



**Special Persons Night**  
Tuesday, May 20, 6 p.m.  
A celebration of learning for students and their special people at Watervliet Elementary School!



**Remember to Vote on May 20**  
2025-26 School Budget Vote & Board of Education Election, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.



**Class of 2025 Graduation**  
Watervliet High School Class of 2025 Commencement is Friday, June 27.



News from

# Watervliet CITY SCHOOLS

## School budget vote set for May 20

Proposed budget focused on teaching and learning to meet student needs, tax levy increase below 'cap'

*On Tuesday, May 20, Watervliet City School District residents will vote on a proposed **\$44,082,000** budget for the 2025-26 school year. Voters will also consider a bus lease proposition, a proposed library tax (see page 3), and will elect one candidate to the Board of Education. Voting will take place from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at two polling locations: Watervliet Elementary School and the Watervliet Elks Lodge (see page 4).*

The budget proposal calls for an increase of nearly \$2.7 million or 6.5% compared to the current year. It will allow the district to maintain all personnel, programs and services. The projected state aid increase of \$2 million will help offset spending and invests in supports to address the needs of all students.

A reduction in state building aid qualifies the district for a capital levy exclusion, which would yield a maximum allowable tax levy limit of 15.44% per the state's tax "cap" calculation. District leadership has chosen instead to present a budget with a **much lower 1.77% tax levy increase**. This is possible because of the district's strategic approach to

long-term fiscal stability, which includes setting aside funds to address disparities in state building aid and the district's debt service payments without shifting the burden to taxpayers.

School tax rates, which determine the amount property owners pay per \$1,000 of assessed value, are set when the City provides its final tax assessment data to the district in August.

### Budget prioritizes student needs

The proposed school budget continues to prioritize teaching and learning. It provides resources to meet the academic needs of students and supports for social-emotional development. The budget proposal includes the following:

- Addition of a school counselor, athletic director, special education teacher, part-time art teacher and part-time speech therapist.
- Rental of classroom space to relocate the EVOLVE program to Green Island's Heatly School.
- Increase in professional development for teachers with instructional coaching K-12.

## BUDGET At a Glance

Proposed Budget	Budget Increase	Tax Levy Increase
<b>\$44.1</b> million	<b>6.5%</b> +\$2.7M	<b>1.77%</b> projected

- Technology infrastructure updates for desktop computers, hard drives, printers, and one-to-one devices for learning.
- Security system upgrades –including new cameras, weapon detection systems and digital hall pass software – aim to maximize instructional time, promote accountability, reduce disruptions and enhance safety.

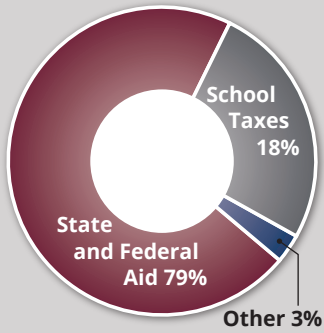
The 2025-26 proposed fiscal plan takes into account the growth in enrollment and the revenue from the tuitioning agreement between the Green Island and Watervliet school districts. It offers

an opportunity to expand high school elective options that will provide students with diverse and impactful experiences.

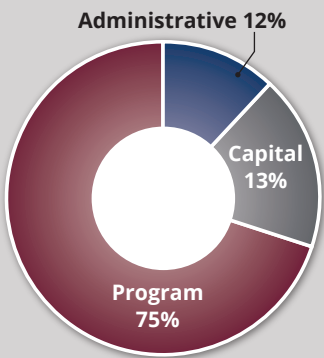
"Our budget proposal reflects a balanced approach to meeting the needs of students while also planning for the future,"



## 2025-26 Revenue Sources



## 2025-26 Projected Expenses



## Where Watervliet's education dollars come from

Source of Revenue	2024-25 Budget	Proposed 2025-26 Budget	\$ Change
Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$221,000	\$235,000	\$14,000
Interest and Penalties on Taxes	30,000	30,000	0
Consumer Utility Tax	375,000	390,000	15,000
Charges for Services (includes tuition revenue)	43,000	503,000	460,000
Use of Money and Property	5,000	16,000	11,000
Miscellaneous	180,000	233,000	53,000
Total State Aid	32,606,000	34,619,000	2,013,000
Total Federal Sources	204,000	189,000	(15,000)
Interfund Transfers	—	—	—
School Taxes	7,730,000	7,867,000	137,000
Appropriated Fund Balance	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$41,394,000</b>	<b>\$44,082,000</b>	<b>\$2,688,000</b>

We invite you to visit our website at [watervlietcityschools.org](http://watervlietcityschools.org) for more information about the proposed 2025-26 school budget, including a glossary of budget terms.

## How Watervliet's education dollars are spent

Budget Expense Category	Proposed Administrative 25-26 Budget	Proposed Program 25-26 Budget	Proposed Capital 25-26 Budget	Proposed Total 25-26 Budget	Total 2024-25 Budget	\$ Change
Board of Education	\$11,000	—	—	\$11,000	\$8,000	\$3,000
Central Administration	295,000	—	—	295,000	284,000	11,000
Finance	520,000	—	—	520,000	431,000	89,000
Staff	224,000	—	—	224,000	219,000	5,000
Central Services	717,000	—	1,559,000	2,276,000	1,922,000	354,000
Special Items	418,000	—	—	418,000	379,000	39,000
Administration & Improvement	1,646,000	—	—	1,646,000	1,536,000	110,000
Teaching-Regular School	—	10,111,000	—	10,111,000	9,457,000	654,000
Special/Occupational Ed Programs	—	8,484,000	—	8,484,000	8,212,000	272,000
Instructional Media	—	545,000	—	545,000	487,000	58,000
Pupil Services	—	2,204,000	—	2,204,000	2,077,000	127,000
Pupil Transportation	—	2,568,000	—	2,568,000	2,680,000	(112,000)
Employee Benefits	1,308,000	9,040,000	428,000	10,776,000	9,411,000	1,365,000
Debt Service	—	—	3,895,000	3,895,000	4,189,000	(294,000)
Interfund Transfers	—	—	109,000	109,000	102,000	7,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,139,000</b>	<b>\$32,952,000</b>	<b>\$5,991,000</b>	<b>\$44,082,000</b>	<b>\$41,394,000</b>	<b>\$2,688,000</b>

## 2025-26 Budget, from page 1

said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Donald Stevens. "It invests in strategies that strengthen academics, streamline operations and enhance safety. Most of all, it aligns with our mission to educate, inspire and challenge every student, every day."

**PROPOSITION 2: SCHOOL BUS**

- Residents will decide a referendum to lease one 66-passenger bus for five (5) years at an annual cost of \$26,600.

**PROPOSITION 3: LIBRARY TAX**

- Residents will vote on a proposition to authorize the school district to levy a tax of \$200,000, an increase of \$50,000, to support the Watervliet Public Library's programs. As per NYS education law, libraries are permitted to place a funding proposition on the school district's ballot that would require the district to levy and collect taxes for the library. **The proposed library tax is NOT part of the school district's budget.** Please visit our website for more information.

**Watervliet School District Budget Notice**

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2024-25 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2025-26 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$41,394,000	\$44,055,400	\$43,945,000
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$2,661,400	\$2,551,000
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		6.5%	6.2%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$7,730,000	\$7,840,400	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	-	-	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	-	\$26,600	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	-	-	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$7,730,000	\$7,867,000	\$7,730,000
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	-	-	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$7,861,000	\$ 8,012,350	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$7,730,000	\$7,867,000	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$131,000	\$145,350	
Administrative Component	\$4,849,000	\$5,139,000	\$5,139,000
Program Component	\$30,635,000	\$32,952,000	\$32,815,000
Capital Component	\$5,910,000	\$5,991,000	\$5,991,000

\* If the proposed budget is defeated on May 20, the Board of Education will have three options: present the same budget to voters a second time; present a revised budget to voters; or adopt a contingent budget. If the budget is again defeated, the board must adopt a contingent budget. Under the tax levy limit law, school districts can levy a tax no greater than that of the prior year, or a 0 percent increase, in a contingent budget. The Watervliet City School District would be required to eliminate an additional \$137,000 in proposed spending for the 2025-2026 school year.

\*\* List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)

Description	Amount
5-Year lease of one (1) 66-passenger school bus	\$26,600

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup>	\$361 City of Watervliet \$352 Town of Colonie

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the Watervliet school district, Albany County, New York, will be held at Watervliet Elementary School and the Watervliet Elks Club in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Watervliet school(s), at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

<sup>1</sup> The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.



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Watervliet, New York 12189

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Heather Soroka

Victoria Donnelly

Kyle Daniels

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Kelly Webster  
*Assistant Superintendent of  
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Keith Heid  
*Business Manager*

Molly McGrath  
*Director of Special Education and  
Student Support Services*

Kirsten DeMento  
*Director of Educational Programs  
and Accountability*

Editor: Judy Frost  
jfrost@vlietschools.org

*Produced by the Watervliet City School District  
in cooperation with the Capital Region BOCES  
Engagement & Development Service.*

## Postal Customer

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**TIME SENSITIVE — SCHOOL ELECTION MATERIAL — PLEASE EXPEDITE DELIVERY**

## Voting information

- ✓ **You are eligible to vote if you** are a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, registered with the Albany County Board of Elections, and a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote date.
- ✓ **Absentee ballots:** Residents who wish to vote by absentee ballot may pick up an application at the district office. Qualifications for voting by absentee ballot include: will be out of the county on the day of the vote; unable to appear in person due to permanent illness or disability.
- ✓ **Early Voting:** Eligible voters may apply for an early voter ballot for the school budget and board of education election by completing an application, which can be requested from the District Clerk.

## Polling sites for the Tuesday, May 20 vote

For the school budget vote and Board of Education election on May 20, eligible voters will cast their ballots at one of the two locations below:

- ✓ **District 1 – Watervliet Elks Lodge, 501 4th Avenue**  
All locations in the district south of the northernmost wall of the Arsenal and the entire area of Mannsville.
  - ✓ **District 2 – Watervliet Elementary School, 2557 10th Avenue**  
All locations in the district north of the northernmost wall of the Arsenal.
- Questions about the polling sites? Call the district office at 518-629-3201.*

## Also on the ballot:

- ✓ **Board of Education election:** Voters will elect one candidate to serve on the Board of Education, beginning July 1. **For candidate information, please visit [www.watervlietcityschools.org](http://www.watervlietcityschools.org)**

## International Night offers a celebration of cultures, diversity within our schools

Students, families, teachers and staff celebrated diversity and the many cultures represented in our schools and community during the district's third annual International Night at WJSHS in April. With their passports in hand, students explored countries from around the globe, and engaged in activities such as dance, games, and crafts associated with those countries. They also sampled cuisine from around the world. If you missed International Night, check out the dozens of vibrant photos on the district's Facebook page.

