



TOWN OF WATERTOWN  
WATER AND SEWER BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, January 5, 2026, 5:30 PM  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MINUTES

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

1. Call meeting to order.  
Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call  
Present: Michele McHugh  
Dan Cocchiola  
Joseph Chabot  
Jeffrey Cheney  
Adam Simonsen

Absent:

3. Public Participation  
Barbara Zelkeski, 17 Mallory Road  
See attached

Catherine Dinsmore, 35 Reynolds talked about the Water and Sewer litigation with bond payments and settlement offers.

Richard Rozanski, 35 Reynolds talked about the Water and Sewer litigation and the decisions made. He talked about open discussions, court summons and meeting minutes.

Mary Ann Rosa, 24 Central Avenue talked about the deadline date not being realistic, the committee needed more depth of information to hear. She suggested adding

Raymond Primini the Chair of the Town Council for the interviewees list to give information on what occurred then.

4. New Business.

Discussion of interview responses

- a. WSA (Joe Masi, Dave McMahan, Jerry Lukowski)
- b. Legal (Franklin Pilicy, Paul Jessell)
- c. Town Council (Jonathan Ramsey)
- d. Town Managers (John Gavallas, Mark Raimo)
- e. Finance (Maria Guerrero)

The committee read their notes discussing the interview responses broken down by area.

5. Analysis of existing information and possible action

- a. Areas if agreement/inconsistency
- b. Outstanding questions
- c. Additional information needed

Chair Michele McHugh asked the committee that they would not be done by February 2<sup>nd</sup> and asked if they would be able to continue.

The consensus of the committee they will be able to extend their time.

Motion: Dan Cocchiola seconded by Joseph Chabot: I would like to make a motion to invite to interview Vincent Catterino, William Hedburg, Debbie Desena, James Sugden and Raymond Primini.

Motion passed unanimously

Motion: Dan Cocchiola seconded by Jeffrey Cheney: I would like to make a motion that we make an effort to invite via video conference former Town Manager Robert Scannell.

Motion passed unanimously

Motion: Dan Cocchiola seconded by Joseph Chabot: I would like to make a motion to request any memorandums, emails, documentation or other records from our town's legal Attorney Jessell regarding advice that he gave to town officials regarding raising the rates on WSA to set aside funding to protect the town in liability consistent with Attorney Pilicy's 2020 memo.

Motion passed unanimously

A question was asked about discussion with the litigation attorneys for both the initial suit and the appellate suit in respect, did they in terms of strategy paying under protest, advised statutory interests factored into litigation and appeals strategy. What risk warnings were provided and to whom and are those items that we need to hear from a third party to determine what our team knew.

It was suggested after the interviews of the six people and at the end of the next meeting if we think we want to interview the litigation attorneys we can arrange it for the following week.

The next meeting will be the Tuesday after Martin King's Birthday at 5:30.

The committee suggested switching up the questions for the next interviewees.

Chair Michele McHugh asked if there any changes in the questions send by Friday the 9th and I will give the courtesy of sending them the questions and to cc Lisa.

6. Agenda items for Jan 19

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Adam Simonsen and seconded by Dan Chioccihola to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully,

Michele McHugh, Chair



# WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM

Date of Meeting: 1/5/20

(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: Barbara Zuczek  
(please print)

Address: 17 Mallory Rd

Signature: [Handwritten 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.

1/5/26

I do not speak for or represent the Watertown Fire District, but I want to address the testimony given by Town Attorney Paul Jessell.

Attorney Jessell stated that he would not have done anything differently and still does not believe the Town should have lost the lawsuit, despite the fact that Watertown has now lost three times in court. That position alone should concern every resident. When repeated losses produce no reflection or course correction, we must ask what, if anything, has been learned. Continuing litigation without reassessment raises serious concerns about judgment, stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and whether the Town had the appropriate legal guidance for an issue of this magnitude.

What is equally troubling is that nearly every witness in positions of authority and significant compensation offered the same response: they would not change a thing. That lack of accountability should alarm this community. Leadership requires the ability to reassess decisions, especially when those decisions result in repeated losses and long-term financial consequences. The Town Council must ask itself whether the right people are in the right positions.

We were told the Town's only options were to raise rates or get Waterbury back to the negotiating table. The record shows otherwise. Waterbury was willing to negotiate and reduce the judgment if the Town and the Water & Sewer Authority agreed to Waterbury's new rates. Watertown refused outright to pay those rates. That refusal eliminated any meaningful path to settlement. And yet, residents of both the WSA and the Fire District are paying Waterbury residential rates regardless.

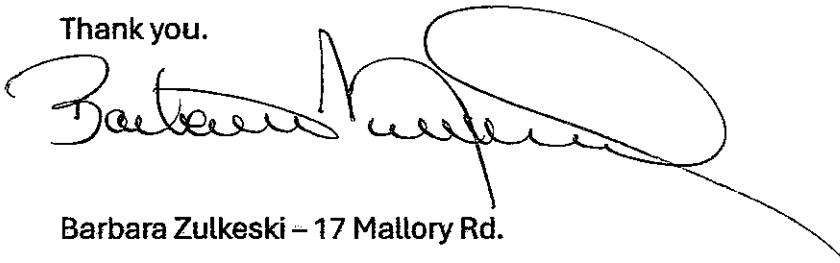
I also need to correct the record regarding Attorney Jessell's statement to the Fire District. It was not the Fire District that "drew a line in the sand." That line was drawn by 2,200 Fire District residents who refused to absorb millions tied to a General Obligation Bond they had no control over and no benefit from. This was not a Fire District debt bond. Those decisions were made by the Town Council, Town Manager, and Town Attorney, yet Fire District residents are now being portrayed as unreasonable. Asking them to absorb this cost would force them to pay twice, while WSA ratepayers who benefited from the bond bear none of that burden. If the Town chooses to act against these residents, that decision will not be forgotten by voters.

The Bi-Partisan Committee raised the concept of tolling, a standard stand-by agreement used to pause litigation while claims are evaluated. That option was never pursued. According to Attorney Jessell, he "never thought of it." Given the stakes, that failure raises serious concerns about diligence and judgment.

Finally, while the judge ruled Waterbury's rates to be fair and reasonable, we were told Waterbury "Threw numbers" at the Town during settlement discussions. Those numbers have never been made public. Where are they? At the same time, the Fire District presented clear figures showing Waterbury's billing practices are flawed. Instead of challenging those bills directly, the Town deflected responsibility. As it stands, Watertown residents are effectively being billed twice due to inflow and infiltration.

So, I ask the commission directly: after three court losses, refusal to negotiate, failure to consider tolling, and a lack of transparency, do we truly have the right people in the right positions? And if not, when will this commission ensure the Town Council holds leadership accountable to the residents who pay these bills?

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Zulkeski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Barbara Zulkeski – 17 Mallory Rd.



**WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FORM**

Date of Meeting: 1/5/25

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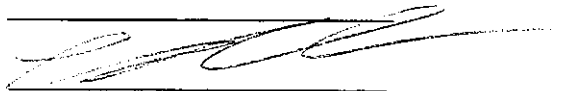
Name:

Catherine Dinsmore  
(please print)

Address:

35 Reynolds Wtn

Signature:



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Town Council Adopted: 12/16/2024



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Name: RICHARD ROZANSKI  
(please print)

Address: 35 REYNOLDS ST  
WATERTOWN, CT 06795

Signature: *Richard R. Rozanski*

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Name: M. A. Bessa  
(please print)

Address: 54 Central Ave  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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