2026 Watertown Aquatic Center Annual Report - *Ryan Schmidt, Director*

In 1993 the Watertown Aquatic Center (WAC) opened to the public. Since 1993, the WAC has undergone changes and improvements to make it the exceptional facility that it is. The WAC has two main swimming areas, the main pool and deep end. The main pool ranges from zero-depth entry on the north end up to 5' 9" of depth before the deep end. During open swim hours WAC Staff reserves two lanes for lap swimming only. The deep end, located on the south end of the WAC, has a maximum depth of 12' and houses two attractions: a 24' plunge slide - known as The Plunger, and a one-meter commercial diving board. Starting in 2026, the WAC required that swimmers ages 13 and under take a swim test to use the deep end. Swim tests were administered every 30 minutes by a WAC Manager or Head Guard. Additionally, the WAC has a 216' Flume Slide, with the catch pool at the bottom. The maximum depth of the catch pool is 3' 3". Patrons must be 42" to use the Flume Slide. Updated admission fees for the 2026 season were $5 for city of Watertown residents and $7.50 for non-residents. Children ages 2 and under are not charged an admissions fee.

Staffing

The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department started the 2026 season with a new Director. It was decided that a seasonal, full-time Aquatics Manager would be beneficial to the Aquatics Division. The 2026 staffing numbers at the WAC were as follows:

- 1 Seasonal, Full-Time Aquatics Manager – new in 2026 after Full-Time Aquatics Manager Removed from City Budget
- 3 Managers – same as 2025
- 3 Head Guards – up from 2 in 2025
- 17 Lifeguards – up from 16 in 2025
- 4 Slide Attendants – same as 2025
- 5 Lead Concessions Workers – up from 2 in 2025
- 6 Concessions and Front Desk Staff – down from 7 in 2025
- 4 Slide Attendants – up from 2 in 2025

Looking ahead to the 2027 Watertown Aquatic Center season, it is anticipated that Aquatic Center staffing levels will remain similar with small adjustments in roles. Desired 2027 staffing levels are as follows:

- 1 Full-Time Aquatics Manager
- 3 Managers
- 22 Lifeguards
- 3 Lead Concessions Workers
- 9 Concessions and Front Desk Staff
- 4 Slide Attendants

In 2026 the majority of the Lifeguarding Staff were first or second year Lifeguards. I anticipate that many of these Lifeguards will be WAC employees in Summer 2027. For the 2027 WAC season the Aquatics Division will need to hire and train approximately seven new Lifeguards.

Hours of Operation and Weather Statistics

The WAC was slated to be open from 11:00am - 6:00pm beginning Saturday, June 13 through Sunday, August 16. The season began later than it historically has due to the new Director and the Aquatics Manager not being available to begin work until May 26th. The WAC was open to some extent on 52 of 64 possible dates in 2026. The 12 dates that the WAC did not open in 2026 were due to low temperatures, rain, low attendance, a mechanical issue, and four days of poor air quality. Managers and Head Guards were instructed to keep the WAC open if there were sufficient patrons to justify doing so. When the WAC closed early during an

operational day an announcement was posted on the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department Facebook, Staff made an announcement over the PA system, the Front Desk Worker told all incoming patrons that we would be closing at the determined time, and Staff posted signs on the door stating that it was our intention to close at a specific time.

Water Quality

To maintain safe swimming conditions, Parks Staff, Managers, and Head Guards frequently check the pool's chemistry throughout the day. Managers and Head Guards check the free chlorine, PH level, and refill chlorine tablets as needed. After closing on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays Managers throw three scoops of shock (concentrated doses of chlorine) into the pool to eliminate bacteria and refresh the pool's sanitation.

Managers and Head Guards made sure to maintain the ideal chlorine level of 2.0ppm to 5.0ppm. Although there were times that the chlorine level was higher than 5.0ppm, it never went above the safe level of 10.0ppm. When the chlorine level was above 5.0ppm a Pool Operator on the Parks Staff was always made aware and assisted with trouble-shooting. Manager and Head Guards also made sure PH did not go below the safe level of 7.2, or above the safe level of 7.8.

There were a few fecal incidents over the course of the summer that were minor. In these instances, an announcement would be made over the PA system for everyone to clear the pool. Managers and Head Guards would then test the pool's chemistry levels in the area and work to clean up the situation. Lifeguards would walk around the pool deck to answer questions and keep patrons updated. Managers and head guards would clean up the area and shock the pool and backwash the pool as needed.

Attendance

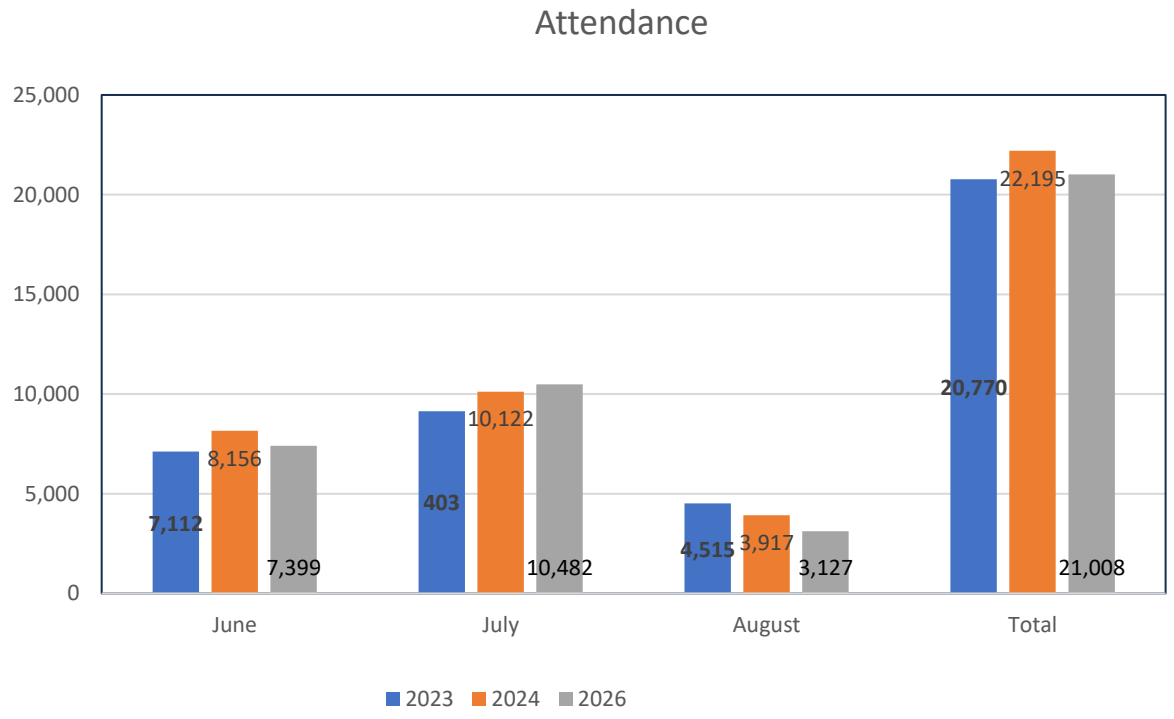
The WAC hosted 21,008 users in the summer of 2026. This number includes paying resident open swim users, paying non-resident open swim users, and Season Pass users. The busiest day of the season was Saturday, June 29th, where there were 800 users at the Aquatic Center. Attendance was not logged for the majority of the 2025 season; a year-to-year comparison is not fully available.

Daily Attendance

Daily Users	2023	2024	2026
Closed	14	11	12
1 – 99	5	4	3
100 – 299	25	30	18
300 – 499	22	18	20
500 - 699	10	14	10
700+	1	1	1

There are three ways to gain admission into the WAC: resident daily passes, non-resident daily passes, and use of a season pass.

User Breakdown	Resident	Non-resident	Season Pass Use	Total
June	2,055	550	4,794	**7,399**
July	4,397	1,897	4,188	**10,482**
August	1,086	540	1,501	**3,127**
Total	**7,538**	**2,987**	**7,878**	**21,008**



Combo and WAC Passes

Combination passes can be used to get into the WAC and the Indoor Pool. Combination Passes are valid for use through December 31st each year.

	2026 Passes				
	Family	**Adult**	**Senior**	**Youth**	**TOTAL**
Combo Passes	10	12	12	1	35
WAC Only Passes	218	17	30	30	295
Total	228	29	42	31	**330**

Revenues and Expenditures

Watertown Aquatic Center Income Statement - Summer 2026			
	2024	**2025**	**2026**
Revenues			
Gross Profit (admission, season passes, concessions)	**$122,870**	**$130,095**	**$140,245****
Expenses			
Prorated Aquatics Manager Wage	15,000*	16,614*	0
Overtime	1,414	3,684	1,095
Part-time Salaries	116,213	101,282	104,562
Contracts/Services	3,625	4,294	1,986
Supplies and Expenses	3,072	5,465	7,402
Repairs	11,952	14,594	10,000**
Trainings	1,384	1,789	678
Fuel	3,523	5,737	6,000**
Electric	18,331	15,281	15,232**
Water	14,208	14,396	18,900**
Telephone	703	1,355	1,527**
Social Security	7,293	6,505	6,550
Medicare	1,706	1,521	1,532
Chemicals	27,725	25,506	25,674
Uniforms	1,971	2,355	1,869
Concessions Supplies	26,436	23,579	24,786
Total Expenses	**$254,194**	**$243,957**	**$227,793****
Total			
Operating Income (Loss)	**$(131,342)**	**$(113,862)**	**$(87,548)****

* = ¼ of Aquatics Manager salary, no benefits

** = Firm estimates for 2026, these numbers will differ before 2026 finances are completed

Safety and Incident Reports

I am fortunate to have Staff who took their positions and the responsibilities that come with them seriously. During the 2026 season there were a handful of Lifeguard assists/saves which mostly involved younger patrons not being able to complete the swim test. Lifeguards did a great job of paying attention to their entire zone and properly executing the few saves that did not occur during a swim test.

During the 2026 WAC season, the most common medical incidents that occurred were bloody noses, small cuts, and bee stings. A few times throughout the summer a patron would hit their head while going down the plunge slide. When this occurred Staff were prepared to help by giving the injured an ice pack and monitoring them for any symptoms of a further injury. The WAC had no major medical incidents in the 2026 season.

There were a handful of patron infractions that caused patron(s) to be removed from the WAC for the day or the remainder of the summer. When these removals occurred WAC Manager were always professional and the patron(s) involved were cooperative with the enforcement.

Recommendations for 2027

1. Open closer to Memorial Day if staffing availability allows.
2. Purchase additional lifejackets for patrons to use.
3. Continue to strive for a 50% profit margin on all concession items sold.
4. Continue to remain open during Riverfest weekend.
5. Look into feasibility of adding morning lap swim and/or fitness classes to the facility schedule.