



REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026 AT 6:00 PM

WATERTOWN MUNICIPAL BUILDING - 106 JONES STREET, WATERTOWN WI 53094 - RM
2044

1. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

A. Approval of minutes from August 19, 2026

5. OPENING FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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

6. BUSINESS

A. For discussion: RDA roles and responsibilities (Mayor Stocks)

B. Discuss and take action: Beltz grant application from Parks, Rec & Forestry Dept (Holiday Tree Lighting event)

C. Review and discuss: Priority work teams

i. Business continuity funding (Ryan & Steve)

ii. Ease of starting a business (Alder Haase, Todd, Bob)

iii. Strengthen and diversify revolving loan fund (Ryan & Jacob)

7. UPDATES

A. RiverWalk

i. Between Milwaukee Street & Main Street (east and west sides)

ii. Seawall maintenance by Globe

8. REPORTS

A. Social media report

9. ADJOURN

Persons requiring other reasonable accommodations for any of the above meetings, may contact the office of the City Clerk at cityclerk@watertownwi.gov phone 920-262-4000

A quorum of any City of Watertown Council, Committee, Board, Commission, or other body, may be present at this meeting for observing and gathering of information only



Redevelopment Authority for the City of Watertown

Turning Opportunity into Results

Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 6:00 pm

In-PERSON/VIRTUAL MEETING

Room 2044, City Hall

RDA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 1) Strengthen and diversify RDA Revolving Loan Fund, both in size and scope
- 2) Exploring options for Business Continuity Funding for downtown businesses in preparation for 2028 Main Street Reconstruction project
- 3) Simplifying the process of starting or expanding a business in Watertown

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
 - A. Present: Ryan Wagner, Steve Board, Ald. Tony Arnett, Ald. Rita Haase, Todd Huhn, Jacob Maas, Bob Smith, and Deb Sybell
 - B. Virtual: None
 - C. Bob Smith is a new member of the RDA Board

Other attendees: John Kadish, Stef Broere, Zack Goodrow
3. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order at 6:00 pm.
4. Approval of meeting minutes
 - A. Regular board minutes 6.17.26.
Steve Board motioned to approve
Todd Huhn seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Public Comment
 - A. None
6. Business
 - A. Discuss and take action: Sign grant application from Ready 2 Dance
Jacob Maas motioned to approve
Todd Huhn seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
 - B. Review and discuss: Business continuity funding priority (Ryan & Steve)
 Ryan and Steve shared a draft proposal for a business continuity loan program to carry viable downtown businesses through the 2028 Main Street reconstruction. The proposal includes a limited municipal guarantee behind loans originated by local lenders under their own underwriting standards. Ryan and Steve will meet with RDA financial institution partners and report back at next meeting.
 - C. Review and discuss: Ease of starting a business priority (Alder Haase & Todd)
 Bob Smith added to priority team. Todd shared his idea of developing a flowchart with the steps and links to resources. Alder Haase has been talking with businesses and shared survey data and RDA website analytics. The team will work on the website and flowchart.
 - D. Review and discuss: Strengthen and diversify RDA revolving loan fund priority (Ryan & Jacob)

Ryan reported that progress on this priority is “on pause” while the team works on the business continuity program priority.

7. Updates

A. Downtown Main Street Reconstruction

- The Common Council passed a resolution to sunset the Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Task Force. The resolution also establishes a city staff-led communications work group to develop and implement a comprehensive communication and outreach strategy with opportunities for stakeholder, community and volunteer involvement.
- The City of Watertown and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation hosted an information forum on July 31 regarding the 2028 Downtown Main Street Reconstruction plan.

B. Economic Development Plan Presentation to COW (Aug 4)

- Alder Arnett provided a high-level overview of the economic development plan with the City serving as a regional hub for agriculture, skilled trades, healthcare, commercial and recreational.

C. Presentation on RiverWalk to Watertown Housing Authority (Aug 18)

- Ryan and Steve reported on their visit with the Watertown Housing Authority Board to share and discuss the RiverWalk vision.

8. Adjournment at 7:25 pm

Todd Huhn motioned to adjourn.

Steve Board seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned.

One of the many great parks within the City of Watertown's Park System is The Bentzin Family Square, located on Main Street between First and Water Streets in the heart of our Downtown. Since its creation, The Bentzin Family Town Square has become a vibrant community hub for Watertown residents and visitors alike. Among the most popular community events hosted at The Bentzin Family Town Square is the annual Tree Lighting event, scheduled for Saturday, November 14th, 2026. This free, family-friendly community event officially kicks off the holiday season. Previous Holiday Tree Lightings at The Bentzin Family Town Square have brought an estimated 1,500+ spectators to downtown Watertown while creating a memorable holiday experience.

Due to the popularity of the annual Holiday Tree Lighting event, our Department has been able to secure generous donations from local businesses, individuals, and organizations. Unfortunately, these donations do not cover all event costs, causing the event to run at a deficit. Aside from basic operational costs to make the Holiday Tree Lighting event a success, the decorating of The Bentzin Family Town Square to make it a gem within Watertown is a costly expense on an annual basis. When grant funding is not available, event-related expenses need to be covered through this fund balance, which reduces the resources available for necessary Bentzin Family Town Square maintenance, repairs, and improvements. Grant funding is extremely valuable in helping offset event costs while allowing the Future Fund to remain available for its broader intended purposes.

The second main component of the Holiday Tree Lighting is the Make Your Business Sparkle competition, a holiday tree decorating contest that provides local businesses with the opportunity to sponsor and decorate a tree as part of a friendly community contest. Businesses can showcase their creativity while engaging with the community, and the public can vote for their favorite tree. The winning business is recognized with a trophy. While business sponsorships help offset some of the costs associated with Make Your Business Sparkle, there are additional expenses required to organize and provide the event. Grant funding would help offset these costs and allow the City to continue offering this popular community tradition while minimizing the financial impact on existing City resources.

Supporting the Holiday Tree Lighting will help a well-established Watertown tradition that brings hundreds of people Downtown continue to grow. Your \$8,000 grant would help ensure this free community celebration remains financially sustainable while preserving the Future Fund for future improvements and enhancements to The Bentzin Family Town Square.

I appreciate your consideration of our grant request and continued support of events at The Bentzin Family Town Square.



Beltz Foundation Downtown Watertown Special Events Grant Program

Program Overview

The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Watertown (RDA) established its Beltz Foundation Downtown Watertown Special Events Grant Program to support special events located within the Downtown Watertown Redevelopment District Target Area. The program offers grants up to \$10,000 to organizations conducting events that will positively impact the downtown area and meet the RDA and City of Watertown's goals, as set forth in the Economic Development Chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The RDA defines special events as those public events which attract more than 150 attendees and take place within the Target Area, meet economic development goals, contribute to the unique identity of Downtown Watertown, make the City core a compelling destination, provide economic impact, and promote business and community involvement. Special events do not include conferences, grand openings, ribbon cuttings, open houses, or private events not open to the public.

This is a competitive grant program. Applications are reviewed quarterly by the RDA Grant Program Committee. An application deadline will be announced whenever grant funds are available. Recommendations are presented to the RDA Board of Directors for final approval and awarding of funds.

Please note that applicants must complete the application process before incurring eligible expenses through the Beltz Foundation Downtown Watertown Special Events Grant Program. Any expenses incurred before a Grant Agreement is executed will be ineligible for reimbursement through the grant program.

Available Awards

The RDA has committed a total of \$50,000.00 from the Dr. John Beltz Charitable Foundation to the program, with a maximum grant award of \$10,000 per special event. Applications will be reviewed after each announced application deadline, and funds will be awarded on an ongoing basis, as long as funds are available in a given calendar year.

Eligibility Requirements

- Event must occur entirely within the Target Area (If an event has multiple locations, the RDA will only consider funding the event portion occurring within the Target Area)
- Event must be open to the public
- Event must meet the objectives of the City's plans and the special event definition stated above
- Have anticipated attendance of over 150 people

- Occur after approval of any funding under this program

Eligible Applicants/Organizations

- Must not have any outstanding fees owed with the City of Watertown at the time of application

Eligible Expenses

- Event related marketing and promotion
- Rentals for the event such as equipment, tents, chairs, tables, facilities, and portable toilets
- Vendor, performer, or exhibitor fees

Please note that if awarded funding, the reimbursement amount will be based on receipts submitted.

Program Goals and Priority Criteria

- Support events that promote activity and foot traffic in the downtown area.
- Preference will be given to events that generate positive economic impact for the community, promote and grow downtown businesses, and attract visitors to the City of Watertown.
- Involve members of the community in event planning and participation.
- Events of a political, activist, religious, or controversial nature will not be approved.

Application Process

Application Contents

An application for the program must include all of the following:

- Special Events Grant Application Form
- Event Budget with expenses and any revenue
- If applicant is a nonprofit organization: Articles of incorporation, bylaws and any other relevant documents describing the structure, mission and vision of the organization
- If applicant is a for-profit organization: Last three years of business income statements and most recent balance sheet
- Detailed event plan/information

Submission of Application

The application and all required materials must be submitted to the RDA Executive Director in either print or digital form. Applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Applicants are encouraged to submit materials as soon as completed.

Review process

Time of Review

Applications are reviewed after each application deadline by the RDA Grant Program Committee.

Substantive Criteria

The RDA Grant Program Committee will screen each application based on the following criteria before making a recommendation regarding the application to the RDA Board of Directors:

- Completeness of application
- Type of special event
- Organization history and experience

- Potential economic impact on the business community in Downtown Watertown

Notification of Recommendation

The applicant will be notified of the RDA Grant Program Committee's recommendation regarding the requested grant to the RDA Board of Directors. The applicant will also be notified of the date, time and location of the RDA Board of Directors meeting at which the committee's recommendation regarding the application will be discussed. The applicant will be invited to attend the meeting and address the Board of Directors regarding their application. The committee may postpone a recommendation on an application if additional information is requested or the application is incomplete.

Board of Directors Approval

After the RDA Grant Program Committee makes a recommendation regarding the application, the recommendation will be placed on the next RDA Board of Directors meeting agenda. The applicant will be invited to attend the meeting and address the Board of Directors regarding their application. The RDA Board meets regularly on the third Wednesday of the month. The applicant will be notified of the RDA Board of Directors decision regarding their application.

Conflict of Interest

Members of the RDA Board of Directors or any of its committees who are in a position to influence decisions regarding grants awarded under this program shall not have a financial interest, either directly or indirectly, in any person or entity applying for a grant through this program, unless that interest has been fully disclosed in writing and the board member/committee member involved has removed him/herself from the decision-making process, including all deliberations.

Denial of Applications

Following the recommendation of the denial of an application by the RDA Grant Program Committee, the RDA Executive Director shall so notify the applicant, stating reasons for the recommendation as communicated by members of the Committee, and including, if applicable:

- Requests for additional documents or other information which, if submitted by the applicant, may result in a grant award based on a future application; or,
- Suggestions as to changes in the proposed application which may result in a grant award based on a future application.

Post Award Process

Grant Agreement

Upon approval of the grant award by the RDA Board of Directors, the applicant will be notified and will be sent a Grant Agreement that will need to be signed by the applicant before project expenses can be incurred. Any expenses incurred before the Grant Agreement is executed will be ineligible for reimbursement through the grant program.

Post-award amendments to Project

Following the award of an Beltz Foundation Downtown Watertown Special Events Grant, if the applicant desires to make any changes or modifications from what was approved in their application, the applicant must submit to the RDA Grant Program Committee for review:

- Written description of the changes proposed

NOTE: Failure to obtain approval for any changes in the proposed event after awarding of the original grant will result in disqualification of the applicant from the program and the loss of the entire grant funding.

Distribution of Grant Funds

Payment Request

The applicant may request payment of funds in one payment upon completion of the special event. To request payment of funds the applicant must submit the following to the RDA Executive Director:

- Affidavit that all event activities match what was included in the submitted application
- All receipts from eligible expenses seeking to be reimbursed

Compliance with Approved Application

If all submitted documentation is in compliance with applicant's approved application and the program parameters, the RDA Executive Director will issue a reimbursement check. Checks will be issued within 15 days of request.

Non-compliance

If any of the relocation activities are found to be in non-compliance with the approved application or the program requirements, the applicant will be ineligible to receive grant funding or liable to pay back grant funding already received.

Redevelopment Authority of the City of Watertown
Beltz Foundation Downtown Watertown Special Events Grant Application

Applicant Information

Application Date: August 14, 2026
Organization Name: City of Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department
Organization Sector: Recreation and Enrichment Division

Contact Name: Ryan Schmidt

Role at Organization: Director
Contact Phone: 920-342-0403 Contact Email: rschmidt@watertownwi.gov
Organization Mailing Address: Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department
 ATTN: Ryan Schmidt
 514 South 1st Street
 Watertown, WI 53094

Total Amount Requested: \$8,000 Total Event Cost: \$10,000

Brief Description of what funds will be used for (please see Program Guidelines for eligible expenses):

Anticipated Timeline (estimated start and end dates): November 14, 2026 - January 14, 2027

Organization Information

How long has your organization been established? 59 years

Please describe your organization, including services offered and a brief history of operations.

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department oversees the maintenance of over 330 parkland acres within the City including The Bentzin Family Town Square, Watertown Aquatics Center, Senior and Community Center, and numerous neighborhood and community parks. Our Recreation Division provides diverse recreational offerings for participants of all ages and abilities. The urban canopy of City-owned trees is maintained by two City Arborists with the guidance of the City Forester.

Additional Materials

The following materials must be included with your application:

- ✓ Event Budget with expenses and any revenue projections
- ✓ If a nonprofit: Articles of incorporation, bylaws, and any other relevant documents describing the structure, mission and vision of the organization
- ✓ If a for-profit entity: Last three years of business income statements and most recent balance sheet
- ✓ Detailed event plan/information

Applicant Agreement & Signature

I have read the program requirements and reviewed them with the Executive Director of the Watertown Redevelopment Authority, and I understand that my participation in the Beltz Foundation Downtown Watertown Special Events Grant Program is contingent upon my full compliance with all requirements. I understand that all grant funds must be used to cover eligible expenses as outlined in the program documents and will be reimbursed after submission of receipts. My application includes all the materials listed above.

Applicant Signature  Date August 14, 2026

Holiday Tree Lighting Income Statement

Income	Amount	Notes
Beltz Special Event Grant	\$8,000	
Make Your Business Sparkle Entry Fees	\$2,400	12 @ \$200 each
Donations	\$500	Refreshments, treats, lights, etc.
Gross Income	\$10,900	

Expenses	Amount	Notes
Proline Entertainment	\$5,000	Event sound and lighting
Purchase of Large Decorations	\$2,000	Prevents renting in future
Make Your Business Sparkle Trees	\$1,200	12 @ \$100 each
Town Square Amenities	\$1,000	Needs to be determined, built by PRF
Archway Rental	\$750	
Replacement Holiday Lights	\$500	
Replacement Cords, Timers, Covers, etc.	\$250	
Misc. Event Supplies	\$100	
Make Your Business Sparkle Trophy	\$100	
Gross Income	\$10,900	
Projected Net Income	\$0	

Watertown Redevelopment Authority

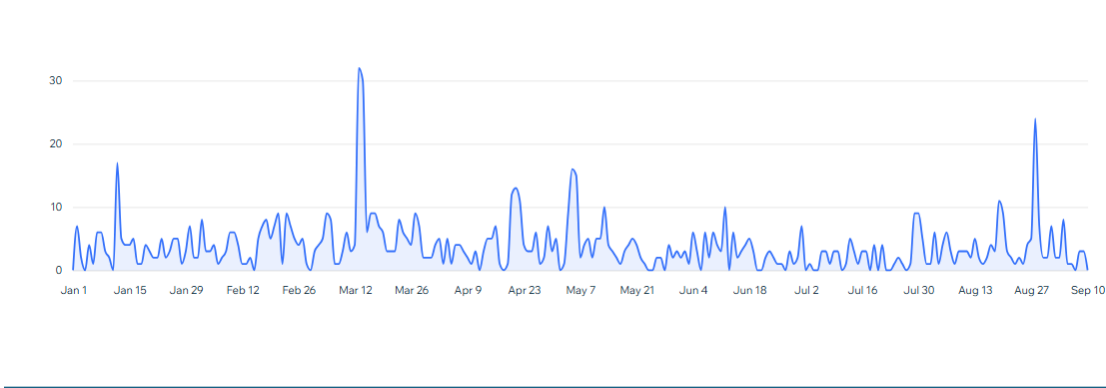
Social Media Report – 9/10/26

Website Metrics (last 30 days)

- 116 Site sessions (up 43%)
- 96 Unique visitors (85 new, 11 returning)
- Page visits:



Year-to-date Website Visits



Facebook (last 28 days)

The top performing post this month is a share from the Main Street Program of the river otter sculptures. 238 views.

- Content interactions: 4
- Followers: 1825
- New Followers: 6
- Link Clicks: 6

Facebook 2025 Totals:

Content interactions: 2,442
New Followers: 249
Link clicks: 1,325

2026 Totals:

Content interactions: 905
New followers: 106
Link clicks: 146