

PUBLIC SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

July 1, 2026

5:05 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present	Also in Attendance	Citizens Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dana Davis, Chair• Brad Blanke• Rita Haase• Jonathan Lampe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captain Caucutt• Andrew Beyer• Nathan Williams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• John Katisch• Stefanie Broere• Alex Savath• Joshua Mueller

2. RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Each individual who would like to address the Committee will be permitted up to three minutes for their comments

- John Katisch spoke about the serious danger e-scooters and e-bikes are causing in the Downtown. E-scooters are not permitted on streets or sidewalks in Watertown. And no bikes, scooters, or skateboards are permitted in the Downtown Business district. He said that he has seen the Police turn on their police car lights and pull these individuals over. But, he says we need more enforcement, signs and messaging to get the word out.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes from June 3, 2026

- [06.03.2026 Public Safety Minutes.pdf](#) (0.17 MB)

MOTION: Approve the Minutes from June 3, 2026. (Blanke/Haase/Unanimous Approval)

4. BUSINESS

MOTION: Motion to move Agenda item H. to the top of the agenda. (Davis/Blanke/Unanimous Approval)

H. Review and take possible action: Stop sign requests for Lisbon Street and Wilbur Street

- [2026.0623_Stop Sign Requests.pdf](#) (0.55 MB)
- [Site Map - Stop Sign Placement.pdf](#) (1.12 MB)
- [Lisbon St. at N. Votech Dr. Request for stop sign 6.3.2026 - Safety and Zoning commission.pdf](#) (0.09 MB)

MOTION: Motion to approve the stop sign request for Lisbon Street and Wilbur Street. (Blanke/Haase/Unanimous Approval)

A. Review and take action: Special Event - July 4th Celebration

- [MEMO 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION.pdf](#) (0.05 MB)
- [2026-19 APPLICATION_Redacted.pdf](#) (1.33 MB)
- [2026-19 MAP.pdf](#) (0.11 MB)

MOTION: Motion to approve Special Event – July 4th Celebration (Lampe/Haase/Unanimous Approval)

B. Review and take action: Special Event - Craft Beer & Bacon Walk

- [MEMO CRAFT BEER & BACON WALK.pdf](#) (0.05 MB)
- [2026-18 APPLICATION_Redacted.pdf](#) (1.18 MB)
- [2026-18 MAP.pdf](#) (0.20 MB)

MOTION: Motion to approve the Craft Beer & Bacon Walk (Lampe/Blanke/Unanimous Approval)

C. Review and take action: Special Event - Watertown Riverfest Carnival

- [2026-17 MEMO RIVERFEST CARNIVAL.pdf](#) (0.05 MB)
- [2026-17 APPLICATION_Redacted.pdf](#) (1.21 MB)
- [2026-17 MAP.pdf](#) (0.34 MB)

MOTION: Motion to approve the Special Event – Watertown Riverfest Carnival with the strong recommendation that the carnival housing trucks for workers do not park in the Aquatic Center parking lot and instead park along the gravel frontage road that is just east of Labaree. Some of the housing trucks could park on the lawn as normal but the rest could park down below along the road where the Riverfest beverage and others trucks have parked in the past. (Davis/Haase/Unanimous Approval)

MOTION: Suspend the rules and bring D., E., F and G. to the floor together for discussion. (Davis/Blanke/Unanimous Approval)

D. Review and discuss: Ord. 26-19 Ordinance to Amend Section 220-3 Classes of Licenses and Fees of the City of Watertown General Ordinance

- [26-19 Ordinance to Amend Section 220-3 Classes of Licenses and Fees.pdf](#) (0.03 MB)

E. Review and discuss: Ord. 26-20 Ordinance to Amend section 220-9(F) Regulation of Licensed Premises and Licensees of the City of Watertown General Ordinances

- [26-20 Ordinance to Amend Section 220-9\(F\) Regulation of Licensed Premises & Licensees.pdf](#) (0.03 MB)

F. Review and discuss: Ord. 26-21 Ordinance to Repeal and recreate section 428-8 Outdoor Open Container Entertainment Event Permit of the City of Watertown General Ordinances Relating to Temporary Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Areas (TDORA)

- [26-21 Ordinance to Repeal and Recreate Section 428-8 Outdoor Open Container Entertainment Event Permit \(TDORA\).pdf](#) (0.03 MB)

G. Review and discuss: Ord. 26-22 Ordinance to Amend section 410-52 Possession of Alcohol Beverages on Public Ways of the City of Watertown General Ordinances

- [26-22 Ordinance to Amend Section 410-52 Possession of Alcohol Beverages on Public Ways of the City of Watertown.pdf](#) (0.02 MB)

DISCUSSION: The committee discussed the TDORA and supporting ordinances for almost 1 ½ hours. A summary of the discussion is below.

Davis: OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY

Proposed Ordinance 428-8 Temporary Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area (TDORA) grants the Public Safety & Welfare Committee oversight responsibility of TDORA applications and approvals.

C. Application.

(1) Application for a TDORA shall be made as part of a special event permit application § 428-7.

(2) In addition to the requirements of § 428-7, the application shall include:

(a) A detailed map of the proposed TDORA boundaries explaining how the boundaries will be displayed and monitored.

(b) A list of all “Class B” retail license holders and Temporary Class B Malt or Wine (Picnic) license holders who will participate in the Special Event.

(c) Such other reasonable and pertinent information as the **Public Safety and Welfare Committee** may require.

The proposed ordinance explicitly delegates oversight responsibility of the application process to the PS&W Committee. This committee has the duty to rigorously review the proposed legislation.

- The PS&W committee was not permitted to review the proposed ordinance prior to its going to the Council.
- The PS&W committee did not have the opportunity to examine the possible impact the ordinance may have on the public safety & welfare of City of Watertown residents prior to the proposed ordinance going to Council.
- The PS&W committee was not asked to provide input on the TDORA application process, requirements for approval and denial, etc. prior to the ordinance being presented to Council.

Lampe: Agreed that the ordinance should have come before the Public Safety Committee and he voted to support referring the ordinance to PS&W. He has questions about the ordinance circumventing other existing processes.

Davis: TIMING

While we understand the desire to have a Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area in place for an upcoming August 8 event, our priority should be to get the ordinance right, not to get it done quickly. This ordinance was not presented to the Council until June 16, leaving limited time for careful review, public input, discussions with affected businesses, and consideration of enforcement, safety, and other long-term impacts.

Our responsibility is to adopt policies that are well thought out and serve the community beyond a single event. If a Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area is the right fit for our city, it should be able to withstand a thorough review process.

The proposed TDORA ordinance is sweeping and complex. Meeting an August deadline is not feasible.

- The TDORA Application form needs to be written and presented to PS&W for additional input, review and approval. PS&W does not meet again until August.
- Will there be a TDORA fee? Must be approved by Finance Committee
- TDORA branded stickers, cups, wristbands must be designed and ordered by participating retail license holders. This will take time.
- **Most DORA ordinances are approved in Year 1 for implementation in Year 2.**

The committee discussed the purpose of a DORA.

Blanke: The purpose of the DORA is to help Bentzin Family Town Square become more viable. He wants the square to be more successful. How can we make it easier for our businesses to do business, be profitable and draw people in?

Lampe: Likes that this ordinance provides an answer for contiguous businesses to participate in an event. Sees this as a solution for established, proven events to involve more businesses.

Davis: Emphasized that it's an economic development tool. And any effective economic development tool needs an effective marketing strategy to be successful. The DORA needs a webpage, it needs branding, it needs marketing materials. All of those things take time which is why most DORA ordinances are approved in one year for implementation the next.

Davis: APPLICATION PROCESS

Currently the ordinance gives no guidance to the PS&W committee for approving or denying TDORA applications. Does the PS&W committee have discretion to deny a TDORA activation based on things like public safety, welfare, traffic, crowd control or community impact?

- If the answer is yes, this should be explicitly stated in the ordinance.

Lampe: Currently the ordinance seems to give the committee the authority to approve and deny.

Davis: What criteria govern activation of the TDORA area?

- Is there a minimum event size?
- Must multiple businesses participate or can one business create a TDORA that effectively only benefits that single business?
- Can a single retail outlet sponsor a TDORA activation?

Currently a single bar could set up a special event/TDORA that only benefits that one bar. Right now, the ordinance makes that possible. There is no requirement for a certain # of businesses to be included in the TDORA event.

Haase: Would there be anything wrong with that happening?

Davis: I don't know. Is that what the DORA is intended to do? Is it designed to make it possible for just one business to benefit from the TDORA event and exclude all other businesses? The City is effectively putting their thumb on the scale to provide economic benefit to select businesses and not to others.

Lampe: In favor of writing an ordinance that only permits TDORAs for established tried and proven events. For example, we know that 3rd Street has successfully hosted Blocktober Fest. It makes sense for the City to choose areas to invest in like the 3rd St. Entertainment District. Another proven event is the Chambers Pop Up Event where the whole Main Street is shut down. DORAs should be used to target specific areas in the City for economic development. The TDORA locations should be targeted and confined areas specifically chosen to invest in by the City.

Blanke: Doing that would exclude other businesses. Instead of just putting the City's thumb on the scale, it would be putting a whole elephant on the scale and exclude a lot of businesses. Blanke expressed an interest in making it easy for as many businesses as possible to host TDORA events.

Davis: Questions I have for the attorney

- Is TDORA activation discretionary or ministerial? The ordinance is not clear on this matter.
Discretionary – For example, the PS&W committee decides where to put stop signs or where to make “no parking zones”. The committee takes in the information and uses their discretion to make the best decision possible. There are pros and cons to discretionary authority. One con is that the decisions are not consistent from one year to the next as the PS&W committee members change.

Ministerial is how the Special Event permit is designed. “As of right” – As long as the applicant follows the rules, they will be granted a special event permit. The benefit of this is that the application of the ordinance is consistent across the years, even if the PS&W committee members change.

Shouldn't the TDORA application be ministerial? If yes, then the ordinance needs much more explicit information as to the approval and denial process.

- Can the committee deny activation because it finds insufficient public benefit? Could doing so open up the City to lawsuits if not clearly delineated in the code?
- Can the committee impose conditions?
- Can the committee reduce the requested activation area?
- Can the committee require street closures?
- Can the committee require additional security?
- If the answer to the above is “yes”, this should be explicitly indicated in the ordinance.
- Will there be a fee for the TDORA?
- Necessary revision - The ordinance needs to require that TDORA Class “B” retail outlets register to be a TDORA participant with the City Clerk for the following reasons:
 - The City will need to know which retailers plan to participate in the DORA so that the City can effectively communicate with them.
 - The City Clerk will need to provide DORA rules/regulations/guidelines to participants. A participant list with emails is needed.
 - Under Regulations, #3 requires [alcoholic beverages to be sold in non-glass containers bearing a TDORA identifier](#) (Branded cups? Branded sticker?)
 - The City Clerk will need to provide ordering information to participants so that they can order the branded cups/stickers/wristbands.

- *TRUE STORY: A bar owner sued a municipality because the bar owner claimed they were not notified properly of the process for ordering the required DORA cups and therefore could not participate in the DORA and lost revenue.*

Davis: PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE

1. Necessary revision to ordinance - "Consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on private property without the owner's explicit consent."

2. Pedestrian-Vehicle Conflict Risk:

A TDORA is designed to encourage people to:

- Leave one establishment
- Walk around downtown
- Visit other businesses
- Attend event activities

This means the TDORA ordinance is intentionally increasing pedestrian circulation.

When alcohol is added, even moderate consumption can affect:

- Situational Awareness
- Decision-making
- Reaction Time
- Attention to traffic

Question: Does the TDORA create a foreseeable increase in pedestrian exposure to moving vehicles?

The answer is probably yes.

If the answer is yes, there should be a requirement in the ordinance to close the roads for every TDORA event.

3. Crowding on Sidewalks

- As special event crowd density increases, pedestrians naturally spill into: Parking lanes, Road shoulders, travel lanes

This is another justification for closing roads for TDORA events.

4. State HWY 19 runs through our downtown = Main Street.

During a special event, people may cross mid-block, between parked vehicles, at unmarked locations.

- Alcohol doesn't cause the behaviors listed above but may impact judgment and decision-making that will lead to the behaviors.

5. Driver Expectation

- Drivers traveling on a state highway generally expect normal vehicle traffic and normal pedestrian activity.

- They may not expect large crowds, individuals carrying alcohol or large groups congregating near intersections.

The mismatch between driver expectations and the actual conditions is a significant safety factor.

Blanke:

- Drivers always expect normal conditions on a road. Thus when you see something abnormal, you change your behavior.
- People spill in the street – If that happens, we can consider closing the street for some events. I don't think we need to close the road for every event.
- Leaving the road closure as an option and not a requirement.
- Consumption can change people's judgment, but having more events is not necessarily going to result in longer drinking periods. We have not seen alcohol causing problems at the types of events that we already have.

Haase: Did not desire the roads to be closed for all TDORA events.

Lampe: I'm in favor of closing the roads for TDORA events.

Davis: In other communities, I've only ever seen the roads closed when the DORA is tied to a Special Event.

6. Boundary Enforcement – The larger the TDORA area, the harder it becomes to prevent alcohol leaving the district, people wandering outside the event footprint and consumption near active traffic.
7. Fall and Trip Hazards – Although this sounds like a minor point, it is often the most common event-related injury. When moderate alcohol use is paired with the following, tripping and fall accidents can and do happen: Uneven sidewalks, Curbs, Temporary barriers, Crowded pedestrian conditions

Davis -QUESTIONS

- 5 years from now, what TDORA applications will this committee be receiving that the current Council isn't envisioning today?
- Should the ordinance be revised to require the closure of roads for TDORA events?
- **What additional risks are created when the City encourages people who are consuming alcohol to circulate through a downtown area that includes an active state highway?**
 - If Main Street and roads are closed and the event area becomes a controlled pedestrian space, many of these concerns are reduced.
 - If State HWY 19 remains open to traffic while attendees are encouraged to walk around carrying alcoholic beverages, then pedestrian-vehicle interactions would likely be the most significant safety concern. This could be a potential liability for the City because an increase in pedestrian exposure to moving vehicles during the TDORA is foreseeable if roads remain open.

SUGGESTED COMMENTS AND REVISIONS FOR COMMON COUNCIL

- The ordinance needs clarification in some areas and revision would be prudent.
- The requirements for approval and denial should be explicitly stated within the ordinance and the PS&W is given the authority by ordinance to give input into these matters.
- Consider requiring TDORA participants to register with the City Clerk so that effective communication can be provided.
- Lampe and Davis recommend requiring road closures for all TDORA events. Blanke and Haase would like the ordinance to have a trigger to close the roads, but not make it a requirement for all events.

5.ADJOURN

Being no further business to discuss, the committee adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.
(Blanke/Haase/Unanimous Approval)