Watertown City Council

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Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight
Meeting: November 1, 2023
Report: November 27, 2023

The Committee convened at 6:30 pm on Wednesday November 2, 2023 in the Louis P. Andrews Upper Conference Room, as a hybrid meeting with remote participation by zoom. Present were Vincent Piccirilli, Chair; Emily Izzo, Vice Chair; and Nicole Gardner, Secretary. Also present were City Manager George Proakis, City Auditor Megan Langan, Council Analyst Doug Newton, and Councilors Caroline Bays, Lisa Feltner, and John Gannon. Present by zoom were Councilors John Airasian and Anthony Palomba.

The purpose of this meeting was to review input from Councilors and make recommendations to the City Council on the FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines.

The Chair sent instructions to Councilors explaining that the Committee's task is not to decide whether each request is a good idea or not; rather the Committee acts as an editor to take input from nine Councilors and synthesize it into a concise, actionable document for the Manager. The Committee may decide to defer or exclude a request because it:

a) requires policy direction from the Council before the Manager can include it in the operating budget;
b) is substantially complete;
c) is too ambiguous to be included in the operating budget;
d) is part of the Capital Improvement Program and not the operating budget;
e) is within the authority of another body who has not weighed in it;
f) overlaps with other existing goals or requests.

To facilitate the process, the Chair arranged the requests from each Councilor, in the order received, into a worksheet for the Committee to use. The Committee completed the review of the FY25 Budget Policy Guidelines, and a summary of the Committee discussions and recommendations are contained within the worksheet (see attachment 1).

The final Budget Policy Guidelines (see attachment 2) will be ranked by the City Council after they are approved. The order they are shown reflects last year's priority ranking and the timing of when new requests were received.

The Committee will use the same weighted ranking method as in past years, with each Councilor filling out a ranking sheet (see attachment 3).

During the discussion, the Committee recommended three items be referred to Committees for further discussion and policy guidance. These were a real estate transfer tax, increasing the personal property tax exemption to $10,000, and discussions with DCR on Cannalonga Park.

The Chair stated that letters to the Committee were received from the Environment & Energy Efficiency Committee (attachment 4), and Watertown Faces Climate Change (attachment 5). He will respond to them with the outcome of tonight's meeting.

The Committee also received a request from World in Watertown about support in the budget for accessibility and accommodations for members of Boards, Commissions, and Committees (attachment 6). Councilor Gardner stated she has a conflict of interest with this matter and recused herself from the discussion. It was agreed that this is a complicated matter that requires policy guidance from the Council before any funds could be budgeted.

➔ ACTION ITEM: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Izzo, that the Committee recommends to the City Council that it adopt the FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines as drafted. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

➔ ACTION ITEM: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Izzo, to recommend the City Council refers discussion of a real estate transfer tax to the Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

➔ ACTION ITEM: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Izzo, to recommend the City Council refers discussion to increase the personal property tax exemption from $5,000 to $10,000 to the Committee of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

➔ ACTION ITEM: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Izzo, to recommend the City Council refers discussions with DCR on Cannalonga Park to the Committee on Parks and Recreation. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

➔ ACTION ITEM: Councilor Izzo made a motion, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli, to recommend the City Council refers discussion of accessibility and accommodations for members of Boards, Commissions, and Committees to the Committee on Personnel and City Organization. The motion passed by a vote of 2-0 with Councilor Gardner recusing herself.

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 pm by a vote of 3-0.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli

Attachments**:**
1. FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines Worksheet
2. FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines for Approval by the City Council (unranked)
3. FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines Ranking Sheet
4. Environment & Energy Efficiency Committee letter
5. Watertown Faces Climate Change letter
6. World in Watertown email

<u>Watertown's FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines Worksheet – For Committee Report November 27, 2023</u>

The City Council is adopting these budget policy guidelines pursuant to Section 5-1 of the Watertown Home Rule Charter. Based on these guidelines, the City Manager will develop budgetary goals and the City budget for FY25.

I. COST-SAVINGS/REVENUES - The City Council believes that identification of cost savings and/or new revenues should be a precondition to additional expenditures. To this end, in developing the FY25 budget, the City Manager should:		
FY24 Guideline	**Input & Discussion**	**Draft FY25 Guideline**
I. A. Continue to proceed with the guidelines of the Strategic Framework for Economic Development, with the long-term goal to promote a diversified and growing tax base.	**Feltner:** Add to the end: "…with a renewed focus on small/local business." **Committee Discussion**: Add the language in the new Economic Development Planner job description "and a renewed focus on small business, retail corridors, and emerging industry clusters"	Continue to proceed with the guidelines of the Strategic Framework for Economic Development, with the long-term goal to promote a diversified and growing tax base, and a renewed focus on small business, retail corridors, and emerging industry clusters.
I. B. Continue pursuing mitigation monies, linkage fees, and/or other measures from larger scale projects.	**Committee Discussion**: Keep as is.	No changes.
I C. Require all Departments to actively pursue filing applications for all relevant state, federal, and private foundation grant programs.	**Committee Discussion**: Keep as is.	No changes.
I. D. Actively seek Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) agreements, or other in-kind services, with each non-profit organization owning or purchasing property in Watertown.	**Committee Discussion**: Keep as is.	No changes.

New Request	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
New Item #1	**Palomba:** Develop a proposal for a 1% - 2% real estate transfer tax for the sale of properties over $1.5 million with the funds collected to be allocated to the Affordable Housing Trust. **Committee Discussion**: Unless state law is changed, this would require a home rule petition by the City Council, and cannot be done by the Administarative Branch as part of the budget process. Pursing this would require a referral to the Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee for policy guidance.	Do not add.

II. PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS/EXPENDITURES - To the extent that resources allow, in light of the financial policies stated above, and adhering to the principle of first identifying cost-savings and/or new revenue, the following program enhancements and, if necessary, new expenditures should receive priority in the FY25 budget. Education program enhancements and expenditures should be considered subsequently in light of the recommendations of the School Committee.

FY24 Guideline	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
II. A. Beginning with FY24, all departments should prepare their budgets to address the strategies and action items in the Climate and Energy Plan adopted August 9, 2022.	**Bays:** Change to **"**All departmental budgets should prioritize the implementation of the strategies and action items in the Climate and Energy Plan." **Feltner**: Change to "All departments and their divisions should continue preparing their budgets to address the strategies and action items in the Climate and Energy Plan adopted August 9, 2022." **Committee Discussion**: See New Item # 2. Change to show year two progress and priority.	All departmental budgets should prioritize and enhance the ability of the City to implement the strategies and action items in the Climate and Energy Plan.
II. B. Continue to work collaboratively with the Watertown Public Schools on the comprehensive multi-year educational budget that assures sustainable funding for our schools and the successful education of our children, and seek to accommodate a 3.5% annual increase for FY24 for the Education appropriation that will provide level-service funding for our schools.	**Bays:** Change "and the successful education of our children" to "the successful education of our children, provide attractive employment packages" **Palomba:** Increasing the funding to the Watertown School District by .5% in FY25 and beyond with the goal of increasing salaries for Instructional Assistants. **Feltner**: Change "3.5% annual increase for FY24:" to "3.5% annual increase for FY25-FY27" **Committee Discussion**: Update with language in the October 10, 2023 Preliminary Budget Overview for a projected increase of 3.5% annually from FY25 through FY27, and include FY25 only. Under Ch.71 §34 the Council is barred from allocating specific funds in the Education appropriation. School collective bargaining is the sole responsibility of the School Committee. The IA contract was already settled. The Teacher contract has a provision for an additional raise if earmarked Fair Share Amendment money is received.	Continue to work collaboratively with the Watertown Public Schools on the comprehensive multi-year educational budget that assures sustainable funding for our schools and the successful education of our children, and seek to accommodate a 3.5% annual increase for FY25 for the Education appropriation that will provide level-service funding for our schools.

FY24 Guideline	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
IIC. Continue support for Building for the Future Initiative funding in collaboration with the School Building Committee, for the Three Elementary Schools project, and for the MSBA High School project, without debt exclusion funding.	**Bays**: Delete the three elementary schools from this. **Feltner**: Change to "Continue support for Building for the Future Initiative funding in collaboration with the School Building Committee for the MSBA High School project without debt exclusion funding, and in final commitments to closing out the Elementary Schools project." **Committee Discussion**: Delete the references to the Three Elementary Schools project.	Continue support for Building for the Future Initiative funding in collaboration with the School Building Committee, for the MSBA High School project, without debt exclusion funding.
II. D. With the ongoing update to the Comprehensive Plan, which will include new goals and strategies for development in Watertown, continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Community Development and Planning by adding resources and/or redeploying existing resources.	**Bays:** Add F to D and change to "Incorporate goals of the updated Comprehensive Plan, and provide funding for a study of Watertown Square that will include Intersection Design, Development & Zoning changes - including increase in housing density, Small Business strategies, and better use of City owned land, parking lots, and former police station.". **Feltner**: Change to "In support of the update to the Comprehensive Plan adopted 9/21/2023, include new goals and strategies for development in Watertown, initiate a comprehensive Self-Evaluation toward developing an ADA Transition Plan, and continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Community Development and Planning with support of new divisions, including Events and continued funding of Public Arts and Culture, and funding for the Affordable Housing Trust." **Committee Discussion**: Combine F with D. See also New Items #1 for Arts funding and #4 for Affordable Housing Trust. Updating the City's ADA self-assessment and transition plan is action item 8F in the Comprehensive Plan.	With the completed update to the Comprehensive Plan which includes new goals and strategies for development in Watertown; and the ongoing Watertown Square Area Plan that will include Intersection Design, Development & Zoning changes including increase in housing density, Small Business strategies, and better use of City owned land; provide funding to address the strategies and action items in the plans, and continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Community Development and Planning by adding resources and/or redeploying existing resources to achieve the goals of the Plans.

FY24 Guideline	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
II. E. Improve the operational efficiency, flexibility, and capacity of the Public Works Department to meet the City's growing needs to manage contractors, respond to work order requests, oversee development projects, plan and implement infrastructure improvements, improve communications to residents about road construction, comply with the MassDEP 2030 Solid Waste Management Plan, and maintain complete streets infrastructure. Review improvements for snow and ice removal. Consider what technology platforms are needed to support the Department.	**Feltner:** Change to "Improve the operational efficiency, flexibility, and capacity of the Public Works Department to: meet the city's growing needs to manage contractors, respond to work order requests, oversee development projects, plan and implement infrastructure improvements including for EV charging, improve communications to residents about road construction and Traffic Control, comply with the MassDEP 2030 Solid Waste Management Plan with continued growth of the organics recycling program, and continue investment in complete streets infrastructure. Continue to review and finalize plans for improvements on snow and ice removal. Identify and select what technology platforms are needed to support DPW. **Committee Discussion**: Keep as is, but modify the last sentence.	Improve the operational efficiency, flexibility, and capacity of the Public Works Department to meet the City's growing needs to manage contractors, respond to work order requests, oversee development projects, plan and implement infrastructure improvements, improve communications to residents about road construction, comply with the MassDEP 2030 Solid Waste Management Plan, and maintain complete streets infrastructure. Review improvements for snow and ice removal. Identify and implement technology needed to support the Department.
II. F. Provide funding for a study of Watertown Square that will incorporate goals of the updated Comprehensive Plan, and include Intersection Design, Development & Zoning changes, Small Business strategies, and better use of City owned land, parking lots, and former police station.	**Bays:** See D above. **Feltner**: Change to "Provide ongoing support for the study of Watertown Square to incorporate goals of the updated Comprehensive Plan, including Intersection Design, Development & Zoning changes (including per MBTA communities act), Small Business strategies, and better use of City owned land, parking lots, and the former police station. Also establish a fund to implement the Watertown Square plan TBD". **Committee Discussion**: Funding of study completed, combine implementation into D above.	Remove, see Item II.D.

FY24 Guideline	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
II. G. Update the five year plan and funding schedule for the integrated improvements of the City's streets and sidewalks, water-sewer-stormwater infrastructure, and underground utilities. The plan should show status of ongoing projects, identify future projects including those with no funding source, identify sources of stormwater and sewage outflow to the Charles River, and coordination with water-sewer-stormwater projects and underground utility projects.	**Feltner:** Add a 2nd sentence "Address vehicle-reduction strategies, street design, signalization, wayfinding, policies and transit operations with DCDP." **Committee Discussion**: Keep as is, but modify the first line.	Continue annual updates of the rolling five-year plan and funding schedule for the integrated improvements of the City's streets and sidewalks, water-sewer-stormwater infrastructure, and underground utilities. The plan should show status of ongoing projects, identify future projects including those with no funding source, identify sources of stormwater and sewage outflow to the Charles River, and coordination with water-sewer-stormwater projects and underground utility projects.
II. H. Provide increased funding and resources for City-wide rodent control in the FY24 budget.	**Bays:** Change to "Continue funding and resources for city-wide rodent control plan." **Feltner**: Change to "Provide increased funding and resources for City-wide rodent control in the FY25 budget in coordination with the Health Dept and DPW." **Committee Discussion**: Update. Important to keep for one more year to allow the new Health Director to fully implement the plan, and provide feedback. to reflect that.	Monitor and assess resources for City-wide rodent control in the FY25 budget.
II. I. Provide funding and resources for launch of the 311 system in the FY24 budget.	**Bays:** Change to "Continue funding and resources for launch of the 311 system." **Feltner**: Change to "Provide ongoing funding and resources for the new Constituent Services Dept with 311 system (to launch in FY24) and new Community Engagement Specialist and with social media & web coordinator, in the FY25 budget." **Committee Discussion**: Update. Important to keep for one more year to allow the new Constituent Services Director to fully implement the plan, and provide feedback.	Monitor and assess resources for launch of the 311 system in the FY25 budget.

FY24 Guideline	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
II. J. Consider funding for the recommendations of the Personnel Department Assessment Review and the Salary Study in the FY24 budget.	**Palomba:** Change to "Consider funding for the recommendations of the Personnel Department Assessment Review and the Compensation/Classification Salary Study." **Bays**: Change to "Fund the recommendations of the Personnel Department Assessment Review and the Salary Study." **Gardner**: Split into 2 new items: 1. Provide funding in the FY25 budget to continue the build out of the Human Resources Department, consistent with the recommendations of the recent study. This could include funding for personnel, training programs, new software systems, among other things. 2. Provide funding in the FY25 budget to carry out the classification and salary recommendations made in the recently completed study. **Feltner**: Change to "Consider funding for the recommendations of the Personnel Department Assessment Review and the Salary Study in the FY25 budget and in support of Human Resources Dept." **Committee Discussion**: Funding of both studies completed. Partial funding for the HR Department is in FY24 but some will be in FY25. Funding the Classification and Compensation Study recommendations will be in FY25. Split in to two guidelines.	#1 Fund the remaining recommendations of the HR Assessment Review in the FY25 budget. #2 Fund the recommendations of the Classification and Compensation Study in the FY25 budget.

FY24 Guideline	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
II. K. Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Public Works Forestry Department by adding resources and/or redeploying additional resources for improving Watertown's public shade trees and increasing the City's overall tree canopy by: (1) Developing a robust data collection process for public shade trees in Watertown, (2) Analyzing the data to determine an action plan and (3) to seek collaboration and partnership opportunities with community groups such as Trees for Watertown.	**Feltner:** Change to "Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Public Works Forestry Department by adding resources and/or redeploying additional resources for improving and maintaining Watertown's public shade trees and increasing the City's overall tree canopy by maintaining robust data collection for public shade trees in Watertown, while analyzing the data to continue tree plantings." **Committee Discussion**: Incorporate Feltner recommendation.	Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Public Works Forestry Division by adding resources and/or redeploying additional resources for improving and maintaining Watertown's public shade trees and increasing the City's overall tree canopy, by maintaining robust data collection for public shade trees in Watertown, and analyzing the data to continue tree plantings.
II. L. Continue working to identify additional acquisition of land for open space and recreation, using the Acquisition of Land/Open Space Stabilization Fund, and including proposals submitted to the Community Preservation Committee.	**Committee Discussion**: See also New Item 10. Leave as is.	No changes.
II. M. Carry out the remaining recommendations of the City-wide Information Technology Assessment.	**Bays**: Is Chris still working on this? If so - no change. **Feltner**: Add to the end "including end-user satisfaction, cybersecurity, web services, etc." **Committee Discussion**: Completed, remove.	Remove.
II. N. Consider funding for the recommendations of the Health & Human Services Study in the FY24 budget.	**Palomba**: Change to "Consider funding for the recommendations of the Community Health and Human Services Assessment." **Feltner**: Change to "Anticipate funding for the recommendations of the FY24 Health & Human Services Study TBD in the FY25 budget, including addressing needs of the Watertown Food Pantry." **Committee Discussion**: Not complete yet. Change to Fund recommendations in FY25 budget.	Consider funding for the recommendations of the Community Health & Human Services Assessment in the FY25 budget.

FY24 Guideline	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
II. O. Continue to work with the Watertown Transportation Management Association to identify sustainable sources of funding for the shuttle bus program in Watertown. Use data from the pilot program to explore strategies to increase ridership in a permanent program.	**Bays**: Change "explore strategies" to "explore alternative strategies" **Feltner**: Change the 2nd sentence to "Explore strategies to increase ridership in a permanent program; evaluate routes and transit operations in conjunction with ten. findings from Watertown Square study in FY25. **Committee Discussion**: Refocus to start with a goal to make the TMA into a permanent local transit program meeting the goals of the Climate & Energy Action Plan.	To meet the goal of allowing people who live and work in Watertown to go car free, continue to work with the Watertown Transportation Management Association to identify sustainable sources of funding for a permanent local transit program in Watertown.
II. P. Based on final City Council policy direction, develop a budgetary plan to meet the identified need for DPW staging space.	**Committee Discussion**: Leave as is.	No changes.
II. Q. Finalize re-use of the former north branch library.	**Bays**: No change - unless you want to put "Come up with a brilliant, innovative, and useful plan for the re-use of the North Branch Library" - maybe that's what O should say as well. **Feltner**: Change to "Q. Consider re-use of the former north branch library after review of a FY24 structural study and findings." **Committee Discussion**: Reword to show a structural assessment is proposed. Future action will depend on the results of the study.	Consider re-use of the former north branch library after review of a FY24 structural study and findings.

New Request	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
New Item #1	**Palomba**: Provide funding for the Watertown Cultural Council by matching the Massachusetts Cultural Council's funding level in FY24. **Committee Discussion**: See also Feltner comment under II.D. There is significant support to provide more arts funding, but this is too specific., make broader.	Provide additional support for cultural events and public art in the FY25 budget.
New Item #2	**Palomba**: Enhance the ability of the City to implement its Climate and Energy Plan by creating a Climate and Energy Division within the Department of Community Development and Planning and increasing its capacity by hiring additional staff. **Committee Discussion**: Requirements for additional staff to address the goals of the Climate and Energy Plan is already covered in II.A. The Committee on Climate & Energy is holding regular meetings to monitor the implementation and progress of the plan. Reorganization is the responsibility of the Manager under the Charter.	Do not add.
New Item #3	**Palomba:** Provide funding for the location, design, and construction of a Miracle Field. **Committee Discussion**: This is still an open referral with the Parks & Recreation Committee, and is awaiting policy guidance from the City Council. See Committee report from May 24, 2022 for the meeting of May 11, 2022.	Do not add.
New Item #4	**Palomba:** Increase funding for the Affordable Housing Trust to $500,000 annually. **Committee Discussion**: See also Feltner comment under II.D. The current budget has $250,000 added to the Affordable Housing Trust annually. Significant funds for affordable housing are available from the Community Preservation Act, as well as the new linkage fee. Any recommendation for additional funds from the operating budget should have policy guidance from the Municipal Housing Trust.	Do not add.
New Item #5	**Gardner:** Budget for staffing, and financial resources for programming, to support the work of the newly forming Human Rights Commission in the FY25 budget. **Committee Discussion**: See New Item # 11. This makes sense to add, with the ordinance that was adopted on September 26, 2023.	Add resources in the FY25 budget to support the work of the newly formed Human Rights Commission.
New Item #6	**Feltner**: Continue funding for the new Finance Dept under a Chief Financial Officer, including new Grants Development staff. **Committee Discussion**: New Finance department and staffing is in the FY24 budget.	Do not add.

New Request	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
New Item #7	**Feltner:** Continue support of the Space Needs Study for all phases, including future plans for Phillips School/Senior Ctr services site. **Committee Discussion**: The space studies are already underway. Funding for any resulting construction is in the Capital Improvement Program for the Parker School. The 3-phase feasibility study for the Parker School/Phillips School/Senior Center is ongoing and subject to future community input.	Do not add.
New Item #8	**Airasian**: I'd like to look into having citywide internet. Maybe have a pilot program in public places like the library, schools, parks etc. if it were fee based (which would be much less than Comcast) we could direct some of that to WCATV to off set customers who are cutting cable service. **Committee Discussion**: The FY24-FY28 Capital Improvement Plan (row 48) has $500,000 in FY25, FY26, and FY27 for Public WiFi. Watertown held a Public Broadband and Digital Equity Information Session on June 27, 2023, and discussions are ongoing. Grant funding is being sought for a capital project.	Do not add.
New Item #9	**Airasian:** Raise personal property exemption for businesses from 5k to 10k. **Committee Discussion**: This is defined by M.G.L. Chapter 59 §5 Clause 54, and requires legislative action by the City Council. A referral to the Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee for policy guidance is recommended.	Do not add.
New Item #10	**Airasian:** DCR.., in particular, Cannalonga Park, for Watertown to take ownership and upkeep to expand the city's green space. **Committee Discussion**: A municipality cannot acquire state-owned open space. This was covered in a Joint Human Services Committee & Conservation Commission report dated October 24, 2017 for a meeting held August 3, 2017. There was also a DCR Listening Session held on June 1, 2022 about Cannalonga Park to determine existing site features and issues that need to be addressed. The manager already met with the DCR Commissioner to discuss this. A referral to the Parks & Recreation Committee is recommended to discuss options with DCR for Cannalonga Park and develop policy guidance.	Do not add.
New Item #11	**Gannon:** Appropriation for staff and budget for new Human Rights Commission, as approved by the City Council on September 26, 2023. **Committee Discussion**: See New Item #5.	New Item #5

New Request	Input & Discussion	Draft FY25 Guideline
New Item #12	**Gannon:** Appropriation for City Council outside counsel, consultants and other experts, as provided by the Watertown City Charter. **Committee Discussion**: Funding to support the City Council needs is included in the Council Reserve, and appropriation for a specific use would need City Council policy guidance.	Do not add.

Watertown's FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines

For Approval by the City Council

November 27, 2023

The City Council is adopting these budget policy guidelines pursuant to Section 5-1 of the Watertown Home Rule Charter. Based on these guidelines, the City Manager will develop budgetary goals and the City budget for Fiscal Year 2025. *Watertown's Ongoing Budget Policy Guidelines* Resolution 2012-72, *Amending Watertown's Ongoing Budget Policy Guidelines* Resolution 2017-84 and *Watertown's Ongoing Capital Project Budget Guidelines* Resolution 2013-76 are hereby incorporated by reference.

I. COST-SAVINGS/REVENUES

<u>Note: The items in this section will be ranked in order of priority by the City Council after adoption</u>

The City Council believes that identification of cost savings and/or new revenues should be a precondition to additional expenditures. To this end, in developing the FY25 budget, the City Manager should:

A. Continue to proceed with the guidelines of the Strategic Framework for Economic Development, with the long-term goal to promote a diversified and growing tax base, and a renewed focus on small business, retail corridors, and emerging industry clusters.

B. Continue pursuing mitigation monies, linkage fees, and/or other measures from larger scale projects.

C. Require all Departments to actively pursue filing applications for all relevant state, federal, and private foundation grant programs.

D. Actively seek Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) agreements, or other in-kind services, with each non-profit organization owning or purchasing property in Watertown.

II. PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS/EXPENDITURES

Note: The items in this section will be ranked in order of priority by the City Council after adoption

To the extent that resources allow, in light of the financial policies stated above, and adhering to the principle of first identifying cost-savings and/or new revenue, the following program enhancements and, if necessary, new expenditures should receive priority in the FY25 budget. Education program enhancements and expenditures should be considered subsequently in light of the recommendations of the School Committee.

A. All departmental budgets should prioritize and enhance the ability of the City to implement the strategies and action items in the Climate and Energy Plan.

B. Continue to work collaboratively with the Watertown Public Schools on the comprehensive multi-year educational budget that assures sustainable funding for our schools and the successful education of our children, and seek to accommodate a 3.5% annual increase for FY25 for the Education appropriation that will provide level-service funding for our schools.

C. Continue support for Building for the Future Initiative funding in collaboration with the School Building Committee, for the MSBA High School project, without debt exclusion funding.

D. With the completed update to the Comprehensive Plan which includes new goals and strategies for development in Watertown; and the ongoing Watertown Square Area Plan that will include Intersection Design, Development & Zoning changes including increase in housing density, Small Business strategies, and better use of City owned land; provide funding to address the strategies and action items in the plans, and continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Community Development and Planning by adding resources and/or redeploying existing resources to achieve the goals of the Plans.

E. Improve the operational efficiency, flexibility, and capacity of the Public Works Department to meet the City's growing needs to manage contractors, respond to work order requests, oversee development projects, plan and implement infrastructure improvements, improve communications to residents about road construction, comply with the MassDEP 2030 Solid Waste Management Plan, and maintain complete streets infrastructure. Review improvements for snow and ice removal. Identify and implement technology needed to support the Department.

F. Continue annual updates of the rolling five-year plan and funding schedule for the integrated improvements of the City's streets and sidewalks, water-sewer-stormwater infrastructure, and underground utilities. The plan should show status of ongoing projects, identify future projects including those with no funding source, identify sources of stormwater and sewage outflow to the Charles River, and coordination with water-sewer-stormwater projects and underground utility projects.

G. Monitor and assess resources for City-wide rodent control in the FY25 budget.

H. Monitor and assess resources for launch of the 311 system in the FY25 budget.

I. Fund the remaining recommendations of the HR Assessment Review in the FY25 budget.

J. Fund the recommendations of the Classification and Compensation Study in the FY25 budget.

K. Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Public Works Forestry Division by adding resources and/or redeploying additional resources for improving and maintaining Watertown’s public shade trees and increasing the City’s overall tree canopy, by maintaining robust data collection for public shade trees in Watertown, and analyzing the data to continue tree plantings.

L. Continue working to identify additional acquisition of land for open space and recreation, using the Acquisition of Land/Open Space Stabilization Fund, and including proposals submitted to the Community Preservation Committee.

M. Consider funding for the recommendations of the Community Health & Human Services Assessment in the FY25 budget.

N. To meet the goal of allowing people who live and work in Watertown to go car free, continue to work with the Watertown Transportation Management Association to identify sustainable sources of funding for a permanent local transit program in Watertown.

O. Based on final City Council policy direction, develop a budgetary plan to meet the identified need for DPW staging space.

P. Consider re-use of the former north branch library after review of a FY24 structural study and findings.

Q. Provide additional support for cultural events and public art in the FY25 budget.

R. Add resources in the FY25 budget to support the work of the newly formed Human Rights Commission.

Watertown's FY2025 Budget Policy Guidelines Priority Ranking

For both sections I and II, rank each item by priority (1=highest) and return to the Chair of the Budget & Fiscal Oversight Committee no later than 5:00 pm Tuesday December 5, 2023. The final published budget policy guidelines will be ranked by composite priority.

Councilor Name: ____

I. COST-SAVINGS/REVENUES	
FY25 Guideline	**Ranking**
I. A. Continue to proceed with the guidelines of the Strategic Framework for Economic Development, with the long-term goal to promote a diversified and growing tax base, and a renewed focus on small business, retail corridors, and emerging industry clusters.	
I. B. Continue pursuing mitigation monies, linkage fees, and/or other measures from larger scale projects.	
I. C. Require all Departments to actively pursue filing applications for all relevant state, federal, and private foundation grant programs.	
I. D. Actively seek Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) agreements, or other in-kind services, with each non-profit organization owning or purchasing property in Watertown.	

II. PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS/EXPENDITURES	
FY25 Guideline	**Ranking**
II. A. All departmental budgets should prioritize and enhance the ability of the City to implement the strategies and action items in the Climate and Energy Plan.	
II. B. Continue to work collaboratively with the Watertown Public Schools on the comprehensive multi-year educational budget that assures sustainable funding for our schools and the successful education of our children, and seek to accommodate a 3.5% annual increase for FY25 for the Education appropriation that will provide level-service funding for our schools.	
II. C. Continue support for Building for the Future Initiative funding in collaboration with the School Building Committee, for the MSBA High School project, without debt exclusion funding.	
II. D. With the completed update to the Comprehensive Plan which includes new goals and strategies for development in Watertown; and the ongoing Watertown Square Area Plan that will include Intersection Design, Development & Zoning changes including increase in housing density, Small Business strategies, and better use of City owned land; provide funding to address the strategies and action items in the plans, and continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Community Development and Planning by adding resources and/or redeploying existing resources to achieve the goals of the Plans.	
II. E. Improve the operational efficiency, flexibility, and capacity of the Public Works Department to meet the City's growing needs to manage contractors, respond to work order requests, oversee development projects, plan and implement infrastructure improvements, improve communications to residents about road construction, comply with the MassDEP 2030 Solid Waste Management Plan, and maintain complete streets infrastructure. Review improvements for snow and ice removal. Identify and implement technology needed to support the Department.	
II. F. Continue annual updates of the rolling five-year plan and funding schedule for the integrated improvements of the City's streets and sidewalks, water-sewer-stormwater infrastructure, and underground utilities. The plan should show status of ongoing projects, identify future projects including those with no funding source, identify sources of stormwater and sewage outflow to the Charles River, and coordination with water-sewer-stormwater projects and underground utility projects.	
II. G. Monitor and assess resources for City-wide rodent control in the FY25 budget.	
II. H. Monitor and assess resources for launch of the 311 system in the FY25 budget.	
II. I. Fund the remaining recommendations of the HR Assessment Review in the FY25 budget.	
II. J. Fund the recommendations of the Classification and Compensation Study in the FY25 budget.	
II. K. Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Department of Public Works Forestry Division by adding resources and/or redeploying additional resources for improving and maintaining Watertown's public shade trees and increasing the City's overall tree canopy, by maintaining robust data collection for public shade trees in Watertown, and analyzing the data to continue tree plantings.	
II. L. Continue working to identify additional acquisition of land for open space and recreation, using the Acquisition of Land/Open Space Stabilization Fund, and including proposals submitted to the Community Preservation Committee.	
II. M. Consider funding for the recommendations of the Community Health & Human Services Assessment in the FY25 budget.	
II. N. To meet the goal of allowing people who live and work in Watertown to go car free, continue to work with the Watertown Transportation Management Association to identify sustainable sources of funding for a permanent local transit program in Watertown.	
II. O. Based on final City Council policy direction, develop a budgetary plan to meet the identified need for DPW staging space.	
II. P. Consider re-use of the former north branch library after review of a FY24 structural study and findings.	
II. Q. Provide additional support for cultural events and public art in the FY25 budget.	
II. R. Add resources in the FY25 budget to support the work of the newly formed Human Rights Commission.	

CITY OF WATERTOWN

Environment & Energy Efficiency Committee

Jeanne Trubek, Co-chair
Ellen Menounos, Co-chair
Brian Hebeisen
Lauri Murphy
Silas Fyler, Energy Manager
Patricia Rathbone
Carina Wallack
Shin Nagpal

October 24, 2023

To: City Councilors of Watertown
Re: Budget Priorities for City Councilors' consideration

Dear Councilors,

In order to meet the goals of the Climate and Energy Plan, we highly recommend that the City fund the following actions:

Cross-Cutting Strategy CC1: "Add staff capacity and resources to the Energy Manager's Office and the DPW Forestry Division. More staff is critical to the successful and timely implementation of the Plan."

1. Immediately: fund an additional full-time energy professional in the Energy Department. The demands of the Climate and Energy Plan are too large for a single person and are growing as the Plan ramps up. Note: We estimate that an additional person will be required to administer the BERDO when it is fully operational in 2 to 3 years.
2. Fund a half-time certified arborist working in the DPW to do education and outreach to the community. We need a person to educate our community about how trees support the Climate and Energy Plan goals. Trees reduce energy use and provide a livable environment.

Transportation and Mobility Goal 1: "Reduce personal vehicular travel miles by 50%."

1. Fund a Watertown Transportation Plan or, if the plan is funded by ARPA, implement the actions.
2. Fund a pilot project to evaluate the effectiveness of microtransit.
3. Re-write ordinances, regulations, practices around road and traffic projects.
4. Provide funding in partnership with developers for infrastructure, such as dedicated bus lanes and priority traffic signals.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Trubek, Co-chair
Ellen Menounos, Co-chair

The City of Watertown's Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee

Please reply to mjtrubek@gmail.com or ellenmenounos@gmail.com. Thank you.

Watertown Faces Climate Change (WFCC) is a working group of Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment and a node of 350 Mass.

To: City Councilors of Watertown
Re: Budget Priorities for City Councilors' Consideration

Dear Councilors,

Watertown Faces Climate Change (WFCC) understands that the City Council must weigh numerous priorities and resources are finite. However, the goals within the adopted Climate and Energy Plan must be paramount. We respectfully request that the following three recommendations be considered as high priorities for the FY2025 budget.

1. **Hire an additional full-time person in the nascent "Energy Department".** This person should be a qualified Energy Manager or an individual with equivalent senior experience. We appreciate how much Silas Fyler has completed in the past year, with focus primarily on energy improvements within city facilities, and we have high hopes for the newly hired Energy Advocate. Unfortunately, the urgency of the climate crisis and the pace of development requires the city and its citizens to focus on numerous projects all at once and this requires expanding the city's energy team. The sixteen actions of the Buildings and Energy section of the Climate and Energy Plan generally fall within the Energy Department's responsibility with overlapping responsibility from other sections of the plan. Additional actions will be identified as the plan is adapted to changing state and federal policies and incentives and to new challenges, technologies, and ideas. Examples of immediate needs include launching a Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) for Watertown, grant writing, researching new ideas and techniques, and collaborating with regional entities like Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN), the Building Electrification Accelerator (BEA) and neighboring cities. It is important to note that within two to three years a third person will be required to administer the BERDO when it is fully operational.

2. **Add a half-time certified arborist to DPW.** Additional resources are required to support the activities of the Tree Warden and implement the provisions of the Tree Ordinance**.** We have an excellent Tree Warden, but his time is spent locating, purchasing, installing, and maintaining our urban tree canopy; this is his major responsibility. We need a person to educate the community about how trees support our Climate and Energy Plan's attempts to reduce energy use and provide a livable environment. Once the Tree Ordinance is adopted, this person's responsibilities will expand to tasks related to implementing the ordinance.

3. **Act on Transportation and Mobility Goal 1: Reduce personal vehicular travel miles by 50% by 2050.** Of all the transportation goals and strategies in the Climate and Energy Plan, this may be the most difficult to achieve. It is difficult because of the changes required in habits, policies, and established practices. Due to the complexity and urgency of achieving this goal, we recommend it be a priority to provide funding for the following:

- A Watertown Transportation Plan or implementing the actions if the plan is funded by ARPA.

- A pilot project to evaluate the effectiveness of micro transit.
- Revision of the ordinances, regulations, and practices that affect road and traffic projects.
- Provision of funding in partnership with developers for infrastructure such as dedicated bus lanes and priority traffic signals.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these priorities.

Sincerely,

Members of Watertown Faces Climate Change

budget authority priority request

Bevin Croft <bevincroft@gmail.com>

Mon 10/30/2023 6:44 AM

To:City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>
Cc:board-wiw@googlegroups.com <board-wiw@googlegroups.com>

Dear Watertown City Councilors,

For many people in Watertown, competing demands as a caregiver of children/older adults, cognitive and linguistic accessibility, or limited experience with City government are barriers to participation in Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

The Board of World in Watertown urges the City Council to please prioritize accessibility and accommodations for members of boards and commissions in the City budget. Actions to support accessibility could include:

-covering costs of child care for members with young children or older adults during meetings
-covering costs of transportation to and from meetings
-language (including ASL) interpretation services
-ensuring full accessibility of meeting materials (508-compliance for all written materials, ensuring agendas and other meeting materials are in easy read formats, translation of materials into preferred languages)
-support to facilitate participation for people with cognitive disabilities (e.g. pre-meeting support, coaching and mentoring)
-orientation, consultation, and mentoring for people who haven't previously served in a similar role

We believe such an investment would be a relatively low-cost but high-impact way to enhance equity and representation and will ultimately enrich the work of the Boards, Commissions, and Committees in our city.

Warm regards,

Bevin Croft
Ben Jerome
Rachel Kay
Xin Peng
Sarah Zoen