

## Blue Ribbon Committee Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2024

### 1. Roll Call

The meeting began at 6:30 PM. Municipal Policy Analyst Doug Newton called the roll. Present were Jack Bartley, Christine Cole, Susan Falkoff, Sarah Baker, Jimmy Mello, Marcy Murningham, and Linda Scott. Also present were residents Bruce Coltin and Elodia Thomas as well as Councilor Vinnie Piccirilli.

### 2. Discussion

#### a. Presentation from Municipal Policy Analyst

Doug Newton began with a brief presentation. He expressed that he has done research at the direction of Committee members into council salaries based on the source of property tax revenue in terms of residential versus commercial. He also noted that he is working to gather information on other benefits in addition to salary received by City Councilors and that other Committee members have been doing independent research. He noted that documents not attached to the agenda will be attached as an addendum to the meeting minutes. Doug conveyed that he examined every city and town in Massachusetts with a council form of government and obtained data on the percentage of their property tax revenue derived from residential and open space properties as compared to commercial and industrial properties. He also examined manager salaries from other cities and towns which use the Council-Manager form of government. He also obtained data on the history of Watertown's Council salaries from Councilor Piccirilli and shared it with the Committee. He also expressed that he has informed the Council of the Committee's interest in interviewing the current members and reached out to the Massachusetts Municipal Association to see if they are aware of a subject matter expert who would like to speak to the Committee.

#### b. Committee Discussion on Council Salary and Benefits

The Committee began by considering how it will interview the current slate of City Councilors. There was agreement that it would be best if the Committee had a pre-set slate of questions to keep the process simple and consistent. Linda Scott introduced some of the research which she has done leading up to the meeting. This consisted of a calculation of the amount of time spent by City Councilors in formal meetings. She concluded that it amounts to roughly five hours per month based on 2023 in full Council meetings. However, she noted that time spent in Committee meetings will vary significantly based on Committee. She further pointed out that the work of Committees can vary year by year based on the issues at hand. Sarah Baker explained her analysis of council salaries in communities sorted by property values and share of property tax based on residential versus commercial sources. She excluded communities which were 10 percent higher or lower than the average. She concluded that each of these communities have higher Council salaries than Watertown and that Watertown would fit better into a range of \$19,000-28,000. Jimmy Mello proposed that raises given to City Councilors should be linked to raises given to unionized city employees.

He proposed that the salary should be \$15,000 for Councilors and \$10,000 for the School Committee. There was additional discussion on the benefits received by City Councilors as the Committee awaits information from the Auditor. Jimmy Mello expressed that Council members may now need to serve for 25 or 30 years to qualify for benefits. Susan Falkoff suggested that in the Committee's report there should be a statement of expectations for City Councilors and conveyed that there are some Councilors who treat it as a 24/7 endeavor while others do not devote much time at all. A consensus emerged in the Committee that they are indeed considering an increase to Councilor salaries. Jack Bartley proposed not calling this a salary "increase" but rather an "adjustment." Susan Falkoff suggested that perhaps with an increase in salary should come an increase in expectations.

The Committee members began proposing questions to ask City Councilors in a future meeting. The following questions were raised:

- What can the Committee do to make a Councilor's job easier?
- Raise a specific number and ask the Councilors to respond.
- How many hours per week, year, or month would you say you spend on Council duties?
- What should be the future process for determining salary?
- Should future increases be linked to something such as CPI or should Councilors be made to vote on any and all future increases?
- What do you perceive adds complexity to your job? Is it residential versus commercial property tax, population size, budget size?
- What do you wish we had asked, or is there anything else you would like to share?
- Is there another job that you would view as comparable to what your job is as a Councilor?
- What skills does someone need to do the job of a Councilor?
- How has your job changed as time has passed?

Ultimately, the Committee decided to consider the following questions at a future meeting:

1. How many hours per week or month would you say that you spend as a city councilor? If possible, please clarify time spent in Council or Committee meetings as opposed to less formal constituent meetings.
2. What do you believe should be the future process for determining the salary of City Councilors?
3. What do you perceive as adding complexity to the job of a City Councilor? The Committee has discussed a residential vs. commercial tax base, population size, and budget size. Are we missing anything?
4. Is there another job that you view as comparable to the job of a City Councilor in Watertown?
5. What skills does someone need in order to do the job of a City Councilor?
6. How has your job changed over the years?

7. Is there anything else you would like to say or wish we had asked?

The Committee decided to have a brief meeting in the near future for the sole purposes of finalizing the list of questions to ask. There was additional discussion as to receiving public input. Several members expressed interest in a flash vote or a survey to the public. There was also discussion of having a meeting toward the end of the process primarily devoted to receiving public input. Linda Scott expressed that residents may feel that Council pay is too exorbitant while Marcy Murningham expressed that many members of the public do not know how little Councilors are paid. Ultimately, the idea of a survey or flash vote was tabled while the importance of public input was emphasized. The Committee then considered potential subject matter experts to contact. Susan Falkoff suggested the Collins Center or former Councilor Ken Woodland.

3. Public Comment

Resident Elodia Thomas asked Sarah Baker to re-state an earlier point she had made as she had some trouble hearing. She also suggested an expert that the Committee may be interested in contacting. She further questioned if there is a need to meet with the Councilors and expressed concern that union contracts can take so long to settle that it may not make sense to link them to Council salaries. She added that she reviewed council salaries under the following categories: councilor payment, form of government, population, budget, amount of councilor support, size in square miles, and benefits. She also asked if Councilors need stipends for some of their work. She concluded by thanking the Committee.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Municipality	Assessed Value Residential	Assessed Value Open Space	Assessed Value Commercial	Assessed Value Industrial
Waltham	11,237,452,744	0	4,497,140,638	830,585,568
Marlborough	5,642,577,064	0	1,214,003,964	677,928,334
Everett	5,471,993,242	0	766,921,381	715,209,600
Woburn	7,606,203,283	0	1,148,119,001	1,100,811,189
Chelsea	3,886,759,490	0	885,143,510	255,408,600
<b>Watertown</b>	<b>8,100,534,759</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,099,728,370</b>	<b>1,464,436,550</b>
Springfield	8,675,183,438	0	1,443,635,062	294,050,400
Taunton	6,398,801,890	0	1,102,150,588	383,023,525
Chicopee	4,075,733,387	0	460,288,935	267,654,700
Braintree	7,164,371,965	0	1,402,084,909	289,157,600
Franklin	5,876,670,670	0	471,504,398	657,052,300
Leominster	4,417,580,914	423,200	511,998,824	286,933,415
Fall River	7,044,931,749	0	776,602,834	444,473,600
New Bedford	7,063,590,736	0	757,454,232	373,341,650
Lawrence	5,664,430,302	0	514,125,079	336,377,951
Peabody	8,518,805,217	0	1,221,095,705	356,421,100
Salem	6,558,258,053	0	641,590,725	375,963,052

Assessed Value Pers Prop	Total Assessed Value	R/O % of Total Value	CIP % of Total Value
645,542,070	17,210,721,020	65.29	34.71
318,891,520	7,853,400,882	71.85	28.15
565,598,700	7,519,722,923	72.77	27.23
591,953,180	10,447,086,653	72.81	27.19
259,910,360	5,287,221,960	73.51	26.49
286,186,179	10,950,885,858	73.97	26.03
861,859,550	11,274,728,450	76.94	23.06
229,702,870	8,113,678,873	78.86	21.14
319,134,170	5,122,811,192	79.56	20.44
132,847,700	8,988,462,174	79.71	20.29
230,354,400	7,235,581,768	81.22	18.78
186,741,300	5,403,677,653	81.76	18.24
343,114,610	8,609,122,793	81.83	18.17
406,097,440	8,600,484,058	82.13	17.87
349,910,790	6,864,844,122	82.51	17.49
157,683,720	10,254,005,742	83.08	16.92
265,961,700	7,841,773,530	83.63	16.37

Form of Government	Council Salary	Rate, excluding x4 or x1/4 of 9000	0.915851
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$22,554	0.3775822	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$11,205	0.5068246	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$25,000	1.2208643	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$10,000	0.3520032	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$28,000	1.9993395	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$8,900	0.3122422	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$28,000	1.0771116	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$16,631	0.9698072	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$14,000	1.3370544	
MAYOR	\$5,000	0.2741093	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$0		x
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$12,308	1.2486893	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$16,000	1.022893	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$22,298	1.4508489	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN			x
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$11,339	0.6534691	
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$12,000	0.9349322	

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Assessed Value Residential</b>	<b>Assessed Value Open Space</b>	<b>Assessed Value Commercial</b>	<b>Assessed Value Industrial</b>
Arlington	12,578,665,911	0	511,501,086	25,403,300
Braintree	7,164,371,965	0	1,402,084,909	289,157,600
Brookline	26,623,129,744	0	2,441,019,555	21,092,200
Burlington	5,367,998,198	0	2,782,585,886	213,606,314
Dedham	5,565,727,722	0	880,547,898	50,562,880
Medford	12,518,031,403	0	1,047,977,797	141,839,500
Natick	8,715,485,212	0	1,671,890,188	53,089,100
Needham	10,715,862,649	0	1,026,136,613	125,420,724
Newton	33,729,173,360	0	2,653,977,440	215,141,400
Norwood	5,270,525,571	0	1,137,996,816	470,833,275
Saugus	5,207,426,438	0	755,608,438	177,162,024
Somerville	18,588,162,698	0	2,830,367,975	433,342,800
Wakefield	6,034,097,729	0	484,367,843	90,219,500
Waltham	11,237,452,744	0	4,497,140,638	830,585,568
<b>Watertown</b>	<b>8,100,534,759</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,099,728,370</b>	<b>1,464,436,550</b>
Woburn	7,606,203,283	0	1,148,119,001	1,100,811,189

<b>Assessed Value Pers Prop</b>	<b>Total Assessed Value</b>	<b>R/O % of Total Value</b>	<b>CIP % of Total Value</b>
191,285,110	13,306,855,407	94.53	5.47
132,847,700	8,988,462,174	79.71	20.29
319,160,879	29,404,402,378	90.54	9.46
217,267,970	8,581,458,368	62.55	37.45
208,200,700	6,705,039,200	83.01	16.99
240,804,280	13,948,652,980	89.74	10.26
250,147,510	10,690,612,010	81.52	18.48
380,448,340	12,247,868,326	87.49	12.51
504,991,200	37,103,283,400	90.91	9.09
135,157,970	7,014,513,632	75.14	24.86
149,014,150	6,289,211,050	82.80	17.20
450,822,700	22,302,696,173	83.34	16.66
143,596,280	6,752,281,352	89.36	10.64
645,542,070	17,210,721,020	65.29	34.71
<b>286,186,179</b>	<b>10,950,885,858</b>	<b>73.97</b>	<b>26.03</b>
591,953,180	10,447,086,653	72.81	27.19

Form of Government	Council Salary	9.159E-06
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		6,669
MAYOR	\$10,000	16,706
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		25,472
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		29,431
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		10,434
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$14,500	13,102
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		18,089
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		14,031
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$12,000	30,902
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		15,972
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING		9,908
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$5,000	34,020
OPEN TOWN MEETING		6,577
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$10,200	54,706
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$9,000	26,105
COUNCIL AND ALDERMAN	\$2,952	26,018



# CITY OF WATERTOWN

## Auditor

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472-4410

Megan E. Langan  
City Auditor

Telephone: (617) 972-6460  
Facsimile: (617) 972-6563

### **OPEN ENROLLMENT DENTAL, VISION, AFLAC & BOSTON MUTUAL**

April 3, 2024

Dear City and School Employee:

This letter is to notify all eligible City employees of the annual open enrollment for **dental, vision, and life insurance**. The benefit fair for DENTAL, VISION, AND LIFE INSURANCE ONLY will be held April 23<sup>rd</sup> 12:00-4:00. Location will be City Hall, Council Chambers, Second Floor.

**The open enrollment period will be from April 3rd- May 1st, 2024.**

**Please note: GIC Health Insurance Open Enrollment will be April 3rd-May 1st, 2024. For more GIC information please log on to MYGICLINK to view your health options.**

#### **Altus Dental**

DMS Network Plan  
Altus Dental Plan

#### **Paul McCaffrey or David Grondin**

Boston Mutual Life Insurance  
AFLAC

#### **Altus Vision**

**Please contact Paul at 508-735-1242**

**Dave Grondin at 781-710-6316**

**paul@accessenroll.com**

**Dave Grondin**

**david@accessenroll.com**

#### **Watertown Municipal Credit Union**

**Luisa Figueiredo-617-924-0160**

**The coverage is effective July 1, 2024**

**Employees are responsible for submitting their dental and vision application directly to the Auditor's Office no later than May 1st, 2024.**

As a reminder, these benefits are only available during the annual benefits open enrollment or within thirty (30) days of date of hire/eligibility.

Sincerely,

Megan E. Langan  
Auditor



# CITY OF WATERTOWN

## Auditor

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472-4410

Megan E. Langan  
City Auditor

Telephone: (617) 972-6460  
Facsimile: (617) 972-6563

To: All Eligible Town/School Employees  
From: Megan E. Langan  
Date: April 3, 2024  
Subject: Dental, Vision and Life Insurance Rate

The Following is the Fiscal Year 2025 rates for Dental, Vision and Life Insurance.

DMS DENTAL				
	EMPLOYEE'S COST 100%			
DMS Network	26 Week	20 WEEK	MONTHLY	Yearly
EMPLOYEE (2800 & 2815)	\$11.12	\$14.46	\$24.10	\$289.20
EMPLOYEE PLUS ONE (2805 & 2820)	\$21.94	\$28.52	\$47.54	\$570.48
FULL FAMILY (2810 & 2825)	\$32.10	\$41.74	\$69.56	\$834.72
<b>* ALL DENTAL DEDUCTED 1 MONTH IN ADVANCE</b>				
Altus Dental				
EMPLOYEE ( )	\$20.66	\$26.86	\$44.76	\$537.12
EMPLOYEE PLUS ONE ( )	\$41.33	\$53.73	\$89.55	\$1,074.60
FULL FAMILY ( )	\$66.13	\$85.97	\$143.28	\$1,719.36
<b>* ALL VISION DEDUCTED 1 MONTH IN ADVANCE</b>				
Altus Vision				
EMPLOYEE ( )	\$2.33	\$3.03	\$5.05	\$60.60
EMPLOYEE PLUS ONE ( )	\$4.66	\$6.06	\$10.10	\$121.20
FULL FAMILY ( )	\$9.14	\$11.89	\$19.81	\$237.72

BOSTON MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE		100%	\$20.70
BASIC GROUP-50%			
	BI-WEEKLY (2880)	20 WEEK	MONTHLY YEARLY
	\$4.78	\$6.21	\$10.35 \$124.20
<b>VOLUNTARY AND OPTIONAL LIFE</b>		<b>MUST ALREADY HAVE BASIC LIFE</b>	
<b>EMPLOYEE PAYS 100% OF PREMIUM</b>			

If you have any further questions, please contact Michelle Persico (617) 972-6460 or [mperisco@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:mperisco@watertown-ma.gov)

**The deadline to sign up for dental and vision coverage is May 1st, 2024, with an effective date of coverage: July 1, 2024.**

## CITY OF WATERTOWN-ACTIVES

Group Number: 2491-0001

Altus Dental Plus - Includes Connection Dental and DenteMax Networks

Exams, cleanings, bitewing x-rays, single x-rays, fluorides, sealants and full mouth/Panorex x-rays do not count against your annual maximum.

### Annual Maximum

\$2,250

### Maximum Lifetime Cap

Unlimited

### Deductible

Individual \$50

Family \$150

### Dependent Coverage

Dependent children are covered under these benefits up until the end of the month that they turn 26.

P Pre-treatment Estimate Recommended

A Prior Authorization Required

See back page for additional information >

### Plan pays 100%; Member Coinsurance 0%

- Oral exam twice per calendar year
- Cleaning three per calendar year
- Fluoride treatment for children under age 19 or Fluoride varnish for all covered members, for a total of two treatments per calendar year.
- Bitewing x-rays one set per calendar year
- Complete x-ray series or panoramic film once every 36 months.
- Single x-rays as required
- Sealants for children under age 16, once every 36 months on unrestored permanent molars
- Space maintainers unilateral space maintainers once per lifetime for lost deciduous (baby) teeth. Bilateral space maintainers once every 60 months for lost deciduous (baby) teeth

### Plan pays 80%; Member Coinsurance 20%- (Deductible Applies)

- Palliative treatment (minor procedures necessary to relieve acute pain) twice per calendar year
- Amalgam (silver) fillings and composite (white) fillings
- Repairs to existing partial or complete dentures once per calendar year
- Recementing crowns, onlays or bridges once every 60 months
- Rebasement or relining of partial or complete dentures once every 60 months

### Plan pays 50%; Member Coinsurance 50%- (Deductible Applies)

- Extractions and other routine oral surgery when not covered by a patient's medical plan
- General anesthesia or intravenous (I.V.) sedation for certain complex surgical procedures
- Root canal therapy on permanent teeth one procedure per tooth per lifetime.
- P • Crowns over natural teeth, build ups, posts and cores replacement limited to once every 60 months
- P • Bridges and crowns over implants replacement limited to once every 60 months
- P • Partial and complete dentures replacement limited to once every 60 months
- P • Root planing and scaling once per quadrant every 24 months
- P • Osseous (bone) surgery once per quadrant every 24 months (bone grafts are not covered)
- P • Gingivectomies once per site every 24 months
- P • Soft tissue grafts once per site every 60 months
- P • Crown lengthening once per site every 60 months
- P • Surgical placement of endosteal implant and abutment replacement limited to once every 60 months
  - Periodontal maintenance following active therapy two per year
  - Teeth whitening once per arch every 60 months
  - Athletic mouth guards for dependent children under age 19, once every 24 months.

Monthly Rates Effective: 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025

Individual: \$44.76

Two Person: \$89.55

Family: \$143.28

This is a summary of benefits. The information shown here is not a guarantee of payment. Refer to the Certificate of Coverage for the full plan terms. The Certificate includes any limitations or exclusions not seen here. For a complete listing of frequencies and limitations go to [www.altusdental.com/el](http://www.altusdental.com/el). To be covered, services must be dentally necessary and appropriate as per our review guidelines.

*Note: This plan does not include a missing tooth clause. In addition, if covered, crowns, bridges, partials and complete dentures are paid when the permanent structure is inserted (seated) by the dentist. Member coverage must be active on the date that the permanent structure is inserted and payment is based on benefits available on that day — for example, if the member's annual maximum has been paid prior to the insertion of the permanent structure, the service will not be paid.*

\* Time limits on services (e.g. 6, 12, 24, 36, or 60 months) are figured to the exact day. Services are then covered the following day. For example, when a service is covered once every 12 months, if the service was done on July 1, it will not be covered again until the following year on July 2 or after.

### **Out-of-Network Coverage**

You have the freedom to choose any dentist, but it is important to know that your out-of-pocket costs may be higher when you visit a dentist who does not participate in our network. Non-participating dentists have not agreed to accept the Altus Dental allowance as payment in full, so services from an out-of-network dentist may cost you more. You may also have to pay the dentist at the time of service and file a claim yourself. To be eligible, all claims must be filed within one year of the date of service. To find a participating dentist near you, use our Find A Dentist tool at [www.altusdental.com](http://www.altusdental.com).

### **How to Find a Dentist**

Choose from Altus Dental's extensive network of dentists, you're sure to find one that's right for you. Visit [www.altusdental.com](http://www.altusdental.com) to use our online Find A Dentist tool. You can see if your current dentist participates with us or look for a new dentist by searching by name, location or specialty. Enter your address or other criteria important to you (extended hours, languages spoken, etc.), and our tool will return a list of dentists that meet your needs – as well as maps and driving directions.

### **Beyond Benefits**

When you visit us at [www.altusdental.com](http://www.altusdental.com), you can access a wealth of important dental health information and manage your plan by:

- Checking your benefits and claims
- Reviewing your deductibles and maximums
- Using our Find A dentist tool to find a dentist in your area

### **Notice of Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Policy**

Altus Dental does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Español (Spanish): ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-877-223-0588.

Português (Portuguese): ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para 1-877-223-0588.

## Benefits Summary: Altus Vision 150

Benefit	Description	Copay
<b>In-Network Coverage with VSP Choice Network: 45,000 Preferred Providers   117,000 Access Points</b>		
<b>WELLVISION EXAM®</b>		
<b>Exams</b> 1 exam every 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive eye exam to ensure overall visual wellness</li> </ul>	\$10
<b>PRESCRIPTION GLASSES</b>		
<b>Frames</b> 1 pair every 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$150 allowance for wide selection of frames</li> <li>Extra \$20 allowance for featured frames<sup>1</sup></li> <li>20% savings on amount over allowance</li> <li>\$80 Walmart/Sam's Club or Costco® Optical frame allowance<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Frame allowance backed by a wholesale guarantee</li> </ul>	\$25
<b>Lenses</b> 1 pair every 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single vision, lined bifocal and lined trifocal lenses</li> <li>Impact-resistant lenses for children</li> </ul>	
<b>Lens Enhancements</b> Every 12 months	Standard Progressive Lenses	\$0
	Premium Progressive Lenses	\$95 - \$105
	Custom Progressive Lenses	\$150 - \$175
	Average savings of 30% on other lens enhancements, including scratch-resistant or anti-glare coating, tints, UV protection and more	
<b>CONTACT LENSES (instead of glasses)</b>		
<b>Contacts</b> Every 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact lens fitting and evaluation</li> <li>\$150 allowance for contacts (copay does not apply)</li> </ul>	Up to \$60
<b>Value-added Programs and Extra Savings</b>		
<b>Additional Glasses and Sunglasses</b>	20% savings on additional prescription glasses and/or nonprescription sunglasses from any VSP provider within 12 months of last WellVision Exam	
<b>Laser Vision Correction</b>	Average of 15% off regular price; discounts available at contracted facilities	
<b>VSP Diabetic Eyecare Plus Program<sup>SM</sup></b>	Members with diabetes receive full retinal screening at no cost. Members with diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD) receive additional exams and services with \$20 copay. Limitations and coordination with medical coverage may apply	
<b>TruHearing<sup>®3</sup></b>	Save up to 60% on the latest brand-name hearing aids. Visit <a href="http://TruHearing.com/VSP">TruHearing.com/VSP</a> or call 877.396.7194 for more information	
<b>Monthly Rates</b>		
<b>Employee Only</b>	<b>Employee Plus One</b>	<b>Family</b>
\$5.05	\$10.10	\$19.81

See reverse side for more information.

### Your Coverage with Out-of-Network Providers:

Exam	Up to \$55	Lined Bifocal Lenses	Up to \$50	Progressive Lenses	Up to \$50
Frame	Up to \$70-\$75	Lined Trifocal Lenses	Up to \$65	Elective Contact Lenses	Up to \$105-\$140
Single Vision Lenses	Up to \$30	Lenticular Lenses	Up to \$100	Necessary Contact Lenses	Up to \$210

### Items Not Covered

The following items are excluded under this plan: plano lenses (refractive correction of less than  $\pm .50$  diopter); two pairs of glasses instead of bifocals; replacement of lenses, frames, or contacts; medical or surgical treatment; orthoptics, vision training or supplemental testing; local, state and/or federal taxes, except where VSP is required by law to pay.

Items not covered under contact lens coverage: insurance policies or service agreements; artistically painted or non-prescription lenses; re-fitting of contact lenses after the initial (90-day) fitting period; additional office visits for contact lens pathology; contact lens modification, polishing or cleaning.

### Dependent Coverage

Dependent children are covered up until the end of the month they turn age 26.

### Notice of Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Policy

Altus Dental does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Español (Spanish): ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística.

Llame al 1-877-223-0588.

Português (Portuguese): ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis.

Ligue para 1-877-223-0588.

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Coverage with a retail chain may be different or not apply. Log in to [vsp.com](http://vsp.com) to check your benefits for eligibility and to confirm in-network locations based on your plan type. VSP guarantees coverage from VSP network providers only. Coverage information is subject to change. In the event of a conflict between this information and your organization's contract with VSP, the terms of the contract will prevail. Based on applicable laws, benefits may vary by location. In the state of Washington, VSP Vision Care, Inc., is the legal name of the corporation through which VSP does business.

1 Extra \$20 allowance on featured frame brands, such as bebe, Calvin Klein, Flexon®, Lacoste, Nike, Nine West and more. Only available to VSP members with applicable plan benefits. Frame brands and promotions are subject to change. Savings based on doctor's retail price and vary by plan and purchase selection; average savings determined after benefits are applied. Ask your VSP network doctor for more details. Promotions do not apply at Walmart or Costco Optical.

2 Allowance may differ at Walmart, Sam's Club and Costco® Optical, however it is of equivalent value. The allowance of \$70 is equivalent to \$130 frame allowance at VSP doctor locations and participating retail chains.

3 VSP is providing information to its members, but does not offer or provide any discount hearing program. The relationship between VSP and TruHearing is that of independent contractors. VSP makes no endorsement, representations, or warranties regarding any products or services offered by TruHearing, a third-party vendor. The vendor is solely responsible for the products or services offered by them. If you have any questions regarding the services offered here, you should contact the vendor directly.

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ACCESSENROLL™

## City of Watertown: 2024 Employee Benefits Highlights

Supplemental benefits fill the gaps where health insurance leaves off, and unlike traditional health insurance, we pay you, not the doctor or hospital. You control the cash benefits and spend them as you like to meet any financial challenges that an accident or illness could have to your standard of living.

- Choose from a menu of benefits offered to you at group rates. Rates **NEVER increase!**
- Individual, Husband/Wife, One Parent Family and Two Parent Family coverage is available.
- All plans are 100% portable at the same low rates - and guaranteed renewable.
- No coordination of benefits with other plans, which means that you get paid the full benefit, no matter what other coverage you may have.

### Short Term Disability Plan

Disability insurance helps replace lost income in the event you become sick or injured and can't work

- \$500-\$6,000/month benefit
- Guarantee Issue up to \$4,000/month
- 3, 6, 12, 18 or 24 months of coverage available
- Covers off-the-job, on-job rider, illnesses and maternity

### Group Accident

- Pays cash directly to you in the event of any type of accident. Great plan for active individuals and families.
- \$200 for Initial ER Visit
- \$2,000 – 1<sup>st</sup> night hospital benefit, then \$500/day
- \$125 - \$100,000 lump sum injury benefit
- Physical therapy benefit
- \$150/day for rehabilitation unit benefit
- Up to \$200,000 accidental death insurance

**Did you know... Up to 50% of the cost associated with an accident are non-medical and come out of your pocket?**

### Group Critical Illness Plan

- Pays lump sum cash benefits in amounts from \$5,000 to \$50,000.
- Guarantee Issue available.
- Covers cancer, heart attack, stroke, coma, paralysis, end stage renal failure and organ transplant.
- Children covered free with adult coverage.

**Did you know... Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. and strokes affect about 795,000 people each year.**

### Cancer Care Plan (Premier)

According to the American Cancer Society, 1 in 2 men, 1 in 3 women will be diagnosed with some form of cancer in their lifetimes.

- \$6,000 - \$12,000 initial diagnosis benefit
- \$900/week chemotherapy benefit
- \$500/week radiation benefit
- \$300-\$500/day hospital confinement
- \$500/week for experimental treatment
- Up to \$3,000 per event for reconstructive surgery
- \$10,000 stem cell and bone marrow transplant benefits

**Did you know... One in five people who are diagnosed with cancer use all of most of their savings because of the financial challenges of dealing with cancer.**

### Hospital Income

- \$500 - \$2,000 Admission
- \$50 - \$100 Short Stay
- \$100 - \$500 daily confinement

### Life Insurance

- Term or Whole Life
- Up to \$500,000 of coverage
- Guaranteed issue for new hires
- Issue age rate lock

### TELADOC / Call A Doctor Plus

- Talk to a doctor in 14 minutes on average
- 4 out of 5 office visits better handled by phone
- No co-pays, deductibles or per call charges
- US based, trained, and certified doctors
- Get PRESCRIPTIONS, diagnosis, and treatment plans.

**For questions, coverage options/enrollment, please see Paul McCaffrey: 508-735-1242. paul@accessenroll.com**

**GIC RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025**

07/01/2024-06/30/2025

**CITY EMPLOYEES AND TEACHERS RATE SHEET**

	EMPLOYEE'S COST		CITY'S COST		FULL COST		ANNUAL COSTS	
	20% HMO'S, PPO'S & POS'S, BI-WEEKLY	40% INDEMNITY MONTHLY	80% HMO, PPO'S & POS'S BI-WEEKLY	60% INDEMNITY MONTHLY	MONTHLY	100% MONTHLY	EMPLOYEE	CITY
<b>HARVARD PILGRIM EXPLORER-POS</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$98.57	\$213.57	\$394.29	\$854.30	\$1,067.87	\$1,067.87	\$2,562.89	\$10,251.55
FAMILY	\$244.24	\$529.18	\$976.95	\$2,116.72	\$2,645.90	\$2,645.90	\$6,350.16	\$25,400.64
<b>HARVARD PILGRIM QUALITY-HMO</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$72.74	\$157.61	\$290.97	\$630.43	\$788.04	\$788.04	\$1,891.30	\$7,565.18
FAMILY	\$185.15	\$401.16	\$740.61	\$1,604.65	\$2,005.81	\$2,005.81	\$4,813.94	\$19,255.78
<b>HARVARD PILGRIM ACCESS AMERICA-PPO</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$116.25	\$251.88	\$465.01	\$1,007.51	\$1,259.39	\$1,259.39	\$3,022.54	\$12,090.14
FAMILY	\$259.32	\$561.85	\$1,037.27	\$2,247.41	\$2,809.26	\$2,809.26	\$6,742.22	\$26,968.90
<b>HEALTH NEW ENGLAND-HMO</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$72.76	\$157.65	\$291.05	\$630.60	\$788.25	\$788.25	\$1,891.80	\$7,567.20
FAMILY	\$172.33	\$373.39	\$689.34	\$1,493.57	\$1,866.96	\$1,866.96	\$4,480.70	\$17,922.82
<b>MASS GENERAL BRIGHAM COMPLETE-HMO</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$90.25	\$195.53	\$360.98	\$782.13	\$977.66	\$977.66	\$2,346.38	\$9,385.54
FAMILY	\$238.65	\$517.08	\$954.62	\$2,068.34	\$2,585.42	\$2,585.42	\$6,205.01	\$24,820.03
<b>WELLPOINT TOTAL CHOICE-INDEMNITY *</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$277.17	\$600.54	\$415.76	\$900.81	\$1,501.35	\$1,501.35	\$7,206.48	\$10,809.72
FAMILY	\$615.09	\$1,332.69	\$922.63	\$1,999.03	\$3,331.72	\$3,331.72	\$15,992.26	\$23,988.38
<b>WELLPOINT COMMUNITY CHOICE-PPO</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$68.77	\$148.99	\$275.07	\$595.98	\$744.97	\$744.97	\$1,787.93	\$7,151.71
FAMILY	\$170.69	\$369.82	\$682.74	\$1,479.27	\$1,849.09	\$1,849.09	\$4,437.82	\$17,751.26
<b>WELLPOINT PLUS-PPO</b>								
INDIVIDUAL	\$88.49	\$191.72	\$353.95	\$766.90	\$958.62	\$958.62	\$2,300.69	\$9,202.75
FAMILY	\$210.84	\$456.81	\$843.34	\$1,827.24	\$2,284.05	\$2,284.05	\$5,481.72	\$21,926.88

HMO'S , PPO'S & POS'S 80%-20%

\*INDEMNITY 60%-40%

Hello Doug and committee members,

I was thinking that, while we can't link pay to the performance of Councilors, perhaps we could add a statement somewhere about our expectations of them.

The list could include:

Review agenda materials and attend regular and special Council Meetings

Attend meetings of assigned committees

When committee chair, respond to Council referrals in a timely way

Respond in a timely way to constituent communications

Hold an annual meeting with constituents

Observe open meeting law

Be respectful and maintain high ethical standards

Thank you,

Susan

## **Dear Fellow Blue Ribbon Committee Members**

I've put together this Draft "foundational document" for you to consider. Since we are representing the public, I thought that it might be wise to fill them in on the history of this salary issue with documentation and what we're tasked with doing.

As we go along, we could add the tools we end up using, the data we collect, the conclusions that we come to, etc.

This is only a draft! If we as a group choose to use this, it'll be the group's document, not mine.

If you see any errors or things omitted that should be included, just let me know.

Again, we can use this or not. It's up to you! At any rate, I hope that it's helpful in some way!

Thanks!

Linda

## **Blue Ribbon Committee on Councilor Salaries An Introduction**

**Ordinance: Section 2-3 of the Watertown Charter reads as follows:**

*“Salary - The city council may, by ordinance, provide an annual salary for its members. No ordinance increasing or decreasing such salary shall be effective, however, unless it shall have been adopted during the first eighteen months of the term for which city councilors are elected, and it provides that such salary is to take effect with the organization of the city government following the next biennial election.”*

### **Chronology:**

On January 24, 2023, the Watertown City Council approved the creation of a Blue Ribbon Committee to study City Councilor and Council President salaries.

On February 26, 2024, the City Council’s Committee on Personnel and City Organization created and approved a process to move forward on creating a Blue Ribbon Committee to study Council salaries.

On March 12, 2024, the Watertown City Council voted in favor of establishing a blue ribbon committee on Councilor salaries, based upon the recommendations of the Personnel and City Organization Committee. To view the reading of the recommendations, click [here](#), minutes 31:12 - 38:17)

It is to this end that a group of seven Watertown residents were convened in a Blue Ribbon Committee to assess and make salary recommendations to the Watertown City Council. Their first meeting was on July 10, 2024. The chair of this committee was John Bartley. The members: Sarah Baker; Christine Cole; Susan Falkoff; James Mello; Marcy Murningham; Linda Scott, with Doug Newton, Watertown Municipal Policy Analyst, as the staff assigned to assist with this task.

## **The Mandate:**

The Blue Ribbon Committee's duties are:

1. Study the salary and other compensation received by City Councilors and the Council President for their services.
2. Make recommendations on a methodology and process for salaries to be set going forward.
3. Make a recommendation for a salary increase for the Councilors and the Council President for the year 2026-2027

## **Possible Additions:**

One suggestion was made by a member of the Committee for further research:

Developing some sort of way to gauge Councilor involvement

## **Changes to Watertown's Governance in the year 1980**

Proposition 2½ was a Massachusetts law enacted in 1980 that strictly limits the amount of property tax revenue a municipality can raise through real and personal property taxes. This revenue is called the “tax levy.” Prop 2½ limits how much the tax levy can be increased from year-to-year.

“On May 5, 1980, Watertown changed its municipal charter from being a town form of government to a city form of government.” (See: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/101/About> ).

This means:

“City Councils act as the legislative branch in communities with a city form of government, as well as the policymaking body. Whereas Town Meeting is a form of direct democracy, the City Council is a representative body, somewhat like a local version of Congress.”

Sep 19, 2023. Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA)

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**The Watertown City Council Salary History (2000 - Present)**  
**Watertown City Councilor And Council President Salaries (2000 - 2018)**  
**With Projected Increases**  
**(Yellow Highlighted Cells are Actual Salary)**

Year	Salary/ Year (Councilor s)	Projected Yearly Councilor Salary Increase at 2%*	Projected Yearly Councilor Salary Increase at 2.5 %**		Salary/ Year (Council President)	Projected Yearly Council President Salary Increase at 2%*	Projected Yearly Council President Salary Increase at 2.5%**
2000	\$5000.00				\$6500.00		
2001	\$5000.00	\$5100.00	\$5125.00		\$6500.00	\$6630.00	\$6662.50
2002	\$5000.00	\$5202.00	\$5253.13		\$6500.00	\$6762.60	\$6829.06
2003	\$5000.00	\$5306.04	\$5384.45		\$6500.00	\$6897.85	\$6999.79
2004	\$5000.00	\$5412.16	\$5519.06		\$6500.00	\$7035.81	\$7174.78
2005	\$5000.00	\$5520.40	\$5657.04		\$6500.00	\$7176.53	\$7354.15
2006	\$5000.00	\$5630.81	\$5798.47		\$6500.00	\$7320.06	\$7538.01
2007	\$5000.00	\$5743.43	\$5943.43		\$6500.00	\$7466.46	\$7726.46
2008	\$5000.00	\$5858.30	\$6092.03		\$6500.00	\$7615.79	\$7919.62
2009	\$5000.00	\$5975.46	\$6244.31		\$6500.00	\$7768.10	\$8117.61
2010	\$5000.00	\$6094.97	\$6400.42		\$6500.00	\$7923.46	\$8320.55
2011	\$5000.00	\$6216.87	\$6560.43		\$6500.00	\$8081.93	\$8528.56
2012	\$5000.00	\$6341.21	\$6724.44		\$6500.00	\$8243.57	\$8741.78
2013	\$5000.00	\$6468.03	\$6892.56		\$6500.00	\$8408.44	\$8960.32
2014	\$5000.00	\$6597.39	\$7064.87		\$6500.00	\$8576.61	\$9184.33
2015	\$5000.00	\$6729.34	\$7241.49		\$6500.00	\$8748.14	\$9413.94
2016	\$5000.00	\$6863.93	\$7422.53		\$6500.00	\$8923.11	\$9649.29
2017	\$5000.00	\$7001.21	\$7608.09		\$6500.00	\$9101.57	\$9890.50
2018	\$7500.00	\$7141.23	\$7798.29		\$10,500.00	\$9283.60	\$10,137.78

In 1999, the Watertown City Council passed Ordinance #28, which raised City Councilor salaries to \$5000.00 and the Council President's salary to \$6500.00 starting in January 2000.

In 2016, (Ordinance #35), the City Council gave the Councilors an increase to \$7500.00 and the Council President \$10,500, beginning in January 2018. This Councilor raise was between 2% and 2 ½ % of what they would have received. For the City Council President, the raise was above the 2 ½%.

**Watertown City Councilor Salaries (2019 - 2023)**  
**With Projected Increases**  
 (Yellow Highlighted Cells are Actual Salary)

Year	Salary/ Year (City Councilor s)	Projected Yearly Salary Increase at 2%	Projected Yearly Salary Increase at 2.5%		Salary/ Year (Council President)	Projected Yearly Council President Salary Increase at 2%	Projected Yearly Council President Salary Increase at 2.5%
2019	\$7500.00	\$7650.00	\$7687.50		\$10,500.00	\$10,710.00	\$10,762.50
2020	\$7500.00	\$7803.00	\$7879.69		\$10,500.00	\$10,924.20	\$11,031.56
2021	\$7500.00	\$7959.06	\$8076.68		\$10,500.00	\$11,142.68	\$11,307.35
2022	\$7500.00	\$8118.24	\$8278.60		\$10,500.00	\$11,365.53	\$11590.03
2023	\$7500.00	\$8280.60	\$8485.56		\$10,500.00	\$11,592.84	\$11,879.78

In 2023, the City Council, in Ordinance #26, raised City Councilor salaries to \$8700.00 and Council President to \$12,000, effective January 2024. This was above the equivalent of a 2 ½% raise for both Councilors and the Council President.

In this same ordinance, they raised Councilor salaries to \$8900 and the Council President to \$12,500, effective January 2025.

**Watertown City Councilor Salaries (2024 - 2025)**  
 (Yellow Highlighted Cells are Actual Salary)

Year	Salary/Year Councilors	Salary/Year Council President	Projected Yearly Salary Increase at 2%	Projected Yearly Salary Increase at 2.5%
2024	\$8700.00	\$12,000.00		
2025	\$8900.00	\$12,500.00		

## **Councilor Compensation: Benefits**

In the Personnel and City Organization Committee Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2022 (also includes figures and comparisons with other cities), the conclusion reached was that deeper research was required, such as the value of pension and medical benefits as well as the number of meetings attended each year.

We've seen a history of Watertown City Councilor and Council President salary increases up until the year 2025. What do Watertown City Councilors currently receive in benefits and other forms of compensation, and how does this compare to other Massachusetts communities? (Examples: health insurance, dental and vision insurance, life insurance, stipends for optional work, pensions, professional development budgets, mileage etc.)

The benefit figures are not yet available.

**Question:** How should salaries and benefits between City Councilors and the City Council President correspond? Should the Vice President of the Council's salary be judged differently than the City Councilors?

## **The Job of this Blue Ribbon Committee**

This Blue Ribbon Committee has been tasked with:

**1. Reviewing the Councilors' job requirements/ activities**

As mentioned by several City Councilors at the July 10th meeting, there can be a large discrepancy in the workload assumed by individual councilors, since most of their activities are independently driven. The only "correction" for this is at the ballot box, and last election (November 7, 2023) all 8 councilors ran unopposed.

**2. Determining what criteria should be used in evaluating salary increases, including all benefits, etc. accrued with this position.** (For instance, in the Charter it also states, "Subject to appropriation, the council members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.").

Question: Does each Councilor have an annual "allowance" that pays for conferences, mileage, etc.? Is there a group fund?

**3. Gathering and Evaluating data within that criteria.**

**4. Based upon this study, coming up with a culminating report with the "number" that we determined was a fair and equitable salary amount for the year 2026-2027 for both councilors and the council president as well as the citizens of Watertown.**

**3. Suggesting a process, a blueprint, for going forward that would assist the City Council with determining future salary increases.**

**4. Possibly suggesting a transparent way that Councilors' efforts can be documented.**

## 2024 AMI's (Area Median Incomes) for Cities and Counties in Massachusetts

This Committee is cognizant of the fact that living in Massachusetts, and specifically in Middlesex County, where prices have grown at a far more aggressive rate than other parts of the country and state, needs to be taken into account. A note: Watertown (Middlesex County) is comparable to Boston (Suffolk County) and is considered part of the Boston region.

Click [here](#) for a full list of 2024 AMI's (Area Median Incomes) for Cities and Counties in Massachusetts, which highlights the large differential in salaries that are needed to live in different Massachusetts counties.

### Hampden County

Agawam, Blandford, Brimfield, Chester, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Granville, Hampden, Holland, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Monson, Montgomery, Palmer, Russell, Southwick, Springfield, Tolland, Wales, Westfield, West Springfield, Wilbraham

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
80% Income Limit	\$61,350	\$70,100	\$78,850	\$87,600	\$94,650	\$101,650	\$108,650	\$115,650
100% Income Limit	\$76,650	\$87,600	\$98,550	\$109,500	\$118,300	\$127,050	\$135,800	\$144,550

### Hampshire County

Amherst, Belchertown, Chesterfield, Cummington, Easthampton, Goshen, Granby, Hadley, Hatfield, Huntington, Middlefield, Northampton, Pelham, Plainfield, Southampton, South Hadley, Ware, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
80% Income Limit	\$61,350	\$70,100	\$78,850	\$87,600	\$94,650	\$101,650	\$108,650	\$115,650
100% Income Limit	\$76,650	\$87,600	\$98,550	\$109,500	\$118,300	\$127,050	\$135,800	\$144,550

### Middlesex County

Acton, Arlington, Ashby, Ashland, Ayer, Bedford, Belmont, Boxborough, Burlington, Cambridge, Carlisle, Concord, Everett, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Malden, Marlborough, Maynard, Medford, Melrose, Natick, Newton, North Reading, Reading, Sherborn, Shirley, Somerville, Stoneham, Stow, Sudbury, Townsend, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Wayland, Weston, Wilmington, Winchester, Woburn

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
80% Income Limit	\$91,400	\$104,450	\$117,500	\$130,550	\$141,000	\$151,450	\$161,900	\$172,350
100% Income Limit	\$114,250	\$130,600	\$146,900	\$163,200	\$176,300	\$189,350	\$202,400	\$215,450

Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Groton, Lowell, Pepperell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, Westford

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
80% Income Limit	\$77,000	\$88,000	\$99,000	\$110,000	\$118,800	\$127,600	\$136,400	\$145,200
100% Income Limit	\$96,250	\$110,000	\$123,750	\$137,500	\$148,500	\$159,500	\$170,500	\$181,500

### Nantucket County

Nantucket

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
80% Income Limit	\$80,800	\$92,350	\$103,900	\$115,400	\$124,650	\$133,900	\$143,100	\$152,350
100% Income Limit	\$101,000	\$115,400	\$129,850	\$144,250	\$155,800	\$167,350	\$178,900	\$190,450

These numbers are provided by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership. They derive their numbers through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

## **Six Resources to Guide Us:**

**Resource 1: The City of Watertown Massachusetts Rules of the City Council (Approved April 23, 2024):** To get a sense of the responsibilities of the elected City Council members, click [here](#).

**Resource 2: A synopsis of a memo sent to this committee by Councilor Lisa Feltner, District B.**

**Resource 3: Interviews with Watertown City Councilors and the Council President. (To be included at a later date).**

**Resource 4: Charts accounting for actual City Council meetings and Committee meetings in 2023 as an indication of hours spent in official meetings.**

**Resource 5: Comparisons to other communities.**

**Resource 6: The City of Watertown Employee Classification and Compensation Study.**

## **Councilor Duties**

### **What does a Watertown City Councilor and Council President Do?**

To evaluate future City Councilor and Council President salaries, we must compile and evaluate Councilor and Council President duties.

As our city grows, the increased duties of the City Council needs to be taken into account.

There is no specific job description for Watertown City Councilors. Here is a general description of their job:

In Watertown, our Councilors:

- Hire the City Manager

- Pass ordinances, approve regulations and zoning laws.

- Review and approve the budget.

Our Watertown City Council President:

In addition to Councilor duties, sets the agenda and runs City Council meetings and serves on the School Committee.

# What Do Councilors Do?

(Based upon a memo from Councilor Feltner)

## **Council-related Meetings:**

City Council Executive Sessions (scheduled as needs arise)

City Council Meetings (twice a month, except for July, August, December)

City Council Committee meetings (as scheduled, depending on current topic)

One Councilor /public meeting per year (as mandated by the City Charter).

Recent example of compulsory joint meeting: The Watertown Square Area Plan Meetings (June-July 2024 @ 10 hours) that they shared with the Planning Board

## **Other Meetings (Optional):**

District Development project meetings

With Watertown Staff, officials, evaluators

Other Public Meetings (Comprehensive Plan, etc.)

Councilors may also choose to attend any meeting called by the any of the 33 Watertown Boards, Commissions and Committees.

Recent meeting topics (note: not all councilors attend these meetings, and some attend, but not for the whole meeting). Here's a recent (past two years) sampling of the topics of these meetings: Comprehensive Plan and Watertown Square Area Plan

## **Constituent Services**

Neighbor and community group meetings

Telephone calls/e-mails/letters/meetings

## **Paperwork, Prep and Research**

Creating minutes/reports.

Note: Minutes are very time-consuming. Should there be an AI solution for this or part-time employee with these duties, etc.?

## Charting City Council Meetings (In Actual Time) January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

In 2023, Watertown City Council members attended 59 hours of meetings, or about 5 hours/month. On average, each meeting was slightly under two hours.

Date	Time	Comment	Other
1/4	2:07	Special Meeting Interviews	
1/10	1:43		
1/24	:59		
1/26	1:45		
2/14	1:07		
2/21	1:47		
2/28	3:20		
3/14	:45		
3/16	1:34		
3/28	:54		
4/11	2:17		
4/25	1:21		
5/2	1:52	Special Meeting Interviews	
5/9	1:37		
5/23	:31	Budget	Combined
5/23	2:13	Budget	Combined
5/25	:54	Budget	
6/6	1:29	Budget	

Date	Time	Comment	Other
6/13	1:56		
6/27	2:10	With Exec Session	
7/11	2:34	With Exec Session	
8/8	2:26		
8/22	1:19		
9/12	1:29		
9/26	2:35		
10/10	2:25	With Exec Session	
10/24	1:02		
11/8	3:30	Whole/Exec	
11/9	3:30	Whole/Exec	
11/14	2:55		
11/27	1:33		
12/12	:59		

### Methodology

Taking all of the City Council meetings in 2023 (televised, using the timer, and untelevised, using the unconfirmed time on the agenda), we added them to the minute and divided by 60.

# Charting City Council Committee Meetings (In Actual Time) January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023


Committee	# of Meetings	Time
Budget and Fiscal Oversight	13	22 hours
Rules and Ordinances	11	21.5 hours
Climate and Energy	3	5 hours
Economic development and Planning	12	17 hours
Education and School System	1	:45
Human Services	9	15 hours
Parks and Recreation	4	7.5 hours
Personnel and City Organization	4	4.5 hours
Public Safety	3	2.5 hours
Public Works	3	8.5 hours
State, Federal and Regional Government	1	1.5 hours

Note: Not all City Councilors attend all of these committee meetings. There are a select few who are mandated to attend these meetings (assigned by the Council President). At times, other City Councilors will choose to attend.

**Question: How do Watertown City Councilor and Council President duties compare with other councilors in other communities? Do they or other communities have support staff?**

**Appendix A**  
**Council Ordinances, Minutes, Memos and Letters**

**Ordinance #28. 1999**

 *Town Council*  
TOWN OF WATERTOWN  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING • WATERTOWN, MA 02472-4410  
(617)972-6470 • FAX (617)972-6485

Ordinance # 28 O-99-28

AN ORDINANCE SETTING THE SALARY OF MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Now be it ordained that the Ordinances of the City known as the Town of Watertown are hereby amended by adding a new Chapter XXIV as follows:


CHAPTER XXIV. TOWN COUNCIL SALARIES.

WHEREAS, Section 2-4 of the Home Rule Charter of the City known as the Town of Watertown permits the provision of an annual salary for members of the Town Council by ordinance;

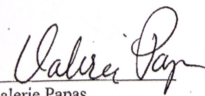
NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, that, effective the first secular day of January, 2000, the salary of the members of the Town Council shall be as follows:

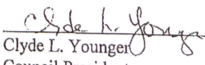
- (1) the salary of Councillors shall be \$5,000.00 per annum;
- (2) the salary of the Council President shall be \$6,500.00 per annum.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a copy of this Ordinance shall be forwarded to the Town Treasurer and Town Auditor forthwith.

  
Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above Ordinance was adopted by a vote of 9 for 0 against and 0 present on April 27, 1999.

  
Valerie Papas  
Council Clerk

  
Clyde L. Younger  
Council President

# Ordinance # 35, 2016



## Watertown Town Council

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6470

ORDINANCE #35

O-2016-35

### AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING TOWN COUNCIL SALARIES

WHEREAS, Section 2-3 of the Town of Watertown Home Rule Charter provides that the Town Council may, by ordinance, provide an annual salary for its members.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Town Council of the City Known as the Town of Watertown that the Council hereby establishes the Town Council Salary as follows:

Effective January 2, 2018, the salaries of the Town Council shall be established as follows:

Councilor - \$7,500 per annum.

Council President - \$10,500 per annum

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above Order was adopted by a vote of 8 for, 0 against and 0 present on June 14, 2016.

Marilyn W. Pronovost, Council Clerk

Mark S. Sideris, Council President

# Ordinance #26. 2023



## Watertown City Council

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,  
Vice President &  
District C Councilor

John M. Airasian  
Councilor At Large

Caroline Bays  
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,  
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,  
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,  
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,  
District B Councilor

Emily Izzo,  
District D Councilor

ORDINANCE # 26

O-2023- 26

### AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING CITY COUNCIL SALARIES

WHEREAS, Section 2-3(a) of the City of Watertown Home Rule Charter provides that the City Council may, by ordinance, provide an annual salary for its members.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Council hereby establishes the City Council Salaries as follows:

Effective January 1, 2024, the salaries of the City Council shall be established as follows:

Councilor - \$8,700 per annum.

Council President - \$12,000 per annum

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED as follows:


Effective January 1, 2025, the salaries of the City Council shall be established as follows:

Councilor - \$8,900 per annum.

Council President - \$12,500 per annum

  
Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Order was adopted by a vote of 9 for, 0 against and 0 present on May 23, 2023.

  
Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk

  
Mark S. Sideris, Council President

## **Town Council Committee on Personnel and Town Organization**

### **Report of the Meeting of March 23, 2016**

A meeting of the Personnel and Town Organization committee was held in the Town Council Office on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at 7:30pm for the purpose of continuing the discussions on Town Council salaries and preparation of committee meeting minutes.

Members in Attendance: Councilor Susan Falkoff, Chair; Councilor Angeline Kounelis, Secretary, and Councilor Michael Dattoli, Vice-Chair. Also in attendance were Councilors Vincent Piccirilli, Ken Woodland, and Lisa Feltner.

The committee discussed current salaries for elected officials in area municipalities with similar forms of government. It was noted that Cambridge should also be added to the list (see attached). Excluding Cambridge, salaries range from \$14,000 to volunteer (unpaid) positions.

Councilor Falkoff noted that Watertown has not increased Council salaries since 1999. There was a discussion around what current salaries would be if a 2% raise were applied year-over-year (roughly \$7,000).

Members discussed that the scope of the Council's work has changed, as there were not frequent committee meetings occurring at the same level ten to fifteen years ago. Also, in regard to the Council President salary, it was noted that this should include Council pay plus School Committee stipend.

Councilor Dattoli made a motion to refer to the Town Council a recommendation that Councilor salaries be amended to \$7500 per annum. Councilor Kounelis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Regarding meeting minutes, there was a discussion around the City of Waltham and City of Newton policies and procedures for preparing committee meeting minutes (see attached). One option for Watertown might be to record audio and have minutes later transcribed by a clerk. It was agreed that not every Councilor has the skills or technology to record meeting minutes and that people should have options available.

Councilor Kounelis made a motion to recommend to the Town Council that an option be available for committee members that choose not to take their own minutes. If the council approves the idea of alternate ways to do minutes, the committee will reconvene and discuss alternatives. Councilor Dattoli seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm. Minutes prepared by Councilor Dattoli.

## Committee on Personnel and Town Organization

Meeting Date: November 26, 2018

Read: January 22, 2019

The Committee met in the Town Council Office on November 26, 2018 at 7:15 pm. Attending were Caroline Bays, Chair, Susan Falkoff, Vice Chair, and Angeline Kounelis, Secretary. Also attending: Town Council President Mark Sideris, Councilors Anthony Donato and Kenneth Woodland, and resident Elodia Thomas.

I. The committee first discussed whether to increase **Town Council salaries**. The committee reviewed data on salaries from other communities and there was a lively discussion of pros and cons that included the following points:

- Other communities are currently considering raising salaries (Bays)
- Former Councilor Dushku sent a memo suggesting that salaries be raised to professional full-time salary levels (Bays)
- Changing the job to full-time would require a charter change (Sideris)
- The Council has voted down a raise on some occasions and the successful vote to raise salaries was recent (Kounelis)
- If the Councilors were paid at minimum wage for 20 hours/week, the salary would be \$11,000. Towns with volunteer government have trouble finding qualified people. (Woodland)
- We have volunteer Boards. If the Councilors get a raise, maybe Board members should too (Kounelis)
- We do have trouble attracting good people for the Boards (Sideris)
- No matter if it is \$5,000 or \$27,000, the pay is still part-time and so an individual needs another source of income. (Kounelis)
- What if the salary went up every year via a Cost of Living Increase instead of setting a fixed amount? (Bays)
- Since the Charter mandates the Town Council set a salary, a COLA-type system would require a charter change but it would save the trouble of repeating this conversation. We are close to the next Charter Review (Sideris)
- It would be hard for me, as a first-time councilor, to vote yes on a raise (Donato)

Councilor Falkoff made a motion, seconded by Councilor Kounelis, to defer the issue of Council compensation until the next Charter Review. The motion carried 3-0.

II. The Committee next took up the issue of the **Town Auditor's salary**. Councilor Kounelis noted that the Committee had voted to discuss this after the Councilors had completed evaluations on the auditor's job performance. President Sideris said there had been miscommunication about the evaluation and the form would go out ASAP. The committee will reconvene once the evaluations have been compiled and presented.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Falkoff

**Watertown City Council  
Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6470**

**Committee on Personnel and City Organization Meeting  
November 15, 2022**

The Committee convened at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 in the Phillip Pane Lower Conference Room, Ground Floor.

Councilors Caroline Bays, Chair, John Gannon, Vice-Chair, and Nicole Gardner, Secretary. Also in attendance were City Council President Mark Sideris, and Councilors Lisa Feltner and Vinnie Piccirilli.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss potential amendments to City Council Salaries.

Chair Bays called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm and opened the meeting by reminding all present that this was the second meeting of the PCO on this topic.

For context, the salary history for City Councilors is

- From January 1999 through December 2018, salaries were \$5,000, with no adjustment over 19 years
- In January 2019 salaries were raised to \$7,500, where they have remained until present, with no adjustment over 4 years

Chair Bays referred us to an updated chart of councilor salaries in comparative cities, and a graphic of the data. The councilors discussed the data presented and agreed that there were no specific implications or conclusions that could be drawn from the research. Deeper research and analysis is needed, such as the value of pension and medical benefits, and the number of Council meetings per year. In addition it is hard to draw conclusions based on the different political realities in each municipality. Councilor Feltner shared that she tracks full council meetings, City Council Committee meetings, and some resident board and commission meetings in her calendar. She estimates that for those meetings alone she averages around 120 meetings per year, and 260 hours per year. This estimate substantially underestimates the true hours worked per year, because it excludes time spent on:

- District development project meetings,
  - Time spent on creating minutes/reports,
  - Meeting prep and research,
- Constituent services in meetings or communications,

- Neighbor or community group meetings
- Time with Watertown staff or other officials,
- Communications such as newsletter, updating web page, etc.
- Other public meetings or time devoted to many topics, such as: Comprehensive.

Plan, RMUD, Arsenal Yards, MassDOT Arsenal Corridor, AOTC-AthenaHealth, iCube, Watertown Square Improvements, School Assessments, Airplane Noise, Charter Review Committee, School Building Committee, Complete Streets, Mount Auburn Street redesign, Community Preservation, Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, Climate-Energy-Resilient Watertown, our MVP Greening, Mass. Municipal Association, MBTA or other state agencies, our capital improvement projects such as Victory Field, Arsenal Park, Filippello Park and lighting.

Councilor Feltner's write up of her research is attached to these minutes.

Chair Bays presented an analysis, attached, showing what councilor salaries would be if they were paid minimum wage per hour, across three estimates of hours worked per year. The estimated annual salary ranges \$13,800 to \$17,250 per year. Refer to the second table. Council President Sideris opposed such a big leap in salary, saying it was untenable.

Instead, he suggested amending the Councilor Salary Policy to include an automatic annual COLA of 2.5%, to take effect in January 2023.

Councilor Gardner expressed a concern that we need information on what the proper salary should be, in fairness to those who will serve as councilors in the future. She noted that last year the Charter Review Committee was concerned that the Council compensation was too low for two reasons:

- The increased workload, complexity, and scope of the role compared to prior years
- The need to ensure that people are compensated fairly, so that the role can be served for any citizen in Watertown, without undue hardship, not only those with significant savings or high salaries, or who aren't facing expenses such as college for their kids.

Councilor Piccirilli suggested that we could take a first step toward reaching appropriate compensation by applying an annual COLA of 2.5% to the 2018 salary of \$7500 and use that to calculate the salary for January 2024.

The Committee calculated that the 2024 and 2025 salaries that would result from this approach would be:

- For Councilors: \$8,700 in 2024, and \$8,900 in 2025.
- For the Council President: \$12,000 in 2024 and \$12,500 in 2025.

Chair Bays suggested we could use the COLA approach as a stop gap measure for 2024 and 2025, and that we should create a Blue Ribbon Resident Committee to review this matter in greater depth and come back with a recommendation to the PCO and ultimately the Council. Other councilors liked this approach. The Councilors discussed whether a Blue-Ribbon Resident Committee could be selected and convened in time for them to be able to do an in-depth review of councilor compensation in comparable municipalities and come back with a recommendation to the Council for deliberation and decision making by June 2023. There was a consensus that time was too tight.

--> **Action Item:** Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council amend the salary for City Councilors to \$8,700, effective January 1, 2024, and \$8,900 effective January 1 2025. Approved 3-0

--> **Action Item:** Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council amend the salary for the Council President to \$12,000, effective January 1, 2024, and \$12,500 effective January 1, 2025. Approved 3-0

--> **Action Item:** Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, that the City Council recommend that the next seated City Council create a Blue-Ribbon Resident Committee whose purpose will be to study compensation and salary structure for the roles of Council and Council President and make recommendations to the City Council. Approved 3-0

At 7:36 p.m. Councilor Gardner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Gannon. Approved unanimously.

Report prepared by Nicole Gardner

Attachments:

Comparatives for Council Salaries

Bubble Chart of Salaries for Selected Municipalities

Councilor Feltner Email

Councilor Bays Estimates of Salary at Minimum Wage

# Comparatives of Council Salaries

*Berys Handout*

*4/13/22*

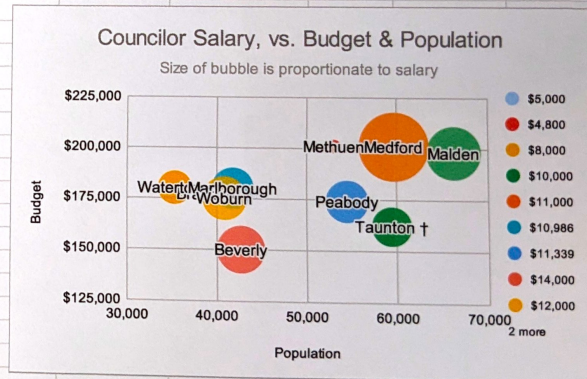
Cities inside 495	County	Form of Government	Founded	Population	Budget	Salary	Notes	
<u>Winthrop</u>	City[4]	Suffolk	Council-manager	8.3	2	1852	19,316 36 million	\$2,600
<u>Amesbury</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	13.7	12.3	1668	17,366 69 million	3,000
<u>Frammingham</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	26.5	25	1700	72,362 307 million	5,000 president -7,500
<u>Malden</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	5.1	5	1649	66,263 188 million	5,000
<u>Melrose</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	4.8	4.7	1850	29,817 91 million	5,000
<u>Randolph</u>	City[4]	Norfolk	Council-manager	10.5	10.1	1793	34,984 33 million	5,000
<u>Braintree</u>	City[4]	Norfolk	Mayor-council	14.6	13.8	1640	39,143 145 million	7,500
<u>Watertown</u>	City[4]	Middlesex	Council-manager	4.1	4	1630	35,329 160 million	7,500
<u>Newburyport</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	10.7	8.3	1764	18,289 75 million	9,000 president - 11,000
<u>Methuen</u>	City[4]	Essex	Mayor-council	23	22.2	1725	53,039 170 million	10,000 chair - 15,000
<u>Taunton †</u>	City	Bristol	Mayor-council	48.4	46.7	1639	59,408 162 million	10,000
<u>Weymouth</u>	City[4]	Norfolk	Mayor-council	21.6	16.8	1635	57,437 183.6 million	10,000 president - 11,000
<u>Marlborough</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	22.1	20.9	1660	41,793 173 million	10,664
<u>Peabody</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	16.8	16.2	1868	54,481 163 million	11,016
<u>Woburn</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-aldermen	12.9	12.7	1642	40,876 160 million	11,150.00
<u>Beverly</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	22.6	15.1	1668	42,670 144 million	11,733
<u>Chelsea</u>	City	Suffolk	Council-manager	2.5	2.2	1739	40,787 249 million	14,000
<u>Salem †</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	18.3	8.3	1626	44,480 662 million	14,000
<u>Revere</u>	City	Suffolk	Mayor-council	10.1	5.7	1846	62,186 241 million	14650 and 5000 stipend
<u>Lawrence †</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	7.4	6.9	1847	89,143 103 million	15,000
<u>Haverhill</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	35.7	33	1641	67,787 216 million	15,000 president gets 18,000
<u>Newton</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council[7]	18.2	17.8	1688	88,923 462 million	15,500
<u>Brockton †</u>	City	Plymouth	Mayor-council	21.5	21.3	1821	105,643 439 million	16,662
<u>Waltham</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	13.8	12.7	1738	65,218 299 million	22,554
<u>Lowell †</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-manager-	14.5	13.6	1826	115,554 464 million	25,000 2016
<u>Lynn</u>	City	Essex	Mayor-council	13.5	10.7	1629	101,253 407 million	25,000
<u>Somerville</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	4.2	4.1	1842	81,045 286 million	25,000
<u>Everett</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	3.7	3.4	1870	49,075 260 million	25,500 has a legislative aid - 54,000
<u>Medford</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-council	8.7	8.1	1630	59,659 191 million	29,360 president - 32,000/vp 30,000
<u>Quincy</u>	City	Norfolk	Mayor-council	26.9	16.6	1792	101,636 346 million	35,000
<u>Charlton †</u>	City	Middlesex	Mayor-manager-	7.1	6.4	1636	118,403 748 million	83,404
<u>Boston †</u>	City	Suffolk	Mayor-council	89.6	48.3	1630	675,647 3,760 million	103,500
<u>Bridgewater</u>	City[4]	Plymouth	Council-manager	28.2	27.5	1656	28,633 66 million	0?

# Comparatives for Council Salaries Bubble Chart of Salaries for Selected Municipalities

Sheet1

City	Population	Budget '23	Salary	Council President	Health Ins option	County	Form of Government	Area in Square miles
Braintree	39,143	\$177,000	\$5,000					
Methuen	53,039	\$201,000	\$4,800	\$7,500		City[4] Norfolk	Mayor-council	14.6
Woburn	35,329	\$180,000	\$8,000	\$6,000	y	City[4] Essex	Mayor-council	23
Taunton †	59,408	\$162,000	\$10,000	\$2,500	y	City[4] Middlesex	Council-manager	4.1
Weymouth	57,437	\$264,000	\$11,000			City Bristol	Mayor-council	48.4
Marlborough	41,793	\$180,000	\$10,986	\$12,000		City[4] Norfolk	Mayor-council	21.6
Peabody	54,481	\$174,000	\$11,339			City Middlesex	Mayor-council	22.1
Beverly	42,670	\$150,000	\$14,000			City Essex	Mayor-council	16.8
Woburn	40,876	\$175,000	\$12,000	\$15,000		City Essex	Mayor-council	22.6
Malden	66,263	\$198,000	\$17,500	\$14,000		City Middlesex	Mayor-aldermen	12.9
Medford	59,659	\$201,000	\$29,360	\$32,500.00		City Middlesex	Mayor-council	8.7

Methuen 2020 effort to raise the salary to \$10,000 failed.  
Beverly's current salary is \$11,733.



## Councilor Feltner's Letter

In terms of basic salary or annual compensation, here's what I found and verbally shared with the PCO committee:

Starting with 1980 salary of \$4626, a yearly 2.5% increase (not including President):

to 1994 would be \$6537, when council was raised to \$4500;

In 2010 it would have equaled \$9,705, when council was raised to \$5000;

In 2018 it would have been \$11,824, when council was raised to \$7500.

In 2024 it would be \$13,713 (2025 \$14,055) based on the original 1980 base compensation.

At the Nov 15 meeting, we calculated that a 2.5% increase on current \$7500 starting from January 2018, would realize \$8698 in 2024 or \$8915 in 2025; and based on the current \$10,500 for Council Pres, a 2.5% increase would come to \$12,177 in 2024 or \$12,481 in 2025.

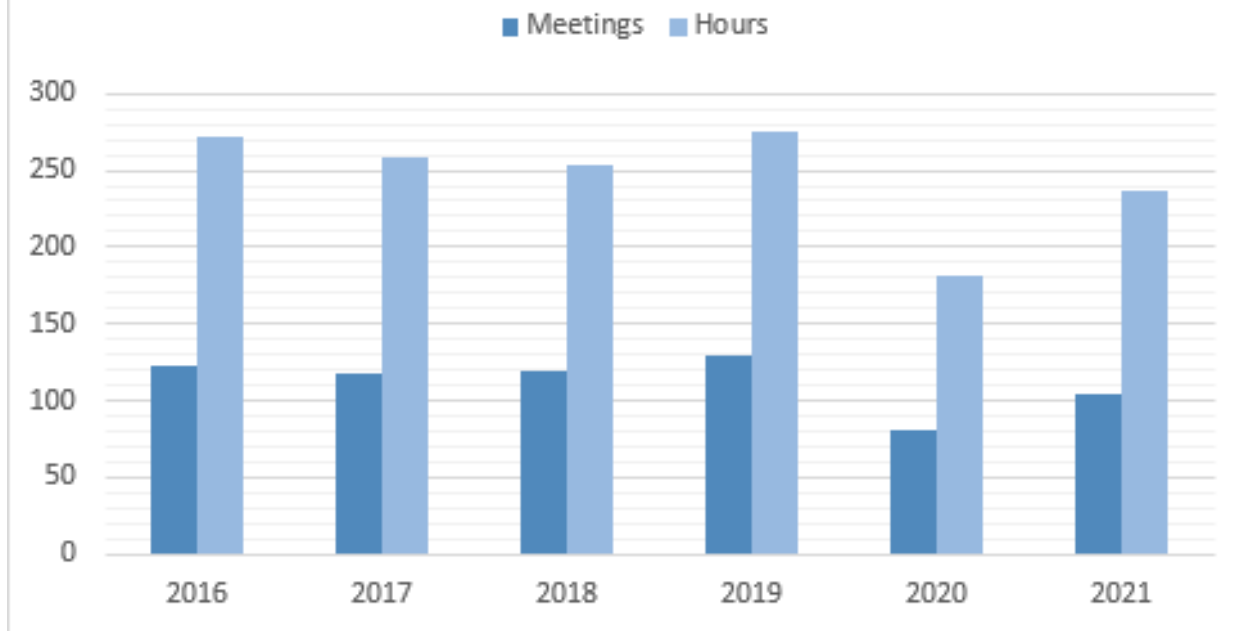
Please note that my tally:

Does not include District development project meetings, or time spent on creating minutes/reports, or meeting prep and research. Does not include constituent services in meetings or communications, nor neighbor or community groups.

Does not include meeting time with Watertown staff or other officials, or evaluations.

Does not include other public meetings or time devoted to many topics, such as: Comp. Plan, RMUD, Arsenal Yards, MassDOT Arsenal Corridor, AOTC-AthenaHealth, iCube, Watertown Square Improvements, School Assessments, Airplane Noise, Charter Review Committee, School Building Committee, Complete Streets, Mount Auburn Street redesign, Community Preservation, Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, Climate-Energy-Resilient Watertown, our MVP Greening, Mass. Municipal Association, MBTA or other state agencies, our capital improvement projects such as Victory Field, Arsenal Park, Filippello Park and lighting...

### Full Council, Council Committees, Local Boards Councilor Feltner participation



## Estimates of Salaries at Minimum Wage

Compensation Calculations			
These were prepared by Councilor Bays			
20 hours per week for 42 weeks	$20 \times 42 = 840$	20 hours a week except July August	
10 hours a week for 8 weeks	$10 \times 8 = 80$	and assumes a 2 week vacation	
	\$13,800	assumes \$15/hour effective Jan 1 2023	
25 hours per week for 42 weeks	$25 \times 42 = 1050$	25 hours a week except July August	
12.5 hours per week for 8 weeks	$12.5 \times 8 = 100$		
	17250		
25 hours per week for 36 weeks	$25 \times 36 = 900$	25 hours a week but has a longer range of times off	
10 hours per week for 14 weeks	$10 \times 14 = 140$		
	15600		

:

To: Watertown staff whose positions are included in the Classification & Compensation Study

From: Emily Monea, Deputy City Manager

Date: April 13, 2023

Re: Comparable communities methodology and results

A key component of the Classification & Compensation Study is establishing a list of comparable communities to gather salary data from so that the City's consultant, GovHR, can ensure that our Classification and Compensation Plan is externally equitable (i.e., that Watertown's salaries are in line with our peer communities).

GovHR's methodology for selecting comparable communities relies on evaluating how similar other Massachusetts communities are to Watertown on seven criteria: population, income per capita, equalized valuations (EQV) per capita, total assessed value, tax levy, total budget, and state aid. The Community Comparison Report from the Division of Local Services (DLS) of the Department of Revenue (DOR) is the data source for all of these criteria: [https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Community\\_Comparison\\_Report](https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Community_Comparison_Report). GovHR also considers distance from Watertown as a criterion.

The City Manager's Office added two additional criteria to the comparable community analysis – population density and commercial, industrial, and personal property (CIP) assessed value – since we feel both capture the complexity of our work in Watertown.

To get to a list of comparable communities using these criteria, we applied a factor of 4, meaning we allowed for communities that are 1/4 of the size of Watertown's number on the relevant criteria up to communities that are 4 times the size of Watertown's number. For example: according to the DLS Community Comparison Report, Watertown's 2021 population was 35,149, so our methodology allowed for a community that had a population between  $35,149/4$  and  $35,149*4$ , or between 8,787 and 140,596.

To be considered a comparable community, a community needed to 1) fall within the relevant range on all nine criteria and 2) be within 20 miles from Watertown.

This methodology produced the following list of comparable communities:

1. Arlington
2. Braintree
3. Brookline
4. Burlington
5. Dedham
6. Medford
7. Natick
8. Needham
9. Newton
10. Norwood
11. Saugus
12. Somerville
13. Wakefield
14. Waltham
15. Woburn

Hello Doug,

Below are my thoughts on this process thus far and my response to the questions that you sent us. Please share this with the rest of the committee.

**Some thoughts:**

First, I'd like to say that I have a renewed appreciation for our cable station that accurately records all meetings and stores them in a logical, transparent manner. I also appreciate the 32 citizen boards and commissions that have to fill in, doing City work where the City Council leaves off.

I set to work trying to gather information for City Council meetings and Council Committee meetings in 2022 (see pages 5 to 7) to see if the numbers were significantly different. They weren't. If anything, they were a bit lower. I was unable to get the total picture, because finding the minutes for those meetings to ascertain their length was far harder than for 2023. The problem:

Many of those 2022 meetings were not recorded on cable, and each Committee's minutes are not located on the City website under each committee's name. For instance, if you go to the city site, click on the "Government" link, then go to the "City Council Committee Assignments, Meeting Minutes and Agendas, Meeting Videos" link, that takes you to the City Calendar. There you can click on a meeting which might give you two categories to download: Agenda and Agenda Packet. These are generated before the meeting. Neither one would have a copy of the minutes for that meeting. To sum up, there are no "minutes" in the "City Council Committee Assignments, Meeting Minutes and Agendas, Meeting Videos" link!

The only place that I could access the minutes for meetings was when they were presented to the City Council, and even then, there were irregularities in format (some didn't include an adjournment time, for instance).

Here's an example of how all-over-the-place and inscrutable this system is: at the City Council meeting on May 10, 2022, the Personnel and City Organization Committee meeting minutes/reports were presented for their meetings dated December 12, 2020, June 28, 2021, February 7, 2022, and April 13, 2022.

**This leads me to an important question for you regarding our Committee:**

We had several requests from members to have our minutes and all information shared to be on the City website in a timely manner. There was an assumption that there was a link entitled "Blue Ribbon Committee on Councilor Salaries" on the City site. It doesn't seem to be there yet. If/when this link is added to the City site, (hopefully within the next few weeks), please be sure that the whole title is included, not just "Blue Ribbon Committee," to assure transparency. I understand that we are awaiting Committee approval for minutes, but other documents could be there already.

**More thoughts on the actual work:**

If we can get an approval from our Blue Ribbon Committee members for the first pages of the draft document that I put together, giving the history of Council salaries, I can send that part to you, minus my name, to be stored with you for our final report.

As I look ahead:

At present, we are doing some fact-finding on:

### **1. What does a councilor's job entail?**

So far, this involves:

Our research  
Councilor questionnaires  
15 minute interviews  
Possibly a presentation by a councilor

We've repeatedly referred to how the job has "changed," but we've never specified how. We have to look no further than one of our Blue Ribbon Committee members, Susan Falkoff, for some information on that, if this is something that she'd be willing to do. We might want to ask a few former and current councilors for their thoughts on this as well.

We also might want to include a question on the history of City Council Committee work (when the committees were formed and why). That may give us some insight into when and how Councilor workload increased and/or became more complex.

### **2. How should we approach the problem of councilor salary adjustment and salaries going forward?**

Our task is not just to find "the number for the year 2026-2027."

As the Personnel and City Organization Committee states, "Duty one of the Blue Ribbon Committee is to study the salaries received by councilors and the council president for their services and to make recommendations of methodologies and the process for salaries to be set going forward." (Click [here](#), minutes 31:12 - 38:17)

#### **Full Compensation Package:**

As a pre-requisite for doing this, we need to develop a full, comprehensive picture of councilor compensation (salary and benefits). City Council members' requested that be done to get an in-depth picture. I believe that I requested councilor benefits information in late July.

In your message to me in the first week in August, you communicated that the City Auditor was working on this. I'm very concerned that we won't have "the full picture" until the very last minute. We're now almost halfway through our meeting times!

It would be good if you could please send the benefit information out to us the minute you receive it. Waiting for the next meeting to occur could waste valuable time for us to review this information for our open meeting discussion. The December deadline is coming on quickly.

Additionally, we've been talking about furthering our mission by including a statement of council expectations and looking at barriers to their success, and ways for the council to "up their game." And, I believe from our conversations, underlying all of this is the concept of making the City Council position one that would encourage more citizens to consider running for office.

**Response to Our Questions (by the way...great job synthesizing all of our thoughts, Doug):**

**1. How many hours per week would you say that you spend as a city councilor? If possible, please clarify time spent in Council or Committee meetings as opposed to less formal constituent meetings.**

Alternatively:

1. This is a list of potential activities that you would be responsible for as a Watertown City Councilor in an average month. If we've missed any activities, please add them below in the "Other" spaces. Then number them 1 to ?, 1 being the activity you generally do the most in a month to the activity you do the least.

\_\_\_\_\_ City Council Meetings

\_\_\_\_\_ City Council Committee meetings

\_\_\_\_\_ Other meetings (with City staff, boards and commissions, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Constituent services ( telephone calls, e-mails, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Research on City topics

\_\_\_\_\_ Paperwork (minutes, reports, etc.)

Other:

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On average, how many hours per month do you spend on councilor activities?

**2. What do you believe should be the future process for determining the salary of City Councilors?**

I think that question two is probably fine the way it is.

**3. What do you perceive as adding complexity to the job of a City Councilor? The Committee has discussed a residential vs. commercial tax base, population size, and budget size. Are we missing anything?**

How about adding population density to the "complexity" issues?

**4. Is there another job that you view as comparable to the job of a City Councilor in Watertown?**

I'd change to "job or jobs"

Questions 5 - 7 seem fine. Possibly add: Are you responsible for developing informational materials for the public? If so, is that at your own expense or does the City reimburse you for that activity?

**Also, as mentioned above, maybe a question on when and why City Council committees were added?**

Thanks, again, Doug! This is a lot of work, and I appreciate your efforts!!

Linda

Please see data collected on 2022 City Council meetings below.

**Charting City Council  
Meetings\*  
(In Actual Time)  
January 1, 2022 - December  
31, 2022**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Other</b>
1/11	3:05	Exec Session	
1/25	3:30	Exec Session	
2/8	1:08		
2/23	:52		
3/8	1:25		
3/22	1:42		
4/12	1:28		
4/26	1:47		
4/27	:33	Announce CM Finalists	
5/10	1:30		
5/12	3:14	Special CC Meeting	
5/24	1:11	Special Meeting	
5/31	1:49	Budget Hearing	
6/2	1:35	Budget Hearing	
6/7	1:34	Budget Hearing	
6/14	2:16	Exec Session	
6/21	2:17	Special Meeting	
6/28	2:09	Exec Session	
7/12	1:48		
8/9	3:00	Exec Session	

Date	Time	Comment	Other
9/13	1:43	Exec Session	
9/27	1:17	Exec Session	
10/11	1:57		
10/25	1:06		
11/9	1:31		
11/22	1:48		
12/13	1:39		
12/29		Entire meeting exec session	

Total: 49 hours (missing time for 12/29 meeting)

**\*More Committees**

By my count, there were at least 3 adhoc committees working in 2022:

Adhoc Subcommittee for the City Manager Search

I roughly counted 5 meetings with no times specified and no members listed

Adhoc Career Tech, Vocational Education Committee (CVTE)

Rough count: 7 meetings, no times or members listed

Adhoc Subcommittee on Auditor Search

One meeting?

Also:

Preliminary screening for Library Director: 3 meetings, and Budget and Finance Subcommittee: 2 meetings

Not sure how involved the City Council members are in these. I'm guessing, at least in the City Manager search, very involved. It would help if I could find minutes for these meetings. I'll continue to look into these.

**Charting City Council Committee Meetings  
(In Actual Time)  
January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022**

<b>Committee</b>	<b># of Meetings</b>	<b>Time</b>	
Budget and Fiscal Oversight	7	13 hours*	* Minutes for 1 meeting not found
Rules and Ordinances	4	7.25 hours*	*Minutes for 1 meeting not found
Climate and Energy	3	6.5 hours	
Economic development and Planning	7	7.25 hours	
Education and School System	1	2.5 hours	
Human Services	8	8 hours*	*Minutes for 1 meeting not found; minutes of one meeting do not include time
Parks and Recreation	2	.5 hours*	*Minutes for 1 meeting do not include time
Personnel and City Organization	9	10 hours*	*Minutes of 2 meetings don't include time
Public Safety	1	48 minutes	
Public Works	7	6.5 hours*	*Minutes not found for 2 meetings; 1 meeting minutes didn't include time
State, Federal and Regional Government	2	1 hour	

\*If minutes were not found or didn't include an adjournment time, the hours spent in those meetings could not be included.