

MEMO

TO: Mayor Stocks and Members of the Common Council
FROM: Chief Tanya Reynen, Fire Chief / Emergency Management Director
DATE: August 10, 2026
RE: April 2026 Flood Recovery Update - FEMA DR-4923-WI Disaster Declaration

Background

Following the initial report to Council on April 21, 2026, City staff have worked with Jefferson County Emergency Management to document damage to public infrastructure and private property. Those reports supported the State of Wisconsin request submitted through Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) and the resulting Presidential major disaster declaration, DR-4923-WI, for the storms and flooding of April 13-23, 2026. Jefferson County is designated for both Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA).

Public Assistance (PA) and the Request for Public Assistance

The PA program reimburses eligible local government costs for emergency response and for repair or restoration of public facilities. Eligible work includes emergency categories such as debris removal and emergency protective measures, and permanent categories such as roads, buildings, utilities, and parks. Eligibility rests on four components: applicant, facility, work, and cost. Costs must be reasonable, properly procured, and reduced by insurance proceeds. Funding may also be available for cost-effective mitigation built into permanent repairs.

The City is submitting a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) through the FEMA Grants Portal. The RPA is the formal application that registers Watertown as a PA applicant with WEM and FEMA. It does not commit the City to a specific dollar amount; it preserves our eligibility to seek reimbursement for documented eligible costs. The deadline for this declaration is July 30, 2026.

Once the RPA is accepted, FEMA will assign the City a Program Delivery Manager, a dedicated specialist who serves as our single point of contact throughout the process. That specialist will conduct a recovery scoping meeting, help build the damage inventory, and guide the City through scoping and costing, obligation of funds, and closeout. Staff are assembling labor, equipment, material, contract, and insurance documentation.

Individual Assistance

The declaration also opened assistance to residents and businesses. Jefferson County homeowners and renters may apply to FEMA for grants covering temporary housing, home repair, personal property, and other needs at

106 Jones Street • P.O. Box 477 • Watertown, WI 53094-0477 • Phone 920.262.4060 • Fax: 920.262.4042

Opportunity Runs Through It

DisasterAssistance.gov or (800) 621-3362, deadline August 31, 2026. Businesses, nonprofits, homeowners, and renters may also apply for low-interest SBA disaster loans at DisasterLoanAssistance.sba.gov or (800) 659-2955 by August 31, 2026, with an economic injury deadline of March 30, 2027.

Recommendation

This update is informational; no Council action is required. Staff will submit the RPA ahead of the July 30 deadline and continue coordinating with the County, WEM, and FEMA. I will report back as projects are scoped and obligated, and will return to Council if a local cost share or budget amendment becomes necessary.