

DPW – Street/Solid Waste Division

To: Alderperson Arnett and Public Works Commission Members

From: Stacy Winkelman

Date: August 19, 2026

Subject: Solid Waste Rate Increase

Background

After working with the City Attorney, our division has created a resolution to support a rate increase in the solid waste utility as recommended by Ehlers Public Finance Advisors. The resolution aligns with this commission's desire to increase rates by \$1.10 per month for the years 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030 and 2031. (from the May 12, 2026 Public Works Commission meeting)

Budget Goal

Solid Waste Utility 17-58-17-

Financial Impact

The utility was reviewed and studied by an outside financial advising company and with projected costs and spending, they determined a rate increase was warranted.

Recommendation

It is our recommendation to approve a rate increase of \$1.10 per month for the years 2027-2031 to allow the utility to provide continued services to the City of Watertown. The resolution is attached and can be presented to the full Council on September 1, 2026.

2026 Operational Goals

Present a budget that:

1. Encourage community growth by assessing opportunities, involving all stakeholders, environmental needs, modern code and policy priorities.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

5:30 p.m.

The Public Works Commission met at the above date and time. The following members were present: Alderpersons Ken Berg, Myron Moldenhauer, Gina Nitecki, and Tony Arnett, Citizen member Pete Thompson. Absent: none. Also present: City Staff Andrew Beyer, Pete Hartz, Stacy Winkelman, Nathan Williams.

1. **Call to order.** Chairperson Arnett called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. **Comments and Suggestions from Citizens Present.** - None.
3. **Review and take possible action. Minutes of PWC meeting of April 28th, 2026.** Mr. Berg moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Mr. Thompson. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
4. **Discuss and take possible action: The Solid Waste Rate Study, presentation by Ehlers** – Solid Waste rates have not been adjusted since 2019 are not sufficient to fund projected costs or capital needs. Two scenarios were presented – a large increase in the first 2 years to fund capital needs with cash and a much smaller increase every year for the next 10 years using borrowing to fund capital needs. Mr. Arnett urged the adoption of the much smaller annual increase, and to put it in place for 5 years, with another review at that time. Commission members concurred. Staff will prepare a resolution to that effect to bring back to the Commission.
5. **Review and approve: 2025 Compliance Maintenance Annual Report (CMAR) – Wastewater Utility permit to discharge summary** – The annual report had very good ratings. The one area of deficiency was because of discrepancy in the sizing standards used by the State in that area, which do not match the standards currently applied in the State-approved facilities plan. Mr. Thompson moved to recommend the report to Council and Ms. Nitecki seconded. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
6. **Review & discuss: 2028 Labaree Street STP Urban Project** – This street reconstruction (including water and sewer) is slated for 2028 and would be partially funded by a State grant. Special consideration is being made to have Riverside Park accessible for Riverfest.
7. **Review & take possible action: Lighting for downtown Main Street 2028 Reconstruction Project** – Following Commission action earlier this year to look at an alternative vendor for lighting for the Main Street reconstruction project, the previously approved vendor came back with a dramatically reduced price that matched the alternative vendor.
8. **Review and take possible action: Draft Functional Classification Map Review** – The only update to the map was to adjust the boundary area. No street classifications changed. Mr. Berg moved to approve the map, seconded by Mr. Moldenhauer. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
9. **Adjournment.** Mr. Thompson moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Nitecki. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote at 6:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Arnett, Chairperson

Note: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.

**RESOLUTION TO
APPROVE NEW SOLID WASTE RATES**

**SPONSOR: ALDERPERSON ARNETT
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, costs to dispose of solid waste as well as recyclable items continue to increase; and,

WHEREAS, due to increasing costs to collect and dispose of solid waste and certain recyclables it is anticipated the City's Solid Waste Utility Fund will require additional revenue to remain solvent; and,

WHEREAS, the Public Works Commission has reviewed the financial data study for the Solid Waste Utility and have recommended an annual increase of \$1.10 in the monthly Solid Waste Utility collection rate for City of Watertown residences from 2027 – 2031.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF WATERTOWN, WISCONSIN:**

That the solid waste utility monthly rate for residents will have an annual increase of \$1.10 for the years 2027 – 2031.

That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect upon its passage and adoption.

	YES	NO
DAVIS		
LAMPE		
BERG		
NITECKI		
BLANKE		
SMITH		
ARNETT		
HAASE		
MOLDENHAUER		
MAYOR STOCKS		
TOTAL		

ADOPTED September 1, 2026

CITY CLERK

APPROVED September 1, 2026

MAYOR