

To: New and Reelected Common Council Members

Date: 5/1/2026

Re: Council Training Materials

Provided to you is the City of Watertown Council Training and Reference Packet for new and returning Council members. These materials are intended to serve as both an onboarding resource and ongoing reference guide regarding Council procedures, expectations, and City operations.

Key topics and reminders included in the packet include:

- Council meeting schedules, agenda procedures, and voting processes
- Expectations to review agenda packets in advance and arrive prepared for discussion and action
- Proper use of motions, resolutions, and ordinances during Council proceedings
- Understanding quorum requirements, voting thresholds, and meeting order
- Meeting conduct, decorum, and professionalism when interacting with fellow Council members, staff, media, and the public
- Expectations regarding communication channels and appropriate staff contacts for City business
- Open Meetings Law requirements, public records considerations, and avoiding walking or negative quorums
- Closed session procedures, statutory limitations, and meeting notice requirements
- Public comment procedures, hearings, and citizen participation guidelines
- Ethics, conflicts of interest, gift restrictions, and Council code of conduct expectations
- Board, committee, and commission roles, appointments, and meeting responsibilities
- Department overviews and key staff contact information, including who to contact for specific operational or policy matters
- General reminders regarding televised meetings, microphone use, meeting technology, and electronic agenda access

Please retain this packet for future reference and review these materials periodically throughout your term as a refresher on meeting procedures, legal compliance requirements, communication expectations, and proper operational processes.

We look forward to working with you throughout your term and supporting you in your role as a member of the Common Council. Please reach out with any questions.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING LOGISTICS AND PROCEDURES

LOGISTICS

City Council Meetings

The new City Council first meets on the third Tuesday of April for the purpose of organization, and regular meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of the month thereafter. City Council meetings start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noticed.

Parking

Most Councilmembers park in the City Hall parking lot at the corner of 2nd Street and Jones Street.

Seating of City Council

Seating of Councilmembers will be arranged by district.

Name Plates

The City will provide a nameplate for the City Council Chambers with the name you wish to have displayed to the public.

Use of Microphones

It is essential to speak into the microphones at the Council dais to ensure you are heard on the meeting broadcast and recording.

Meeting Technology

You will be issued a tablet to access meeting agenda materials and to electronically participate in the meeting (requesting to speak, voting, etc.). The IT Office will provide training on using the tablet. During Council meetings, the media staff is available to assist with issues that arise.

Recording of City Council Meetings

City Council meetings are streamed live by our Media Department on YouTube. Always remember that the cameras are on and that the City Council meeting is being recorded. When speaking, it is best to look at the Mayor; or look out at the audience when addressing the audience.

Recordings of City Council meetings can be found on the City YouTube website at: <https://www.youtube.com/@WatertownTV/streams>

Press

The press is allowed to join any meetings.

City Staff

The City Staff is present to assist you and answer questions you may have. The Mayor will pre-assign a staff member to do any City presentations. If you are dissatisfied with a staff member's response, ask the City Mayor. Further, from time to time, the Mayor may add supplemental information to a staff member's response or elect to answer a question instead of the staff member to ensure full and accurate information.

<https://ecode360.com/29269190#29269190>

City Council Meeting Manners

Lastly, a few words about City Council meetings. The City Council has a long-standing tradition of striving for a feeling of goodwill and a spirit of good fellowship between members of the City Council. This does not mean, however, that all votes of the City Council should be unanimous, nor that debate should never take place. It means that when the City Council meeting is over, so are the differences. The City Council should focus on issues, not personalities.

Do your homework for the City Council meeting. Residents and other Councilmembers find it disconcerting to have to wait until the next meeting for a decision when there has been sufficient time for studying the problem in advance.

Councilmembers are urged to silence their cell phones upon entering the Council Chambers and refrain from using cell phones when the City Council is in session.

PROCEDURES
CHAPTER 114 MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Election of President

The Council President is customarily chosen at the organizational meeting. The Council President is voted upon by the Councilmembers.

Schedule of Meetings

The new City Council first meets on the third Tuesday of April for the purpose of organization, and regular meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of the month thereafter. When a regular meeting date falls on city recognized holiday, the meeting will be rescheduled. When a regular meeting date falls on an election day the meeting is rescheduled to Monday instead of Tuesday.

Special meetings or Committee of the Whole (COW) may be called by written notice as required by State Statutes.

The Agenda

The agenda is a schedule of items for the consideration of the City Council at a regular or special meeting. The agenda is prepared for Councilmembers by the Mayor and City Staff. Members wishing to include items on it for any particular meeting should indicate their desire to do so and the nature of the item to the Mayor or Department Head by telephone, email, or in person.

Items brought up requesting City Council action during a meeting cannot be acted upon unless the item has been published as part of the agenda. Such items may be briefly discussed but must be referred to the next agenda for proper action.

Delivery of the Agenda

The City Council meeting agenda and supporting materials are delivered electronically through email and may be accessed on our meeting management website <https://watertown-wi.municodemeetings.com/>. Agenda packets are delivered to City Council members via email the Friday before the next scheduled meeting in order for the members to familiarize themselves with the forthcoming items of business. Paper packets will not be printed.

Quorum

Council - Five of nine members of the City Council constitute a quorum. A majority vote of members present of the City Council is necessary to adopt any ordinance or resolution. Two-Thirds vote is six.

Quorum and majority vote will depend on the size of the committee, commission or board.

Order of Business

The order of business at regularly scheduled meetings is:

1. Call to order by presiding officer.
2. Roll call
3. Pledge of allegiance
4. Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting and approving the same if correct and rectifying mistakes if any exist
5. Comments and suggestions from citizens present.
6. Reports of committees
7. Unfinished business from previous meetings
8. Communications and recommendations
9. New business
10. Paid Invoices Report (second regular meeting)
11. Communications and miscellaneous business
12. Ordinances
13. Resolutions
14. Comments and suggestions from citizens present.
15. Adjourn

City Council Action

There are three types of actions that implement policy by the City Council: simple motions, resolutions, and ordinances.

Motions are the simplest of actions by the City Council. Motions are used to process work activity, to handle procedural actions, to process directives such as suspension of rules, and to generate consensus of the body. Motions adopting a report or predefined action can have more permanence and effect. Motions should be made as follows: "I move that . . . (action be taken)".

A resolution should be utilized when permanence and a detailed written record of an action of the governing body is desired. Resolutions are used by the City Council primarily to state a position on a particular matter or issue and/or direct action.

An ordinance is the most formal of all City Council actions and has the force of law. Some specific actions of the City Council are required to be passed by ordinance. If the action of the City Council is one of permanence and should be part of the municipal code, or has a regularity or penalty implementation, an ordinance is preferable to a resolution. Conviction of an ordinance violation normally brings penalties.

Some resolutions and ordinances require an extraordinary majority vote by State law. This means that in order to pass certain specific actions by the City Council, more than a majority vote is required.

The City Attorney is present at City Council meetings to determine which resolutions and ordinances require an extraordinary majority.

Robert's Rules of Order

The City Council in its deliberations is governed by Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise stipulated by simple motion or ordinance. The City Attorney advises the Mayor and Council on procedure and the Rules of Order. The most common procedural question concerns reconsideration. If the City Council wishes to rescind affirmative action, then the motion must be made by the prevailing side, may be seconded by anyone, and requires five votes for passage.

Open Meetings

The Open Meeting law of the State of Wisconsin has been amended several times since its adoption in 1958 and continues to be redefined by the court system through court interpretation. The Open Meeting law, covered under Wisconsin Statutes 19.81 through 19.98, provides that ". . . all meetings of all state and local governmental bodies shall be publicly held in a place reasonably accessible to members of the public and shall be open to all citizens at all times unless otherwise expressly provided by the law." 19.81(2). This Open Meeting law establishes the right of people to be present at all public meetings but not to participate. State required public hearing requirements are dealt with in a separate section of the statutes.

The definition of what constitutes a meeting is defined by Wisconsin Statutes 19.82(2). "Meeting" means the convening of members of a governmental body for the purpose of exercising the responsibilities, authority, power, or duties delegated to or vested in the body. If one-half or more of the members of a governmental body are present, the meeting is rebuttably presumed to be for the purpose of exercising the responsibilities, authority, power, or duties delegated to or vested in the body.

Public Notice

Public notice requirements are part of the Open Meeting law. Notice must be made by submission of a copy of the agenda to the official newspaper and other news media requesting such notification at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Closed Session

There is a special procedure to enable a public body to hold a closed meeting. Wisconsin Statutes 19.85(1) provides for a closed session of the governing body under specific conditions.

At an open meeting, a motion is made to convene in closed session specifying the subsection under which the closed session will be held. Before the vote on that motion, the Council President must announce the nature of the business to be conducted in the closed session and repeat the proper subsection. The motion is then voted on. If it passes the City Council may go into closed session.

The allowable subjects of closed meetings are:

- (a) Deliberating after any judicial or quasi-judicial trial or hearing.
- (b) Consideration of the dismissal, demotion, licensing or discipline of (1) any public employee or (2) any person licensed by a board or commission, provided the public employee or person licensed is given actual notice of any evidentiary hearing which may be held prior to final action being taken and of any meeting at which final action may be taken. The notice shall contain a statement that the person has the right to demand the evidentiary hearing or meeting be held in open session. This exemption does not apply to any such evidentiary hearing or meetings where the employee or person licensed requests that an open session be held.
- (c) Consideration of employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercise responsibility.
- (d) Consideration of specific application of probation or parole or considering strategy for crime detection or prevention.
- (e) Deliberating or negotiating of the purchase of public properties, the investing of public funds or conducting other specific public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session.

- (f) Consideration of financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons, which, if discussed in public would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations.
- (g) Conferring with legal counsel who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the governmental body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved.
- (h) Consideration of requests for confidential written advice from local ethics board.

Committee Appointments

City Council committee members will be appointed by the City Mayor subject to confirmation by the City Council with exception to the Plan Commission and Police & Fire Commission. Appointments can be made throughout the year. Refer to the Board and Committees Overview section for a description of all the City Council standing committees. Each year, the Mayor will assign councilmembers to special committees. This is typically done at the organizational meeting on the third Tuesday in April.

Citizen Comments During City Council Meetings

City Council may be addressed by citizens during the “Comments and Suggestions from Citizens Present” item on the meeting agenda. *Members of the public who wish to address the Council must register their request in writing before the meeting begins. Each individual who requests to address the Council will be permitted up to three minutes for their comments. Members wishing to speak during the public comment section may only speak once per meeting.*

If a public hearing is listed as an agenda item, comments pertaining to that item are held until the public hearing is opened.

Public Hearings

Some items are scheduled for public hearings. These items are specifically noted on the agenda. The Mayor will open the public hearing, allow anyone in the audience to comment, and then close the hearing. No response to specific comments to Councilmembers is necessary.

Conflicts of Interest

A Councilmember should refrain from voting on any matter in which they or their immediate family have a direct financial interest, or they apparently have a conflict of interest. A Councilmember who questions whether he/she has a conflict of interest is encouraged to contact the City Attorney prior to the meeting.

Camera Etiquette - Recommended Do's and Don'ts

DO.....

- Please watch delayed broadcasts of the meetings to appreciate what the public sees and hears as well as to personally evaluate yourself.
- Always assume you are on camera. Even though you may not be speaking, you may be in view of the camera. It is a public meeting room and people in the room are observing you at all times.
- Remember to sit up straight, it projects confidence, and it puts you in the proper position to speak into the microphone.
- Be aware of your non-verbal expressions which can speak volumes.
- Wear clean simple colors. Medium toned solid colors work well. Avoid clothing with large areas of white, red or dark purple. Avoid checks, small stripes and other busy patterns.

DON'T.....

- When speaking, do not look down or turn your head away from the microphone.
- Do not touch your microphone, leave it in the normal speaking position at all times; lowering it picks up paper shuffling, etc.
- Do not open candy wrappers and beverage cans during the meeting or chew gum.
- Do not “eat” the microphone. When you speak, you should be about two to three inches away from the microphone.
- Media staff is happy to talk with Councilmembers and staff to review this list and to answer your questions related to televised meetings.

Virtual Meeting Etiquette

- Test your set up prior to the meeting start time.
- Mute your microphone when not speaking.
- Turn on your camera if you have one available.

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GUIDELINES FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

- A. To avoid interruptions, members, when recognized, should indicate the course their remarks will follow and perhaps verbally, or otherwise, indicate they have concluded.
- B. Motions on the floor should not be modified by statements such as, "that's all right" or "I'll include that change." Preferably, motions should be prepared in advance and should incorporate suggested changes prior to being made. Changes to a motion should be in the form of amendments.
- C. Committee chairpersons should report committee actions and move adoption of recommendations, regardless of their position on the committee vote. The committee chairperson may speak against the action during debate on the subject.
- D. Legislative action should be taken by ordinance or resolution. Unless otherwise specifically required by law, any action may be initiated by motion. A resolution shall be presented in writing prior to the meeting.
- E. Whenever feasible, any member who intends to offer a resolution should arrange, through the City Attorney, to have it prepared in writing and circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting at which it is to be offered.
- F. Sample motions for various courses of action are provided below:

MAIN MOTION

(1) I MOVE _____.

AMENDMENTS

(2) I MOVE to amend the motion by inserting _____ between _____ and _____.

(3) I MOVE to amend the motion by adding _____ after _____.



- (4) I MOVE to amend the motion by striking out _____.
- (5) I MOVE to amend the motion by striking out _____ and inserting _____.

- (6) I MOVE to amend by striking out the motion and substituting the following
_____.
- (7) I MOVE that this motion be referred to the _____ committee (commission).

PREVIOUS QUESTION

- (8) I MOVE the previous question (2/3 vote) (stops debate and orders an immediate vote).

RECONSIDER

- (9) I MOVE to reconsider the vote by which _____ was voted. I voted with the prevailing side.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE (FIRST READING)

- (10) I MOVE the adoption of ordinance number _____ entitled (read from the agenda) on its first reading.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE (SECOND READING)

- (11) I MOVE the adoption of ordinance number _____ entitled (read from the agenda) on its second reading.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION

- (12) I MOVE the adoption of resolution number _____ entitled (read from the agenda).

CLAIMS

- (13) I MOVE that the City Council accept the recommendation of the City Attorney and (deny / pay) the claim of _____ in its entirety.

CITY COUNCIL SERVICE ETHICS

Wisconsin law includes a code of ethics for persons who hold municipal public offices, either elected or appointed. This law applies to the City Council, Mayor, and all employees appointed or hired by the Mayor or City Council.

A Councilmember concerned about a potential conflict of interest should contact the City Attorney for an opinion.

The code prohibits such municipal officers, officials, and employees from using their position to obtain financial gain or receive anything of substantial value for private benefit. No individual may give a local public official anything that might affect such official's judgment or appear to influence the exercise of his/her discretion or appear to be a reward for any official action. A local official may not take part in any event or action in which he/she or a family member has a substantial financial interest, nor can an individual use his/her office or position as a means of producing a personal (including family) benefit.

A good rule of thumb which is easily applied is as follows: when the number of individuals invited to a dinner/event or given a gift is few and the dollar amount is more than nominal, the public official's conduct in accepting becomes suspect. In these cases, the public official(s) should have the City cover the costs. Otherwise, they should not attend the event or accept the gift.

Items or services specifically prohibited according to information received from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities include:

- 1) Food, drink, and travel of more than nominal value;
- 2) Something reasonably expected to influence an official;
- 3) A reward for any official action or interaction; and
- 4) Transportation, traveling accommodation, or communication services for which suppliers would usually charge.

Examples of prohibited conduct include an individual or organization buying a public official dinner or giving a gift in order to influence their decision-making (or appearing to influence their decision-making). If the public official is attending a dinner or event sponsored by individuals or organizations that may have an interest in influencing their decision-making (vendors, lobbyist, business, individuals), it is best to approach the situation by having the City pay the cost. If the individual or organization refuses, a check for the cost should be sent from the City. In all cases, if the public official is unsure, it is best not to participate in the event and/or not accept the gift.

<https://ecode360.com/29269364>

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING LOGISTICS AND PROCEDURES HELPFUL
RESOURCES**

- 1) [Wisconsin State Statute Chapter 19 \(General Duties of Public Officials\)](#)
- 2) [Chapter 65 of Municipal Code of Ordinances re: Ethics](#)
- 3) [Wisconsin Open Meetings Law Compliance Guide \(WI Department of Justice, Office of Open Government\)](#)
- 4) [Wisconsin Public Records Law Compliance Guide \(WI Department of Justice, Office of Open Government\)](#)
- 5) [The League of Wisconsin Municipalities Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Boards, Committees, and Commissions Overview

Boards

Board of Review

Board of Review reviews assessment rolls for real estate and personal property, hears testimony from property owners objecting to property assessments and makes the determination of appropriate assessment based on testimony from assessor and property owner. This board meets once a year.

Health Board

This board assesses the health needs of the community and creates policy designed to improve public health.

Housing Authority

The Housing Authority administers and maintains 78 public housing units, 55 elderly/disabled and 23 family units. Public housing is a federal program that allows tenants to pay 30% of their income for rent. The Housing Authority operates this program under an Annual Contributions Contract with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Housing Authority is not officially a city entity; the Mayor appoints, and the Council approves, an alderperson and citizen member to this body.

Library Board - State Statute Chapter 43

This board manages the operations of the Watertown Public Library.

Licensing Board

This board reviews all liquor license applications required by City Code and Wisconsin Statutes and presents its recommendation to the Common Council for approval, when necessary. In addition, they may recommend any revision of city licensing ordinances to the Common Council. This board meets once a month.

Council Representative to Main Street Board

Founded in April 2000, the Watertown Main Street Program is dedicated to the preservation, beautification and economic vitality of downtown Watertown. Working in partnership with downtown building and business owners, the City of Watertown, and the greater Watertown community, the Main Street Program serves as a catalyst to inspire reinvestment and renewal in the city's historic business district.

The Main Street Program a registered 501(c)(3) organization accredited through the National Main Street Center. Approximately 40% of the Main Street Program's annual revenue is derived from city funding. Although the Main Street Program is not a

standing city committee, a representative of the Common Council, appointed by the Mayor annually, serves as a voting member on its Board of Directors.

Zoning Board of Appeals

This board hears and decides appeals when there is any alleged error made by the Zoning Administrator. Additionally, they can hear and decide exceptions to the Zoning Chapter to avoid unnecessary hardship and promote public safety and welfare. This board only meets as needed.

Committees

Finance Committee

This committee reviews the yearly budget as submitted by the Mayor and makes recommendations to the Common Council regarding changes to that budget. The Finance Committee also reviews and approves purchases over the department head purchasing threshold and reviews and recommends approval of contracts and grant applications. The Finance Committee also serves as the Personnel committee for the City approving the wages of new hires and recommending policy changes to the employee handbook.

Public Safety & Welfare Committee

The Public Safety and Welfare Committee reviews and recommends ordinances affecting general public safety and hears appeals regarding such. Topics include but are not limited to emergency management, parking, crosswalks, right of way encroachments, street lighting, signage, recreational fires, property maintenance, vicious dogs and other animal issues.

Site Plan Review Committee

This committee manages the direction of growth and planning within the City. They do so by reviewing various maps and plans and making technical recommendations to the Plan Commission to ensure that the proposed development is compatible with our ordinances and policies.

Youth Advisory Committee

New in 2021, this committee is currently being formed to gauge the ideas and input of the youth in the greater Watertown community. The goal is to incorporate the ideas and opinions of the Youth Advisory Committee in an effort to have balanced and strategic growth that is appealing and appropriate to all generations.

Commissions

Airport Commission

This commission is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and equipment of the Municipal Airport. They may recommend appropriate improvements to the airport to the Public Works Commission and Common Council. They have the authority to set fees and charges for the use of the Municipal Airport.

Historic Preservation & Downtown Design Commission

The Watertown Historic Preservation & Downtown Design Commission oversees beautification projects within the Main Street Historic District. The commission is available to assist any downtown property or business owner interested in improving the look of their storefront or building. The Commission also works city-wide to promote historic preservation awareness through education and the creation of additional historic districts.

Park, Recreation & Forestry Commission

Park, Recreation & Forestry Commission plans and approves Parks and Recreation programs, administers the budget, recommends to the Common Council all major purchases, and submits ordinances and resolutions for managing Parks and Recreation programs

Plan Commission

This commission makes reports and recommendations pertaining to the plan development of the City. They may, in doing their functions, enter upon any land to examine and survey it.

Police and Fire Commission

This commission appoints the Chief of Police and the Chief of the Fire Department, approves subordinates appointed by the chiefs, and oversees the policies and conduct of both departments.

Public Works Commission

This commission superintends public works and keeps the streets, sewers, and public places and works in repair.

Redevelopment Authority

This body carries out projects aimed at eliminating blight and renewing urban areas. The scope of its powers and duties are outlined in State Statutes. The RDA is technically not a part of the City of Watertown; however, the RDA works very closely with the City.

Tourism Commission

This committee coordinates tourism promotion and tourism activities for the city. They provide duties and services as allowed by state statutes.

Transit Commission

The Transit Commission bids and awards the City's taxi service provider contract, reviews operations of the shared-ride taxi service, hears citizen complaints and reviews and recommends taxi rates.

Task Forces

Bicycle & Pedestrian Task Force

This task force was created in 2016 to oversee, delineate and update the plans to reflect the most advantageous locations for bicycle and pedestrian paths that will bring the biggest benefit to the City.

Downtown Main Street Task Force

New in 2021, this temporary task force has been formed to chart a strategic course for Main Street between Church and Market Streets.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE OPEN MEETINGS GUIDE

Open Meetings Law

Wisconsin open meetings laws (WI Statutes 19.81-19.98) require all meetings of local governmental bodies be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to the public and open to all citizens unless otherwise provided by law. All local agencies, boards, commissions, committees, councils, departments or subunits created by constitution, statute, ordinance, rule or order including advisory entities fall under the Wisconsin open meetings law.

A meeting is considered to be the convening of members of any of the bodies listed in the previous paragraph for the purpose of exercising responsibility, authority, power or duties delegated to or vested in that body. In most cases, a simple majority of commission or committee members must be present in order to hold a meeting and conduct business. This minimum number of members required to make decisions is known as a quorum. In the event that not enough members are present for a quorum at the scheduled meeting time, no discussion or votes may take place. The only actions that can be taken in the absence of a quorum are:

- Attempt to assemble a quorum by contacting committee/commission members
- Temporarily recess the meeting until a quorum is assembled
- Adjourn the meeting to a later specified date or the next regular meeting.

City boards, committees and commission members should also be aware of the potential for negative quorums and walking quorums in order to comply with open meetings laws:

NEGATIVE QUORUM: Less than half the members of a governmental body may constitute a negative quorum if the members present are sufficient to block a measure by agreeing to vote in opposition. Presence of a negative quorum triggers the legal requirements of an open meeting.

WALKING QUORUM: Legal interpretations have determined that a series of phone calls or e-mails between members of a governmental body can constitute a walking quorum. Members of boards, commissions or committees should avoid discussing business of that body outside of scheduled public meetings and should not discuss matters via group e-mail messages.

Social gatherings and chance meetings where a majority of a board, commission or committee may be present are acceptable provided it is not an attempt to circumvent public meetings law and that business of that body is not discussed or acted on.

Questions or concerns regarding open meetings compliance may be directed to the City Attorney at 920-262-4033.

Open Session/Closed Session

Another key component of the open meetings law is that all meetings are to be held in open session and any member of the public may attend. While the public may attend any public/open meeting, the public does not have the right to participate in the meeting. However, committees or commissions may permit participation by way of accepting public comments. The presiding officer of the meeting (chairperson) can set reasonable time and subject matter restrictions on participation. The rules for public comments/participation should be applied consistently and fairly.

There are very limited circumstances described in the WI statutes for which a closed session may be held. Any planned closed sessions must be properly noticed on the meeting agenda with the corresponding statutory reference. If a board, commission or committee is contemplating the need for a closed session, please contact the City Attorney at 920-262- 4033 for further direction on the mechanics of a closed session and how to properly agendize and record minutes of a closed session portion of a meeting.

Public Meeting Notice Required (Agendas)

One of the main components of the open meetings law is notifying the public of meetings. This is done by posting and publishing agendas. The City Clerk's office handles the required publishing and posting of agendas for all public meetings. City staff and the Committee Chair of each board, committee or commission assist in the assembly of the agenda. Agendas/agenda items must be submitted no later than close of business Wednesday of the week prior to a meeting (earlier submittal is appreciated) and are emailed to the City Clerk's office at cityclerk@watertownwi.gov. If there are items that need to be part of a meeting packet such as supporting documents, those items should be submitted no later than close of business Wednesday of the week prior to a meeting (earlier submittal is appreciated) also to the City Clerk.

The agenda for a meeting must include:

- Time, date and place of meeting (include virtual meeting access information)
- List of all subjects or matters before the body for that meeting.
 - Subjects must be stated sufficiently enough to identify the topic.
 - "New business" or "old business" are not sufficient descriptions. New or old business can be placed on an agenda provided a subset of actual topics is listed.

Example: *Old Business*

1. *Discuss and take action: Clerk's office voting equipment purchase*
2. *Review and take action: City web site content policy*

The mayor and city attorney review final agendas on Thursday evening/Friday morning for final approval.

It is recommended that a public meeting notice or BADKE notice be prepared for tours, site visits or specific social gatherings when it is known in advance that a majority of the members of a board, commission or committee will be present. The notice should state that no business will be discussed or acted upon at such an event.

After the Meeting (Minutes)

A record of all meetings held by a board, commission or committee of the City of Watertown must be written in the form of meeting minutes. All minutes are presented to the City Council and made part of the City's records. **Ensuring minutes are prepared is the responsibility of the chairperson of each body.** However, another member may serve as a recording secretary as it can be difficult for a chairperson to run a meeting and record the activity of the meeting.

Meeting minutes should be emailed to the City Clerk's office [at cityclerk@watertownwi.gov](mailto:cityclerk@watertownwi.gov) as soon as possible following the meeting. Minutes are presented to the City Council at their meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month. To be presented to the City Council, minutes must be received by close of business Wednesday the week prior to the Council meeting.

Minutes for a meeting must include:

- Time, date and place meeting was held
- Each agenda item with a description of any vote or action taken on the item and a brief synopsis of any important discussions.
- Signature or name of person creating the minutes.

Department Overviews

Function, Staff, Key Issues/Topics

Administration

The Administration Department is responsible for executive leadership via the Mayor, Human Resources, Information Technology and Strategic Initiatives and Development.

City Attorney

The City Attorney provides legal representation to the City of Watertown. The Attorney's duties include providing legal counsel to the Mayor and other departments, assisting in drafting, negotiating, and reviewing contracts, purchases, bonds, retention of services, real estate and property acquisitions. Also, the Attorney helps draft and revise legislation for the City Council. Additionally, the Attorney represents and defends the City in all civil actions.

Finance Department

The Finance Department handles most financial functions for the City of Watertown. This includes managing payroll, invoices, budget preparation, debt administration, tax calculation and collection, city accounting, and preparing reports for other entities.

City Clerk

The Clerk, located within the Finance Department administers oaths, issues license and permits, handles meeting management, provides notary public services to residents and departments, and handles insurance claims. This office also administers elections for City voters.

Engineering

The Engineering Department works to maintain the overall function of the City's infrastructure by providing information and assistance in planning, designing, coordinating, contracting, and supervising construction and capital improvements. Additionally, they oversee current records on public utilities, maps, and construction. Their responsibilities include coordinating the Annual Street Capital Improvement Program, managing the Stormwater Utility, managing public lots, and maintaining several structures along the Rock River, including the Riverwalk, two dams, and multiple bridges.

Building, Safety & Zoning

The Building, Safety & Zoning Department supports the safety and quality of life for residents and visitors of the City of Watertown by implementing the City Building and Zoning codes. By reviewing the plans of private developers, managing permits, inspecting properties, and keeping up-to-date resources, the department maintains compliance and safety for Watertown.

Health

The Health Department monitors community health to identify and solve community health problems, informs the people about health issues, develops and enforces policies that support individual and community health, and assures competent public and personal health care workforce. They examine the many factors that affect health in the community and ensure that people have access to the services they need to maintain health.

Media Productions

The Media Productions Department creates content for Watertown TV, the City website, social media, and The City Connection newsletter. This content provides transparency in government while engaging and informing the community.

Street Department & Solid Waste

The Street Department's main functions are to maintain 125 miles of public streets and right of way. This includes storm sewer maintenance, repair, and complete installation. The Street Department also does full street reconstruction with the Annual Street Improvement Program.

The Street Department also performs a variety of maintenance activities such as, leaf collection, snow removal, demolition projects, pothole patching, yard waste management, concrete repair in sidewalk and curb and gutter, quarry operations, and many other activities.

Under the management of the Street Department, the Solid Waste Department keeps the City of Watertown clean by collecting garbage and recycling throughout the city every day of the week, including holidays. They strive to run an efficient service, using public education to stress the value of recycling and keeping a clean landfill.

The Solid Waste team consists of six full time route employees and one mechanic. The Solid Waste team is managed by the Street Department.

Parks, Recreation & Forestry

The Parks Division takes care of Watertown's parks. Functions of this division include mowing, landscaping, maintaining buildings and fields, and keeping the parks beautiful for public enjoyment.

The Recreation Department provides high-quality recreational programming to the City of Watertown, partnering with local organizations to reach our community. They manage youth and adult athletic leagues, fitness and dance classes, park rentals, the indoor and outdoor pools, and the Senior Center.

The Forestry Division maintains Watertown's Urban Canopy. Managing street trees is the chief responsibility of the Forestry Division. They partner with property owners to assure a safe, green, and healthy city forest by fighting the various threats to our trees: Emerald Ash Borers, pollution, and the physical stress that is placed on those trees.

Police Department

The Watertown Police Department maintains law and order in Watertown by enforcing the law. They are divided into the Uniform Services, Support Services, and Administrative Bureaus, which handle patrol, investigations, and dispatch, respectively. In addition, these bureaus manage several programs and services that improve the safety and quality of life in Watertown.



Water and Wastewater Utility

The City of Watertown Water and Wastewater Utilities are two separate municipally-owned enterprise activities with the core purpose of safeguarding the health and welfare of the public and the environment. To this end, every day the department practices its mission of providing safe and reliable water and wastewater services today and into the future. While this mission drives what they do today, preparing for the future itself is central to that mission.

Fire Department

The Watertown Fire Department provides emergency services to the City of Watertown and parts of four surrounding communities. The department's services include fire prevention, fire inspection, fire suppression, Haz-Mat operations, wildland fire suppression, fire investigation, technical rescue, and paramedic services.

“Who to Call” List

Department/Division/Office	Topics	Contact
Airport	Municipal airport, hangar rental/lease	261-4567
Attorney’s Office	City ordinances	262-4033
Building,Safety & Zoning	Zoning code & enforcement, building & related permits, floodplain	262-4060
Media Productions	City website, social media, Watertown TV	262-4021
Finance Dept/City Clerk	Elections, municipal licenses, City Council action or policy, claims, municipal accounting, finances	262-4000
Court	Municipal Court, tickets for traffic and ordinances violations	206-4203
Engineering Department	Sidewalks, stormwater utility management, annual street program, GIS mapping	262-4060
Fire Department	Fire inspections, Fire & EMS reports, sprinkler tests, emergency management, tornado sirens, tours	261-3610
Public Health	Community health assessments, community health improvement planning, family health programming, immunizations, communicable disease, car seat safety, sharps collection, retail and recreational business licensing, human health hazards, radon information center, public health emergency preparedness	262-8090
Human Resources	Job opportunities with the City	262-4058
Inspection Department	Building permits, site review, code enforcement	262-4060
IT Department	Technology issues – helpdesk@cityofwatertown.org	206-4265
Library	Library services	262-4090
Mayor	Strategic items, council, board and committee actions and process, department concerns	206-4220
Police Department	Police reports, warrants, parking fines	261-6660
Senior/Rec Center	Aquatics, athletics, enrichment, senior programming, parks and forestry	262-8080
Initiatives and Development	Job creation, business recruitment and expansion, downtown revitalization	206-4266
Streets Department & Solid Waste	Street maintenance, traffic control, traffic lights, street lights, street signs, recycling, refuse, citizen drop off	262-4080
Water Department	Water quality, services, rates/billing, private wells, reports, tours	262-4075
Waste Water Department	Sewer connectivity, sewer backup, service, reports, tours, rate/billing	262-4085

Code of Conduct

The intent of this Code of Conduct is to outline how Council members should treat each other, City staff and others they meet while representing the City of Watertown. It defines more clearly the behavior, etiquette and manner that are suitable for various occasions.

The guidelines of conduct are founded upon "respect." Council members may face a great deal of stress in making decisions that impact fellow community members. Regardless, elected officials are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Demonstrating respect through words and actions can help guide members of City Council to do the right thing in even challenging situations.

Council conduct with other Council members

Despite the variety of backgrounds and personalities on Council, all have chosen to serve in public office with the common goal of preserving and protecting the present and future of the community. In all cases, this fact should be kept in mind even as Council may hold differing opinions on contentious issues.

In public meetings

- Maintain civility and professionalism during discussions and debate.

Challenges and criticism of ideas and information are part of a free democracy in action. This does not mean that Council members are allowed to make belligerent, personal, disparaging or threatening comments.

- Avoid personal comments and offending other Council members.
- Be role models for effective problem-solving.

Council members have a public opportunity to demonstrate how individuals with opposing points of view can find common ground for the greater benefit of the community.

- Be timely and focus discussion on relevant topics.

It is important that Council members honor the commitment to attend meetings on time and keep discussions pertinent to the topic at hand.

In private encounters

- Maintain respectful behavior.

The same degree of respect for different points of view that in public discussions should be kept in private conversations.

- Be mindful of the insecurity of written notes, voicemails and e-mail correspondence.

Your written and spoken words in private always have the potential to be made public. Think first: Would you feel comfortable if others could view what you wrote? How would you feel if your voicemail message was broadcast publicly? If your email message was forwarded to others, would you stand by what you said?

- Even private conversations can have a public presence.

The actions and behavior of elected officials are always on display. Conversations at lunch may be overheard, parking lot arguments watched, and casual comments noted. Effort should be made to show mutual respect for all members of the community.

- Treat all staff as professionals

Respecting the abilities, experience, and dignity of all City staff is expected. Disparaging and demeaning behavior towards staff is unacceptable.

- Limit contact to specific City staff.

Questions of City staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed to the Mayor.

- Do not take City staff away from their work.

Council members should avoid contacting City staff while in meetings, phone conversations, or while performing their jobs just to have individual needs met.

- Never publicly criticize an employee.

Council members should avoid criticizing the performance of a City employee in public. Comments such as these should only be made to the Mayor.

- Avoid involvement in administrative functions.

Do not attempt to influence City staff in making appointments, granting contracts, choosing consultants, handling development applications, or approving City licenses or permits.

- Communicate with City staff on correspondence before initiating.

Prior to engaging in correspondence, check with staff to see if an official response by the City has been sent or is in progress.

- Avoid attending meetings with City staff unless requested.

The presence of a Council member may imply partiality, intimidate staff or affect the staff's ability to perform their job.

- Limit requests for support from City staff.
- Do not attempt to obtain political support from staff.

Staff may, as private citizens, support candidates. Such activities must be outside of the workplace.

Council Conduct with the Public

In public meetings

Public participation is key to the democratic process. Council members should make effort to be respectful and impartial in hearing public testimony.

- Treat speakers with care, attention and respect.

Presenting before Council can be challenging for some people. The manner in which Council members treat people during public testimony can help them relax and be more comfortable.

- Give equal public hearing time to all speakers.
- Give the appearance of being an active listener.

It can be discouraging for Council members not to look at the speaker when they are talking. Be cognizant of expressions and body language.

- Ask for clarification, but avoid debate and argument with the public.

Questions by Council members to the individual testifying should aim to clarify information. It is inappropriate to belittle or demean the speaker.

- Avoid personal attacks of all kinds, under all circumstances.

In unofficial settings

- Do not make promises on behalf of the Council or City staff.
- Avoid personal comments about Council members.

Public disagreement about an issue is fine, but it is inappropriate to make disparaging comments about other Council members and their opinions or actions.

Council Conduct with Other Public Agencies

- Be clear about whether you are representing the City or personal interests.

When giving a statement or opinion to another agency or organization, clearly state 1) if this reflects personal opinion or the official stance of the City; 2) whether this opinion is in the minority or majority on the Council. Any correspondence should also reflect this clarity of representation.

- Remember that Boards and Commissions serve the community, not individual Council members.

Board and Commission members do not report to Council members. Council members do not have the right to threaten Board and Commission members with removal for disagreement on issues.

- Inappropriate behavior can lead to removal.

Inappropriate behavior by a Board or Commission member should be noted to the Mayor, and the Mayor should counsel the offending member. If inappropriate behavior continues, the Mayor should bring the situation to the attention of the Council and the individual is subject to removal from the Board or Commission.

Council Conduct with The Media

Council members may be contacted by the media for background and quotes.

- Avoid going "off the record" with media members.

Most media members can be trusted to keep their word. But all it takes is one transgression to be catastrophic.

In sum, the center piece of all this is respect. Respect for each other. Respect for different opinions. Respect for our community.