

JANUARY 28, 2025



Watertown City Council

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

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025, 7:00 P.M. RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 149 MAIN STREET

MINUTES

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on January 28, 2025 at 7:00 PM in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber
- B. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/?channel=3>
- C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92991331344>
- D. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 929 9133 1344
- E. Public may comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov
- F. Please Visit the City Council Website here: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/350/City-Council>

1. ROLL CALL

Council President Sideris called to order a regular meeting of the City Council at 7:00 p.m. in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Those present were Councilors John M. Airasian, Caroline Bays, Lisa J. Feltner, John G. Gannon, Nicole Gardner, Emily Izzo, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Also present were George Proakis City Manager, Mark Reich, City Attorney, Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk, and Doug Newton, Municipal Policy Analyst

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC FORUM

Frank Ding – 89 Linden Street, Boston - Spoke about the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) persecution of Falun Gong, a peaceful meditation practice based on truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. He highlighted the severe human rights violations, including torture, forced labor, and organ harvesting that Falun Gong practitioners face in China. He also discussed the CCP's influence in the USA, where they monitor and intimidate Falun Gong practitioners and spread disinformation. He emphasized the role of Shen Yun Performing Arts in exposing CCP atrocities, and concluded by stressing that the CCP's actions undermine American values of freedom of speech and religious liberty.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Sideris stated that the staff for the Council put out its first City Council newsletter. He noted that in his haste to publish it, the members of the Council were not informed prior to its release. This newsletter will be attempted to be published on a regular basis, and the effort will include website and outreach personnel.

5. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, AND SIMILAR PAPERS AND MATTERS

A. Proclamation Honoring Ingrid Marchesano

President Sideris read the proclamation.

Ingrid Marchesano graciously accepted the proclamation. She thanked the Council, her colleagues, and remarked on how much she will miss everyone in her retirement.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the proclamation and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Voice Vote.

6. MOTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDERS, AND RESOLUTIONS

A. Authorization to Sign a Five-Year Contract to Initiate and Maintain a Body Worn Camera Program for Sworn Police Officers

City Manager Proakis stated that Watertown is shifting its approach to implementing body-worn cameras and upgrading the Watertown Police Department's computer aided dispatch and records management system. These will now be managed through a long-term contract with Motorola. This \$1.6 million five-year contract ensures continuous maintenance, upgrades, and support for the systems while providing technical assistance crucial for the police department.

He continued by stating that the body-worn camera program, supported by the police union and community, aims to protect both officers and the public by providing access to

video footage. The first year's cost is \$250,000, mostly covered by a \$234,000 state grant. Future costs will be included in the WPD's operating budget, transitioning these items from capital to operational expenses.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the authorization and Councilor Feltner seconded.

Councilor Gannon commended this effort as he believes that this will lead to more transparency for the public and police union alike.

Councilor Feltner inquired about policies on use and recording - how they are going to be addressed and finalized.

City Manager Proakis replied that policies are a union negotiating item that will be addressed between the administration and the union.

Councilor Feltner inquired about the training program with the equipment.

City Manager Proakis replied that there is training involved and the WPD has more information on it.

The motion carried unanimously in a Voice Vote.

- B. Pursuant to M.G.L. c.30, §39M(b) - Authorization of Proprietary Specifications for Improvements at the Parker Annex Building, including but not limited to, door locks & door hardware and ceramic wall tile as suggested by Ai3

City Manager Proakis discussed the Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Improvement Plan, specifically item number 23, which allocates \$2.2 million for second-floor upgrades to the Parker Annex building. This includes creating space for the Planning Department staff and other inspectors. Additional funding is also included for necessary code upgrades and other improvements.

He continued to state that Ai3, an on-call architect, is completing bid specifications for the project, and an owner project manager will oversee the process. According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30 §39M (b), proprietary specifications for public construction projects can only be used for sound reasons in the public interest, documented in writing and requiring a council vote. While the administration attempts to avoid proprietary specs, as they can potentially become more costly on a project, they are necessary for this cause.

Ai3 recommends proprietary specifications for door locks, door hardware (sergeant locks and medical high security SFIC keying), and ceramic wall tiles to maintain consistency with other city buildings and ensure durability and ease of maintenance. City Manager Proakis stated the Council needs to vote on these specifications as part of the bidding process.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the authorization and Councilor Feltner seconded.

Councilor Gardner asked if the doors would open automatically from a press point panel.

Assistant City Manager for Community Development and Planning Steve Magoon replied that the administration is making sure that all upgrades meet code requirements. He stated that those push panels are present in multiple other buildings, and that he will inquire to see if they can be added to the Parker Annex.

The motion carried unanimously in a Voice Vote

7. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

A. Submission of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 – 2030 Capital Improvement Program

City Manager Proakis presented the capital improvement program (CIP) package (attached) to the Council, highlighting key points and challenges. The CIP aims to align with the council's goals, particularly prioritizing the middle school project with a budget of \$8.47 million and borrowing \$70 million. Other projects, like the Senior Center and East End Fire Station, are pushed to later years. Creative financing options are being considered for Watertown Square, and temporary sites for DPW staging and snow storage are being explored.

The CIP required adjustments, including eliminating planned debt and shifting projects. Core projects like streets and sidewalks, and long road connector programs remain funded. Immediate impacts include the Parker Annex Building and Victory Field Project, with necessary ADA and plumbing upgrades.

The document includes a seven-page memo and appendices listing parks construction projects and prior year CIP projects. Some projects are delayed or removed. The five-year CIP color sheet shows higher borrowing numbers due to the middle school project, with a general obligation bond number of \$169 million. Efforts are made to keep tax revenue numbers below \$4 million annually.

City Manager Proakis emphasized the importance of stable, long-range capital planning and the impact of the middle school project on the CIP. The council looks forward to further discussions in committee meetings.

President Sideris stated that the CIP will be referred to the Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight.

City Manager Proakis announced that the Watertown website received the Category 1 Municipal Website Award from the Massachusetts Municipal Association, recognizing excellence in customer service, functionality, convenience, and government transparency. The award is for communities with populations over 35,000. He expressed gratitude to the website team, editors, staff, community, city council, IT team, and communications team for their contributions.

He then discussed follow-up actions from the recent meeting on the winter parking ban, noting the complexity of changing parking policies and the need for a study.

City Manager Proakis also emphasized the importance of signing up for the Everbridge reverse 911 system to receive emergency notifications. He provided instructions on how to sign up and encouraged everyone to do so for better communication during emergencies.

President Sideris asked if that information could be posted on the front page of the website for transparency.

City Manager Proakis then remarked on deceased waterfowl in reports of dead geese around the Charles River walking paths. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is handling the issue. Residents can report sightings to DCR or call 311. For safety guidelines, he advised the public to avoid interacting with wild birds, keep pets away, and report multiple deceased birds to the state. He implored to not attempt to remove birds yourself due to avian flu concerns.

Concerning Federal Grants, he remarked on the uncertainty due to recent policy changes from the new administration and a temporary freeze. The City is assessing the impact on various programs, including school funding, tree planting, and public safety grants. The administration and staff are actively monitoring the situation and will update the public as more information becomes available.

8. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION/REVIEW OF LIST OF PENDING MATTERS

Councilor Feltner asked for clarification on how the public should deal with found dead animals.

City Manager Proakis replied that a person in that circumstance should call the 311 number or the Health Department number for assistance.

President Sideris discussed the 2022 update to the demolition delay ordinance, which allows the Historical Commission to delay demolitions for up to two years. He supports protecting historic buildings but is concerned about the ordinance's application. He noted that while the delay can help find alternatives to demolition and allow for documentation and salvage, the commission's discretion in applying the delay has been inconsistent.

President Sideris remarked that he is particularly worried about the ordinance's impact on key city projects, such as economic development sites in Watertown Square and the Watertown Middle School, which require building removals to meet educational goals. He requested that the City Manager and staff review the ordinance and suggest changes to ensure it does not hinder important city projects or other community areas. He also suggested evaluating whether some types of houses might not need a delay.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Palomba announced two Committee on Human Services meetings, one on February 6th with the Affordable Housing Trust, and a meeting on February 13th regarding night lights on parks.

Councilor Gardner announced her annual meeting will be held on January 29th.

Councilor Feltner announced a community meeting for a conceptual project on Franklin and Washburn Street on the 29th, and a meeting on Wednesday February 5th for the proposed project on 75 Spring Street.

President Sideris announced that four architectural firms will be pitching for feasibility studies and services for the Middle School on the 29th.

10. PUBLIC FORUM

Frank Ding - 89 Linden Street, Boston - Emphasized the impact of the CCP's interference on US religious freedom, highlighting that it violates core American values such as freedom of speech and religious liberty. This interference, particularly regarding Falun Gong, threatens the fabric of US society by attempting to control narratives and suppress religious freedom. He called for the Council to recognize the significant influence of the CCP within US borders, noting their efforts extend beyond China to include spying, disinformation campaigns, and interference in democratic processes. These actions aim to silence dissent and manipulate public opinion. He urged the Council to raise awareness in the community about these covert operations.

Joan Gumbleton – 32 Falmouth Road – Remarked that the signs at the Parker Annex Building are misleading and reflect companies that are no longer present. She called for better signs to indicate that City offices are located there along with other necessary upgrades.

11. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Piccirilli made a motion to adjourn and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion was adopted unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by a vote of 9 for, 0 against, and 0 present on February 11, 2025.



Mark S. Sideris, Council President
s:/BTM

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

City Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 7:00 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber
Administration Building, 149 Main Street
List of Documents

1. Proclamation Honoring Ingrid Marchesano – Item 5A
2. Body worn cameras – Item 6A
3. Proposed FY26-FY30 CIP – Item 7A
4. Materials from Frank Ding
5. Email from Peter Centola

**ADDENDUM TO THE
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY
28, 2025 CITY COUNCIL
MEETING**



City Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 7:00 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber

Agenda

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on January 28, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. Location: Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber
 - B. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch-now?site=3>
 - C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92991331344>
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- 1. ROLL CALL
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 3. PUBLIC FORUM
- 4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
- 5. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, AND SIMILAR PAPERS AND MATTERS
 - A. Proclamation Honoring Ingrid Marchesano
- 6. MOTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDER, AND RESOLUTIONS
 - A. Authorization to Sign a Five-Year Contract to Initiate and Maintain a Body Worn Camera Program for Sworn Police Officers
 - B. Pursuant to M.G.L. c.30, §39M(b) - Authorization of Proprietary Specifications for Improvements at the Parker Annex Building, including but not limited to, door locks & door hardware and ceramic wall tile as suggested by Ai3
- 7. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER
 - A. Submission of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 - 2030 Capital Improvement Program
- 8. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION/REVIEW OF LIST OF PENDING MATTERS
- 9. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 10. PUBLIC FORUM
- 11. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

CITY COUNCIL ATTENDANCE
MEETING DATE: JANUARY, 2025

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2025

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to accept a proclamation honoring Ingrid Marchesano



Watertown City Council

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

PROCLAMATION HONORING INGRID MARCHESANO

Whereas: The quality of life and spirit in a community is enhanced by the long-term and unwavering commitment and willingness of an employee to give of her time and numerous talents during employment; and,

Whereas: Ingrid Marchesano is being honored by the City Council, the Administration, Colleagues and Community Members for her 40 plus years of dedicated service to the Watertown community; and,

Whereas: Mrs. Marchesano came to Watertown from Europe with her husband, Vincenzo, where she began her career in planning as a draftsman on Newbury Street in Boston. Making Watertown home with their family, they created beautiful memories travelling, fishing and camping trips to Truro; and,

Whereas: Ingrid started her municipal planning career as the draftsman for the then Town of Watertown Conservation Commission in 1975, she then left Town employment for a short time and was appointed by Town Manager Peter F. Boyer where she rejoined the staff on March 28, 1984 with the Department of Community Development and Planning, for which she has continued discharging her duties professionally, faithfully, fairly, and honorably consistently over the last 40 years; and,

Whereas: During Ingrid's tenure, she served on a number of committees assisting the Administration and City Council on the Watertown Arsenal Development Committee, the Planning Board, the original Public Arts and Culture Committee, and many other City efforts; and,

Whereas: Mrs. Marchesano worked tirelessly with the department staff as it has grown in astronomical measure especially over these last few years, and always kept a close watch on the expenditure of City funds as if they were her own, while supporting the City in blazing new and innovative pathways in recent years; and,

Whereas: Ingrid, in her retirement, can now enjoy her time more freely with her beloved family, daughter Angela and her husband Mark, son John and his wife Amy, six beautiful grandchildren, Brady, Hannah, Zara, Enzo, Annabelle and Dante. Ingrid is devoted to her grandchildren and enthusiastically participates in all their activities including holiday time as one big happy family! and,

Whereas: Ingrid's culinary skills are the envy of Michelin Star-awarded restaurants including her ultimate baking skills that would "Crown" her best baker on the charming "Great British Bake Off." Her kitchen is a Food Network's dream, equipped with every gadget imaginable. When Ingrid is not having an adventure in the kitchen, she will now have more time for her joy of reading, Traveling the world, spending time with her countless-admiring friends, watching the Crown and QVC shopping!

Now Therefore Be It Resolved: That the City Council, acting on behalf of the people of Watertown, hereby extends their deepest appreciation to the Iconic Ingrid and takes great pride in honoring her and we thank her for her many years of service and extend its heartfelt congratulations to

Ingrid Marchesano on her Retirement from City Government

In Witness Whereof, we have
hereunto set our hand and caused the
Great Seal of the City of Watertown
to be affixed this fourth Tuesday of January, the 28th, 2025

Mark S. Sideris, Council President



CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2025

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to authorize a five year contract to initiate and maintain a body worn camera program for sworn police officers



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the City Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
www.watertown-ma.gov
citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager 

Date: January 16, 2025

RE: Agenda Item – Authorization to Sign Five Year Contract

Please find attached correspondence from Justin M. Hanrahan, Chief of Police, requesting approval for a five-year contract with Motorola in order to initiate and maintain a body worn camera program for sworn officers.

I respectfully request that this matter be placed on the City Council agenda for January 28, 2025 for favorable consideration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



WATERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

JUSTIN M. HANRAHAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

MEMORANDUM

TO: George Proakis, City Manager

FROM: Justin M. Hanrahan, Chief of Police 

DATE: January 16th, 2025

SUBJECT: 5-Year Body Worn Cameras, CAD-RMS

The police department requests approval to engage in a five-year agreement with Motorola in order to initiate and maintain a body worn camera program for sworn officers. Included in this agreement, Motorola will also transition the department to a new Computer-Aided Dispatch System and Records Management System as well as providing all of the necessary software and licensing to ensure that all three of these technology systems interact with each other.

The five-year span of this agreement amounts to a total cost of \$1,675,782.49. Motorola has given us a cost break down as follows:

Year 1 (FY25):	\$250,000.00
Year 2 (FY26):	\$476,328.75
Year 3 (FY27):	\$316,484.58
Year 4 (FY28):	\$316,484.58
Year 5 (FY29):	\$316,484.58

If approval is granted, \$234,000 in grant funding exists which will allow us to address the majority of the costs associated with the agreement's first year – FY25. Beyond this five-year agreement, an estimated cost to maintain these technologies is \$233,000.

JMH:jp

Cc: Ari Sky, CFO

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2025

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.30, §39M(b) - motion to approve the authorization of proprietary specifications for improvements at the Parker Annex Building, including but not limited to, door locks & door hardware and ceramic wall tile as suggested by Ai3.



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF WATERTOWN

Office of the City Manager

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149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6465

www.watertown-ma.gov

citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager 

Date: January 28, 2025

RE: Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program

Pursuant to the provisions of the Watertown Home Rule Charter, the attached City Council Resolution on the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Process, and the City Council Resolution on Watertown's Ongoing Capital Project Budget Guidelines, I herewith present the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2030 General Fund CIP totals \$273,090,100. The general obligation bonding requirement for the FY 2026-2030 CIP is \$169,474,200. The addition of the middle school project to the CIP, as discussed below, is driving a significant portion of the increased bonding requirements in this CIP.

As you are aware, the Capital Improvement Program is the method used to realistically show relatively expensive and higher-cost equipment and projects that need to be planned to ensure the City's infrastructure is adequately maintained.

Background

The attached document is the Proposed FY 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program. In the coming days we will update our projected debt chart to reflect this updated plan. Please note that, as we review financing, if we find that we are unable to afford all of the items in the early years of the CIP, some items may need to be adjusted, delayed, or removed from the chart.

For the purposes of the CIP, a capital item is defined as an asset with a useful life of at least two years and a purchase price of at least \$15,000. Items costing less than \$15,000 are included in the operating budget. In addition, items that are labeled "TR" or "tax revenue" are included both in the CIP (because of their relatively large expense) and in the "Capital Outlay" lines of the operating budget for the relevant departments or the "Transfer to Capital Projects" lines in the budget.

While it is easy to not fund maintenance repairs and equipment replenishment until something either falls down or stops running, this is poor planning, for at least two reasons:

1. It does not reflect the true cost each year of an item.
2. By maintaining buildings and equipment in good repair, the useful life of the item can be extended at a reasonable cost. Many communities wait until buildings, vehicles or equipment are in such a state of disrepair that a major overhaul, repair, or replacement is required at much greater expense.

Therefore, to maintain and improve its infrastructure, facilities, and equipment, the City should expect to make annual capital expenditures of at least 7.5% to 8% of the General Fund budget. In FY 2026, we are proposing a plan that would make annual capital expenditures about 7.2% of the General Fund budget.

Changes for the FY 2025-2029 Capital Plan

There is one change in the organization of the plan this year. The DPW building has been moved under the Public Buildings section of the document, as the Department of Public Buildings is managing these projects.

City Council Priorities

In October of 2024, in my preliminary budget overview, I identified the challenges of forthcoming capital projects and requested that the council provide policy guidance on these projects. The Honorable City Council, in the FY 2026 Budget Policy Guidelines indicated in Guideline II.D that the administration should, based on the final policy direction of the council, develop a budgetary plan, within the confines of Proposition 2 ½ for the following five unfunded capital projects:

- Senior Center/Recreation Center
- East End Fire Station
- DPW Staging Area
- Watertown Square Plan Implementation
- Middle School Renovations

The Honorable City Council provided that feedback in a Special Meeting of the Council on November 19, 2024. At that meeting, the Council supported a motion to make the Watertown Middle School project a high priority in the CIP. Further Council direction to the administration was as follows:

1. Prioritize the middle school, working to keep the budget at \$84.7 million, and borrowing at \$70 million with a combination of renovations and new construction
2. Seek to push the Senior Center / Recreation Center to the outer years of the current CIP, and implement a study to determine the best location for these programs, either together or separately.
3. Move the East End Fire Station out beyond the five-year CIP but continue to plan for its development and continue to seek a new site for this building if one becomes possible.
4. Continue to pursue funding for Watertown Square, but consider creative financing such as DIF financing, a Parking Benefits District, MassWorks grants, and funding through public-private partnerships.

5. Continue to consider temporary and permanent sites for additional DPW staging and snow storage.

The CIP complies with the City Council's guidelines through a combination of actions that ensure the availability of funding through a combination of direct appropriations and the timing of preparatory actions in advance of the actual projects. The identification of available funding required staff to review and eliminate planned debt that was being carried from prior years that is no longer needed, and to restructure and defer projects that were included in the CIP adopted last year in order to make space for additional projects. Nevertheless, the proposed plan increases total expenditures by about \$56.9 million over the FY 2025-2029 CIP.

Following is a breakdown of proposed projects by program area:

Administration

The proposed CIP includes \$24.6 million over the course of the five-year planning period for repairs to City Hall, the Parker Annex, and other City building projects. This amount includes \$11.4 million as placeholders, marked TBD in the CIP, from FY 2028-2030 for projects whose funding configuration is contingent upon corollary decisions, specifically:

- \$3.3 million for Parker Annex window replacement, which may be impacted by decisions related to the renovation of the middle school.
- \$1.0 million for demolition of the former Police facility, that may be able to be covered as a part of larger work in Watertown Square
- \$5.5 million for development of a downtown geothermal energy micro-grid, which would be executed in concert with energy improvements for the Main Library, system upgrades at City Hall, and redevelopment of Watertown Square.
- \$1.0 million in funding for the North Branch Library, for which the City will seek funding via the Community Preservation Act
- \$500,000 in upgrades to the multi-service center that will be reviewed in conjunction with the implementation of new Human Services programs by the City and its partners while implementing the new Health and Human Services Study.

The FY 2026-2030 CIP also includes the following adjustments:

- An additional \$230,000 for the completion of second-floor renovations at Parker Annex. This is about a 10% total budget increase from the funds identified in the FY 2025-2029 CIP, due to cost escalations.
- Consolidation of additional Parker School upgrades for code and ADA compliance. Some of this work will now need to be completed in FY 2026 due to code upgrades triggered by the other Parker Annex renovations in the coming year.

Community Development & Open Space

The proposed CIP includes \$48.9 million over the course of the five-year planning period for parks improvements, repairs to the Commander's Mansion, arts and monuments, and to support the redevelopment of Watertown Square. The preponderance of open space funding consists of \$15.1 million for Phases 2 and 3 of the Victory Field project in FY 2026-2028. In

addition, the plan contains \$5.25 million for Moxley Park and \$2.75 million for How Park, principally in the latter years of the CIP.

The proposed CIP also contains \$19.6 million in placeholders for projects whose funding configuration would be dependent on either outside sources/funding under the CPA or subject to future policy decisions, specifically:

- Community Preservation Act/Outside Sources: \$4.6 million for Walker Pond, Common Street Cemetery, and the historic path at the Commander's Mansion.
- Future Placeholder: \$15 million from FY 2028-2030 to support the redevelopment of Watertown Square for which the city will combine future borrowing with the partnership strategies noted above

Parks projects remain substantially on schedule, although some additional schedule adjustments were required to allow middle school funding to fit the CIP borrowing schedule. An addendum to this letter establishes the most updated park and open space project schedule.

Recreation & Parks

The CIP moved open space projects to Community Development in FY 2025. The remaining project provides \$200,000 over the course of the CIP to install Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) devices in City parks and facilities beginning in FY 2026.

Information Technology

The CIP maintains funding for IT equipment and technology improvements by including \$7.4 million dollars over the five-year planning period.

Fire Department

The CIP contains \$4.5 million over the planning period for vehicle and apparatus replacements and facilities improvements. Included in the plan are \$450,000 in FY 2026 for replacement of firefighter's outer gear, \$1.25 million in FY 2027 for replacement of Engine 3, \$550,000 in FY 2028 for replacement of an ambulance, and \$400,000 in FY 2029 for replacement of firefighters' AirPaks. Other projects include the replacement of three staff vehicles, miscellaneous facility repairs, and equipment replacements.

Library

The CIP contains \$725,000 over the planning period for miscellaneous renovations and repairs including \$100,000 in FY 2029 for a feasibility study to evaluate potential expansion of the Main Library, in concert with the Watertown Square redevelopment.

Police Department

The CIP includes \$3.8 million over the planning period for vehicle and equipment replacement. Included in the plan is \$1.58 million in FY 2026 to install Level 3 EV chargers and \$1.3 million in proposed tax revenue over the planning period to continue the scheduled replacement of patrol vehicles at the current rate of three vehicles per year. The City continues to annually fund the radio infrastructure and miscellaneous building improvements.

If the Honorable City Council supports the five-year contract with Motorola that is on the January 28, 2024 Council agenda which will initiate and maintain a body-worn camera program and to transition the department to new computer-aided dispatch and records management systems, the body-worn camera and records management items in the CIP are no longer required, as these costs will become annual operating budget expenses. The administration supports this effort as it will ensure that the City continues to receive upgraded equipment and maintenance service without the need for an extensive capital outlay every few years.

Department of Public Works

The CIP contains \$9.2 million over the planning period for vehicle and equipment replacement. Consistent with the City Council's Climate and Energy Plan, the proposed CIP includes funding for the replacement of electric vehicles of various types ranging from standard light vehicles to an electric street sweeper. DPW's capital program would be funded through a combination of tax revenue and short-term debt.

School Department

The capital plan for the School Department includes funding for the renovation and partial replacement of Watertown Middle School. Designated by the City Council as a priority project, the middle school renovation is proposed to be funded through a combination of \$14.7 million to be set aside in stabilization accounts in FY 2025 and FY 2026 and \$70 million in long-term debt. With the addition of a middle school renovation/rebuild project, over \$9 million in previously identified CIP expenditures for the building for FY 2026-2029 were removed from this year's CIP.

The School Department's overall capital plan totals \$82 million. In addition to the middle school, the CIP includes several repairs and improvements to the Phillips School building, the elementary schools, as well as a number of miscellaneous improvements throughout the school system. A total of \$5.78 million of requested CIP items were not able to be funded in this plan, mostly in the form of upgrades to the Phillips School. The administration and school department will continue to work to fund these items as possible.

Public Buildings

The CIP contains \$3.3 million for various improvements and replacements. Included in the plan is \$2.0 million in FY 2026 to replace the roof and install a solar canopy at the Department of Public Works facility on Orchard Street, and \$450,000 to add EV stations throughout the City.

Senior Center

The capital plan contains \$25.2 million for the senior center. This amount principally consists of a \$25 million placeholder in FY 2030 for the construction of the new senior center, as noted above. Also included is funding for ongoing maintenance and a new shuttle bus in FY 2027, for which we will seek alternate funding.

Skating Arena

The CIP contains \$1.6 million dollars to fund various repairs and renovations at the John A. Ryan Skating Arena. A new item on the CIP anticipates borrowing \$1.25 million in FY 2027-2028 for the replacement of the rink's flooring and underlying plumbing.

Streets & Sidewalks

The CIP contains \$61.6 million over the course of the planning period to fund street and sidewalk improvements at various locations throughout the City. \$20.7 million is proposed to be funded by State revenue. Additionally, \$1 million has been included in FY 2028 as a placeholder to safeguard against unforeseen issues with the Mt. Auburn Street corridor project. Further, the plan anticipates continuation of the General Fund's annual support for transportation projects, as well as continued bond funding for sidewalk reconstruction. The CIP, despite the additional borrowing for the middle school project, is able to retain funding for street and sidewalk projects at the same level anticipated in the previous CIP.

Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2030 plans for the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds are forthcoming and will be submitted to the Honorable City Council in the coming days, along with a memo summarizing relevant background information. All work to the water, sewer, and drain systems directly impact water and sewer rates. Interest-free loans and grants, when secured, will enable the City to perform the necessary work while minimizing impact of these important upgrades on ratepayers.

Revisions to Planned Debt

Staff conducted a thorough review of previously planned debt through FY 2025 to determine whether planned projects should proceed or be cancelled or deferred. Several instances were identified where subsequent decisions or circumstances necessitated a change in strategy for these projects going forward. Significant eliminations/deferrals are listed below.

Project	Fiscal Year	Amount	Disposition
Comm. Path Design (Taylor/Linear)	2018	\$325,000	Deferred to FY28 & FY29 to be integrated with the Watertown Square Project
Comm. Path Construction (Taylor/Linear)	2020	\$3,000,000	Deferred to FY28 & FY29 to be integrated with the Watertown Square Project
High School Design	2023	\$9,789,779	Removed, design has been completed
Sullivan Playground	2022	\$700,000	Construction deferred to FY27, new cost estimate of \$550,000
Victory Field Phase 3	2022-2023	\$4,375,000	Deferred to FY 2027-2028, design cost reduced by \$250,000 per new estimates
Middle School Renovations	2022-2025	\$3,410,000	Eliminated (replaced by new project)
DPW Roof Replacement	2023	\$2,000,000	Deferred to FY 2026
City Hall Repairs	2023-2025	\$1,405,000	Deferred to FY 2026-2030 Planning Period
Deferred Projects:		\$11,805,000	
Eliminated Projects:		\$13,199,779	

Prior Year Projects:

Appendix B to this memo identifies prior year CIP projects that were previously confirmed or re-confirmed By the Honorable City Council in the FY 2025 Conceptual Recommendations.

Conclusion

I look forward to working with the Honorable City Council in their review and adoption of conceptual recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program.

Attachments:

1. Appendix A: Park Projects
2. Appendix B: Current and Prior-Year Projects
3. FY 2026-2030 Proposed Capital Improvement Plan

cc: Honorable School Committee
Honorable Library Board of Trustees
School Building Committee
All Department Heads

APPENDIX A: Parks Project Update

Parks Projects Completed:

Irving Park; Moxley Court; Filippello Splash Pad; Victory Turf; Lower Saltonstall Park

Parks Projects Underway:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Construction Timeline</u>	<u>CIP FY</u>
Arsenal Phase B	Complete mid-2025	2021
Lowell Playground	Complete by September 2025	2020
Upper Saltonstall	Complete Summer 2025	2024

Future Parks Projects:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Construction Timeline</u>	<u>CIP FY</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Victory Phase II	Start July 2025	2026	New cost estimate
How Playground	Summer 2025	2023	
Bemis Playground	Summer 2025	2021/25	CPA funding request
Walker Pond	Spring 2026	2025/26	
Sullivan Playground	Summer 2026	2027	
Victory Phase III	Summer 2027	2028	Delay one year
Saltonstall Tot Lot	Summer 2027	2028	Move one year earlier
Victory Tot Lot	Summer 2028	2028/29	
How Park Phase II	Summer 2029	2030	
Moxley Field	Summer 2029	2028/30	Delay for middle school
Filippello Grove	Summer 2031	n/a	Delay to 2031
Filippello Pickleball	Summer 2031	n/a	Delay to 2031 or seek other funds
Casey Park/Playground	Summer 2031	n/a	Delay to 2031
Filippello Arlington Playground	Summer 2032	n/a	Delay to 2032

Appendix B: Current & Prior-Year Projects

FY 2018 CIP Projects

Project	Amount	Council Rec	Status
Community Path Taylor/Saltonstall	\$325k	re-confirm #3	Removed/replaced in FY28 @ \$325K

FY 2020 CIP Projects

Project	Amount	Council Rec	Status
Community Path Taylor/Saltonstall	\$3.0 mil	re-confirm #4	Removed/replaced in FY29 @ \$3.0 mil

FY 2022 CIP Projects

Project	Amount	Council Rec	Status
Sullivan Playground	\$700k	re-confirm #7	Removed/replace in FY27 @ \$550k
Victory Phase III design	\$375k	re-confirm #8	Removed/replace in FY27 @ \$125k

FY 2023 CIP Projects

Project	Amount	Council Rec	Status
City Hall Design	\$205k	remove #9a remove #9b re-confirm #9c	\$40k Masonry Design completed w. Transfer \$120k HVAC Design completed w. Transfer \$45k roof replacement design
IT improvements	\$500k	re-confirm #10	Forthcoming
Library Improvements	\$200k	remove #11a re-confirm #11b	Completed in FY25 Forthcoming
DPW roof/vehicle/water heater	\$2.23 mil	re-confirm #12a remove #12b remove #12c	Design underway: construction in FY26 Completed Completed
Victory Phase III construction	\$4.0 mil	re-confirm #13	Removed/replace in FY28 @ \$4.0mil
How Park	\$500k	re-confirm #14	Scheduled 2025 w/additional 2026 CIP funds
Middle School	\$1.34m	remove #15	Removed due to Middle School Project

FY 2024 CIP Projects

Project	Amount	Council Rec	Status
Midde School HVAC	\$72k	remove #17a	Removed due to Middle School Project
District Security	\$95k	re-confirm #17b	Forthcoming
Admin Building Upgrades	\$1.15 mil	remove #20	Completed with FY24 YE Transfers
Parker Annex	\$1.28 mil	re-confirm #21	Forthcoming
IT Improvements	\$1.14 mil	re-confirm #22	Forthcoming
Fire improvements	\$310k	re-confirm #23	Forthcoming
Library Improvements	\$786.3k	re-confirm #24	Forthcoming
Police Improvements	\$37k	re-confirm #25	Forthcoming
DPW Improvements	\$960k	remove #26	Loan Order Authorized in FY25
Lowell Playground	\$650k	remove #27	In Progress, to be completed FY26
Skating Rink Improvements	\$171k	remove #28	Completed with FY24 YE Transfer
Local Road Construction	\$2.625 mil	remove #30	Completed
Connectors & Longer Streets	\$2.1 mil	re-confirm #31	Forthcoming
Underground Ducts for Utilities	\$300k	remove #32	Loan order issued in FY25

FY 2025 CIP Projects

Project	Amount	Council Rec	Status
Admin Building Upgrades	\$140K	remove #33	Completed with FY24 YE Transfer
Parker Annex	\$2.341 mil	remove #34a	Completed with FY24 YE Transfer
		re-confirm #34b	Scheduled in FY25, add'l request in FY26 CIP
Commander's Mansion	\$350k	re-confirm #35	Forthcoming
Bemis Playground	\$960k	re-confirm #36	Scheduled in Summer 2025
IT Improvements	\$1.1 mil	re-confirm #37	Forthcoming
Fire Improvements	\$1.76 mil	remove #38a & b	Completed
		re-confirm #38 c	Forthcoming
		remove #38 d & e	Loan Order Authorized in FY25
Library Improvement	\$75k	remove #39	Completed with FY24 YE Transfer
Police Improvements	\$1.62 mil	remove #40a & c	Forthcoming w/ Operating Budget
		re-confirm #40b & d	Forthcoming
DPW Improvements	\$1.157mil	remove #41b	Loan Order Authorized in FY25
		re-confirm #41a, c-g	Forthcoming
School Improvements	\$1.015 mil	remove #42 a-d	Removed due to Middle School Project
		re-confirm #42e	Forthcoming
Skating Rink Improvements	\$225k	remove #43 a & b	Completed with FY24 YE Transfers
		re-confirm #43c	Forthcoming
Local Road Construction	\$2.2 mil	re-confirm #45	Forthcoming
Mt. Auburn Non-Participatory	\$500k	re-confirm #46	Forthcoming

**FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund**

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
2	Administration Building											
3	Administration Building Improvements/Renovations	217.0	25.0	TR	45.0	TR	47.0	TR	49.0	TR	51.0	TR
4	Replace Carpets	45.0	45.0	TR								
5	Paint Hallway/Offices	50.0	50.0	TR								
6	Additional Roof/Masonry	300.0	300.0	BR								
7	Upgrade Fire Sprinkler System Design/Install	790.0							90.0	BR	700.0	BR
8	Security & Accessibility Improv	660.0			60.0	BR	600.0	BR				
9	Lighting & Electrical Upgrades	300.0					300.0	BR				
10	Building Retocommissioning Study & HVAC	2,225.0					325.0	BR	1,900.0	BR		
11												
12	PARKER ANNEX											
13	Move of Departments	100.0	100.0	TR								
14	Parker Annex Building Improvement/Renovations	270.0	50.0	TR	52.0	TR	54.0	TR	56.0	TR	58.0	TR
15	Parker 2nd Floor Renovations	230.0	230.0	BR								
16	Parker ADA/Code Update Requirements	4,528.0	2,106.0	BR	875.0	BR	1,547.0	BR				
17	Retrocommissioning Study	75.0	75.0	BR								
18	Retrocommissioning Upgrades	1,600.0	800.0	BR	800.0	BR						
19	Parker Roof Design/Replacement	1,210.0			110.0	BR	1,100.0	BR				
20	Parker Window Design Replacement	3,300.0							300.0	TBD	3,000.0	TBD
21	Masonry Additional Costs	350.0	350.0	BR								
22												
23	MISC BUILDING PROJECTS											
24	Energy Efficiency Projects	250.0	50.0	ER	50.0	ER	50.0	ER	50.0	ER	50.0	ER
25	Former Police Facility	1,000.0							1,000.0	TBD		
26	Multi-Service Center Renovation	500.0							500.0	TBD		
27	Renovation/Reuse former North Branch	1,100.0					1,100.0	TBD				
28	Geothermal Upgrades	5,500.0							500.0	TBD	5,000.0	TBD
29	ADMINISTRATION & PARKER SUBTOTAL	24,600.0	4,181.0		1,992.0		5,123.0		4,445.0		8,859.0	
30												
31	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT											
32	Monument Restoration & Replacement	75.0	15.0	TR	15.0	TR	15.0	TR	15.0	TR	15.0	TR
33	Public Art	235.0	40.0	TR	45.0	TR	50.0	TR	50.0	TR	50.0	TR
34	Commander's Mansion	150.0	30.0	TR	30.0	TR	30.0	TR	30.0	TR	30.0	TR
35	Watertown Sq Transportation Charges	15,000.0					5,000.0	TBD	5,000.0	TBD	5,000.0	TBD
36												
37	OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS											
38	Walker Pond Design/Construction	2,500.0	2,500.0	TBD								
39	Common St Cemetery & Old Burying Ground	1,800.0			1,800.0	TBD						
40	Commander's Mansion Historic Path								150.0	TBD	150.0	TBD
41	Lower Saltonstall Tot Lot & Equipment	400.0					400.0	BR				

**FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund**

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
42	Tot Lot/Court Resurfacing as needed	560.0	100.0	TR	105.0	TR	110.0	TR	120.0	TR	125.0	TR
43	COMM. PATH DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION(TAYLOR/LINEAR)	3,325.0					325.0	BR	3,000.0	BR		
44	Sullivan Park Construction	550.0			550.0	BR						
47	How Park Phase 1	650.0	650.0	BR								
48	How Park Phase 2 Construction	2,100.0									2,100.0	BR
49	Moxley Park: Design: Field, Nets, Bleachers, Dugouts	250.0					250.0	BR				
50	Moxley Park: Install: Field, Nets, Bleachers, Dugouts	5,000.0									5,000.0	BR
51	Victory Field Design/Install Tot-Lot	900.0					100.0	BR	800.0	BR		
52	Victory Track, Field & CRT Reno - Phase 2	11,000.0	11,000.0	BR								
53	Victory Filed Phase III - Field House & Elevator Design	4,125.0			125.0	BR	4,000.0	BR				
54	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUBTOTAL	48,920.0	14,335.0		2,670.0		10,280.0		9,165.0		12,470.0	
55												
56	RECREATION & PARKS											
57	AEDs in Rec Facilities	200.0	40.0	BE	40.0	BE	40.0	BE	40.0	BE	40.0	BE
58	RECREATION & PARKS SUBTOTAL	200.0	40.0		40.0		40.0		40.0		40.0	
59												
60	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY											
61	Additional Equipment	85.0	15.0	TR	16.0	TR	17.0	TR	18.0	TR	19.0	TR
62	Replacement of Equipment	695.0	135.0	TR	137.0	TR	139.0	TR	141.0	TR	143.0	TR
63	IT Infrastructure Improvements	1,000.0	200.0	BE	200.0	BE	200.0	BE	200.0	BE	200.0	BE
64	Permitting and Transparency Dashboards	750.0	150.0	BE	150.0	BE	150.0	BE	150.0	BE	150.0	BE
65	Video Security and Access Control	1,000.0	200.0	TR	200.0	TR	200.0	TR	200.0	TR	200.0	TR
66	Fiber Loop Build-out and Cabling	750.0	150.0	TR	150.0	TR	150.0	TR	150.0	TR	150.0	TR
67	Document Scanning	1,000.0	200.0	BE	200.0	BE	200.0	BE	200.0	BE	200.0	BE
68	MUNIS Financial System Enhancements	500.0	100.0	BE	100.0	BE	100.0	BE	100.0	BE	100.0	BE
69	Hybrid Meeting Technology	375.0	75.0	TR	75.0	TR	75.0	TR	75.0	TR	75.0	TR
70	Parker Annex Technology	470.0	50.0	BE	105.0	BE	105.0	BE	105.0	BE	105.0	BE
71	Digital Equity and Broadband	750.0	150.0	BE	150.0	BE	150.0	BE	150.0	BE	150.0	BE
72	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUBTOTAL	7,375.0	1,425.0		1,483.0		1,486.0		1,489.0		1,492.0	
73												
74	FIRE DEPARTMENT											
75	ALS Ambulance Medical Equipment	200.0	40.0	TR	40.0	TR	40.0	TR	40.0	TR	40.0	TR
76	Chief's, & staff vehicles (2)	160.0			80.0	TR			80.0	TR		
77	Fire Building Improvements/Renovations	300.0	60.0	TR	60.0	TR	60.0	TR	60.0	TR	60.0	TR
78	East End Fire Station HVAC/Plumbing	126.0	126.0	BR								
79	East End Fire Station Painting-Carpet-Lighting	121.0	121.0	BR								
80	Main Station Interior Repairs	100.0					100.0	BR				
81	DOT Type III Emergency Ambulance Vehicle	550.0					550.0	BE				
82	Incident Command Vehicle (Deputy Chief)	120.0	120.0	TR								
83	Firefighters Protective Outer Gear	450.0	450.0	BE								

FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
84	Main Station HVAC Replacement	250.0			250.0	BR						
85	Engine Truck, replacement for 2013 Engine 3	1,250.0			1,250.0	BE						
86	Main Station Shop Air Compressor Replacement	20.0					20.0	TR				
87	Trailer Replacement for 1998 Special Rescue Trailer	20.0					20.0	TR				
88	Unmanned Aerial System Replacement	25.0			25.0	TR						
89	Replament 2 Cardiac Monitors	165.0							165.0	BE		
90	Gear Extractors & Dryer (3 each)	110.0							110.0	BE		
91	Scott AirPak Replacement	400.0							400.0	BE		
92	Solar Powered Radio Box for Emergency Reporting (5)	75.0									75.0	BE
93	Main & North Station Security Upgrades/Access Control	50.0									50.0	BE
94	UTV Replacement	50.0									50.0	BE
95	FIRE DEPARTMENT SUBTOTAL	4,542.0	917.0		1,705.0		790.0		855.0		275.0	
96												
97	LIBRARY											
98	Feasability Study for Library Expansion	100.0							100.0	BR		
99	Painting	250.0	50.0	TR	50.0	TR	50.0	TR	50.0	TR	50.0	TR
100	Building Renovations/Replacement of Equip	375.0	75.0	TR	75.0	TR	75.0	TR	75.0	TR	75.0	TR
101	LIBRARY DEPARTMENT SUBTOTAL	725.0	125.0		125.0		125.0		225.0		125.0	
102												
103	POLICE DEPARTMENT											
104	Police Cruisers (3 annually)	1,359.3	246.0	TR	258.3	TR	271.2	TR	284.8	TR	299.0	TR
105	Radio Infrastructure/specialized equipment	200.0	40.0	TR	40.0	TR	40.0	TR	40.0	TR	40	TR
106	Police Building Improvements/Renovations	170.0	30.0	TR	32.0	TR	34.0	TR	36.0	TR	38	TR
107	Video System Security Server Replacement	48.0	48.0	BE								
108	Replace Tactical Bullet Proof Vests	15.0	15.0	TR								
109	Level 3 EV Charging Station Install	1,585.0	1,585.0	BE								
110	Sani Sort Ozone Sanitizer	20.0			20.0	TR						
111	Perimeter Fencing at Station	31.0					31.0	TR				
112	Security Switch Replacement	34.0	34.0	BE								
113	Fingerprint Machine	29.0									29.0	TR
114	LED Lighting through Interior Facility	100.0									100.0	BR
115	Transport Vehicle (Ford F150 EV)	82.0									82.0	BE
116	Mobile Data Terminal System Replacement	158.2					158.2	BE				
117	POLICE SUBTOTAL	3,831.5	1,998.0		350.3		534.4		360.8		588.0	
118												
119	PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT											
120	FLEET											
121	Staff Replacement Electric Vehicles	370.0	70.0	TR	72.0	TR	74.0	TR	76.0	TR	78.0	TR
122	Additional Equipment	125.0	25.0	TR	25.0	TR	25.0	TR	25.0	TR	25	TR
123	Traffic Supervisor Vehicle - #C10	80.0	80.0	BE								

**FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund**

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
124	Service Truck	110.0							110.0	BE		
125	Animal Control Vehicle	75.0			75.0	BE						
126	Electrician Supervisor Pickup Truck (#C8)	90.0					90.0	BE				
127	Fleet Pick-up Truck	80.0			80.0	BE						
128	Engineer SE AWD #126	65.0									65.0	BE
129	Pool Car EcoBoost Engineer #old C3	50.0									50.0	BE
130	Electric Admin #127	60.0							60.0	BE		
131	Electric Admin #128	65.0									65.0	BE
132	FLEET SUBTOTAL	1,170.0	175.0		252.0		189.0		271.0		283.0	
133												
134	HIGHWAY											
135	Replacement of Equipment	210.0	38.0	TR	40.0	TR	42.0	TR	44.0	TR	46.0	TR
138	Heavy Duty Dump Truck #40	240.0			240.0	BE						
139	Electric Street Sweeper #21	600.0			600.0	BE						
140	Backhoe #12	150.0					150.0	BE				
141	Loader #29	325.0					325.0	BE				
142	Hot Box #49	300.0	300.0	BE								
143	Triaxle Dump Truck with Sliding Sander & Plow #43	320.0							320.0	BE		
144	6-Wheel Dump Truck #34	290.0					290.0	BE				
145	Paint Crew Truck #26	160.0							160.0	BE		
146	Skid Steer #102	90.0									90.0	BE
147	HIGHWAY SUBTOTAL	2,685.0	338.0		880.0		807.0		524.0		136.0	
148												
149	SNOW & ICE REMOVAL											
150	Plows, Sanders, Salt control units/Replacement	400.0	80.0	TR	80.0	TR	80.0	TR	80.0	TR	80.0	TR
151	2-Salter 6 Wheelers (#18 & #39)	625.0							625.0	BE		
152	4x4 Sander (#37 & #38)	620.0	320.0	BE							300.0	BE
153	Snow Fighter (#5)	340.0					340.0	BE				
154	Salt Shed Repair	400.0									400.0	BR
155	Sander #20	165.0									165.0	BE
156	Sidewalk Tractor #48	200.0									200.0	BE
157	SNOW & ICE REMOVAL SUBTOTAL	2,750.0	400.0		80.0		420.0		705.0		1,145.0	
158												
159	CEMETARY											
160	Improvements	143.0	25.0	TR	27.0	TR	29.0	TR	30.0	TR	32.0	TR
161	Cemetery Expansion Feasability Study	50.0									50.0	TBD
162	Dump Truck (#79)	90.0			90.0	BE						
163	Dump Truck 4X4 #202	100.0	100.0	BE								
164	Utility Vehicle #C7	85.0			85.0	BE						
165	CEMETERY SUBTOTAL	468.0	125.0		202.0		29.0		30.0		82.0	

FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
166												
167	PARKS & FORESTRY											
168	Improvements	240.0	48.0	TR	48.0	TR	48.0	TR	48.0	TR	48.0	TR
169	Additional Equipment	75.0	15.0	TR	15.0	TR	15.0	TR	15.0	TR	15.0	TR
170	Replacement of Equipment	220.0	40.0	TR	42.0	TR	44.0	TR	46.0	TR	48.0	TR
171	Backhoe #25	140.0			140.0	BE						
172	4x4 Landscape Dump Truck #78	160.0			160.0	BE						
173	Chipper Body #74	200.0	200.0	BE								
174	Pickup Truck #72	85.0							85.0	BE		
175	Dump Truck #75	140.0					140.0	BE				
176	Irrigation intallation & improvements	300.0					100.0	BE	100.0	BE	100.0	BE
177	PARKS & FORESTRY SUBTOTAL	1,560.0	303.0		405.0		347.0		294.0		211.0	
178												
179	TRAFFIC CONTROL											
180	Replacement of Equipment	145.0	25.0	TR	27.0	TR	29.0	TR	31.0	TR	33.0	TR
181	Adaptive Traffic Management	100.0			100.0	BE						
182	Bucket Truck #15	200.0									200.0	BE
183	TRAFFIC CONTROL SUBTOTAL	445.0	25.0		127.0		29.0		31.0		233.0	
184												
185	STREET LIGHTING & WIRING											
186	Replacement of Equipment	100.0					100.0	TR				
187	STREET LIGHTING & WIRING SUBTOTAL	100.0	0.0		0.0		100.0		0.0		0.0	
188												
189	TOTAL DPW - TBD	50.0	0.0	TBD	0.0	TBD	0.0	TBD	0.0	TBD	50.0	TBD
190	TOTAL DPW - TR	2,028.0	366.0	TR	376.0	TR	486.0	TR	395.0	TR	405.0	TR
191	TOTAL DPW - BE	6,700.0	1,000.0	BE	1,570.0	BE	1,435.0	BE	1,460.0	BE	1,235.0	BE
192	TOTAL DPW - BR	400.0	0.0	BR	0.0	BR	0.0	BR	0.0	BR	400.0	BR
193	PUBLIC WORKS SUBTOTAL	9,178.0	1,366.0		1,946.0		1,921.0		1,855.0		2,090.0	
194												
195	SCHOOL DEPARTMENT											
196	CUNNIFF SCHOOL											
197	Cell Communication Enhancement	250.0			250.0	STBD						
198	RetroCommisioning Study/Repairs (Years 6-7)	475.0			75.0	TR	400.0	BR				
199	Generator Design/Install	750.0							150.0	BR	600.0	BR
200	Total for Cunniff	1,475.0	0.0		325.0		400.0		150.0		600.0	
201												
202	HOSMER SCHOOL											
203	Cell Communication Enhancement	250.0	250.0	STBD								
204	RetroCommisioning Study/Repairs (Years 6-7)	600.0					100.0	TR	500.0	BR		
205	Total for Hosmer	850.0	250.0		0.0		100.0		500.0		0.0	

**FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund**

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
206												
207	LOWELL SCHOOL											
208	Cell Communication Enhancement (IT)	250.0					250.0	STBD				
209	RetroCommisioning Study/Repairs (Years 6-7)	600.0							100.0	TR	500.0	BR
210	Generator Design/Install	750.0							150.0	BR	600.0	BR
211	Total for Lowell	1,600.0	0.0		0.0		250.0		250.0		1,100.0	
212												
213	WATERTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL											
214	New Middle School Project	70,000.0	10,000.0	BR	30,000.0	BR	30,000.0	BR				
215	Total for Middle School	70,000.0	10,000.0		30,000.0		30,000.0		0.0		0.0	
216												
217	WATERTOWN HIGH SCHOOL	0.0										
219	Total for High School	0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0	
220												
221	PHILLIPS SCHOOL											
222	Bathroom Fixture Upgrades	180.0	60.0	STBD	60.0	STBD	60.0	STBD				
223	Window Damages/Replacements	1,125.0	125.0	STBD	1,000.0	STBD						
224	Masonry Repairs	222.0	222.0	BR								
225	Design and Install New Generator	300.0	300.0	STBD								
226	Design/Modernize/Replace Elevator	400.0					100.0	STBD	300.0	STBD		
227	Network/Wiring Upgrades	300.0							300.0	STBD		
228	Roof Repairs/Replacement	1,100.0			100.0	BR	1,000.0	BR				
229	Design/Deep Energy Retrofit Heat Pumps	700.0					100.0	STBD	600.0	STBD		
230	Rekey Doors	150.0	150.0	STBD								
231	Total for Phillips School	4,327.0	707.0		1,160.0		1,260.0		1,200.0		0.0	
232												
233	DISTRICT											
234	Update Food Service Equipment	150.0	30.0	TR	30.0	TR	30.0	TR	30.0	TR	30.0	TR
235	Signage Improvements	300.0	100.0	STBD	100.0	STBD	100.0	STBD				
236	School Building Exterior Repairs/Masonary Repointing	1,250.0	250.0	STBD	250.0	STBD	250.0	STBD	250.0	STBD	250.0	STBD
237	Furniture Replacement	250.0	50.0	STBD	50.0	STBD	50.0	STBD	50.0	STBD	50.0	STBD
238	Security System Enhancements	475.0	95.0	BR	95.0	BR	95.0	BR	95.0	BR	95.0	BR
239	School Technology	500.0	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA
240	Refrigerated Food Service Van	75.0			75.0	STBD						
241	Interior Painting	625.0	125.0	TR	125.0	TR	125.0	TR	125.0	TR	125.0	TR
242	Total for District	3,625.0	750.0		825.0		750.0		650.0		650.0	
243												
244	SCHOOL DEPARTMENT TOTALS											
245	Total School Technology - SA	500.0	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA
246	Total Various School Improvements - TR	1,050.0	155.0	TR	230.0	TR	255.0	TR	255.0	TR	155.0	TR

FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
247	Total Various School Improvements- STBD	5,780.0	1,285.0	STBD	1,785.0	STBD	910.0	STBD	1,500.0	STBD	300.0	STBD
248	Total Various School Improvements - MSBA	0.0	0.0	MSBA	0.0	MSBA	0.0	MSBA	0.0	MSBA	0.0	MSBA
249	Total Various School Improvements - DE	0.0	0.0	DE	0.0	DE	0.0	DE	0.0	DE	0	DE
250	Total Various School Improvements - BE	0.0	0.0	BE	0.0	BE	0.0	BE	0.0	BE	0	BE
251	Total Various School Improvements - BR	74,697.0	10,317.0	BR	30,195.0	BR	31,495.0	BR	895.0	BR	1,795.0	BR
252	SCHOOL DEPARTMENT SUBTOTAL	82,027.0	11,857.0		32,310.0		32,760.0		2,750.0		2,350.0	
253												
254	PUBLIC BUILDINGS											
255	Vehicles & Snow Equipment	300.0	60.0	BE	60.0	BE	60.0	BE	60.0	BE	60	BE
256	Equipment Inventory	150.0	150.0	BE								
257	Add EV Stations	450.0	90.0	BR	90.0	BR	90.0	BR	90.0	BR	90.0	BR
258												
259	DPW BUILDING											
261	Roof Replace/solar & Solar Canopy DPW Pkg Lot	2,000.0	2,000.0	BR								
262	Garage Fan & Doors	200.0	200.0	BR								
263	Generator Replacement	200.0							200.0	BR		
264	PUBLIC BUILDINGS SUBTOTAL	3,300.0	2,500.0		150.0		150.0		350.0		150.0	
265												
266	SENIOR CENTER											
267	Building Improvements	95.0	15.0	TR	17.0	TR	19.0	TR	21.0	TR	23.0	TR
268	Shuttle Bus	150.0			150.0	TBD						
269	Senior Center	25,000.0									25,000.0	TBD
270	SENIOR CENTER SUBTOTAL	25,245.0	15.0		167.0		19.0		21.0		25,023.0	
271												
272	SKATING ARENA											
273	Building Renovations	170.0	30.0	TR	32.0	TR	34.0	TR	36.0	TR	38	TR
274	Rebuild of Compressors	50.0	25.0	BR					25.0	BR		
275	Upgrade of Internal Lighting to LED	30.0	30.0	BR								
276	Garage Doors Zamboni Room	30.0			30.0	BR						
277	Replacement of Rink Flooring	1,250.0			50.0	TR	1,200.0	BR				
278	Rink Netting	30.0	30.0	TR								
279	SKATING ARENA SUBTOTAL	1,560.0	115.0		112.0		1,234.0		61.0		38.0	
280												
281	STREETS & SIDEWALKS											
282	Mt. Auburn St. Corridor (Irving St-Coolidge Sq.-Cambridge line)	15,000.0	7,500.0	TIP	7,500.0	TIP						
283	Mt Auburn TIP overruns above 10%	1,000.0					1,000.0	TBD				
284	Mt. Auburn St. Non participatory funds	1,000.0	500.0	BR	500.0	BR	500.0	BR				
285	Ornamental Street Lighting	1,500.0	300.0	BR	300.0	BR	300.0	BR	300.0	BR	300.0	BR
286	Highway reconstruction (Chap 90)	1,875.0	375.0	C9	375.0	C9	375.0	C9	375.0	C9	375.0	C9

FY 2026 - FY 2030
CIP General Fund

	C	D	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		TOTALS	FY '26		FY '27		FY '28		FY '29		FY '30	
287	Highway reconstruction (Tax Revenue)	3,930.8	711.4	TR	746.9	TR	784.3	TR	823.5	TR	864.7	TR
288	Highway reconstruction (Bonds)	12,500.0	2,300.0	STB	2,400.0	STB	2,500.0	STB	2,600.0	STB	2,700.0	STB
289	Highway reconstr.- Connector Roads/Longer Streets	12,500.0	2,300.0	STB	2,400.0	STB	2,500.0	STB	2,600.0	STB	2,700.0	STB
290	Sidewalk reconstruction (Chap 90)	1,875.0	375.0	C9	375.0	C9	375.0	C9	375.0	C9	375.0	C9
291	Sidewalk reconstruction (Tax Revenue)	3,930.8	711.4	TR	746.9	TR	784.3	TR	823.5	TR	864.7	TR
292	Fair Share Amendment (Chap 90)	1,950.0	390.0	C9	390.0	C9	390.0	C9	390.0	C9	390.0	C9
293	Underground Duct for Utilities	900.0	300.0	BR			300.0	BR			300.0	BR
294	Sidewalk reconstruction (Bonds)	3,125.0	575.0	SWB	600.0	SWB	625.0	SWB	650.0	SWB	675.0	SWB
295	STREETS & SIDEWALKS SUBTOTAL	61,586.6	16,337.8		16,333.8		10,433.6		8,937.0		9,544.4	
296												
297	GENERAL FUND CIP	273,090.1	55,211.8		59,384.1		64,896.0		30,553.8		63,044.4	
298												
299	COSTS BY SOURCE OF FUNDS											
300	GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS											
301	(EQUIPMENT)	16,827.2	4,217.0	BE	3,825.0	BE	3,148.2	BE	3,140.0	BE	2,497.0	BE
302	(REMODELING)	124,522.0	29,520.0	BR	33,885.0	BR	42,932.0	BR	7,400.0	BR	10,785.0	BR
303	(STREET)	25,000.0	4,600.0	STB	4,800.0	STB	5,000.0	STB	5,200.0	STB	5,400.0	STB
304	(SIDEWALK)	3,125.0	575.0	SWB	600.0	SWB	625.0	SWB	650.0	SWB	675.0	SWB
305	SUBTOTAL GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS	169,474.2	38,912.0		43,110.0		51,705.2		16,390.0		19,357.0	
306												
307	CHAPTER 90 FUNDS	5,700.0	1,140.0	C9	1,140.0	C9	1,140.0	C9	1,140.0	C9	1,140.0	C9
310	SCHOOL TO BE DETERMINED	5,780.0	1,285.0	STBD	1,785.0	STBD	910.0	STBD	1,500.0	STBD	300.0	STBD
311	TAX REVENUE	19,185.9	3,724.8	TR	3,749.1	TR	3,890.8	TR	3,923.8	TR	3,897.4	TR
312	SCHOOL APPROPRIATION	500.0	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA	100.0	SA
313	TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROG.	15,000.0	7,500.0	TIP	7,500.0	TIP	0.0	TIP	0.0	TIP	0.0	TIP
314	Energy Rebate Revenue	250.0	50.0	ER	50.0	ER	50.0	ER	50.0	ER	50.0	ER
315	TO BE DETERMINED	57,200.0	2,500.0	TBD	1,950.0	TBD	7,100.0	TBD	7,450.0	TBD	38,200.0	TBD
316	SUBTOTAL OTHER	103,615.9	16,299.8		16,274.1		13,190.8		14,163.8		43,687.4	
317	GRAND TOTAL	273,090.1	55,211.8		59,384.1		64,896.0		30,553.8		63,044.4	



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Auditor

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472-4410

Megan Langan
City Auditor

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

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: Megan Langan, City Auditor *ML*

DATE: October 7, 2024

RE: Proposed Resolution – Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Process

WHEREAS: Article 5 of the Watertown Home Rule Charter sets out a process for the development and adoption of the annual operating budget and capital improvement program; and

WHEREAS: The City Council wishes to establish a timeline, consistent with the Charter, by which it will provide policy guidance to the City Manager on the development of the budget and capital improvement program; and

WHEREAS: Such a timeline will also give city residents notice of their opportunity to offer input on these important financial matters;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of the City of Watertown establishes the following timeline for the development of the Fiscal Year 2026 operating budget and capital improvement program:

1. The Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Overview will be presented to the City Council by October 22, 2024.
2. The City Council will adopt its Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Policy Guidelines by November 25, 2024.
3. The proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program will be presented to the City Council by January 21, 2025.
4. The City Council will adopt its conceptual recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program by February 25, 2025, subject to the availability of funds.



Watertown Town Council

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

ELECTED
OFFICIALS:

Resolution # 84

2017- R - 84

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President

Michael F. Dattoli,
Councilor At Large

Aaron P. Dushku,
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland,
District D Councilor

RESOLUTION: AMENDING WATERTOWN'S ONGOING BUDGET POLICY GUIDELINES

WHEREAS the Town Council adopted Resolution 2012-72 *Watertown's Ongoing Budget Policy Guidelines*, to establish permanent financial policy guidance, and

WHEREAS since 2014 the Town Council and the School Committee have been working on a plan for the renovation or reconstruction of Watertown's school buildings, including submitting Statements of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, and

WHEREAS at the Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget Overview presented on October 10, 2017, it was proposed to self-fund a project to renovate or reconstruct three elementary schools entirely within the operating budget, with funds redirected from the retirement appropriation when the pension is fully funded, while also paying down the OPEB liability, and

WHEREAS the value of the debt service required for such school capital expenditures would exceed 8% of the operating budget as stipulated in Resolution 2012-72, and

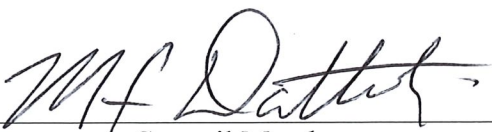
WHEREAS the Town of Watertown wants a "strong" position for its financial management policies to get the most favorable rates when going to the bond market for such capital expenditures.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown hereby amends Resolution 2012-72 *Watertown's Ongoing Budget Policy Guidelines*, with existing guidelines I.A and I.B to be deleted in their entirety and replaced with the following language:

I. A. Unreserved fund balance: In order to respond to emergencies and other unanticipated needs, preserve financial flexibility, and maintain favorable bond ratings, the Town should seek to maintain an unreserved fund balance (including stabilization funds) equal to 8-15% of the annual operating budget. The Council and the Town Manager will work to develop a formal multi-year policy on the unreserved fund balance, including the use of free cash, if the unreserved fund balance is above the 8-15% target.

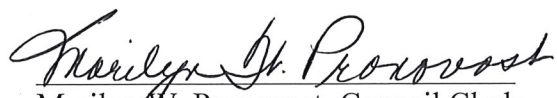
I. B. Capital Expenditures: In order to maintain and improve its infrastructure, facilities, and equipment, the Town should seek to make annual capital expenditures (including debt and exclusive of the school Building for the Future Initiative funding and enterprise funds) equal to at least 7.5-8% of the operating budget.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be incorporated by reference into the annual budget policy guidelines that are adopted each year.



Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 8 for, 0 against, and 0 present on November 28, 2017.



Marilyn W. Pronovost, Council Clerk



Mark S. Sideris, Council President



Watertown Town Council

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Stephen P. Corbett,
Vice President

John A. Donohue,
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,
District A Councilor

Cecilia Lenk,
District B Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
District C Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland
District D Councilor

Resolution# 2012- 72

Resolution: Watertown's Ongoing Budget Policy Guidelines

WHEREAS the Town Council adopts budget policy guidelines each year pursuant to Section 5-1 of the Watertown Home Rule Charter, so that the Town Manager can develop budgetary goals and the Town budget for the next fiscal year, and

WHEREAS for the past several years, annual budget policy guidelines have included three sections of ongoing budget practices, namely Section I. FINANCIAL POLICIES, Section II. ONGOING BUDGET PRACTICES, and Section V. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MONITORING, and

WHEREAS the budget policy guidelines in these three sections have reached a point of maturity whereby they have become standard operating procedure, and do not need to be revised each year.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown hereby establishes the following budget policy guidelines as permanent policy guidance, to be followed annually:

I. FINANCIAL POLICIES

A. Unreserved fund balance: In order to respond to emergencies and other unanticipated needs, preserve financial flexibility, and maintain favorable bond ratings, the Town should seek to maintain an unreserved fund balance (including stabilization funds) equal to 7-10% of the annual operating budget. The Council and the Town Manager will work to develop a formal multi-year policy on the unreserved fund balance, including the use of free cash if the unreserved fund balance is above the 7-10% target.

B. Capital Expenditures: In order to maintain and improve its infrastructure, facilities, and equipment, the Town should seek to make annual capital expenditures (including debt and exclusive of enterprise funds) equal to at least 7.5-8% of the operating budget.

C. Pension Liability and Other Post Employment Benefits: In order to achieve long term financial stability, meet the Town's obligations to its employees and retirees, and maintain favorable bond ratings, the Council, the Retirement Board and Town Manager will work to address the Town's unfunded pension liability and other post-employment benefits (OPEB). As was done with the unfunded Pension Liability, create a long-range financial plan for addressing the unfunded OPEB liabilities, including the converting the OPEB stabilization fund to an OPEB Trust Fund. Continue dialog with Retirement Board and State representatives to consider options for pension reforms for new hires.

II. ONGOING BUDGET PRACTICES

A. Continue the Town's efforts within all departments to obtain grant funding from federal, state, and other sources, including the use college interns.

B. Continue to analyze the Town's charges for licenses, permits, penalties, and fees to determine whether they should be increased or new ones instituted, while adhering to the principal that fees should not exceed the cost of services provided.

C. Review the possibilities and cost implications of contracted services vs. staffing in various departments.

D. Support the possibilities of providing more services on a regional or inter-municipal basis in accordance with the council resolution.

E. All department heads should seek to identify line items within their existing budgets where costs can be controlled and not increased. Look at other possible scenarios including spending freezes, level dollar and reduction budgets. Review the use of overtime in each department and monitor consistent Town-wide practices and related utilization.

F. Continue to enhance the Town's website and use other technologies as cost effective means of delivering information and services, increasing public awareness, and encouraging public feedback.

G. Explore cost savings by sharing personnel across Town departments. Work towards merging or combining the following functions to better serve both Town and School Departments: facilities management, human resources, finance, and information technology.

H. Meet annually in Executive Session(s) to discuss strategies on pending collective bargaining agreements and the potential impact on upcoming and future budgets.

III. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MONITORING

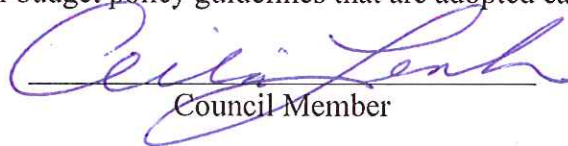
A. In order to improve its ability to monitor the implementation of the Town budget, the Town Council will receive quarterly reports on the revenues and expenditures during the fiscal year.

B. The Town Council will receive a report on the use and balance of monies in the Council reserve upon each transfer, and a report each month when there is a change in Town Councilors' expense line items.

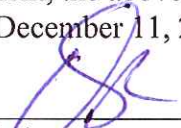
C. An early-warning system will be used to alert the Town Council if revenues fall below projections.

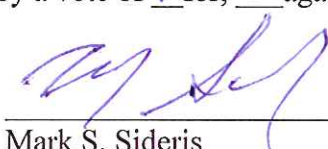
D. The Town Council will receive quarterly updates on progress in addressing the recommendations in the annual audit report.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be incorporated by reference into the annual budget policy guidelines that are adopted each year.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 9 for, 0 against and 0 present on December 11, 2012.


Valerie Papas
Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris
Council President



Watertown Town Council

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Resolution# 2013- 76

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Stephen P. Corbett,
Vice President

John A. Donohue,
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounellis,
District A Councilor

Cecilia Lenk,
District B Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
District C Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland
District D Councilor

Resolution: Watertown's Ongoing Capital Project Budget Guidelines

WHEREAS the Town Council adopts budget policy guidelines each year pursuant to Section 5-1 of the Watertown Home Rule Charter, so that the Town Manager can develop budgetary goals and the Town budget for the next fiscal year, and

WHEREAS in the Fiscal Year 2014 budget policy guidelines, Attachment A "ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON CAPITAL PROJECTS" was included to use the Town's capital project funds in the most efficient manner, and to improve the efficiency and transparency of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process, and

WHEREAS these recommendations have become standard operating procedure for the Town of Watertown, and do not need to be revised each year.

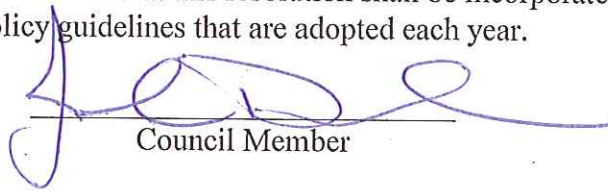
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown hereby establishes the following recommendations on capital projects as permanent budget policy guidance, to be followed annually:

1. Status of existing capital funds and projects: As part of the January CIP submission by the Town Manager, include from each department, a listing of all existing unspent capital funds (including Chapter 90, developer mitigation, grant funds, etc.) and a status on each project or acquisition, including how and when remaining funds will be spent, effective November 30th.
 - a. Include project funds appropriated by the Town Council to the School Department.
 - b. Include Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund reporting of capital projects & funds as a new section of the CIP separate from the General Fund.
2. Details on new projects: As part of the January CIP submission by the Town Manager, provide details for all items in the CIP that have been previously shown as annual lump sums in a single line.
 - a. Include the School Department's "various school improvements".
 - b. Include "highway reconstruction" and "sidewalk reconstruction", with a forecast of streets to be done each year.
 - c. Include Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund capital projects as a new section of the CIP separate from the General Fund, with a forecast of streets to be done each year.

- d. Include transportation or water/sewer and stormwater projects which have or will be proposed in the future, with no funding source yet identified.
- 3. Coordination Issues Related to Public Works projects: The increasing volume and complexity of public works projects requires a rethinking of how the Town does its planning to maximize the use of capital funds and departmental resources, as well as providing information to the public in a timely, readily accessible fashion.
 - a. To this end, the CIP needs to have a five-year forecast of what water/sewer/stormwater, road reconstruction, and sidewalk reconstruction are planned, by specific street, which will:
 - i. Insure that work is sequenced to obtain the maximum life from road and sidewalk reconstruction without major water/sewer work compromising their integrity.
 - ii. Allow utility companies adequate time to plan underground service replacements prior to road and sidewalk reconstruction, to avoid compromising their integrity.
 - iii. Allow time for the Zoning Enforcement Office to notify property owners of non-conforming driveways, while giving the owners adequate time to seek a variance.
 - iv. Allow developers time to plan their projects in coordination with the Town, and avoid digging up newly installed roads and sidewalks.
 - v. Allow abutting homeowners, who may want to pay for granite curbs on streets scheduled for asphalt curbs, time to arrange contracting and payment.
 - vi. Allow time for the Tree Warden to notify abutters who may want a street tree in front of their property, to allow for the placement of a tree pit prior to the installation of a new sidewalk.
 - vii. Provide more transparency to citizens on public works projects and spending.
 - viii. Allow the Public Works Committee or other appropriate committee adequate time to review the proposed work and provide policy guidance on the above as it relates to Watertown's goals.
 - b. Issues of coordination and timing need to be improved to insure the most efficient use of funds, and bonding of annual street construction projects should be coordinated with bidding such that contractors can begin by April and be completed by November.
 - c. The Public Works Department should address, on an ongoing basis:
 - i. Assure adequate supervisory capacity to eliminate decision bottlenecks and improve timeliness of responses for construction work.
 - ii. Notification to the public of what construction is happening and where and when it will occur must be improved, and should be available on the website and updated regularly.
 - iii. Improve completion of punch list items on projects needs to be improved, including painting of roadway markings, installation of traffic signs, removal of temporary construction signs, cleanup of construction debris, etc.
- 4. Protection of investments: With millions of dollars being spent each year in Watertown on street and sidewalk construction, the administration should take a more aggressive

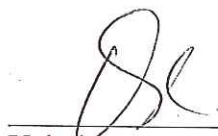
role to protect the value of these investments to insure that maximum life is obtained from the new surfaces.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be incorporated by reference into the annual budget policy guidelines that are adopted each year.

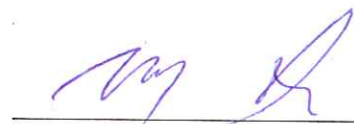


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote on December 9, 2013.



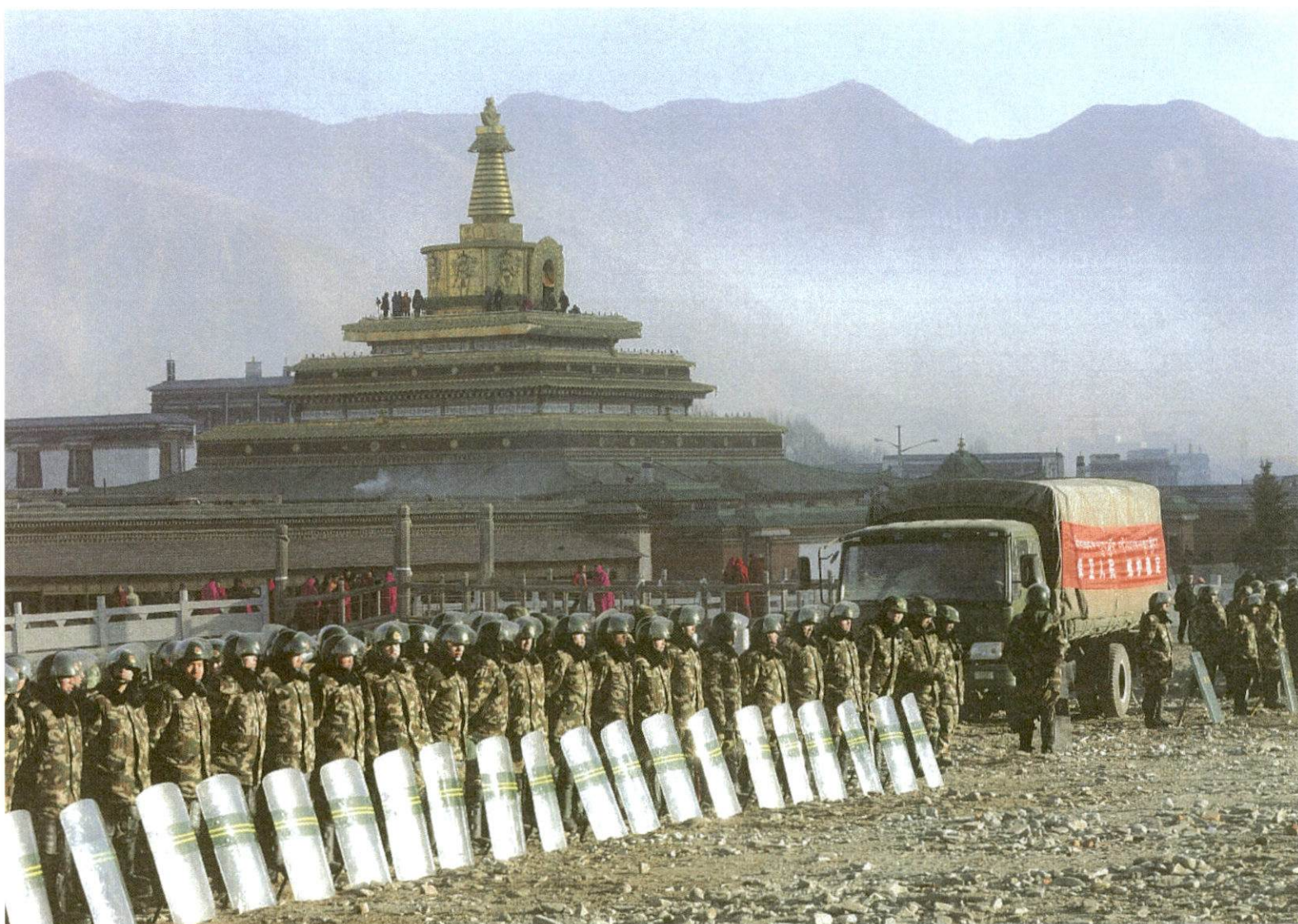
Valerie Papas, Council Clerk



Mark S. Sideris, Council President

The Battle for China's Spirit

Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance under Xi Jinping



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Cook, senior research analyst for East Asia at Freedom House, served as project director and author of this report. She directs the *China Media Bulletin*, a monthly digest in English and Chinese providing news and analysis on media freedom developments related to China. She is also the author of two previous Freedom House special reports: *The Politburo's Predicament: Confronting the Limitations of Chinese Communist Party Repression* (2015) and *The Long Shadow of Chinese Censorship: How the Communist Party's Media Restrictions Affect News Outlets Around the World* (2013).

RESEARCH, EDITORIAL, AND ADVISORY TEAM

Five experts on religious communities in China (three doctoral candidates, an independent researcher, and a journalist) provided research support for the report's five chapters, but wished to remain anonymous. Tyler Roylance (staff editor), Annie Boyajian (advocacy manager), and interns Bochen Han and Cathy Zhang provided editorial and research assistance. Three China scholars who wished to remain anonymous served as academic advisers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was made possible by the generous support of the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation. Special thanks to Arch Puddington, Daniel Calingaert, and Robert Ruby for their comments and feedback. Gerry Fey served as graphic designer.

ON THE COVER

Chinese soldiers amass outside of Labrang Monastery in Gansu Province to prevent protests during Losar, the Tibetan lunar New Year festival, in February 2016 (Christophe Boisvieux/Getty Images).

V: Falun Gong

Degree of persecution:

Falun Gong

VERY HIGH

Trajectory of persecution:

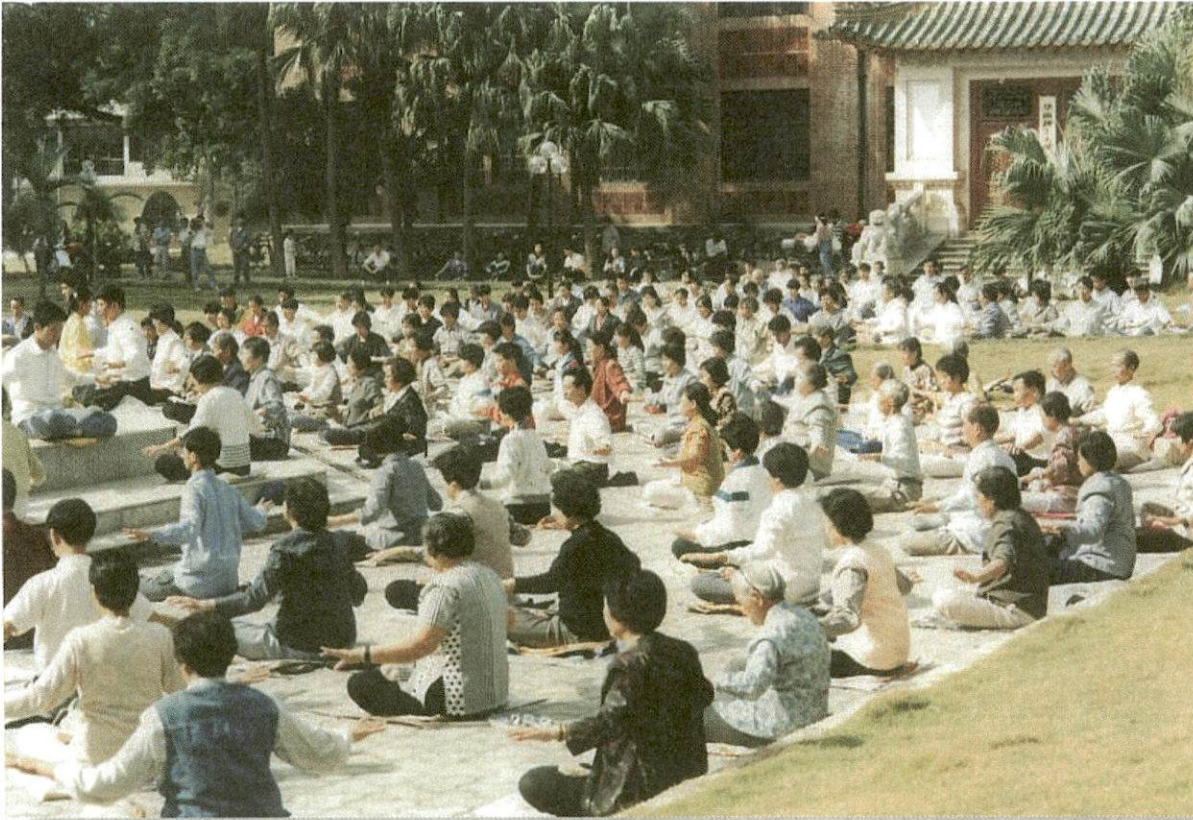
Falun Gong



Minor Decrease

Key findings

- 1 **Survival:** Despite a 17-year Chinese Communist Party (CCP) campaign to eradicate the spiritual group, millions of people in China continue to practice Falun Gong, including many individuals who took up the discipline after the repression began. This represents a striking failure of the CCP's security apparatus.
- 2 **Ongoing large-scale persecution:** Falun Gong practitioners across China are subject to widespread surveillance, arbitrary detention, imprisonment, and torture, and they are at a high risk of extrajudicial execution. Freedom House independently verified 933 cases of Falun Gong adherents sentenced to prison terms of up to 12 years between January 1, 2013, and June 1, 2016, often for exercising their right to freedom of expression in addition to freedom of religion. This is only a portion of those sentenced, and thousands more are believed to be held at various prisons and extralegal detention centers.
- 3 **Cracks in the crackdown:** Despite the continued campaign, repression appears to have declined in practice in some locales. President Xi Jinping has offered no explicit indication of a plan to reverse the CCP's policy toward Falun Gong. But the purge and imprisonment of former security czar Zhou Yongkang and other officials associated with the campaign as part of Xi's anticorruption drive, together with Falun Gong adherents' persistent efforts to educate and discourage police from persecuting them, have had an impact.
- 4 **Economic exploitation:** The party-state invests hundreds



Falun Gong practitioners meditating in public in Guangzhou in 1998, before the Communist Party banned the spiritual group in 1999. Such sessions remain forbidden.

Credit: Minghui

of millions of dollars annually in the campaign to crush Falun Gong, while simultaneously engaging in exploitative and lucrative forms of abuse against practitioners, including extortion and prison labor. Available evidence suggests that forced extraction of organs from Falun Gong detainees for sale in transplant operations has occurred on a large scale and may be continuing.

5 Response and resistance: Falun Gong practitioners have responded to the campaign against them with a variety of nonviolent tactics. They have especially focused on sharing information with police and the general public about the practice itself, the human rights violations committed against adherents, and other content aimed at countering state propaganda. In recent years, a growing number of non-Falun Gong practitioners in China—including human rights lawyers, family members, and neighbors—have joined these efforts.

"[The Communist Party initiated] the worst instance of religious persecution since the Cultural Revolution, with the clampdown against Falun Gong."

—André Laliberté, Ottawa University, leading scholar on religion in China, 2015¹¹

"Orders for arrests continue to come down from high-level authorities, but sometimes the Public Security Bureau agents will say no, they are only exercising to be healthy."

—Chinese human rights lawyer, 2013¹²

Fierce crackdown on a popular qigong

Falun Gong is a spiritual practice whose key features are five meditative *qigong* exercises and teachings reminiscent of Buddhist and Taoist traditions, with particular emphasis placed on the tenets of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance (*Zhen-Shan-Ren* in Chinese). Adherents perform the exercises, study spiritual texts, and attempt to conform to these values—believed to be in harmony with the spiritual nature of the universe—in their daily lives, with the understanding that doing so leads to better physical health, mental well-being, and spiritual enlightenment.³ While Falun Gong includes some spiritual attributes of religion, it is loosely organized and lacks a professional clergy, formal membership, acceptance of donations, and specialized places of worship.⁴

Throughout the early and mid-1990s, Falun Gong, its practitioners, and founder Li Hongzhi enjoyed substantial government support and positive coverage in state media. Li first introduced the practice to the public in China in 1992.⁵ For the next two years, he traveled the country under the auspices of the state qigong association, giving lectures and teaching the five Falun Gong exercises.⁶ State media reports from that period laud the benefits of Falun Gong practice and show adherents receiving “healthy citizen awards.” In an event that would be unimaginable today, Li gave a lecture at the Chinese embassy in Paris in 1995, at the government’s invitation.⁷

After Li completed his formal lecture series, the practice continued spreading by word of mouth and through an informal network of local volunteers who would teach the exercises and share copies of the spiritual texts with friends and at public exercise sites. Chinese people from every stratum of society—doctors, farmers, workers, soldiers, intellectuals, Communist Party members—began taking up the practice. Though students of Falun Gong would gather in groups to practice exercises, many saw the discipline as a personal rather than a collective endeavor to enhance their physical and mental well-being. There were no signs of a political agenda or even criticism of the CCP, as now appears in Falun Gong literature years after the persecution began. By 1999, according to government sources and international media reports, at least 70 million people were practicing; Falun Gong representatives claimed that the community had reached 100 million.⁸

In the 1990s, Chinese people from every stratum of society—including Communist Party members—began taking up Falun Gong.

In July 1999, the spiritual discipline was abruptly banned. Prominent adherents were arrested, and anyone who continued practicing was pursued as an enemy of the state. Reports began emerging of Falun Gong believers being abducted, tortured, and even killed. The name of the practice, the name of its founder, and a wide assortment of homonyms became some of the most censored terms on the Chinese internet. Any mention in state-run media or by Chinese diplomats was inevitably couched in demonizing language.

What went wrong?

The CCP’s dramatic about-face regarding Falun Gong was unusual, even in the context of the party’s restrictive religious policies. Observers have consequently speculated about why it happened and whether it could have been avoided.

The CCP generally displays low tolerance for groups that place any spiritual authority above

their allegiance to the party. Still, scholars, eyewitnesses, and other knowledgeable observers point to a constellation of processes and factors specific to Falun Gong that probably contributed to the particularly harsh assault against the group:

- **Popularity:** With over 70 million followers, Falun Gong exceeded the CCP's own membership of 63 million as of 1999,⁹ and represented the second-largest faith community in China after Chinese Buddhism.
- **Ideological competition:** Falun Gong's emphasis on the values of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance as part of its spiritual worldview appears to have attracted the party's ire, as it conflicted with principles underpinning Marxist ideology and the legitimacy of CCP rule, like materialism, political struggle, and nationalism.¹⁰ Falun Gong effectively offered an alternative moral compass, and its spread came to be seen as a fundamental challenge to the party's authority.¹¹
- **Party-state 'infiltration':** Falun Gong was becoming popular within parts of the party-state apparatus that were critical to maintaining CCP rule, including the military, internal security forces, state media, and the party disciplinary inspection committee.¹² Fear that these Falun Gong adherents could place their allegiance to the discipline's principles above loyalty to the CCP leadership apparently began to take hold.
- **Independent civil society network:** The CCP has long sought to co-opt and suppress independent civil society organizations and other forms of grassroots collective activity.¹³ The party attempted to bring all qigong groups under closer control in the mid-1990s. In 1996, the state-run qigong association, with which Falun Gong was linked, called for the establishment of party branches among the practice's followers and sought to profit from Falun Gong teachings. Li Hongzhi chose to part ways with the association, intending for Falun Gong to remain a personal practice without formal membership and shared free of charge.¹⁴ Falun Gong continued to spread through a loosely knit network of meditation sites and volunteer coordinators across the country.
- **A period of escalating repression:** From 1996 to 1999, many in the party-state still held favorable views of Falun Gong, publicly citing its benefits for health and even social stability.¹⁵ But several top cadres began perceiving it as a threat, resulting in periodic acts of repression. State printing presses ceased publishing Falun Gong books in 1996. Attempts to register with various government organizations were denied. Articles that appeared sporadically in state-run news outlets smeared Falun Gong. Security agents monitored practitioners and occasionally dispersed meditation sessions.¹⁶
- **High-profile appeal to the leadership:** In April 1999, the escalating harassment culminated in the beating and arrest of several dozen practitioners in Tianjin. Those calling for their release were told that the orders had come from Beijing. On April 25, over 10,000 adherents gathered quietly outside the national petitions office in Beijing, adjacent to the Zhongnanhai government compound, to ask for an end to abuses and recognition of their right to practice. Some observers have argued that this very public demonstration took party leaders by surprise and triggered the crackdown that followed.¹⁷ However, the mass petition itself was a response to growing persecution led by central

officials—including then security czar Luo Gan—suggesting that repression was already being implemented by parts of the party apparatus before the incident.¹⁸

- **Jiang Zemin's personal role:** Then premier Zhu Rongji took a conciliatory stance toward Falun Gong after the April 25 demonstration.¹⁹ He met the petitioners' representatives and orchestrated the release of the adherents in Tianjin, after which those in Beijing voluntarily dispersed. But Jiang Zemin, then the CCP general secretary and state president, overruled Zhu, calling Falun Gong a serious challenge to the regime's authority, "something unprecedented in the country since its founding 50 years ago."²⁰ In a circular dated June 7, Jiang issued an unequivocal order to "disintegrate" Falun Gong.²¹ The decision was unusually abrupt and ran contrary to earlier investigations by domestic intelligence agencies that concluded Falun Gong posed no threat.²² Some experts have claimed that Jiang was unsettled by the evident enthusiasm for Falun Gong at a time when he saw his own standing with the public was flagging.²³

Chinese state media and officials have offered their own explanation for the crackdown, seeking to frame the campaign as a necessary move against an alleged "evil cult" that had a nefarious influence on society. But such claims run counter to internal party documents and the lack of harmful outcomes in other countries where Falun Gong has spread. International scholars have repeatedly concluded that Falun Gong does not have the attributes of a cult.²⁴ Even in China, the label only appeared in party discourse in October 1999, months after the crackdown was launched, as the propaganda apparatus seized on a manipulated English translation of the Chinese term *xiejiao*. This suggests that the term was applied retroactively to justify a violent campaign that was provoking international and domestic criticism. David Ownby, a leading scholar on Chinese religions, notes:

The entire issue of the supposed cultic nature of Falun Gong was a red herring from the beginning, cleverly exploited by the Chinese state to blunt the appeal of Falun Gong and the effectiveness of the group's activities outside China.²⁵

In the context of China's authoritarian political system, once Jiang made the arbitrary and arguably illegal decision to ban Falun Gong and asserted his will over other members of the Politburo Standing Committee, there were few institutional or legal obstacles to stop what came next. Over the following months, Jiang created a special party leadership group with an extralegal, plainclothes security force to lead the fight. Established on June 10, 1999, it came to be known as the 6-10 Office.²⁶

In July 1999, the campaign began in earnest, and the full weight of the CCP's repressive apparatus was brought down on Falun Gong. Demonizing propaganda flooded the airwaves, thousands of people were detained, and millions were forced to sign pledges to stop practicing. Zhao Ming, a former Falun Gong prisoner of conscience from Beijing, explained that "the party's machinery of persecution was there—Jiang pushed the button."²⁷

Falun Gong had been allowed to grow in part because it operated in the grey zone of qigong, outside the scope of the broader restrictions on organized religion that were already in place in the 1990s. It essentially slipped through a tenuous loophole in the CCP's ideological defenses, and from that perspective, a conflict between the loosely organized, independent-

minded spiritual group and the authoritarian, atheist regime may have been inevitable. Still, under another paramount leader, the party's belated response might not have been as violent or deadly, or even taken place at all.

The Falun Gong community in China today

Given the force of the CCP's crackdown, few observers inside or outside China would have expected Falun Gong to survive. Indeed, the conventional wisdom among many scholars, journalists, and policymakers is that it was successfully crushed inside China.²⁸ In an environment of long-standing repression, it is nearly impossible to know how many people practice Falun Gong in China today. Yet 17 years after it was banned, there is reason to believe that the number remains in the millions,²⁹ and possibly the tens of millions.³⁰

Over 17 years after Falun Gong's ban, there is reason to believe that millions, and possibly tens of millions, in China continue to practice.

Several points of information suggest that a reasonable estimate of the minimum number of people in China practicing Falun Gong today would fall in the range of 7 to 10 million, while overseas Falun Gong sources have estimated that the total is 20 to 40 million.³¹

As part of nationwide campaigns launched since 2010 to reduce the number of Falun Gong practitioners, local government websites often refer to adherents who have yet to renounce the practice and to "relapses," in which individuals resume practice following release from custody.³² In some cases, government directives provide quotas to low-level officials regarding these populations. For example, an April 2009 work plan in Jiangxi Province called for officials to reduce by 50 percent the number of people who had not renounced Falun Gong and to keep the proportion of "recidivists" within 10 percent of the local Falun Gong practitioners who had renounced the practice.³³ Applying a 10 percent return rate to the 70–100 million who were practicing in 1999 yields an estimated 7 to 10 million remaining adherents, though not all have been forced to recant in the first place, while others abandoned the practice voluntarily.

Minghui, a Chinese-language, overseas-based Falun Gong website with a robust network of contacts in China, reported in May 2009 that users uploaded and downloaded material on the site through approximately 200,000 secure internet connections in China. Official documents indicate that the sites remain active throughout the country.³⁴ Freedom House interviews with Falun Gong activists involved in coordinating such sites found that each one typically relays printed materials or discs to several dozen adherents.³⁵ This information similarly produces a minimum estimate of 7 to 10 million people practicing and sharing Falun Gong–related information, particularly since not all people practicing are necessarily engaged in such risky activity.

In terms of trajectory, lawyers interviewed by Freedom House noted numerous cases of individuals taking up the practice in recent years, long after the 1999 ban.³⁶ Documents published in mid-2013 on local government websites in Zhejiang and Hunan Provinces also speak of Falun Gong's "resurgence" and "expansion" in the area.³⁷

Given its rapid growth in the 1990s, the Falun Gong community in China might have expanded well beyond 70 million if the practice had not been banned. Accounts by adherents

point to the combination of its reputed effectiveness in improving physical health and its offer of spiritual advancement without the requirement of a monastic lifestyle as a key factor that makes it attractive vis-à-vis other qigong disciplines or religious faiths.³⁸ As described in more detail below, repression has apparently eased in some locales despite the continuation of severe abuses nationally. If the perceived risk of punishment ultimately wanes in the coming years, many in China could resume their practice or take it up for the first time.

Falun Gong under Xi Jinping

After the launch of the crackdown in 1999, it became clear that Falun Gong adherents would not simply cease practicing on government orders, and the party began intensifying its efforts in 2001. A new round of demonizing propaganda flooded the airwaves in January,³⁹ and by midyear a *Washington Post* investigation found that central authorities had sanctioned the systematic use of violence to force people to renounce their belief in Falun Gong.⁴⁰ When Hu Jintao took over as general secretary of the CCP in 2003, Jiang retained significant influence as head of the military. Meanwhile, a number of Jiang's associates—including Luo Gan and later Zhou Yongkang—were placed in top positions that enabled them to continue Jiang's Falun Gong campaign after his full retirement in 2004.

Since November 2012, at least 900 people have been imprisoned for practicing Falun Gong or disseminating information about it.

As a result, during the period of Hu's leadership, hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong adherents were sent to labor camps and prisons, where they were subjected to horrific forms of torture.⁴¹ Many were detained and punished for simply possessing spiritual texts in the privacy of their homes.⁴² Central authorities periodically launched new rounds of arrests, including around the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai.⁴³ In 2006, the first allegations emerged of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience being killed so that their organs could be used in transplant operations.⁴⁴

Since November 2012, when Xi Jinping took the helm of the CCP, the party-state's relationship with Falun Gong has been marked by two seemingly contradictory dynamics—ongoing severe and large-scale violations on the one hand, and reduced persecution in some locales on the other.

Ongoing violations, some escalation

Xi has made no official change to the party's policy toward Falun Gong and its stated aim of eradicating the practice. Falun Gong practitioners throughout China continue to be detained, imprisoned, tortured, and sometimes killed in what is still a massive campaign of religious persecution.

In 2013, the central 6-10 Office launched a two-year nationwide campaign titled the "final battle on education and transformation."⁴⁵ Notices of the campaign appeared on government websites throughout China and included quotas on the percentage of local Falun Gong residents who "must undergo education-study classes" each year.⁴⁶ Despite the abolition of the "reeducation through labor" (RTL) camp system in 2013, large numbers of Chinese citizens known to the authorities to practice Falun Gong remain at risk of incarceration, either through the normal court system or in extralegal detention facilities where forced renunciation sessions are conducted.⁴⁷

Freedom House analysis of Chinese court documents found evidence of at least 597 Falun Gong adherents sentenced to prison by a first instance court between January 1, 2014, and June 1, 2016, with punishments of up to 12 years.⁴⁸ In addition, the Duihua Foundation reported documenting the trials of 336 Falun Gong prisoners of conscience in 2013,⁴⁹ bringing the total to at least 933 Falun Gong practitioners imprisoned since Xi assumed leadership of the CCP. Cases of imprisonment were found in 29 out of China's 31 provinces and provincial-level municipalities.

This total is not comprehensive, however. According to Duihua, Chinese government sources suggest that the number of Falun Gong practitioners tried in 2013 could reasonably be three times the number it was able to document.⁵⁰ Falun Gong sources like Minghui have recorded over 2,500 practitioners sentenced to prison during that time period, and at least 22,000 individuals arrested since January 2013, although at least a third were later released.⁵¹ Thousands of Falun Gong practitioners are also believed to be held at extralegal "legal education centers," "black jails," and pretrial detention centers, and many others sentenced during the Jiang and Hu eras remain imprisoned.⁵²

45-year-old Gao Yixi died in police custody in April 2016, just 10 days after he and his wife were taken from their home under apparent suspicion of practicing Falun Gong.

Once in detention, Falun Gong adherents—young and old, male or female—are routinely subject to various forms of psychological and physical torture in an effort to break their will. The most prevalent methods are being forced to watch videos slandering Falun Gong and its founder, sleep deprivation, beatings, stretching in awkward postures for long periods of time, and shocks with electric batons, including to the breasts and genitals.⁵³ Such abuse has been known to cause long-term disability and sometimes death. In one high-profile case in Heilongjiang Province, 45-year-old Gao Yixi died in police custody in April 2016, just 10 days after he and his wife were taken from their home under apparent suspicion of practicing Falun Gong and disseminating information about it.⁵⁴ Minghui recorded another 292 deaths of Falun Gong practitioners as a result of abuse in custody or other forms of persecution between January 2013 and November 2016.⁵⁵

A thorough online search of references to the 6-10 Office and its work found evidence that as of June 2016, the extralegal security force remained active in all of China's provinces, autonomous regions, and provincial-level municipalities, with the exception of Tibet. A key aspect of the agency's work appears to be monitoring local residents known to practice Falun Gong and being vigilant around politically sensitive dates, such as May 13 (the anniversary of Falun Gong's introduction), April 25 (the date of the 1999 appeal at Zhongnanhai), and July 20 (marking the launch of the persecutory campaign), when Falun Gong adherents may attempt to gather together privately or engage in a public display of resilience and community education, for instance by hanging banners or disseminating literature. Indeed, interviewees repeatedly noted that large-scale arrests often occur around such dates.⁵⁶

Two developments could indirectly exacerbate conditions for Falun Gong practitioners:

- 1. Harsher penalties under Article 300 of the criminal code:** An amendment to the criminal code that came into effect in November 2015 raised the penalty under Article 300 from 15 years to life imprisonment.⁵⁷ The article, which punishes "using a heterodox religion to

undermine implementation of the law,” was added to the criminal code in October 1999 in a retroactive attempt to legalize the ban on Falun Gong.⁵⁸ Chinese judges have used the article as the basis for sentencing thousands of Falun Gong adherents, a small number of human rights lawyers, and members of various other banned faiths to prison. As of November 2016, Freedom House found no evidence that the amended article had been employed to sentence a Falun Gong practitioner to life in prison.

2. **Crackdown on rights lawyers who defended Falun Gong clients:** In July 2015, Chinese security agencies launched an aggressive assault on the country's contingent of human rights lawyers and the broader “rights defense” movement, detaining over 300 lawyers and their assistants. Most were subsequently released, but others remain in detention and face serious political charges of “subversion.” Several of the detained—including Wang Yu, Wang Quanzhang, and Li Heping—had assisted detained Falun Gong practitioners, including in the period shortly before their own arrests. Obtaining a lawyer has become slightly more difficult for Falun Gong practitioners as a result, but hundreds of attorneys still appear willing to take up the sensitive cases.⁵⁹ This is a stark contrast to the early 2000s, when finding a lawyer who would enter a “not guilty” plea for a Falun Gong defendant was nearly impossible.

Cracks in the crackdown

Considering the CCP's track record regarding Falun Gong, a trajectory of rigid or endlessly escalating persecution might be expected. In a 2015 article, scholar Stephen Noakes and researcher Caylan Ford argue that the party is caught in a path-dependency dilemma when it comes to the group.⁶⁰ Billions of dollars have already been invested, the party's legitimacy would be seriously undermined if it were to suddenly announce a reversal of its policy, and such a change would generate pressure to loosen its grip on other religious groups. Meanwhile, one of the underlying factors that contributed to the ban—the party's deep-seated fear of any large, independent civil society group—remains firmly in place.

Surprisingly, however, there is now evidence of cracks in the repressive apparatus that have allowed some local officials to refrain from persecuting Falun Gong residents. Dynamics that were unimaginable a few years ago—the release of a veteran practitioner after only a few days detention,⁶¹ police permitting adherents to meditate in custody,⁶² or officers actively protecting people⁶³—have emerged across the country and do not appear to be isolated incidents.

The trend may have begun to affect judicial decisions, a remarkable development for a repressive campaign that has epitomized the “rule by man” attributes of China's legal system. In June 2015, a judge in Shaanxi Province issued the first known “exemption from punishment” verdict for a Falun Gong practitioner, Pang You, who was immediately released after an intense campaign on his behalf.⁶⁴ More adherents have apparently been sentenced to regular prisons since the 2013 abolition of the RTL camp system removed that alternative form of incarceration,⁶⁵ but available data indicate that the total number of people incarcerated remains far lower than when the RTL system was in place.

Several overlapping factors appear to be driving these changes:

- **Purge of key officials affiliated with the anti-Falun Gong campaign:** As part of Xi's crackdown on corruption, several high-ranking “tigers” who played a pivotal role

in promoting and implementing the anti-Falun Gong effort have been purged and sentenced to prison. The two most important are former security czar Zhou Yongkang and former 6-10 Office chief Li Dongsheng. On June 11, 2015, state media announced that Zhou had been sentenced to life imprisonment; this was almost the same day that the Shaanxi practitioner was effectively acquitted in the case mentioned above. Falun Gong activists who interact with security forces have been adept at capitalizing on such events to encourage lower-level cadres to distance themselves from the persecutory campaign.⁶⁶

- **Bureaucratic weakening of repressive institutions:** The purge of Zhou and Li, along with the abolition of the labor camp system, appears to have weakened the influence of institutions that had been critical to the campaign. Since Li's initial arrest in 2013, the central 6-10 Office has had three different leaders in as many years, with the most recent appointee—Huang Ming—assigned to the post in May 2016.⁶⁷ Such turnover, with periods of vacancy, stands in contrast to Li's four-year tenure. Meanwhile, since the conclusion of the 2013–15 "transformation" campaign, Freedom House found no evidence of a new centralized push against Falun Gong. By comparison, almost as soon as the 2010–12 effort ended, the next mobilization was launched in 2013.

In an additional sign of dwindling enthusiasm, the CCP's powerful central disciplinary inspection committee initiated a first-ever, two-month inspection tour of the central 6-10 Office in July 2016.⁶⁸ Local branches of the agency continue to function throughout the country, but with uncertainty and weaker leadership at the upper echelons, there is more room for foot-dragging by local police who find the task of persecuting Falun Gong distasteful, or are concerned that they could later be punished for any abuses.

- **Long-term impact of direct outreach to legal-security apparatus:** For over a decade, Falun Gong practitioners inside and outside China, along with their lawyers and family members, have been directly communicating with security agents and judges by phone and in person, urging them not to arrest local Falun Gong residents or arguing that the campaign is illegal and the defendant innocent. Gradually, these efforts appear to be bearing fruit. One interviewee who has made thousands of such calls reflected that "in places all over China, [police] are clearer about the true situation; there are many cases of police secretly helping Falun Gong."⁶⁹ A lawyer who has represented Falun Gong clients made a similar observation that "because Falun Gong practitioners have talked to local officials, some of them have changed their attitude and realize that Falun Gong members are not that threatening, so they won't arrest them."⁷⁰

A new set of Supreme People's Court guidelines to ease filing procedures came into effect on May 1, 2015, and adherents in China and abroad have taken advantage by initiating an even more daring effort: filing criminal complaints with the Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate regarding the abuses they have suffered, and naming Jiang Zemin as responsible for the crimes (see below).⁷¹ While many factors appear to drive torture victims to file such complaints, one motivation repeatedly raised by interviewees was the desire to inform those at the highest echelons of the legal system as to Jiang's culpability, with the hope that they will make "the right choice" and either "bring Jiang to justice" or at least avoid participating themselves.⁷²

Key methods of political control

Since July 1999, the full array of CCP suppression tactics have been deployed against Falun Gong. In the first days and months of the campaign, the party's methods were very public, reminiscent of a Cultural Revolution–like “struggle”: a state media propaganda blitz, public book burnings, mass detentions in stadiums, televised show trials, beatings of protesters on Tiananmen Square.⁷³ Over time, especially once it became apparent that Falun Gong would not be so easily crushed and that public displays of repression were hurting China's international reputation, the tactics became more discreet.

Seventeen years into the campaign, measures like detention, imprisonment, torture, and censorship remain routine in the party's handling of Falun Gong. However, a number of trends in the past five years provide additional insight into Chinese officials' evolving priorities and methods:

Falun Gong practitioners have been jailed for leaving voicemail recordings, posting messages to WeChat or QQ, or circumventing censorship to access blocked websites.

1. Electronic surveillance to supplement physical monitoring: Chinese citizens known to practice Falun Gong have long been under intensive surveillance by both security forces and neighborhood committee members, who track their movements and make periodic home visits to determine whether they continue to practice. Authorities have also monitored targets' phone and internet use since the early days of the persecution, but the Chinese government's surveillance capabilities have expanded significantly over the past decade. Today, Chinese security forces also draw on video cameras in public places and geolocation data to identify Falun Gong practitioners and catch those disseminating information. Court documents and anecdotes provided by Falun Gong refugees illustrate the varied and detailed types of evidence that authorities collect to convict adherents, from video footage on a bus to internet browsing histories and mobile phone records.⁷⁴

2. Continuing focus on ‘transformation’ as a key goal: In 2008, the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China defined “transformation” as “a process of ideological reprogramming whereby practitioners are subjected to various methods of physical and psychological coercion until they recant their belief in Falun Gong.”⁷⁵ From the start, it has been a central goal of the anti-Falun Gong campaign, a way of “eradicating” the practice by forcing its believers to renounce it, often in writing. Authorities use any means necessary to achieve this aim, including physical torture, punishing family members or fellow inmates, and administering drugs to weaken adherents' mental resolve.⁷⁶

Government websites refer to “transformation quotas” and the need to check on those who have been released to make sure they do not resume practice.⁷⁷ Though recanting one's beliefs is often a precondition for early—or any—release from custody, submitting to such pressures does not necessarily put an end to a detainee's persecution. Many “reformed” adherents are simply moved to another section of the prison to focus on forced labor, and some are required to prove the sincerity of their own transformation by pressuring other Falun Gong detainees to recant. Former prisoners who have recanted under pressure speak about the long-lasting psychological impact of having been forced to betray deeply held beliefs.

3. Countering Falun Gong information efforts: Censorship and propaganda have been critical

components of the anti-Falun Gong campaign since its inception, as the CCP had to convince the majority of Chinese people that a popular qigong was suddenly a threat. Studies of online censorship in China have consistently found that terms related to Falun Gong are among the most heavily restricted.⁷⁸ Practitioners have responded with their own massive, multifaceted, and sophisticated public education campaign, both online and offline.⁷⁹

Making headway in the resulting cat-and-mouse game has become a core element of routine anti-Falun Gong work in the Chinese security services. In a sample of 59 available court verdicts from 2016 analyzed by Freedom House, all of the Falun Gong activists sentenced to prison were punished for exercising their right to free expression or access to information. Their alleged “crimes” included leaving voicemail recordings, posting messages to the social media platforms WeChat or QQ,⁸⁰ using a virtual private network (VPN) to download content from Minghui,⁸¹ or simply possessing large numbers of leaflets or discs for apparent dissemination.

Meanwhile, local 6-10 Office websites across the country constantly reference the need to clean up Falun Gong literature circulating in their district,⁸² encourage residents to turn in currency notes with pro-Falun Gong messages printed on them,⁸³ and prevent installation of satellite dishes that allow viewers to access otherwise blocked foreign and Chinese dissident stations.⁸⁴ On the propaganda side, authorities in Shaanxi Province have engaged in their own innovations, commissioning the April 2016 production of an apparent anti-Falun Gong “microfilm”—a short online video of the kind that has become increasingly popular in the smartphone era.⁸⁵

- 4. Isolating Falun Gong from societal support:** In recent years, a growing number of nonpractitioners have taken steps to support Falun Gong, including human rights lawyers who defend practitioners in court and ordinary citizens who sign petitions to free a detained Falun Gong neighbor.⁸⁶ In response, Chinese authorities have employed various tactics to drive a wedge between Falun Gong believers and their existing or potential supporters. Lawyers who take Falun Gong cases or challenge abusive practices have been beaten, disbarred, harassed, and imprisoned. Collective punishment tactics threaten landlords, colleagues, and fellow inmates if someone in their midst is found to be practicing Falun Gong.⁸⁷ And anti-Falun Gong propaganda initiatives have encouraged the public to participate, for instance by signing “pledge cards” or writing essays for a school contest.⁸⁸

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Taken together, these repressive activities seep into every corner of life and society—schools and workplaces, supermarkets and public transportation, passport requests and *hukou* residency registrations, laptops and smartphones. Wherever known Falun Gong practitioners go and whatever they do, particularly if it involves interaction with official agencies, they are under constant surveillance and at risk of detention simply for self-identifying as a believer.

Many of these measures and the way they are implemented are also illegal. They contravene China’s international human rights commitments, many Chinese laws, and even the CCP’s own stated policies, like the declaration that “any action which forces a believer not to believe” is an “infringement of freedom of religious belief.”⁸⁹

The money trail: Expenditures, exploitation, and organ harvesting

The campaign against Falun Gong is very expensive, requiring significant investments of material and human resources. Determining the full annual cost is arguably an impossible task. Nevertheless, some official data are available online, including the annual reported expenditure calculations of 13 local 6-10 Office branches in various counties and districts across nine provinces in 2014 and 2015. The total expenditure for these branches, covering a population of some 14 million, was 8.9 million yuan (\$1.37 million). If that per capita investment is applied to China's total population of 1.37 billion, the estimated annual budget for all 6-10 Office branches nationwide is 879 million yuan (\$135 million).⁹⁰ And this is only for one part of the party-state apparatus involved in the suppression of Falun Gong.

The role of money in the CCP's campaign goes beyond simple expenditures, however. Various forms of economic incentives and exploitation have given individuals within the party-state apparatus a financial interest in continued repression. They include:

- Opportunistic extortion, bribe taking, or theft of property by local police⁹¹
- Officially sanctioned bonuses or financial demerits for security personnel, rewards for residents who report Falun Gong activities, and fines imposed on adherents by the courts⁹²
- Systematic forced labor by detained Falun Gong adherents, a phenomenon that continues at prisons and transitional detention centers even after the abolition of RTL camps⁹³

It is in the context of dehumanizing propaganda, severe abuse in custody, and economic inducements that the ultimate form of financial exploitation has been reported: the killing of Falun Gong detainees and the extraction of their organs to be sold at high prices to Chinese patients and foreign "transplant tourists" as part of a multibillion-dollar industry. The allegations first surfaced in 2006, and several investigations by foreign journalists and legal specialists have found them to be credible;⁹⁴ some members of the medical community have voiced their own concerns.⁹⁵

The estimated annual budget for all 6-10 Office branches nationwide is 879 million yuan (\$135 million).

There are indubitably serious problems surrounding the sources of organs for transplants in China.⁹⁶ A thorough investigation into these sources is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, Freedom House reviewed available evidence compiled by other investigators (including phone calls made to Chinese doctors), interviewed former Falun Gong prisoners of conscience who provided detailed accounts of blood tests in custody, spoke to a Taiwanese doctor whose patients have traveled to China for transplants, and met with the friend of a military hospital employee who had firsthand knowledge of organ extraction from a Falun Gong detainee as recently as 2011.⁹⁷ The above review found credible evidence suggesting that beginning in the early 2000s, Falun Gong detainees were killed for their organs on a large scale.

There are reasons to believe that such abuses continue. The organ transplant industry in China remains enormous and growing, even as the number of judicially executed prisoners has declined over the past decade.⁹⁸ After admitting that extracting organs from executed prisoners was problematic, the Chinese government has initiated a voluntary organ-donor

system, but its capacity remains small. Moreover, in 2014, a top health official announced that organs from prisoners would be embedded within the same database, even though prisoners are not in a position to provide free consent for “voluntary” donations.⁹⁹

A detailed June 2016 study of publicly available data on the number of transplants being conducted at medical institutions in China found that the scale is many times greater than the 10,000 transplants per year often cited by officials.¹⁰⁰ This would indicate that the discrepancy between known supply and actual transplant volume may be even larger than previously appreciated, increasing the risk to Falun Gong practitioners, other prisoners of conscience, and criminal detainees.

Community response and resistance

Falun Gong believers in China have responded to CCP persecution with tenacity, nonviolence, and creativity. In the first days and weeks of the ban, many picketed local government offices. When these lower-level officials proved unreceptive, adherents began writing letters to higher authorities or petitioning directly in Beijing. They shared their positive experiences with the practice in an effort to convince officials that Falun Gong posed no threat to society. By 2000, practitioners unfurling banners and performing qigong exercises were a daily presence on Tiananmen Square, though most were immediately arrested.

Falun Gong believers in China have responded to CCP persecution with tenacity, nonviolence, and creativity.

In 2001, as it became clear that a top-down reversal of the ban was unlikely, adherents turned their focus to the Chinese public and local police, engaging in a proactive effort to educate them about Falun Gong and urge them not to participate in the persecution. Printed leaflets and homemade videos were produced and disseminated en masse in a form of activism that one scholarly account likens to a “Chinese samizdat.”¹⁰¹ Falun Gong devotees in the diaspora designed censorship circumvention software, produced videos for dissemination inside China, and developed newspaper, radio, and satellite television outlets to relay uncensored news about Falun Gong and other human rights issues to audiences inside and outside China.

The Minghui website has itself played a critical role, serving as a communications channel between overseas and Chinese practitioners, a clearinghouse for accounts of persecution, and an activist resource. One section of the website serves as something of a toolkit, replete with the latest versions of circumvention tools, videos for download, and instructions for hanging banners and making automated phone calls.¹⁰²

These distribution channels and content have evolved as practitioners gauge what might resonate with Chinese audiences, and as many lost faith in the CCP’s willingness—or even ability—to reverse the campaign. Some types of content have been consistent: personal accounts of the benefits of the practice, examples of rights abuses occurring nationwide and locally, evidence of Falun Gong’s spread around the world, and specialized content to debunk claims in party propaganda.¹⁰³

Over the past decade, a broader array of information has joined this regular repertoire for circulation in China, including DVDs of classical Chinese dance performances and the *Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party (Jiuping Gongchandang)*, a book-length series

of articles first published in 2004 that offers a critical narrative of the CCP's history and a moral vision for how the country might recover from decades of violent political campaigns, including the one against Falun Gong. Such content suggests that Falun Gong activists are no longer focused simply on clearing the practice's name and ending the persecution, but are also seeking to help revive traditional culture and prepare the Chinese population for a future without the CCP.

Falun Gong practitioners' grassroots resistance and advocacy efforts in China since 2012 can be sorted into five major categories:

- 1. Campaigns to win the release of detained practitioners:** When a Falun Gong practitioner is detained, particularly if the person is well known within the community, adherents inside and outside China have developed various tactics for applying grassroots pressure on local officials to secure the detainee's release. For example, several teams of volunteers outside China make phone calls to local police, 6-10 Office agents, prosecutors, and judges, using numbers obtained from inside China (sometimes from sympathetic police). According to the coordinator of one such team, over 3,000 calls might be made on behalf of 350 detained individuals in a given week.¹⁰⁴ Within China, adherents write letters to local authorities, hire human rights lawyers to represent the detained believer, and increasingly circulate petitions among nonpractitioners calling for the individual's release.¹⁰⁵

Although it is difficult to track the impact of these efforts, there have been cases in which the detainee was released, as with Pang You in Shaanxi, noted above. Pang's lawyer reported that when he met with an officer to gain access to his client, a stack of letters was handed to the officer and phones were constantly ringing; the policeman said the calls were from friends of the detainee.¹⁰⁶ At least 1,000 residents in Pang's hometown of Beijing also signed a petition calling for his release.¹⁰⁷

- 2. Adapting public education to new technology and censorship:** Increases in mobile phone and internet penetration in China have created both challenges and opportunities for Falun Gong practitioners' public education efforts. Certain types of media, like video discs, have become less prevalent and therefore less effective. Some activists have switched to social media applications like QQ or WeChat, which allow them to share links to videos or other content in a manner that does not trigger automated keyword filtering.¹⁰⁸ Yet increased government censorship, tighter surveillance, and more consistent enforcement of real-name registration have created new obstacles, requiring constant innovation. For example, rather than making individual calls, it is now safer and more efficient to obtain a large number of registered phone cards and devices, then use them to make simultaneous calls with automated recordings. After a Beijing adherent was tracked down by authorities via geolocation technology, activists in that city began urging practitioners to move from place to place while making the calls.¹⁰⁹

- 3. Using legal channels to challenge persecution:** The Chinese legal system, with its institutionalized political control, is better suited to serve as a tool of repression than as a guarantor of justice. Nonetheless, as a matter of principle and with the hope of giving those within the system a chance to play a positive role, Falun Gong adherents have regularly engaged in legal activism. As a larger number of human rights lawyers have been willing to take Falun Gong cases, more adherents and their families have

been hiring attorneys to enter not guilty pleas and appeal convictions. Court documents analyzed by Freedom House found that between January 2014 and June 2016, second instance courts had issued at least 275 decisions in Falun Gong cases, indicating that a certain percentage of jailed adherents decided to appeal despite the extremely slim—or even nonexistent—chances of a reversed decision.

- 4. Lodging legal complaints against Jiang Zemin to seek accountability:** Since May 2015, large numbers of Falun Gong torture survivors have gone on the offensive, taking advantage of a change in regulations to lodge criminal complaints that name Jiang Zemin as the one responsible for their suffering. New Supreme People's Court guidelines that took effect on May 1, 2015, require judicial authorities to accept criminal complaints submitted by individual citizens; previously, they had the leeway to reject the complaints. A number of articles on Minghui raised awareness of the change and proposed that adherents take advantage of Xi's anticorruption drive—which had brought down key Jiang allies—by submitting their accounts of persecution and calling for Jiang to be investigated.

Victims of persecution inside and outside China began drafting complaints and mailing them to the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, either individually or jointly. One interviewee who had done so reported that he was able to track the package and received confirmation that it had arrived at its destination and was signed for, though he had received no further news of its processing.¹¹⁰ As of July 2016, Minghui reported that over 200,000 practitioners had submitted complaints, often sharing a copy for publication on the website. Although unable to verify such a large number of cases, Freedom House researchers obtained copies of several complaints and spoke to individuals from Beijing, Shanghai, Heilongjiang, and the United States who had submitted complaints and personally knew dozens of others who had done the same. Many noted that while some plaintiffs had been imprisoned, the vast majority had not experienced retribution or had been quickly released.

- 5. Encouraging fellow citizens to renounce the CCP:** Since late 2004, a centerpiece of content disseminated by Falun Gong practitioners has been the *Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party* mentioned above, including text, video, and audio versions. Noakes and Ford explain that the book's publishers also "encourage citizens to issue 'tuidang' [withdraw from the party] statements, symbolically severing their affiliations with the Party, youth league, or young pioneers as a form of catharsis and a way to clear the conscience."¹¹¹ Freedom House interviews with Falun Gong activists and references in Chinese official documents indicate that this has become a focus of outreach efforts in China.¹¹²

A 2011 study of the phenomenon found that the aim of those involved was not to overthrow the CCP. Rather, the campaign stems from the belief that the CCP is on its last legs, but that in order to ensure a peaceful transition to a less repressive form of government, the Chinese people must undertake a process of moral awakening and a commitment to nonviolence.¹¹³ As of November 2016, the overseas website tracking the tuidang movement claimed that over 255 million people inside and outside China had published statements. Although this figure could not be verified, Chinese court documents from early 2016 identify multiple cases in which Falun Gong adherents were sentenced to prison for possessing tuidang literature, indicating that the CCP itself is taking the movement seriously.¹¹⁴

Falun Gong outreach efforts and advocacy campaigns appear to have had at least some success, despite the harsh environment in which Falun Gong adherents in China operate. The sheer scale of information sharing is evident from court documents, in which a single defendant is often accused of possessing hundreds of leaflets, DVDs, or phone cards. Some practitioners have been released after intense campaigns on their behalf, and some proportion of police who receive phone calls have reportedly changed their attitudes and committed to treat detained practitioners more humanely.¹¹⁵

Perhaps most impressive is the large contingent of nonpractitioners who have joined Falun Gong initiatives. Despite the 2015 crackdown on human rights lawyers, hundreds continue to represent Falun Gong clients.¹¹⁶ Tens of thousands of people around China have signed petitions, not only for the release of detained neighbors, but more recently in support of Jiang Zemin's prosecution.¹¹⁷ The aforementioned 2011 study of tuidang statements and accounts from Freedom House interviewees indicate that the majority of people making such commitments are not Falun Gong adherents. Meanwhile, a number of high-profile human rights and democracy activists have published their own separation statements over the years, including Gao Zhisheng, Hu Jia, Wei Jingsheng, and Yang Jianli.

The simple fact that Falun Gong has survived the CCP's onslaught is impressive and amounts to a genuine failure of the party's repressive apparatus.

Future outlook

In today's China, Falun Gong remains a taboo subject. Many Chinese still believe party propaganda that leads them to fear or even hate Falun Gong practitioners. And on a daily basis, large numbers of judges, prosecutors, and police play an active role in the arrest, imprisonment, and torture of Chinese citizens who persist in their devotion to Falun Gong. Nevertheless, in July 1999, few people inside or outside China would have suspected that 17 years later, millions might still be practicing Falun Gong, neighbors would be signing pro-Falun Gong petitions, and Jiang Zemin would be the subject of a wave of criminal complaints.

The simple fact that Falun Gong has survived the CCP's onslaught is impressive and amounts to a genuine failure of the party's repressive apparatus. When one considers this reality and the factors that led to the ban, it is hard not to conclude that Jiang and the CCP have created a self-fulfilling prophecy, generating the very threats they feared by turning tens of millions of politically loyal citizens and party members into an army of dedicated activists at odds with the CCP.

The contradictory trends evident since Xi became general secretary make it difficult to predict how the party will treat Falun Gong in the future, but this very uncertainty represents a change from the previous outlook of unrelenting repression. Given how unimaginable it was a few years ago that powerful figures like Zhou Yongkang would be imprisoned, it is not entirely outside the realm of possibility that Jiang Zemin might also come under fire, if only on corruption charges rather than for his pivotal role in the anti-Falun Gong campaign.

Absent such a move, which could clear the path for a top-down reversal of the campaign, the choices of individual local officials will continue to be both critically important and widely divergent, sometimes making the difference between life and death.¹¹⁸

NOTES

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29. One indicator that would support an estimate in the millions is the number of "solemn declarations" documented by Minghui. These are statements submitted to Minghui by adherents who wish to declare null and void the renunciations they were forced to sign under pressure. As of July 26, 2016, a total of 564,683 had been collected, with between 39 and

- 148 published almost every day over the previous two weeks. Since not all adherents have been arrested, conceded under duress, or are able to access the blocked Minghui website, this figure represents only a portion of the overall community. Although it is impossible to confirm the authenticity of all statements, several people interviewed by Freedom House had published such statements on Minghui at one point, validating that many do come from real adherents in China. See "44 Ren Shengming Congxin Kaishi Xiulian," [44 people stated to restart the practice], *Minghui*, July 26, 2016, <http://www.minghui.org/mh/articles/2016/7/26/44%E4%BA%BA%E5%A3%B0%E6%98%8E%E4%BB%8E%E6%96%B0%E5%BC%80%E5%A7%8B%E4%BF%AE%E7%82%BC-331908.html>.
30. For example, attorney Han Zhiguang told the *London Telegraph* in 2009 that tens of millions of people were practicing Falun Gong, and that the number of adherents was expanding. Malcolm Moore, "Falun Gong 'growing' in China despite 10-year ban," *Telegraph*, April 24, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/5213629/Falun-Gong-growing-in-China-despite-10-year-ban.html>.
 31. Falun Dafa Information Center, "Falun Gong: Beliefs and Demographics," April 26, 2010, <http://www.faluninfo.net/article/1041/Falun-Gong-Beliefs-and-Demographics/>.
 32. Stephen Noakes and Caylan Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China: Explaining the Continuing Anti-Falun Gong Campaign," *China Quarterly* 223 (2015): 658–679.
 33. U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "Communist Party Calls for Increased Efforts to 'Transform' Falun Gong Practitioners as Part of Three-Year Campaign," March 22, 2011, <http://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/communist-party-calls-for-increased-efforts-to-transform-falun-gong>.
 34. A collection of court verdicts involving Falun Gong practitioners obtained by Freedom House indicated as much. All 59 individuals in the sample sentenced in 2016 were punished for disseminating information about Falun Gong. A total of 23 verdicts explicitly mentioned Minghui as the source of the materials.
 35. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 36. Interview with human rights lawyers C and D, November 2013.
 37. Stephen Noakes and Caylan Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China."
 38. Ryan John Taylor Adams, "Transformers: Chinese Self-Cultivation Traditions in Taiwan's Falun Gong," PhD dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2012.
 39. The centerpiece of this propaganda blitz was a self-immolation on Tiananmen Square committed by five alleged Falun Gong practitioners. However, investigations by the *Washington Post*, overseas Chinese media, and other analysts found that the individuals were not in fact Falun Gong practitioners and that the episode was apparently an elaborate ploy to demonize the group. Round-the-clock state television coverage of the incident led more Chinese citizens to view the group as dangerous and deserving of suppression. Philip P. Pan, "Human Fire Ignites Chinese Mystery," *Washington Post*, February 4, 2001, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/02/04/human-fire-ignites-chinese-mystery/e27303e3-6117-4ec3-b6cf-58f03cdeb4773/?utm_term=.7bdd871eb486; New Tang Dynasty Television, *False Fire: China's Tragic New Standard in State Deception*, Falsefire.com, accessed November 30, 2016, <http://www.falsefire.com/>.
 40. John Pomfret and Philip P. Pan, "Torture is Breaking Falun Gong," *Washington Post*, August 5, 2001, available at <http://www.faluninfo.net/article/566/i-Washington-Post-i-Torture-Is-Breaking-Falun-Gong/>.
 41. Some experts, such as journalist Ethan Gutmann, estimate the number of practitioners in custody in the mid- to late 2000s at between 450,000 and one million at any given time. His estimate is based on an assessment from extensive interviews that Falun Gong practitioners made up 15 to 20 percent of those held in labor camps, prisons, and various other detention facilities. Ethan Gutmann, *The Slaughter: Mass Killings, Organ Harvesting, and China's Secret Solution to Its Dissident Problem* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2014). See also Amnesty International, "Changing the Soup But Not the Medicine?—Abolishing Re-Education Through Labour in China (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2013), 34, <http://www.amnesty.org/es/library/asset/ASA17/042/2013/en/f7e7aec3-e4ed-4d8d-b99b-f6ff6ec860d6/asa170422013en.pdf>; Chinese Human Rights Defenders, *Re-education through Labor Abuses Continue Unabated: Overhaul Long Overdue*, February 4, 2009, http://docs.law.gwu.edu/facweb/dclarke/public/CHRD_RTL_Report.pdf.
 42. See for example the case of Bu Dongwei from Beijing: "China: Fear of Torture or Ill-Treatment/Prisoner of Conscience: Bu Dongwei (Also Known as David Bu), (M)," Amnesty International, August 29, 2006, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/049/2006/en/>.
 43. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 44. David Kilgour and David Matas, "Bloody Harvest: Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China," January 31, 2007, <http://organharvestinvestigation.net/>.
 45. Noakes and Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China: Explaining the Continuing Anti-Falun Gong Campaign"; Matthew Robertson, "Documenting a Campaign of 'Transformation' Ordered in China," *Epoch Times*, November 16, 2013, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/361576-documenting-a-campaign-of-transformation-ordered-in-china/>.
 46. Matthew Robertson, "Final Battle' to Brainwash Millions Launched in China," *Epoch Times*, November 15, 2013, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/360610-final-battle-to-brainwash-millions-launched-in-china/>.
 47. Sarah Cook, *The Politburo's Predicament: Confronting the Limitations of Chinese Communist Party Repression* (Freedom House, January 2015), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/china/politburo-predicament>.
 48. The documents were collected and downloaded from the online database of the Supreme People's Court in June 2016, then sorted and analyzed. Since January 1, 2014, Chinese courts have been required to publish verdicts online, providing a significantly greater number of available verdicts even on a sensitive issue like Falun Gong. Nevertheless, the database is not comprehensive, and individual verdicts are periodically removed. See Zhongguo Caipan Wenshu Wang [China Judgments Online], accessed November 29, 2016, <http://wenshu.court.gov.cn>.
 49. This figure was reached based on Dui Hua's reporting of 517 individuals in its political prisoner database who were tried in

- 2013 under Article 300, of whom 65 percent were Falun Gong practitioners, resulting in a figure of 336 Falun Gong prisoners. See Dui Hua Foundation, "State Security Indictments, Cult Trials Up in Xi Jinping's 2013," January 7, 2015, <http://www.duihuajournal.org/2015/01/state-security-indictments-cult-trials.html>.
50. Ibid.
 51. This total tally was calculated by Freedom House researchers based on various annual counts provided on Minghui's website. See for example "2014 Persecution Statistics: 983 Falun Gong Practitioners Tried, 635 Sentenced," Minghui, January 15, 2015, <http://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2015/1/15/147980.html>.
 52. For example, over 150 Falun Gong adherents detained in advance of the Beijing Olympics and subsequently imprisoned were reportedly still in custody as the 2016 Olympics opened in Rio. "Notable and Quotable: China's Olympic Prisoners," *Wall Street Journal*, August 9, 2016, available at <http://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2015/1/15/147980.html>.
 53. Interview with Chen Zhenping, Falun Gong practitioner imprisoned in China from 2008 to 2015, August 2016; Amnesty International, *China: No End in Sight—Torture and Forced Confessions in China*, November 12, 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA17/2730/2015/en/>.
 54. Interview with Chinese human rights lawyer attempting to assist Gao's family, July 2016; Matthew Robertson, "A Sudden Escape from China's North after Cover-up of Falun Gong Death in Custody," *Epoch Times*, July 6, 2016, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2107981-a-sudden-escape-from-chinas-north-after-cover-up-of-falun-gong-death-in-custody/>.
 55. "Statistics and Charts," *Minghui Wang*, accessed on November 17, 2016, <http://library.minghui.org/category/32.95.1.htm>.
 56. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016;
 57. China Law Translate, "People's Republic of China Criminal Law Amendment (9)," September 1, 2015, <http://chinalawtranslate.com/%E4%B8%AD%E5%8D%8E%E4%BA%BA%E6%B0%91%E5%85%B1%E5%92%8C%E5%9B%BD%E5%88%91%E6%B3%95%E4%BF%AE%E6%AD%A3%E6%A1%88%E6%BC%88%E4%B9%9D%E6%BC%89/?lang=en>.
 58. Despite the change, Chinese lawyers and international legal experts have argued that no law defines Falun Gong as a "heterodox religion" per se, only party documents. Bryan Edelman and James T. Richardson, "Falun Gong and the Law: Development of Legal Social Control in China," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 6, no. 2 (April 2003): 312–331; Yiyang Xia, "The illegality of China's Falun Gong crackdown—and today's rule of law repercussions," written statement for European Parliament hearing, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/droi/dv/506_yiyangxia_506_yiyangxia_en.pdf.
 59. For example, Minghui reports that 48 percent of the trials of Falun Gong practitioners in their records from 2015 (242 trials) included a lawyer who entered a "not guilty" plea on his or her client's behalf. Minghui, "Minghui Human Rights Report 2015: 501 New Trials of Falun Gong Practitioners," January 20, 2016, <http://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2016/1/20/154880.html>.
 60. Noakes and Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China: Explaining the Continuing Anti-Falun Gong Campaign."
 61. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Heilongjiang who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 62. Matthew Robertson, "Falun Gong Looks Forward to a New China," *Epoch Times*, June 30, 2016, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2062536-falun-gong-looks-forward-to-a-new-china/>.
 63. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Tianjin, who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 64. Interview with Wang Youqun and interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Beijing who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 65. Sarah Cook, *Politburo's Predicament*.
 66. One interviewee, who regularly makes phone calls to police, explained that adherents refer to the cases as a way of demonstrating to lower officials that no one is able to protect them from the consequences of the crimes they are committing, saying, "This [point about Zhou and Li's purge] has the most power to shock them. The top of the 6-10 Office is taken down, so what kind of future do you guys have?" Interview with overseas Falun Gong practitioner who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 67. Larry Ong, "Chinese Regime Inspection of 'Chinese Gestapo' Begins with Unusual Announcement," *Epoch Times*, July 8, 2016, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2110591-inspection-of-chinese-gestapo-begins-with-unusual-announcement/>; Yunshi Lin, "62 Sui Fu Zhenghua Ren Gonganbu Changwu Fubuzhang" [62-year-old Fu Zhenghua took up the post of administrative vice minister of Ministry of Public Security], *Caixin*, May 9, 2016, <http://archive.is/gQozJ> <http://archive.is/mdWTV>.
 68. Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, "Zhongyang Di Shixi Xunshizu Zhuangxiang Xunshi Zhongyang Fangfan He Chuli Xiejiao Wenti Lingdao Xiaozu Bangongshi Gongzuo Dongyuan Hui Zhaokai" [Mobilization meeting of the special inspection of the 14th central inspection team on the Offices of the Central Leading Group on Dealing with Heterodox Religions was convened], July 7, 2016, <http://archive.is/cyFVl> <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2110591-inspection-of-chinese-gestapo-begins-with-unusual-announcement/>.
 69. Interview with overseas Falun Gong practitioner who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 70. Interview with human rights lawyer A, November 2013.
 71. Falun Dafa Information Center, "As Xi Jinping Visits U.S., Torture Victims Sue Ex-leader Jiang Zemin in China," September 22, 2015, <http://faluninfo.net/article/1323/As-Xi-Jinping-Visits-US-Torture-Victims-Sue-Ex-leader-Jiang-Zemin-in-China?cid=84>.
 72. Interviews with Falun Gong practitioners from Beijing and Shanghai who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
 73. Noakes and Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China: Explaining the Continuing Anti-Falun Gong Campaign."
 74. Case of Deng and Chen Bingyu from January 14, 2016: Chen Bingyu, one of the two defendants, was caught on a bus spreading Falun Gong material; bus and road video footage was later used as evidence to charge her. See Shanghai Huangpu District People's Court, "Cao Yueling Zuzhi Liyong Huidaomen Xiejiao Zuzhi Liyong Mixin Pohuai Falv Shishi Yishen Xingshi Panjueshu" [Judgement of the first trial of Cao Yueling undermining the practice of law by organizing and using

- superstitious sects and heretical organization, and using feudalistic superstition], *China Judgements Online*, April 26, 2016, <http://wenshu.court.gov.cn/content/content?DocID=d227f882-7b3-4118-833f-90049cbb7a0>.
75. U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "2008 Annual Report," October 31, 2008, <https://www.cecc.gov/publications/annual-reports/2008-annual-report>.
76. Interview with Chen Zhenping, August 2016.
77. Noakes and Ford, "Path-Dependence and the Management of Political Opposition Groups."
78. Ibid.
79. Falun Gong adherents have made use of older media like homemade leaflets and shortwave radio, as well as cutting-edge technologies like internet circumvention tools, social media applications, and multimedia mobile-phone messages, to share information debunking state propaganda, exposing abuses, and questioning the legitimacy of CCP rule.
80. Noakes and Ford, "Path-Dependence and the Management of Political Opposition Groups"; Shandong Province Guan County People's Court, "Ni Mou Liyong Huidaomen Xiejiao Zuzhi Liyong Mixin Pohuai Falv Shishi Yishen Xingshi Panjueshu" [Judgement of the first trial of Ni for undermining the practice of law by organizing and using superstitious sects and heretical organization, and using feudalistic superstition], *China Judgements Online*, April 28, 2016, <http://wenshu.court.gov.cn/content/content?DocID=ab6a7014-6396-4450-b5af-41f8973eb734>.
81. Heilongjiang Province Baoqing County People's Court, "Gai Mou Mou Jiang Mou Mou Liyong Xiejiao Zuzhi Pohuai Falv Shishi Yishen Xingshi Panjueshu" [Judgement of the first trial of Gao and Jiang for undermining the practice of law by using heretical organization], *China Judgements Online*, March 29, 2016, <http://wenshu.court.gov.cn/content/content?DocID=cc49862-5359-449f-b021-93644b91ce12>.
82. Jilin City Changyi District Government, "Changyi Qu Zuoqia Zhen Kaizhan 'Shuangqing' Gongzuo" [Changyi District Zuoqia Township Implemented 'Double Clean Up' Campaign], March 15, 2016, <https://archive.is/R39rP>.
83. Yangzhou City Hanjiang District Fangxiang Township, "Xiang Fanxuanbi Shuo Bu: Zhi Quanzhen Guangda Qunzhong De Yi Feng Xin" [Say No to Anti-Propaganda Currency Notes: An Open Letter to the People of the Whole Town], May 12, 2016, <https://archive.is/Vf18t>.
84. Guilin City Administration of Culture, Press, Publication, Radio and Television, "2015 Guilin Shi Jingwai Weixing Dianshi Chuanbo Zhixu Zhuanxiang Zhengzhi Shishi Fang'an" [The Implementation Plan of Special Remediation of the Broadcast of Foreign Satellite TV in Guilin City 2015], July 20, 2015, <https://archive.is/Ku2m>.
85. Yan'an City Government Procurement Center, "Zhonggong Yan'an Shiwei 610 Bangongshi Fanxiejiao Weidianying Zhizuo Chengjiao Gonggao" [The announcement of the deal of the Communist Party of China Yan'an Municipal Party Committee 6-10 Office antiheretical micro movie production], Yan'an City Government website, April 29, 2016, <https://archive.is/VfYJJ>.
86. Sarah Cook, *The Politburo's Predicament*.
87. Donghai County Niushan Street Office, "Niushan Zhashi Tuijin Wu Xiejiao Chuangjian" [Niushan Steadily Promotes the Achievement of Zero Heretical Organization], November 3, 2014, <https://archive.is/U6Re8>.
88. U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "Communist Party Calls for Increased Efforts to 'Transform' Falun Gong Practitioners as Part of Three-Year Campaign"; Noakes and Ford, "Path-Dependence and the Management of Political Opposition Groups."
89. Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, "Zhonggongzhongyang Guanyu Yinfa 'Guanyu Woguo Shehuizhuyi Shiqi Zongjiao Wenti De Jiben Guangdian He Jiben Zhengce' De Tongzhi" [Notification from Central Committee of the Communist Party of China about distributing 'The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period'], State Administration of Religious Affairs of PRC, March 31, 1982, <http://www.sara.gov.cn/zcfc/zc/497.htm>. An English translation is available here: Donald MacInnis, *Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice* (New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 8-26, https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Document_no_19_1982.pdf.
90. See the following link for example; the remaining 12 are on file with the author. Zhangzhou Municipal Government, "2015 Niandu Zhonggong Zhangzhou Shiwei 610 Bangongshi Yusuan Shuoming" [2015 Budget Introduction of the Communist Party of China Zhangzhou Municipal Committee 610 Office], May 27, 2016, <http://archive.is/8QP8e>.
91. Falun Gong adherents and their families often report small-scale extortion or theft by local police. Relatives are asked to pay various "fees" to cover the food and lodging costs of a family member taken away to an extralegal "forced conversion" center, or must bribe police to secure the release of a loved one. Refugees report that when police raid a home in search of evidence of Falun Gong-related activism, personal property, cash, and electronic devices are often seized and never returned. Court documents corroborate this, often listing multiple computers, phones, and printers that were taken from the defendants' home. Driving these dynamics is the need to cover the costs of the campaign, an air of impunity for harassing a demonized minority, and general corruption in China's law enforcement bodies.
92. Some monetary rewards and demerits have an official imprimatur. Court documents indicate that alongside prison sentences, judges imposed fines ranging from 1,000 to 20,000 yuan in early 2016 on Falun Gong practitioners who were caught engaging in personal practice, outreach, or activism. Local websites have been found to advertise rewards for residents who report a Falun Gong practitioner to the police. Promotions and monetary bonuses are offered to officers who effectively crack down on or "transform" adherents. By contrast, journalist Ian Johnson recorded in detail how a provincial party secretary in Shandong imposed fines on lower-level officials if a Falun Gong adherent from their area lodged an appeal in Beijing, creating incentives for torture that led to numerous deaths in custody in 1999-2000. Ian Johnson, "Death Trap: How One Chinese City Resorted to Atrocities to Control Falun Dafa," *Wall Street Journal*, December 26, 2000, <http://www.pulitzer.org/winners/ian-johnson>.
93. Forced labor in custody has been a common experience for many detained Falun Gong adherents and has received international attention when detainees' hidden notes appear in products purchased by foreign consumers. Although many of China's prisoners (criminal and political) are forced to engage in such work, the connection to Falun Gong has been especially

notable given the large influx of prisoners from among the group's believers following the 1999 crackdown, particularly at RTL camps. This exploitative dimension of the anti-Falun Gong campaign has not subsided with the recent abolition of the RTL system, however. Both judicial prisons and transitional detention centers are sites of forced labor, sometimes on a scale even larger than at an RTL camp. With larger numbers of Falun Gong cases being handled by the courts following the RTL abolition, adherents have inevitably become a larger contingent of the workforce at formal prisons.

94. Kilgour and Matas, "Bloody Harvest," Ethan Gutmann, *The Slaughter: Mass Killings, Organ Harvesting, and China's Secret Solution to its Dissident Problem* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2014).
95. See for example A. Sharif, M. Fiatarone Singh, T. Trey, and J. Lavee, "Organ procurement from executed prisoners in China," *American Journal of Transplantation* 14, no. 10 (2014): 2246–2252, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajt.12871/pdf>.
96. A lack of transparency is exacerbated by Chinese officials' vacillating explanations of their sources. For example, after years of denying that executed prisoners were used to supply organs for transplant, officials admitted in November 2006—shortly after the emergence of the more damning allegations regarding Falun Gong—that the majority came from prisoners. Anna Schecter, "China Admits Selling Prisoners' Organs," *The Blotter* (blog), ABC News, November 27, 2006, http://blogs.abcnews.com/theblotter/2006/11/china_admits_se.html.
97. Interview with Taiwanese urologist who wished to remain anonymous, March 2016; interview with a technologist and Falun Gong practitioner from Beijing who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016. The Beijing interviewee's friend apparently relayed the highly sensitive incident to him as a warning, knowing that he was a Falun Gong practitioner.
98. Duihua Foundation, "China Executed 2,400 People in 2013," October 20, 2014, http://duihua.org/wp/?page_id=9270.
99. A. Sharif, M. Fiatarone Singh, T. Trey, and J. Lavee, "Organ procurement from executed prisoners in China,"
100. David Kilgour, Ethan Gutmann, David Matas, "Bloody Harvest/The Slaughter: An Update," June 22, 2016, http://endorganpiling.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Bloody_Harvest-The_Slaughter-June-23-V2.pdf.
101. Noakes and Ford, "Path-Dependence and the Management of Political Opposition Groups."
102. See "Basic Technologies of Information Spot," Minghui, <http://www.minghui.org/mh/fenlei/79/>.
103. Noakes and Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China: Explaining the Continuing Anti-Falun Gong Campaign"; interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
104. Interview with overseas Falun Gong practitioner who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
105. Interview with Wang Youqun; interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Beijing; see also Sarah Cook, *Politburo's Predicament*.
106. Interview with Wang Youqun, who helped hire the lawyer for Pang.
107. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Beijing, June 2016. See also Frank Fang, "Once an Official, Now a Target in China," *Epoch Times*, January 25, 2015, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/1220423-once-an-official-now-a-target-in-china/>.
108. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai, June 2016.
109. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Beijing, June 2016.
110. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai, June 2016.
111. Noakes and Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China."
112. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai, June 2016; interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Tianjin now living in the United States, April 2016; Shandong Province Junan County People's Court, "Wangmou Zuzhi Liyong Huidaomen Xiejiao Zuzhi Liyong Mixin Pohuai Falv Shishi Yishen Xingshi Panjueshu" [Judgement of the first trial of Wang for undermining the practice of law by organizing and using superstitious sects and heretical organization, and using feudalistic superstition], *China Judgements Online*, May 20, 2016, <http://wenshu.court.gov.cn/content/content?DocID=7e68a163-05c4-4e67-9b1b-c63bb7bafdde>.
113. Caylan Ford, "Tradition and Dissent in China: The Tuidang Movement and Its Challenge to the Communist Party," master's thesis, George Washington University, May 15, 2011, https://www.allmystery.de/dateien/79056.1337890746.Ford_Caylan2011Tradition_and_Dissent_in_China_The_Tuidang_Movement_and_its_Challenge_to_the_CP_MA-Thesis.pdf.
114. See for example this case of a Falun Gong practitioner from Shandong Province who was sentenced to three years in prison in April 2016 for possessing, among other items, copies of the *Nine Commentaries* for apparent dissemination to others. Shandong Province Junan County People's Court, "Wangmou Zuzhi Liyong Huidaomen Xiejiao Zuzhi Liyong Mixin Pohuai Falv Shishi Yishen Xingshi Panjueshu" [Judgement of the first trial of Wang for undermining the practice of law by organizing and using superstitious sects and heretical organization, and using feudalistic superstition], *China Judgements Online*, May 20, 2016, <http://wenshu.court.gov.cn/content/content?DocID=7e68a163-05c4-4e67-9b1b-c63bb7bafdde>. See also this case of a Falun Gong adherent from Shandong who was sentenced to three years in prison in January 2016 for possessing, among other items, instructions on how to renounce the party: Shandong Province Mengyin County People's Court, "Zhangmou Jia, Zhangmou Yi Zuzhi Liyong Huidaomen Xiejiao Zuzhi Liyong Mixin Pohuai Falv Shishi Yishen Xingshi Panjueshu" [Judgement of the first trial of Zhang A and Zhang B for undermining the practice of law by organizing and using superstitious sects and heretical organizations, and using feudalistic superstition], *China Judgements Online*, January 30, 2016, <http://wenshu.court.gov.cn/content/content?DocID=bc33df52-ab28-46b9-804a-30f5db18fbc2>.
115. Interview with overseas Falun Gong practitioner who wished to remain anonymous, June 2016.
116. "Minghui Human Rights Report 2015: 501 New Trials of Falun Gong Practitioners," Minghui, January 20, 2016, <http://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2016/1/20/154880.html>.
117. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner in Beijing, June 2016.
118. One interviewee described variation in official attitudes even among districts within the same city. Interview with Falun Gong practitioner from Shanghai, June 2016.

UN Reports the Chilling Facts on Organ Harvesting from Live Falun Gong Practitioners

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Suggests Mechanisms to Hold States Accountable

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On March 20, 2007, Manfred Nowak, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture issued a report that corroborates previous findings in 2006 about persecution, abuse and torture of Chinese citizens.

His report states, "Organ harvesting has been inflicted on a large number of unwilling Falun Gong practitioners at a wide variety of locations for the purpose of making available organs for transplant operations." Mr. Nowak issued his report to the Human Rights Council's Fourth session, as part of their Agenda item 2, the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 60/251.

On August 11, 2006, three UN Special Rapporteurs had sent an urgent appeal on organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners. This was a joint action by the Special Rapporteur on Torture, Mr. Manfred Nowak, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Ms. Asma Jahangir and the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Ms. Sigma Huda.

Mr. Nowak reports the situation that, "Vital organs including hearts, kidneys, livers and corneas were systematically harvested from Falun Gong practitioners at Sujiatan Hospital, Shenyang, Liaoning Province, beginning in 2001. The practitioners were given injections to induce heart failure, and therefore were killed in the course of the organ harvesting operations or immediately thereafter."

The report adds, "It is reported that employees of several transplant centres have indicated that they have used organs from live Falun Gong practitioners for transplants. After the organs were removed, the bodies were cremated, and no corpse is left to examine for identification as the source of an organ transplant. Once the organs were removed they were shipped to transplant centres to be used for transplants for both domestic and foreign patients."



Manfred Nowak, speaking at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva

Although the Chinese government denied the allegations, the Report states that China's passage of a law on July 1, 2006, prohibiting the sale of organs and requiring the donor to give written permission, indicates that China allowed organ harvesting before that time.

"Moreover, evidence exists, for example, that at least up until April 2006, price lists for organ transplants in China were published on the Internet," states the report.

The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Ms. Asma Jahangir, also addressed the harvesting of organs from Falun Gong practitioners in her annual report on 250 countries. Regarding freedom of religion or belief, her report states, "The Special Rapporteur continues to be very concerned by the continued violations of freedom of religion or belief suffered by members of the Falun Gong. In her previous reports to the Commission on Human Rights, she explicitly mentioned members of the Falun Gong as targets of various human rights violations because of their beliefs and she strongly condemns the continued lack of freedom of belief of members of Falun Gong."



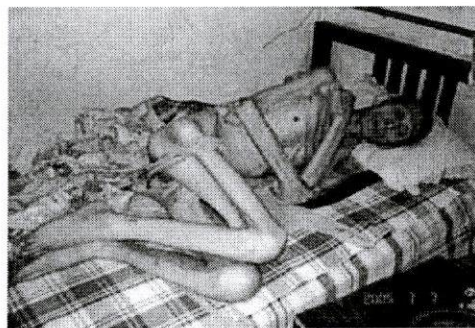
Special Rapporteur Asma Jahangir

The Silence about Organ Harvesting

The Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group initially described the organ harvesting issue in its newsletter, Sujiatun Death Camp: Putting Conscience On Trial. The news was met with silence.

On July 7, 2006, former Canadian Secretary of State (Asia Pacific) and MP David Kilgour and human rights attorney David Matas released their "Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China." Presenting 17 points of evidence on the harvesting of organs from live Falun Gong practitioners, they stated, "The allegations, if true, would represent a grotesque form of evil which, despite all the depravations humanity has seen, would be new to this planet. The very horror makes us reel back in disbelief. But that disbelief does not mean that the allegations are untrue." Kilgour and Matas have traveled the world discussing their findings with organizations and nations, but, as yet, no country and no major media have condemned this heinous practice.

Dr. Shizhong Chen, founder of The Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group (www.falunhr.org), when asked about the importance of the UN Report, observed, "David Matas condemned the organ harvesting as a new kind of evil that humanity has yet to see."



**70-Year-Old Falun Gong Practitioner
Tortured until Skin and Bones**

Sadly, we have also seen a new kind of silence to this evil, silence from world governments and from the media.

"This report by the Special Rapporteur removes any excuse of silence, of not knowing, not trusting and not believing the appeals of Falun Gong practitioners whose lives are supplying China's burgeoning transplant market. It also belies the US State Department report that they found 'no evidence' of organ harvesting after Chinese officials organized two guided tours for their benefit."

Many Cases of Persecution and Torture in China

The Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group has submitted many appeals to the United Nations Special Rapporteurs and has often spoken to the UN Human Rights Council. In his 2005 Report on his mission to China, Nowak observed, in Table 1, that 66% of all alleged victims of torture were Falun Gong practitioners. In 2006, Mr. Nowak sent many urgent appeals to the government of China concerning Falun Gong practitioners and other Chinese citizens who were abused and tortured.

Mr. Nowak cited the persecution of many Chinese citizens in his report, among others, human rights lawyer, Mr. Gao Zhisheng.

The Persecution of Chinese Lawyer Gao Zhisheng

Mr. Gao Zhisheng has represented dissidents, religious believers, entire villages with disputes against officials, and Falun Gong practitioners. When he did his own personal investigation and found evidence of ongoing torture of Falun Gong practitioners, he wrote an open letter asking CCP leaders Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao to stop the persecution of Falun Gong. As a result, the CCP started persecuting him. In November 2005, Mr. Gao met with Mr. Manfred Nowak, who at that time was in China investigating the use of "torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

On December 2, 2005, 12 days after Mr. Nowak met with him, the Justice Bureau closed Mr. Gao's Shengzhizhi Law Firm. Mr. Nowak "strongly protested to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs against the intimidation and surveillance by the security services that Mr. Gao was subjected to during their meeting in Beijing on November 20, 2005," and detailed the persecution suffered by Mr. Gao's wife, Ms. Geng He, their children of 13 and 2 years of age and his 70 year old mother-in-law. One time, two police officers beat Ms. Geng, ripped her clothing and tore off one of her fingernails. They followed Gao's daughter Gege at all times, including when she was in school and when she went to the bathroom. They even attempted to kidnap Gao's two-year-old son.

Other victims mentioned in the report include Ms. Mao Hengfeng whom Nowak interviewed on November 24, 2005, during his mission to China; Sun Xicheng, He Guoguang, Zhou Xiudi, Chen Zonglai, Wu Yuping, Jin Huijun, Mao Hengfeng, Chen Guancheng, Xu Zhiyong, lawyers Li Fangping and Li Subin, Ismail Samed, an ethnic

Uighur from Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR)), Mr. Chen Xiaoming, Ms. Fu Yuxia, and Mr. Han Zhongming, Ms. Ma Yalian, Yusuf Kadir Tohti and Abdukadir Sidik, Mr. Xu Shuangfu (also known as Xu Wenku) and Mr. Li Maoxing, Bu Dongwei (also known as David Bu), He Depu, whom the Special Rapporteur on Torture interviewed on November 22 and 24, 2005, at the Beijing No. 2 Prison, and Zhang Hongwei, a Falun Gong practitioner residing in Tonghua District, Jilin Province, currently detained at Jilin Prison.

The list of victims goes on and on...

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Suggests Mechanisms to Hold States Accountable

In an effort to help stop the use of torture, Mr. Nowak proposes that consideration be given to methods for holding accountable those States in which torture is systematic or widespread.

As an example, he suggests, "Such States might be required to contribute adequate funds to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. In addition, the respective costs for treatment should ideally be borne by the individual perpetrators, their superiors and the authorities directly responsible."

Mr. Manfred Nowak's report is at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/>

Click on the second report: A/HRC/4/33/Add.1

The information about China begins on page 45 and continues to page 70; the organ harvesting begins on page 60.

Mr. Nowak is the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Question of Torture to visit China for a UN investigation on torture. The findings from his 2005 visit triggered worldwide attention to the communist government's use of torture on its own citizens. His China mission report can be found at:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/huricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/677C1943FAA14D67C12570CB0034966D>

Ms. Asma Jahangir's report is at:

http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=86

Click on "E" in the first report. The information on China begins on page 28.

UN Report on Organ Harvesting in China

<http://falunhr.org/reports/UN2007-org/Torture-UN-07.pdf>

To Sign the Online Petition:

[http://falunhr.org/te/index.php?signature=1\(&en](http://falunhr.org/te/index.php?signature=1(&en)

Background Information

[What is Falun Gong?](#)

[Why the persecution in China?](#)

[Current situation of the persecution in China](#)

[Read all newsletters online](#)

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PRESS RELEASE

Southern California Political Operative Arrested on Federal Complaint Alleging He Acted as Illegal Agent of People's Republic of China

"This case highlights the breadth of the PRC's relentless intelligence and malign influence activities targeting the United States," said Akil Davis, the Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office. "The FBI will continue to use all the tools at its disposal to identify PRC intelligence operations and disrupt their efforts to undermine the integrity of our justice system and seek to establish a global network of criminal conspiracies to undermine the integrity of our elected officials."

For Immediate Release
U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of
California

About a month after Individual 1's election, Chen arranged a lunch at a Rowland Heights restaurant with Sun and others, a gathering that Chen described to a PRC official as a "core member of the Chino Hills man on federal charges that allege he acted as an illegal agent of the People's Republic of China (PRC), including while serving as the campaign manager for a political candidate who was elected in 2022 to the city council of a Southern California city."

Yaoning "Mike" Sun, 64, was arrested without incident and is expected to make his initial appearance this afternoon in United States District Court in downtown Los Angeles.

A criminal complaint filed Tuesday and unsealed this morning charges Sun with acting as an illegal agent of a foreign power. Sun is also charged with conspiring with another man, Chen Jun, who was sentenced to federal prison last month for acting as an illegal agent of the PRC government and plotting to target U.S.-based practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice banned in China. Chen instructed Sun to include a section on Individual 1, who was to be a "New Political Star" with connections to other prominent politicians. The affidavit also states that Chen and Sun discussed their past efforts to target and undermine the integrity of the U.S. government and its officials. Sun served as the campaign manager and close personal confidante for a Southern California politician (described in the affidavit as "Individual 1") who

was running for local elected office in 2022. During the campaign, Sun allegedly communicated with Chen regarding his efforts to get Individual 1 elected. Chen discussed with Chinese government officials how the PRC could "influence" local politicians in the United States, particularly on the issue of Taiwan, according to the complaint. In November 2022, shortly after Individual 1 was elected to office, Chen instructed Sun to prepare a report on the election that was sent to Chinese government officials, who responded positively and expressed thanks, according to the complaint affidavit. Chen also sent a message to Individual 1 stating that Individual 1 was "doing a good job, I hope you can continue the good work, make Chinese people proud," the affidavit states.

"The conduct alleged in this complaint is deeply concerning – the defendant is charged with acting on behalf of the People's Republic of China to influence our political system," said United States Attorney Martin Estrada. "We cannot permit hostile foreign powers to meddle in the governance of our country. My office and our law enforcement partners will continue to prioritize the security of our nation and the preservation of the liberties that make this country the envy of the world."

"This case highlights the breadth of the PRC's relentless intelligence and malign influence activities targeting the United States," said Akil Davis, the Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office. "The FBI will continue to use all the tools at its disposal to identify PRC intelligence operations, disrupt PRC information laundering networks, and bring to justice those who seek to engage in criminal conspiracies to undermine the integrity of our elected officials."

About a month after Individual 1's election, Chen arranged a lunch at a Rowland Heights restaurant with Sun and others, a gathering that Chen described to a PRC official as a "core member lunch," the affidavit alleges. Chen subsequently described the lunch as "successful" as participants agreed to establish a "US-China Friendship Promotional Association." While Individual 1 did not attend the meeting, Chen described Individual 1 as being part of the association and Sun serving as vice president. "This is the basic team dedicated for us," Chen wrote to the Chinese government official.

Chen instructed Sun in early 2023 to write up another report for Chinese officials describing "you and me cultivating and assisting [Individual 1's] success," according to the affidavit. In a February 2023 draft of Sun's report, Sun described his personal background, his history of working against "Chinese secessionist forces," and boasted that, "most proudly of all, during the 2022 U.S. midterm elections, I orchestrated and organized my team to win the election for city council member candidate [Individual 1]." In subsequent communications outlined in the affidavit, Chen instructed Sun to include a section on Individual 1, who was to be described as a "New Political Star" with connections to other prominent politicians. The affidavit also states that Chen and Sun discussed their "past struggle fighting Taiwanese independence forces" over the years and fighting "FLG" (Falun Gong) influences "in a California city."

In February 2023, Sun and Chen drafted a second report to PRC officials that requested an \$80,000 budget to fund additional pro-PRC activities and to combat “anti-China forces” in the United States.

After Chen and Sun discussed a planned trip to the PRC to meet with “leadership,” and after Chen directed Sun to schedule a meeting with the Chinese consul general in Los Angeles, Sun and Individual 1 traveled to China in late August 2023.

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

The charge of acting as an illegal agent of a foreign government carries a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years in federal prison. The charge of conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States carries a maximum statutory sentence of five years.

This FBI is conducting the ongoing investigation in this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney David Ryan, Chief of the National Security Division, and Assistant United States Attorney Amanda Elbogen of the Terrorism and Export Crimes Section are prosecuting this case, with assistance from Trial Attorney Garrett Coyle of the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section in the Department of Justice’s National Security Division.

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Updated December 19, 2024

Topic

NATIONAL SECURITY

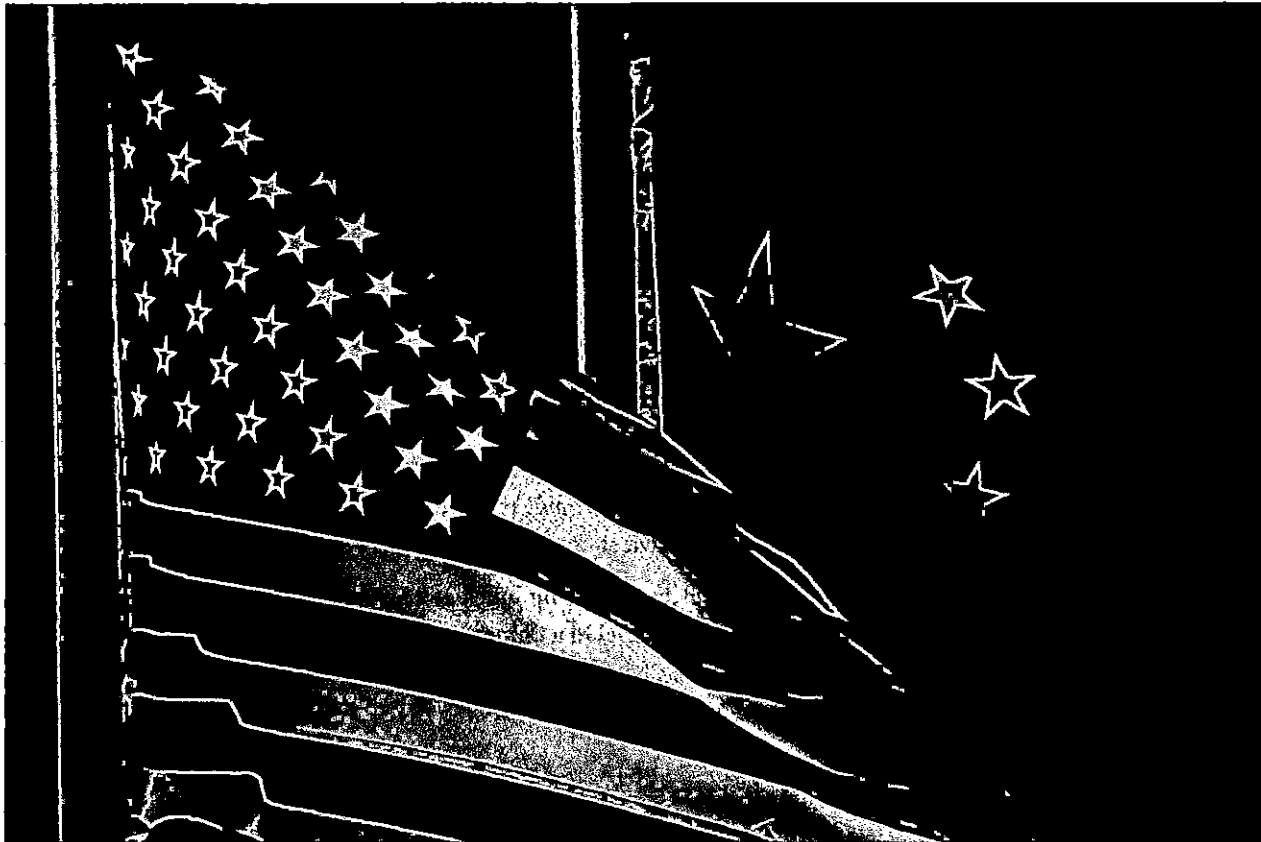
Component

USAO - California, Central

SoCal political campaign manager suspected of spying for China arrested

Federal investigators say Yaoning "Mike" Sun plotted to influence U.S. politics and target faith-based political enemies abroad.

MATT SIMONS / December 19, 2024



The American and Chinese flags wave at Genting Snow Park ahead of the 2022 Winter Olympics, Feb. 2, 2022, in Zhangjiakou, China. (AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato, File)

(CN) — FBI agents arrested a Los Angeles man on Thursday, accusing him of acting as an illegal agent of the People's Republic of China while serving as the campaign manager for a Southern California politician.

Authorities say Yaoning "Mike" Sun, 64, sought to influence U.S. politicians on the issue of Taiwan and promote activities against "anti-China forces" in the U.S., including practitioners of Falun Gong — a spiritual practice banned by China's authoritarian government.

"We cannot permit hostile foreign powers to meddle in the governance of our country," U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada said in a statement.

Sun was arrested without incident Thursday and is expected to make his initial appearance in the downtown Los Angeles federal court.

Sun also faces charges of conspiring with another man, Sun Chen, who was sentenced to federal prison last month for attempting to bribe U.S. officials as part of a Chinese state-funded scheme to topple the Falun Gong movement.

Justice Department officials called the revelation "deeply concerning."

"This case highlights the breadth of the PRC's relentless intelligence and malign influence activities targeting the United States," said Akil Davis, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office.

A religious movement founded in the early 1990s, Falun Gong borrows heavily from Buddhist and Taoist traditions and boasts about 20 million practitioners worldwide. Its followers are best known in the United States for operating the popular Shen Yun dance troupe and the Epoch Times, an ultra-conservative news organization.

According to the criminal complaint, Sun served as the campaign manager and close personal confidante for a Southern California politician who was running for local elected office in 2022, described in the affidavit as "Individual 1." The politician was successfully elected to a city council position in 2022.

Chen, the co-conspirator, discussed with Chinese government officials how the PRC could "influence" local politicians in the United States, particularly on the issue of Taiwan, according to the complaint.

In November 2022, shortly after Individual 1 was elected to office, Chen instructed Sun to prepare a report on the election that was sent to Chinese government officials, who responded positively and expressed thanks, according to an affidavit. Chen also sent a message to Individual 1 stating that the politician was doing a good job.

Chen said to the politician that he hoped he could continue the good work and make Chinese people proud, the affidavit states.

Sun also supposedly met with Chen and others for lunch at a Rowland Heights restaurant, a gathering that Chen described to a Chinese official as a "core member lunch," the affidavit claims. Chen subsequently described the lunch as successful after as participants agreed to establish a "U.S.-China Friendship Promotional Association."

While Individual 1 did not attend the meeting, Chen described them as being part of the association and Sun as its vice president.

The Chinese government has dedicated significant resources to harassing Falun Gong adherents in recent years, calling them one of the "Five Poisons," or one of the top five threats to its rule, alongside Taiwanese independence, Tibetan independence and the Chinese democracy movement.

In a February 2023 draft of a report to Chinese officials, Sun reportedly described his personal background, his history of working against "Chinese secessionist forces," and boasted that he was proud of "orchestrating" the win for Individual 1 during the 2022 U.S. midterm elections.

In later communications, Chen and Sun reportedly described Individual 1 as a "new political star" with connections to other prominent politicians. Chen and Sun also discussed their past struggle fighting against Taiwanese independence forces over the years and fighting Falun Gong influences in an unspecified California city.

authorities say that in February 2023, Sun and Chen drafted a second report to Chinese officials that requested an \$80,000 budget to fund additional pro-PRC activities and to combat "anti-China forces" in the United States.

"We commend the Department of Justice for its diligence in countering the Chinese Communist Party's transnational repression targeting Falun Gong," Alice Sun, an L.A.-based Falun Gong group coordinator, said in a statement. "We are aware that the CCP is intensifying its efforts to target Falun Gong through its spies in the U.S., as well as through YouTubers and even U.S. media outlets. Our government must take stronger measures to curb the CCP's reach and influence."

The charge of acting as an illegal agent of a foreign government carries a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years in federal prison. The charge of conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States carries a maximum statutory sentence of five years.

This FBI's investigation remains ongoing.

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Report: China still harvesting organs from prisoners at a massive scale

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/23/asia/china-organ-harvesting/>

(CNN) A new report claims that China is still engaged in the widespread and systematic harvesting of organs from prisoners, and says that people whose views conflict with the ruling Chinese Communist Party are being murdered for their organs.

The report -- by former Canadian lawmaker David Kilgour, human rights lawyer David Matas, and journalist Ethan Gutmann -- collates publicly reported figures from hospitals across China to show what they claim is a massive discrepancy between official figures for the number of transplants carried out throughout the country.

They blame the Chinese government, the Communist Party, the health system, doctors and hospitals for being complicit.

"The (Communist Party) says the total number of legal transplants is about 10,000 per year. But we can easily surpass the official Chinese figure just by looking at the two or three biggest hospitals," Matas said in a statement.

The report estimates that 60,000 to 100,000 organs are transplanted each year in Chinese hospitals.



``

China orders retrial of murder case of man executed 21 years ago

According to the report, that gap is made up of executed prisoners, many of them prisoners of conscience locked up for their religious or political beliefs. China does not report its total number of executions, which it regards as a secret.

The report's findings stand in stark contrast to Beijing's claim that, since the beginning of 2015, China has moved from almost completely relying on organs from prisoners to the "largest voluntary organ donation system in Asia."

At a regular press conference Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China has "strict laws and regulations on this issue."

"As for the testimony and the published report, I want to say that such stories about forced organ harvesting in China are imaginary and baseless -- they don't have any factual foundation," she said.

The National Health and Family Planning Commission, which oversees organ donations in China, did not respond to a request for comment for this piece.

 Patients queue at a hospital in China. More than 300,000 people require organ transplant operations every year.

Secret transplants

According to the report, thousands of people are being executed in China in secret and their organs harvested for use in transplant operations.

So who is being killed? The authors say mainly imprisoned religious and ethnic minorities, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, underground Christians, and practitioners of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement.

While much of China's organ transplant system is kept secret, official figures show that 2,766 volunteers donated organs in 2015, with 7,785 large organs acquired.



China's Foreign Minister berates Canadian reporter

Official figures put the number of transplant operations at around 10,000 a year, which the report disputes.

The authors point to publicly available statements and records released by hospitals across China claiming they carried out thousands of transplant annually, and

interviews with and official biographies of individual doctors who claim to have carried out thousands of transplant operations during their careers.

"Simply by adding up a handful of the hospitals that have been profiled in this (report), it's easy to come up with higher annual transplant volume figures than 10,000," the authors write.

According to official statistics, there are more than 100 hospitals in China approved to carry out organ transplant operations. But the report states the authors have "verified and confirmed 712 hospitals which carry out liver and kidney transplants," and claims the number of actual transplants could be hundreds of thousands larger than China reports.



Falun Gong members stage a protest against China in Hong Kong.

'Ghoulish and inhumane practice'

The apparent gap in official transplant figures, the report claims, is filled by prisoners of conscience.

According to Amnesty International, "tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained" since the government launched a crackdown on the practice in 1999.

China regards Falun Gong as a "cult" and claims followers engage in "anti-China political activities."

"The government considers Falun Gong a threat to its power, and has detained, imprisoned and tortured its followers," says Maya Wang, China researcher for Human Rights Watch.

The report says detained Falun Gong practitioners were forced to have blood tests and medical exams. Those test results were placed in a database of living organ sources so quick organ matches could be made, the authors claim.

This massive supply of organs served to benefit hospitals and doctors, making for an ever growing industry.

The report's authors testified before the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Thursday.

"The Chinese government has been trafficking in organs for profit for far too long and we have strong evidence that Falun Gong practitioners were singled out for organ harvesting," said Representative Chris Smith, who co-chairs the committee.

In a statement released online, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, former chair of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the Chinese government's "ghoulish and inhumane practice of robbing individuals of their freedom, throwing them in labor camps or prisons, and then executing them and harvesting their organs for transplants is beyond the pale of comprehension and must be opposed universally and ended unconditionally."

'Good intentions'

For decades, Chinese officials strenuously denied that they harvested organs from prisoners, calling claims to the contrary "vicious slander."

Finally in 2005, officials admitted that the practice took place and promised to reform it.

Five years later however, Huang Jiefu, director of the China Organ Donation Committee, told medical journal The Lancet that more than 90% of transplant organs still came from executed prisoners.

China carries out more executions annually than the rest of the world put together, at least 2,400 in 2014, according to Death Penalty Worldwide. Official Chinese figures are not reported.

In late 2014, China announced that it would switch to a completely voluntary donation-based system.

This pronouncement was greeted with great skepticism however, given that between 2012 and 2013, only around 1,400 people signed up to donate (compared to the more than 300,000 in need of organ transplants every year).

Since then, the government has seen limited success in getting people to sign up to the national register.

One 86-year-old woman, surnamed Zhou, told CNN she had wanted to donate her organs in 1996 but at the time her local Red Cross chapter had never heard of someone doing so.

"Since I wasn't able to have a medical career myself, I want to make a contribution after I die," she said.



Why China needs to stop Yulin dog meat festival (opinion)

Zhou said that while her family was mostly supportive of her decision, "in China, the conventional wisdom is that it's improper to mutilate a body when someone is dead."

While people like Zhou have stepped forward to fill the gap left by prisoners, experts warn that there is nothing to stop those condemned to be executed from also "volunteering," and regulations legalizing the use of prisoners' organs remain in force.

The 2014 announcement "is only at best a statement of good intentions but has no force of law," the medical journal BMJ said.

The phasing out of executed prisoners' organs is a "semantic trick," Professor Li Huige of Johannes Gutenberg University said in a recent report commissioned by the European Parliament.

Why will China struggle to end organ harvesting from executed prisoners?

He pointed to statements by Huang to Chinese state media that "death row prisoners are also citizens."

"If (they) are willing to atone for their crime by donating organs, they should be encouraged," Huang told People's Daily.

By redefining prisoners as regular citizens, Li says, "China's national organ donation system may be abused for the whitewashing of organs from both death row prisoners and prisoners of conscience."

In an open letter to the Lancet, five doctors wrote that "China is still using death row inmates' organs. The only difference is that these organs are now been classified as citizens' voluntarily donated organs."

Huang did not respond to a request for comment. Speaking to the New York Times, he said his comments had been "distorted" and were not in keeping with government policy.

Testifying before the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee on Thursday, Francis Delmonico, president of the Transplantation Society, praised Huang as a "principal ally to change the outrageous practice" of using prisoners' organs.

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FBI Charges Chinese Nationals with Spying at Camp Grayling

October 2, 2024 [Press Release](#)

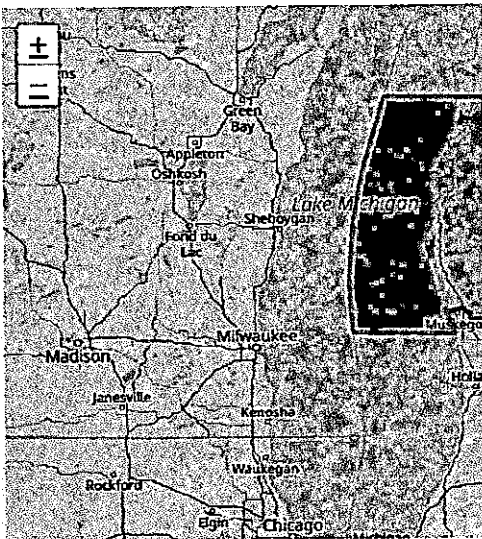
Today, the Detroit News **reported** the FBI has charged five Chinese nationals who studied at the University of Michigan with espionage related charges. The five individuals are accused of taking photos of military equipment at Camp Grayling. While the students were taking photos, the Michigan Army National Guard was hosting training for the Taiwanese military.

"This case shows once again that CCP espionage can happen anywhere in America and we must be vigilant. The CCP obviously has an interest in Camp Grayling and this is further evidence it would be a mistake for Michigan leaders to allow Gotion to build in our state. State funding for Gotion's plan to bring Chinese nationals to Mecosta County is an open invitation for further spying on Camp Grayling. For national security reasons, Governor Whitmer and the legislature must revoke state funding for Gotion immediately," said Congressman John Moolenaar.

"Additionally, as chairman of the Select Committee on China, my committee recently issued a report on research security at our nation's universities. All of our nation's universities must shut down their joint institutes with Chinese universities, and enact stricter guardrails on emerging technology research. American universities must realize they are a target for espionage and protect the critical taxpayer-funded research they do," he continued.

Last month, Moolenaar along with Chairwoman Virginia Foxx of the Committee on Education and Workforce released a report on research security at American universities. The five Chinese nationals charged with espionage were students at the University of Michigan through the schools joint partnership with Shanghai Jiao Tong University in Shanghai.

Issues: [National Security](#)



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Chinese government's campaign of transnational repression in the United States. But the individual they attempted to bribe was in fact an undercover law enforcement agent, and defendants were arrested this morning. The Justice Department will continue to investigate and prosecute efforts by the PRC government to silence its critics and extend the reach of its regime onto U.S. soil. We will never stop working to defend the rights to which every person in the United States is entitled."

PRESS RELEASE

Illegal Agents of the PRC Government Charged for PRC-Directed Bribery Scheme

"China's government has once again shown its disregard for the rule of law and international norms," said FBI Director Christopher Wray. "The FBI will not tolerate CCP repression — its efforts to threaten, harass, and intimidate people — here in the United States. We will continue to confront the Chinese government's efforts to violate our laws and repress the rights and freedoms of people in our country. The United States poses as severe a threat to the democratic values of the United States as the PRC attempts to weaponize our institutions and programs and attack the rights of those on U.S. soil. Any attempt to repress or harass individuals runs directly counter to the ideals our nation was founded upon, and it simply will not be tolerated."

Friday, May 26, 2023

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

**John Chen and Lin Feng Allegedly Furthered the PRC Government's
Transnational Repression Campaign Against the Falun Gong by Bribing a
Purported IRS Official**

"John Chen and Lin Feng allegedly waged a campaign at the behest of the People's Republic of China to influence a U.S. Government official in order to further the PRC's transnational repression campaign against Falun Gong practitioners in the United States. A federal court in the Southern District of New York today unsealed a complaint charging two individuals with acting and conspiring to act in the United States as unregistered agents of the People's Republic of China (PRC); conspiring to bribe and bribing a public official, and conspiracy to commit money laundering."

According to the complaint, John Chen, aka Chen Jun, 70, a Los Angeles resident and former citizen of the PRC, and Lin Feng, a Los Angeles resident and PRC citizen, allegedly participated in a PRC government-directed scheme targeting U.S.-based practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice banned in the PRC. Chen and Feng were arrested today in the Central District of California. In China, Falun Gong is one of the top five threats to its rule. In China, Falun Gong adherents face a range of repressive and punitive measures from the PRC government.

"The Chinese government has yet again attempted, and failed, to target critics of the PRC here in the United States," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "We allege the defendants in this case attempted to bribe someone they thought was an IRS agent in order to further the

Chinese government's campaign of transnational repression in the United States. But the individual they attempted to bribe was in fact an undercover law enforcement agent, and both defendants were arrested this morning. The Justice Department will continue to investigate, disrupt, and prosecute efforts by the PRC government to silence its critics and extend the reaches of its regime onto U.S. soil. We will never stop working to defend the rights to which every person in the United States is entitled."

"The Department of Justice continues to expose the Chinese government's brazen attempts to perpetrate transnational repression, this time through attempted bribery," said Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco. "As highlighted by today's arrests and charges of conspiracy, bribery, and money laundering, we will not tolerate efforts by the PRC or any foreign government to intimidate, harass, or undermine the rights and freedoms enjoyed by all who live in the United States."

"China's government has once again shown its disregard for the rule of law and international norms," said FBI Director Christopher Wray. "The FBI will not tolerate CCP repression — its efforts to threaten, harass, and intimidate people — here in the United States. We will continue to confront the Chinese government's efforts to violate our laws and repress the rights and freedoms of people in our country. No other nation poses as severe a threat to the democratic values of the United States as the government of the People's Republic of China," said FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate. "The FBI will not stand by as the PRC attempts to weaponize our institutions and programs and attack the rights of those on U.S. soil. Any attempt to repress or harass individuals runs directly counter to the ideals our nation was founded upon, and it simply will not be tolerated. The FBI and our partners remain committed to confronting the illegal conduct of the PRC government that threatens our national security and freedom."

"John Chen and Lin Feng allegedly waged a campaign at the behest of the Government of the People's Republic of China to influence a U.S. Government official in order to further the PRC Government's repression of practitioners of Falun Gong," said U.S. Attorney Damian Williams for the Southern District of New York. "Efforts to manipulate and use the arms of the U.S. Government to carry out the PRC Government's autocratic aims are as shocking as they are insidious. My office will work vigorously to protect against malign foreign influences."

The complaint alleges that from at least approximately January 2023 to May 2023, Chen and Feng worked inside the United States at the direction of the PRC government, including an identified PRC government official (PRC Official-1), to further the PRC government's campaign to repress and harass Falun Gong practitioners. The PRC Government has designated the Falun Gong as one of the "five poisons," or one of the top five threats to its rule. In China, Falun Gong adherents face a range of repressive and punitive measures from the PRC government, including imprisonment and torture.

"The Chinese government has yet again attempted to extend its reach into the United States," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "We allege the defendants in this case attempted to bribe someone they thought was an IRS agent in order to further the

As part of the PRC government's campaign against the Falun Gong, Chen and Feng allegedly engaged in a PRC government-directed scheme to manipulate the IRS's Whistleblower Program in an effort to strip the tax-exempt status of an entity run and maintained by Falun Gong practitioners (Entity-1). After Chen filed a defective whistleblower complaint with the IRS (the Chen Whistleblower Complaint), Chen and Feng paid \$5,000 in cash bribes, and promised to pay substantially more, to a purported IRS agent who was in fact an undercover officer (Agent-1), in exchange for Agent-1's assistance in advancing the complaint. Neither Chen nor Feng notified the Attorney General that they were acting as agents of the PRC government in the United States.

In the course of the scheme, Chen, on a recorded call, explicitly noted that the purpose of paying these bribes, which were directed and funded by the PRC government, was to carry out the PRC government's aim of "toppl[ing] ... the Falun Gong." During a call intercepted pursuant to a judicially authorized wiretap, Chen and Feng discussed receiving "direction" on the bribery scheme from PRC Official-1, deleting instructions received from PRC Official-1 in order to evade detection, and "alert[ing]" and "sound[ing] the alarm" to PRC Official-1 if Chen and Feng's meetings to bribe Agent-1 did not go as planned. Chen and Feng also discussed that PRC Official-1 was the PRC Government official "in charge" of the bribery scheme targeting the Falun Gong.

As part of this scheme, Chen and Feng allegedly met with Agent-1 in Newburgh, New York, on May 14. During the meeting, Chen gave Agent-1 a \$1,000 cash bribe as an initial, partial bribe payment. Chen further offered to pay Agent-1 a total of \$50,000 for opening an audit of Entity-1, as well as 60% of any whistleblower award from the IRS if the Chen Whistleblower Complaint were successful. On May 18, Feng paid Agent-1 a \$4,000 cash bribe at John F. Kennedy International Airport as an additional partial bribe payment in furtherance of the scheme. Chen allegedly obtained funding from the PRC government to make bribe payments during his trips to the PRC in the course of the scheme.

Chen and Feng are each charged with (1) one count of conspiring to act as an agent of a foreign government without notifying the Attorney General and to bribe a public official, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison; (2) one count of acting as an agent of a foreign government without notifying the Attorney General, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison; (3) one count of bribing a public official, which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison; and (4) one count of conspiring to commit international money laundering, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

The FBI New York and Los Angeles Field Offices and Counterintelligence Division are investigating the case with valuable assistance provided by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA).

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Shiva H. Loganathan, Qais Ghannay, Michael D. Lockard, and Kaitlyn A. Wheelock for the Southern District of New York and Trial Attorney Christina A. Clark of the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section are prosecuting the case. The charges in the complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Updated July 25, 2024

In the course of the scheme, Chen, on a recorded call, explicitly noted that the purpose of paying these bribes, which were directed and funded by the PRC government, was to carry out the PRC government's aim of "toppling" . . . the Falun Gong. During a call intercepted pursuant to a judicially authorized wiretap, Chen and Feng discussed receiving "toppling" information from PRC Official-1, deleting instructions received from PRC Official-1 in order to evade detection, and "alert[ing]" and "sound[ing]" the alarm to PRC Official-1 if Chen and Feng's meetings to bribe Agent-1 did not go as planned. Chen and Feng also discussed that PRC Official-1 was the PRC government official "in charge" of the bribery scheme involving the Falun Gong.

Attachment

John Chen complaint (PDF, 329 KB)

Components

Office of the Attorney General	Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	National Security
Division (NSD)	Office of the Deputy Attorney General	USAO - New York, Southern

Press Release Number: 23-609

Related Content

Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco Delivers Remarks at the Convening of the Election Threats Task Force

Washington

Thank you very much, Mr. Attorney General — and good afternoon, everyone.



PRESS RELEASE

Two Men Plead Guilty to Acting as Illegal Agents of Chinese Government and Bribery

As part of this scheme, Chen and Feng met with Agent-1 in Newburgh, New York, on May 14, 2023. During the meeting, Chen gave Agent-1 a \$21,000 cash bribe as an initial, partial bribe payment. Chen further offered to pay Agent-1 a total of \$20,000 for opening an account of Entity-1 as well as 60% of any profits from the IRS if the Chen whistleblower complaint were successful. On May 18, 2023, Feng paid Agent-1 a \$4,000 cash bribe at John F. Kennedy International Airport as an additional partial bribe payment in furtherance of the scheme.

Defendants Furthered the Chinese Government's Transnational Repression Campaign Against the Falun Gong by Bribing a Purported IRS Official

John Chen, 71, of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Los Angeles, California, and Lin Feng, 44, a PRC citizen and resident of Los Angeles, California, pleaded guilty to acting as unregistered agents of the PRC and bribing an IRS agent in connection with a plot to target U.S.-based practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice banned in the PRC. According to court documents, from at least approximately January 2023 to May 2023, Chen and Feng worked inside the United States at the direction of the PRC government, including PRC government official identified as PRC Official-1, to further the PRC's campaign to repress and harass Falun Gong practitioners. The PRC designated the Falun Gong as one of the "Five Poisons," or one of the top five threats to its rule. In China, Falun Gong adherents face a range of repressive and punitive measures from the Chinese government, including imprisonment. As part of the PRC's campaign against the Falun Gong, Chen and Feng engaged in a PRC government-directed scheme to manipulate the IRS's Whistleblower Program in an effort to strip the tax-exempt status of an entity run and maintained by Falun Gong practitioners (Entity-

1). After Chen filed a defective whistleblower complaint with the IRS, Chen and Feng paid \$5,000 in cash bribes and promised to pay substantially more to a purported IRS agent (Agent-1) who was, in fact, an undercover officer, in exchange for Agent-1's assistance in advancing the complaint. Neither Chen nor Feng notified the Attorney General that they were acting as agents of the PRC in the United States.

In the course of the scheme, Chen, on a recorded call, explicitly noted that the purpose of paying these bribes, which were directed and funded by the PRC, was to carry out the PRC government's aim of "toppl[ing] . . . the Falun Gong." During a call intercepted pursuant to a judicially authorized wiretap, Chen and Feng discussed receiving direction on the bribery scheme from PRC Official-1, deleting instructions received from PRC Official-1 in order to evade detection, and alert[ing] and sound[ing] the alarm to PRC Official-1 if Chen and Feng's meetings to bribe Agent-1 did not go as planned. Chen and Feng also discussed that PRC Official-1 was the PRC government official "in charge" of the bribery scheme targeting the Falun Gong.

As part of this scheme, Chen and Feng met with Agent-1 in Newburgh, New York, on May 14, 2023. During the meeting, Chen gave Agent-1 a \$1,000 cash bribe as an initial, partial bribe payment. Chen further offered to pay Agent-1 a total of \$50,000 for opening an audit of Entity-1, as well as 60% of any whistleblower award from the IRS if the Chen whistleblower complaint were successful. On May 18, 2023, Feng paid Agent-1 a \$4,000 cash bribe at John F. Kennedy International Airport as an additional partial bribe payment in furtherance of the scheme.

Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Division, U.S. Attorney Damian Williams for the Southern District of New York and Executive Assistant Director Robert R. Wells of the FBI's National Security Branch made the announcement.

John Chen, 71, of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Los Angeles, California, and Lin Feng, Chen and Feng each pleaded guilty to one count of acting as an unregistered agent of a foreign government and one count of bribing a public official. Chen pleaded guilty yesterday and is scheduled to be sentenced on Oct. 30. Feng pleaded guilty today and is scheduled to be sentenced on Oct. 31. Chen and Feng each face a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

PRC government official identified as PRC Official-1, to further the PRC's campaign to repress the Falun Gong. The FBI and the Office of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration are investigating the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Qais Ghafary, Michael D. Lockard and Kathryn Wheelock for the Southern District of New York and Trial Attorney Christina Clark of the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section are prosecuting the case.

Entity-1, a tax-exempt status of an entity run and maintained by Falun Gong practitioners (Entity-

Topic

NATIONAL SECURITY

Components

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) | National Security Division (NSD) | USAO - New York, Southern

Press Release Number: 24-934

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October 11, 2024

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PRESS RELEASE

California Man Sentenced for Acting as an Illegal Agent of the People's Republic of China Government and Bribery

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

For Immediate Release

John Chen Furthered the PRC Government's Transnational Repression Campaign Against the Falun Gong by Paying Cash Bribes to a Purported IRS Official

Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Council, Los Angeles, California, announced today that John Chen, 71, of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Los Angeles, was sentenced today to 20 months in prison for acting as an unregistered agent of the PRC and bribing an IRS agent in connection with a plot to target U.S.-based practitioners of Falun Gong — a spiritual practice banned in the PRC.

In addition to the prison term, Chen was sentenced to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. According to court documents, from at least approximately January 2023 to May 2023, Chen and co-defendant Lin Feng, 44, a PRC citizen and resident of Los Angeles, California, worked inside the United States at the direction of the PRC government, including an identified PRC government official PRC Official-1, to further the PRC government's campaign to repress and harass Falun Gong practitioners. The PRC government has designated the Falun Gong as one of the "Five Poisons," or one of the top five threats to its rule. In China, Falun Gong adherents face a range of repressive and punitive measures from the PRC government, including imprisonment.

Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section prosecuted the case.

AS part of the PRC's campaign against the Falun Gong, Chen and Feng engaged in a PRC government-directed scheme to manipulate the IRS' Whistleblower Program in an effort to strip the tax-exempt status of an entity run and maintained by Falun Gong practitioners, the Shen Yun Performing Arts Center. After Chen filed a defective whistleblower complaint with the IRS (the Chen Whistleblower Complaint), Chen and Feng paid \$5,000 in cash bribes and promised to pay substantially more to a purported IRS agent (Agent-1) who was, in fact, an undercover officer, in exchange for Agent-1's assistance in advancing the complaint. Neither Chen nor Feng notified the Attorney General that they were acting as agents of the PRC in the United States.

In the course of the scheme, Chen, on a recorded call, explicitly noted that the purpose of paying these bribes, which were directed and funded by the PRC, was to carry out the PRC government's aim of "toppl[ing] the Falun Gong." During a call intercepted pursuant to a judicially authorized wiretap, Chen and Feng discussed receiving "direction" on the bribery scheme from PRC Official-1, deleting instructions received from PRC Official-1 in order to evade detection, and "alert[ing]" and "sound[ing] the alarm" to PRC Official-1 if Chen and Feng's meetings to bribe Agent-1 did not go as planned. Chen and Feng also discussed that PRC Official-1 was the PRC government official "in charge" of the bribery scheme targeting the Falun Gong.

As part of this scheme, Chen and Feng met with Agent-1 in Newburgh, New York, on May 14, 2023. During the meeting, Chen gave Agent-1 a \$1,000 cash bribe as an initial, partial bribe payment. Chen further offered to pay Agent-1 a total of \$50,000 for opening an audit on the Shen Yun Performing Arts Center, as well as 60% of any whistleblower award from the IRS if the Chen Whistleblower Complaint were successful. On May 18, 2023, Feng paid Agent-1 a \$4,000 cash bribe at John F. Kennedy International Airport as an additional partial bribe payment in furtherance of the scheme.

Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Division, U.S. Attorney Damian Williams for the Southern District of New York, and Executive Assistant Director Robert R. Wells of the FBI's National Security Branch made the announcement.

In addition to the prison term, Chen was sentenced to three years of supervised release and ordered to forfeit \$50,000. Feng was sentenced on Sept. 26 to a time-served sentence of 16 months in prison.

The FBI and Office of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Qais Ghafary, Michael D. Lockard, and Kathryn Wheelock for the Southern District of New York and Trial Attorney Christina Clark of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section prosecuted the case.

Topic

NATIONAL SECURITY

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PRESS RELEASE

Two North Korean Nationals and Three Facilitators Indicted for Multi-Year Fraudulent Remote Information Technology Worker Scheme that Generated Revenue for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

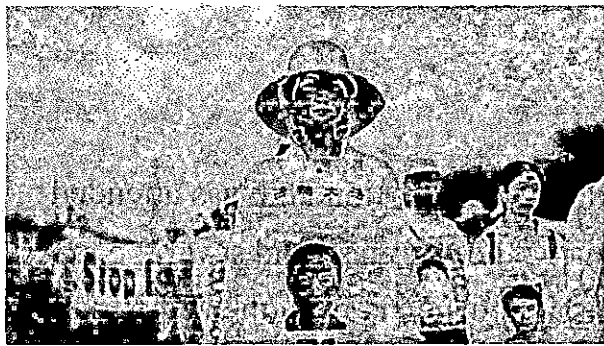
The Justice Department today announced the indictment of North Korean nationals Jin Sung-Il (진성일) and Pak Jin-Song (박진성), Mexican national Pedro Ernesto Alonso De Los Reyes, and U.S. nationals Erick...

January 23, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

In Secret Meeting, Xi Jinping Ordered New Strategy to Attack Falun Gong Globally

Washington, December 7, 2024



By Eva Fu

In October 2022, Chinese leader Xi Jinping held a secret meeting instructing top state officials overseeing political, intelligence, and influence operations—on a new strategy to target the Falun Gong religious group internationally. The Epoch

Times has learned.

At the core of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s new anti-Falun Gong strategy is launching disinformation campaigns via social media influencers and Western media outlets; and using the American legal system to go after companies started by Falun Gong practitioners.

Details of the 2022 secret meeting were provided by Yuan Hongbing, a Chinese legal scholar living in exile in Australia who has maintained connections within China's top political circles. His account is based on information he received from two sources: an individual from a veteran CCP family, who now opposes Xi; and from an insider with knowledge speaking out for reasons of conscience.

The meeting took place right before the 20th National Congress, which saw Xi secure an unprecedented third term as Party leader. Xi told officials at the meeting that the regime's previous efforts to suppress Falun Gong overseas had essentially failed.

CONGRESSMAN
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ing spiritual group in China. Based on
bearance, and meditative exercises,
moral character. In 1999, the CCP saw

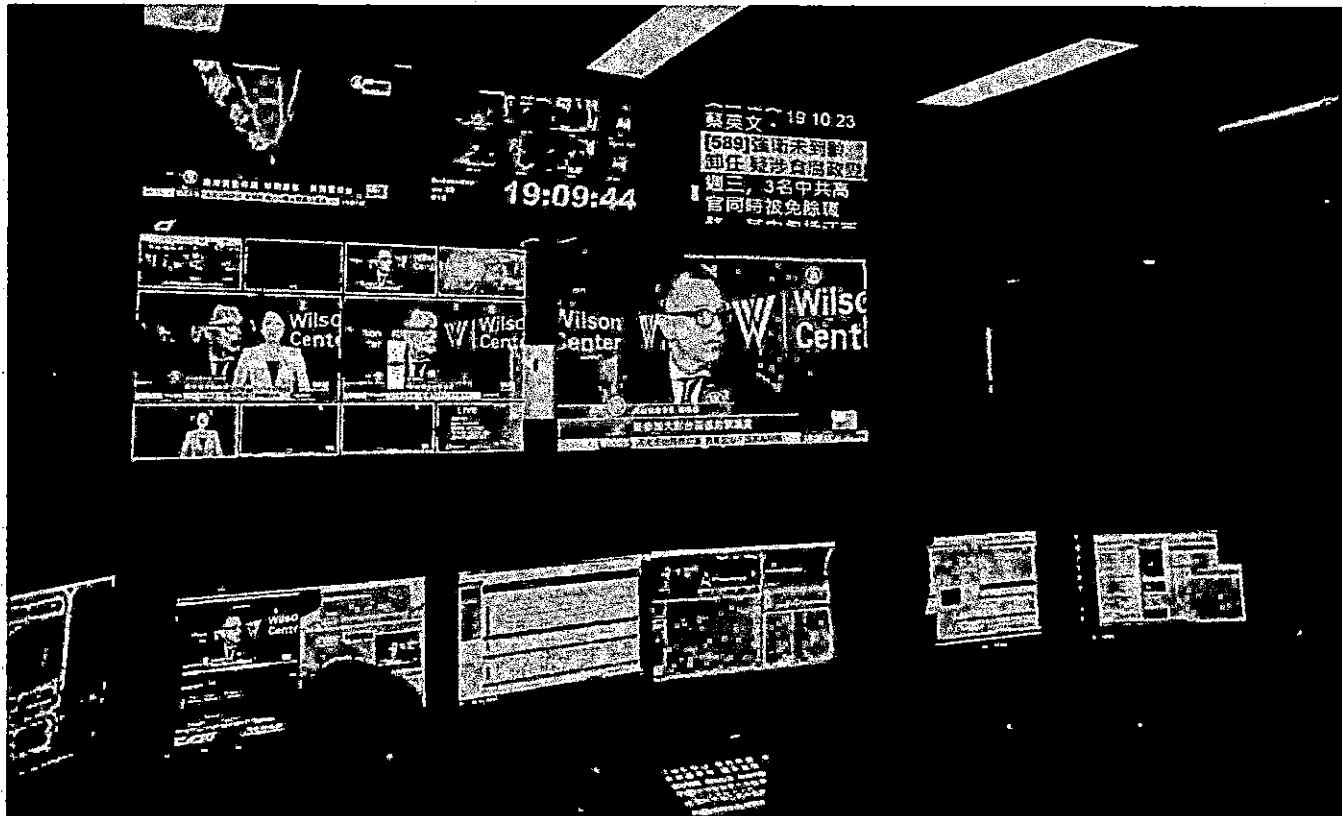
its growing popularity as a threat and launched a persecution campaign vowing to eliminate it. Since then, the group has been severely persecuted by the CCP, including through widespread forced organ harvesting. Xi's instructions, which have not been previously reported, appear to have quickly led to an escalation in the long-running operation against Falun Gong practitioners abroad—a campaign that has cast a shadow over the lives of those who've sought refuge in America and elsewhere.

'Dire Situation,' Says Xi

The meeting was held by the Political and Legal Affairs Commission and was attended by the ministers of National Security and State Security, the secretary and several deputy secretaries of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from the United Work Front Department, the key Chinese agency tasked with overseas influence operations, according to Yuan.

Yuan said one of the main reasons Xi deemed international efforts against Falun Gong to be a failure was the growth of media organizations started by Falun Gong practitioners, which Xi says have become the main "hostile force" against the CCP, not just in Chinese but also in English.

Media founded by Falun Gong practitioners include The Epoch Times and New Tang Dynasty Television (NTD), which were started in the early 2000s initially in Chinese and now in many languages with branches across the world.



A television station control room of the NTD Television Network, one of the media outlets targeted by the CCP, at its headquarters in New York City, in a file photo. (The Epoch Times)

Xi said that despite years of expending large amounts of manpower, material resources, and money, the CCP has not only failed to suppress these media, but instead let them grow into a leading counterforce to the CCP internationally and in the media industry.

The CCP leader described the situation as “dire,” and said it was a major oversight of the responsible officials.

Xi believes the failure stems in part from a lack of “strategic planning” and “thorough, forceful coordination,” according to Yuan.

On top of that, Xi considered the existing suppression tactics as too “reserved, conservative, and not creative enough;” and while the country has poured a significant amount of resources toward the effort, a large portion of that, upon disciplinary inspection, turned out to be wasted through corruption.

Xi told the attendees to start “cultivating anti-Falun Gong forces afresh” and reassess the current personnel designated to the task overseas, and to impose punishment or cut them off if necessary.

Shift in Strategy

“Infiltrate, break down, and dissolve”—these have been the strategies Chinese influence operatives have used against targets in the Chinese diaspora such as Falun Gong.

Xi said they were not sufficient.

The Chinese Ministry of Public Security, with its roughly 2 million law enforcement officers, was given charge of suppression efforts in China.

Traditionally, the Chinese foreign ministry and the 610 Office—an extralegal apparatus specifically charged with the persecution work—had carried out the campaign overseas. Xi ordered a structural overhaul, according to Yuan.

Xi assigned the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, the overseer of all legal enforcement authorities, to coordinate the task both inside China and outside.

Under the commission’s oversight, the Ministry of Public Security, with its roughly 2 million law enforcement officers, was put in charge of persecution efforts in China.

The Ministry of State Security, China’s top spy agency, was tasked with attacking Falun Gong overseas, with the United Front Work Department, the CCP overseas influence operation arm, and the relevant department from the foreign ministry, playing a supporting role.

“To fight a snake, hit at the seventh inch,” Yuan’s source quoted Xi as saying. The phrase is a Chinese idiom meaning to strike where it hurts most.



Chinese legal expert Yuan Hongbing, in this file photo. (Chen Ming/The Epoch Times)

Xi instructed officials to use lawfare and disinformation, deploying media with no traceable ties to the CCP, and social media to attack Falun Gong. He told them to direct their energy toward smearing Falun Gong's founder, Li Hongzhi, and to discrediting Falun Gong-founded media through inside operatives.

The reason for relying on social media and Western media in its war of public opinion, is because Xi believes using CCP state media is not effective overseas because it comes across as propaganda.

The Western press has long been used in propaganda wars by communist countries.

“What the CCP is doing is precisely what the Soviets did in terms of trying to get their narrative, their propaganda into recognized Western newspapers, magazines, media outlets,” Ronald J. Rychlak, a distinguished professor of law at the University of Mississippi, and expert on disinformation, told The Epoch Times.

Casey Fleming, CEO of BlackOps Partners, and a counterintelligence expert, says the CCP has been at this for decades and “they just become very, very good at it.” And that new technologies just allows them to scale up.

"Social media can be instantaneous worldwide to distribute a false message and to unseat people's opinion and unseat our freedom in the United States in the free world," Fleming told The Epoch Times.

A New Security Chief

Days after the Party Congress, the Ministry of State Security got a new leader, Chen Yixin.

Chen had previously been the mayor of Wuhan and later the secretary-general of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission. During his tenure at both posts the persecution increased against Falun Gong.

A separate whistleblower, who came forward last month, also pointed to Chen as the one personally driving the campaign against Falun Gong overseas.

The whistleblower said Chen considers the issue his political capital and is aiming to "resolve the 'Falun Gong issue' by the end of the year."

The spy chief's ascension to the post was accompanied by a surge in human rights abuses under his charge.

Tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners suffered harassment or arrest over the period Chen headed the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission while hundreds have died, according to incomplete estimates by Minghui.org, which collects accounts directly from China.

Meanwhile, Wuhan, the city he had presided over just prior, became a model for persecution. The commission even dispatched people to Wuhan's brainwashing center—a facility used to force people to renounce their faith—so that they can learn the tactics and apply them nationwide, according to Minghui.org.

Overseas, Chen's ministry has a number of networks that can be readily deployed. A letter obtained by The Epoch Times from March 2021 shows that the agency and the Ministry of Public Security collectively oversee an "anti-Falun Gong North America Office."

An individual named Wu Xiuhua had just been named the director of the office, according to the letter. It credits him for "planning and organizing multiple tasks to

experience.

There's little information about this office online, suggesting it is one of the Party organs that operates in secrecy. Aside from the North America office, the regime has embedded an extralegal network of agents in other ways. In 2023, the FBI arrested two CCP agents who operated a secret police station in Manhattan, under the cover of a pro-Chinese civil organization.



Police detain a Falun Gong protester in Tiananmen Square as a crowd watches in Beijing, China, on Oct. 1, 2000. (Chien-min Chung/AP Photo)

Dozens of social media (Chien-min Chung/AP Photo) Shen Yun Performing Arts, a classical Chinese dance and music company founded by Falun Gong practitioners that depicts a traditional China as it existed before communism.

The Chinese American social media influencer publicly claimed credit for helping the New York Times launch a number of attack pieces targeting Shen Yun.

"I was the one who introduced people [to Shen Yun performers] to the New York Times, especially for the initial interviews. They found additional people through that," he wrote on X following the publication of a New York Times hit piece on Shen Yun earlier this year.



Falun Gong practitioners at the National Mall in Washington on July 20, 2023.

(Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times)

'Systematic and Complete Plan'

The international campaign against Falun Gong and its affiliated groups has notably intensified over the past year.

Dozens of social media accounts sprung up specifically targeting Falun Gong and Shen Yun Performing Arts, a classical Chinese dance and music company founded by Falun Gong practitioners that depicts a traditional China as it existed before communism.

One Chinese American social media influencer publicly claimed credit for helping The New York Times launch a number of attack pieces targeting Shen Yun.

"I was the one who introduced people [ex-Shen Yun performers] to the New York Times, especially for the initial interviews. They found additional people through that," he wrote on X following the publication of a New York Times hit piece on Shen Yun earlier this year.

U.S. authorities in recent months sentenced two Chinese agents who had conspired to bribe the IRS to open an audit into Shen Yun with a \$50,000 sum, which they obtained from Chinese officials by making a trip to China.

The individual also bragged about filing complaints against Shen Yun with New York state authorities in order to generate legal action against the arts group. He encouraged others to do the same.

Last year, he was tracked by law enforcement near Shen Yun's campus. The FBI issued a warning to local law enforcement describing him as "potentially armed and dangerous." He now faces charges for possession of illegal firearms.

The New York Times' articles attempted to smear Shen Yun by misrepresenting a practicum program that allows a limited number of talented students at two affiliated religious arts schools, Fei Tian Academy and Fei Tian College, to tour with Shen Yun. The publication of its recent articles coincided with the launch of a civil lawsuit filed by a former student claiming labor violations.

According to two whistleblowers who spoke to the Falun Data Information Center in August, a Ministry of Public Security meeting two months earlier had asked all province-level governments to "fully support" the social media influencer who spoke to the New York Times by supplying "all malicious information on Falun Gong" that the ministry gathered internally.

The CCP also increased its efforts to target Shen Yun using the U.S. legal system.

U.S. authorities in September and November sentenced two Chinese agents who conspired to bribe an IRS agent with \$50,000 to open an audit into Shen Yun. The money was obtained from CCP officials during trips to China.

The same two agents had traveled to Orange County, New York where Shen Yun is based to surveil Falun Gong practitioners and collect information that would serve as the basis for a potential environmental lawsuit against Falun Gong. The growth of the



The performance, "Flowing Sleeves," from the 2009 Shen Yun Performing Arts program (Shen Yun Performing Arts) is a traditional Chinese dance. The woman who filed the lawsuit has been linked to a Chinese government entity and has contributed interviews to individuals that the CCP apparatus uses to attack Shen Yun, according to a statement from Shen Yun.

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The same two agents had traveled to Orange County, New York, where Shen Yun is based, to surveil Falun Gong practitioners and collect information that would serve as "the basis for a potential environmental lawsuit meant to inhibit the growth of the

environmental lawsuits targeting Shen Yun. In the latest case, Judge Kenneth Karas of the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of New York dismissed the suit with prejudice over its flaws, meaning it can't be refiled.



A garden outside the South Gate of the Dragon Springs campus in Cuddebackville, N.Y., on Oct. 1, 2023. (Cara Ding/The Epoch Times)

Meanwhile, last week a Chinese national was sentenced for spying on Falun Gong in the United States.

Calls for Vigilance

The escalating transnational repression against Falun Gong has alarmed U.S. lawmakers, like Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.).

For an “adversarial country trying to use the instruments of our federal government to punish their ideological rivals is completely out of bounds and exceptionally concerning,” Perry told The Epoch Times. He sponsored the Falun Gong Protection Act in the House, a bill to hold the CCP accountable for the crime of forced organ harvesting.



Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) walks through the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 12, 2024. (Kent Nishimura/Getty Images)

Other legislators expressed similar concerns about the CCP exporting its human rights abuses into America.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he “strongly condemn[s] China’s latest series of attempts to commit human rights violations against pro-democracy group Falun Gong in the U.S. and abroad.”

“The CCP has a history of repressing pro-democracy groups beyond its borders as it seeks to strengthen its authoritarian grip on its own people,” he told The Epoch Times, adding that he commends U.S. law enforcement for “protecting democratic activists’

lives, civil liberties, and the rule of law.”



Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, speaks during a roundtable discussion with the families of the U.S. service members killed in the terrorist attack at the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA)'s Abbey Gate in Washington on Aug. 29, 2023. (Madalina Vasiliu/The Epoch Times)

Rep. Michelle Steel (R-Calif.) has previously called for legal means to combat the regime's transnational repression against dissidents. Like the others, she believes there needs to be liability for what Beijing is doing.

"For 25 years, the Chinese Communist Party has been persecuting Falun Gong practitioners and all who seek to practice their faith without government interference. Oppressive regimes like the CCP must be held accountable for attacking human rights through disinformation and persecution," she told The Epoch Times.



Rep. Michelle Steel (R-Calif.) speaks during a hearing about the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) forced organ harvesting before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China in Washington on March 20, 2024. (Madalina Vasiliu/The Epoch Times)

To tackle covert Chinese operations, Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.), elected in November to the Senate, cited the Countering China's Political Warfare Act he introduced. Congress needs to pass the bill to "sanction CCP groups like the United Front that are waging political warfare against U.S. citizens and Chinese dissidents on American soil," he told The Epoch Times.



Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.) speaks to the media with members of the Republican Study Committee about Iran in Washington on April 21, 2021. (Joshua Roberts/Getty Images)

Perry said given that the CCP is an adversary, the United States must be vigilant.

“We should have increased scrutiny on all their activities and with the mindset that they would do these things purposefully and when we find that to be the case, severe, strict and sudden consequences need to be imposed.”

Here he sees an opportunity to “send a stronger message” to the CCP and Xi Jinping.

“Closing consulates and other diplomatic means can be things that we would consider” if the regime wants to pursue this kind of policy, he said.

“The Communist Party of China is essentially a criminal organization running a country,” Perry said, adding that since the United States doesn’t allow criminal organizations to use government systems to persecute adversaries or violate basic human rights, “we certainly shouldn’t let the CCP do it either.”

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Persecution of 100 Million Sends China into Downward Spiral with Worldwide Impact



For the past 15 years, China's ruling Communist Party has violently suppressed tens of millions of people simply for practicing Falun Gong. The regime has abducted, tortured, and killed an untold number of innocent people who were striving to be healthier, kinder, and wiser through this traditional meditation practice.

The campaign's victims range from top judges, professors, and military officers to ordinary housewives, students, and farmers. No segment of Chinese society

has been left untouched.

Such large-scale persecution has fueled a descent into extraordinary corruption and moral decay in China that impacts us all—from environmental pollution to tainted products arriving in our stores.

And with every Falun Gong practitioner that is detained—as the man in the above photo is about to be—the values of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance printed on his banner come under attack.

“The [Chinese] government... sanctioned the systematic use of violence against the group... No Falun Gong member is supposed to be spared.

- *The Washington Post*

“Falun Gong practitioners and their family members... have suffered persecution, intimidation, imprisonment, torture, and even death for the past decade.

- *U.S. Congress (Resolution 605)*

From the Pride of a Nation to Prisoners of Conscience

FROM THE HEARTLAND OF CHINA

In the 1990s, Falun Gong became the most favored mind-body exercise system in mainstream Chinese society and was endorsed by the government. One hundred million people were practicing by 1999. But that July, the Communist Party launched an attack on Falun Gong, fearing that its popularity and promotion of traditional values were a threat to the Party's control over society.



Falun Gong practitioners in the southwest Chinese city of Chengdu do their morning exercises in the late 1990s.

HORRIFIC ATROCITIES

For the past 15 years, horrific abuses have occurred in police custody on a daily basis across China. These include electric baton shocks, sexual assault, beatings, starvation, and the killing of Falun Gong detainees so that their organs can be sold for profit. These abuses have been documented by the United Nations, U.S. Congress, Amnesty International, *The Wall Street Journal*, and others.



Ms. Xu was killed within hours of being abducted by police in May 2012. She was 47 years old.

TENS OF MILLIONS AT RISK

Today, Falun Gong practitioners are the largest group of prisoners of conscience in China, if not the world. They number in the hundreds of thousands at any given time and continue to be abducted daily throughout China. The regime's abuses against Falun Gong have destabilized Chinese society as a whole.



Ms. Jin's mother was illegally imprisoned for eight years. Amnesty International says she has been badly beaten and injected with harmful drugs.

WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD ABOUT THIS?

The Communist Party has gone to great lengths to hide the atrocities committed against Falun Gong practitioners. Human rights groups are barred from prison camps. Foreign journalists have been assaulted, their informants imprisoned, and their companies threatened. Thus, years can go by without a major news story on Falun Gong.

An Ancient Practice

Falun Gong (also called Dafa) is an advanced system for improving mind and body. It has roots in thousands of years of Chinese culture. The practice's most important aspect is its meditation and four exercises—highly effective ways to improve health and energy levels.

Falun Gong practitioners also follow spiritual teachings—as this young woman is doing—taking them as a guide for daily life.

At the core of these teachings are the values of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance.

“I used to suffer from chronic gastroenteritis, but they completely disappeared once I started practicing Falun Gong.

- *Connie from London*

For Organs Prisoners of Conscience

AR, TENS OF THOU-
organ transplants are
in China. But only a
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isoners, but refuses to
ails of who these people
reported numbers fall far
ounting for the full scale
organs.

5, mounting evidence has
at vast numbers of organs
aken from prisoners killed
so that their body parts
d at lucrative prices for
plant operations. But
" are not just death row
they are prisoners of
r practitioners.

Persecution



cticed Falun Gong.
ial claims "bogus."

Why is this peaceful meditation practice persecuted in China?



There are three primary factors that lead to the systematic persecution of Falun Gong in China:

- (1) **SIZE:** By 1999, there were over 100 million people practicing Falun Gong, which caused some Communist Party leaders to feel threatened.
- (2) **IDEOLOGY:** As a practice rooted in traditional Chinese culture, Falun Gong's tenants of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance were an ideological threat to a ruling party that built and maintained power through corruption.
- (3) **LEGACY:** China's then-top leader, Jiang Zemin, saw in Falun Gong a practice that was widely praised among the people, while Jiang remained fairly unpopular. Many China experts point to Jiang's personal quest to steal the spotlight from Falun Gong as the tragic driving force behind Jiang's edict to "eradicate Falun Gong."

What can I do?

- **SHARE:** give this flier to a friend
- **SIGN:** sign a petition at www.fofg.org
- **WRITE:** write to your congressional representative
- **LEARN:** learn more at www.faluninfo.net

How to learn Falun Gong?

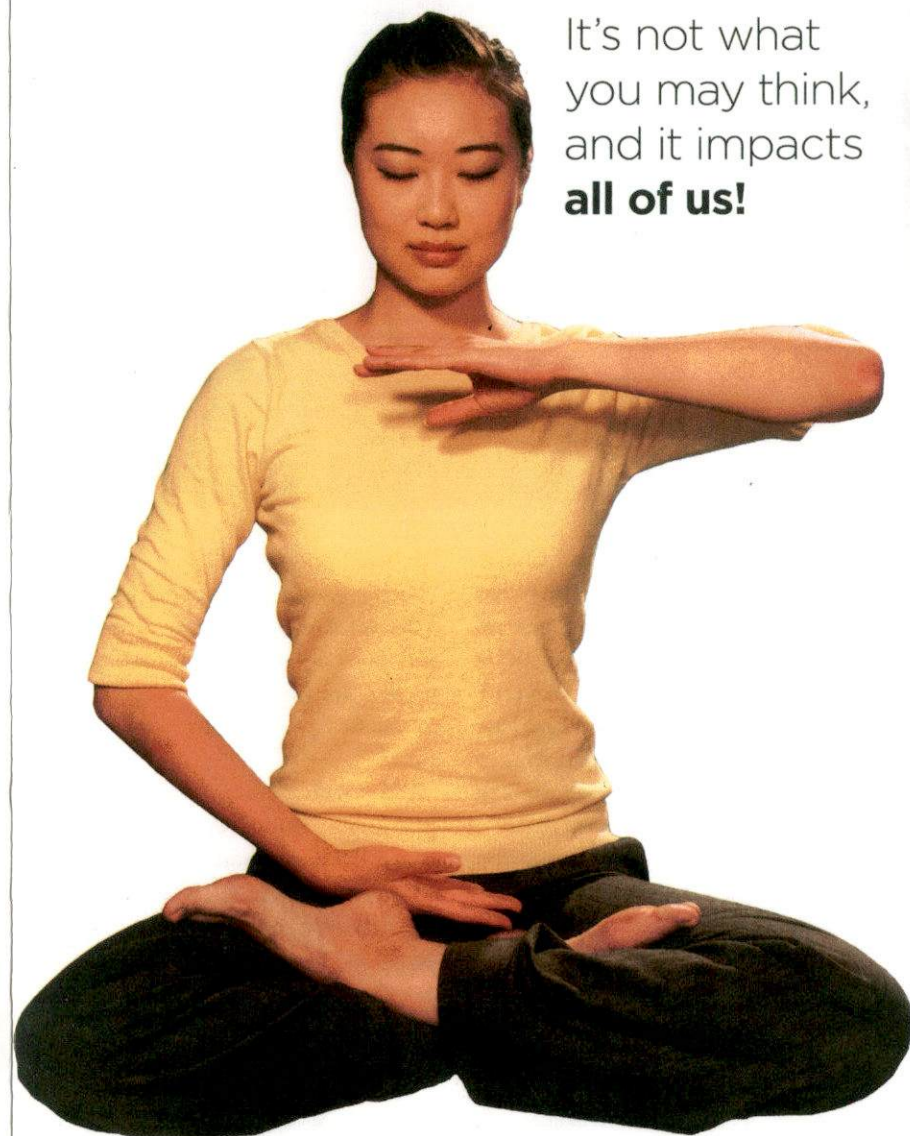
Falun Gong is always taught free of charge by volunteers. It has no system of membership or initiation processes, and no rituals. All Falun Gong books, as well as video instructions of Falun Gong's exercises, can be downloaded for free at www.FalunDafa.org. You can also find a local practice site.

Falun Gong Today

Produced by Volunteers

CHINA'S **BIG** SECRET

It's not what
you may think,
and it impacts
all of us!



— www.faluninfo.net —

An Ancient Practice for the Modern Day



Falun Gong (also called Falun Dafa) is an advanced system for improving mind and body, with roots in thousands of years of Chinese culture. The practice's most visible aspect is its meditation and four gentle exercises—highly effective ways to improve health and energy levels.

Falun Gong practitioners also study spiritual teachings—as this young lady is doing—taking them as a guide for daily life.

At the core of these teachings are the values of Truthfulness, Compassion,

and Tolerance. Falun Gong teaches that these are the most fundamental qualities of the universe and that by assimilating to them, a person can unlock both physical health and immense wisdom.

As people from diverse nationalities and professions have taken up the practice, most have found themselves undergoing a profound transformation. Forgiveness replaces anger. Calm replaces anxiety. Frustration and greed give way to a serene inner joy that endures in even the most challenging situations.

“ I used to suffer from chronic angina and gastroenteritis, but they completely disappeared once I started practicing Falun Gong.

- Connie from London

“ Falun Gong gives me the knowledge and wisdom to be a better son, husband, and friend. It allows me to make the right choices even in difficult circumstances.

- Nick from Phoenix

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Systematic Killing for Organs

Organs Forcibly Harvested from Falun Gong Prisoners of Conscience



Former Canadian Secretary of State David Kilgour led an investigation into forced organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

EACH YEAR, TENS OF THOUSANDS of organ transplants are performed in China. But only a few hundred voluntary donations are on record. Where do all of the other kidneys, livers, hearts, and corneas come from? The Chinese government claims they are from executed prisoners, but refuses to provide details of who these people are, or how reported numbers fall far short of accounting for the full scale of available organs.

Since 2006, mounting evidence has indicated that vast numbers of organs have been taken from prisoners killed on demand so that their body parts could be sold at lucrative prices for use in transplant operations. But the “donors” are not just death row criminals—they are prisoners of

conscience and most of them are Falun Gong practitioners.

Propaganda Fuels Persecution

WHEN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS launched their illegal and unprovoked assault on millions of innocent people, they scrambled to justify it to Chinese citizens and the international community.

To do so, officials sought to portray Falun Gong as a menace to society—a superstitious, foreign-driven, tightly organized, even dangerous group of meditators. State-run media tell gruesome stories of mutilation and suicide, but outsiders are not allowed to investigate them. When researchers have managed to scrutinize such cases, they have found stories of individuals who don't exist

and crimes committed by people who never practiced Falun Gong. Human Rights Watch has simply called the official claims “bogus.”



Good evening Watertown Leadership,

I am wondering if I will receive some feed back from my ongoing requests.

I am appreciative the that the board renovation project at Casey Park was completed.

Welcome Thomas Brady, please forward this as I could not find his direct email.

I am happy that our Assistant Director of Recreation, Jon Kazanjian finally started and wish him well.

Since my last email as of June 14, 2025, I have attended the Commision on Disability meeting and continued communication with them, scheduled to present at the Traffic Commission Meeting on February 26 in regard to the parking, circulation, and other issues relative to the Victory AD hoc Plan and attended "Watertown Talks" meeting hosted by Tyler Cote. Tyler did a nice job listening to my topics and hopefully will hear from him soon in regard to my queries.

Open Forum Presentation - January 28, 2025 - please read and put in minutes (as you know, this is just a snapshot of my asks, but I want to be sure to stay within the two minutes). I am not available on Tuesday night to attend or be on zoom.

- My favorite movie is Field of Dreams because they include "Build It and He Will Come" and "Go the Distance". In terms of working with the Town in regards to various issues, topics and problems as identified, I will be "Going the Distance" and will persistent and passionate in my pursuit of "Best Practice" making sure projects are built correctly, inequities will be addressed and corrected, and common sense will prevail.
- Considering the concerns raised by school leadership, school committee, coaches, parents and myself is their going to be a follow-up meeting on the Victory Field AD Hoc plan where we here from leadership on why the Town is not considering common sense amenities and measures to correct issues with the plan.
- For instance, what is the downside of changing the parking, circulation design to the 2014 model which would increase parking capacity by 28 spaces, safe drop off spots, allow bus parking, and turn around which would include fire trucks.
- Instead of using the Park and Recreation subcommittee to talk about lighting time issues, I would propose adding the problems with the AD HOC plan to the agenda. We did this for the Casey Field Renovation plan and then cancelled the plan when 4 residents objected.

- What is the updated cost estimate of the Victory Field Renovation?
- What is the status of the pickleball renovation at Filippello Park?
- Who oversees Title IX for the Town of Watertown.

Thank you for your time

Regards,

Peter Centola

Thurston Road