

# Watertown Water & Sewer Authority (WSA)

## Understanding the Water & Sewer Budget

*(Plain Language Summary of the FY 2026–2027 Financial Plan)*

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### Why This Document Matters

The Watertown Water & Sewer Authority (WSA) provides essential services that every resident relies on every day.

This document explains—in simple terms:

- How the system is funded
- How costs are estimated
- How revenue is collected
- How the system is planned for the future

The goal is to make the budget easier to understand and to provide clear, transparent information to the community.

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### How the System Is Funded

The WSA operates as a **self-supporting utility**, which means:

- It is funded by **user fees**, not property taxes
- Customers pay for the services they receive
- All funds are reinvested into the water and sewer system

There are two main types of revenue:

#### 1. Usage-Based Charges

- Based on how much water is used
- Used to estimate both water and sewer activity

#### 2. Flat Fees

- Fixed charges included in bills

- Help cover costs that do not change with usage

These two sources work together to keep the system financially stable.

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## **How the WSA Plans Its Budget**

To plan responsibly, the WSA does not rely on just one year of data.

Instead, it uses **multi-year averages**:

- Water planning uses a **seven-year average**
- Sewer planning uses a **six-year average**

### **Why This Approach Is Used**

Water and sewer activity can change due to:

- Weather conditions
- Seasonal usage
- System conditions

Using long-term averages helps:

- Avoid overreacting to unusual years
  - Create more stable and predictable planning
  - Support fair and consistent rate decisions
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## **Water System Overview**

### **What the WSA Does**

- Purchases drinking water
- Delivers water to homes and businesses

### **Estimated Cost**

- Approximately **\$1.32 million per year** to purchase water

### **Revenue**

- Generated through usage charges and flat fees
  - Usage-based revenue ranges from approximately:
    - **\$1.55 million to \$1.80 million**
  - Flat fees provide an additional stable revenue source (approximately **\$800,000 annually**)
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## Sewer System Overview

### What the WSA Does

- Collects wastewater from homes and businesses
- Sends it to the City of Waterbury for treatment

### Estimated Cost

- Approximately **\$4.04 million per year** for wastewater treatment

### Revenue

- Retail customers generate approximately **\$3.06 million**
  - The Watertown Fire District contributes approximately **\$1.39 million**
  - Flat fees provide additional stable funding (approximately **\$1.5 million annually**)
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## Why Sewer Costs Can Be High

Sewer costs are based on **total system flow**, not just household use.

This includes:

- Normal wastewater from homes and businesses
- Additional water entering the system (called **Inflow & Infiltration or I&I**)

I&I comes from:

- Groundwater entering pipes
- Stormwater entering the system
- Aging infrastructure

This increases total flow—and therefore cost—for the entire system.

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## **How the System Stays Balanced**

The WSA is designed to:

- Cover all operating costs
- Maintain infrastructure
- Meet regulatory requirements
- Plan for long-term needs

At this time:

- The system is financially stable overall
  - Individual accounts may show timing differences, but
  - The system as a whole remains positive and solvent
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## **Planning for the Future**

The WSA continues to:

- Evaluate infrastructure needs
- Plan for long-term investments
- Review financial strategies

This includes:

- Reviewing capital priorities
- Evaluating long-term debt planning
- Updating the water and sewer rate study

These steps help ensure the system remains reliable and sustainable.

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## **Key Takeaways**

- The WSA is funded by **user fees, not taxes**
- Long-term averages are used to support **stable planning**
- Water and sewer systems have **different cost drivers**
- Sewer costs are affected by **total system flow**, including I&I
- Flat fees help provide **financial stability**
- The system is currently **financially stable overall**

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## Learn More

Residents who would like to review the full technical details can refer to:

### **FY 2026–2027 Executive Summary (Technical Document)**

Additional materials are available at:

[www.watertownct.org](http://www.watertownct.org)

Departments → Water & Sewer

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## **Final Note**

This summary is part of an ongoing effort to provide clear, accessible explanations of WSA operations, budgeting, and financial planning. The information presented is forward-looking and intended to support transparency, understanding, and informed community engagement.