirement	\$ 27,165
A.3410.0830 Fire - Social Security	\$ 6,515
A.3410.0850 Fire - Health Insurance	<u>\$ 13,635</u>
Total	<u>\$ 132,475</u>

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, City Manager Wagenaar confirmed for Council Member Shoen that this takes into account the budget line-item changes for staff levels.

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

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 1 - Designating the Zoning Classification of a VL-3 Waterman Drive, Parcel Number 9-43-114.000, as Industrial

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

WHEREAS the City of Watertown has made an application by petition filed with the City Clerk, pursuant to Section 83 of the New York General City Law to designate the zoning classification of VL-3 Waterman Drive, Parcel Number 9-43-114.000 as Industrial, and

WHEREAS the Planning Commission of the City of Watertown considered the zoning designation request at its July 7, 2026, meeting and adopted a motion recommending that City Council approve the zoning designation, and

WHEREAS the zoning designation proposal was referred to the Jefferson County Planning Board for consideration at its July 28, 2026, meeting, pursuant to General Municipal Law Section 239-m, and

WHEREAS a public hearing was held on the proposed zoning designation on August 3, 2026, after due public notice, and

WHEREAS the City Council has made a declaration of Negative Findings of the impacts of the proposed zoning designation according to the requirements of SEQRA, and

WHEREAS the City Council deems it in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Watertown to approve the requested zoning designation,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED that the zoning classification of VL-3 Waterman Drive, Parcel Number 9-43-114.000 shall be designated as Industrial, and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the Zoning Map of the City of Watertown shall be amended to reflect the zone change, and

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

Seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen

Motion was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to schedule a Public Hearing on the foregoing ordinance for Monday, August 3, at 7:15 p.m. Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Ordinance No. 2 - Amending City Municipal Code § 310, Zoning

Introduced by Council Member Robert O. Kimball

BE IT ORDAINED that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby amends the City Municipal Code § 310, Zoning as follows, with **bold** text added and stuck through text eliminated:

§ 310-28. Sign Requirements

1. Each occupant shall be allowed two square feet of total sign surface area for each linear foot of occupant building frontage. In no case shall total signage exceed the maximum sign surface area listed in the following table:

District	Maximum Sign Surface Area Per Sign Occupant (square feet)
Residential	4
NMU	60
UMU	50
Downtown	40
Commercial	200
Planned Campus	200
Industrial	200
Parks and Open Space	20 200
Waterfront Overlay	50

And,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that Chapter § 310-37 (E) is deleted in its entirety, with **bold** text added and stuck through text eliminated:

~~E. For new construction, two EV charging ports shall be installed for every 30 parking spaces constructed.~~

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 was made by Council Member Robert O. Kimball to schedule a Public Hearing on the foregoing ordinance for Monday, August 3, at 7:15 p.m. Motion was seconded by Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

OLD BUSINESS

The Ordinance Changing the Approved Zoning Classification of 647 Flower Street, Parcel Number 4-19-101.000, from Residential to Industrial. (Introduced on July 6, 2026; public hearing held this evening; appears in its entirety in the 2026 Minutes Book on page 7 of the 7/6/2026 minutes).

Council Member Shoen offered his support for this zone change, noting that Flower Street can accept industrial zoning since it is across the street from the airbrake. He mentioned that this street was zoned

commercial before the City-wide rezoning process and he experienced the same issue with a building that he owns.

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

STAFF REPORTS

Refuse Update and Request to Modify Two (2) Routes

A report was available for Council to review stating that the refuse route changes implemented on December 1, 2025 have worked well. However, collection volumes have shifted, leaving Tuesday's refuse route significantly heavier than Wednesday's route. DPW staff recommend moving the area between State Street and Academy Street from Tuesday collection to Wednesday, which would affect fewer than 150 customers. This change will become effective in October 2026 and will better balance material volume, weight, and daily completion time. Any affected residents will receive advance notice through direct mail and door hangers.

Mayor Pierce commented that she would support this recommendation to be more efficient and stressed the importance of communicating the change to the affected residents.

Council Member Kimball also expressed support and wondered if the residents should be called to be notified of the change.

Council Member Garrabrant said he was fine with the route change and wondered if one of his recently proposed initiatives to improve the refuse system could be rolled out at the same time as this route change.

Council Member Shoen mentioned that he would be affected by this route changed and he stated that he had noticed refuse staff working later on the Tuesday route. He agreed that communication is important and offered suggestions on how to notify the residents.

City Manager Wagenaar mentioned that Council Member Garrabrant's proposed initiatives were scheduled to be discussed during the August work session.

NYSDOT Roadway Department Safety Action Plan (RwDSAP) Grant Awards

Mayor Pierce summarized this report stating the City of Watertown has received two NYSDOT RwDSAP grants to support roadway safety improvements. The awards fund most project costs and will allow the City to complete the Moulton Avenue guardrail replacement and upgrade pavement striping in Public Square with longer-lasting epoxy. The projects total about \$530,000 in state funding, with small local shares that may partly be reimbursable through CHIPS. Design work is planned for 2027, and construction is anticipated in 2030.

CitiBus Carry-On Items Policy and Passenger Code of Conduct Enforcement

Mayor Pierce reviewed the report stating CitiBus will begin consistent enforcement of its Carry-On Items Policy and Passenger Code of Conduct beginning July 13, 2026, following a two-week public education effort. The policies are longstanding but were not consistently enforced during COVID. This decision responds to safety concerns such as blocked aisles, emergency exits, and mobility device areas.

Enforcement will ensure passengers only bring items that can be safely accommodated and maintain control of their belongings, while the Code of Conduct reinforces expectations for safe, respectful behavior.

Sales Tax Revenue – June 2026

A report was available for Council to review.

Sale of Surplus Hydro-electricity – June 2026

A report was available for Council to review.

New York State Pro-Housing Community Recertification

A report was available for Council to review stating the New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) notified the City that it successfully maintained its status as a Pro-Housing Community for 2026. A Pro-Housing certification is a required prerequisite for several state grant programs and allows the City to apply for grants such as NY Forward, the Regional Council Capital Fund, New York Main Street, and the Public Transportation Modernization Enhancement Program. The City originally applied and attained the Pro-Housing certification in 2024, when it pledged to streamline housing permitting, adopt policies that promote Fair Housing, consider housing needs when making decisions, increase development capacity for residential uses and enact policies that encourage a broad range of housing developments.

NEW BUSINESS

Privilege of the Floor Response - Power Play Sports

Council Member Garrabrant asked if ice time at the arena had been locked in for this season.

City Manager Wagenaar noted that it was not and that they are still having discussions with Power Play Sports. He indicated that further discussion of the distribution of ice time could be a topic for a future work session.

Council Member Garrabrant stated that all of these organizations benefit the community and he wanted a fair process for distributing ice time to eliminate the appearance of the City playing favorites.

Work Session Topics

Council Member Garrabrant requested that the discussion of a citywide assessment reevaluation be a topic for an upcoming work session. He stated that he knows this would be time-consuming and expensive, but he thinks it is needed. He also asked if Council could receive an update from the hydro consultant and discuss policy initiatives that have been recently proposed by Council Members.

Retirement of Police Chief and Promotion of Police Captain

During their individual New Business portions, several members of Council congratulated Police Chief Donoghue on his upcoming retirement and Police Captain Lyon on the promotion to Police Chief.

Opening Ceremony of the Jefferson County Fair

Council Member Kimball mentioned that he participated in the opening ceremony of the Jefferson County Fair and was one of the honored guests on stage. He stated that it is important for the City to support the fair as the county seat.

Library

Council Member Kimball mentioned that he is the Council Liaison to the Library and reported that there are concerns over the roof leaking, loading dock repairs and the marble fence.

City Manager Wagenaar reported that the RFP for the loading dock is going out next week and he will look into the other issues.

JB Wise Demo

Council Member Kimball asked for the final cost of the JB Wise demolition.

Block Party

Council Member Kimball announced the next block party will be on July 31 at 5:00 p.m.

Request for Zoo Funding

Council Member Kimball mentioned the letter from Kenneth Mix requesting Council reconsider funding support for ZooNY. He noted the zoo has done a lot of work to correct their financial situation and has asked the City for assistance in fixing the deficiencies within a city-owned building. He wondered if there is an opportunity to establish a capital fundraising on their behalf and work out some sort of matching funds from the City to share the cost to fix the building.

eBike Law

Council Member Osborne said he was pleased to see that people are following the new ebike laws and wearing helmets.

Privilege of the Floor Response - Power Play Sports (continued)

Council Member Osborne said he shares Council Member Garrabrant's sentiments, and he hopes the City can make the process fairer.

Flynn Pool

Council Member Osborne said he has received a lot of feedback about the Flynn pool not being opened every day and he requested a breakdown of the cost to have this pool opened for the rest of the season.

There was discussion of the daily cost of operating this pool and City Manager Wagenaar said he would need to verify whether staffing levels could accommodate this, especially in mid-August when college students leave and high school sports start.

Privilege of the Floor Response – Bus and eBikes Rules

Council Member Osborne noted that the City is starting to implement and enforce restrictive policies regarding the bus system and ebikes because, unfortunately, people do not know how to behave. He said people need to have consideration and respect for other people.

Deficiencies Identified With the Process Leading to Demolition of JB Wise Building

Council Member Osborne said that he has identified deficiencies with this process and he has drafted two policies, which are similar to policies implemented in other municipalities. He explained that he sent the draft policies to Council and staff for review and noted that they provide a workable outline for moving forward. He said he would like to discuss this further in a work session.

Parking Restrictions

Council Member Shoen mentioned that an individual contacted Council about parking restrictions in front of commercial and industrial zoned parcels. He said the restriction makes sense in residential zones but it could be less restrictive in commercial and industrial zones.

Privilege of the Floor Response - Power Play Sports (continued)

Council Member Shoen said he appreciates everyone who spoke about this topic and noted the City is going to do whatever it can to fairly distribute the ice time at the arena.

Burlington Street

Council Member Shoen indicated that Burlington Street construction is completed and he recently drove down it, noting the project was done well.

143 Bishop Street

Council Member Shoen stated that he has received complaints about this property not being kept up for years. He said the City needs to push property owners to repair the property or encourage them to relinquish it.

400 Block of Flower Avenue

Council Member Shoen mentioned that the infrastructure on this street is fairly new, so he thinks the road should be grinded, basins reset and paved. He suggested using CHIPs funds for this.

Corner of Temple Street and Wight Drive

Council Member Shoen said a resident questioned this corner not being accessible a year ago, but it still has not been done. He said it is the northeast corner of the intersection, and he would like CHIPs funds used to fix it.

Corner of Sherman Street and Clinton Street Property

Mayor Pierce said she is still getting complaints about the condition of the former Medical Arts Property owned by Mr. Lundy. She commented that the City should be able to get him to comply and clean it up.

Privilege of the Floor Response - Power Play Sports (continued)

Mayor Pierce said she understands everyone's concerns and the City will continue to work towards making it fair to all the groups.

Work Session Topics (continued)

Mayor Pierce indicated that she has been keeping a running list of topics that Council Members would like to discuss and she will present them to the City Manager.

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

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

Council moved into Executive Session at 8:26 p.m.

Council reconvened at 8:53 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT

At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 8:53 p.m. by motion of Council Member Benjamin P. Shoen, seconded by Council Member Robert O. Kimball and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Ann M. Saunders
City Clerk