



Watertown Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Agenda

Date: Thursday, August 06, 2026
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Town Hall - Parks & Recreation Conference Room
61 Echo Lake Road, Watertown, CT 06795

Meeting is In-Person and also available via Zoom. A link will be posted on meeting day.
Please refer to www.watertownct.org under *Calendar of Meetings*

- I. Call Meeting to Order:**
- II. Roll Call:**
- III. Public Participation:**
- IV. Approval of Minutes:**
 - A. July 02, 2026-Regular Meeting
- V. Correspondence:**
- VI. Reports:**
 - A. Chairman
 - B. Director
 - C. Sub-Committees
- VII. Old Business:**
 - A. Policies and Procedures
 - B. Maintenance List Update
 - C. Park and Recreation Account balance update
- VIII. New Business:**
 - A. Review and Consideration of Submitted Applications for 2026
- IX. Adjournment**

Commissioners: Unable to attend? Contact P&R Department at 860-945-5246 by 4:30 PM

AGENDA
Date: 8-6-26
Number: 1VA



MINUTES

WATERTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

DATE: July 2, 2026

TIME: 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Town Hall – Parks and Recreation Conference Room
61 Echo Lake Road, Watertown, CT 06795

I. Call Meeting to Order:

Chairman Bill Donston called the regular meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Tadd Johnson, Pat Rinaldi, Vice Chair, Alan Mickel, Joseph McGrail, Bill Donston, Chair

Absent: Margaret Germain
Karim Belica
Herm Desena, Town Council Liaison

III. Public Participation: None

IV. Approval of Minutes:

June 4, 2026, Regular Meeting

Motion: Pat Rinaldi seconded by Alan Mickel to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 4, 2026. Aye: 4 Rinaldi, Mickel, McGrail, Donston Nay: 0 Abstain: 1 Johnson Motion passed.

V. Correspondence:

- a. Letter from Town Manager's office notification of new town website.
- b. Quotes to replace the Tennis and Pickleball Courts (4)

- c. Proposal from Girl Scout, Skylar F. proposed a "Rainbow Bench" at the Dog Park. It was hoped that Skylar would have attended to present this proposal in person
- d. Monthly report from the department

VI. Reports:

A. Chairman –

- a. Presented the report from Carrie Godfrey, Assistant Recreation Director
- b. Staff have been busy closing out the fiscal year

B. Director – proud of all staff for their efforts towards the completion of the recent projects; a goal heading into this fiscal year is to start projects earlier. There were 24-time-period flags proudly displayed at the entrance of the Town Hall in celebration of the country's 250th.

C. Sub-Committees – Golf.

- a. Reported on the ongoing discussion about the enterprise account and its codification

VII. Old Business:

- A. Policies and Procedures – No update
- B. Maintenance List Update - Discussed
- C. Account Balances (specials) for Parks and Recreation – No Report

Motion: Alan Mickel seconded by Pat Rinaldi to add under Old Business #D: Adams Road Park

Motion passed unanimously.

D. Adams Road Park

The commission discussed the minimization of Adams Road Park; this was the conclusion because of several commissioners visiting the park

Motion: Pat Rinaldi seconded by Alan Mickel to add Old Business #E discussion about the John Staver Fund.

Motion passed unanimously.

The Commission revisited and discussed the priority list

VIII. New Business:

- A. Review and Consideration of Submitted Applications for 2026 –

Motion by Joe McGrail, seconded by Alan Mickel, to approve the Watertown Police Tournament on October 2, 2026

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Alan Mickel, seconded by Pat Rinaldi, to add under New Business #B to discuss a gate at Lake Winnemauug.

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Lake Winnemauug Gate

The gate at Lake Winnemauug was discussed at a previous Police Commission meeting.

IX. Adjournment:

Motion: Alan Mickel, seconded by Tadd Johnson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 pm

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

William Donston, Chairman
Watertown Parks and Recreation Commission

Approved:

Susan King, Clerk

AGENDA

Date: 8-6-26

Number: ✓

Thomas R. Claire

2 Town Line Hwy.

Watertown, CT 06795

203 491-7254 • thomasrc Claire@gmail.com

July 5, 2026

Michael Ganem, Director

Parks, Recreation, Senior, and Social Services

61 Echo Lake Rd.

Watertown, CT 06795-2629

Letter of Commendation Concerning Giuliana Guerrero,

Special Events Coordinator, Recreation

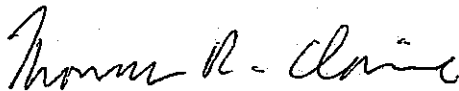
Parks, Recreation, Senior, and Social Services

Dear Michael,

I write to commend Giuliana Guerrero for her recent work on the town committee celebrating the the nation's semiquincentennial. As a member of the committee, I saw at firsthand and from start to finish Giuliana's ongoing and unflagging efforts at assembling, coordinating, executing, and accomplishing all of the committee's goals in celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary. Her ability to think—sometimes on her feet—and her understanding of how things work at the local level were evident throughout the planning and coordinating processes, as were her gifts at communication, administration, and delegation. Her energy, insight, and seeming natural ability at problem solving and resolving sometimes-nitpicky, occasionally nettlesome problems kept planning and execution going forward at all times while providing never-ending good cheer and occasional humor. Giuliana Guerrero is someone quite special at special events and no doubt a valuable member of the Watertown Parks & Res community. I applaud her and her work and not only am I happy to have met and worked with her on Watertown's Semiquincentennial Committee but I also commend you on her being on your team.

I cannot speak highly enough of Giuliana Guerrero.

In all sincerity and highest compliments,



Thomas R. Claire

cc: Town Manager Mark A. Raimo



WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT
PARKS, RECREATION SENIOR, & SOCIAL SERVICES
61 ECHO LAKE ROAD WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT 06795-2629
MAIN OFFICE (860) 945-5246 FAX (860) 945-4734



July 22, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the public safety implications and the unique location of the new pedestrian bridge over Steele Brook, I am writing to respectfully request that lighting be installed on the bridge and its immediate approaches.

From the shared perspectives of both the Police Department and the Parks and Recreation Department, adding lighting at this location would provide a vital layer of safety and security for residents utilizing our local trail system. While the trail is officially closed during hours of darkness, a significant number of residents use the path during sunrise and sunset hours, often finding themselves exiting as natural light rapidly diminishes.

The location of this new bridge presents specific environmental challenges:

- **Low-Lying Terrain & Vegetation:** The bridge sits in a low-lying area along Steele Brook where surrounding topography and heavy foliage cause conditions to become significantly darker much faster than other sections of the trail.
- **Infrastructure Consistency:** Equipping this bridge with lighting aligns with our existing trail standards. The sister bridge located at the opposite end of the trail is already fully illuminated; installing fixtures here ensure a uniform safety standard throughout the entire network.

The addition of safety lighting will enhance visibility, assist pedestrians in navigating the terrain safely during low-light periods, and serve as an effective deterrent against unwanted activity.

We believe this modest infrastructure enhancement will provide meaningful safety benefits to our community. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. Please let me know if you would like me to compile preliminary equipment and installation estimates for your review.

Sincerely,


Michael Ganem, CPRP
Director of Parks and Recreation

Kaitlyn Sanzone

From: Michael Ganem
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2026 8:42 AM
To: Kaitlyn Sanzone
Subject: FW: Request for Assistance with After-Hours Activity at Lake Winnemaug Boat Launch

Kaitlyn,
Good morning.
Please include this thread in the next packet.
Thank you.

Michael Ganem, CPRP
Director

Office: 860-945-5246



From: Bill Zarillo <wzarillo@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2026 8:05 AM
To: Jared D'Andrea <jdandrea@watertownctpd.org>; Mark Raimo <raimo@watertownct.org>; Joshua Bernegger <jbernegger@watertownctpd.org>; Gerald Lukowski <Lukowski@watertownct.org>; Michael Ganem <ganem@watertownct.org>
Cc: Richard Antonetti (Antonettip@sbcglobal.net) <antonettip@sbcglobal.net>; David Jannetty (david.jannetty@snet.net) <david.jannetty@snet.net>; John Buono <Buono@watertownct.org>; Carrie Godfrey <Godfrey@watertownct.org>
Subject: Re: Request for Assistance with After-Hours Activity at Lake Winnemaug Boat Launch

Dear Parks and Recreation Director Ganem,

I am writing in response to your email of July 13, 2026, regarding the discussion of after-hours access to the Lake Winnemaug boat launch.

First, I would like to thank you and the Watertown Police Department for your continued efforts to address the ongoing issues at the boat launch. However, despite the increased patrols, the problem continues. As recently as last night, vehicles were again parked at the boat launch at approximately 9:30 p.m., well after the facility should have been closed. This demonstrates that additional measures are needed to effectively prevent after-hours access.

While I understand the concerns expressed about using a chain across the entrance, I respectfully recommend reinstating a dusk-to-dawn closure of the boat launch using a safer and more permanent solution.

The launch has become a gathering place after hours, resulting in littering, noise, and activities unrelated to boating. Restricting access during nighttime hours would help preserve the facility for its intended recreational use while improving public safety, reducing maintenance costs, and minimizing disturbances to nearby residents.

Rather than using a chain, I encourage the Town to consider installing a 20-foot galvanized swing barrier gate equipped with high-visibility reflective striping, a lockable latch that allows access for emergency responders and Town personnel, and a receiver post to securely hold the gate in both the open and closed positions.

A good example already exists within the Town of Watertown. The swing gate at the Watertown Substation on Neil Drive is an attractive, well-maintained installation that demonstrates how this type of gate can be both functional and aesthetically appropriate. It is a proven example of the type of entrance barrier that could be successfully installed at the Lake Winnemaug boat launch.

The estimated installed cost for a manual galvanized swing barrier gate is approximately \$3,000 to \$6,000, depending on site conditions and hardware. If staffing is a concern for opening and closing the gate each day, the Town could instead consider an automatic swing gate system. These systems can be programmed to close automatically at dusk and reopen at dawn, eliminating the need for daily staff involvement. They also incorporate vehicle detection loops, photo-eye sensors, and exit sensors that allow vehicles already inside the launch area to exit safely after the gate has closed while preventing additional vehicles from entering. The estimated installed cost for an automatic swing gate system is generally \$10,000 to \$20,000, depending on the gate size, electrical service, controls, and site conditions.

One way to help offset the cost of either gate option would be to implement a boat launch parking permit program. Many municipalities require parking permits for access to their public boat launches. Resident permits could be offered at a nominal annual fee, while non-resident permits could be priced at a higher rate. Revenue generated from the permit program could help fund maintenance, enforcement, gate operation, and future improvements to the facility.

In fact, the Town of Watertown already administers a similar permit program through its annual Transfer Station permit, which residents purchase for access to that Town facility. A boat launch permit program would follow the same general concept and would not represent a new administrative model for the Town. Instead, it would provide a dedicated source of revenue to help maintain and improve the boat launch while ensuring that those who benefit from the facility contribute to its upkeep.

I believe these recommendations directly address the concerns outlined in your July 13 email. A properly designed swing gate eliminates the safety and liability concerns associated with a chain, while providing controlled access for emergency responders and Town personnel. An automatic gate addresses the staffing and operational challenges of manually opening and closing the facility each day. A durable galvanized gate is significantly more resistant to vandalism than a chain and padlock, and a permit program provides a practical way to help fund installation, ongoing maintenance, enforcement, and future improvements. Together with the Police Department's continued patrols and appropriate signage, these measures would provide a comprehensive, long-term solution to preserving the boat launch for its intended recreational purpose.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your willingness to consider these recommendations and hope the Town will view them as constructive solutions that balance public safety, operational needs, fiscal responsibility, and the long-term stewardship of Lake Winnemaug.

I am happy to assist the Town in any way I can as these options are evaluated. Please feel free to contact me on my cell at (203) 232-8384 if you would like to discuss these recommendations or if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bill Zarillo

On Monday, July 13, 2026 at 03:07:08 PM EDT, Michael Ganem <ganem@watertownct.org> wrote:

Hello Deputy Chief D'Andrea and everyone,

Thank you for the update, and I greatly appreciate the Police Department increasing nightly patrols in the area to help curb the after-hours loitering.

Regarding the status of installing a chain to block entry to the boat launch when closed, Chief Bernegger and I have previously discussed the history of this issue, and the Parks and Recreation Department advises against using a chain for several key reasons:

- **Liability and Safety Hazards:** A chain spanning a roadway or launch entrance presents a severe safety hazard, particularly after dark. If a driver, motorcyclist, or bicyclist fails to see it, it poses a high risk of serious injury and significant liability for the town.
- **Emergency and Town Access:** A locked chain slows down critical access for emergency services, police responses, or town maintenance crews who may need to get down to the water immediately.
- **Operational Overhead:** Managing a manual chain gate requires dedicated staff to physically lock it at dusk and unlock it at dawn every single day, which creates scheduling and labor challenges for our department.
- **Vandalism Risk:** In isolated areas, padlocks and chains are frequently cut, bypassed, or vandalized, requiring constant replacement without effectively solving the security issue.

We want to continue working closely with the PD to keep all of our parks secure. Increased visibility through the nightly patrol checks you mentioned is the most effective deterrent, and we are happy to look into adding or upgrading "Closed After Dusk" signage to ensure the rules are clearly posted for enforcement.

Thank you again for your partnership on this.

Best regards,

Michael Ganem, CPRP

Director

Office: 860-945-5246



From: Jared D'Andrea <jdandrea@watertownctpd.org>
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2026 2:51 PM
To: Mark Raimo <raimo@watertownct.org>; Bill Zarillo <wzarillo@outlook.com>; Joshua Bernegger <jbernegger@watertownctpd.org>; Gerald Lukowski <Lukowski@watertownct.org>; Michael Ganem <ganem@watertownct.org>
Cc: Richard Antonetti (Antonettip@sbcglobal.net) <antonettip@sbcglobal.net>; David Jannetty (david.jannetty@snet.net) <david.jannetty@snet.net>
Subject: RE: Request for Assistance with After-Hours Activity at Lake Winnemaug Boat Launch

Hello Mr. Zarillo,

Thank you for emailing the Watertown Police Department about the activity you and your wife observed at the Lake Winnemaug boat launch. We appreciate you bringing this to our attention and for your ongoing commitment to keeping our community safe and enjoyable for residents.

Chief Bernegger is currently out of the office but I have updated our Patrol Lieutenant of the persistent after-hours issue at the boat launch. I have advised the Patrol Division to perform nightly patrol checks at dusk to ensure no one is loitering in the boat launch area. They will also be monitoring the area throughout the evening and overnight hours to ensure there are no issues. Any issues observed during these patrol checks will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. I will also reach out to the Parks and Recreation Department and check on the status of a chain to block entry to the boat launch when closed.

If you or your neighbors witness any suspicious activity or safety concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our non-emergency line at 860-945-5200. Providing details such as dates, times, vehicle descriptions or license plates would greatly assist us in our investigations.

Thank you and stay safe,

Deputy Chief Jared D'Andrea
Watertown Police Department
195 French St.
Watertown, CT, 06795
860-945-5212
jdandrea@watertownctpd.org



From: Mark Raimo <raimo@watertownct.org>
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2026 9:02 AM
To: Bill Zarillo <wzarillo@outlook.com>; Joshua Bernegger <jbernegger@watertownctpd.org>; Gerald Lukowski <Lukowski@watertownct.org>; Jared D'Andrea <jdandrea@watertownctpd.org>

Cc: Richard Antonetti (Antonettip@sbcglobal.net) <antonettip@sbcglobal.net>; David Jannetty (david.jannetty@snet.net) <david.jannetty@snet.net>

Subject: RE: Request for Assistance with After-Hours Activity at Lake Winnemaug Boat Launch

Good morning,

I have added Deputy Chief D'Andrea to this email to help this matter be addressed.

Best,

Mark A. Raimo

Town Manager

Town of Watertown

61 Echo Lake Rd

Watertown, CT 06795

(860) 945-5255

Mission Statement: In Watertown, we strive to be Litchfield County's most citizen/employee centric town. We seek to be a town where citizens, businesses and employees are valued; where all can count on efficient services, fiscal responsibility, engaging schools and a safe community.

From: Bill Zarillo <wzarillo@outlook.com>

Sent: Monday, July 13, 2026 6:37 AM

To: Joshua Bernegger <jbernegger@watertownctpd.org>; Gerald Lukowski <Lukowski@watertownct.org>

Cc: Mark Raimo <raimo@watertownct.org>; Richard Antonetti (Antonettip@sbcglobal.net) <antonettip@sbcglobal.net>; David Jannetty (david.jannetty@snet.net) <david.jannetty@snet.net>

Subject: Request for Assistance with After-Hours Activity at Lake Winnemaug Boat Launch

Dear Chief Bernegger, Chief Lukowski, Mr. Raimo, Mr. Antonetti, and Mr. Jannetty,

I understand that Chief Bernegger is out of the office until July 16, so I am hoping one of you gentlemen may be able to assist with this matter.

Last night at approximately 9:30 p.m., my wife and I were out for our evening walk and observed more than eight vehicles parked at the Lake Winnemaug boat launch, well after dusk. As you know, the boat launch is supposed to be closed at dusk, yet this seems to occur quite frequently.

As residents of Lake Winnemaug, my wife and I, along with many of our neighbors, find it concerning to have groups of people congregating in the boat launch late into the evening. In the past, the Town addressed this issue by closing the launch and securing it with a chain across the entrance. That approach appeared to be effective, and we would appreciate it if the Town could consider implementing a similar solution or another effective means of enforcing the dusk closure.

In addition to the safety concerns, these gatherings sometimes result in litter being left behind, loud conversations, tire peel-offs, and other disruptive behavior. Allowing unrestricted access after dark also encourages people to be out on the lake at night. In fact, yesterday there was even a fire on one of the islands, which highlights the need for better control of after-hours access.

We appreciate all that the Town and Police Department do to keep our community safe, and we respectfully ask that this issue be reviewed to determine what steps can be taken to improve enforcement of the existing dusk closure.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Sincerely,

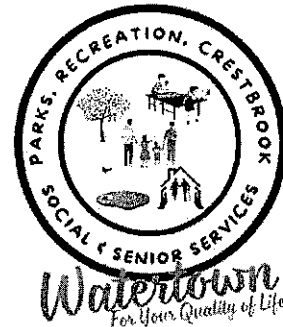
William Zarillo



WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT

PARKS, RECREATION, SENIOR, & SOCIAL SERVICES

61 ECHO LAKE ROAD WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT 06795-2629
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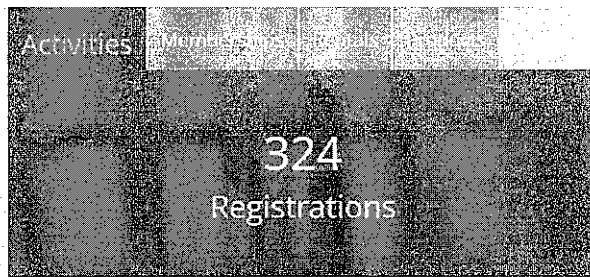


July 2026 MONTHLY REPORT

AGENDA

Date: 8-6-26

Number: VIB



Myrec 7/01/2026-7/31/2026

Recreation:

- **Saturday, July 4 – America 250 Celebration**

We celebrated 250 Years of America at Sunset Grille at Crestbrook Park.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this historic milestone. From the reading of the Declaration of Independence and family activities to the pie-eating contest, games, and wonderful community spirit, it was a day to remember.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our amazing sponsors, volunteers, participants, and everyone who helped make this event possible. Your dedication, generosity, and support brought this celebration to life.

Here's to 250 years of America and to a community that continues to come together to celebrate our nation's history. Thank you for making this event so special!

- **Saturday, July 11 – Night Out on Main Street**

Our first Night Out on Main Street was held on Main Street in Watertown with a new event layout. We welcomed more than 52 vendors, including food vendors. The community was very receptive to this exciting event. Despite a brief rain shower, attendance was excellent, and visitors enjoyed live music by Vivid, shopping, and great food.

- **Summer Coloring Contest**

We hosted a Summer Coloring Contest for children in Pre-K through 4th grade.

Participants submitted coloring pages that were featured in our Summer Activities Guide.

Each child showcased their creativity, and every participant received a prize.

- **Summer Camps**

Our summer camps continue to be a tremendous success. Enrollment has remained strong, and both campers and parents have shared positive feedback. As we begin to wind down the season, we have just three weeks of camp remaining.

- **Aquatics**

Both Crestbrook Park Pool and the Watertown High School Pool are fully operational and continue to be well attended. Residents have been enjoying a safe and successful summer swim season.

- **Mini Musical Summer Camp**

On July 17, campers performed a wonderful production based on the musical Annie. It was fantastic to see the children showcase everything they learned throughout the program. They truly did an outstanding job!

- **Watertown Farmers Market**

The Watertown Farmers Market was held every Wednesday throughout July at Veterans' Memorial Park from 5:00–8:00 p.m. Attendance has been exceptional. Vendors have expressed how pleased they are with the new location and the increase in customer traffic and sales.

- **Summer Poker Run**

Our Summer Poker Run was held every Wednesday in July at Veterans' Memorial Park. Participants had the opportunity to complete a 5K, 3K, or 1K course. This popular event reached a record attendance of more than 50 participants.

- **Summer Concert Series**

The Parks & Recreation Department continued hosting its Summer Concert Series every Wednesday evening at the Veterans' Memorial Park Pavilion. The concerts have generated tremendous community support, with approximately 350 attendees each week, enjoying live music, food, and a fun family atmosphere.

- **Saturday, July 24 – Family Movie Night**

Our first Summer Family Movie Night Under the Stars was held at the Veterans' Memorial Park Pavilion. Approximately 100 residents attended to enjoy the featured movie, The Goat. The addition of a food truck made the evening even more enjoyable, and the community response was overwhelmingly positive.

- **Fall Programs**

Planning for our fall season is well underway. The Fall Activities Guide will be released on August 4, with registration opening on August 6. We look forward to another exciting season of programs and special events.

- **Korean War Memorial Service**

On Monday, July 27, the Korean War Memorial Service was held at the Steele Brook Greenway Bridge. It was a meaningful ceremony honoring the service and sacrifice of our veterans, and we were grateful to be part of such a special community event.