



**THE CITY COUNCIL OF WATERLOO, IOWA
WORK SESSION TO BE HELD AT
Harold E. Getty Council Chambers
Monday, April 20, 2026
4:00 PM**

RULES FOR WORK SESSION PUBLIC COMMENT

Iowa Code Chapter 21 gives the public the right to attend council meetings, but it does not require cities to allow public participation except during public hearings. The city council shall not receive any public comment during a work session.

Roll Call.

Agenda, as proposed or amended.

Approval of Minutes of the April 6, 2026, Council Work Session, as proposed or amended.

4:00 p.m. Discussion of Black Hawk County water quality.

Submitted by: Deborah Berry, Ward 3 Council person

Approx. 4:30 Discussion of Middle Cedar Watershed Management Authority update.

p.m. Submitted by: Wayne Castle, PLS, PE, Assistant City Engineer

Approx. 4:50 Discussion of Black Hawk County Watersheds project.

p.m. Submitted by: Wayne Castle, PLS, PE, Assistant City Engineer

ADJOURNMENT

Kelley Felchle
City Clerk

April 6, 2026

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Harold E. Getty Council Chambers
4:00 p.m.

Pre-Meeting Items

Roll Call.

Members present: Mayor Dave Boesen in the Chair. Roll Call: Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Salamanca, Ms. Creighton-Smith, Ms. Berry, Mr. Martin and Mr. Simon.

Agenda, as proposed or amended.

Simon/Martin
that the agenda as proposed be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of the March 16, 2026, Council Work Session as proposed or amended.

Simon/Martin
that the minutes of the March 16, 2026 Council Work Session, be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Work Session Items

Discussion of the FY2027 budget.

Bridgett Wood presented the FY2027 budget that will be published in the paper on April 7, and the FY27 levy rate that the mayor would like us to certify. She explained that because it is being published in the paper, we can only make decreases.

Mayor Boesen commented that his goal is to keep the levy rate at 21.79. He shared that we will begin working on next year's budget right after this budget to allow more time to find new areas of saving. He asked the council members to reach out to Bridgett with any questions they still had.

Discussion of adding a park to Walnut Neighborhood.

Todd Derifield, Leisure Services Director, introduced Ali Parrish, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity.

Ali Parrish gave a presentation on a proposed new park in the Walnut Neighborhood. She explained that the Immanuel Lutheran Church & School had a playground park right behind where CVS and the grocery store are now. When the church sold the property to CVS in 2012, the neighborhood lost their park. Following surveys taken in 2022, action teams were formed in the winter of 2023. Habitat acquired five vacant properties and has identified the area to be a fit for the new park. The proposed timeline for groundbreaking would be spring 2026, construction

in the summer of 2026 and ribbon cutting in early fall 2026. She shared that they have currently secured \$167,253.00 with \$140,000 pending. Habitat for Humanity will donate the property to the city as part of the project and, upon acceptance, the city will maintain the park ongoing.

Estee Valtchev, Neighborhood Association, 527 E. Park Avenue, shared that through the process they have received feedback from the neighbors and it was important that the neighborhood be walkable to accommodate wheelchairs.

Mr. Salanca questioned the cost of maintenance once the park is complete.

Paul Huting, Leisure Services Director, commented that it would be minimal as they already perform maintenance that area.

Mr. Salamanca asked what the gap was in funding.

Ali Parrish, estimated perhaps \$50,000.00.

Mayor Boesen asked if there was a website where citizens could donate.

Ali Parrish shared that donations can be made through the Waterloo Community Foundation exclusively for this project, Walnut Neighborhood Park & Place Designated Fund.

Council members shared their comments and support for the project.

Discussion of adding a drone for firefighting services.

Brock Weliver, Fire Marshal, shared with the council members a copy of a community stakeholder survey. He explained that the Waterloo Fire Rescue will hold a town hall meeting on April 23, 2026, at the Waterloo Center for the Arts from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. to capture key information concerning community experience, city services, public confidence and satisfaction in Waterloo Fire Rescue and gather perceived hazardous risks. The survey will be available at the town hall meeting and online for the next two weeks. He further shared that the department is working toward obtaining Community for Public Safety Excellence Accreditation and this will align with our community risk assessment module, and he asked for council's support in getting this out to the public and promoting our town hall meeting.

Lieutenant Mike Zimmerly, provided an overview of how adding a drone could enhance public safety and asked permission to pursue external grant funding to create a mission-ready drone program.

Mr. Morrow asked if there would be a drone response team or have a drone on each truck and what the payload for the drone would be.

Mike Zimmerly stated that the current plan is to have one drone for the department, with multiple certified operators on each shift and described the drone options and maximum payload.

The mayor and council members continued to discuss the possibility of a drone with Chief Beck and Lieutenant Zimmerly.

ADJOURNMENT

Creighton-Smith/Simon
that the council adjourn at 5:12 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Kelley Felchle
City Clerk

Black Hawk County Watersheds Project:
Expanding Dry Run Creek Watershed Improvement Project
Background for Council Consideration

For more than two decades, the Dry Run Creek Watershed Improvement Project has demonstrated that coordinated, partnership-driven watershed management delivers measurable results. Through collaboration across rural and urban communities, the project has reduced runoff, improved water quality, and attracted millions of dollars in external investment to Black Hawk County.

Guided by the belief that “we all live in a watershed and all have a role to play,” the initiative has brought together landowners, agencies, and community partners to address two state-identified water quality impairments. These efforts have supported the implementation of more than 309 conservation practices across the watershed, backed by approximately \$3.4 million in private, local, state, and federal funding.

The impact is tangible. Today, these practices treat over 126 million gallons of stormwater annually and prevent an estimated 3,800 tons of sediment from reaching downstream waters each year. Long-term monitoring also shows improving trends in water quality, including increased aquatic species diversity and a healthier stream ecosystem.

These accomplishments reflect sustained collaboration among many partners, including the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Northern Iowa, City of Cedar Falls, City of Waterloo, Green Iowa AmeriCorps, The Nature Conservancy, Tallgrass Prairie Center, Hawkeye Community College, and numerous local landowners committed to conservation.

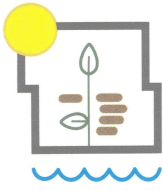
Now, there is an opportunity to build on that success.

The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, is preparing to expand this proven approach through the renamed *Black Hawk County Watersheds Project*—an effort designed to scale this model across both Waterloo and Cedar Falls to address shared water challenges in a more coordinated and strategic way.

Central to this effort is a grant-funded watershed coordinator who will work across the combined urban area to secure funding, align partners, and implement high-impact conservation practices. Funding for this position is expected to come through external grant sources, and the District will be responsible for supporting the position.

At this stage, the project is seeking a resolution of support for our forthcoming federal grant application. This resolution of support will demonstrate local partnership and coordination—key criteria for securing funding such as EPA Section 319 grants. This resolution does not commit the City to financial participation. Rather, it signals support for a collaborative approach that has already proven successful and positions the community to compete for significant external funding.

Continued investment in this work means more than protecting water quality—it means leveraging outside dollars, reducing long-term infrastructure costs, supporting local landowners, and safeguarding the health and resilience of our communities.



April 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Request for Letter of Support for Black Hawk County Watersheds Project

Dear Mayor and Members of the Waterloo City Council:

For more than 20 years, the Dry Run Creek Watershed Improvement Project has demonstrated that strong partnerships can deliver measurable improvements in water quality, runoff reduction, and attraction of external funding. That success provides a proven model for addressing watershed challenges across our region.

The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with the Iowa DNR, now desires to expand this approach through the renamed Black Hawk County Watersheds Project. This effort will strengthen coordination across Waterloo and Cedar Falls to address shared priorities and bring additional resources into the community.

Central to this work is a watershed coordinator who will secure funding, align partners, and guide implementation of high-impact conservation practices. This role is essential to accessing major funding sources, such as EPA Section 319 grants, State Water Quality Initiative funding, City REAP, private and local initiatives, among others.

At this stage, the project is seeking a resolution of support for our forthcoming federal grant application. This resolution of support will demonstrate local partnership and coordination—key criteria for securing funding such as EPA Section 319 grants. This resolution does not commit the City to financial participation. Rather, it signals support for a collaborative approach that has already proven successful and positions the community to compete for significant external funding.

In practical terms, a small local commitment helps unlock significant outside resources while reducing long-term costs associated with stormwater management, infrastructure demands, and water quality challenges.

This is a cost-effective way for Waterloo to remain an active partner in a proven, results-driven effort that strengthens resilience and protects prior investments.

We respectfully request that the Waterloo City Council adopt a resolution of support for our federal grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. 'Jeri' M. Thornsberry".

G. 'Jeri' M. Thornsberry, Chair