



## **Watertown City Council**

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

### **Committee on Public Works**

**Councilor Piccirilli, Chair, Councilor Feltner, Vice Chair, Councilor Palomba,  
Secretary**

**Meeting on October 7, 2024, 6:00 PM, City Council Chambers**

**Committee Report**

**City Council Meeting November 12, 2024**

The Committee on Public Works met in the City Council Chambers on Monday, October 7, 2024. Present were Councilor Piccirilli, Chair, Councilor Feltner, Vice Chair, and Councilor Palomba, Secretary. Also present were City Manager George Proakis and Deputy City Manager Emily Monea. Joining on Zoom was Bernie Lynch of Community Paradigm Associates, Michael Albano, Director of Administration and Finance at the Department of Public Works, and residents Dean Martino and Amy Plovnick.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the qualifications and qualities for a new Department of Public Works Superintendent with the City Manager.

City Manager Proakis noted that Superintendent Greg St. Louis resigned at the end of September and soon after the City enlisted the services of Community Paradigm Associates (CPA) to help find a qualified candidate. CPA developed a Position Statement for a Director of Public Works (attached) and has begun to circulate it. He noted that his goal is to have CPA create the broadest pool of candidates as possible.

Mr. Lynch noted that candidates for a director of public works fall into three general categories. They are – individuals with engineering experience, those whose strength is understanding the day-to-day operations of a public works department, and those who possess strong management and leadership skills. While it is desirable, it is his experience that is very rare to find a candidate who has these three qualities. It was also noted at one point in the meeting that the present Department of Public Works has a budget of \$37 million including the Water and Sewer Enterprise funds, and is the department with the second largest number of employees excluding the School Department

Each of the Committee members had an opportunity to share what qualifications and qualities our new Director of Public Works should possess. **Below is a summary of their key points. For their complete statements please watch the**

## **recording of the meeting on WCATV.**

Councilor Feltner asked why the Position Statement did not require the candidate to be an engineer. She also felt the director should be accessible and be present at DPW projects that occur in the City. At the same time they should understand how the department, with its many divisions and staff, interacts with other departments that may have overlapping responsibilities and goals. She noted that the director should be able to manage the department and maintaining strong internal communication. Councilor Feltner would like to see the new director be aware of the importance of accessibility in all department projects.

Councilor Piccirilli felt that it is important that the director have technical skills and a background in public works as well as financial skills and the ability to supervise staff and work productive with union employees. He felt the ability to oversee large projects such as water and sewer projects and major road and sidewalk reconstruction projects was important. However, if he had to select one of the three basic skills outlined earlier he would favor the director having management and leadership skills given the size of DPW's operating and capital budgets and the number of personnel in the department.

Councilor Palomba felt that the director should see concern about the environment, particularly the role the department can play in mitigating climate change, as a priority. He also felt that the new director should view their department as one of many city departments and place a premium on working cooperatively with them. Finally, he noted the director should instill in all employees that robust community engagement and excellent customer service are required on a consistent basis.

Additional comments that can be inferred from the Councilors' presentations include that:

- the director must recognize the importance of being a team player vis-à-vis their colleagues and the value of working cooperatively with and responsive to the members of the City Council.
- they need to represent the best interests of the residents and the City when interacting with companies the City contracts with to perform services and with representatives of the Commonwealth and their contractors operating in the City.
- they make it a priority for the department to actively participate in the implementation of the City's major plans and studies such as the Climate and Energy Plan, the Watertown Square Area Plan, and the Comprehensive Plan.

Additional comments from resident Dean Martino include that:

- the director must place a priority on residents' quality of life.
- they are aware of the day-to-day operations performed by department staff and evaluate the work.
- they follow-up on concerns that residents may have, especially about concerns that have a direct impact on their lives such as uncollected trash.

Resident Ms. Plovnik, who submitted an email which is attached, advocated for a director that placed a priority on maintaining our streets to benefit all road users

including those who walk and bike. She emphasized the need for the director to take seriously the goal of the Climate and Energy Plan to reduce personal vehicular travel miles by 50% and that this will require more residents to walk, bike and take transit. She felt the director needs to put in place a plan that reflects these needs when designing our streets and include protected bike lanes, traffic calming measures, and shorter crosswalks for pedestrians.

There were no action items at the meeting. Councilor Palomba made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Councilor Feltner and passed 3-0. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:20 PM and the minutes were written by Councilor Palomba.

#### **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,  
Chair

Lisa J. Feltner  
Vice Chair

Anthony Palomba,  
Secretary

# Watertown, MA – Director of Public Works



## Position Statement

Watertown, MA (35,329 pop.), is a thriving community that provides a suburban-like setting with urban amenities. Located just six miles from Boston, the City is a hidden gem offering many of the benefits of a smaller town with access to the economic, cultural, and educational resources of a big city. Cultural destinations like the Arsenal Center for the Arts and the Armenian Museum of America are complemented by welcoming neighborhoods, a good school system, international food offerings, coffee shops, and fresh green grocers. The City, which has a diverse population including the second-largest Armenian population in the country, celebrates and supports the rich and varied cultures within the community. Watertown is a City in transition as it has been experiencing demographic and socio-economic changes in recent years.



Watertown is well managed and well situated for continued success. It has an AAA rating and an FY25 total budget of \$204 million. The City's challenges include managing its growth, maintaining its superior financial stability, continuing to build a strong team of municipal department heads as retirements occur, maintaining the City's relative affordability, and moving to the forefront on social issues, including diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts. Watertown recognizes that climate change impacts community health, local natural resources, and infrastructure and is diligently working to mitigate the impacts and to enhance climate resiliency.

This is an exciting opportunity for a highly qualified Public Works leader to join a high-functioning and collaborative team in a City that is known for developing and completing innovative projects. The position of Director of Public Works will oversee the divisions of Administration, Fleet, Highway, Forestry, Parks, Cemetery, Street Lighting & Wiring, Traffic Control, Engineering, Water & Sewer, Snow Removal, and Waste Disposal. Watertown is seeking an experienced and dynamic public works professional with superior management, communication, and technical skills to serve as Director of Public Works. Preferred candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's is a plus) in civil engineering, public administration, or a related field and at least seven years of progressively responsible experience in municipal government with at least five years in a public works or public works adjacent department, or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Candidates must be innovative, proactive, and a proven leader.

**Annual Salary: \$150K +/-, DOQ.** The successful candidate will also receive an excellent benefit package including health and retirement plans. Health insurance 80% City paid premium. Watertown is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Department of Public Works

Watertown is an innovative and active community that seeks out projects and completes them, and the [Department of Public Works](#) is a significant part of these efforts, as demonstrated with its close collaborations with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority in upgrading the City's sewers. Watertown is implementing innovations in stormwater efforts, including installing [tree trenches](#), with state and federal grants. The City is highly successful in seeking and receiving funds from a variety of programs, such as MassWorks.

The City is soon to undertake engineering design for the future of Watertown Square, including new pedestrian amenities, complete streets strategies, reconstruction of the intersection, reduced travel lanes, and additional bicycle infrastructure. Currently underway is a full reconstruction of Mt. Auburn Street, a TIP project that will cost more than \$20 million and is being done in coordination with the Commonwealth and its contractors.

Watertown is considered a leader in 'complete streets,' and has a commitment to complete streets projects annually. The City strives to ensure it meets the needs of all users of its streets and sidewalks, thus providing commuting, exercise and recreational opportunities for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Watertown has allocated over \$70 million in its Capital Improvement Program to reconstruction of streets, sidewalks, and implementation of complete streets strategies over the next five years. The City is making it a point to install curbs on streets and throughout the community as it improves its infrastructure. Additionally, it has allocated \$12 million FY2025-2029 capital plan for upgrades to the DPW's own infrastructure and DPW vehicles. The City has more than \$750,000 annually in Chapter 90 funds.

### Director of Public Works Position & Staffing

The Director of Public Works oversees the public works divisions of Administration, Fleet, Highway, Forestry, Parks, Cemetery, Street Lighting & Wiring, Traffic Control, Engineering, Water & Sewer, Snow Removal, and Waste Disposal. In FY24, Watertown re-aligned the Public Works' divisions, added staff (including new engineering positions), and adjusted salaries through its 2023 Classification and Compensation study, which assisted in filling vacancies as the City seeks to fully staff the department. The changes are intended to provide proper leadership and management structures and clear division of responsibilities to enhance the department's operational efficiency and grow its capacity for meeting Watertown's growing needs. The DPW staff has won awards for the City's trash/recycling programs that are focused on reducing overall waste, providing municipal compost, and maintaining stability in the trash and recycling program and budget.

The Director oversees the Public Works department's 60 staff positions and General Fund budgets totaling \$15.4 million as well as overseeing Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund budgets totaling \$22.2 million and various capital projects. The Director is also a member of the Emergency Management Team and Traffic Commission.

The Director works under the policy direction of the City Manager and is responsible for improving service delivery and customer service; asset management and preventive maintenance; work order, resource, and staff management; and the development of standardized policies and procedures. The Director is also responsible for planning and implementing public works capital projects, collaborating with the Community Development & Planning Department on open space and major roadway projects, and effectively managing major contractors. The Director is responsible for meeting all regulatory requirements including, but not limited to, those resulting from MassDEP's 2030 Solid Waste Management Plan and the City's NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit.



## Government

Watertown recently completed a charter review process in which a revised [Home Rule Charter](#) was adopted with a number of modifications including a revised preamble, creation of a Community Engagement Specialist, and creation of a Human Rights Commission. It retained its Council-Manager form of government but redesignated itself to be known as the City of Watertown. The nine-member City Council serves as the legislative and policy-making body of Watertown. The Council appoints the City Manager as the Chief Administrative Officer of the City. The Director of Public Works reports to the City Manager.

## Finances

Watertown has an FY25 total budget of approximately \$204 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AAA with a stable outlook. The City is in exceptionally strong and stable financial condition. Watertown has a fully funded Retirement System (as of July 2021) and a long-range funding plan has been created for addressing the unfunded OPEB liability which is scheduled to be fully funded in 2031. Additionally, it has a Building for the Future plan, which is a comprehensive, forward-looking initiative to address operational, and capacity improvements for all city and school facilities.

## Education

The [Watertown Public Schools](#) provides an excellent education and currently serves approximately 2,600 students. It has a preschool, three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Watertown's student body is diverse, reflecting the ever-changing demographics of the community and the country. Watertown schools are working to address climate resiliency in various ways, including via two new elementary schools that are Net-Zero due to energy efficiency efforts and solar deployment.

## Economic and Community Development

Watertown is transitioning into a post-industrial community with a mix of cultural, racial, educational, and economic diversity. There has been considerable investment in Watertown from biotechnology and life science industries as well as in the retail and restaurant sectors in recent years. The City benefits from its location, bordering Soldiers Field Road and the Massachusetts Turnpike, which are major arteries into downtown Boston. A variety of housing types and innovative reuse of old industrial sites along the river and former rail corridor provides flexible options for a mix of business and residential uses. In addition to having a key location, Watertown is a well-maintained community, with a relatively new DPW facility, a popular public library, recently constructed police station, three well-maintained fire stations, and upgraded recreation fields. The City is thriving, which is apparent via its vibrant downtown, squares, and mixed-use developments.

## Open Space, Recreation, and Climate Resiliency

Watertown has beautiful open space along the Charles River, in the reservation owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. The City is also home to the multi-use [Arsenal Park](#), Filippello Park, the Whitney Hill Conservation Area, the [John A. Ryan Arena](#) (skating rink), and 10 playgrounds. The City's [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) identifies Watertown's open space and recreation resources and ensures the resources are not lost due to pressures of development or uncoordinated individual actions. The City is committed to equity, communication, and innovation while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enabling all residents to thrive in the face of climate change. Watertown is a leader in making high efficiency buildings the norm and powering them with clean energy. Watertown has three municipal solar installations, and two new elementary schools will be Net-Zero via energy efficiency and aggressive rooftop and canopy solar deployment.

### Important Links:

- [City of Watertown](#)
- [Home Rule Charter](#)
- [City Code](#)
- [Department of Public Works](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [FY25 Annual Budget](#)
- [FY25 Capital Improvement Program](#)
- [Watertown Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Arsenal Park Master Plan](#)
- [Economic Development Report](#)
- [Watertown Square Area Plan](#)
- [Complete Streets Policy](#)
- [Resilient Watertown Climate and Energy Plan](#)



## The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (master's is a plus) in civil engineering, public administration, or a related field.
- At least seven years of progressively responsible experience in municipal government, at least five of which should be in a public works or public works adjacent department; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job.
- At least five years of supervisory experience.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships.
- Superior management and leadership skills.
- Skill in developing policies and procedures to accomplish goals and objectives.
- Proficient communication and organizational skills.
- Ability to work both independently and as a team leader.
- Skill in utilizing office computer software systems, such as Microsoft Office and other applications.
- A valid Massachusetts driver's license with good driving history.
- Registration as a Professional Engineer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is not required but is a plus.
- Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) Certification is not required but is a plus.

## How To Apply

Position is open until filled. For a guaranteed review of application materials, send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by November 8, 2024, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

[Apply@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Apply@communityparadigm.com)

**Subject: Watertown Director of Public Works**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal  
Community Paradigm Associates  
[Blynch@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Blynch@communityparadigm.com)  
978-621-6733

*The City of Watertown, Mass., is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.*





Councilor Tony Palomba <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>

## Input on hiring new DPW Superintendent

Amy Plovnick <amyplovnick@gmail.com>

Sun, Oct 6, 2024 at 9:21 PM

To: apalomba@watertown-ma.gov, "Piccirilli, Vincent J" <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>, Lisa Feltner <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councilors -

I would like to provide comments on the agenda item "Discussion of Qualifications and Qualities for a new DPW Superintendent with the City Manager" for the October 7 meeting of the Committee on Public Works. Please read these comments into the record of the meeting.

I would like to urge the city to hire a DPW Superintendent who can oversee the design and maintenance of our streets to benefit all road users, including those who walk and bike. Our country is facing an unacceptably high level of roadway fatalities, and fatalities for cyclists and pedestrians are rising at a higher rate than that of motorists. This is true close to home as well, tragically illustrated by the three cyclist fatalities so far this year in neighboring Cambridge.

To meet the Watertown Climate Plan's goal to reduce personal vehicular travel miles by 50%, more residents will need to walk, bike, and take transit for everyday trips. To ensure that people are comfortable and safe outside of their cars, it is critical that we design our roads with safety for pedestrians and cyclists at the forefront. This means protected bike lanes on all major roads, traffic calming to reduce vehicle speeds, and shortened crossing distances for pedestrians at intersections. It also means focusing on creating a bicycle network, as laid out in the Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, rather than continuing the city's current piecemeal approach.

The DPW has a unique role in the design of our streets, and to move Watertown forward we need a leader who prioritizes safety and has experience designing transportation infrastructure that serves all residents, not just those who drive. This is especially critical as we implement the Watertown Square Plan's ambitious and necessary street redesign proposals.

Thank you,

Amy Plovnick  
29 Ashland Street

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