



Watertown Town Council

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

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

Caroline Bays
Councilor At Large

Anthony J. Donato,
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland,
District D Councilor

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M. MEETING WILL ONLY HAVE REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION WITH PUBLIC ACCESS MINUTES

The Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, relating to the 2020 COVID-19 emergency and to avoid group congregation, this meeting will have only remote opportunities for participation with public access provided as follows:

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television):
<https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/#/watertown/video/5f490e6f9e1d640008a803ae?page=HOME&type=live>
- B. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92991331344>
- C. 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 #
- D. Public may comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov

1. ROLL CALL

Council President Sideris called to order a regular meeting of the Town Council at 6:00 p.m. in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, §20, relating to the 2020 COVID-19 emergency and to avoid group congregation, through remote opportunities for participation with public access. Those present were Councilors Caroline Bays, Anthony J. Donato, Lisa J. Feltner, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Councilor Palomba arrived at 6:07 p.m. Also present were Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development/Assistant Town Manager, Thomas Tracy, Town Auditor and Assistant Manager for Finance, Mark Reich, Town Attorney, and Marilyn W. Pronovost, Town Council Clerk.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 P.M.

To Consider the Purchase, Exchange, Lease, or Value of Real Property as an Open Meeting May Have a Detrimental Effect on the Negotiating Position of the Public Body – Stanley Avenue – Parcel 807 1B 1A

Councilor Piccirilli moved to enter into executive session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body – Stanley Avenue – Parcel 807 1B 1A; Councilor Gannon seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

3. RETURN TO SESSION – 7:00 P.M.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

5. PUBLIC FORUM

Deborah Peterson – Spoke regarding the [Watertown Public Arts Master Plan](#). She stated that the cover of the plan shows a segment of a mural at the Boys and Girls Club with the statement: Don't Hate – Solve. She finds this to be a comforting sentiment in light of current events. She stated that Art brings people and community together and expressed the hope that the Council can review the Master Plan (NOTE: To see the plan, please the link at Item 12)

Amy Plovnick – 29 Ashland St. and Member of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee – She asked for support of the recommendation in Item 10 to close Greenough Boulevard in the spring. When the road was closed in 2020, people became aware of the space for outdoor activities. DCR and Town could provide something that has a low cost impact and could work together on a measure that helps all.

Janet Jameson – The Arts group has produced three murals and the Watertown Public Arts and Culture Kit. There is a desire to make this activity a more formal program and MACC has helped them provide extensive outreach. They developed a comprehensive vision of what art can do for the community.

She also spoke in support of the closing of Greenough Boulevard.

Andre Compagna – Spoke in regards to the closing of Greenough Boulevard, which offers one of the best views of the river. The closing of the boulevard gave people the opportunity to focus on various outdoor activities. An issue that needs to be addressed is the need to strike a healthy balance of access. Working with DCR will help with provide that balance.

Hannah Rakoff – 87 Spruce Street – spoke in favor of the closing of Greenough Boulevard and emphasized that this would be a pilot. She noted the concern regarding parking but the concept is to make it accessible to as many as possible.

There being no other speakers, Council President Sideris closed the Public Forum.

6. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A. [Minutes of the November 24, 2020 Town Council Meeting](#)

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the minutes as written; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

B. [Minutes of the December 8, 2020 Town Council Meeting](#)

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the minutes as written; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Referral to the Committee on Media and Public Outreach – Work with the CIO to Update the Town Council Web Page with Newer Available Technologies

Council President Sideris has been working with Chris McClure, CIO, on the Charter Review Committee, and has improved their communication. The referral is for Mr. McClure to work with the Committee on Media and Public Outreach to update the Town Council webpage so as to improve public outreach.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to refer to the Committee on Media and Public Outreach to work with the CIO to update the Town Council web page with newer available technologies; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Council President Sideris stated that he would call a Special Meeting as an initiative using Kingian principles of “Listen and Learn”, something that we often don’t do well, to provide a Listening Session for the community to speak out and listen to current concerns of racism, bullying, and harassment. As the Listening Session evolves, it may provide a clearer understanding of what the several referrals should be considering.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

An Order [Accepting a Public Use Park and Pathway Located at Pleasant Street and Waltham Street](#) and Authorizing the Town Manager to Execute the Acceptance of said Public Use Park and Pathway

Council President Sideris stated that this item would not be discussed at this meeting.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Loan Order Authorizing the Town Treasurer, with the Approval of the Town Manager, to Borrow and/or Expend Monies in the Amount of \$1,771,000 under M.G.L. c. 44, §7(1) or Pursuant to Any Other Enabling Authority for the Purpose of Paying Costs of [Town-Wide Radio Infrastructure Improvements](#), Including the Acquisition and Installation of Radio Infrastructure and Related Upgrades at Town Facilities, the Acquisition of Portable Radio Equipment, and All Costs Incidental and Related Thereto and to Issue Bonds or Notes of the Town Therefor. Any Premium Received Upon the Sale of Any Bonds or Notes Approved by this Order, Less Any Such Premium Applied to the Payment of the Costs of Issuance of Such Bonds or Notes, May be Applied to the Payment of Costs Approved by this Order in Accordance with M.G.L. c.44, §20, Thereby Reducing the Amount Authorized to be Borrowed to Pay Such Costs by a Like Amount.

Mr. Driscoll provided background on the matter. Fire Chief Quinn spoke stating the Town's radio infrastructure is in need of significant repairs and that Motorola will no longer support the equipment for its annual maintenance program. There have been increasing coverage issues, radio equipment failures, Verizon copper line failures, and lack of redundancy. The Police and Fire Departments each have only one main transmitter located at a condominium at the golf course and a backup at the old Police Station. Due to the many issues, Langone and Associates completed an evaluation of the current system and made recommendations.

Mr. Langone provided a presentation of the recommendations. He stated his group reviewed the system and found that it is not reliable and upgrades are needed to improve communication. The program will provide new portable and mobile radios; upgrade the facility at the transmitter condominium, such as fixing the water damage and providing air conditioning; and upgrade the equipment in that building. All radio equipment will be replaced.

Mr. Langone recommended coverage improvement due to the growth of building density structures and to improve the system quality. Currently there is only one transmit location – the condominium at the golf course. The recommendation is to add three more transmit and receive sites at Arsenal Yards, Cross Street, and Police Headquarters. There should be some added receive only sites at the Cunniff School and Fire Station #3 as the low power hand held radios need added reception. The Verizon wires should be replaced with RCN fiber and microwave. The aging radio equipment should be replaced. This includes the Police Department Headquarters Communications Center radio equipment and the portable and mobile radios. DPW radios do not need to be replaced as they are new. The current coverage is good in the center of the town but is less reliable in the west and east ends of town. With four transmit sites, the coverage will improve substantially.

The budget for the radio system is \$4,000,000 broken into two phases: Phase I provides for the procurement of portable and mobile radios and the facility upgrades for \$1,700,000 and will be completed within 6-9 months and Phase II will provide a new radio system design, procurement, and implementation for \$2,300,000 to be completed within 12-15 months.

Mr. Driscoll stated that \$225,000 would be for facility upgrades; \$1,448,250 would be for radios; and \$22,500 for consultant fees. The payments would begin in Fiscal Year 2022 and end in Fiscal Year 2031.

Council President Sideris open the public hearing. There being no speakers, the public hearing was closed.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Town Manager, to borrow and/or expend monies in the amount of \$1,771,000 under M.G.L. c. 44, §7(1) or pursuant to any other enabling authority for the purpose of paying costs of town-wide radio infrastructure improvements, including the acquisition and installation of radio infrastructure and related upgrades at town facilities, the acquisition of portable radio equipment, and all costs incidental and related thereto and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this order, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this Order in accordance with M.G.L. c.44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion.

The following matters were brought up in the discussion:

- There would be backup generators for use and there are batteries in the equipment which will allow for continued communication until the generators begin to work
- DPW equipment is relatively new so not all radios need to be replaced now; some will be replaced in Phase II
- The equipment is typical public safety equipment and there are no restrictions at this time regarding bandwidths
- The current transmitting site is operating on a long term lease arrangement
- The project is broken into two phases for purposes of budgeting: Phase I is the purchase of the equipment and upgrade of the current transmitting facility; Phase II completes the project with infrastructure upgrades
- Currently long term borrowing costs the Town between 2-2.5% interest

The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

10. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- A. Committee on Economic Development and Planning Report Regarding the Relocation of [NS AJO Holdings and the Recreational Closure of Greenough Boulevard](#) – Kenneth M. Woodland, Chair

ACTIONS ITEMS:

1. That the Town Council Authorize the Town Manager to Amend the Host Agreements with NS AJO Holdings to Move From 23 Elm street to 390 Arsenal Street, Contingent Upon Holding a Community Outreach Meeting
2. That the Town Council Authorize the Council President to Send a Letter to Ask DCR to Evaluate Traffic Data in the Area of Greenough Boulevard between Arsenal Street and North Beacon Street in Watertown and Determine if a Longer Term or Weekend Closure is Feasible, and Ask DCR to Work with Watertown's Department of Community Development and Planning and the Department of Public Works to Explore the Possibility of Doing a Pilot Program to Close this Section of Road on Weekends During the Spring/Summer/Fall of 2021

Councilor Woodland read the Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Committee on Economic Development and Planning Report regarding the relocation of NS AJO Holdings and the Recreational Closure of Greenough Boulevard; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli recused himself for consideration of the first action item. Councilor Woodland moved for the Town Council to authorize the town manager to amend the host agreements with NS AJO Holdings to move from 23 Elm Street to 390 Arsenal Street, contingent upon holding a community outreach meeting; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to authorize the Council President to send a letter to ask DCR to evaluate traffic data in the area of Greenough Boulevard between Arsenal Street and North Beacon Street in Watertown and determine if a longer term or weekend closure is feasible, and ask DCR to work with Watertown's Department of Community Development and Planning and the Department of Public Works to explore the possibility of doing a pilot program to close this section of road on weekends during the spring/summer/fall of 2021; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

- B. Committee on Economic Development and Planning Report Regarding [Various Transportation Issues and the Updating or Amending of the Comprehensive Plan](#)

ACTION ITEM:

That the Town Council Endorse the Department of Community Development and Planning Recommendation to Hire a Consultant to Review and Update the Comprehensive Plan in FY 2022

Councilor Woodland read the Committee on Economic Development and Planning Report regarding various transportation issues and the updating or amending of the comprehensive plan. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to endorse the Department of Community Development and Planning recommendation to hire a consultant to review and update the Comprehensive Plan in FY 2022; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

- C. Committee on Human Services Report Regarding the Establishment of an [Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) and the Creation of a Permanent Rental Assistance Program – Anthony Palomba, Chair

Councilor Palomba read the Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Committee on Human Services Report regarding the establishment of an Emergency Rental Assistance Program and the creation of a permanent Rental Assistance Program; Councilor Palomba seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

- D. Committees on Public Works and Economic Development and Planning Regarding the [Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Report](#) – Vincent J. Piccirilli, Public Works Chair, Kenneth M. Woodland, Economics and Development Committee Chair

Councilor Piccirilli read the Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Committees on Public Works and Economic Development and Planning regarding the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Report; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The report was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Referral to the Committee on Rules and Ordinances Consideration of Special Legislation to Enable Local Control over Transitioning from Beer and Wine Package Store Licenses to All Alcohol Package Store Licenses

Councilor Piccirilli moved to refer to the Committee on Rules and Ordinances consideration of special legislation to enable local control over

transitioning from beer and wine package store licenses to all alcohol package store licenses; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

- B. Referral to the Committee on Parks and Recreation to [Review the Requests Made in the Citizen Petition](#) presented at the December 8, 2020 Town Council meeting to:
1. Increase the Off-Leash Fenced Area to Include a Large Section of Adjacent Grassy Playfield
 2. For the Committee to Make Recommendations on How to Proceed

Councilor Piccirilli noted the referral as listed is incomplete and should read as follows:

Referral to the Committee on Parks and Recreation to review the requests made in the citizen petition presented at the December 8, 2020 Town Council meeting to 1. Increase the off-leash fenced area to include a large section of adjacent grassy playfield, and 2. Park surface upgrades and regular maintenance; and for the Committee to make recommendations on how to proceed

Councilor Piccirilli moved to have the motion as corrected be approved; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

12. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

[Public Arts Master Plan](#)

Mr. Driscoll stated that the Town received a grant from MAPC. The Town Steering Committee has met with the public and created a Public Arts Master Plan and would like to present it to the Town Council for consideration. Councilor Piccirilli moved to refer the Public Arts Master Plan to the Committee on Economic Development and Planning for consideration; Councilor Gannon seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Driscoll stated that COVID-19 cases have risen so that Watertown is in the red zone, a higher risk of transmission community. Public Health Director Ramdin informed him that there has been a consistent increase since Halloween and the start of winter sports. Other contributing factors were family and teen gatherings; people comingling when they should be self-isolating; the return of college students; and the indifference of some. The Town Manager urged that citizens follow the guidelines of wearing a masks, social distancing, and staying home if one is sick.

Mr. Driscoll further mentioned that the Town is working with a Regional Coalition led by Arlington to provide vaccinations to citizens. On Thursday

and Friday, January 14 and 15, 2021, clinics would be set up for first responders. Future distribution will be based on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines. Clinics will be set up, but notices will not be posted until the vaccines are in hand.

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

Councilor Bays requested information on the [percentage of the Town's pension portfolio that is invested in fossil fuels](#).

Councilor Woodland requested a list of [home rule petitions](#) that the State legislature considered during 2020 regarding real estate transfer fees and any petitions that were enacted. He also requested a copy of the case Emerson College v. Boston, 391 Mass 415 (1984). Councilor Woodland also requested a list of referrals made to Committees that have yet to be taken up and if they have not yet done so, why has it not started.

Councilor Kounelis expressed her concerns regarding the [maintenance of the Coolidge Square area, which is the commercial base of the East End](#).

Councilor Gannon requested information regarding the [COVID-19 vaccinations](#): how would citizens be notified of the vaccinations and how would they be distributed – first come first serve or by appointment.

Councilor Bays added questions regarding the [vaccination distribution](#): How would people be vaccinated – in person or in cars and where would the vaccinations occur.

Councilor Palomba thanked the Town Manager and Public Health Director Larry Ramdin for organizing the COVID tests at the Commander's Mansion. He has received favorable remarks regarding the testing. Council President Sideris included Tom Tracy in the mention as he was instrumental in getting the program organized.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Kounelis announced that on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., there would be a community meeting to review plans for 99 Coolidge Avenue, and that there would be a second community meeting on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

She also announced that on Thursday, January 21, 2021, there would be a second meeting regarding 617 Arsenal Street, the former site of the Miller's Ale House.

Council President Sideris stated that on Monday, January 18, 2021, the Martin Luther King Breakfast would be held virtually.

Councilor Bays announced that the High School Environmental Club is initiating a new project to plant 150 trees to counter the schools carbon dioxide emission output. If anyone is interested, please contact Councilor Bays at cbays@watertown-ma.gov and she will forward the link.

15. PUBLIC FORUM

Pat Rathbone – Stated that the tree plantings were to offset the use of paper in the schools, not the carbon footprint.

16. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adjourn; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

[ADDENDUM](#)

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by a vote of _9_ for, _0_ against, _0_ present on January 26, 2021.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President
s:/MWP

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.
MEETING HAD ONLY REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PARTICIPATION WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

1. Watertown Public Arts Master Plan – Deborah Peterson – January 26, 2021 – Item 5
2. Minutes of the November 24, 2020 Town Council Meeting – Item 6A
3. Minutes of the December 8, 2020 Town Council Meeting – Item 6B
4. Agenda Item – An Order Accepting a Public Use Park and Pathway Located at Pleasant Street and Waltham Street and Authorizing the Town Manager to Execute the Acceptance of Said Public Use Park and Pathway – Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, to Town Council – December 3, 2020 – Item 8
5. Additional Information – Proposed Loan Order Regarding the Radio Infrastructure Loan Order Regarding Town-Wide Radio Infrastructure Improvements – Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, to Town Council – January 7, 2021 – Item 9
6. Committee on Economic Development and Planning Report Regarding the Relocation of NS AJO Holdings from 23 Elm Street to 390 Arsenal Street and the Recreational Closing of Little Greenough Boulevard – Kenneth M. Woodland, Chair – December 10, 2020 – Item 10A
 - Presentation to Town Council – December 10, 2020
 - Email Regarding the Closure of Little Greenough Boulevard – Councilor Angeline B. Kounelis
 - Comment on a Petition to DCR Regarding the Closure of Little Greenough Boulevard – Amy Plovnick
7. Committee on Economic Development and Planning Report Regarding the Wayfinding Grant; Regional Electric Scooters; Bluebikes; TMA/Pleasant Street Shuttle; Comprehensive Plan – Kenneth M. Woodland, Chair – December 14, 2020 – Item 10B
 - Community Branding and Wayfinding Presentation
 - Update of Comprehensive Plan – Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning, Assistant Town Manager to Town Council and Town Manager, February 22, 2019
8. Committee on Human Services Report Regarding the Emergency Rental Assistance Program and an Affordable Housing Program – Anthony Palomba, Chair – October 18, 2020 – Item 10C

9. Committees on Public Works and Economic Development and Planning Report Regarding the Consideration of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Report – Vincent J. Piccirilli, Chair, Public Works, Kenneth M. Woodland, Chair, Economic Development and Planning – December 8, 2020 – Item 10D
10. Referral Request to the Parks and Recreation Committee – Councilor Vincent Piccirilli – January 7, 2021 – Item 11B
11. Public Arts Master Plan – Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, to Town Council – January 7, 2021 – Item 12
12. Request for Information Regarding Pension Investments in Fossil Fuels – Councilor Caroline Bays – January 12, 2021 – Item 13
13. Request for Information Regarding Home Rule Petitions – Councilor Kenneth M. Woodland – January 12, 2021 – Item 13
14. Request for Information Regarding Maintenance of Coolidge Square – Councilor Angeline B Kounelis – January 12, 2021 – Item 13
15. Request for Information Regarding COVID-19 Vaccinations – Councilor John G. Gannon – January 12, 2021 – Item 13
16. Request for Information Regarding COVID-19 Distribution Protocols – Councilor Caroline Bays – January 12, 2021 – Item 13