THE CITY OF WATERTOWN
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Water Systems
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 20, 2026
TO: Mayor Stocks and Members of the Finance Committee
FROM: Pete Hartz, Water Systems Manager
RE: Water Systems Position Title Updates, Grade Adjustments, and Retroactive Pay

Background

As part of the City's ongoing compensation realignment under Resolutions 9868 and 9869 (adopted June 2, 2026), the Water & Wastewater Utility engaged McGrath Human Resources Group to conduct a classification and compensation study covering positions across the utility. As part of that process, three Utility Technician positions within the Water Division and one Systems Operator position within the Wastewater Division were reviewed for appropriate classification.

McGrath's review determined that two Utility Technician positions hold responsibilities consistent with the Utility Technician III classification, and one holds responsibilities consistent with the Utility Technician II classification. Additionally, one Wastewater Division employee was placed at the Systems Operator II level during the McGrath rollout when the correct placement, based on certifications and experience, should have been Systems Operator I. All four classifications are already established within the City's compensation framework. The City's compensation authority has recommended administratively retitling these positions to their proper tiered levels in the approved pay table.

Placement Basis

Employees SN and TL, recommended for Utility Technician III, each bring 25 or more years of directly relevant experience and hold the certifications required for that classification under the City's adopted advancement framework. Their pay adjustments are recommended retroactive to January 1, 2026. Both employees have been performing duties and responsibilities consistent with the Utility Technician III classification throughout the 2026 calendar year. The delay in final placement reflects the timeline of the McGrath study process, not any change in the work actually performed.

Employee ML's reclassification from Systems Operator II to Systems Operator I corrects an initial placement error from the McGrath rollout. This adjustment accurately reflects the employee's current certifications and experience level and does not constitute a demotion — due to step placement within the correct grade, the adjustment results in a slight increase in compensation. This correction is also recommended retroactive to January 1, 2026, aligning the compensation record with the correct classification from the effective date of the adopted 2026 pay structure.

Employee NP's advancement from Utility Technician I to Utility Technician II reflects the attainment of the required Level II certification bundle and demonstrated independent operational capability consistent with the City's advancement framework. This adjustment is effective the current pay period (October 14, 2026) and is not retroactive.

Position Summary

Previous Title	Updated Title	Current Wage	Current Grade/Step	Proposed Wage	Proposed Grade/Step	Years Exp.
Utility Technician II (SN, TL)	Utility Technician III	$34.58	135 / Step H	**$35.22** (Eff. 01/01/26)	140 / Step F	25+
Utility Technician I (NP)	Utility Technician II	$27.20	130 / Step A	$29.10 (Eff. 10/14/26)	135 / Step A	1
Systems Operator II (ML)	Systems Operator I	$35.22	140 / Step F	**$35.44** (Eff. 01/01/26)	135 / Step I	7

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Finance Committee authorize the following actions:

1. Retitle employees SN and TL from Utility Technician II to Utility Technician III at Pay Grade 140, Step F ($35.22/hour), effective January 1, 2026, consistent with McGrath's classification determination and the City's adopted advancement framework.

2. Retitle employee ML from Systems Operator II to Systems Operator I at Pay Grade 135, Step I ($35.44/hour), effective January 1, 2026, correcting the initial placement error from the McGrath rollout. This correction results in no reduction in compensation.

3. Authorize retroactive pay adjustments for employees SN, TL, and ML to January 1, 2026, reflecting continuous performance at the correct classification level throughout the 2026 calendar year.

4. Retitle employee NP from Utility Technician I to Utility Technician II at Pay Grade 135, Step A ($29.10/hour), effective the current pay period (October 14, 2026).

These adjustments are consistent with McGrath's classification determinations and the City's adopted compensation framework under Resolutions 9868 and 9869. These recommendations have been reviewed with and are supported by the DPW Director and Mayor Stocks. This memo is submitted for Finance Committee consideration and authorization.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Hartz

Water Systems Manager, City of Watertown