



**TOWN COUNCIL  
WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT  
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026  
REGULAR MEETING – 7:00 P.M.**

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

1. Call Meeting to Order.  
Chairman Jonathan Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
  
2. Pledge of Allegiance.  
Chairman Jonathan Ramsay led the pledge of allegiance.
  
3. Roll Call.  
PRESENT:                   Jonathan Ramsay, Chair  
                                  Michele McHugh, Vice Chair  
                                  Dan Cocchiola  
                                  Ken Demirs  
                                  Robert Desena  
                                  Carina Noyd  
                                  Robert Retallick  
                                  Mary Ann Rosa  
                                  Rachael Ryan  
  
ABSENT:  
  
OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Raimo, Town Manager  
                          Maria Guerrero, Finance Director

4. Public Participation.

The Town Council invites the public to speak under public participation. Please complete and provide a *Watertown Town Council Public Participation* Form if you wish to speak at the meeting. Copies are available on the Town’s website or at the meeting. There is a time limit of three minutes per speaker.

Mary Ann Rosa spoke about the town putting aside it's personal differences and working together, treating people with kindness instead of unkind things being said. I am going to make a special effort to everyone I deal with to respect their opinion whether I agree or not. I am hoping that others will try and do the same so that we can move forward in Watertown.

Krista Palomba spoke about the integrity of the town at recent meetings being disappointing. Town meetings should be a place to share ideas and where disagreement leads to productive discussions. The citizens should feel welcomed and heard, the meetings have become hostile, combative and disrespectful rather than discussing issues. The town faces real issues that deserve thoughtful intentions, economic development infrastructure, schools, taxes and community trust. We want leaders who can disagree without disrespecting one another.

Jeannette Forcelli spoke as a community leader; she is seeing political problems and the people of the town deserve better with honesty and full disclosure of financial accounts. She stated the treasurer is a full-time job not a part time. She talked about the town's infrastructure and the roads in town.

Barbara Zulkeski spoke.  
attached

Katherine Camara spoke about the last two meetings regarding a party's nominee for a commission seat and the removal of an appointment being a political move. She suggested setting up a committee regarding the volunteer fire fighters.

Frankie Popilowski thanked the people for coming out tonight and the people at home that are listening. She stated that you do not have to vote yes for the referendum because of the cost for another referendum, that it would be a drop in the bucket compared to costs for Water and Sewer.

5. Minutes.

a. April 22, 2026 – Budget Public Hearing

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve the Budget Public Hearing minutes dated April 22, 2026 as presented.

Motion passed unanimously

b. May 4, 2026 – Regular Meeting

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve the Regular Meeting minutes dated May 4, 2026 as presented.

Motion passed unanimously

c. April 28, 2026 -Special Meeting

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve the Special Meeting minutes dated April 28, 2026 as presented.

Motion passed unanimously

6. Chairman's Report

a. Correspondence.

1. Resignation from Phil Rogers as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals received May 13, 2026.
2. The Watertown High School Lecture Hall on Wednesday there will be a Celebration of Life for John Gavallas at 6 p.m. for those that would like to join.
3. The 250<sup>th</sup> Centennial Celebration, Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup> 2026 from 11:00 to 2:00 at the Crestwood Golf Course for those who would like to attend.

Mary Ann Rosa read the proclamation:

## **REPROCLAMATION** **Older Americans Month 2026**

**WHEREAS**, older Americans have built the foundations of our communities through their dedication, wisdom, and lifelong contributions to family, work, and civic life; and

**WHEREAS**, the strength and resilience of our nation depend on honoring the experiences, talents, and achievements of older adults, while ensuring they remain valued, included, and supported members of society; and

**WHEREAS**, communities thrive when people of all ages are connected, engaged, and empowered to share their knowledge and skills across generations; and

**WHEREAS**, it is essential to reaffirm our commitment to promoting the health, independence, and dignity of older adults, and to eliminating barriers that prevent their full participation in community life; and

**WHEREAS**, Older Americans Month provides an opportunity to recognize the diverse contributions of older adults and to highlight the importance of fostering

age-friendly communities that respect and celebrate individuals at every stage of life; and

**WHEREAS**, our community celebrates their achievements, learns from their experiences, and work together to ensure that every older adult is supported, respected, and empowered to continue making valuable contributions to our society.

**NOW THEREFORE I**, Jonathan Ramsey by virtue of the authority vested in me as Chairman of the Watertown Town Council do hereby proclaim May 2026 as **Older Americans Month**.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Town of Watertown to be affixed on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.

Jonathan Ramsay, Chair  
Watertown Town Council

7. Staff Reports.

a. Town Manager

Mark Raimo reported:

Clarified comments made in public participation, Barbara Zulkeski sent an email to select council members saying that I inserted myself into negotiations of the Watertown Police Department. I at no time inserted myself into the negotiations. I was asked by our Town Labor Attorney if I would be interested in being involved in the discussion. I immediately said no, because I do have a conflict of interest. I then turned to the Town Council and advised you of the conflict. I asked you for guidance and you gave me guidance, asking to have the Labor Attorney with me. I wrote a memo and I am asking that memo be placed in the record to refute the statement made by Barbara Zulkeski. What is amusing to me is that in her complaint she said this was not personal and if it was not personal then why was it brought up why would only certain town council members were asked to look at this. There is nothing hidden, I was forth coming and to be honest I do not want to sit with the police and discuss it because it is a difficult thing. Negotiations are at last best offer; there is nothing that is going to change prior to arbitration other than what the last best offer was. The law has been misinterpreted. The attorney has made a written statement and every Town Council member has received that. I don't know what else to do. I think somebody should say thank you Mr. Town Manager for understanding that there is a conflict and asking for guidance, my memo will outline my actions.

Robert Retallick stated thank you Mr. Town Manager.

Mark Raimo stated I would be happy to place my memo that articulates the exact process that happened and my response to the union and then my coming to the Town Council. This is very much personal. I am also going to ask the Town Council take the opinion written by the Town Attorney and place it on the record as well. Why would only certain Town Council members not all council members if this is not personal.

1. A rate study is going to be going out on WSA on Wednesday and I am inviting all Town Council members to sit through that rate study to understand where we are going in the near future. It will be at 7:00 in the Town Council Chambers, I expect it to be well attended. New Gen will be reporting on and looking at the big picture giving it assessment to understanding how to move forward in the position we are in for rates.
2. We have the Governor coming to the Town of Watertown on Thursday to celebrate Forum Plastics that moved to Calendar Road. We went against 3 other towns and were able to bring Forum Plastics to Watertown. They came here with 90 employees and building a 80,000 square foot brand new manufacturing company. On Thursday you will be invited to go in and tour it. They came here with 90 employees and built it up to 180 within one year. It's a celebration for Watertown and it's a good example that the town is open for business for economic development.
3. I would like to pay special attention to the Police Chief's memo in your packet; there are a lot of transitional pieces going on in the Police Department that you should be made aware of it. Starting with the Deputy Chief and then working down, we have some retirements that are in place.

#### Council questions:

Rachael Ryan stated I know you talked about guidance and I am just wondering if there should have been a vote on that. We should have had a motion on the agenda. I would like to know of it ahead of time and just have a little bit more information so that we are prepared for that conversation. It doesn't feel like it was the best process for making such an important discussion. I know council members spoke up and expressed their opinion but I think a formal vote would have been a more appropriate way and then you would feel more competent voting how many people support that statement. It sounds like it is too late at this point, it sounds like the negotiations are on going but in future that would be the best way to go. It is to protect you to make sure that the right decision was made.

b. Finance Director

Maria Guerrero reported:

1. The Finance Department is currently moving closer to the fiscal year end. Reminder memos will be sent out to all departments regarding the proper handling of accounts payable and prepaid expenses that is banned between June and July. The Fiscal Year 26/27 budget file has been completed and will be ready for uploading to the Tyler system once the budget is approved allowing revenues and expenses to be tracked accordingly.
2. The payroll is setting up the new Tyler modules to ensure a clean transition between fiscal years and to update union contracts information effective as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. I received a resignation letter from our Assistant Finance Director/ Treasurer Megan Guiliano, her last day is scheduled for Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. I want to thank Megan for all her hard work in her role as the Assistant Finance Director/Treasurer, she will be missed. At this time with the current vacancies and ongoing operational needs within the Finance Department, we are taking this opportunity to review the department's overall structure to ensure that we are best positioned moving forward with a strong and qualified productive team. As this review progresses any recommended organizational or structural changes will be brought to the Town Council for discussion and consideration.

8. Subcommittees.

Public Works Subcommittee, Robert Retallick reported:

The Public Works Subcommittee met and some of the highlights from that meeting are:

1. Street sweeping is almost 100% complete.
2. The highway garage renovations are completed.
3. On the Steele Brook Greenway Project, you can see French Street to the Unico Bridge started.
4. The Saint John wall removal has been approved and has been put out to bid.

9. New Business.

- a. Consider appointments to boards and commissions.

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Dan Cocchiola: I move to appoint Alan Mickel, 95 Woodvine Avenue, Oakville as a Constable for a term to expire January, 2027.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Rachael Ryan: I move to appoint Serena Cestari, 285 Davis St. Oakville as an alternate member of the Economic Development Commission to fill the remaining term of Peter Linn who resigned for a term to expire January 31, 2031.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Dan Cocchiola: I move to appoint Tadd Johnson, 100 Canon Ridge Dr., Watertown to fill the remaining term of Thomas Claire member of the Public Buildings for a term to expire, January 31, 2028.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

b. Discussion regarding possible anticipated revenue from the State of Connecticut.

Mark Raimo as stated at the last meeting CCM provided us documents as to anticipated revenue for the Town of Watertown. Pilot money was increased by \$52,000; we went from 459 to 512, increased by \$1,000 is the Town Road Aid and \$11,790 on special ed expansion development. The big increase was on our ECS grant, we anticipate the increase by about 1.4 million dollars. We also sought an increase on the one-time monies for the supplemental Pequot, Mohegan of \$278,000. The total anticipated increase is almost 1.8 million. Just as further information the state is giving the ECS Grant monies back to the towns for us to effectively reduce the mil rates. It is important that we consider that as we move into the next few meetings to discuss that. The other one-time increase is our monies that we should not have used for budgetary expenses. It should be for one-time purchases because if we use it this year, we are just going to increase the expense next year and we are going to need to raise taxes. If we look at using ECS funds moving forward it would be effective to reduce the mil rate using the one-time monies and some of thoughts I was thinking of maybe using towards some of our projects, percentage of contribution towards our grants. One would be Steele Brook Greenway for the secondary piece, one of our STEEP Grants out there.

Council questions:

Dan Cocchiola stated I definitely support the idea of 1.45 going against the mil rate increase. I think that would really settle the concerns for residents especially with the referendum. I guess as a matter of process is there a role for the council to play even tonight in articulating the data direction, we wanted to go with the ECS funding. We are articulating right now that we would like to do it, as a council do we want to say that we are going to do it?

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay answered we vote on the mil rate the meeting right after the referendum.

Dan Cocchiola stated as a group non-binding I believe at this stage because the referendum has not happened yet, can we collectively say do we as a nine support the 1.45 are going against the mil rate if the referendum passes.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay answered yes, I can't speak for anyone else.

Robert Retallick answered I am in agreement with that. We wanted to bring the mil rate close to zero if we possibly could and this is our opportunity to do that.

Mary Ann Rosa answered we shouldn't vote on something until the governor signs that it is official. Vocalizing that yes that is our goal is a good thing but legal vote we would then be committed if the number changed.

Dan Cocchiola stated I am thinking of the time here, I wanted as nine here we are committed.

Mary Ann Rosa stated that is our goal.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay our goal is to have the mil rate as low as possible.

Vice Chair Michele McHugh asked when will those dollars actually hit the General Fund?

Mark Raimo answered it will take some time in October which is the normal distribution from the State of Ct and I am in agreement that we should hold off until we know exactly what the dollars are and the governor does need to sign that budget for us to understand the numbers given to us through CCM.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay stated nothing is for sure until the governor signs that bill.

Rachael Ryan asked could I get an explanation of how the ECS grant works. The educational cost sharing grant, how does this actually work, in terms of this money going into the general fund to be used for education does it get applied, I just want a Finance 101?

Maria Guerrera answered in terms of the budget yes, I work with Maria Kushuba and she gets an estimate from the state on what the number is. That is what I use for the revenue and when it comes in, she lets us know and then we apply it accordingly.

Mark Raimo added the ECS grant is reimbursement for money that we are already budgeted for expensing on the BOE side. It's a formula that the state came up with back I believe in the early 2000's and the Watertown's ECS grant was 12 million 999 thousand dollars. As a result of this last legislative session, they changed it and they looked at the

changing of this ECS grant formula and Watertown ended up with more money. Moving forward I believe the legislators discussed that this being a onetime funding source. It's a direct revenue that offsets the expense for the BOE.

Rachael Ryan stated are their two options then, to lower the mil rate or could potentially, I am not saying I agree with it, the BOE could they spend the money?

Mark Raimo answered this money is reimbursement of the revenues to the town, it's the towns money not the BOE's money. If the Town Council stated we wanted to give you X number of dollars that would be in your prevue. But the intent of the legislation was to take some of the burden off the tax payer by reducing the mil rate. It wasn't given to the town to increase budgets on the BOE side unless they were underfunding their budgets that they couldn't meet last year's MBR. In that case the money would go directly towards to the BOE, we are not at that situation. We have an increase in our MBR which allowed the town to keep all its money under the ECS grant as a revenue, it's up to the council how it is appropriated.

Rachael Ryan stated say for example the special ed grant which has been just over \$11,000 that would go to special education?

Mark Raimo answered the law was not clear on that. I don't know the process of how that goes back to the BOE. Not seeing anything in the law I think it would just go to the BOE. I am not 100% sure on that, I would have to do some background research.

No action taken.

- c. Consider authorizing an appropriation in the amount of \$59,112.92 from the Jahana Hayes Communications Grant to account 262.50320.511.0000.9062 for change order number two for the communication upgrade project.

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Robert Desena: I move to authorize an appropriation in the amount of \$59,112.92 from the Jahana Hayes Communications Grant to account 262.50320.511.0000.9062 for change order number two for the communication upgrade project.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

- d. Consider authorizing an appropriation from the General Fund in the amount of \$4,310.60 to the Police Overtime Account number 010.50130.020.0000.9010. Funds received for Watertown Police Funds received from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for DUI activity enforcement.

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Robert Desena: I move to authorize an appropriation from the General Fund in the amount of \$4,310.60 to the Police Overtime Account number 010.50130.020.0000.9010. Funds received for Watertown Police Funds received from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for DUI activity enforcement.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

- e. Consider a resolution authorizing the transfer of funds between line items for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.



## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, expenses in the 2025-26 fiscal year require the transfer of funds:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by vote of the Watertown Town Council, that the following actions are taken relative to the transfer of funds.

### **GENERAL FUND**

AMOUNT: \$7,569.78 NO: 1

FROM: \$7,569.78 – 010.50110.006.0038.9010 – BOOKKEEPER I

TO: 010.50130.006.000.9010 – OVERTIME

REASON: To cover overtime expenses incurred during the period in which the Bookkeeper I remained vacant.

AMOUNT: \$17,586 NO: 2

FROM: \$17,586 – 010.50120.014.0000.9010 – PART-TIME SALARIES

TO: 010.50317.014.0000.9010 – MAINT LAND & BUILDINGS

REASON: To cover Fire House cleaning services that were originally budgeted as a part-time payroll position but are now being provided through a contracted cleaning service.

AMOUNT: \$35,000 NO: 3

FROM: \$35,000 – 010.50310.033.3229.9010 – WASTE & RECYCLING

TO: 010.50310.033.3230.9010 – RESIDENTIAL WELLS & DEEP FEES

REASON: For testing, maintaining, and installing water filtration systems in the vicinity of the Transfer Station as approved by the Public Works Subcommittee.

AMOUNT: \$24,475 NO: 4  
FROM: \$24,475 – 010.50510.014.0000.9010 – REPAIR HVAC CO1

TO: 010.50552.014.3118.9010 – 2024 FORD F350 W/PLOW

REASON: This budget transfer is needed because funds were entered into the incorrect account during the FY 2025–2026 budget upload into the Tyler Technologies accounting system.

AMOUNT: \$211,379 NO: 5  
FROM: \$211,379 – 010.50210.042.0270.9010 – MEDICARE

TO: 010.50210.042.0000.9010 – SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

REASON: This budget transfer is needed because funds were entered into the incorrect account during the FY 2025–2026 budget upload into the Tyler Technologies accounting system.

Dated at Watertown, Connecticut this 18th day of May 2026.

Jonathan Ramsay, Chairman  
Watertown Town Council

Motion: Michele McHugh seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve a resolution authorizing the transfer of funds between line items for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

10. Adjournment

Motion: Ken Demirs seconded by Michele McHugh: to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

---

Jonathan Ramsay, Chair  
Watertown Town Council

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Susan King, Clerk

Bring to Meeting



**WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM**

Date of Meeting: 5/18/26

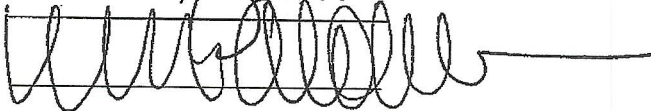
(Please complete this form and submit it to the clerk of the Town Council if you wish to speak at this meeting)

**Please Note: Three Minute Time Limit**

1. I agree to a three-minute time limit;
2. I agree not to raise my voice;
3. I agree not to use lewd, obscene, profane, slanderous or libelous language or speak or act in a manner that would tend to incite a breach of the peace;
4. I agree not to speak about Town personnel matters. Personnel matters include comments about the job performance of named Town employees, other than elected officials;
5. After three minutes I agree to leave the microphone and yield the floor;
6. I agree that if I cause a disruption and am asked to leave, I will leave the Chambers.

Name: Krista Palomba  
(please print)

Address: 480 Echo Lake Rd  
Watertown, CT 06795

Signature: 

Written materials may be submitted to the Clerk of the Town Council. Personnel matters should be directed to the relevant Department Head and/or Supervisor or in the case of a Department Head to the Town Manager except for the Town Manager which should be directed to the Chair of the Town Council.



# WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Janette Forcell*

Name: *Janette Forcell*  
(please print)

Address: *40 Viola*  
*Oakville Rd*

Signature: *Janette Forcell*

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**WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM**

Date of Meeting: 5/18/26

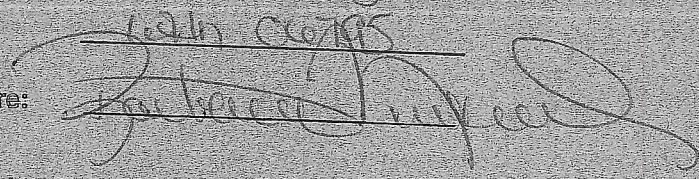
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Name: Barbara Zukowski  
(please print)

Address: 11 Mallory Rd

Signature: 

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May 18, 2026

I want to address two very serious concerns following the last Town Council meeting: the Town Manager's involvement in the police union negotiations and the continued lack of transparency surrounding the municipal budget.

First, I believe it was a major error in judgment for the Town Manager to insert himself as a "middleman" in negotiations involving the police union while his own son serves as an officer within that union. Whether intended or not, this creates at minimum the appearance of a conflict of interest and potentially exposes the town to unnecessary legal and ethical liability.

Connecticut General Statutes § 1-85 states in part that: "No public official or state employee shall use his public office or position... to obtain financial gain for himself, his spouse, child, child's spouse, parent, brother or sister..." While this statute is generally applied at the state level, the principle behind it is clear, public officials should avoid participating in matters where immediate family relationships create actual or perceived conflicts involving compensation, negotiations, or financial benefit.

Additionally, Connecticut General Statutes § 7-148h regarding municipal ethics allows municipalities to establish ethics standards specifically to prevent conflicts of interest and maintain public trust in local government decision-making.

Whether or not there is direct financial gain involved is not the only issue. Public perception matters. The appearance of impropriety matters. When personal or family relationships intersect with labor negotiations involving taxpayer dollars, leadership should be removing themselves from the process, not inserting themselves deeper into it.

At a time when residents are already questioning transparency and accountability, this decision only further erodes public trust and opens the door to potential legal challenges the town cannot afford.

Second, I continue to strongly oppose presenting the municipal budget to residents without complete financial information and without answering the questions repeatedly raised by the public.

Residents are still asking:

- What are the full long-term costs tied to WSA obligations?
- What are consultant and missing staffing costs for budget year 26-27 ?
- What future bonding obligations will taxpayers ultimately absorb?
- How will residents on private well and septic systems be protected from costs tied to services they do not receive?

These are not unreasonable questions. They are basic financial questions taxpayers deserve answers to before being asked to vote on a budget.

Instead, residents are being told to trust the process while major financial obligations remain unclear. That is not transparency, and it is not responsible governance.

This town did not arrive at this point overnight. Years of poor oversight, lack of accountability, ignored audit findings, and leadership failures created this situation. Residents asking hard questions are not the problem. In fact, residents asking questions may be the only reason some of these issues are finally being acknowledged publicly at all.

The Town Council's responsibility is not to protect political narratives or avoid uncomfortable conversations. Your responsibility is to protect the residents, the taxpayers, and the long-term financial stability of this town through transparency, accountability, and sound decision-making.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Zulkeski', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Barbara Zulkeski – 17 Mallory Rd. 06795



## WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM

Date of Meeting: 5/18/2026

(Please complete this form and submit it to the clerk of the Town Council if you wish to speak at this meeting)

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Name: Katherine Caman  
(please print)


Address: 31 Cottage Place  
Oakville, CT

Signature: 

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*\* signed under protest for violating  
First Amendment Rights*

Town Council Adopted: 12/16/2024

  
**WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM**

Date of Meeting: 5/19/20

(Please complete this form and submit it to the clerk of the Town Council if you wish to speak at this meeting)

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Name:

Frankie Paparowski  
(please print)

Address:

2100 Me, CO

Signature:

Frankie Paparowski

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Town Council Adopted: 12/16/2024



# WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM

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Name:

Mary Ann Ross  
(please print)

Address:

54 Central Ave  
Dakville

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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Town Council Adopted: 12/16/2024