ATTACHMENT A

RECEIVED
NOV 17 2026
BY:

Good Evening, Mayor Rossi, Members of the Council and city officials, thank you for hearing my comments.

My name is Susan Grossmann, and I am currently a resident of Ward 4. I grew up in Oneida, attended school here, but like many, after graduation, I left to forge my life ahead. During my many years away, I always called Oneida home. In 2020, I made the decision to return to Oneida, being blessed with the opportunity to purchase a home I'd always admired on Main St. Twenty-one of the 36 years I was away I was serving in the US Navy, stateside, overseas, aboard ship, and a deployment to Afghanistan, so I understand what it means to serve, and to sacrifice, and I appreciate all of yours.

Back when the appeal was made to amend our city charter in order to incorporate and hire a city manager, it made sense to me, and I voted in favor of it. I believed anything to help our city improve its economy, tax revenue, job and business opportunity, and quality of life for its citizens was a good thing. I had high hopes for where Mr. Lovell would bring our fair city.

I have disregarded all of the Facebook banter about Mr. Lovell. As a matter of fact, this past year I just off of Facebook altogether, thinking that a better name for the app should be "In your Facebook." Anyway, I like to make up my own mind about things based on facts. So, this is how I see it.

This year, it is my understanding Mr. Lovell initially proposed a 27% property tax increase for the 2027 budget, then reduced it to 23%. It was at this point that the council members went to work, very diligently, to get that down to where they have it now, below 10%. I was present for some of those deliberations, and I am very grateful to the Mayor and council for their dedication, hard work, and their willingness to each take a voluntary pay cut in order to make this happen. I am also grateful to the Mayor for holding off on proposals to increase water rates, saying "We aren't going to hit the taxpayers twice." I appreciate that. I think we all do.

My higher concern, however, is regarding the well documented discrepancy in Mr. Lovell's 2026 salary. I know this has been raised and discussed, and there

is video evidence of Mr. Lovell stating that he would accept a salary of $120K vs. $150K, in addition to a $30k+ benefit buyout (a 1000% increase in benefit buyout over any other city employee). Then, due to a clerical error, lack of oversight, due diligence, or whatever, this change was never made, the budget passed, and Mr. Lovell received a salary of $150K plus the benefit buyout, making his salary in 2026 greater than $180,000.

What troubles me the most is that I can't imagine that you, our City Manager, didn't notice the discrepancy in your pay. You served in the military, so I know you understand the importance of paying attention to detail. In my mind, an honest man, a man of integrity, both character traits I would expect of a veteran, would have raised the issue to have it rectified. But that didn't happen. You just continued to collect the higher amount. In verbalizing that you would take $120k but instead took $150K without addressing this error tells me that your word is of no value. Your word is no good. It will now be almost impossible for me, and I think many others, to trust anything you say.

I attended the council meeting on October 20th where I believe this issue was supposed to be discussed. Unfortunately, for reasons no one could state, neither you nor our city attorney were present at that meeting, so it was not brought up.

The last meeting I attended was the final budget meeting on November 4th. I missed much of it because I mistakenly thought it was at 6:30 not 5:30, but I did catch the end. And at the end of that meeting the discussion turned to who could possibly write grants for the city? How were we to get that done? Isn't there a BOCES course that teaches grant writing? That came as quite a surprise to me, because I clearly remember Mr. Matt Roberts standing up in these very chambers, advocating for the city manager position and for Mr. Lovell to fill it, stating that in fact, Mr. Lovell would be writing grants. It is my understanding that Mr. Lovell has even claimed grant writing experience. Why then, would we need to look elsewhere, and spend more money for someone else to do this? I also recall it being said that in a meeting encouraging us to hire Mr. Lovell that the revenue he would bring to the city would make up for

his salary within three years. Well, it's been three years. Has that happened? Do we even know? How do we know that we are getting a good return on our investment especially since I have also recently learned that there is no formal performance evaluation for Mr. Lovell. How convenient. As a taxpayer, I would like to know exactly, line item by line item, what Mr. Lovell himself has done to bring in business, develop our economy, ease the taxpayer burden and improve the life of the citizens of Oneida. I would like that information to be backed up by data and facts and hard numbers. I want to see evidence for keeping you in this position. I want to see the goals, the milestones, the one-year, three-year and five-year plans. Are there any? The citizens of Oneida deserve an honest open reporting and to know what we are paying for. I understand that the cost of doing business, and life itself, has gone up. But none of us want to be taken for a ride.

I know that according to his contract, the city manager can be fired without cause. In my very humble opinion, I think there is great cause. I hope the city council will muster the political will to do the right thing.

Thank you for your consideration.