



**TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE
WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT**

**SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 2026 - 7:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

**WATERTOWN TOWN HALL
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
61 ECHO LAKE RD.
WATERTOWN, CT 06795**

1. Pledge of Allegiance.
Vice Chair Michele McHugh called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Call Meeting to Order.
Vice Chair Michele McHugh led the pledge of allegiance.
3. Roll Call. (All members of the Town Council are members of the Finance Subcommittee)

PRESENT: Michele McHugh, Vice Chair
Dan Cocchiola
Ken Demirs
Robert Desena
Carina Noyd (phone)
Robert Retallick
Rachael Ryan

ABSENT: Jonathan Ramsay, Mary Ann Rosa

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Raimo, Town Manager
Maria Guerrero, Finance Director

4. Review proposed FY 2026/2027 budgets:
 - a. Library
Donna Rintelman, Director of the Watertown Library Association gave a presentation regarding the library operating budget. The presentation showed that the library serves 11,501 registered borrowers, 87,152 physical items for circulation and having 46 percent of the town as card holders.

Presentation attached

Council questions:

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked what overlap of services is there between the branch and the main facility, hour wise?

Donna Rintelman answered the branch is open currently Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The main library is open Monday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday's from 10 am. to 2 p.m.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked about the existing services at the branch?

Donna Rintelman answered the branch is utilized as a children's library to 3rd grade and is also has an adult popular fiction library. It also houses now The Book Nook.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked on the estimated health increases medical when will those be finalized and how close are we to the fifteen percent?

Donna Rintelman answered that is not up to me, we are very fortunate in that the 3 employees that we have medical insurance come in with the town as three more people.

Michele McHugh asked do you charge for any services, you mentioned notary?

Donna Rintelman answered if somebody loses their library card we ask for a \$1.00 for a replacement. There is no charge for someone to become a member of the library. If they become a member of the association there is a \$15.00 annual charge. We currently do charge for copies, I don't even think that is breaking in on the cost, the ink and the paper but it does bring in people to utilize the service. I discussed with our board of trustees at our last meeting about bringing back fines in a formal way and we all agreed that is something we would be doing.

presentation attached

b. Elections

Diane Stengl Democratic Registrar and Christine Shields Republic Registrar, stated their budget is down \$2,750 down from the previous year. The decrease comes with the election worker line from an early voting grant from the state. We did increase our printing line items because we are not sure what the new

tabulator costs will be depending on the ballot. we increased our event meals and there is a decrease in office furniture.

Council questions:

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked when we feed them do we patronize the restaurants in town?

Diane Stengl answered yes, we use the Meat Center during early voting with a sandwich and a drink for each worker. The election itself we do breakfast from Jimmies and then lunch from LaBonne's.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked you spoke about an early voting grant, who is responsible for writing that grant?

Diane Stengl answered the state says here is the money now show us how you used it, we just reported that to the state. There is no guarantee that they are going to continue giving us grant money.

Christine Shields added there is so much up in the air because after many years of being similar we got new tabulators. for early voting they are so many changes that are taking place, some of our numbers need to change a little bit more or less each year to accommodate. As the ballot numbers costs increase or decrease we are learning the companies sometimes are telling us some things we did not know previously things are changing back and forth.

Diane Stengl added our advertising budget might change due to the Town Times is no longer there, we have to deal with Hearst Media and we are not sure what they are going to hit us with.

Dan Cocchiola asked the value of the grant?

Diane Stengl answered this past grant was approximately \$11,614 almost all that could have been applied just to the workers having nothing to do with the printing, the media and the meals things like that. Prior to that we received \$7,500, prior to that we received \$10,000 however much the state feels like giving.

Dan Cocchiola stated it is random and asked if we don't get what we anticipate we are on the hook for the difference?

Diane Stengl answered absolutely, there is no say how early voting goes, it is in front of the legislature again but it may not be voted on this session, it may wait till the next session.

Christine Shields added we are waiting to see what has been given to us, the most we can do is call our legislators.

Diane Stengl stated we would like shorten early voting. It's a huge expense and we don't get any extra voters they seem to think that we will. It the same amount of people over a longer period of time.

Dan Cocchiola asked how long have we been doing early voting?

Diane Stengl answered early voting is new.

Dan Cocchiola stated it's a couple of years. If it were to shorten to 1 week vs. to what is now?

Diane Stengl answered that is what the Association of Ct is advocating for.

Christine Shields stated right now primaries are seven days and the regular election is 14 days Monday.

c. Economic Development:

Mark Raimo stated there is a zero percent increase in this budget. After meeting with the Economic Development Coordinator, we agreed to leave the budget as is, the only part that I would like to advocate for to keep in the budget is the \$15,000 Façade Improvement Program.

Council questions:

Rachael Ryan asked so the budget that we got is incorrect, it says \$66,787 that number is not the correct number? There is a large increase in the Economic Development Consultant line it went from \$35,000 to\$ 42,000?

Mark Raimo answered we did not have that money available last year in front of the council so that is money we associated with a potential raise. It would be budgeted under wage and benefits. There is no increase, just a carry-over from one line.

Rachael Ryan asked are you saying that the consultant is currently making \$42,000 and that is just continuing.

Mark Raimo answered that is correct, it is current salary it has not come in front of the council to discuss. The wage increase is for department heads as we created the budget, we put the money into wage and benefit to offset. Because we just don't have the time to plan that out. As normal we would budget for union

wages, two and three quarters percent it would be wage and benefit. This is just the actual number. Our total budget of the town would be the same according to this. It would be reduced out of benefits and its in this particular department.

d. Probate

Mark Raimo stated probate is our fee that we pay probate in our geographical area. The cost for us to be part of this probate is \$8,017.90. It's broken down, it takes our net grand list and prorates it appropriately.

e. Town Manager

Mark Raimo stated you are going to find wage adjustments; the salary items were trued up because I have not finished our white-collar union contract so we budgeted in wage and benefits and now we carried it over this current budget. Additionally, as we put together social media stipend and the stipend for the emergency management person within the Town Manager's office. It was only meant to be like that temporarily because there are issues that come up. Where on the social media that individual would be going out on the weekend. We felt we pull those stipends out, and put it into the actual salary we are still within the range of that salary. With our human resource position, we have taken some of those day-to-day tasks, moved it from that director's position and put it on a staff member. We gave a small bump up to that staff member to accommodate those changes. With that I had some small increases to training and meeting costs and small increases to programs and events. Our emergency management grew we kept all the stipends except the same for the one I just explained. We have a small increase that is stated in the executive summary, it was a \$10,542 increase that is about 2.9 increase to the budget.

Council questions:

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked with the stipends, I am thinking of them similar to bonuses is that correct?

Mark Raimo answered no, it would be for work performed. If you look at emergency management among several staff members, some of them are employees, some are volunteers, one of our staff members are a non-exempt employee which they are a union member. Our exempt employees there is no issue providing a stipend because there is no consequence to that. Having that union person in there specifically under this circumstance.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked I guess what I am getting at is for the nonunion people if you put the stipend money into their actual wages then the following year they are going to get the 2.9 percent; it becomes part of their

salary. So next year they will get 2.9 of that amount, where if it's a stipend, it sort of a won and done.

Mark Raimo answered I am in full agreement; it doesn't work out well for us. If somebody were to make a complaint about that and I did have discussions with our attorney over this. The issue we saw was as you check off the amount of work that is done, we are finding it is well over that 35 hour per week. That person individually would get that increase every year, the other stipends we are going to leave in place. it is a won and done per year. Don't forget the EMPG grant really supplements 50 percent of those stipends under the emergency management.

Dan Cocchiola stated if we are adding work load to the position, adding to the salary structure makes reasonable sense. I want to think about the social media communications.

Dan Cocchiola asked the 2110 line has that significant bump in the salary, 45 to 58 is that where it is reflected if so, are there expectations parameters that are going to be pretty explicit on what we want the person to produce in terms of that communication piece?

Mark Raimo answered specific to social media, the person who is in that position has taken up a leadership role in developing that program and continues the need to enhance that program on regular basis. On the website you will see a lot of changes, with pictures which are taken during times of year, pictures changing on the weekend, then events she will take it upon herself to go on the weekend to those events. Yes, the expectation has been set in the beginning and that individual stepped up and made it more than what we expected.

Dan Cocchiola added having that in the within the job description would be fruitful.

Rachael Ryan asked the administrative assistant line it is a \$13,000 increase, so the \$3,500 stipend is being added in and then you mentioned in that summary the \$3,000 for the additional increase and that is \$6,500 where does the other \$6,500 come from to get that \$13,000 increase?

Mark Raimo answered it accurately reflected because it was kept in wage and benefits because that is how we were able to produce the budget. This is trueing up those wages based on that money coming out of wage and benefits. I don't have those exact calculations but there was an adjustment in that difference so it did miss the \$2,500 stipend the grant that accounted for \$2,500 dollars for that \$6,000 whatever you stated we have \$4,00 difference. We can show you the

document to show that was a wage adjustment. When we settled our contract for the white collar was a 3.25 percent increase for the first year, we are already into that second year of the budget they adjusted it another 2.75 percent.

Rachael Ryan asked going forward can we get accurate numbers in our budget book.

Mark Raimo answered we can't give accurate numbers because we do not know what the numbers are, we don't know what we are going to settle with the contract. We have to make an adjustment or estimate of what that number will be. This is not a fault on the town or staff members this is way to budget to make sure we enough money to complete deals that we are making with the unions.

Rachael Ryan stated I don't recall having this being an issue. is there something different in past years. I know there is ongoing negotiations we have always had salary numbers set have been accurate from what I recall.

Mark Raimo answered nobody delved into the numbers this has been the standard practice longer than I have been here, it always the way it has been budgeted. If a contract is not completed, we have to put money aside. I don't think it should be placed up front where the unions when we are heading for those negotiations.

f. Town Council

Mark Raimo stated the total for Town Council has stayed at \$19,000. The only item I contemplated changing, we pay a vendor to take changes in our regulations, they codify that for us. We are hoping to get that started out of this current budget year. I left it at that same amount it was \$15,000. We are hoping to get that process started by the end of the close out of the budget year and carry over into the next year.

g. Public Buildings

Donna Ford, Purchasing Agent and Tony Iosa, Building Maintainer present and gave a presentation on the public buildings with staff consisting of herself, the building maintainer and four part time custodians taking care of 17 buildings in the town.

presentation attached

Council questions:

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked on the Senior Center how long has the Senior Center in need of repairs?

Donna Ford answered quite a while. We made repairs to the sidewalk over time but it just doesn't last with the snow and the frost heaves.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked you talked about applying for grants?

Donna Ford answered for the Police Department we have applied.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked who writes the grants?

Donna Ford answered between the Town Manager and myself we have done that.

Mark Raimo added I have been in touch with our representative Mr. Polletta we expect this grant to be awarded last fall and the state did not move forward on grants. Our project is still viable to keep in touch on a regular basis. The HVAC was bad when I was there and I have been retired 14, 15 years. With us changing and moving towards a capital budget as we move through this presentation with the council. If we do remove this because I do feel we are going to get the grant. we may want to do it is to put seed money into that project if needed. We can discuss as we talk about capital projects.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked to fix the aging HVAC system at the Police Department is that really going to address the issue? You spend \$988,000 dollars I know what is not possible for us to put aside money on a new Police Department and a new garage is that going to solve the problem, throwing good money after that?

Tony Iosa, Building Maintainer answered the way I look at it is that the town still owns the building and to build a new Police Department the town will still either have to sell it and make more revenue on it, it will still be heated and cooled. If it doesn't get heated and cooled down, we are going to have to rent a trailer and pump heat into the building into the duct system and or air conditioning. Renting that is going to be very expensive because we are going to need that per building and health code, it not like we have many options.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked if you spend the \$988 thousand for HVAC is that going solve the issue for the HVAC?

Tony Iosa, Building Maintainer answered yes, to tear down the whole entire ceiling and tear down everything and replace the ceiling along with the roof top units. It's not like the Police Department can shut down and we can do the work and they can reopen. They are open 24/7, It is going to be a very complicated thing of trying to do an office, move to another office so they continue to do their

work. It's going to be a lengthy process; it will have to get done. The Police Chief still wants to put money into the building the chances of having a new Police Department are slim to none. You still have to invest in your infrastructure.

Robert Desena stated Donna I appreciate your explanation of all the expansive and encompassing your role is for your staff in maintaining our town's 17 public buildings to code, obviously excluding the BOE building. You and your maintainer and the remainder of your staff are continuously in crisis situations has been brought by department heads. You are trying to maintain before they become not only safe but OSHA concerns. A good example is the maintenance garage that your maintainer works on, its has been here for years. it's used for an office, supplies, for the truck that was wisely purchased. Thank you for what you both do.

Robert Retallick stated the senior center is quite disturbing and I guess I am asking did we have an architect already take a look at the building to see if we can move the door to a different side? We may have to make an emergency expenditure?

Donna Ford answered we have preliminary plans, we have not had anything yet because we are waiting to get the money but I did have a company to come out to do this, the same company that did highway. It would be all encompassing on them. They would make sure the codes are up to code and they have begun to do that, and that costs money to have them do it fully. If we got the money they would go ahead. They would draw the plans they would be responsible for all of that.

Robert Retallick stated they gave you an estimate? Mr. Retallick asked the Town Manager if he could expedite to get this on a list going forward.

Mark Raimo, Town Manager answered I would be happy to put an appropriation there.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked have we gotten more than one quote?

Donna Ford answered no that was the only one. I can certainly do that, we would have to put that out to bid. This company I would not have to put it out to bid and the benefit to that is I would have to try to write up the bid with all the codes and that wouldn't be my expertise. I need someone that knows how to write up a bid with all the specific codes. This would have to be with fire codes, OSHA rules, ADA compliant, many codes that would have to go into this, this company would do all that.

Mark Raimo, Town Manager asked Ms. Ford to explain why by using this company?

Donna Ford answered just like the highway garage this is from a consortium where this has been already put out to bid. They have already received bids for it. It is like the state bid we order things from. This is the same its already put out to bid just like we did with highway.

h. Fire Department

David Bromley, Fire Chief gave a presentation on the 26/27 fiscal year budget reviewing the volunteer membership on what they do with rescue, fire and medical.

presentation attached

Council questions:

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked under Section 505 equipment you put replace car two for \$30,000 but then it looks to me that car two was replaced in...

David Bromley answered what we do replace vehicles, those command type vehicles, we do them on a lease purchase for three years, this is payment two of three.

Dan Cocchiola stated if we had a full pay for the Fire Department you estimated it would be about \$5 million and asked do you currently work more than 35 hours in your role?

David Bromley answered I currently get paid for 30 but I do more than 30.

Dan Cocchiola asked you have 76 people.

David Bromley answered we are down to 73 people.

Dan Cocchiola stated they are part time.

David Bromley answered they are on call and whoever responds to the fire house gets \$10.00 per call.

Dan Cocchiola stated your request for full time to me doesn't sound crazy. It seems pretty reasonable.

Michele McHugh asked how long have you been working your 30 hours?

David Bromley answered when I was first voted in as Chief that April of 2018 that was 20 hours. During COVID the Town Manager and the Town Council saw fit to raise our hours to 35 hours each week because of the demand. There are continual demands that keeps coming. I just can get caught up.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked what your average number of hours a week are now?

David Bromley answered 35 to 40.

Mark Raimo added the Chief has asked for this process last year, they are a volunteer organization somewhat separate from the town. We do support their budget they operate within different rules their organization came up with. Last year we talked about putting this off and put together a committee to look at it, so that we can understand, because the Chief is not going to be here forever as a Fire Chief. This is has come around and we never go to it endorse the Chief going full time but I think we should meet and put a good understanding to replace the Fire Chief at the next changeover.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh stated that is good succession plan for most of our department head chief positions.

David Bromley answered you would have to look at the town charter because the department does run itself unless something happens.

Robert Retallick asked we had an agreement with Northwest to use the antenna tower which we shared some of our resources to make this happen under this grant that we got are we still sharing.

David Bromley answered there is a new combiner being put out there. Northwest public pays for the electric and pays for the gas for the generator.

Robert Retallick stated with today's pricing pays, antenna sites are a thousand dollars a month, I think you should go after them for rent?

David Bromley answered I will try.

Michele McHugh asked speaking of grants, who writes your grants.

David Bromley answered in the past the Deputy wrote those grants, they have become somewhat cumbersome because of the reporting after we get the grant. It is a lot of paperwork, it is easier to write a grant for one specific thing than multiple things.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked are there grants that would help if we have the time?

David Bromley answered yes, if it available that we can try to use.

i. Adjourn

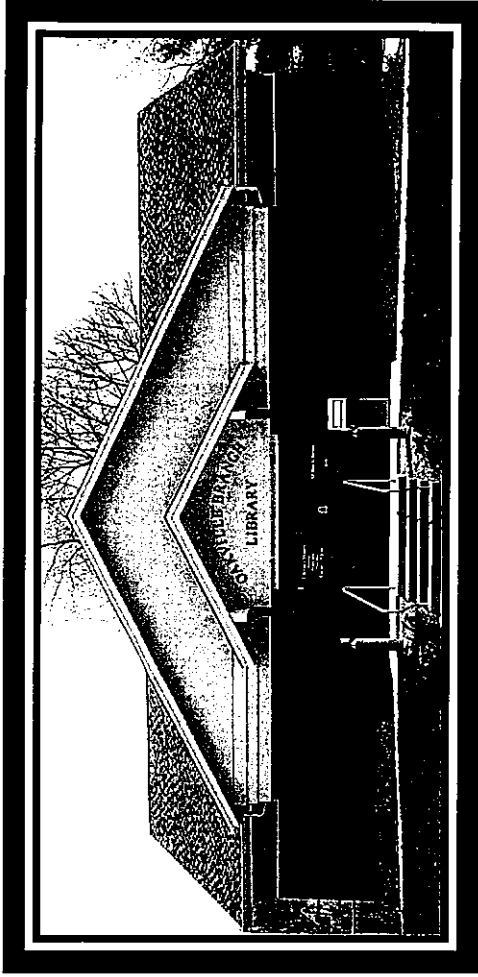
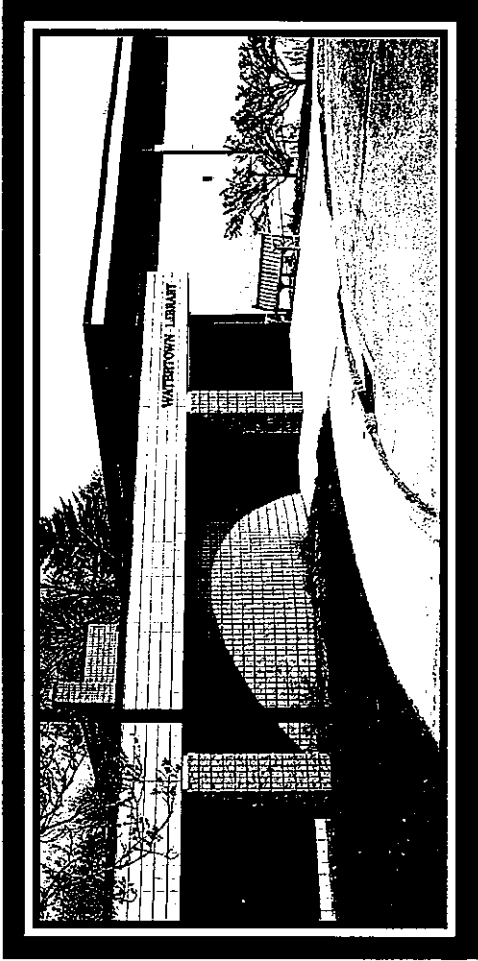
Motion: Robert Desena seconded by Rachael Ryan: to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted.

Michele McHugh, Vice Chair
Watertown Town Council

Approved: _____
Susan King, Clerk



WATERTOWN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

established 1865

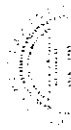
Presentation to Town Council

11 February 2026

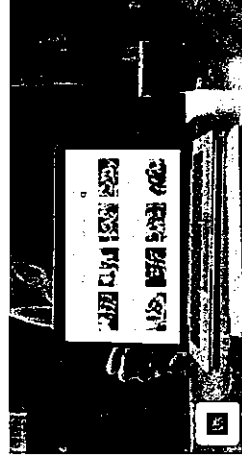
Serving The Community For 161 Years

Providing a wealth of resources

- Collections for Adults, Teens and Children in a variety of formats including e-books and e-audiobooks
- On-site technology available with user support
- Quiet study space for students of all ages, an alternative space for those working offsite or traveling
- Programs and offerings continue to grow:
 - Adult and children's programs and events have expanded (Woodward Atrium has afforded space for broader subjects and larger audiences as well as hybrid program offerings)
 - Take-home craft kits for children
 - Book club
 - Meet the Author events
 - Meeting space for community groups
 - Notary Services offered by our Adult Service Librarian



WATERTOWN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
established 1865



LearningExpress Library

Targeted collections of practice tests, tutorials, e-books, articles and more.



JOHN M. BIRCH

Mystery Book Club

The Mystery Book Club meets at 7:00pm on the third Wednesday of each month via Zoom or in person at Watertown Library.



CHRISTINA CARROLL

Chair Yoga

Members at the Watertown Library for Chair Yoga, a gentle yoga program incorporating the use of chairs led by a certified Chair Yoga Instructor, Frances Lamoree.

Frequency: 1st/3rd/5th/7th/9th/11th/13th/15th/17th/19th/21st/23rd/25th/27th/29th/31st

All sessions run from 12:30pm to 1:00pm

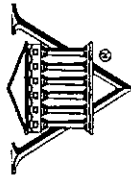


1000 Books Before Kindergarten
The Watertown Library Association is participating in the 1222 Books Before Kindergarten program!

Performance

Borrowers, library hours, events, programs, etc.

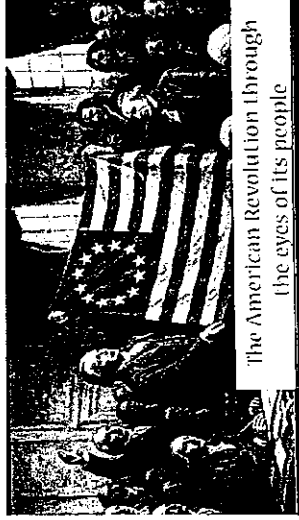
- We served 11,501 registered borrowers in 2024/2025
- 46% of Oakville and Watertown residents have a library card (CT Avg: 32%)
- Total service hours between locations: 3,000 (State Avg: 2,947)
- Reference transactions: 14,500
- Total programs offered: 159 onsite 12 virtual
- Technical consultations: 2533



Value Line®



brainfuse
JobNow



AMERICA




WATERTOWN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

established 1865

A very careful steward of public resources

- Support for the Library is in line with area communities, on a per-capita basis:

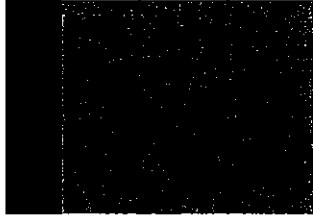
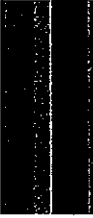
	↑	↓	
Woodbury	\$71.72		1.96%
Thomaston	\$62.95		1.57%
Cheshire	\$56.09		1.29%
Statewide Average	\$54.88		1.12%
Middlebury	\$54.34		1.12%
Litchfield - OWL	\$51.06		1.24%
Bethlehem	\$42.06		1.17%
Southbury	\$41.67		1.18%
Plymouth - Ferrysville	\$40.41		1.03%
Prospect	\$38.34		1.04%
Watertown	\$37.78		0.95%

Partnership

FY 2025-2026

Town of Watertown Budget

- Watertown Library
- Debt Service
- Misc. (Excl. Benefits)
- Employee Benefits
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Works
- Public Safety
- General Government
- Board of Education



The Town:

Annual appropriation funds ongoing services and operations

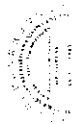
- Books, newspapers, magazines, and DVDs
- Online information and database licenses, e-books, audiobooks, etc.
- Staff wages
- Cost of day-to-day operations: Utilities, Integrated Library System, Community space upkeep

The Library:

Responsible for ALL capital projects, aided by local foundations, The Friends of the Watertown Library and individual donations.

In last 10 years (>\$1 million)

- Woodward Atrium and technology systems;
- New Book Nook;
- Water drainage, HVAC, Wi-Fi, and Lighting upgrades;
- Firewall system overhaul;
- Entrance, stairs, restroom upgrades;
- Furnace and hot water heater replacements at Branch;
- Staff IT equipment upgrades;
- Cost-effective landscaping/maintenance plan put in place



WATERTOWN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

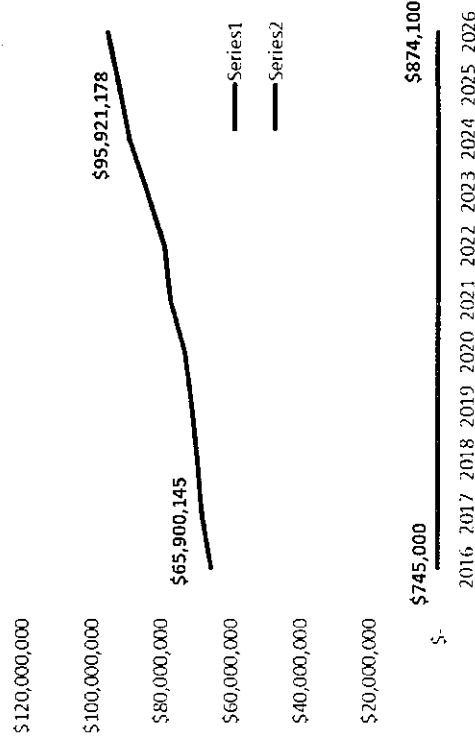
established 1865

FY 2026-2027 Request

Requesting a 2.85% increase (\$24,900) over FY 2026 which will provide for

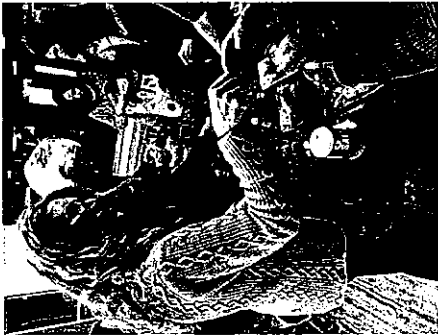
- A 2.8% cost of living increase for employees & 15% estimated increase in medical costs
- Maintain library service hours at Main ST and Davis ST locations and access to online resources
- Includes funding for the in-demand and well attended adult, children, and multigenerational program offerings
- Best estimates for anticipated increase in cost of utilities, service contracts, and maintenance supplies

2016-2026: Town vs. Library Budgets

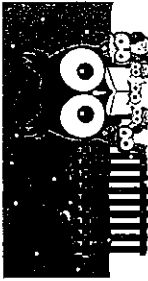


FY 2016-2026	
Total Growth	Average Growth
Town	3.8%
Library	1.6%

FY 26/27 REQUEST	
Request \$	Increase
Library	2.8%



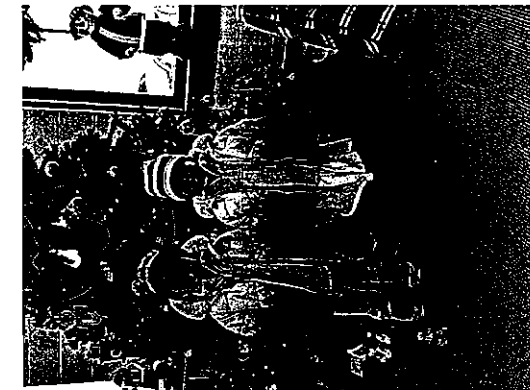
Thank you!



TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 17, 2026
Story Time with Mrs. Butterfly
Join us at the Watertown Library on
Tuesday, February 17, 2026 from 10:30am
to 11:30am for a story and crafts with
Dinah Butterfly! - children age 3 - 6.
Registration is suggested.



TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 24, 2026
Story Time with Mrs. Piccolo
Join us at the Watertown Library on
Tuesday, February 24, 2026 from 10:30am
to 11:30am for story time and special craft
with Mrs. Piccolo! - children age 3 - 6.
Space is limited. Registration is required.



WATERTOWN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
established 1865





PUBLIC BUILDINGS

BUDGET PRESENTATION – 2026/2027

New Down Spouts- Quote - \$8,000

The Gutter system is original to the building. Instead of replacing the entire underground system, we've determined that replacing the gutters with a larger size should take care of the problem of the gutters becoming blocked causing water to overflow and pour off the side of the building.

Roof Replacement - Quote - \$65,000

Roof is still leaking in areas. Work has been done to patch roof but we are still seeing leaks in other areas. The roof will have to be replaced before we can install a new HVAC system.

HVAC System - \$988,000

As we have presented in past years, the HVAC system has passed its life expectancy. Control parts are no longer available, ductwork is spitting and system is totally inefficient causing electric bills in both the summer and winter to increase. Heat in some areas has become insufficient in the winter and air conditioning in other areas is barely working. Engineering services to design the entire system is also included in this quote. We are still hoping to receive a grant for this project but as of yet, have not heard anything. Every year this project is getting more and more costly.

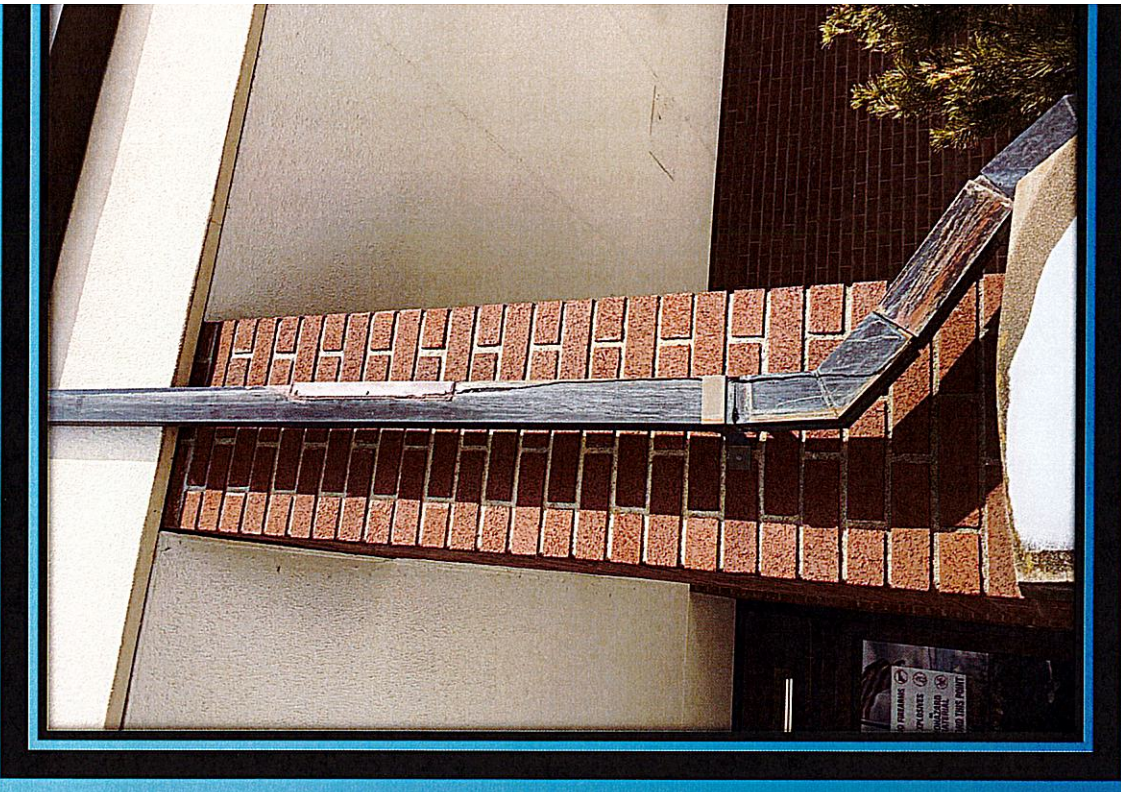
POLICE DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENTS

▶ **Generator – Quote - \$240,000.**

As we have presented in the past, the generator is undersized for what is needed. At this point the only area it supports is Communications.

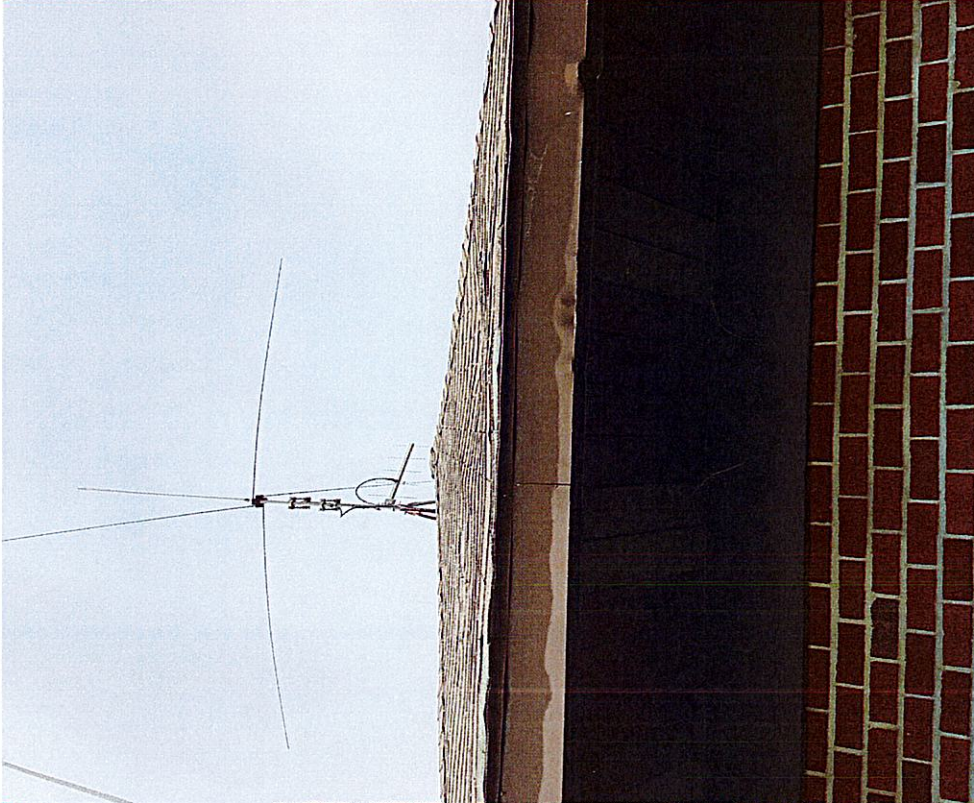
POLICE IMPROVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

POLICE DEPARTMENT GUTTERS



- ▶ The 911 Building on Buckingham Street houses the communications equipment for Fire/Police/Highway and Northwest CT Public Safety. The roof is very old and has passed its lifespan. This is an extremely important building and we would like to replace the roof before any damage can be done. It would be detrimental to the safety of the town if the computer equipment housed in this building was ever compromised.

911 BUILDING ROOF -- QUOTE \$7,000



911 COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING

- ▶ This was approved in the budget two years ago but we were unable to complete it at the time and the money went back into the general fund. We are obviously still having the same problems with the roof leaking into the building causing mold and damage to the interior. This building also houses the police motorcycle, public works signage and the new skid steer, roller, paint trailer, paint, roll off, etc. for the highway department. We received another quote that was much more affordable.

MAINTENANCE GARAGE ROOF –
QUOTE \$40,000



MAINTENANCE GARAGE



MAINTENANCE GARAGE STORAGE

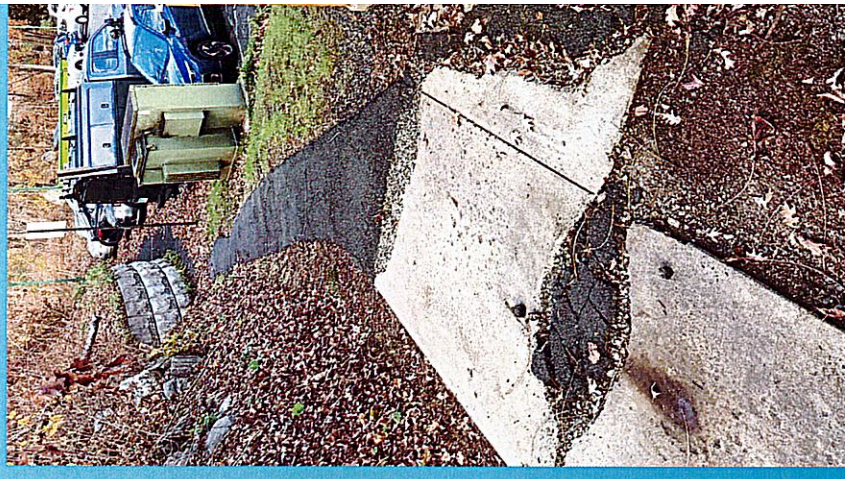
▶ **Painting and Exterior Repairs** – Quote \$45,000

The exterior of the Senior Center is deteriorating and is in need of painting and also repairs to the siding which has begun to rot. The Senior Center has over 900 Members and we are unsure of when this building was painted last.

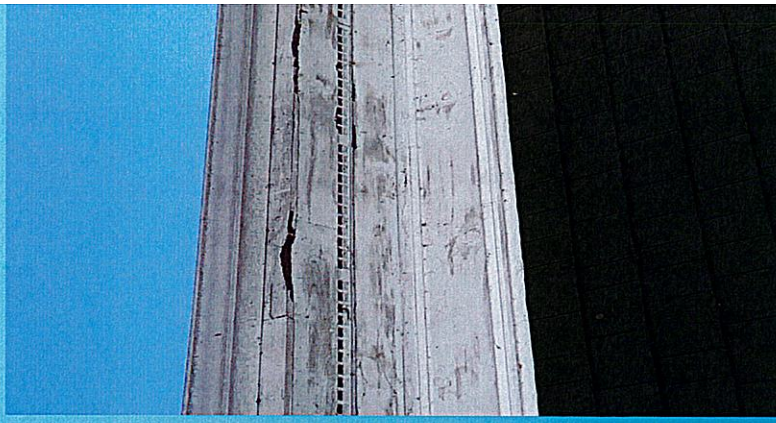
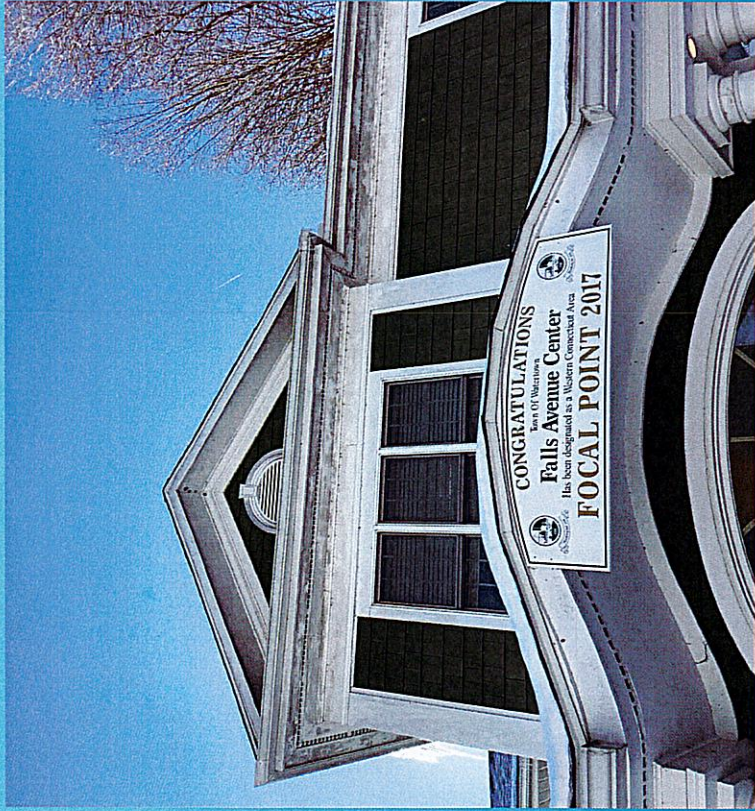
▶ **Repair of Handicapped Emergency Exit** – Quote \$126,000

This is a safety issue, an OSHA issue and a building code issue. The handicapped emergency exit is in desperate need of repair. The sidewalk has deteriorated where it is not wide enough for a wheelchair and is in very poor shape. We are asking to move the emergency exit access to the other side of the building. This was the less costly option that was proposed to us. A new ADA ramp would be built onto the existing deck and a new sidewalk and rails would be installed.

SENIOR CENTER IMPROVEMENTS



SENIOR CENTER HANDICAPPED EMERGENCY EXIT



SENIOR CENTER EXTERIOR

▶ New Garage Doors – Quote \$50,000

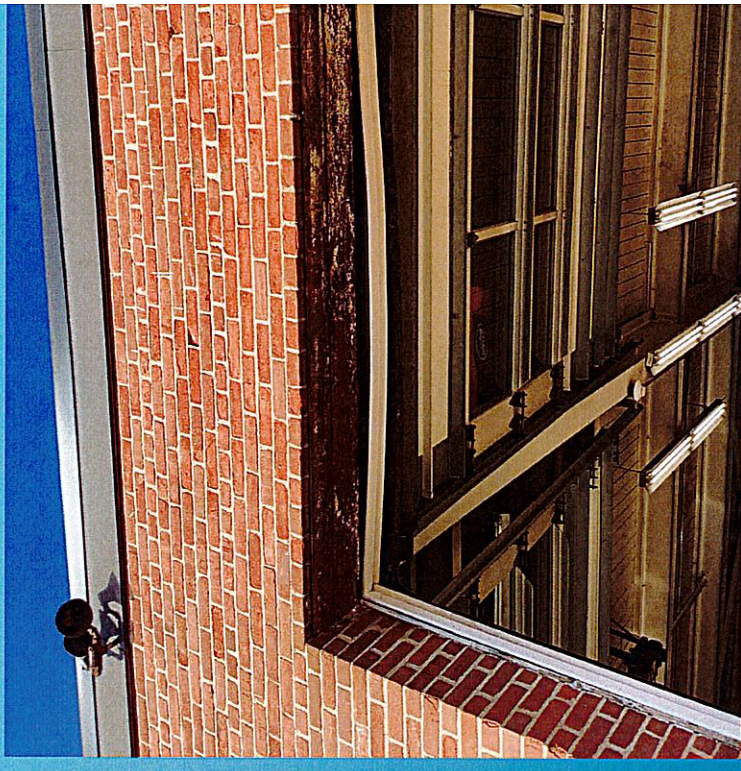
The Highway Garage was recently updated with all new windows but they are still losing heat and air conditioning due to the old and rotted garage doors. The wood is rotted and doors are in poor condition. The weather stripping has disintegrated and the doors may be too rusted and damaged to repair. Installing new doors will lower the cost of heating and cooling. This proposal would replace 4 double doors and 1 single door.

HIGHWAY GARAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Rotted wood on doors

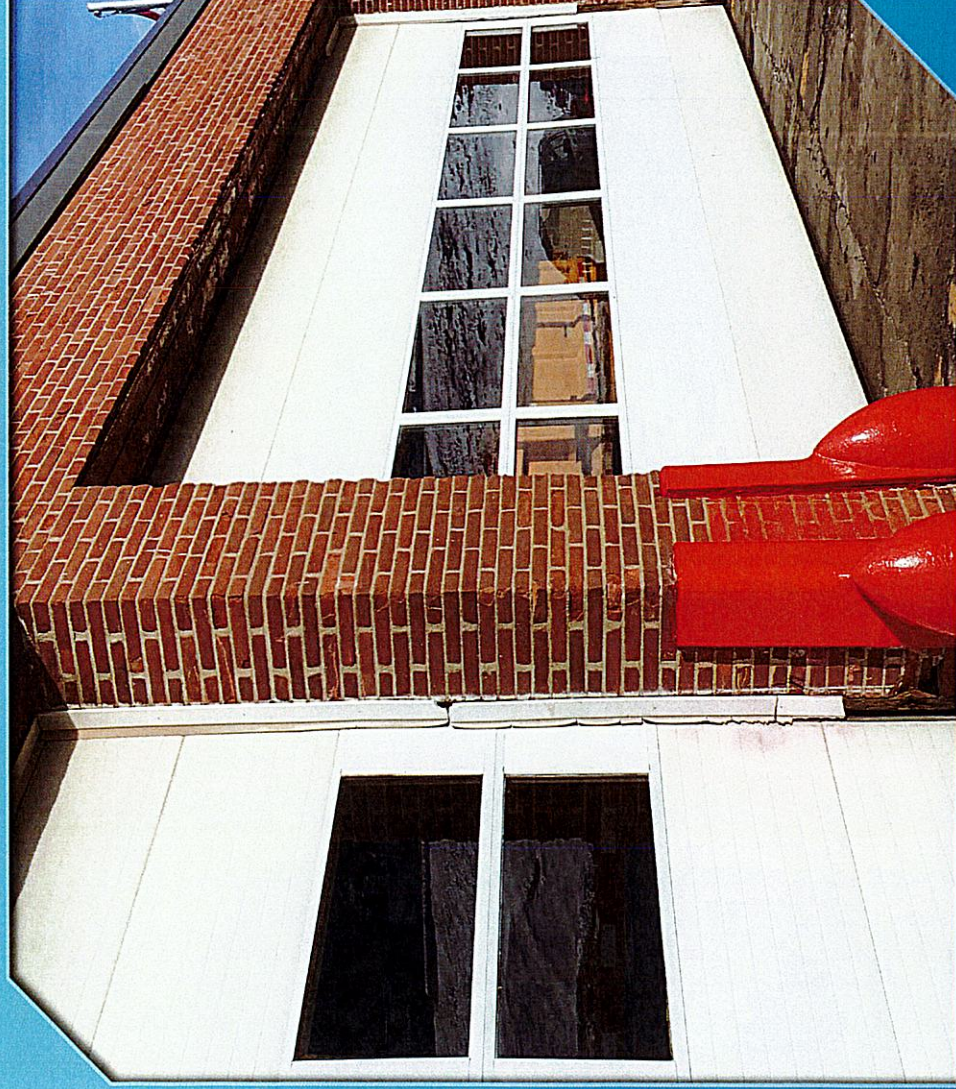


Frames are bent



HIGHWAY GARAGE DOORS

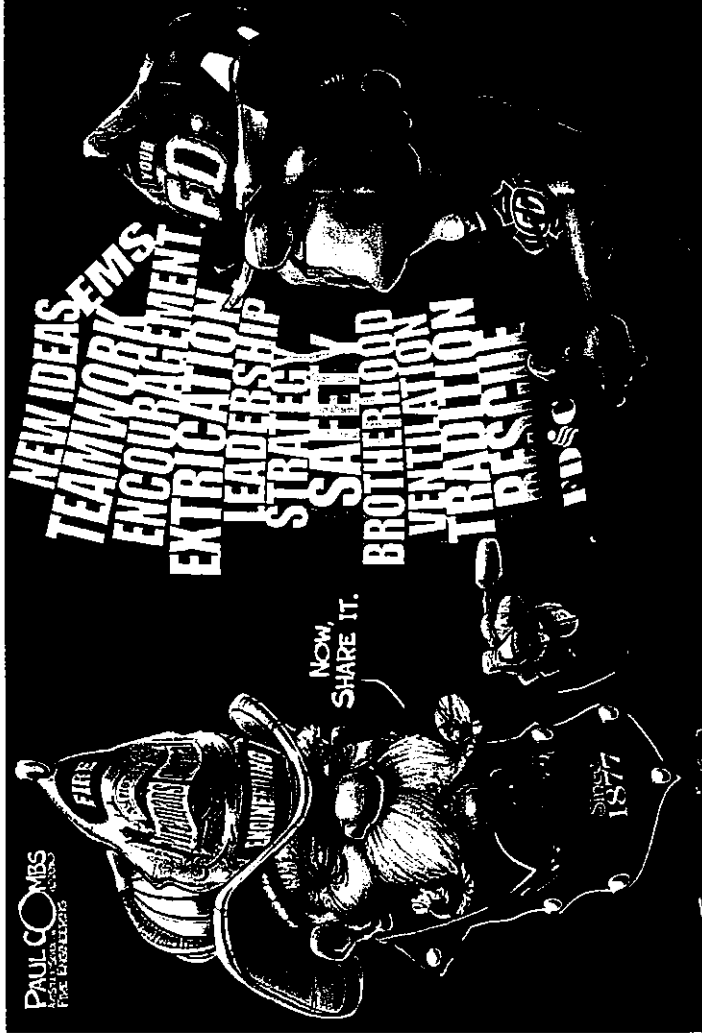
HIGHWAY GARAGE DOUBLE DOORS



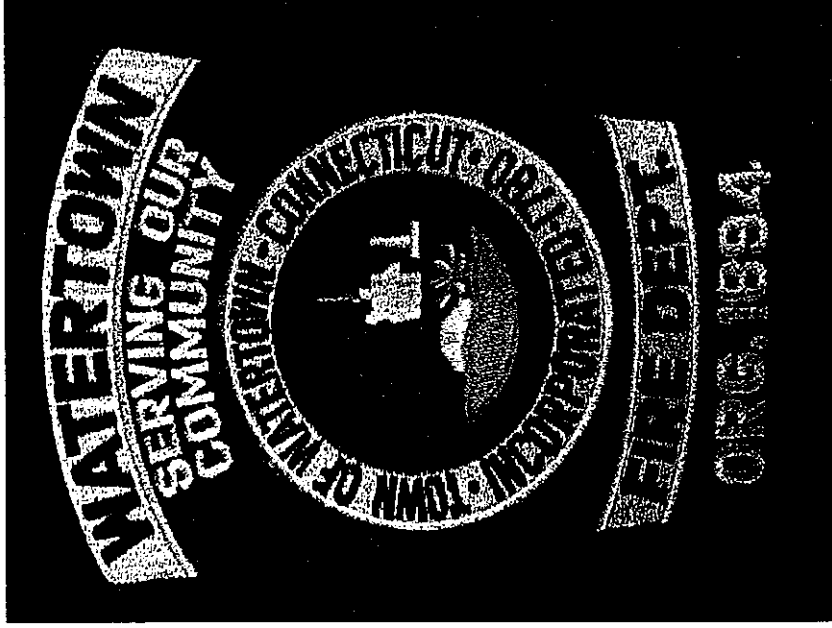
WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

CELEBRATING 132 YEARS OF SERVICE

2026-2027 Fiscal Year Budget



The Fire service tasks are ever changing, due to NFPA & OSHA Emergency Response Rules, which will change the way fire depts. manage, train and respond. Chief Officers are now dealing with declining ranks of volunteers in our society, which has slowed response times, causing towns to hire career Firefighters & EMTs



WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT INC.
A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS SERVING
OUR COMMUNITY SINCE
MAY 08, 1894

Part-Time Chief & Part-Time Deputy Chief
Full-Time Marshal & Part-Time Deputy Marshal
Full-time Administrative Assistant

Current Membership (120 allowed)

73 Active Members (3 less than last yr)

47 Members are Certified EMS Responders (4 less than last yr)

1 Department Chaplain

75% of the Nations Firefighters are Volunteers

It is estimated Watertown saves annually \$5 mil, having Volunteers vs Career. That with the response town volunteers give now, many residents believe they have a full time Fire Dept., but without future volunteers coming forward, the Town will soon face a decision of hiring career.

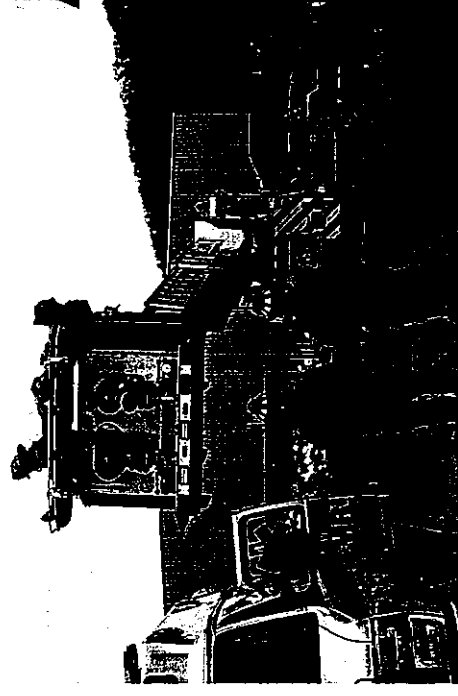
Rescue



Fire



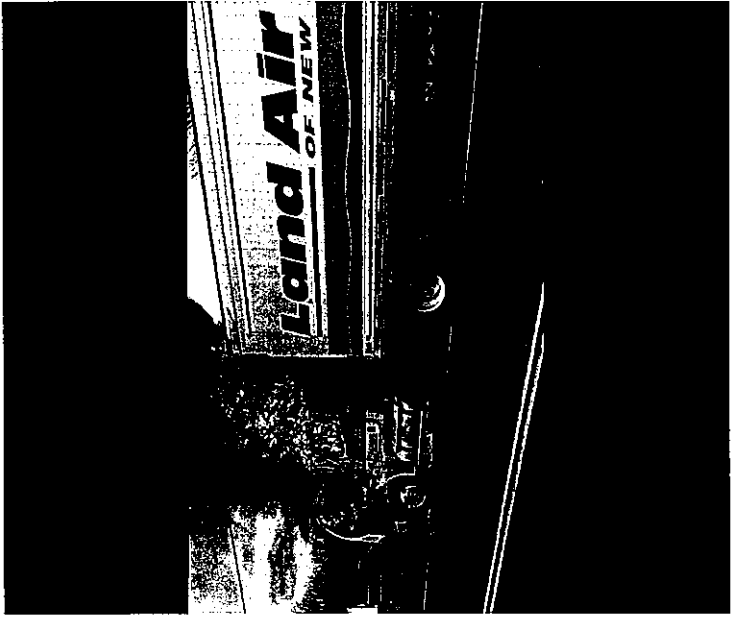
Medical



Vehicle Extrication

Live Fire Training

MEMBERS TRAIN EXTENSIVELY ONLINE & IN PERSON
IN 2025, MEMBERS LOGGED OVER 2059 HOURS OF
VOLUNTEER TRAINING, TO IMPROVE THEIR SKILLSET



INCIDENTS ALONG MAIN STREET

WFD RESPONDED TO 2925 CALLS IN 2025, 854 FIRE/RESCUE AND 2071 EMS INCIDENTS, A DECREASE OF 221 INCIDENTS FROM 2024. BIGGEST DECREASE WAS 226 EMS INCIDENTS, DUE TO A CHANGE IN NON-EMERGENCY RESPONSES RUNS, WITH AN INCREASE OF 5 FIRE/RESCUE

APPARATUS REPLACEMENT FUND

The Dept. Requests increasing the Town funding from \$150K to \$300K yearly. This fund allows the town to replace fire apparatus on a 25 yr replacement schedule, due to PM plan, NFPA Guidelines recommends a 20 yr plan. This fund saves the Town thousands in bonding & interest costs. Past years of under funding and cost increases of apparatus has caused delays in the replacement plan.

Currently the account contains approx. \$340,120 due to the recent Ladder 2 Bond purchase coming up short \$161,000. So with funding of \$300,000 in the next three budget cycles FY26 thru FY28, there would be approx. \$1,240,120 to fund the replacement of Rescue 10. If the fund was fully funded each year forward and costs not increasing. That Rescue 10 would be 29 years old when replaced.

RESCUE 10 is a 2000 Spartan GK Medium Rescue. Based on annual funding and current replacement est. the costs to replace it today is \$1,100,000. Delivery of a new Rescue 10 would happen during the 2028-2029 FY.

Engine 4 is a 2003 Spartan GK Pumper/Tanker and is the next unit to be replaced



► 2026 – 2027 Department Budget Request:

FY 25-26 FY 26-27 Increase

Fire Administration 016

50110-016-1927 - Fire Marshal	yearly wage increase pending	\$ 90,331	\$ 90,327	\$ -	4
50110-016-2110 - Administrative Assistant	yearly wage increase 2.75 % X2	\$ 46,283	\$ 50,458	\$ 4,175	
50110-016-2298 - Deputy Fire Marshal	yearly wage increase pending	\$ 29,797	\$ 29,797		
50110-016-1929 - Deputy Fire Chief	yearly wage increase pending, wage adj.	\$ 38,569	\$ 39,728	\$ 1,159	
50110-016-2913 - Fire Chief	yearly wage increase pending	\$ 79,772	\$ 79,772		
\$13,294 increase for Fire Chief to full time (5 hours weekly)	Total	\$ 0	\$ 93,066	\$ 13,284	

A change to a full time Fire Chief which was originally recommended by Chief Black in 2018 upon his retirement, has now become more evident, that with ongoing regulation changes in the fire service reporting networks and the increased workload of managing, responding and protecting the 76 volunteer members and the 22k+ citizens of our town along with those that pass through daily, the Chief's job is a full-time assignment.

Fire Suppression & Rescue 017

50120-017 0069 – Volunteer Firefighters	pay per call from \$10 to \$12.50	\$ 315,000	\$ 393,750	\$ 78,750	
50120-017-1956 - LOSAP 401 Plan for Volunteer Firefighters		\$ 85,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 5,000	
50329-017-0000 – Training / Meetings w/o travel		\$ 25,000	\$ 28,000	\$ 3,000	
50340-017-0561 – NW CT Public Safety, Med control with Hospital		\$ 8,984	\$ 9,224	\$ 240	
50573-017-1926 – Auto Defibrillator replacement program		\$ 3,000	\$ 3,400	\$ 400	

► 2026 – 2027 Department Budget Request:

FY 25-26 FY 26-27 Increase

Maintenance & Support 018

50318-018-0000 - Maint. not bldgs, Testing of Aerials, Pumps, Ladders & SCBA	\$ 16,500	\$ 18,000	\$ 1,500
50819-018-0000 - Vehicle Maint.	\$120,000	\$130,000	\$ 10,000
50415-018-0000 - Equip. Parts, Tires replaced every 7 years (NFPA) Batteries, Etc	\$ 14,000	\$18,000	\$ 4,000
50450-018-0000 – Uniform/Protective Clothing 10 sets of Turnout gear replaced yearly	\$ 50,000	\$ 54,000	\$ 4,000

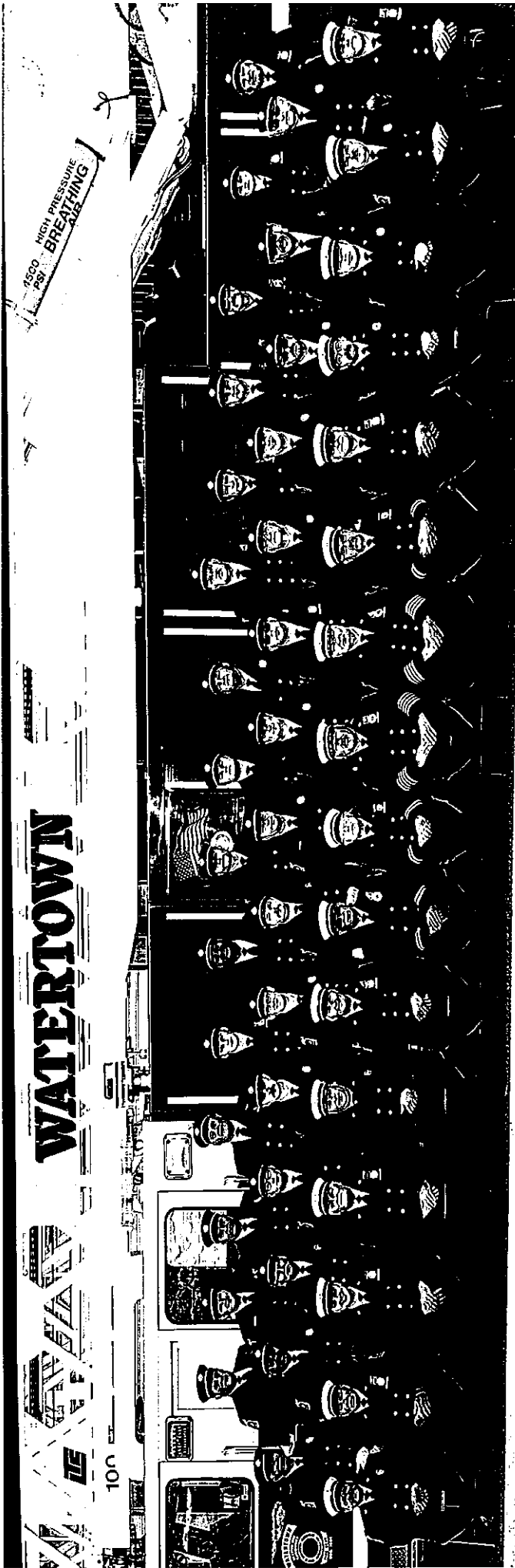
FY 25-26 Budget was \$1,182,895 --- FY 26-27 Budget request is \$1,291,564 an increase of \$108,669

NOTE: the following line items were removed from FD Budget and placed in Town Manager budget

50120-017-2617 Emergency Management Director	\$12,500
50120-017-3094 Emergency Management Deputy Director	\$ 2,000
50411-017-2151 Civil Preparedness	\$ 500
Total Reduction	\$ 15,000

The Watertown Volunteer FIRE and EMS Service members, continually serve the TOWN OF WATERTOWN and OAKVILLE and those that pass through daily, with members at times putting themselves in harms way. They respond to Fire and EMS incidents at all hours of the day & night to protect and treat residents, some of who are testing positive for FLU & COVID19, along with other infectious diseases, with the volunteers responding to these incidents receiving a stipend for their time of \$10 per call, whether it's a 20 minutes EMS run or an 8-hour structure fire, or worst yet a natural disaster occurring over several days.

The Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Marshal and I have presented a responsible budget request for the volunteer fire department and town fire marshal office, in an effort to help the Town financially and will make this budget work. We ask that the Town Council support the Fire Department budget request to enhance and maintain the safety of its volunteers and the services to the town residents.



Watertown Fire Department 2025

The Watertown Fire Department
stands Ready Day & Night

Thank you!!