

# Watertown, MA – City Auditor



## Position Statement

Watertown, MA (35,329 pop.), is a thriving community that provides a suburban-like setting with urban amenities. Located just six miles from Boston, the City is a hidden gem offering many of the benefits of a smaller town with access to the economic, cultural, and educational resources of a big city. Cultural destinations like the Arsenal Center for the Arts and the Armenian Museum of America are complemented by welcoming neighborhoods, a good school system, international food offerings, coffee shops, and fresh green grocers. The City, which has a diverse population including the second-largest Armenian population in the country, celebrates and supports the rich and varied cultures within the community. Watertown is a City in transition as it has been experiencing demographic and socio-economic changes in recent years. Watertown recently appointed a new City Manager following the retirement of a City Manager who served the community for 45 years. The new City Manager joins the Watertown team in August 2022.



Watertown is well managed and well situated for continued success. It has an AAA rating and an FY23 budget of approximately \$174 million. The City's challenges include managing its growth, maintaining its superior financial stability, maintaining the City's relative affordability, continuing to build a strong team of municipal department heads as retirements occur, increasing communications with residents, and moving to the forefront on social issues, including diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts. Watertown recognizes that climate change impacts community health, local natural resources, and infrastructure and is diligently working to mitigate the impacts and to enhance climate resiliency.

**The position of City Auditor** has become available following the current City Auditor's decision to retire after a long and successful tenure. Watertown is seeking an experienced, knowledgeable, and talented financial professional with excellent financial management skills, strong knowledge of governmental accounting, and strong organizational skills to serve as its next City Auditor. Preferred candidates must have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in finance, accounting, or a related field and a minimum of five years of experience in governmental financial management or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

**Annual Salary: Negotiable, DOE/DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive total compensation package including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Watertown is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Government

Watertown recently completed a charter review process in which a revised [Home Rule Charter](#) was adopted with a number of modifications including the addition of a preamble, creation of a Community Engagement Officer, and creation of a Human Rights Commission. It retained its Council-Manager form of government but redesignated itself to be known as the City of Watertown. The nine-member City Council serves as the legislative and policy-making body of Watertown. The Council appoints the City Manager as the Chief Administrative Officer of the City. The City Auditor works under the policy direction of the City Council. The City Auditor supervises a staff of five full-time employees and one part-time employee.



## Finances

Watertown has an FY23 budget of approximately \$174 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AAA with a stable outlook. The City is in exceptionally strong and stable financial condition. Watertown has a fully funded Retirement System (as of July 2021) and a long-range funding plan has been created for addressing the unfunded OPEB liability which is scheduled to be fully funded in 2031. Additionally, it has a Building for the Future plan,

### Important Links:

- [City of Watertown](#)
- [Home Rule Charter](#)
- [City Code](#)
- [City Auditor](#)
- [Annual Town/City Reports](#)
- [FY23 Preliminary Budget Overview](#)
- [FY22 & FY21 Budgets](#)
- [City Auditor Dept. FY23 Budget](#)
- [Watertown Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Arsenal Park Master Plan](#)
- [Economic Development Report](#)
- [Resilient Watertown Climate and Energy Plan](#)
- [Watertown Organizational Chart](#)

which is a comprehensive, forward-looking initiative to address learning, operational, and capacity improvements for all school facilities. The FY22 tax rate is \$13.25 for residential properties and \$21.28 for commercial properties. Approximately 7.9% of the City's budget comes from state aid. New growth in FY21 was \$3.4 million, in FY22 is \$7.9 million, and is projected to be \$4 million in FY23. The total assessed value of Watertown properties in FY22 is slightly more than \$10 billion. Free cash for FY22 is approximately \$22.66 million.



The next City Auditor must have superior financial acumen and thorough knowledge of the methods and procedures relating to governmental accounting. The City Auditor must have knowledge of budget development and administration, understand the operations of other City departments, and have strong communication skills.

## Economic and Community Development

Watertown, founded in 1630 as a settlement based on agriculture, is today transitioning into a post-industrial community with a mix of cultural, racial, educational, and economic diversity. The City benefits from its location, bordering Soldiers Field Road and the Massachusetts Turnpike, which are major arteries into downtown Boston. It is close to Cambridge and Kendall Square.

With a network of squares and multi-modal corridors, Watertown is a well-connected and attractive place to live and work. A variety of housing types and innovative reuse of old industrial sites along the river and former rail corridor provides flexible options for a mix of business and residential uses. In addition to having a key location, Watertown is a well-maintained community, with a popular public library, recently constructed police station, three well-maintained fire stations, relatively new DPW facility, and upgraded recreation fields. The City is thriving, which is apparent via its vibrant downtown, squares, and mixed-use developments.



There has been considerable investment in Watertown from biotechnology and life science industries as well as in the retail and restaurant sectors in recent years. Additionally, a second hotel in the City was recently completed and opened for business. A number of prestigious academic institutions have facilities located in or near Watertown, including Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Boston University. Watertown is a thriving community with such major employers as Perkins School for the Blind, Exergen Corporation, Athena Health, and Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. In addition to easy access to the Mass. Turnpike and Route 128, Watertown is served by several MBTA bus routes and two community shuttles. Residential and open space account for slightly over 78% of the City's total property valuation.

## Departments

Watertown's department heads and employees are collaborative and supportive of the City's many initiatives. The finance-related departments – Auditor, Assessing, and Treasurer/Collector – are well regarded and strive to assist the City Council and City Manager in maintaining Watertown's current financial stability. The City will soon create the position of Community Engagement Officer which is charged with reaching out to residents and increasing transparency. All departments continue to adapt to increased service requirements in relation to the City's ongoing development.

## Open Space, Recreation, and Climate Resiliency

Watertown has beautiful open space along the Charles River, in the reservation owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, including more than four miles of direct frontage. The City is also home to the multi-use [Arsenal Park](#), Filippello Park, the Whitney Hill Conservation Area, the [John A. Ryan Arena](#) (skating rink), and 10 playgrounds. The City's [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) was developed to identify Watertown's open space and recreation resources and to ensure that the resources are not lost due to pressures of development or uncoordinated individual actions. Watertown is continuing its efforts to increase the amount of protected open space. Additionally, the City is committed to equity, communication, and innovation while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enabling all residents to thrive in the face of climate change. Watertown is a leader in making high efficiency buildings the norm and powering them with clean energy. Watertown has three municipal solar installations and two new Net-Zero elementary schools through a combination of energy efficiency and aggressive rooftop and canopy solar deployment.

## City Auditor Responsibilities

The City Auditor is responsible for the compliance with public finance laws and the application of general accounting practices and other financial practices of the City. The City Auditor works under the policy direction of the City Council and is responsible for supervising five full-time employees and one part-time employee. Staffing in the City Auditor's office includes the Auditor, Assistant Auditor, and three Principal Account Clerks, who are responsible for Accounts Payable, Payroll, and Benefits, respectively. Some of the duties and responsibilities of the position are:

- Ensures that the City fully complies with Massachusetts laws concerned with public finance. Participates in and oversees the accounting related functions. Ensures the accuracy of payments to vendors and contractors, as well as the accuracy of payment to City employees.
- Assists City departments with the tracking of expenditures, solving problems and the preparation of the annual budget. Ensures that all City department expenditures are within budget. Reviews all City contracts to ensure the accuracy and the appropriateness of the contract for services.
- Prepares and maintains financial records of the City. Works with independent auditors to ensure that necessary information and schedules are provided to ensure that a proper audit of City finances is accomplished.
- Prepares financial reports required by state or federal agencies. Prepares financial reports for the City Council and responds to information requests from the Council. Performs financial analysis of expenditures and participates in the budgeting process. Serves as a member of the financial management team to ensure effective planning.
- Serves as *ex officio* member of the Watertown Contributory Retirement Board. Oversees investment activity and ensures that monthly payrolls for retirees and beneficiaries are completed. Ensures compliance with public retirement laws.
- Performs similar or related duties as required by general laws, charter, ordinance or vote of City Council.

## Ongoing City Projects

- Construction of a new high school is expected to begin in 2023 with the facility slated to open in 2026. The high school is to be co-funded by the City and MSBA.
- Two new elementary schools are now open and a third elementary school is under construction. Total cost of the three schools is \$170 million and is being funded within the confines of Proposition 2½.
- Continuing work on updating the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Watertown Open Space Study is in progress.
- Determining future use of the former police station building.
- Possible recruitment and hiring of a Deputy City Manager.
- Recruitment of a Community Engagement Officer.
- Continuing efforts to acquire additional open space.
- Determining resolution to space needs at City Hall.
- Continuing to increase the City's walkability.
- Determining appropriate use of ARPA funding.
- Recently established Municipal Affordable Housing Trust.
- Completion of a Climate Action Plan.





## The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (Master's preferred) in finance, accounting, or a related field.
- Minimum of 5 years of experience in governmental financial management; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Thorough knowledge of the methods and procedures relating to governmental accounting.
- Knowledge of automated accounting systems and fiscal management systems.
- Knowledge of budget development and administration.
- Thorough knowledge of fiscal planning.
- General knowledge of the operations of other city departments and procedures, and relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with City officials.
- Ability to analyze financial management problems and find solutions.
- Expertise in state laws relating to local government finance.
- Ability to prepare detailed financial reports.
- Ability to maintain accurate records.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Recognizes and embraces the diversity of the community and supports the goals of equity and inclusion.
- Embraces anti-racist policies and practices.
- Treats everyone fairly and respectfully.
- Knowledgeable of financial best practices.
- Knowledge of Community Preservation Act is a plus.
- Massachusetts Municipal Auditors' and Accountants' Association (MMAAA) certification required or obtained within 3 years of hiring.

## How To Apply

Position is open until filled with a first review of application materials on October 24, 2022. Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, to:

[Apply@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Apply@communityparadigm.com)

**Subject: Watertown  
City Auditor**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal  
Community Paradigm Associates  
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*The City of Watertown, Mass., is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.*

