CITY OF ONEIDA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
BUREAU OF POLICE
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November 2, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Police Department's budget. The proposal submitted to the City Manager reflects the gaps between our current resources and what we need to fulfill our mission. It was prepared with an understanding of the City's financial constraints and a responsibility to identify, prioritize, and address risk.

The strategy behind this budget is proactive risk management: recognizing vulnerabilities, assessing their consequences, and addressing them before someone is hurt or a preventable failure occurs. My responsibility as Chief is to explain what we need, why we need it, and the consequences of operating without adequate resources.

Personnel is the foundation of that strategy and my first priority. Every responsibility we carry depends on having people available to do the work. We need boots on the ground officers who can respond to emergencies, protect victims, investigate crimes, address neighborhood concerns, and at the end of the day - put handcuffs on individuals who threaten our community. We also need time and personnel to complete reports, preserve evidence, and follow cases through to their conclusion.

The workload makes that need clear. We handled **11,218 calls for service in 2024 and 11,290 in all of 2025. This year, we are already at 11,869**, with two months remaining. Our year-over-year comparisons show calls for service up **25.23%**, offenses up **38.93%**, arrests up **approximately 40%**, and tickets up **47.95%**. Our personnel continue to investigate offenses, make arrests, and close cases under increasingly difficult staffing conditions. The work is not stopping.

Our members have done outstanding work through vacancies, shortages, and competing demands. Their dedication has kept this department moving. Sustaining that work requires a staffing plan that recognizes the demands placed on them. As I emphasized during last year's budget discussions, adequate staffing is essential to meeting both immediate calls for service and the proactive work our community expects. Drug investigations, traffic enforcement, community engagement, and quality of life concerns all require personnel and time.

Overtime will always be part of police operations. It will never be zero dollars. Emergencies, arrests near the end of a shift, court appearances, investigations, training, and necessary coverage create demands beyond a fixed schedule. We can scrutinize overtime, manage its use, and reduce avoidable expenses. However, we still have to fund the work that must be done. Reducing the overtime appropriation does not eliminate the circumstances that require it.

Grants, expanded responsibilities, and improved department capabilities are essential to our progress. They also require personnel to research opportunities, prepare applications, implement programs, track expenditures, and complete reporting. Every award creates work and responsibilities. To use those resources effectively, we must have adequate personnel to manage them while continuing to address the crime and quality of life issues already facing our residents.

My second priority is training. Liability is an ever-present reality in policing. Our officers need current knowledge, sound tactics, effective supervision, and practical preparation for consequential decisions under pressure. That requires funding instruction and providing time to

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attend it. When an officer goes to training, someone must still answer the calls. With limited staffing, adjusting schedules often moves the shortage elsewhere and can still result in overtime. We must provide the time and resources for officers to prepare properly and perform their duties thoroughly.

I respect the difficult financial decisions facing the City. I will continue pursuing efficiencies, grants, and partnerships. I also need to be clear: **we cannot sustain further cuts to a budget that has already been reduced.** Additional reductions will affect our ability to investigate crime, conduct proactive patrols, address neighborhood concerns, train effectively, and absorb unexpected demands.

I ask that this budget be evaluated against the workload, the responsibilities entrusted to us, and the risks we must manage. Our personnel are the root of our success. Supporting their numbers, preparation, and ability to complete the work is essential to protecting this community and preserving the trust our residents place in us.

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