

FEBRUARY 25, 2025



Watertown City Council

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

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025, 6:15 P.M. RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 149 MAIN STREET

MINUTES

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on February 25, 2025 at 6:15 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 6:15 p.m. in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Those present were Councilors John M. Airasian, Caroline Bays, John G. Gannon, Nicole Gardner (joined via Zoom during executive session at 6:16 PM and remained virtually present during regular session), 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. Councilor Lisa J. Feltner was absent due to family bereavement.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:15 P.M.

- A. Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c.30A, sec. 21(a)(1) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Police Supervisors Union as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the City's bargaining position.
- B. Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec.21(a)(6) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body - 138 - 148 Waltham Street

President Sideris, as Chair of the City Council, declared that an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on both the consideration of the purchase, exchange, lease or real property located at 138 – 148 Waltham Street, as well as discussion of strategy regarding collective bargaining with the Police Supervisors Union.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to enter into Executive Session and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

3. RETURN TO SESSION – 7:00 P.M.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

5. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no participants in Public Forum.

6. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- A. Minutes from Special City Council Meeting January 21, 2025

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt the minutes and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

- B. Minutes from City Council Meeting February 11, 2025

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt the minutes and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. Review and consideration of status, and possible action, on proposed acquisition of property located at 148 Waltham Street

President Sideris remarked that the Council, in executive session, has been discussing the purchase of the former Sterritt Lumber site, which has undergone several changes. Initially, when it was first purchased, there was an attempt to develop a 40B housing project, but the neighborhood pushed against that project, so it didn't proceed. Then he stated that it was permitted to be a life science lab, but the value and demand for that endeavor has dramatically dropped from a few years ago.

He continued by saying that after some due diligence, the City Manager was able to contact and engage in talks of a possible transaction with the property owners, which was also encouraged by the adjoining neighborhood who had been advocating for the City to purchase this property. A few years ago, during the lab space boom, this property would be too expensive to purchase, however there is now an opportunity to do so. He then stated that this is a good opportunity for the City to acquire another piece of property and do something beneficial for the neighbors.

City Manager Proakis echoed that have been multiple discussions about purchasing the Sterritt Lumber site for various uses, but not for another lab building, as Watertown already has 11 permitted but unbuilt lab buildings. The site's value increased significantly after it was permitted for lab use, making it unaffordable for the City, however, the lab market has since declined, and the property's value has dropped to around \$9.3 million. He stated that the City now has an opportunity to purchase the site for \$9.2 million, with an initial \$500,000 payment. The Council is considering a budget amendment to allocate funds for this purchase, which could benefit the community by addressing various needs.

He added that this is a great opportunity for the community, but the question is: an opportunity for what? He stated that there are many possible answers, but that he didn't have a definitive one yet, and that he wants to discuss this with the community, neighbors, and the City Council to find a collective future for the site.

In the short term, the City might use it for snow storage and DPW overflow, with proper fencing and screening, and long-term possibilities include affordable housing, DPW use, or a new senior center, possibly with affordable senior housing. He remarked on the need to think carefully and provide community benefits, but that they can't leave it unused. He then concluded by saying the purchase will be a friendly negotiated agreement, not an eminent domain taking – there is a willing buyer and seller, an agreed price, and the ability to fund the purchase without borrowing.

City Attorney Mark Reich echoed that this is not an adversarial process. While eminent domain often implies a contentious taking, this is a "friendly taking," where the property owner and the City agree on a negotiated price. This approach addresses statutory procedures and avoids limitations on the City's acquisition process, allowing for a fair market process.

He added that the purchase and sale agreement outlines the terms of the acquisition and anticipates the City Council's vote on an order of taking. It locks in the City's interest and the seller's position, addressing statutory requirements and title issues, and sets the stage

for an amicable resolution. He concluded by stating that the initial funding will cover the down payment, with further funding to be discussed in a later meeting.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to authorize the City Manager to sign a purchase and sale agreement to purchase 148 Waltham Street for the amount of \$9.2 million plus fees and Councilor Gannon seconded.

Councilor Izzo thanked everyone for their efforts in facilitating this purchase, including the administration, fellow Councilors, and especially the residents of the neighborhood who have been vocal about this site since 2020. She stated that the Sterritt site was one of the first major issues she worked on as a City Councilor, and that she has collaborated with many residents over the years with the issue. She remarked that the general consensus was that the neighborhood did not want a lab to be developed there. She expressed her excitement for this purchase as it is an opportunity to work with the West End residents to create a space that complements the neighborhood and serves the community.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

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

A. Proclamation Celebrating Arshile Gorky

President Sideris read the proclamation.

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

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

Director of the Armenian Museum of America Jason Shoigian graciously accepted the proclamation and stated that they are proud of Gorky's history in Watertown as an American artist of Armenian heritage. Personally, he stated that this has been a long-time goal, and with the help of Jack Dargan, Liz Helfer, and City Councilors, he's proud to have made it a reality. He closed by saying that this is just the beginning of many programs in Watertown, and to stay tuned for more announcements throughout the year.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Ordinance Establishing the Memorialization Committee

Deputy City Manager Emily Monea remarked that this item is discussing establishing a proposed Memorialization Committee. Currently, the code includes an administrative policy for naming squares or intersections for non-veterans. The new ordinance aims to expand this by establishing a five-member committee to recommend names for all public spaces in the Watertown, excluding veterans' memorials, public schools, and libraries. The committee will consist of the City Manager or their designee, a City Council

representative, and three residents selected by the Residents Advisory Committee. All committee recommendations will require City Council approval.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the establishment of the Memorialization Committee and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

10. MOTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDERS, AND RESOLUTIONS

- A. The Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight requests moving the date the City Council will adopt its conceptual recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program from February 25, 2025 to March 11, 2025

Councilor Piccirilli made a motion to approve moving the date and Councilor Bays seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

President Sideris then requested a motion to move up Item 11C out of order as it relates to the next Item 10B.

Councilor Piccirilli made the motion and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

11.C

Committee on Human Services Report regarding its meeting on January 16, 2025 – Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council endorse the Health and Human services Assessment and request that the City Manager take action to implement its recommendations

Councilor Palomba read the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the action item and Councilor Gannon seconded.

President Sideris remarked that he appreciates the efforts of the committee and the recommendations of the study as it represents beneficial long-term goals.

Councilor Bays added that while the Committee on Human Services approves of the study overall, there are opportunities for improvements and tweaks to be made along the way.

Councilor Palomba voiced his support for the program, which has been in development for a long time. The assessment process took about a year and was excellent. He mentioned that Bob Buchanan appreciated the involvement of the community, departments, and Councilors. He stated that he is looking forward to the future recommendations from the Human Services Director.

Councilor Gannon also added his support for the implementation of the study, and specifically noted the effort of Councilor Palomba with his work in concert with the creation of a Human Services Department and its director.

B. Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$38,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to Fiscal Year 2025 City Manager Full-Time Salaries Account

City Manager Proakis stated that this request for \$38,000 is to fund a new Human Services Director position within the City Manager's department for the remainder of fiscal year 2025. This position was recommended by a recent study endorsed by the Council. The funds will be transferred to the City Manager's office budget to post and hire for this role.

He continued by saying that the request does not include creating a full administrative reorganization plan for a Human Services Department, which is expected to be addressed in the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. The goal is to hire a director first and then develop the organizational plan. The \$38,000 will cover the position for the rest of the year. This item is related to a City Manager item to be discussed later in the meeting.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the transfer of funds and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

C. Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$45,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to the Fiscal Year 2025 Transfer to Capital Projects - Public Buildings Account

City Manager Proakis stated that this proposed transfer of funds is to finish funding the Watertown Middle School feasibility study. The initial allocated amount was \$400k, but this figure covers additional costs.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the transfer of funds and Councilor Gannon seconded.

President Sideris thanked City Manager Proakis for his attentiveness to the need of expediting funds to fully cover the study where certain aspects had not been accounted for with the original allocation.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

D. First Reading on a Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

City Manager Proakis remarked that this budget amendment allocates \$9.3 million from free cash in two ways: \$500,000 to reimburse Item 10E, and the remainder for the purchase of 148 Waltham Street. The amendment covers the full funding cost and additional closing costs. The capital plan will increase by \$9.3 million, with \$8.8 million for land acquisition and \$500,000 to the City Council Reserve account. This is a First Reading, and a Public Hearing and Vote will be on the next agenda.

- E. Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$500,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to the Fiscal Year 2025 Acquisition of Land Account

City Manager Proakis reiterated that this transfer of funds facilitates the initial deposit for the purchase of 148 Waltham Street. The amount would also be reimbursed to the City Council Reserve via free cash facilitated from the budget amendment.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the transfer of funds and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

11. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- A. Committee on Rules and Ordinances Report regarding its meeting on January 27, 2025 – Gannon, Chair

Councilor Gannon read the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

- B. Committee on Human Services Report regarding its meeting on February 6, 2025 – Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the full City Council vote to approve Jessica Malenfant as a member of the Board of Health to a term expiring February 7, 2028

Councilor Palomba read the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the action item and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

- C. Committee on Human Services Report regarding its meeting on January 16, 2025 – Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council endorse the Health and Human services Assessment and request that the City Manager take action to implement its recommendations

*** refer to “11.C” above***

12. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

- A. Parker Annex Update and Budget

City Manager Proakis shared a memo from Assistant Manager Steve Magoon regarding the Parker Building renovations. The memo resulted from discussions at the Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee, which is finalizing the Capital Improvement Plan. The plan includes a small cost adjustment for second-floor renovations and additional funds for Fiscal Year 2026 for code-related upgrades, ADA compliance, plumbing, and other necessary updates.

He continued to remark that the memo captures the full costs based on a recent cost estimate. The Committee will review the conceptual recommendations next week. The project is close to going out to bid and includes borrowing items for the second floor and potentially the code upgrades. The renovations will also bring the food pantry into the building.

He then added that the Parker Building has provided essential flex space for various departments, helping achieve many administration goals. The Health, IT, and Public Buildings departments have permanent spaces there, while other teams have temporary space. The goal is to move all relevant teams into a single space. Further refined numbers will be presented to the committee next week.

- B. Victory Phase II Update Memo and Budget

City Manager Proakis stated that the Victory Field Phase 2 project is included in the Capital Plan, alongside the middle school renovation and new construction project. The cost estimates for Phase 2 have escalated to around \$11 million, making it a significant project for the community. He added that the attached memo details the project as it goes out to bid, including potential add alternates suggested by the School Committee. The memo, prepared by Mr. Magoon, Ms. Erika Jerram, and Ms. Michelle Moon, outlines the current status with 90% drawings and finalizing design. He concluded that a funding proposal is expected to be presented to the City Council this spring, ensuring the project aligns with the community process., and that the project is on track for summer 2025.

C. Discussion of Qualities and Qualifications for a Human Services Director, per Section 3.2 3A of the City Charter

City Manager Proakis asked for a referral to discuss the qualities and qualifications of a Human Services Director.

President Sideris replied that request will be referred to the Committee on Human Services.

D. City Logo Update

City Manager Proakis stated that a committee report on the city logo design process will be forthcoming. The committee has guided staff to reopen the design process for a city logo, which will supplement the seal rather than replace it. The goal is to form a committee to vet logo ideas. Meanwhile, the City will proceed with implementing wayfinding signs and using the current branding color schemes in website upgrades and other visuals. The logo itself will be addressed after the committee report, but the City will continue using existing branding elements.

E. Consideration and action regarding withdrawal from the Civil Service Law – All police offer positions withing the Watertown Police Department above the rank of patrol officer

City Manager Proakis stated that the Watertown Police Supervisors Association triggered the reopener clause in their contract due to wage agreements with the Police Patrol Union. After discussions, the supervisors' contract was updated to match items negotiated by the patrol union. The City also discussed removing the supervisors from civil service, requiring a new internal promotion policy for flexibility and local control. This change needs a City Council vote to revoke civil service for positions above patrol officers.

Removing civil service has allowed for more diverse hiring and lateral transfers. The funding request for \$45,000 to cover contract costs will be presented at the next Council meeting. If the Council votes to revoke civil service tonight, new rates will be implemented in the next pay period, and the funding item will be addressed at the next meeting.

Councilor Piccirilli moved that the City of Watertown revoke its prior acceptance of G.L. Chapter 31, the civil service law, for all police officer positions within the Watertown Police Department about the rank of patrol officer and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion carried unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

F. Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption

City Manager Proakis stated that this item responds to a request for information and suggests referring it to a committee for policy consideration. The 2023 state economic development bill allows municipalities to offer property tax exemptions to owners who voluntarily rent to income-qualified persons at affordable rates year-round. This law is

complex and new, with no known local government adoption yet. The Council will discuss in a committee meeting whether this fits Watertown or not.

President Sideris referred this request to the Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight.

City Manager Proakis continued by announcing that they are conducting a City ADA survey to ensure access to facilities, programs, and services for residents and visitors. The survey is open through March 24 and available on our website. For questions, contact Patrick George, our ADA coordinator.

He then remarked that applications are now open for the inaugural Watertown Civics Academy, a six-week program from May 8 to June 12, offering residents an inside look at local government. Spaces are limited, and applications close on March 21. Priority is given to residents who haven't participated in boards or commissions.

He concluded by noting that a community dialogue on accessory dwelling units is scheduled for March 24 at the Coolidge School Apartments. This event will help shape a proposal for the City Council, and that registration details will be announced in early March.

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

There were no Requests for Information.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Announcements

15. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no participants in Public Forum.

16. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was adopted unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 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 March 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, February 25, 2025 at 6:15 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber
Administration Building, 149 Main Street
List of Documents

1. Arshile Gorky Proclamation – Item 8A
2. Memorialization Committee Ordinance– Item 9A
3. Transfer of Funds – Human Services Director – Item 10B
4. Transfer of Funds – Middle School Study – Item 10C
5. Budget Amendment – Item 10D
6. Transfer of Funds – P&S 148 Waltham Street Initial Payment – Item 10E
7. Committee on Rules and Ordinances Report 1/27/25 – Item 11A
8. Committee on Human Services Report 2/6/25 – item 11B
9. Committee on Human Services Report 1/16/25 – Item 11C
10. Parker Building Renovations – Item 12A
11. Victory Field Phase II Update – Item 12B
12. Civil Service Revocation – Item 12E
13. Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption – Item 12F

**ADDENDUM TO THE
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY
25, 2025 CITY COUNCIL
MEETING**



City Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 6:15 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber

Agenda

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on February 25, 2025 at 6:15 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>
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- 1. ROLL CALL
- 2. EXECUTIVE SESSION - 6:15 P.M.
 - A. Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c.30A, sec. 21(a)(1) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Police Supervisors Union as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the City's bargaining position
 - B. Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec.21(a)(6) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body - 138 - 148 Waltham Street
- 3. RETURN TO SESSION – 7:00 P.M.
- 4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 5. PUBLIC FORUM
- 6. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
 - A. Minutes from Special City Council Meeting January 21, 2025
 - B. Minutes from City Council Meeting February 11, 2025
- 7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
 - A. Review and consideration of status, and possible action, on proposed acquisition of property located at 148 Waltham Street

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, AND SIMILAR PAPERS AND MATTERS
 - A. Proclamation Celebrating Arshile Gorky
9. PUBLIC HEARINGS
 - A. Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Ordinance Establishing the Memorialization Committee
10. MOTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDER, AND RESOLUTIONS
 - A. The Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight requests moving the date the City Council will adopt its conceptual recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program from February 25, 2025 to March 11, 2025
 - B. Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$38,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to Fiscal Year 2025 City Manager Full-Time Salaries Account
 - C. Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$45,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to the Fiscal Year Transfer to Capital Projects - Public Buildings Account
 - D. First Reading on a Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget
 - E. Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$500,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to the Fiscal Year 2025 Acquisition of Land Account
11. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
 - A. Committee on Rules and Ordinances Report regarding its meeting on January 27, 2025 - Gannon, Chair
 - B. Committee on Human Services Report regarding its meeting on February 6, 2025 - Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:
To recommend that the full City Council vote to approve Jessica Malenfant as a member of the Board of Health to a term expiring February 7, 2028
 - C. Committee on Human Services Report regarding its meeting on January 16, 2025 - Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:
To recommend that City Council endorse the Health and Human Services Assessment and request that the City Manager take action to implement its recommendations
12. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER
 - A. Parker Annex Update and Budget
 - B. Victory Phase II Update Memo and Budget
 - C. Discussion of Qualities and Qualifications for a Human Services Director, per Section 3.2. 3A of the City Charter
 - D. City Logo Update

- E. Consideration and action regarding withdrawal from the Civil Service Law - All police officer positions within the Watertown Police Department above the rank of patrol officer
- F. Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption
- 13. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION/REVIEW OF LIST OF PENDING MATTERS
- 14. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 15. PUBLIC FORUM
- 16. 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: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </u>	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	X (@6:16 Via Zoom)	<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: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> </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 move into executive session

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 adopt minutes from Special Council Meeting January 21, 2025

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 adopt minutes from City Council Meeting February 11, 2025

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 the City Manager to sign a purchase and sale agreement for \$9.2 million plus fees for the property located at 138-148 Waltham Street

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 the Arshile Gorky proclamation



Watertown City Council

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

PROCLAMATION HONORING ARSHILE GORKY

WHEREAS, Arshile Gorky, born Vostanig Adoian circa 1904, is regarded as one of the most influential artists of the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, Gorky's innovative art, marked by emotional depth and a unique blend of personal history and universal themes, profoundly shaped the development of modern art with his unique fusion of abstraction and surrealism; and

WHEREAS, Gorky's Armenian heritage, shaped by the trauma of the Armenian Genocide, profoundly influenced his creative vision; and

WHEREAS, Gorky arrived in Watertown, Massachusetts, a town with a strong Armenian community, on March 1st, 1920; and

WHEREAS, Gorky became a significant figure in the cultural and artistic life of the nation; and

WHEREAS, Gorky's struggle with personal hardship, and his resilience in the face of adversity have made him an enduring symbol of artistic perseverance and vision; and

WHEREAS, Gorky's legacy continues to inspire and enrich Watertown, serving as a testament to the power of art to transcend boundaries and tell stories of resilience;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED that the City of Watertown hereby proclaims March 1, 2025 as Arshile Gorky Day in honor of his contributions to the art world, his Armenian roots, and his lasting connection to Watertown.

In Witness Whereof,

I have hereunto set our hand and caused the
Great Seal of the City of Watertown
to be affixed this 25th of February, 2025

Mark S. Sideris, Council President



**CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 approve the establishment of the Memorialization Committee



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: February 5, 2025

RE: Agenda Item – First Reading on a Proposed Ordinance Establishing the
Memorialization Committee

I respectfully request that the attached ordinance be included on the agenda for the City Council's meeting on February 11, 2025, as a First Reading.

At the November 12, 2024 City Council Meeting, there was a First Reading on a Proposed Ordinance Establishing the Memorialization Committee, which was subsequently referred to the Committee on Rules and Ordinances for further review. The Committee on Rules and Ordinances convened on December 16, 2024, to discuss this proposed ordinance. At that meeting, the committee was satisfied with the changes discussed to the draft and recommended that City Council accept the ordinance for a First Reading to create a Memorialization Committee as amended.

Please find the attached ordinance for your review and consideration.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.



Watertown City Council

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

ORDINANCE #

O-20254-

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE MEMORIALIZATION COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the City Council seeks to create a uniform process for the naming of public spaces, streets, squares, intersection, and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction as well as for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces; and

WHEREAS, in undertaking this process, the City Council seeks to establish a permanent committee to undertake the review of and make recommendations on proposals for such namings and installations; and

WHEREAS, a Memorialization Committee established for this purpose may make recommendations to the City Council for the naming of these spaces and installation of these objects based on established policies and procedures, including consideration of the contribution honored individuals have made to the City as well as their representation of the broad diversity of those who have contributed to the City.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by deleting Subchapter I of Chapter 38, Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans, in its entirety, and Subchapter II, Flag and Delta Lighting Policy and the subsections therein shall be renumbered accordingly; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by adding new Subchapter VIII of Chapter 368, entitled Memorialization Committee, as follows: which will replace Subchapter I of Chapter 38, Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans, in its entirety;

Commented [EM1]: Per Mark Reich

Commented [EM2]: Per Committee discussion.

~~§38.00 Establishment~~

~~There is hereby established a Memorialization Committee (the "Committee"), consisting of five voting members.~~

~~§36.168.10 Purpose~~

~~The City Council believes that the naming of public spaces and the installation of memorial objects in public spaces is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful~~

Commented [EM3]: Purpose should be first section per Mark Reich

consideration, and the City Council will have sole authority for the naming of public spaces and installation of memorial objects in public spaces under the control of the City of Watertown.

- a. The City Council understands that such namings and memorials may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations, whose perceptions and values may change.
- a-b. The City Council intends to be cautious in exercising its authority to name public spaces or install memorial objects in public spaces.

Commented [EM4]: Per Committee discussion; modified language from Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans policy.

§36.17 Establishment

Upon referral to the Committee by the City Manager or the City Council of a matter involving memorialization, the

Commented [EM5]: Moved below to "Process" section.

There is hereby established a Memorialization Committee (the "Committee"), consisting of five voting members. The Committee is established to provide a systematic, consistent, and transparent approach shall be responsible for making recommendations to the City Council for the naming of all public spaces, streets, squares, intersections, and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction. The Committee shall also make recommendations to the City Council regarding and the installation of all memorial objects in public spaces. The Committee except for veteran memorials and dedications, tee shall will shall not make recommendations for vVeteran memorials and dedications, which are separately processed through the Veteran's Services Officer Department and approved by the City Council.

Commented [EM6]: Language from Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans policy.

Public spaces include but are not limited to parks, playgrounds, and other open spaces; streets, squares, and intersections; and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction. The Watertown Public Library building as well as buildings, structures, and facilities located on school property are excluded. Recommendations made by the Committee shall not be binding and shall be subject to consideration by the City Council in their discretion.

Commented [EM7]: Per discussion at 2/11/25 Council meeting.

Commented [EM8]: Moved below to "Process" section.

§36.188-44 Membership and Term

- (1) Composition. The composition of the Committee and the appointment authority for the Committee members shall be as follows:
 - a. City Manager or their designee
 - b. Representative member of the City Council as designated by the City Council President
 - c. Three residents of Watertown appointed by the City Manager, subject to City Council confirmation
- (2) Term. The appointed resident members first appointed shall have staggered terms, with one initially serving a one-year term and the remaining two each serving a two-year term. Thereafter, all appointments and reappointments for resident members shall be for a period of two years. Resident members may be reappointed for additional terms.
- (3) Vacancy. Any vacancy in membership shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.
- (4) Qualifications. Resident members appointed by the City Manager shall should, when possible, have relevant experience and knowledge related to Watertown's diversity and local history.
- (5) Any resident member who ceases to be a resident of Watertown shall promptly provide written notification of their change in residence to the Committee chair and to the City Clerk. The Committee member may serve as a hold-over until a successor is appointed.

§36.198-42 Meetings and Officers

- (1) Meetings. The Committee shall meet as necessary. Notice of all meetings shall comply with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18 through 25, as may be amended. A majority of the members of the Committee ~~shall constitute~~ a quorum. The committee shall keep a written record of its proceedings.
- (2) Officers. At the first meeting of the Committee, and annually thereafter, the Committee shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson and may elect such other officers, adopt procedural rules and regulations, and establish such subcommittees as it deems appropriate.

~~§36.208-13~~ Process

- ~~(1) The Committee shall review a matter involving memorialization upon referral by the City Manager or the City Council and develop a recommendation for the City Council.~~
 - ~~a. The Committee shall adopt policies and procedures for making such recommendations to the City Council for the naming of spaces and installation of memorial objects in public spaces.~~
 - ~~i. The Committee shall allow for public participation in establishing those policies and procedures and in the Committee's review and recommendation process.~~
 - ~~ii. The policies and procedures may include differing considerations depending on the memorialization matter the Committee is reviewing, as determined by the Committee; as an example, memorial trees may have a different threshold for consideration than the naming of a recreational facility.~~
 - ~~iii. The Committee shall review and update their policies and procedures as necessary but shall strive to maintain consistency in their approach to memorialization.~~
 - b. To the extent the Committee recommends naming public spaces in honor of specific individuals, the Committee shall consider the following:
 - i. The public interest to be served by honoring the individual.
 - ii. The leadership role or distinguished service of the individual, considering the quality of contribution along with the length of service.
 - iii. The association the individual has with the proposed naming location.
 - c. The Committee shall seek to honor those who represent the broad diversity of individuals who have contributed to the City.
 - ~~d. The Committee may recommend that the requestors for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces pay a reasonable fee to cover associated costs of the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the object.~~
- ~~(2) Recommendations made by the Committee are not binding and are subject to consideration by the City Council in their discretion.~~

~~§36.21~~ Review

~~The City Council has sole authority to remove or replace the naming of any public space or memorial object if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served by such naming.~~

~~AND FURTHER, by amending the Watertown Code of Ordinances, Subchapter I of Section 38, Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans, as follows, with the bold language inserted and the strike-through language deleted:~~

Commented [EM9]: From "Purpose" section above.

Commented [EM10]: Per Committee discussion; modified language from Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans policy.

§38.01 Authority of Town ~~City~~ Council

The Town ~~City~~ Council shall have sole authority for the naming of squares or intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town ~~City~~ of Watertown.

(A) The Town ~~City~~ Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations, whose perceptions and values might change.

(B) The Town ~~City~~ Council intends to be cautious exercising the policy to avoid over-naming squares or intersections.

§38.02 Purpose and scope

The Town ~~City~~ Council believes that the naming of squares or intersections is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful consideration.

(A) The Town ~~City~~ Council, therefore, creates this policy to establish a systematic, consistent and transparent approach for naming squares or intersections in Watertown.

(B) This policy is for non-veterans only, as there is a separate policy for naming of squares or intersections for veterans processed through the Veterans Service Officer.

§38.03 Process

Any Watertown resident may propose in writing that a square or intersection be named for a notable non-veteran with specific ties to Watertown.

(A) The proposal shall be submitted to the Town ~~City~~ Council President, and must include documentation to support the rationale for the naming, including a broad level of community backing ~~who shall refer it to the Memorialization Committee for review.~~

(B) The Town Council President, upon determining the proposal is complete, shall place it on a Town Council agenda for a vote of referral to the Public Works Committee for review and recommendation.

(C) The Department of Public Works shall review the proposal and provide the Public Works Committee an analysis as to the appropriateness of signage at the location, taking into account matters such as traffic conditions, sightlines, and planned road construction projects.

(~~DB~~) The Public Works ~~Memorialization~~ Committee shall review the proposal and the Department of Public Works analysis, and, ~~following its adopted policies and procedures,~~ develop a recommendation for the Town ~~City~~ Council.

(C) The Memorialization Committee shall provide its recommendations to the City Council President, who may then place the resolution on a City Council agenda for consideration.

(~~ED~~) The Town ~~City~~ Council will may consider and vote on a resolution to name a square or intersection per taking into consideration the Public Works Committee ~~Memorialization Committee's~~ recommendation.

§38.04 Criteria

~~In deciding the appropriateness of any naming proposal, the Town Council shall consider the following:~~

~~(A) The public interest to be served by honoring the individual.~~

~~(B) The leadership role or distinguished service of the individual, considering the quality of contribution along with the length of service.~~

~~(C) The association the individual has with the proposed naming location.~~

~~§38.054 — Review~~

~~The Town City Council shall have sole authority to remove the naming of any square or intersection if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served.~~

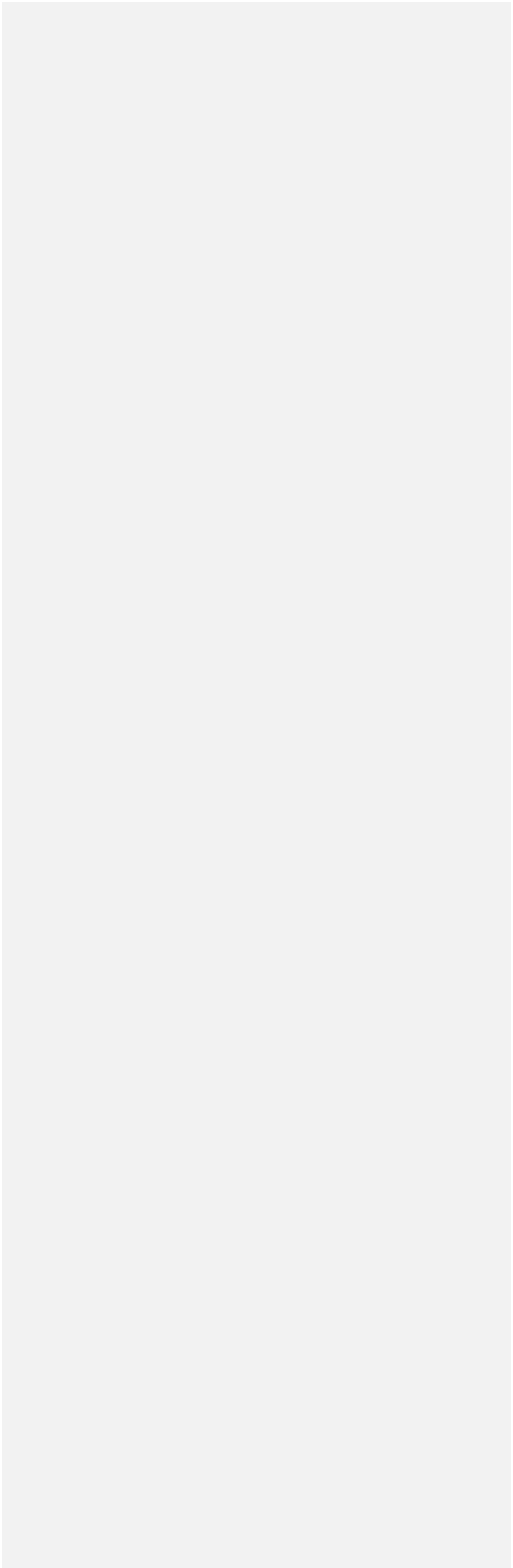
AND FURTHER, that this Ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Order was adopted by a vote of ___ for, ___ against and ___ present on _____.

Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk

Mark S. Sideris, Council President



Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bars,
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



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

ORDINANCE #

O-2025-

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE MEMORIALIZATION COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the City Council seeks to create a uniform process for the naming of public spaces, streets, squares, intersection, and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction as well as for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces; and

WHEREAS, in undertaking this process, the City Council seeks to establish a permanent committee to undertake the review of and make recommendations on proposals for such namings and installations; and

WHEREAS, a Memorialization Committee established for this purpose may make recommendations to the City Council for the naming of these spaces and installation of these objects based on established policies and procedures, including consideration of the contribution honored individuals have made to the City as well as their representation of the broad diversity of those who have contributed to the City.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by deleting Subchapter I of Chapter 38, Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans, in its entirety, and Subchapter II, Flag and Delta Lighting Policy and the subsections therein shall be renumbered accordingly; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by adding new Subchapter V of Chapter 36, entitled Memorialization Committee, as follows:

§36.16 Purpose

The City Council believes that the naming of public spaces and the installation of memorial objects in public spaces is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful consideration, and the City Council will have sole authority for the naming of public spaces and installation of memorial objects in public spaces under the control of the City of Watertown.

- a. The City Council understands that such namings and memorials may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations, whose perceptions and values may change.
- b. The City Council intends to be cautious in exercising its authority to name public spaces or install memorial objects in public spaces.

§36.17 Establishment

There is hereby established a Memorialization Committee (the "Committee"), consisting of five voting members. The Committee is established to provide a systematic, consistent, and transparent approach for making recommendations to the City Council for the naming of all public spaces and the installation of all memorial objects in public spaces, except for veteran memorials and dedications. Veteran memorials and dedications are separately processed through the Veterans' Services Officer and approved by the City Council.

Public spaces include but are not limited to parks, playgrounds, and other open spaces; streets, squares, and intersections; and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction. The Watertown Public Library building as well as buildings, structures, and facilities located on school property are excluded.

§36.18 Membership and Term

- (1) Composition. The composition of the Committee and the appointment authority for the Committee members is as follows:
 - a. City Manager or their designee
 - b. Representative member of the City Council as designated by the City Council President
 - c. Three residents of Watertown appointed by the City Manager, subject to City Council confirmation
- (2) Term. The appointed resident members first appointed shall have staggered terms, with one initially serving a one-year term and the remaining two each serving a two-year term. Thereafter, all appointments and reappointments for resident members shall be for a period of two years. Resident members may be reappointed for additional terms.
- (3) Vacancy. Any vacancy in membership shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.
- (4) Qualifications. Resident members appointed by the City Manager should, when possible, have relevant experience and knowledge related to Watertown's diversity and local history.
- (5) Any resident member who ceases to be a resident of Watertown shall promptly provide written notification of their change in residence to the Committee chair and to the City Clerk. The Committee member may serve as a hold-over until a successor is appointed.

§36.19 Meetings and Officers

- (1) Meetings. The Committee shall meet as necessary. Notice of all meetings shall comply with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18 through 25, as may be amended. A majority of the members of the Committee constitutes a quorum. The committee shall keep a written record of its proceedings.
- (2) Officers. At the first meeting of the Committee, and annually thereafter, the Committee shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson and may elect such other officers, adopt procedural rules and regulations, and establish such subcommittees as it deems appropriate.

§36.20 Process

- (1) The Committee shall review a matter involving memorialization upon referral by the City Manager or the City Council and develop a recommendation for the City Council.
 - a. The Committee shall adopt policies and procedures for making such recommendations.
 - i. The Committee shall allow for public participation in establishing those policies and procedures and in the Committee's review and recommendation process.
 - ii. The policies and procedures may include differing considerations depending on the memorialization matter the Committee is reviewing, as determined by the Committee; as an example, memorial trees may have a different threshold for consideration than the naming of a recreational facility.
 - iii. The Committee shall review and update its policies and procedures as necessary but shall strive to maintain consistency in its approach to memorialization.
 - b. To the extent the Committee recommends naming public spaces in honor of specific individuals, the Committee shall consider the following:
 - i. The public interest to be served by honoring the individual.
 - ii. The leadership role or distinguished service of the individual, considering the quality of contribution along with the length of service.
 - iii. The association the individual has with the proposed naming location.
 - c. The Committee shall seek to honor those who represent the broad diversity of individuals who have contributed to the City.
 - d. The Committee may recommend that the requestors for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces pay a reasonable fee to cover associated costs of the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the object.
- (2) Recommendations made by the Committee are not binding and are subject to consideration by the City Council in their discretion.

§36.21 Review

The City Council has sole authority to remove or replace the naming of any public space or memorial object if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served by such naming.

AND FURTHER, that this Ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Order was adopted by a vote of ___ for, ___ against and ___ present on _____.

Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk

Mark S. Sideris, Council President

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bars,
Councilor At Large
Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President &
District C Councilor
John G. Gannon,
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Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large
Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor



Boston Globe Media

Order Confirmation

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Watertown City Council
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472

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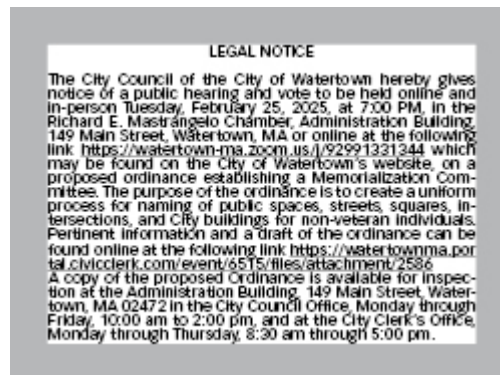
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Watertown City Council

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

ORDINANCE # 14

O-2025- 14

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE MEMORIALIZATION COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the City Council seeks to create a uniform process for the naming of public spaces, streets, squares, intersection, and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction as well as for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces; and

WHEREAS, in undertaking this process, the City Council seeks to establish a permanent committee to undertake the review of and make recommendations on proposals for such namings and installations; and

WHEREAS, a Memorialization Committee established for this purpose may make recommendations to the City Council for the naming of these spaces and installation of these objects based on established policies and procedures, including consideration of the contribution honored individuals have made to the City as well as their representation of the broad diversity of those who have contributed to the City.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by deleting Subchapter I of Chapter 38, Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans, in its entirety, and Subchapter II, Flag and Delta Lighting Policy and the subsections therein shall be renumbered accordingly; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by adding new Subchapter V of Chapter 36, entitled Memorialization Committee, as follows:

§36.16 Purpose

The City Council believes that the naming of public spaces and the installation of memorial objects in public spaces is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful consideration, and the City Council will have sole authority for the naming of public spaces and installation of memorial objects in public spaces under the control of the City of Watertown.

- a. The City Council understands that such namings and memorials may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations, whose perceptions and values may change.
- b. The City Council intends to be cautious in exercising its authority to name public spaces or install memorial objects in public spaces.

§36.17 Establishment

There is hereby established a Memorialization Committee (the "Committee"), consisting of five voting members. The Committee is established to provide a systematic, consistent, and transparent approach for making recommendations to the City Council for the naming of all public spaces and the installation of all memorial objects in public spaces, except for veteran memorials and dedications. Veteran memorials and dedications are separately processed through the Veterans' Services Officer and approved by the City Council.

Public spaces include but are not limited to parks, playgrounds, and other open spaces; streets, squares, and intersections; and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction. The Watertown Public Library building as well as buildings, structures, and facilities located on school property are excluded.

§36.18 Membership and Term

- (1) Composition. The composition of the Committee and the appointment authority for the Committee members is as follows:
 - a. City Manager or their designee
 - b. Representative member of the City Council as designated by the City Council President
 - c. Three residents of Watertown appointed by the City Manager, subject to City Council confirmation
- (2) Term. The appointed resident members first appointed shall have staggered terms, with one initially serving a one-year term and the remaining two each serving a two-year term. Thereafter, all appointments and reappointments for resident members shall be for a period of two years. Resident members may be reappointed for additional terms.
- (3) Vacancy. Any vacancy in membership shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.
- (4) Qualifications. Resident members appointed by the City Manager should, when possible, have relevant experience and knowledge related to Watertown's diversity and local history.
- (5) Any resident member who ceases to be a resident of Watertown shall promptly provide written notification of their change in residence to the Committee chair and to the City Clerk. The Committee member may serve as a hold-over until a successor is appointed.

§36.19 Meetings and Officers

- (1) Meetings. The Committee shall meet as necessary. Notice of all meetings shall comply with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18 through 25, as may be amended. A majority of the members of the Committee constitutes a quorum. The committee shall keep a written record of its proceedings.
- (2) Officers. At the first meeting of the Committee, and annually thereafter, the Committee shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson and may elect such other officers, adopt procedural rules and regulations, and establish such subcommittees as it deems appropriate.

§36.20 Process

- (1) The Committee shall review a matter involving memorialization upon referral by the City Manager or the City Council and develop a recommendation for the City Council.
- a. The Committee shall adopt policies and procedures for making such recommendations.
 - i. The Committee shall allow for public participation in establishing those policies and procedures and in the Committee's review and recommendation process.
 - ii. The policies and procedures may include differing considerations depending on the memorialization matter the Committee is reviewing, as determined by the Committee; as an example, memorial trees may have a different threshold for consideration than the naming of a recreational facility.
 - iii. The Committee shall review and update its policies and procedures as necessary but shall strive to maintain consistency in its approach to memorialization.
 - b. To the extent the Committee recommends naming public spaces in honor of specific individuals, the Committee shall consider the following:
 - i. The public interest to be served by honoring the individual.
 - ii. The leadership role or distinguished service of the individual, considering the quality of contribution along with the length of service.
 - iii. The association the individual has with the proposed naming location.
 - c. The Committee shall seek to honor those who represent the broad diversity of individuals who have contributed to the City.
 - d. The Committee may recommend that the requestors for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces pay a reasonable fee to cover associated costs of the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the object.
- (2) Recommendations made by the Committee are not binding and are subject to consideration by the City Council in their discretion.

§36.21 Review

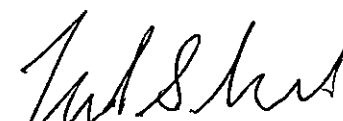
The City Council has sole authority to remove or replace the naming of any public space or memorial object if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served by such naming.

AND FURTHER, that this Ordinance shall take effect upon passage.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Order was adopted by a vote of 8 for, 0 against and 0 present on February 25, 2025.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bars,
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 ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 approve moving the date the City Council will adopt the Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight's conceptual recommendations to March 11, 2025

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 approve a transfer of funds in the amount of \$38,000 from the FY 2025 City Council Reserve to the FY 2025 City Manager Full Time Salaries Account



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 Proakis, City Manager

Date: February 4, 2025

RE: Agenda Item - Transfer of Funds Request

I am requesting to transfer \$38,000 from the City Council Reserve to the City Manager's full-time salaries account to fund the creation of a Human Services Director position. The creation of this position is recommended by the Health & Human Services study that was recommended for endorsement by the Council's Health & Human Services Committee at their January 16, 2025, meeting.

For administrative simplicity, I am requesting to transfer funding to the City Manager's Office budget only for the remainder of FY 2025. The FY 2026 budget will include an administrative reorganization plan establishing a new Human Services Department for the Council's consideration as well as a separate budget for the department.

I respectfully request the attached transfer be considered at the February 25, 2025, City Council meeting.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

cc: Megan Langan, City Auditor



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: GEORGE PROAKIS, CITY MANAGER
FROM: MEGAN LANGAN, CITY AUDITOR 
DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2025
RE: AGENDA ITEM – TRANSFER OF FUNDS REQUEST

Per your request, please find attached a Transfer of Funds request in the amount of \$38,000 for the purpose of funding the creation of a Human Services Director position as recommended by the Health & Human Services study for Fiscal Year 2025.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

TRANSFER AMOUNT: \$ 38,000

FROM: FY 2025 CITY COUNCIL RESERVE \$ 38,000
0111152-570780

TO: FY 2025 CITY MANAGER FULL TIME SALARIES \$ 38,000
0112351-510111

I hereby certify to the availability, authority of funding source, mathematical accuracy
and appropriate fiscal year.

2/2/2025

DATE

Meyer Zyzanski

CITY AUDITOR



Watertown City Council

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

RESOLUTION# 15

2025 – R – 15

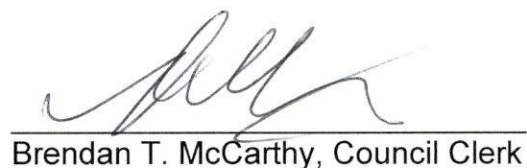
RESOLUTION APPROVING A TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM FISCAL YEAR 2025 CITY COUNCIL RESERVE TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 CITY MANAGER FULL TIME SALARIES ACCOUNT

BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of Watertown hereby approves the transfer of funds in the amount of \$38,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to be transferred to the Fiscal Year 2025 City Manager Full Time Salaries account.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of said transfer is forwarded to the City Auditor and City Treasurer/Collector.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above resolution was adopted by a vote of 8 for, 0 against, and 0 present on February 25, 2025.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

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 ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 approve a transfer of funds in the amount of \$45,000 from the FY 2025 City Council Reserve to the FY 2025 Transfer to Capital Projects – Public Buildings Account



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 Proakis, City Manager 

Date: February 19, 2025

RE: Agenda Item - Transfer of Funds Request

I respectfully request that the attached transfer be considered at the City Council meeting on February 25, 2025. As outlined in the attached memorandum from City Auditor Megan Langan, there is a need for additional appropriation. This request stems from the budget amendment approved by the Honorable City Council on November 12, 2024, which allocated \$400,000 for a feasibility study for the proposed Middle School Project. However, upon reviewing the proposal from the Owner's Project Manager (OPM), an additional \$45,000 is required to adequately complete the feasibility study.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.



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: GEORGE PROAKIS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: MEGAN LANGAN, CITY AUDITOR 

DATE: February 19, 2025

RE: AGENDA ITEM – TRANSFER OF FUNDS REQUEST

Per your request, please find attached a Transfer of Funds request for the Middle School Feasibility Study for \$45,000 for Fiscal Year 2025.

As you are aware, the Honorable City Council approved a budget amendment at the November 12, 2024, Council meeting which funded \$400,000 towards a feasibility study for the proposed Middle School Project. However, upon receipt of the proposal from the OPM, an additional \$45,000 is necessary to properly complete the feasibility study.

As such, we are respectfully requesting a transfer from City Council Reserves to cover these additional costs.

I respectfully request the attached transfer be placed on the February 25, 2025, City Council Agenda.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

TRANSFER AMOUNT: \$ 45,000

FROM: FY 2025 CITY COUNCIL RESERVE \$ 45,000
0111152-570780

TO: FY 2025 TRANSFER TO CAP PROJECT - PUBLIC BUILDINGS \$ 45,000
0193059-596509

I hereby certify to the availability, authority of funding source, mathematical accuracy and appropriate fiscal year.

2/19/25
DATE

Megan Ryan
CITY AUDITOR



Watertown City Council

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

RESOLUTION# 16

2025 – R – 18

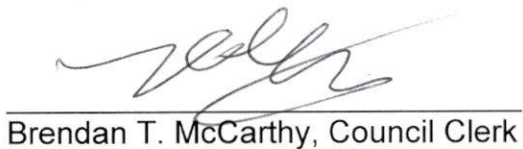
RESOLUTION APPROVING A TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM FISCAL YEAR 2025 CITY COUNCIL RESERVE TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 TRANSFER TO CAP PROJECT- PUBLIC BUILDINGS ACCOUNT

BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of Watertown hereby approves the transfer of funds in the amount of \$45,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to be transferred to the Fiscal Year 2025 Transfer to Cap Project- Public Buildings account.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of said transfer is forwarded to the City Auditor and City Treasurer/Collector.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above resolution was adopted by a vote of 8 for, 0 against, and 2 present on February 25, 2025.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

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



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: February 19, 2025

RE: Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

I respectfully request your favorable consideration of the attached Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. This amendment pertains to the acquisition of land located at 138/148 Waltham Street.

I kindly request that this Amendment be placed on the City Council Agenda for February 25, 2025, as a First Reading to amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.



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: GEORGE PROAKIS, CITY MANAGER
FROM: MEGAN LANGAN, CITY AUDITOR 
DATE: February 19, 2025
RE: AGENDA ITEM – PROPOSED BUDGET AMENDMENT #2

Below please find for your review a Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. The proposed amendment is for the acquisition of 138/148 Waltham Street, commonly referred to as the Sterritt Lumber Site.

REVENUE	INCREASE (DECREASE)	TO READ
UTILIZATION OF FREE CASH	\$ 9,300,000	\$ 11,300,000
TOTAL REVENUE ADJUSTMENT	\$ 9,300,000	
EXPENDITURES	INCREASE (DECREASE)	TO READ
ACQUISITION OF LAND 0194000-580950	\$ 8,800,000	\$ 8,800,000
CITY COUNCIL RESERVE 0111152-570780	\$ 500,000	\$ 3,327,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE ADJUSTMENT	\$ 9,300,000	

Given this Amendment, the Fiscal Year 2025 Revenues and Expenditures will each be increased by \$9,300,000. Therefore, the revised Fiscal Year 2025 Revenues and Expenditures would be \$216,579,923.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET AMENDMENT #2

REVENUE	INCREASE (DECREASE)	TO READ
UTILIZATION OF FREE CASH	\$ 9,300,000	\$ 11,300,000
TOTAL REVENUE ADJUSTMENT	<u>\$ 9,300,000</u>	

EXPENDITURES	INCREASE (DECREASE)	TO READ
ACQUISITION OF LAND 0194000-580950	\$ 8,800,000	\$ 8,800,000
CITY COUNCIL RESERVE 0111152-570780	\$ 500,000	\$ 3,327,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE ADJUSTMENT	<u>\$ 9,300,000</u>	

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 approve a transfer of funds in the amount of \$500,000 from the FY 2025 City Council Reserve to the FY 2025 Acquisition of Land Account



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: February 20, 2025

RE: Agenda Item – Transfer of Funds Request

I respectfully request that the attached transfer be considered at the City Council meeting on February 25, 2025. As outlined in the attached memorandum from City Auditor Megan Langan, the Transfer of Funds request in the amount of \$500,000 is for the purpose of funding the deposit to execute the Purchase and Sale agreement for the acquisition of 138/148 Waltham Street.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.



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: GEORGE PROAKIS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: MEGAN LANGAN, CITY AUDITOR 

DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2025

RE: AGENDA ITEM – TRANSFER OF FUNDS REQUEST

Per your request, please find attached a Transfer of Funds request in the amount of \$500,000 for the purpose of funding the deposit to execute the Purchase and Sale agreement for the acquisition of 138/148 Waltham Street, commonly referred to as the Sterritt Lumber Site.

Please be advised that a budget amendment utilizing free cash to replenish the funds transferred from City Council Reserve for this deposit as well as to fund the remaining balance required for the purchase has been presented to the Honorable City Council for their consideration to be taken up as a vote on the March 11, 2025 City Council Meeting.

TRANSFER AMOUNT: \$ 500,000

FROM: FY 2025 CITY COUNCIL RESERVE \$ 500,000
0111152-570780

TO: FY 2025 ACQUISITION OF LAND \$ 500,000
0194000-580950

I hereby certify to the availability, authority of funding source, mathematical accuracy and appropriate fiscal year.

2/19/25
DATE

Meyer Zenger
CITY AUDITOR



Watertown City Council

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

RESOLUTION#

17

2025 – R –

17

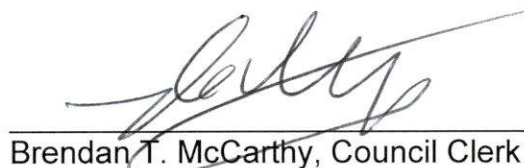
RESOLUTION APPROVING A TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM FISCAL YEAR 2025 CITY COUNCIL RESERVE TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 ACQUISITION OF LAND ACCOUNT

BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of Watertown hereby approves the transfer of funds in the amount of \$500,000 from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Reserve to be transferred to the Fiscal Year 2025 Acquisition of Land account.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of said transfer is forwarded to the City Auditor and City Treasurer/Collector.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above resolution was adopted by a vote of 8 for, 0 against, and 0 present on February 25, 2025.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

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 ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 the Committee on Rules and Ordinances Report from its meeting on
January 27, 2025



Committee on Rules and Ordinances Meeting
Monday, January 27, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber – Second Floor

M I N U T E S

Committee Members Present: Councilor John Airasian, Vice Chair (Zoom); Councilor Lisa Feltner, Secretary; Councilor John Gannon, Chair

1. Call to Order

Councilor Gannon called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., and announced that the meeting was a hybrid format and that questions from Zoom participants should be directed to Councilor Airasian at jairasian@watertown-mass.gov.

Present at meeting:

Councilor Nicole Gardner; Doug Newton, Watertown Municipal Policy Analyst

Zoom participants: Councilor Caroline Bays; Brian Hebeisen, Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee (WE3C); City Manager George Proakis

2. Meeting Discussion

- A. Continuation of Proposed Ordinance Establishing Memorialization Committee
 - City Manager Proakis said that there was a meeting regarding the memorialization committee in December 2024. The item in committee was sent back to full council, however it is not on tomorrow night's city council agenda in order to sort out the minutes and make sure that the right sections are added to the right sections. He is awaiting feedback and expects that it will be discharged to committee at the next meeting.
 - City Manager Proakis added a summary of the proposed Memorialization Committee. Because of the many requests made by residents to name buildings, etc., in memory of people (excluding the process of name intersections after veterans), the committee would establish parameters, standards, and appropriate circumstances for recognition.
 - City Manager Proakis concluded by saying that there was a good draft, he appreciated that it was on the agenda and hoped that the full council is supportive.
 - Councilor Feltner stated that she had reviewed the draft minutes and ordinance, and forward to KP Law.

-Councilor Airasian said he had no further comments and looked forward to it being presented to the full council.

B. Proposed Food and Beverage Single Use Items Ordinance

-Councilor Gannon recognized Councilor Gardner to discuss the proposed food and single use ordinance.

-Councilor Gardner stated that the proposed ordinance would ban restaurants from putting utensils and condiments in takeout bags unless requested, which would lead to a reduction in waste, and save restaurants money. She indicated that the restaurant owners she has spoken to appreciate this proposal, and added that Newton has passed a much broader ordinance, and Needham and Wellesley are considering a similar ordinance.

-Councilor Gannon asked Councilor Gardner if this ordinance is in line with the climate action plan, and she responded yes.

-Councilor Feltner asked Councilor Gannon for his thoughts before opening the discussion to the public.

-Councilor Gannon responded that he had spoken with City Manager Proakis who offered staff help, in addition to Doug Newton. He added that the next step would be to defer to City Manager Proakis and Doug Newton, and there would be a robust discussion once the ordinance was drafted.

-Councilor Airasian thanked Councilor Gardner for her work on the issue and said he believes it is an important issue. He added that it would be nice to know if restaurant owners have offered input.

-Councilor Feltner stated that she would like to learn more about Newton's policy, beyond restaurant containers, before a draft is created.

-Councilor Gardner responded to Councilor Airasian that she has spoken with a few restaurants; was talking with businesses and getting buy-in from the public. She stated that the goal is less plastic, less plastic in the ocean. She then responded to Councilor Felton that it has been a while since she read Newton's ordinance, but that it did include black plastic, Polystyrene (thick Styrofoam), and helium balloons.

-City Manager Proakis introduced the topic of ordinance language and consistency and streamlining of ordinance process, noting that it is relevant to this agenda item as well as the next. To that end, he would like to train five people in city government to be the best ordinance writers, with a common understanding of how new Watertown laws should be written. He would like Watertown's Sustainability Manager, Laurel Schwab, and Doug Newton to be two of these people.

-City Manager Proakis left the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

-Both Councilor Gannon and Councilor Airasian agreed with City Manager Proakis' approach in making the ordinance process consistent and with direction coming from the council.

-Brian Hebeisen (via Zoom) said he had participated in the drafting of the climate plan and believed the ordinance would fit with climate change and W3C. He supported reaching out to restaurants since ordinances can put them at a competitive

disadvantage. He suggested reaching out to surrounding cities and towns working on a similar ordinance.

-Councilor Gannon suggested making a motion to recommend to the full council that Doug Newton be assigned to research policy direction and ordinances and bylaws of other communities.

-Councilor Feltner suggests that a motion is not necessary because it's regular business.

-After discussion of whether or not a motion is needed, Councilor Gannon instructs that the minutes should reflect that the committee is seeking direction on how to move forward before discussion. In addition, it is the consensus of the committee that Doug Newton is directed/authorized to proceed in recommending and researching policy areas of regulation, and analysis of other communities' attempts. There were no further comments.

C. Proposal to Amend Noise Ordinance

- Councilor Gannon provided a quick introduction to the noise ordinance, that from September 2017 through March 2021 the committee discussed a noise ordinance, with the result a 7-1 vote opposing the draft, with one abstention. The full council has referred to the committee to begin again and create a straightforward, easy-to-understand draft ordinance.
- Councilor Feltner said she is glad to be revisiting the subject. She considered one of the biggest frustrations to be a lack of understanding about how humans are affected by sound.
- Councilor Gannon added that there are four new councilors since the last iteration of the draft.
- Councilor Airasian noted that he is one of the new councilors and that he considers it an opportunity for improvement. He would like to see work on transitional neighborhoods, and he thanked Doug Newton for the research information.
- Councilor Gannon recognizes Doug Newton. He introduced three broad issues: use of decibel limits, science of sound, level of comprehensiveness.
- Councilor Fetner asked Doug Newton if he had discovered any criminal violations in his research. He responded that police don't want to "go there."
- Other issues discussed included leaf blowers being separated from noise ordinances, baseline sound (health department), lack of clarity at public parks (police), continuity of sound, regulation inside apartment complexes, and that the last ordinance was seen as unclear and unenforceable.
- Doug Newton stressed that the goal is to achieve compliance; not be punitive. He added that the main news complaint is construction noise, followed by apartments in Arsenal Yards neighborhood. Focus should be on construction noise, and he gave caution on the issue of landscaping because it will require a lot of time, energy, and public input.
- Councilor Feltner suggested that based on the last go around, leaf blowers should have a separate ordinance. She said she was interested in background noise and how it's measured, repetitive noises, and tonal noise.

- Councilor Gardner agreed that persistent noise from labs is a big issue, and leaf blowers should have their own ordinance. She used the example of Newlywed Foods, in her district, that is working with sound engineers for their issues.
- Councilor Bays (Zoom) countered that from her experience working on the last iteration of the ordinance, many people complained about leaf blowers, and she believes they should be covered by the noise ordinance.
- Responding to Councilor Bays question about how other communities deal with leaf blowers, Doug Newton said that Newton has a separate ordinance for landscaping equipment. Councilor Gannon added that Somerville also has a separate ordinance.
- Councilor Gardner asked if leaf blowers will be included in this ordinance. Councilor Feltner responded that the consensus, without official vote, was to keep them separate.
- Councilor Gannon opened time for public comment. Cedar Pruitt (Zoom) introduced herself as a Newton resident, behind Russo's, who has been dealing with industrial sound being carried by the water of the Charles River, as well as the callousness of the businesses causing noise. She asked the committee to consider the issue of continuous noise.
- Ellen Rotham (Zoom) voiced her concern about leaf blowers as a public health threat.
- Rita Colafella, 56 Cuba Street, said she liked the noise ordinance "as is," and she liked Doug Newton's recommendations for tonal effects and decibel levels. She agreed that law enforcement shouldn't have to deal with nuisance laws. She stated that she believes that over enforcement is classist; limiting landscapers' ability to make a living.
- Linda Scott, 55 Olcott Street, said that focus should be on tonal noise first, citing the Charles River and Walker Pond as bodies of water carrying sound, and its effects on birds.
- Councilor Gannon asked for any other comments or recommendations for the next meeting.
- Councilor Feltner said her understanding is that Doug Newton and City Manager Proakis may attend the next meeting with staff. She suggested looking at a separate leaf blower ordinance. She added that she would like to hear input from Laurel Schwab.
- Councilor Airasian would like to see the ordinance be as comprehensive as possible, and simple and enforceable.
- Councilor Gannon agreed with Councilors Airasian and Feltner, and that Doug Newton should continue focusing on the common, consensus issues addressed this evening. He suggested requesting City Manager Proakis bring his staff to the next meeting. He would also like to hear from the police, health, and building departments.
- Councilor Feltner made a motion to continue, which was seconded by Councilor Airasian. All were in favor (8:26 p.m.).

3. Adjournment

Councilor Feltner made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilor Airasian. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 the Committee on Human Services Report from its meeting on February 6, 2025

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 approve the action item from the Committee on Human Services Report from its meeting on February 6, 2025



Watertown City Council Committee on Human Services Thursday, February 6, 2025

Members Present: Councilor Tony Palomba, Chair; Councilor Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and Councilor John Gannon, Secretary

The Committee on Human Services held a public meeting on February 6, 2025, at 5:30pm to discuss the appointment of Jessica Malenfant, MPH, CSPO, as a member of the Board of Health to a term expiring February 7, 2028.

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Palomba called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and introduced the other committee members present: Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and John Gannon, Secretary. Also present was Jessica Malenfant.

Chair Palomba started the meeting by asking Ms. Malenfant why she wanted to be a part of the Board of Health. She replied that she enjoys living in Watertown and wants to get more involved in the community. Her career has been focused on furthering public health initiatives. She has a Masters Degree in Public Health from Boston University, with a focus on epidemiology, and a Master's Degree from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Applied Health Sciences Informatics. She is an epidemiologist with an emphasis on interpreting and analyzing electronic health data and technology, for use in the clinical and public health fields. She has, for example, worked on infectious disease epidemiology and surveillance. She stated that her prior experience working with the Massachusetts Department of Health and providing technical assistance to the boards of health of multiple Massachusetts municipalities would be directly relevant to her service on the Watertown Board of Health.

Action Item: Councilor Bays made a motion that the full Council vote to approve Jessica Malenfant as a member of the Board of Health to a term expiring February 7, 2028. Councilor Gannon seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Councilor Bays made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilor Gannon. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

The meeting concluded at 5:50pm.

Minutes prepared by John Gannon



Watertown City Council

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

RESOLUTION # 18

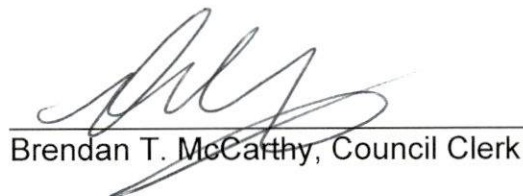
2025 - R - 18

RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF JESSICA MALENFANT TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH

BE IT RESOLVED: That pursuant to the provisions of the Watertown Home Rule Charter, the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby confirms the appointment of Jessica Malenfant to the Board of Health for a term to expire on February 7, 2028.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 4 for, 0 against, and 2 present on February 25, 2025


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

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 ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 the Committee on Human Services Report from its meeting on January 16, 2025

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 approve the action item from the Committee on Human Services Report from its meeting on January 16, 2025



**Committee on Human Services Meeting
Monday, January 16, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber – Second Floor**

M I N U T E S

Committee Members Present: Councilor Tony Palomba, Chair; Councilor Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; Councilor John Gannon, Secretary

Present at meeting:

Rob Buchanan, Principal at Health Management Associates (HMA); Rita Colafella; Tyler Cote, Community Engagement Specialist; Patrick George, Veterans' Services Officer; Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development and Planning; Marcy Murningham; Domenica Puleo, Community Development and Planning Administrative Specialist; Jacky van Leeuwen; and Stephanie Venizelos, Community Wellness Program Manager.

Zoom participants: Rachel Kay, School Committee; Tara Kelly, Health Management Associates; Councilor Vinnie Piccirilli, Jacob Smith, and Linda who did not provide her full name.

1. Call to Order

Councilor Palomba called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. and introduced those present and attending via Zoom.

2. Meeting Discussion – Discussion on the Health and Human Services Assessment

Councilor Palomba invited Rob Buchanan to make his presentation after which he planned to open the discussion to the community and councilors. (The slide presentation is attached.)

Before Rob Buchanan began his slide presentation, Councilor Gannon clarified that although there had been previous meetings with the community and a presentation at a city manager's meeting, this was the first presentation before the Committee on Human Services.

Rob Buchanan introduced his colleague, Tara Kelly, who was attending/assisting him with the slide deck via Zoom. He then proceeded to describe the background of the assessment, beginning with a community forum at the library approximately one year ago, followed by approximately twenty interviews with members of the city council, departments, and community-based organizations. The project timeline was presented, which showed the start as fall of 2023 and the final report presentation as January 2025. He described the three components of the assessment: gap assessment, organizational review, and recommendations. In addition, he presented slides that listed the interviews and focus groups conducted and described the efforts to engage as many members of the community as possible.

Rob Buchanan presented the recommendations that came out of the study. The first recommendation was to create a human services director position for the city with a key task

being the development and implementation of a human services strategic plan. The second recommendation was to create a Watertown health and human services cabinet. This would serve as a way to formalize a lot of the informal work that's presently being done.). The third recommendation was to improve digital front door awareness and access to Watertown's health and human services. The fourth recommendation was to establish a physical front door to Watertown's health and human services. Use of the Parker Annex Building was suggested for this office, as well as a new home for the Watertown Food Pantry. The fifth recommendation was to establish relationships with community-based organizations (CBO) for key programs and services. The sixth recommendation was to improve access to food supports. The seventh recommendation was to develop a DEI approach. Some of the recommended functions of a DEI approach included creating a DEI director, integrating DEI into municipal strategic planning, engaging the community on DEI issues, and developing an official statement on inclusion. The eighth recommendation was to establish a language access program. The ninth and final recommendation was to prioritize health promotion and wellness with key functions including developing a health promotion and wellness strategic plan and integrating Live Well wellness into Human Services and prioritizing strategic planning and alignment.

Community feedback included concerns from Live Well about staffing and resources, housing supports, including renters, the need for strategic planning and policy advocacy to enhance Watertown's food access and infrastructure, concerns around DEI strategies, and making sure that mobility access issues aren't forgotten. Lastly, improving accessibility and green space was deemed important by community members.

Following Rob Buchanan's presentation, Councilor Palomba recognized Jacob Smith and Linda who joined the meeting via zoom. He asked Tara Kelly from HMA if she would like to add anything to the presentation. She replied that she was happy to answer questions.

Councilor Palomba invited the community's questions. Marcy Murningham, 134 Fayette Street, congratulated the team on doing a wonderful job on the Assessment. She added that she disagrees with the recommendation regarding the structural home of Live Well Watertown. Instead, she suggested that it stay where it is in the Office of Community Development and Planning, for the moment. (An email to the members of the Committee from Ms. Murningham is attached.)

Jacky van Leeuwen, 32 Whites Avenue, stated that she appreciated the thoroughness of the Assessment. Her comments were specific to housing. She hoped that the Committee would consider a housing specialist who would have their finger on the pulse of housing in Watertown, as well as locally, regionally, and nationally, and would be able to build relationships and develop creative programs. (Attached is a statement from Housing for All Watertown regarding this issue.)

Rita Colafella, 56 Cuba Street, noted that the one thing she found troubling about the Assessment was putting disability under DEI. She stated her belief that disability should have its

own officer or director. (Attached is a letter from the Commission on Disability regarding this issue.)

Councilor Palomba paused to recognize that School Committee member Rachel Kay had arrived at the meeting on zoom and to invite anyone else who would like to speak to do so.

Rob Buchanan thanked the Watertown community for making the project so enjoyable due in great part to the passion, knowledge, and expertise of the community.

Rachel Kay apologized for being late to the meeting. She added that she thought the Assessment was well done and that her opinions overlapped with Rita regarding the role of disability. Also, she would like to see more about the role of schools in the recommendations, how the City could connect with the schools vis-à-vis implementation.

Councilor Palomba then asked Councilors Bays and Gannon for their comments and questions.

Councilor Bays began by saying she loved the Assessment, particularly recommendation number two to establish a health and human services cabinet. She questioned the discrepancy between the reference to Health and Human Services throughout the report and the position being named Human Services Director. Rob Buchanan acknowledged that it is confusing, and little consistency was found in the way that other cities and towns handle it. Councilor Gannon added his perspective and experience on the matter, but ultimately believes that having a human service department, as opposed to a health and human service department, would better serve the needs of the community. Councilor Bays offered that it might make sense to consider the title of Human Services and Community Wellness Director.

Councilor Bays asked if there is currently any access to tenant-landlord counseling and mediation in Watertown. Rob Buchanan answered, no. She went on to ask about the Somerville Housing Stability Office and whether that was something Watertown could aspire to. Rob Buchanan answered that it is the larger cities like Somerville, Cambridge, and Boston that have it, but it is something Watertown could work toward. Councilor Gannon suggested that they defer to City Manager Proakis who oversaw that office in his role as Somerville Planning Director.

Councilor Gannon said that he was impressed with the Assessment. He liked the outreach and community engagement. He commented on the difference between the Health Department and Human Services. He highlighted the new grant manager role and how that would mesh well with a Human Services department, and how impactful the role could be for Watertown.

Councilor Palomba offered his reflections and concerns. He echoed everybody's compliments on a great Assessment. He said the establishment of the position is critical. He also raised the question of this new department needing administrative support and a budget. He liked the idea of the cabinet, but voiced concern over accountability. In addition, he suggested the cabinet needs to include community folks with lived experience... He liked the idea of a

physical front door but wondered who would staff it and how residents would learn about it. He said he believes it is important to use CBO to gather data. He said he is very supportive of the expansion of the food pantry. He emphasized the importance of the strategic plan that will be one of the first responsibilities of the new director.

Councilor Gannon raised the topic of ADA in conjunction with the DEI coordinator position. He said he envisions a DEI coordinator to fight for all residents, taking on a larger role that would encompass advocacy to include residents with disabilities. Rob Buchanan clarified that the thinking around the DEI Director is that it is a standalone position. Marcy Murningham addressed the problematic nature of the term DEI and encouraged the committee to consider alternative terminology.

Councilor Gannon made a motion that the Committee on Human Services recommend that the City Council endorse the Health and Human Services Assessment and request that the City Manager take action to implement its recommendations. Councilor Bays seconded the motion. All were in favor.

3. Adjournment

Councilor Gannon made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Bays seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:06 p.m.

The minutes were prepared by Ann Korte.



"Founded in Peace"

WATERTOWN
MASSACHUSETTS

HMA

Watertown Health and Human Services Assessment

Watertown City Council Human
Services Committee Meeting
Final Presentation

January 16, 2024
6:00 p.m.



WELCOME

Health and Human Services Assessment Report

- Rob Buchanan, Health Management Associates
- Tara Kelly, Health Management Associates

BACKGROUND OF ASSESSMENT

- » Watertown engaged **Health Management Associates (HMA)** to conduct a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the community's health and human service needs, determine the scope of services presently available to meet those needs, identify remaining disparities in services, and recommend resources to fill those gaps.
- » HMA facilitated extensive community outreach and data gathering efforts in 2024 to elicit a range of community perspectives regarding the strengths and needs of health and human services in Watertown.
- » Assessment includes relevant descriptive and quantitative data about Watertown's health and human services needs from publicly available national, statewide, and local sources.

Community Engagement

- » **20 interviews** with representation from the City Council, City of Watertown department heads and staff, and leaders of community-based organizations (CBOs)
- » **8 focus groups** composed of representatives from public and private health and human services organizations, CBOs, and residents from historically marginalized and underserved populations, including those who do not presently access health and human services
- » **2 community meetings** for all residents, including a follow-up survey
- » **Draft report feedback** was solicited from Watertown residents about the community draft report.

TIMELINE



COMPONENTS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment is composed of three parts:

- » **Health and Human Services Gap Assessment.** Evaluates public and private health and human service organizations that serve Watertown. Describes available services and identifies populations that are being served or inadequately served.
- » **Health and Human Services Organizational Review.** Reviews the operation of the various health and human services functions within Watertown and summarizes staffing, management, and organizational structure.
- » **Recommendations.** Includes recommended organizational and program efficiencies and enhancements, as well as an implementation timeline

Through engagement and analysis, key community priorities emerged with a focus on programs and services relating to:

- **Housing security**
- **Food security**
- **Wellness promotion**
- **Disability supports**
- **Older adult supports**
- **Communications and language access**
- **Immigrant supports**
- **Veterans' services**
- **Public health**
- **Physical and behavioral health**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – INTERVIEWS

- [Lydia McCoy](#), Watertown Director of Senior Services
- [Patrick George](#), Watertown Veteran's Services Officer, ADA Coordinator, Liaison to Commission on Disability
- [Stephanie Venizelos](#), Watertown Community Wellness Program Manager, Live Well Watertown
- [Anthony Palomba](#), Watertown City Council, Councilor-at-Large; HHS Committee Chair
- [Abbey Meyers](#), Watertown Public Health Director
- [Caroline Bays](#), Watertown City Council, Councilor-at-Large; HHS Committee member
- [Laura Kurman](#), Senior Program Manager, Wayside Multi-Service Center
- [Sophia Suarez-Friedman](#), Wayside Multi-Service Center Social Service Resource Specialist Clinician and Program Coordinator

- [Michael Boudreau](#), Director of Public Health, Town of Natick
- [MaryAnn O'Conner](#), Director of Public Health, City of Medford
- [Nina Nazarian](#), Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office, City of Medford
- [Samantha Stone](#), Woburn Assistant to the Mayor for Community Outreach and Communication
- [Olivia Fields](#), Director of Resident Services, Watertown Housing Authority
- [Christina Lupica](#), Youth Engagement Specialist, Wayside Multi-Service Center
- [Tia Tilson](#), Executive Director, Watertown Community Foundation
- [Maysa Ramos](#), Wayside Multi-Service Center Social Service Resource Specialist Clinician
- [Colleen Leger](#), Director of HHS, Town of Arlington

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – FOCUS GROUPS

- Veterans
- Older Adults (*Residents over the age of 60 years*)
- Immigrants (*Watertown Project Literacy*)
- Watertown Housing Authority Residents
- Watertown Commission on Disability
- City of Watertown Health and Human Service Departments
- Community Organizations – Health Services (*Advocates Community Behavioral Health Center, and Mt. Auburn Hospital*)
- Community Organizations – Human Services (*Springwell, Helen Robinson Wright Fund at the First Parish, Marshall Home Fund, Watertown Boys & Girls Club, Watertown Community Foundation, Watertown Police Department*)

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: CREATE A WATERTOWN HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR POSITION

- » Watertown needs designated leadership to address Watertown residents' human service needs, particularly in relationship to coordinating and championing services that address housing insecurity, food insecurity, migrant supports.
- » Under the direction of the City Manager, Watertown should create a Director of Human Services position. The role would oversee the planning, direction, management, and operation of Watertown's human services programs and referral pathways, including services that address housing insecurity, food insecurity, economic insecurity, and migrant supports.
- » The director also would oversee Watertown's partnership with Wayside Youth and Family Support Network, including the Watertown's Social Services Resource Specialist (SSRS) program.
- » As part of coordinating Watertown's initiatives to combat food insecurity, the Director of Human Services would promote food assistance programs and oversee the Watertown Food Pantry, which is currently part of the Senior Services Department. The role would also administer the Live Well Watertown program.
- » From community feedback a key task for the incoming Human Services Director will be prioritizing housing supports as a central focus of the role and assessing the need for additional staff in the future.

Key job functions:

- Develop and Implement Human Services Strategic Plan
- Oversee Policy and Workflow Development
- Lead Community Outreach
- Administer and Manage Partnerships with CBOs
- Advance Housing Insecurity Interventions
- Administer and Champion Food Security Programs
- Implement Data-Driven Approaches to Understanding Community Needs
- Manage Grant and Philanthropic Opportunities
- Oversee Budget Planning and Allocation
- Enhance Interdepartmental Coordination
- Develop and Advocate for Supportive Policies
- Convene the Health and Human Services Cabinet

RECOMMENDATION 2: ESTABLISH A WATERTOWN HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES CABINET

- » As Watertown navigates a rapidly evolving landscape of community health and human service needs, a dedicated, cross-functional HHS Cabinet could significantly enhance resident well-being through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to health and social services.
- » The cabinet should include key participants, such as the Human Services Director, Public Health Director, Senior Services Director, VA Officer, Community Wellness Program Manager, Housing Authority representative, Recreation Director, Public Library representative, Schools Liaison, Police Liaison, and organizations contracted to provide key services to the City.
- » The cabinet should establish a meeting structure, communications plan, cadence, and charter.

Key functions of HHS Cabinet:

- Develop and Implement Human Services Strategic Plan
- Oversee Policy and Workflow Development.
- Lead Community Outreach
- Administer and Manage Partnerships with CBOs
- Advance Housing Insecurity Interventions
- Administer and Champion Food Security Programs
- Implement Data-Driven Approaches to Understanding Community Needs
- Manage Grant and Philanthropic Opportunities
- Oversee Budget Planning and Allocation
- Enhance Interdepartmental Coordination
- Develop and Advocate for Supportive Policies
- Convene the Health and Human Services Cabinet

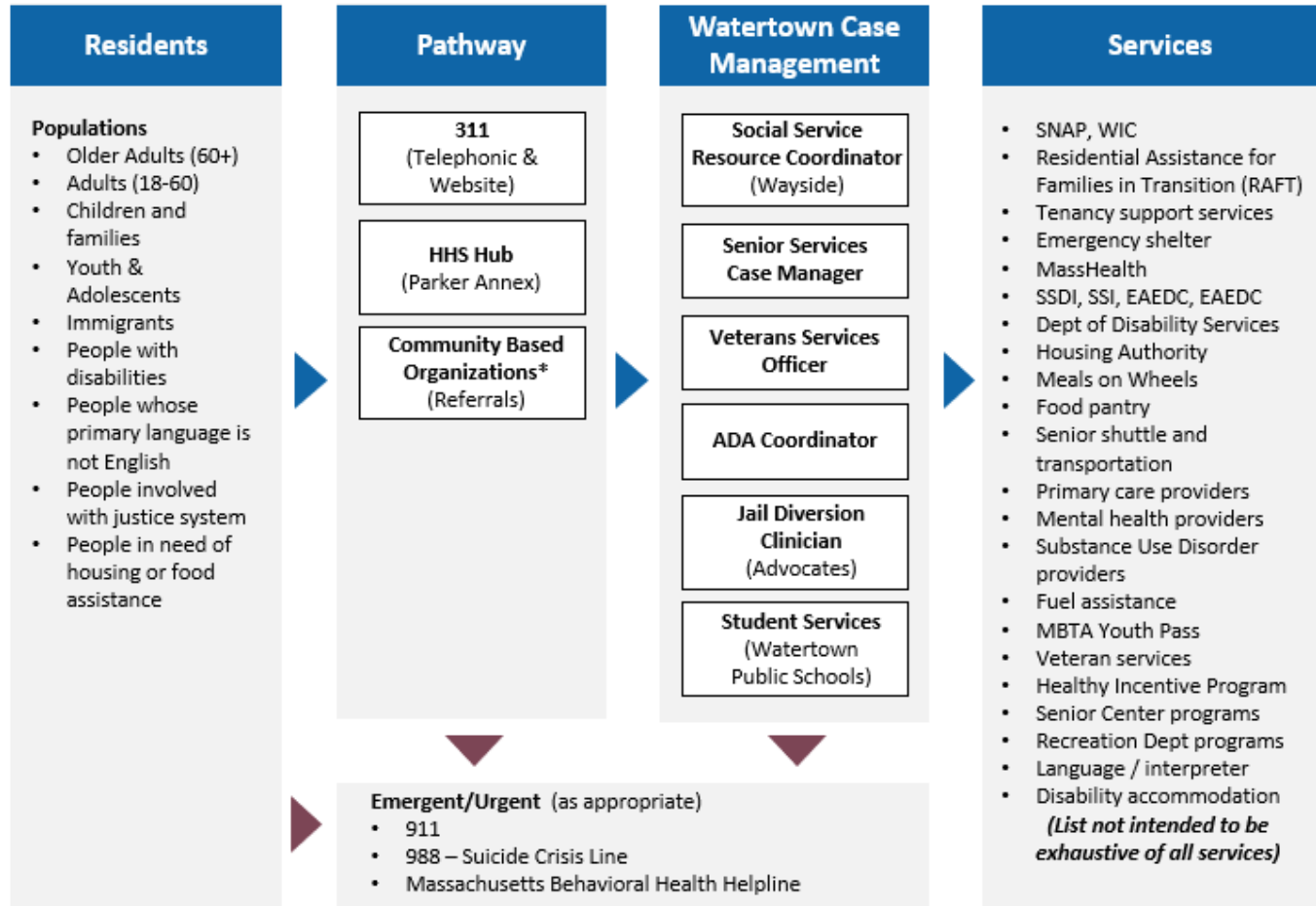
RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPROVE DIGITAL FRONT-DOOR AWARENESS AND ACCESS TO WATERTOWN'S HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- » For Watertown to better serve residents with its existing health and human services improving awareness and access through the front door can enhance user experience and increase visibility and utility of current services.
- » The front door awareness and access campaign could include leveraging 311 infrastructure as an information source to connect residents with resources for health and human services
- » Additional functions of the campaign include develop a comprehensive online and print Welcome Packet for both new and existing residents that includes an up-to-date and detailed list of available health and human services; and use email and mail campaigns to advise residents of health programs, upcoming events, and important health tips.

Key functions of Digital Front Door:

- Website Modifications
- Leverage 311 Infrastructure as an Information Source to Connect Residents with Resources
- Welcome Packet
- Email and Mail Campaign

ENSURING RESIDENTS RECEIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



***Community Based Organizations:** Includes broad continuum of public, private, and non-profit organizations that serve the needs the of Watertown residents and provide formal and informal referral and supportive services (e.g., Wayside Multiservice Center, schools, Watertown Police Department, health providers, churches, etc.)—all of which provide an important referral pathway into health and human services

RECOMMENDATION 4: ESTABLISH PHYSICAL FRONT DOOR TO WATERTOWN'S HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- » To enhance access and streamline navigation, Watertown should establish a physical front-door location to its health and human services. This HHS hub would serve as a single, physical point of contact where residents can obtain information, receive assistance, and access a range of health and human services.
- » As a City-owned building, the City of Watertown will ensure the Parker Annex Building will be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant and therefore could serve as a hub for HHS.
- » The location could incorporate routine on-site presence from key health and human service organizations, such as Wayside Multi-Service Center and the Watertown Housing Authority, to provide specialized support and ensure a comprehensive range of services.

Key functions of Physical Front Door

- Information and Referrals
- Resource Center
- Education Campaign
- Representation from Key Organizations

RECOMMENDATION 5: ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH CBOS FOR KEY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- » The community engagement process highlighted the need for Watertown to develop long-term partnerships with local CBOs for the provision of key programs and services.
- » Opportunities exist to deepen existing relationships or formally establish new partnerships with local CBOs to provide needed services, such as tenancy navigation and support.
- » Watertown can work with organizations to build a more robust foundation of data to understand the community's needs and underlying service gaps.

Key functions of CBO Partnerships:

- Develop Partnerships for Housing Supports
- Strengthen Referral Pathways for Eligible Services
- Promote Cultural Competency.
- Implement Regular Updates and Information Sharing
- Coordinate with Funders to Avoid Duplication

RECOMMENDATION 6: IMPROVE ACCESS TO FOOD SUPPORTS

- » Under the leadership of the Director of Human Services, Watertown should improve access to food supports through multiple strategies.
- » The Watertown Food Pantry should move to location that could accommodate expanded access. A location change will enable extension of the food pantry's hours of operation to accommodate a broader range of schedules.
- » To improve awareness about available food assistance programs, Watertown should continue to develop easy-to-understand visuals and guides to convey information quickly and clearly.

Key functions of Food Support Expansion:

- Relocate and Expand Food Pantry Services
- Food Pantry Oversight to HHS Dpt
- Expand Awareness of Food Insecurity Programs
- Simplify Messaging for Food Assistance Programs

RECOMMENDATION 7: DEVELOP DEI APPROACH

- » To foster a more inclusive and equitable community, Watertown should establish a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategy.
- » Watertown could establish a DEI Director who will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating related initiatives, integrating DEI principles in the municipal strategic planning processes, developing an official statement that affirms the City's commitment to inclusion, developing and implementing awareness and education programs to promote inclusion, and actively engaging with the community on DEI issues.
- » The functions of Watertown's ADA Coordinator should be transitioned to the DEI Director to ensure that compliance with the law is integrated into the broader DEI framework, enhancing support for people with disabilities and promoting a more inclusive environment.
- » Community feedback indicated the importance to further develop a more integrated approach to addressing accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that the needs of individuals with disabilities are met with greater attention and resources. One community member from the feedback process suggested the position be called the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Director.

Key functions of DEI Approach:

- Establish a DEI Director
- Integrate DEI into Municipal Strategic Planning
- Develop an Official Statement on Inclusion
- Promote Inclusion
- Engage with the Community on DEI Issues
- Train Staff on DEI
- Transition ADA Coordination Functions to DEI Director
- Promote Language Access

RECOMMENDATION 8: ESTABLISH A LANGUAGE ACCESS PROGRAM

- » To address the growing need for effective language access services, Watertown should establish a language access program either through a vendor, dedicated language access coordinator, or a relationship with one or more CBO(s).
- » This approach could provide a centralized resource for managing and coordinating language access services.

Key functions of Language Access Program:

- Assist Staff Communication
- Collaborate with City Staff for Dynamic Public Engagement
- Translation of Documents
- CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation)
- Interpretation in Meetings
- Over the Phone Interpretation
- Video Relay Interpretation
- Auto-Generated Captioning

RECOMMENDATION 9: PRIORITIZE HEALTH PROMOTION AND WELLNESS

- » Watertown should develop a comprehensive Health Promotion and Wellness Strategic Plan that outlines key initiatives for improving community health and wellness and foster more integrated and direct collaboration between the Health Department, the proposed Human Services Director, and Live Well Watertown.
- » This approach will support the prioritization of health promotion and wellness by ensuring that resources and efforts are aligned toward preventive and proactive care.
- » The plan should explicitly include substance use disorder awareness, support, and prevention. To enhance coordination and focus on wellness program, Live Well Watertown should be incorporated within the new Human Services Department.
- » As part of the community feedback, HMA recommends that the incoming Human Services Director prioritize strategic planning and alignment of programs and resources with LWW.

Key functions of Health Promotion and Wellness:

- Develop a Health Promotion and Wellness Strategic Plan
- Explicitly Include SUD Awareness, Support, and Prevention
- Integrate Live Well Wellness into Human Services and Prioritize Strategic Planning and Alignment.

TIMELINE

#	Recommendations	Timeline
1	Create a Watertown Human Services Director Position	January 2025
2	Establish a Watertown Health and Human Services Cabinet	January 2025
3	Improve Digital Front-Door Awareness and Access to Watertown's Health and Human Services	March 2025 – June 2026
4	Establish Physical Front Door to Watertown's Health and Human Services (Parker Annex Building)	January – March 2025
5	Establish Deeper Relationships with CBOs for Key Programs and Services (e.g., tenancy navigation and support)	July 2025 – ongoing
6	Improve Access to Food Supports (under leadership of Human Services Director)	July 2025 – ongoing
	Relocate Food Pantry	November 2025
7	Establish a Comprehensive DEI Strategy	December 2025 – June 2026
	Create a DEI Director Position	July 2026
8	Establish a Language Access Program	November 2024
9	Develop a Health Promotion and Wellness Strategic Plan	July 2025 – June 2026

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON DRAFT REPORT

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON DRAFT REPORT

Process: HMA presented draft recommendations to the residents of Watertown on October 21. Our team collected feedback both via meeting, and feedback submitted through email through November.

LiveWell

We received comments regarding LWW with information including:

- Concerns regarding staffing and resource needs required to effectively run its diverse programs, such as food security initiatives and community engagement efforts.
- Concerns for moving LWW under Human Services Director position and the potential risk of deprioritizing LWW initiatives. Many suggested that LWW should be its own separate entity.

Housing Supports

We received comments regarding the need for specialized housing leadership in human services including:

- Concerns that the responsibilities assigned to the Human Services Director are too extensive for one person to manage effectively
- An immediate need for dedicated resources and leadership in housing services given that housing insecurity is a critical issue for the city.
- Request to include renters in language regarding housing supports.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON DRAFT REPORT

Food Security and Access

We received comments regarding advocacy for food security including:

- A strong emphasis on the need for strategic planning and policy advocacy to enhance Watertown's food access infrastructure
- Increased support of the management of current and proposed food access programs

Location Challenges of the Parker Annex

We received concerns about access to the Parker Annex including:

- Concerns about HHS hub location including its distance from Watertown Square and lack of public transportation access
- Concerns about ADA compliance and accessibility

DEI Implementation

We received concerns regarding DEI including:

- An ask for the early implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategies and the potential establishment of a new DEI position within the Human Services Department
- Concerns regarding the lift of duties for one FTE
- Recommendation to include “Access” in the position title

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Disability Services

We received references including:

- Name ADA coordinator in the report, when other positioned were referenced
- Improving accessibility and access to green space in Watertown
- Ensuring access to city buildings including the Parker Annex building to eliminate long walkways to food pantry.

Data and Strategic Planning

We received references including:

- Strong support for data collection to better understand residents' needs and inform future budget planning.

Modifying the display of Comparable Communities Data

We received references requesting:

- Summarize comparable communities' data and incorporate FTEs

DISCUSSION

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF REPORT CHANGES

- **Recommendation 1: Human Services Director.** Added the following: “During the community feedback process on the draft version of this report, a variety of community members expressed concerns that too few resources would be dedicated to addressing housing insecurity. A key task for the incoming Human Services Director will be prioritizing housing supports as a central focus of the role and assessing the need for additional staff in the future.”
- **Recommendation 4: Physical Front Door.** Added the following: “The City of Watertown is reviewing the need for any improvements necessary to ensure the Parker Annex Building complies with the ADA. Through the community feedback process, some individuals expressed concern about the location and accessibility of the Parker Annex Building.”
- **Recommendation 7: DEI Approach (bullet - Transition ADA Coordination Functions to DEI Director).** Added the following: “As part of this transition, it will be important to further develop a more integrated approach to addressing accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that the needs of individuals with disabilities are met with greater attention and resources. One community member from the feedback process suggested the position be called the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Director.”
- **Recommendation 9: Health Promotion and Wellness (bullet - Integrate Live Well Wellness into Human Services).** Added the following: “As part of the community feedback process from draft version of this report, LWW participants in the community highlighted the significant value and contributions LWW brings to Watertown and expressed concerns about the prioritization and visibility of the program. Based on this input, HMA recommends that the incoming Human Services Director prioritize strategic planning and alignment of programs and resources with LWW.”
- **New Appendices:**
 - **Appendix 1.13:** Health and Human Service Budget and FTE Information – Comparable Communities (summarizes budget information across the comparable communities)
 - **Appendix 1.14:** Watertown Community Meeting Regarding HHS Assessment (highlights from October community meeting)

THANK YOU

Housing for All Watertown's Proposal to add to HMA' HHS Recommendations

**Establish a Director/Office within the Human Services Department,
dedicated to Housing Services and Stability**

We are advocating that Watertown prioritize assistance to low-income and workforce residents, by hiring a housing services expert to be part of the forming of the new Cabinet.

The Housing Services and Stability Director's responsibilities would include:

1. **Create a physical and digital point person/place for landlords and tenants** and for the community in the areas of housing-related education, assistance, mediation.
 - To provide a referral way-station for referrals to Wayside, Senior Center, Veterans Services, Advocates, and to legal services, for tenants' rights information, etc.
 - To advocate and seek funding for long-term Direct Assistance, landlord incentives, etc..
 - With increase in inclusionary zoning units, to support tenants and landlords, mediate rent increases, provide accountability.
 - To support migrant and other low-income families in housing searches, negotiating with landlords, in assisting to seek proofs of tenants' financial stability and character etc.
 - To support landlords willing to rent to low- and moderate-income families and are incentivized by long-term access to housing stability staff and resources.
 - To assist with efforts related to building our current pool of participating landlords willing to rent to low and moderate income families, including voucher holders.
 - To educate the community about tenants' rights, discriminatory practices, housing gaps/needs, outcomes of existing services, etc.
 - To address and refer complaints about discrimination.
2. **Convene a Watertown Housing Task Force**
 - to evaluate needs and best practices
 - to build partnerships, including with renters, landlords
 - to connect and strengthen front-line housing assistance providers
3. **Seek funds to fill in gaps.** Housing-related funding is unique and complicated; and larger grants than currently managed by Wayside are needed.
4. **Create a system of data-collection** to
 - Assist with accurate needs and outcomes assessments, and to inform data-driven decision-making.
 - Create a reporting system of homeless and unhoused residents from Schools, Library, Police, Food Pantry, Wayside, residents, and others.
 - Advocate for a Rental Registry



Councilor Tony Palomba <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>

My statement on Live Well Watertown at tonight's hearing

Marcy Murningham <marcy.murningham@gmail.com>

Thu, Jan 16, 2025 at 8:00 PM

To: Tony Palomba <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>, John Gannon <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>, Caroline Bays <cbays@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Tony, John, and Caroline,

Below is a copy of what I sent Tara Kelley at Health Management Associates on November 1, 2024, in response to their request for feedback on the Health and Human Services Assessment report. It pertains to the structural "home" for Live Well Watertown — for the moment, at least.

Before doing that, let me add a new piece, involving the outgoing Biden Administration.

As many have said, LWW is a multi-faceted entity, a literal and figurative "force of nature" that cuts across departmental divisions. Moreover "wellness" is an elastic term, be it applied to individuals, institutions, and / or communities. It's not just about blood and bandages, but the range of human and ecological well being — physical, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual.

Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, outgoing Surgeon General, elaborated on this in his *Parting Prescription for America* released two weeks ago. Drawing on his service to two different Presidents, Dr. Murthy provides a lovely exegesis on how we might cultivate health, happiness, and fulfillment by centering our attention on relationships, purpose, and service. He dubs this "the triad of fulfillment" and core pillars of community. Wise words, indeed, and central to the Human Services mission you're serving.

Now, to my Tara Kelley email sent November 1, 2024:

Dear Tara,

Here's a summary of my considered reactions to HMA's very thoughtful and well-written *Health and Human Services Assessment* for the City of Watertown. Overall, it's a superb effort that was a joy to read. What stands out is HMA's recognition of the interdependence and *intradependence* of key municipal functions with respect to sustainable municipal "thriving." Ours is an unfolding story that, as innovations occur, speak to new institutional configurations and design to meet the moment effectively. Thank you for helping we residents engage in this informed deliberation.

That said, my concern lies primarily with the structural recommendation regarding Live Well Watertown, set forth in Recommendation 9. In it, you state that LWW should be moved into the new Department of Human Services.

I respectfully disagree.

Amidst all the moving parts — affecting actions to date, those that occur within the HHS project's timeline, and recommended steps taken over the next few years — what stands out for me is that Live Well Watertown is a unique initiative. That's because it relies on multiple relationships and collaborations across the City of Watertown's organizational chart and beyond. It's a cherished part of the Watertown community, encompassing residents, civil society institutions, and local businesses.

For these reasons, I view LWW as not easily categorized as belonging in this or that department, a recognition of intersectionality you hint at in your report. Indeed, as you acknowledge in your assessment, LWW takes a holistic view of health and wellness, a systems frame that HMA utilizes in its work, too.

Put another way, using systems thinking, I view LWW as a "node" within a web of interrelated parts. Its multifaceted operation features not only the Farmer's Market but a range of both **people** and **place-based** activities affecting food access and security; sustainable design and climate resilience; substance abuse and mental health; transit mobility; intergenerational physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being; and community-based engagement.

I view that as a good thing, particularly within an environment that elevates interdisciplinarity and collaborative engagement with policymakers, practitioners, and the public. Indeed, as we move into an era with renewed recognition of the virtues of metropolitan area planning and development, this trans-discipline and trans-border quality takes on greater significance.

All this said, I believe that **LWW ought to remain where it is at the moment**, within the Department of Community Planning and Development, pending further strategic planning carried out on the part of the proposed Health and Human Services Cabinet, described in Recommendation 2. As you propose, LWW will be a member of this cabinet, so is in a good position to help discern where its future organizational home should lie.

Indeed, given its unique mission and composition, I envision **future elevation of LWW as a "node" within Watertown's municipal governance system**, one that is dedicated to the guiding ethic and principles articulated in:

- **Watertown's Preamble** to our revised Home Rule Charter, approved by voters three years ago tomorrow on 2 November 2021. As the *Preamble's* primary author, I point specifically to that governing ethic and those guiding principles, along with language emphasizing transparency and accountability, performance excellence, community engagement and public trust, and;
- **Watertown's 2023 Comprehensive Plan, 2023–2030 Open Space and Recreation Plan, and 2022 Climate and Energy Plan**; and, more broadly,
- the "smart growth" principles articulated by the **Metropolitan Area Planning Council** (MAPC), of which the City of Watertown is a member.

Moving LWW into a newly-constituted human services department that concentrates primarily on addressing underserved members of our community runs the risk of draining LWW of its vitality and vibrancy. Keeping it where it is at the moment, with an eye toward more "independent-but-connected" standing, helps to preserve and nurture both the social entrepreneurship and high regard LWW enjoys in our community.

Moreover, given the fact that it will take awhile for the reorganization to settle in and its operating culture to be developed and refined, keeping LWW within the DCPD with an eye toward separate standing will enable continuity while more effectively embracing and co-creating what's to come.

I'm happy to discuss any of this, but fear I've gone on too long. Nevertheless, I appreciate all your efforts, and look forward to the next stage.

Wishing you well,

Marcy.

Marcy Murningham
Principal Architect, Equity Culture / Civic Fiduciary Action Labs
*Select writings on "Wealth, Power, and the Public Interest:
Building Equity Culture and Civic Stewardship," New England
Journal of Public Policy, Vol. 30, no. 1 (2018)*
View LinkedIn profile [here](#)

Landline: 617.926.0633 | Mobile: 617.501.9421
134 Fayette Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Show quoted text

Marcy Murningham



Commission on Disability

City of Watertown
Administration Building, 149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472-4410

City Manager George Proakis
149 Main Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

January 10, 2025

Dear City Manager Proakis:

The Watertown Commission on Disability has read, with great interest, the recent Health and Human Services Study. We appreciate the attention that the study pays to all aspects of life in Watertown, including accessibility for members of the disability community.

We do, however, find the combining of the ADA Coordinator position with that of the new Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion problematic. We worry over the ability of one person to encompass so many duties and responsibilities, especially the critical duties and responsibilities of the ADA Coordinator which is much more than a title.

Our current ADA Coordinator, Patrick George, is also the Veteran Services Coordinator. He has been an excellent liaison to the Commission in his ADA capacity, but his work has included so much more than that. Between meetings, he has followed up with city departments, such as the Department of Public Works, to convey our concerns and discuss solutions and timelines. He has contacted different businesses and done site visits to examine particular accessibility and residents' issues at the site, as well as the Commission's concerns. He has coordinated with agencies in and beyond Watertown to assure us that our residents' needs are being met at all points at which a disability may limit access.

We value the intent of the DEI Director to make opportunities for inclusion available to all residents, but opportunities for inclusion are one of many challenges for residents with disabilities. There are specific and concrete needs to which an effective ADA Coordinator must be aware of and attend to, and these issues are often forgotten or overlooked in the broader DEI context. The Commission believes that meeting ADA compliance is just the minimum requirement for true accessibility, and we need to ensure the ADA Coordinator will be able to help us achieve our goals in this realm. Our most urgent concern is that some of the required functions may be lost under a DEI Director position.

We hope to see our concerns addressed before this position is posted. We would be happy to meet with you and/or your team to have further discussion. We'd appreciate the chance to discuss how this position might be structured so as to be best situated for creating a welcoming and safe community for people with disabilities in Watertown.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Kim Charlson, WCOD Chair

CC: Patrick George, ADA Coordinator

Sarah Zoen, Human Rights Commission, Co-Chair

Mel Poindexter, Human Rights Commission, Co-Chair



George J. Proakis
City Manager

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Citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager

Date: February 19, 2025

RE: Parker Building Renovations

Attached, please find a memorandum on the subject from Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development & Planning.

I will present this under Communications from the City Manager at the City Council Meeting on February 25, 2025.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



**City of Watertown
Department of
Community Development and Planning**

149 Main St and 124 Watertown St
Watertown, MA 02472
(617) 972-6417

To: George Proakis, City Manager
From: Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager for DCDP
Date: February 19, 2025
Subject: Parker Building Renovations

As the Honorable City Council is aware, the City is preparing to renovate a portion of the Parker Building to accommodate the offices of the Department of Community Development and Planning. We are also making a number of improvements to offices for other City staff. Ai3 is the architect, and Liro Hill is OPM, that the City is utilizing to design the improvements for DCDP.

The Public Buildings Department has also contracted with Code Red, to design fire suppression sprinklers throughout the building, and Gale Associates to look at exterior work to maintain the building envelope, and Fitzmeyer and Tocci for the electric service upgrade and emergency generator install.

The improvements for DCDP include spaces 2 B, C, D F, G, and H. This will provide adequate space to hold all of the Divisions and Teams of the Department within one large space, except for the Commanders Mansion Events Team, who will remain at the Commanders Mansion. It also will utilize 2E as a public meeting room, which Public Buildings is doing mostly in house, and expects to have ready as a meeting space by May 1.

The Cities IT Department, Health Department, and Public Buildings Departments are currently in spaces on the 3rd floor of the building, and on the first floor space 1F is being converted to house the Food Pantry. As a result of the extent of the cumulative improvements, it is required that we evaluate the entire building for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and make necessary improvements.

As a result, Ai3 has contracted a subcontractor, KMA, to evaluate the building. As a result, there are a number of improvements that have been added to the project scope, some improvements that we will request an extension for, and lastly some elements that we will request a waiver from MAAB for due to the details of the building.

The improvements associated with the renovation of space for DCDP is estimated at

\$2,870,518, including the renovation of space for the Food Pantry which is estimated at \$326,890, immediate code related upgrades at \$1,069,663, for a total cost of \$3,940,181.

In order to pay for this work there are a number of strategies that will be pursued. There is \$152,000 in ARPA funds allocated for the Food Pantry improvements, the City will borrow for a majority of the costs, and where improvements include tenant spaces, there will be negotiations related to cost sharing.

As for schedule, Ai3 has created 100% design drawings, we now need to coordinate the various pieces with our OPM to get the project out to bid. We had hoped to have the project out to bid now, but that is delayed until the end of February. We expect construction to occur May to October, when we will be able to occupy the renovated space.



George J. Proakis
City Manager

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To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager

Date: February 18, 2025

RE: Victory Field Phase II – Park Project (Winter Update)

Attached, please find a joint memorandum on the subject from Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development & Planning; Erika Oliver Jerram, Director of Community Design; and Michelle Moon, Open Space Planner.

I will present this under Communications from the City Manager at the City Council Meeting on February 25, 2025.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



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TO: Mr. George Proakis - City Manager

FROM: Mr. Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager and DCDP
Ms. Erika Oliver Jerram, Director of Community Design
Ms. Michelle Moon, Open Space Planner

DATE: February 18, 2025

RE: Victory Field Phase II – Park Project (winter update)

On November 6, 2024, CDM Smith presented the 75% Construction Drawings (CDs) for Victory Field Phase II. The past and current site plans are at the end of this memo. Presentation slides are posted on the Victory Field Phase II project webpage: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/1422/Victory-Field-Phase-II>

This winter the City received 90% CDs in January 2025 and provided comments that CDM is working to incorporate. The City and CDM will continue to finalize the design and anticipate presenting this spring to the City Council before putting the project out to bid.

CDM's November 2024 presentation provided an overview of the current project and highlighted the differences between what was in the Ad Hoc Committee Report (2018) and the current design. The main differences include the following items listed below.

Ad Hoc Committee Report – 75% - 90% Design Changes Summary

A + B TRACK AND FIELD EVENT FACILITIES and PLAYING FIELD INSIDE TRACK

In December 2024, the School Committee requested the addition of movable safety nets to help improve safety for all park users. This update is being added to the CDs as an Add Alternate.

The pole vault was removed from the design based on comments for the School Committee that they do not intend to use it.

The plan includes storage for athletic equipment. The 90% Plan includes 3 storage bays, and the City has requested a 4th bay be added if there is room.



C. PARKING AREA AND DRIVEWAY

There are no significant changes to this area from the Ad Hoc Committee Report.

D. TENNIS AND BASKETBALL COURTS

Due to subsurface soil conditions the rain garden south of the courts is not feasible. The area will be planted as a landscape buffer.



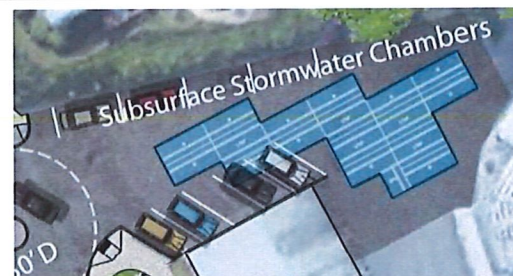
E. LIGHTING

At the Community Meeting in November 2024, CDM stated that we would have to go up to 50-ft. poles for tennis and 90-ft poles for the track and field. We received an update in January 2025, that It looks like MUSCO was able to get these back down to the heights we had from the AD-HOC committee meetings.

The current plan entails burying overhead wires, which is a significant project cost, but is in the Plan.

F. STORMWATER SYSTEM

CDM added in stormwater to the parking lot area. This is due to subsurface soil conditions, many items listed in the Ad Hoc document related to the stormwater system are not feasible. CDM Smith is currently working with the Department of Public Works to meet the City's stormwater requirements.



F. PERIMETER WALLS AND FENCES

There are no significant changes to this area from the Ad Hoc Committee Report.

Also, the Orchard Street fence has also been moved a few feet from the sidewalk to help with maintenance. As part of the 75% CDs, there were brick pillars every 19 ft along the ornamental fence. As part of the 90% CDs, there is just an ornamental fence with brick pillars only at the entrances to help reduce costs.

G. OTHER EQUIPMENT, FIXTURES, LANDSCAPING, AMENITIES

Since the November 2024 Community Meeting where the 75% CDs were presented, there has been a seating area to the west of the playground. This change was based on community input from the community meeting and staff input.

DCDP - PLAN REVIEW REQUESTS (FROM FALL 2024)

DCDP requested the following site amenities be added to the site plan: trash cans, bike racks, drinking fountain, picnic tables and/or benches along Orchard Street, landscaping at the entrance, landscape border for some sections along Orchard Street, consider adding a few more perennials to the plant palette, and set fence back from the sidewalk to reduce potential damage from snow removal.

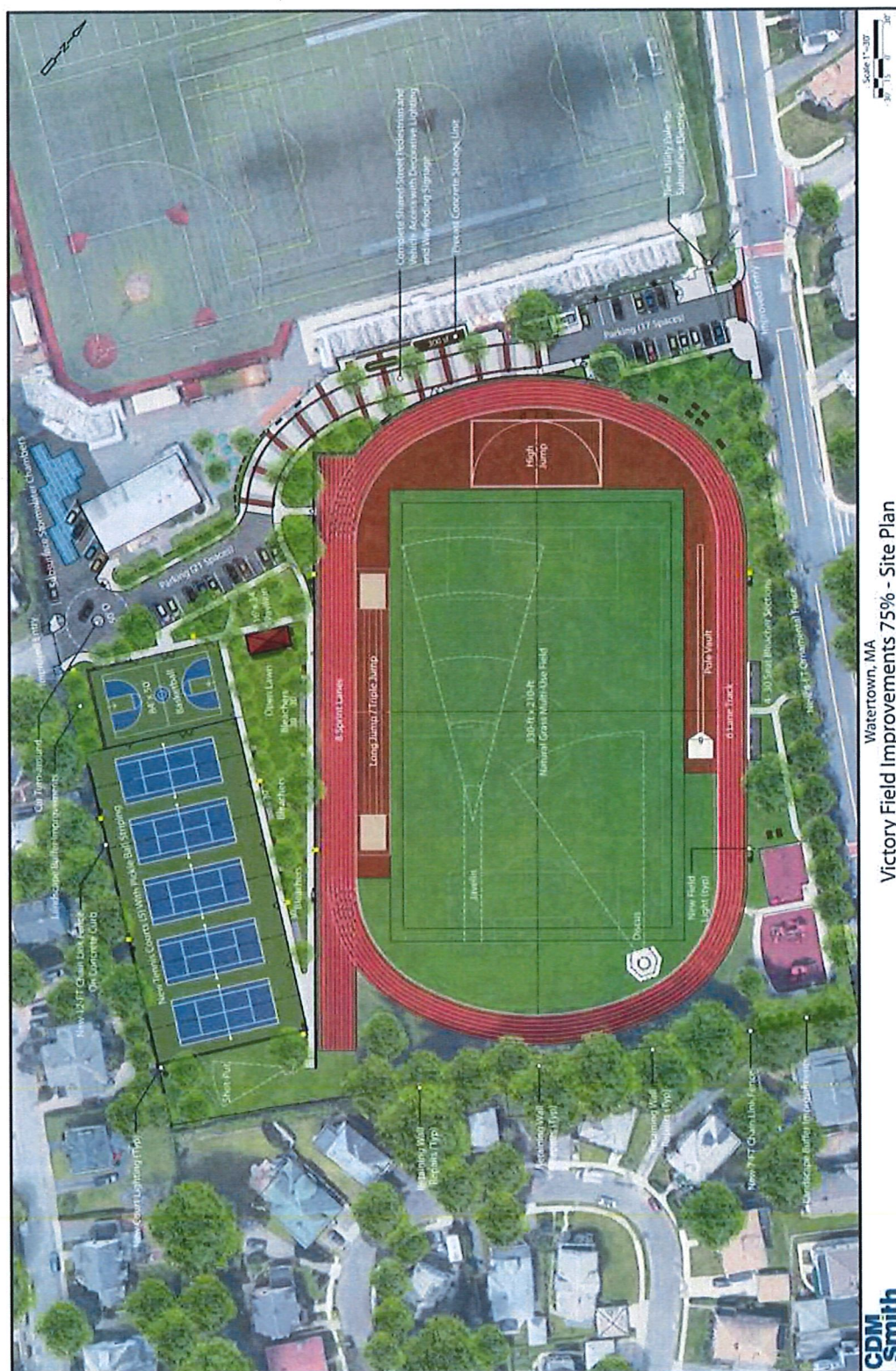
Victory Field Phase II - Concept Plan (Ad Hoc Report; June 28, 2018)



Victory Field Phase II - Concept Plan (Town Council; June 25, 2019, Presentation)



Victory Field Phase II 75% CD - Site Plan (Community Meeting; November 6, 2024)



CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 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> </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 revoke Watertown's prior acceptance of G.L. Chapter 31, civil service law, for police officer positions about the rank of patrol officer



George J. Proakis
City Manager

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To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager

Date: February 19, 2025

RE: Civil Service Revocation

As you may recall, at the May 14, 2024 City Council Meeting, the City Council voted to revoke its prior acceptance of M.G.L Chapter 31, the Civil Service Law, for all positions of the rank of Patrol Officer within the Police Department.

Attached, please find correspondence from Chief of Police Justin M. Hanrahan requesting the removal of supervisor ranks from the civil service system. The Police Supervisors' Union has agreed to this change. We have negotiated a new internal promotional policy that mirrors the civil service system while providing greater flexibility and local control. This policy ensures a fair, merit-based promotional process and allows us to select candidates who best meet our department's and community's evolving needs.

I will bring this matter up under Communications from the City Manager at the February 25, 2025 City Council Meeting.



WATERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

JUSTIN M. HANRAHAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

MEMORANDUM

TO: GEORGE PROAKIS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: JUSTIN M. HANRAHAN, CHIEF OF POLICE

DATE: February 19th, 2025

SUBJECT: CIVIL SERVICE REVOCATION – Watertown Police Supervisor Ranks

As we continue to refine and improve our ability to recruit and promote the most qualified personnel, I respectfully request your assistance in placing this request before the Honorable City Council for its review and action. To maintain continuity with our prior decision to remove the patrol officer's rank from the Massachusetts Civil Service System, and to provide greater latitude in selecting those best suited for leadership positions, I am requesting the removal of the supervisor ranks from the civil service system as well. The police supervisor's union has voted and agreed to this change.

With the guidance of city labor counsel, we have successfully negotiated with the union to implement a new internal promotional policy that largely mirrors the structure of the civil service system while providing greater flexibility and local control. This policy ensures a fair, merit-based promotional process while allowing us to select candidates who are best suited to meet the evolving needs of our department and community.

The civil service system, while originally designed to prevent nepotism, favoritism, and corruption in hiring and promotions, has become increasingly outdated and restrictive. The bureaucratic hurdles associated with the system hinder our ability to efficiently promote the most qualified candidates. In today's policing environment, concerns about unfair hiring and promotion practices can be effectively addressed through transparent and structured internal processes, rigorous background checks, and adherence to professional standards.

By removing the supervisor ranks from the civil service system, we will:

- Regain local control over the promotional process, ensuring that leadership positions are filled by individuals best suited to lead in a modern policing environment.
- Streamline the promotional timeline, reducing delays caused by civil service testing and administrative requirements.

- Expand our ability to develop and implement policies that support professional growth and leadership development within our department.
- Maintain a promotional process that aligns with civil service principles while allowing for necessary flexibility to address department-specific needs.

The removal of the patrol officer rank from the civil service system has been an enormous success as it has allowed us to recruit and hire trained and certified officers, while speeding the process of filling existing vacancies.

Given these factors, I believe that this transition will significantly enhance our ability to attract and develop strong leadership within our department. This change will improve operational efficiency and ultimately benefit both our officers and the community we serve.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or to discuss this matter further.

Proposed City Council Motion for Civil Service
as developed by KP Law

Pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 4, Section 4B, I move that the City of Watertown revoke its prior acceptance of G.L. c. 31, the Civil Service Law, for all police officer positions within the Watertown Police Department above the rank of patrol officer.



George J. Proakis
City Manager

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To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager

Date: February 18, 2025

RE: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption

Attached, please find a joint memorandum on the subject from Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development & Planning; Earl Smith, Assessor; Sean DelRose, Assistant Assessor; and Larry Field, Senior Planner.

I will present this under Communications from the City Manager at the City Council Meeting on February 25, 2025. I respectfully request that the Honorable City Council refer the matter to Committee for policy consideration and guidance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



CITY OF WATERTOWN

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Phone: 617 972 6417
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To: George Proakis, City Manager

From: Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development & Planning; Earl Smith, Assessor; Sean DelRose, Assistant Assessor; Larry Field, Senior Planner

Date: February 18, 2025

Re: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption

SUMMARY

At its November 26, 2024 meeting, the Honorable City Council voted to request the Administration provide an analysis of a 2023 state law allowing a local option property tax exemption to promote affordable housing.

Watertown's existing property tax exemptions are targeted at a small number of households (e.g., veterans with disability), designed to mitigate hardship, and come with a modest cost (about \$183,000 in FY24). The affordable housing exemption is aimed at influencing the rent-setting decisions of residential property owners. Given the large number of property owners and diversity in Watertown's housing stock, it is difficult to know how much a broad exemption would change those decisions and at what cost in lost property tax revenue. Even a much narrower exemption (e.g., only two-families) involves many properties and varying circumstances. There also are significant administrative burdens associated with implementing such an exemption, with that burden rising as the exemption applies to more properties.

All these points suggest that Watertown should wait to enact this local option exemption or start with a highly targeted pilot program.

STATE STATUTE

The 2023 Economic Development bill allowed municipalities to enact a property tax exemption for owners who rent to income-qualifying persons at affordable rates on a year-round, annual basis. G.L. c. 59, § 50 (attached as "A.") The provision provides considerable flexibility to cities/towns in structuring the exemption:

- (1) The exemption may apply to any "class one residential" unit. This can range from a single-family home to a large apartment building.

- (2) The units must be rented to income-qualifying persons; the thresholds may be set by the municipality as long as they are in accordance with HUD guidance/regulations and are not more than 200% of area median income.
- (3) Similarly, the affordable rent must be no higher than the maximum rent set by HUD for the applicable household income level.
- (4) The exemption amount is set locally but cannot be more than the unit's tax obligation.
- (5) The municipality may elect to require that the unit owner live on the property. Similarly, the municipality may elect to require a deed-restriction but, unlike units designated by the state as "affordable," the municipality may also allow the owner to offer an affordable rent for only one year.

Once enacted, the **exemption cannot be repealed for three years.**

Although the exemption is authorized by state law, the state will not reimburse the city for any lost revenue.

The statute requires that an applicant seeking the exemption must submit "any documentation the city or town deems necessary, including but not limited to, a signed lease and poof of the occupying person or persons' household income, to confirm the eligibility of the property for the exemption." However, the Commonwealth's Division of Local Services issued Guidelines in March 2024 requiring that qualifying income be established through federal and state income tax returns. (DLS Guidelines, attached as "B"). The DLS Guidelines also require that the application be filed annually on or before the tax abatement deadline, which is the due date of the first actual tax bill.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: INCOME LIMITS AND MAXIMUM RENTS

To illustrate the qualifying income levels that could be used for an affordable housing property exemption, below is a selection from the HUD income limits chart issued in April 2024 (they are issued annually):

HUD Income Limits Applicable to Watertown 2024-2025			
Household size	50%	65%	80%
1	\$57,100	\$74,230	\$91,200
2	\$65,300	\$84,490	\$104,200
3	\$73,450	\$95,485	\$117,250
4	\$81,600	\$106,080	\$130,250

Maximum rents for these income levels are based on bedroom configurations and include a utility "allowance" based on the type of utilities that serve the unit. Below are the maximum rents for the four most common bedroom configurations:

Maximum Rents Applicable to Watertown 2024-2025

Bedrooms	50%	65%	80%
Studio	\$1,428	\$1,856	\$2,280
1BR	\$1,633	\$2,122	\$2,605
2BR	\$1,836	\$2,387	\$2,931
3BR	\$2,040	\$2,652	\$3,256

MARKET RENTS IN WATERTOWN

It is hard to match up maximum rents for affordable units and market rents because of the varied ways that information on market rents are collected. One approach is to use “average rent” as collected by those who follow the commercial real estate market. These average rents tend to be higher because the information is gathered from larger property owners. Below is one such chart, based on CoStar Group’s database as cited by Apartments.Com:

Average Rents in Watertown January 2025

Bedrooms	Rent
Studio	\$2,528
1BR	\$2,956
2BR	\$3,618
3BR	\$4,851

Another approach is to use US Census Bureau’s data. According to its American Community Survey (ACS) data, the median rent for 2019-2023 was \$2,357 (this combines all bedroom configurations and owner types).¹ The ACS also contains rent distribution percentages for the 2017-2021 period, suggesting that Watertown rents (all bedroom configurations/owner types) were equally split between rents below and above \$2,000 during this period.² Given the significant rent growth since 2017, it is likely that a much higher percentage is now over \$2,000.

RELEVANT PROPERTY TAX DATA

There are 16,778 “Class 1 residential” units in Watertown. (Assessor’s Office Data, attached as “C.”) This includes the following building types: 2,853 single family; 4,033 condominium units; 5,224 units in two-family buildings; and 3,576 in apartment and mixed-use buildings. The taxes per unit vary, with the average property tax per unit for an apartment at \$3,343 and two-family at \$4,976.

Watertown currently has property tax exemptions for certain households. Below is a chart setting forth the exemption categories, exemption amounts and abatement totals for fiscal 2024.

¹ The ACS uses sampling over multiple years to develop data on a municipality level. When rents rise over the sampling period, this obviously affects the median.

² The surprising percentage of rents under \$2,000 may suggest that some owners offer below market rents because of their interest in tenant stability, their relationship with the tenant, or the unit’s condition. These units may not turnover frequently and thus not be available to those looking in the general market.

Name	Clause	# Exemptions Granted	Exemption Amount	Total Abated
Surviving Spouses, minors, or persons 70+ years old	17D	15	\$350	\$5,250
Veterans 10% Disabled	22A	52	\$800	\$41,600
Veteran Surviving Spouse, Service Connected Death	22D	8	Full Taxes	\$47,186
Veterans 100% Disabled	22E	25	\$2,000	\$50,000
Blind	37A	25	\$1,000	\$25,000
Elderly Income Based	41C	14	\$1,000	\$14,000
				\$183,036

ANALYSIS

Watertown would be the first municipality to enact a property tax exemption for affordable housing.³ This section asks the following questions: 1) would a tax exemption increase the affordability of rental units in Watertown—and at what cost in lost revenue? and 2) what are the administrative issues in enacting such an exemption?

A. Trade-off between increasing affordability and lost property tax revenue

The primary goal of this property tax exemption is to provide an incentive for owners to offer below market rent to income-qualified households.⁴ While other considerations could affect that decision, the statute's premise is that the exemption amount would substitute for the owner's lost rental income.

There is a substantial gap between market and affordable rents in Watertown's commercial real estate market. For example, the monthly gap between average and affordable rent for a one-bedroom unit is reportedly \$351. To influence such an owner, the exemption would likely need to exceed \$4,000. In contrast, all but one of Watertown's existing exemptions offer \$2,000 or less.

On the other hand, the gap between market and affordable rent varies in smaller buildings, e.g., a two- or three-family. Some of the units, particularly in buildings that have recently been constructed or renovated, may approach the rents in apartment buildings. Others may be similar in rent to deed-restricted affordable units (or even lower). An exemption amount that influences one owner to offer the unit at a lower rent may lead another owner to obtain the exemption without

³ We confirmed this with the Division of Local Services in late January 2025. On February 12, 2025, Boston City Council approved an "order" generally accepting the state statute. The next step is for the Mayor's office to design a tax exemption program for the Council's review and approval.

⁴ It is also possible that the exemption is viewed as a "reward" for owners already offering below market rent.

lowering the rent. It is not clear, therefore, what exemption amount would increase affordability—and how much that would cost in property tax revenue.⁵

B. Administrative considerations

Complying with the DLS Guidelines for implementing the affordable housing tax exemption involves significant administrative burdens:

- (1) While the lease can be accepted as documentation, verifying the actual rent paid and appropriate utility allowance would be unmanageable for the Assessor's office.
- (2) To prove qualifying income, the applicant must produce federal and state tax returns. In households with multiple taxpayers, each return must be reviewed and then stored in a location that protects confidentiality.
- (3) The unit taxation must be calculated when there is more than one unit on the parcel.
- (4) Most property tax exemptions have a single qualifying date (July 1 or January 1). The affordable housing exemption would require a supplemental filing (or more than one) if a change of tenant occurs. The Assessor's office is likely to receive applications and supplemental filings throughout the year.

CONCLUSION

Given the many questions about whether an effective affordable housing exemption can be created, Watertown should wait for experience in other municipalities in implementing the exemption or consider a highly targeted pilot program.⁶

⁵ Unlike the existing exemption categories, which in FY24 cost \$183,036, there are so many smaller buildings with rental units that even a relatively modest exemption could double or triple what is presently dedicated. For example, if 10% of the two- and three-family owners each obtained a \$1,000 exemption, the cost would be \$331,000. Also, unlike the veteran's 100% disabled exemption, none of the affordable housing exemption would be reimbursed by the state.

⁶ One such idea is to offer an exemption to an owner creating an accessory dwelling unit, as a limited number are likely to be created over a three year period.

ATTACHMENT "A"

SECTION 3. Said chapter 59 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 5N the 8 following section:-

Section 5O.

(a) In any city or town that accepts this section, the board of selectmen or select board of the town, the town council of a municipality having a town council form of government, the city manager, with the approval of the city council, in the case of a city with a plan D or plan E form of government, or the mayor, with the approval of the city council, in all other cities, may establish a property tax exemption for real property classified as Class One residential in the city or town. To qualify for the exemption, the property shall be:

- (i) rented at an affordable housing rate, as determined by the city or town and in accordance with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development guidance and regulations;
- (ii) rented on a yearly basis; and
- (iii) occupied year-round by a person or persons whose household income does not exceed an amount to be set by the city or town; provided, however, that said income shall not be more than 200 per cent of the area median income.

The property tax exemption shall be for an amount determined by the city or town; provided, however, that the amount shall not be more than the tax otherwise due on the parcel based on the full and fair assessed value multiplied by the square footage of the housing units rented and occupied by a person or persons whose household income is not more than the income limit set pursuant to clause (iii), divided by the total square footage of a structure located on the parcel. Assessment of property seeking an exemption under this section, if by an income approach to value, shall assume fair market rent for all units. The property owner seeking the exemption shall submit to the city or town any documentation the city or town deems necessary, including, but not limited to, a signed lease and proof of the occupying person or persons' household income, to confirm the eligibility of the property for the exemption under this section.

(b) A municipality may adopt ordinances or by-laws to implement this section.

ATTACHMENT “B”

DIVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES Informational Guideline Release March 2024 (next page)



Geoffrey E. Snyder
Commissioner of Revenue

Sean R. Cronin
Senior Deputy Commissioner

Informational Guideline Release

Municipal Finance Law Bureau
Informational Guideline Release (IGR) No. 24-4
March 2024

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

(G.L. c. 59, § 50)

This Informational Guideline Release (IGR) informs local officials about a new local option affordable housing property tax exemption. It also explains local standards and procedures that may be adopted relative to the exemption.

Topical Index Key:

Abatements and Appeals
Exemptions

Distribution:

Assessors
Collectors
Treasurers
Accountants and Auditors
Selectmen/Mayors
City/Town Managers/Exec. Secys.
Finance Directors
City/Town Councils
City Solicitors/Town Counsels

Supporting a Commonwealth of Communities
www.mass.gov/DLS

Municipal Finance Law Bureau
Informational Guideline Release (IGR) No. 24-4
March 2024

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

(G.L. c. 59, § 50)

SUMMARY:

This Informational Guideline Release (IGR) informs local officials about a new local option, affordable housing property tax exemption. The exemption was created by section 3 of “AN ACT TO IMPROVE THE COMMONWEALTH’S COMPETITIVENESS, AFFORDABILITY AND EQUITY,” which was signed into law on October 4, 2023. [St. 2023, c. 50](#). For municipalities that accept it, this new tax exemption would apply to the property of residential unit owners who rent their units to income-qualifying persons at affordable rates on a year-round, annual basis.

GUIDELINES:

I. LOCAL ACCEPTANCE

A. Acceptance

Acceptance of G.L. c. 59, § 50 is by vote of the municipality’s legislative body, subject to charter. [G.L. c. 4, § 4](#). Following acceptance, the board of selectboard of a town; the town council of a municipality having a town council form of government; the city manager, with the city council’s approval, in a city with a plan D or E form of government; or the mayor, with the city council’s approval, in all other cities may establish the parameters of the affordable housing property tax exemption. This includes all of the locally determined amounts noted in Section II below, any other restrictions or regulations consistent with the intent of the law and any local rules and procedures. A municipality may also adopt ordinances or by-laws to implement the provisions of the exemption.

B. Effective Date

The acceptance vote should explicitly state the fiscal year in which the exemption will first be available, the first of which can be fiscal year 2025.

C. Revocation

Acceptance may be revoked, but the city or town must wait until at least three years after acceptance. Revocation is also by vote of the legislative body, subject to charter. [G.L. c. 4, § 4B](#).

D. Notice of Acceptance or Revocation

The city or town clerk should notify the [Municipal Databank](#) that G.L. c. 59, § 50 has been accepted or revoked as soon as possible after the vote takes place.

II. SCOPE OF ABATEMENT

A. Residential Ownership

Applicants, including the trustees of a trust, must be the assessed owner of the property on which the tax to be abated is assessed and must own the property on the applicable July 1 exemption qualification date.

This exemption only applies to class one residential units. The unit is not required to be subject to an affordability restriction, but it may have one. Additionally, an accessory dwelling unit that meets the qualifications is eligible to receive the exemption.

B. Domicile

The applicant does not have to be domiciled on their property to qualify unless the municipality adopts a local rule requiring this.

C. Exemption Amount

The amount of the exemption will be determined locally but cannot be more than the tax otherwise due on the parcel (based on its assessed full and fair cash value), multiplied by the square footage of the qualifying housing units and divided by the total square footage of the structure located on the parcel.

For example, based on full and fair cash value, the tax obligation of a three-unit home is \$12,000. Each of the three units is 900 square feet. If only one of the units qualifies for the exemption, then the property owner would receive an exemption equal to 1/3 (900/2700) of the locally determined amount. As such, in this example, the maximum exemption amount would be \$4,000 for that unit.

Otherwise, if a property for which an applicant seeking an exemption is assessed by an income approach to value, then fair market rent must be assumed for all units.

D. Exemption Criteria

Residential unit owners must rent their units to income-qualifying persons at an affordable rate in order to qualify for exemption. The affordable housing rate is determined by the city or town but must be in accordance with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) guidance and regulations.

Additionally, the occupants must have an annual household income that does not exceed the amount set by the city or town; provided, however, that said income shall not be more than 200 percent of the area median income. HUD income limits are available online [here](#).

For example, a municipality determined that the gross occupant income shall not exceed 80 percent of area median income. The municipality further determined that the affordable rate shall not exceed 30 percent of the actual occupant's monthly household income. An application is submitted for an occupant household of one. The relevant area median income limit for a household of one within the statistical area in which the municipality lies was \$82,950. Under the established guidelines of the municipality as set forth above, an occupant income of \$82,950 meets the income requirement, and rent no higher than \$24,885 annually meets the affordable rate requirement.

Further, the unit(s) in question must be rented on an annual basis and be occupied by qualifying persons for the entirety of the applicable fiscal year. If a unit is occupied as such by successive but separate annual leases to qualifying persons, without a significant gap between said leases, the unit is still eligible for exemption.

There are no age-related criteria for qualifying renters.

E. Applications to Assessors

To be considered for this exemption, applicants must submit STF 50, attached below, annually to the local assessors. The applications must include, but are not limited to, a signed lease or leases evidencing an annual rental agreement (including material terms of the lease, such as the rental amount and coverage for the 12 months of the entire fiscal year at issue) with proof of the household income of the occupying person(s) as established through federal and state income tax returns. The application must be filed with the assessors on or before the abatement deadline date, which is the due date of the first actual tax bill.

Any abatements granted shall be charged against the overlay account. As such, the assessors should factor in the amounts needed to fund the exemption when determining overlay needs each year.

III. ADOPTION OF LOCAL RULES

As noted above, the board of selectmen or select board of a town; the town council of a municipality having a town council form of government; the city manager, with the

city council's approval, in a city with a plan D or E form of government; or the mayor, with the city council's approval, in all other cities may establish the parameters of the affordable housing property tax exemption. This includes all of the locally determined amounts noted in Section II above, any other restrictions or regulations consistent with the intent of the law and any local rules and procedures. A municipality may also adopt ordinances or by-laws to implement the provisions of the exemption.

A municipality should adopt rules to determine:

- The maximum amount of the exemption;
- The annual occupant household income limit;
- The affordable housing rate of rent;
- The domiciliary requirements of the owner, if any; and
- Any other restrictions or regulations consistent with the intent of the law it elects to implement.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Assessors' Use only

Date Received

Application No.

Parcel Id.

Name of City or Town

FISCAL YEAR _____ APPLICATION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXEMPTION
General Laws Chapter 59, § 50

THIS APPLICATION IS NOT OPEN TO PUBLIC INSPECTION
(See General Laws Chapter 59, § 60)

Return to: Board of Assessors

Must be filed with assessors not later than due
date of first actual (not preliminary) tax payment
for fiscal year.

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete all sections fully. Please print or type.

A. IDENTIFICATION OF OWNER.

Name of Owner/Applicant: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Legal residence (domicile) on July 1, _____

Mailing address (if different)

No. Street City/Town Zip Code

Location of property: _____

No. of dwelling units: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ Other _____Did you own the property on July 1, _____ Yes ☐ No ☐

B. IDENTIFICATION OF RENTER/LESSEE.

Name of Renter/Lessee: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Legal residence (domicile) on July 1, _____

Mailing address (if different)

No. Street City/Town Zip Code

No. Street City/Town Zip Code

Did the Renter/Lessee live in the property on July 1, Yes ☐ No ☐If no, did another qualifying Renter/Lessee live in the property on July 1? Yes ☐ No ☐Does the Renter/Lessee intend on living at the property through June 30, Yes ☐ No ☐If no, will another qualifying Renter/Lessee live in the property through June 30? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please supplement this application within 30 days of any change of Renter/Lessee.

Is the Renter/Lessee subject to an annual lease? Yes ☐ No ☐

How much rent is being charged (monthly)? _____

Are there any other charges being made upon the Renter/Lessee (whether included in the rental agreement or not)? If
so, please identify the charges and the respective amounts. _____

Please attach a copy of the signed lease(s) to this application.

Other information (as required by the local assessors): _____

C. RENTER/LESSEE ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME. Copies of Renter/Lessee's federal and state income tax returns, and other documentation, may be requested to verify income.

	All Household Members
Number of persons in the household.....	
Total gross income from all persons.....	

D. PARCEL INFORMATION.

How many units on are the parcel.....	
Total square footage of the structure located on the parcel.....	
Total square footage of qualifying housing units.....	

E. SIGNATURE. Sign here to complete the application.

This application has been prepared or examined by me. Under the pains and penalties of perjury, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this return and all accompanying documents and statements are true, correct and complete.

Signature of Owner Applicant

Date

If signed by agent, attach copy of written authorization to sign on behalf of taxpayer.

DISPOSITION OF APPLICATION (ASSESSORS' USE ONLY)

Ownership ☐	GRANTED ☐	Assessed Tax	\$ _____
Occupancy ☐	DENIED ☐	Prorated Exemption Amount	\$ _____
Income ☐	DEEMED DENIED ☐	Adjusted Tax	\$ _____
Rate ☐		Board of Assessors	
Date Voted/Deemed Denied	_____		
Certificate No.	_____		
Date Cert./Notice Sent	_____		
		Date:	

FILING THIS FORM DOES NOT STAY THE COLLECTION OF YOUR TAXES

THIS FORM APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE

TAXPAYER INFORMATION ABOUT THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXEMPTIONS

PERSONAL EXEMPTIONS. You may be eligible to reduce all or a portion of the taxes assessed on your real property if you meet the qualifications described herein for the affordable housing exemption allowed under Massachusetts law.

More detailed information about the qualifications for this exemption may be obtained from your board of assessors.

WHO MAY FILE AN APPLICATION. You may file an application if you meet all qualifications as of July 1. You may also apply if you are the personal representative of the estate, or trustee under the will, of a person who qualified for a personal exemption on July 1.

WHEN AND WHERE APPLICATION MUST BE FILED. Your application must be filed with the assessors on or before the date the first installment payment of the actual tax bill mailed for the fiscal year is due, unless you are a mortgagee. If so, your application must be filed during the last 10 days of the abatement application period. Actual tax bills are those issued after the tax rate is set. Applications filed for omitted, revised or reassessed taxes must be filed within 3 months of the date the bill for those taxes was mailed. THESE DEADLINES CANNOT BE EXTENDED OR WAIVED BY THE ASSESSORS FOR ANY REASON. IF YOUR APPLICATION IS NOT TIMELY FILED, YOU LOSE ALL RIGHTS TO AN ABATEMENT AND THE ASSESSORS CANNOT BY LAW GRANT YOU ONE. TO BE TIMELY FILED, YOUR APPLICATION MUST BE (1) RECEIVED BY THE ASSESSORS ON OR BEFORE THE FILING DEADLINE OR (2) MAILED BY UNITED STATES MAIL, FIRST CLASS POSTAGE PREPAID, TO THE PROPER ADDRESS OF THE ASSESSORS ON OR BEFORE THE FILING DEADLINE AS SHOWN BY A POSTMARK MADE BY THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE.

PAYMENT OF TAX. Filing an application does not stay the collection of your taxes. In some cases, you must pay all preliminary and actual installments of the tax when due to appeal the assessors' disposition of your application. Failure to pay the tax when due may also subject you to interest charges and collection action. To avoid any loss of rights or additional charges, you should pay the tax as assessed. If an exemption is granted and you have already paid the entire year's tax as exempted, you will receive a refund of any overpayment.

ASSESSORS DISPOSITION. Upon applying for an exemption, you may be required to provide the assessors with further information and supporting documentation to establish your eligibility. The assessors have 3 months from the date your application is filed to act on it unless you agree in writing before that period expires to extend it for a specific time. If the assessors do not act on your application within the original or extended period, it is deemed denied. You will be notified in writing whether an exemption has been granted or denied.

APPEAL. You may appeal the disposition of your application to the Appellate Tax Board, or if applicable, the County Commissioners. The appeal must be filed within 3 months of the date the assessors acted on your application, or the date your application was deemed denied, whichever is applicable. The disposition notice will provide you with further information about the appeal procedure and deadline.
