



## CITY OF ONEIDA COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date:	January 6, 2026	Presiding:	Rick Rossi, Mayor
Time:	6:30pm	Clerk:	Sandy LaPera, City Clerk
Location:	Common Council Chambers	Meeting Type:	Regular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special <input type="checkbox"/>

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rick Rossi, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Arrived Late</u>
Mayor Rossi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
City Manager Lovell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor McHugh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Cimpi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Pagano	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Simchik	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____

### Also Present

City Attorney Bell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attorney (Other)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Chief Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Chief Lowell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Selection of Deputy Mayor:

The Council will nominate one of its members for consideration and, following nominations, conduct a majority vote to designate a Deputy Mayor.

Councilor Dave Cimpi nominated Councilor Tom Simchik as Deputy Mayor, seconded by Councilor Bill Pagano. All members, other than Councilor Simchik voted in favor of the designation.

Fire Chief Scott Jones and Police Chief Steve Lowell presented commendations to former Public Safety Commissioner Dave Jones, honoring his dedicated service to the City of Oneida and to both departments.

Following the presentations, Mayor Rossi thanked Commissioner Jones and read a proclamation officially declaring January 6, 2026, as *Dave Jones Day* in the City of Oneida.

## **CITY OF ONEIDA PROCLAMATION-DAVE JONES DAY**

**WHEREAS**, Dave Jones has served the City of Oneida with distinction as Public Safety Commissioner, providing steady leadership, thoughtful guidance, and objective insight to the Police and Fire Departments; and

**WHEREAS**, his commitment to public service strengthened Oneida's public safety operations and reflected the highest ideals of civic responsibility through his dedication, experience, and professionalism; and

**WHEREAS**, Dave Jones consistently placed the needs of the City first, including his decision to step down at the end of December in recognition of fiscal realities and the importance of responsible governance; and

**WHEREAS**, while no longer serving in an official capacity, Dave Jones remains a strong supporter of the City and a continued advocate for the men and women of the Police and Fire Departments;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED**, that I, Rick Rossi, Mayor of the City of Oneida, do hereby proclaim January 6, 2026, as "Dave Jones Day" in the City of Oneida; and

**BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED**, that this day shall serve as an expression of the City's sincere gratitude for Dave Jones's exemplary service, leadership, and lasting contributions, and as a reminder of the impact that dedicated public servants have on the strength and success of our community.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Oneida to be affixed this 6th day of January 2026.

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**RICK ROSSI, MAYOR**

The Mayor requested a moment of silence for Mr. James Chappell, who passed away on December 25, 2025. Deacon Chappell was a former Mayor and Councilor for the City of Oneida and also served as the Fire Department Chaplain.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Residents Joe Magliocca and Brahim Zogby read from prepared comments which are attached to these minutes, noted as Attachment A (Magliocca) and Attachment B (Zogby).

**OLD BUSINESS:**                   None

#### **REPORTS:**

##### MAYOR ROSSI

The Council then moved on to reports. The Mayor presented his report and expressed optimism about the newly seated Council, noting that with the City's new form of government and the current group of officials, the City is well positioned to move forward.

##### CITY MANAGER LOVELL

During his report, the City Manager stated that this has been the snowiest year on record over the past ten years and expressed appreciation for the DPW plow drivers and crews, including sidewalk and street personnel, for their continued hard work. He noted receiving numerous compliments from residents regarding their performance.

The City Manager also discussed the City's coordination with OCWA to assist neighboring communities, stating that approximately 800,000 gallons of water per day are being supplied to surrounding areas. He confirmed that the City's water system is not under strain and credited infrastructure investments for allowing the system to meet demand. He thanked the Water Department staff for their efforts and coordination and noted the importance of assisting neighboring communities.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Councilor Simchik

Seconded by Councilor Pagano

**RESOLVED**, that the minutes of the Special Meeting (Year-end Closeout) held on December 31, 2025, are approved as presented.

Ayes:      7

Nays:      0

Absent:    0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed    Failed

## APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Motion by Councilor Simchik  
Seconded by Councilor Cimpi

**RESOLVED**, that Warrant No. 1, including checks and ACH payments totaling \$92,650.70, as audited by the Voucher Committee, is hereby approved for payment.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed  Failed

## ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION

### RESOLUTION 26-1

Moved by Councilor Simchik  
Seconded by Councilor Smith

**RESOLVED**, that the Organizational Resolution for 2026 consisting of the following is hereby approved:

1. Regular meetings for the City of Oneida for the year 2026 shall be held in Common Council Chambers, Oneida Municipal Building, 109 N. Main Street, Oneida, New York at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month, and if any of said Tuesdays shall fall on a holiday, then in such event, the Common Council shall agree on a date to reschedule.
2. The Rome Sentinel is hereby designated as the official newspaper in the City of Oneida.
3. The City of Oneida funds for year 2026 shall be kept and retained in the following banks:
  - NBT Bank, Oneida, NY-special capital accounts and other current accounts
  - Community Bank, Oneida, NY-special reserve accounts and other current accounts
4. There shall be a Crime Protection Policy for Public Entities, which includes a "Blanket Employee Dishonesty Per Loss", with a per occurrence limit of \$500,000 and a \$500 per occurrence deductible.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed  Failed

#### VOUCHER COMMITTEE

#### **RESOLUTION 26-2**

Moved by Councilor Simchik

Seconded by Councilor McHugh

**RESOLVED**, that pursuant to Section 5.22B of the City Charter, Voucher Committees shall be as follows:

**FIRST COUNCIL MEETING:** Councilor Pagano and Councilor McHugh

**SECOND COUNCIL MEETING:** Councilor Simchik and Councilor Jones

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed  Failed

#### SCRAP METAL SALE

#### **RESOLUTION 26-3**

Moved by Councilor Simchik

Seconded by Councilor Jones

**RESOLVED**, to authorize the Department of Public Works, Wastewater Treatment Plant, Water Department, Fire Department, Police Department and Recreation Department to sell scrap metal at a fair market price, as accumulated, for the remainder of 2026.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed  Failed

DISCUSSION: Councilor Cimpi asked whether the proceeds from the sale of scrap metal are returned to the General Fund or to the department, to which City Manager Lovell advised that the proceeds are deposited into the General Fund.

#### BUDGET TRANSFERS AND AMENDMENTS

#### **RESOLUTION 26-4**

Moved by Councilor Pagano  
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, to approve the budget transfers and amendments as outlined by the Comptroller or a third party duly retained to perform such services.

		<i>To</i>	<i>From</i>
<b><i>2025 Budget Adjustments</i></b>			
\$	3,450.62	001.1220.0101.0000 City Manager Salary	001.1364.0400.0000 Expenses on Property Acquired
\$	5,760.00	001.1410.0101.0000 City Clerk Salary	001.1364.0400.0000 Expenses on Property Acquired
\$	6,000.00	001.1620.0101.0000 Buildings Salary	001.1620.0401.0000 Electric & Gas
\$	800.00	001.1620.0102.0000 Buildings Overtime	001.1620.0401.0000 Electric & Gas
\$	135.00	001.3010.0101.0000 Commissioner Salary	001.1620.0401.0000 Electric & Gas
\$	3,300.00	001.3310.0101.0000 Traffic Salary	001.1620.0401.0000 Electric & Gas
\$	300.00	001.3310.0102.0000 Traffic Overtime	001.1620.0401.0000 Electric & Gas
\$	51,800.00	001.3410.0101.0000 Fire Salary	001.1620.0401.0000 Electric & Gas
\$	7,200.00	001.5132.0101.0000 Central Garage Salary	001.4068.0101.0000 Mosquito Salary

\$	24,500.00	001.7140.0101.0000 Parks & Rec Admin Salary	001.4068.0101.0000 Mosquito Salary
\$	3,800.00	001.7140.0102.0000 Parks & Rec Overtime	001.4068.0101.0000 Mosquito Salary
\$	2,900.00	001.7140.0103.0000 Parks & Res Maint Salary	001.4068.0101.0000 Mosquito Salary
\$	76.00	001.8020.0101.000 Planning Salary	001.4068.0101.0000 Mosquito Salary
\$	10,000.00	001.9030.0801.0000 Social Security	001.9011.0807.0000 Police Retirement
\$	2,500.00	001.9035.0802.0000 Medicare	001.9011.0807.0000 Police Retirement

***To re-allocate appropriations to cover personnel expenses that occurred in 2025 due to a 27th payroll in 2025 and the required payroll accrual for time worked in 2025 for hourly employees***

\$	150,000.00	003.8110.0401.0000 Sewer Utilities	003.0003.0912.0000 Sewer Fund Balance
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***To allocate funds to cover expected 2025 utility expenses***

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed  Failed

**DISCUSSION:** During discussion, Councilor McHugh stated that as a newly seated member of the Council, it felt somewhat awkward voting on matters established by prior Councils. She expressed a desire to meet with department heads to better understand their challenges and to work collaboratively with the City Manager and fellow Council members to identify new and creative solutions to improve efficiency.

**STANDARD WORKDAY RESOLUTION FOR STATE COMPTROLLER**

**RESOLUTION 26-5**

Moved by Councilor Simchik  
Seconded by Councilor McHugh

**WHEREAS**, New York State Rules and Regulations require the reporting of time worked for members of the New York State Local Retirement System; and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of the New York State Comptroller has requested that the City of Oneida adopt a resolution establishing the Standard Workday for elected and appointed officials for the purpose of determining days worked reportable to the New York State and Local Retirement System; **now therefore be it**

**RESOLVED**, that the Common Council hereby establishes the attached as a Standard Workday for elected and appointed officials for the purpose of determining days worked reportable to the New York State and Local Employees Retirement System.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed  Failed

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Councilor McHugh:

During discussion, Councilor McHugh emphasized the importance of transparency, accessibility, and effective communication. She noted that Council members have City-issued email addresses but no City-issued method for telephone communication, requiring the use of personal devices. She requested that the possibility of City-issued devices be explored in order to better manage official communications and simplify compliance with FOIL requests. The Mayor advised that it was something they could look into.

Councilor Cimpi:

Councilor Cimpi encouraged the Council to take a proactive approach, noting that councils often act reactively through approvals of budgets, policies, and legislation. The speaker challenged Council members to return at the next meeting with ideas aimed at improving the City and the lives of its residents.

City Manager Lovell:

City Manager Lovell added that he appreciated the discussion and expressed enthusiasm about working with the newly elected Council members, noting that it had been a long year.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Simchik  
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

**MOTION RESULT:**  Passed  Failed

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

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Sandra LaPera, City Clerk

# Happy New Year, Happy New Term

JOE Magliocca  
ATTACHMENT A

Perception vs reality...that's the challenge isn't it?

Perception vs reality...it's what helps make people, families, and business choose one community over another.

Unfortunately, Oneida has had bad headline, after bad headline, since early in 2024. When at that time, a majority of the Common Council decided to publicly display their disrespect for the citizens of this community, as well various department heads, and other elected officials.

Combined with COORDINATED misinformation campaigns, driven by misguided, partisan, and/or vengeance motivated citizens...and put our community in the news cycle for all the wrong reasons.

When a Syracuse news anchor does the lead into an "on-site" segment by saying, " the mess in the City of Oneida was on full display tonight at the city council meeting"...that's not acceptable.

Every bad story, started with a few of those former councilors, the City codes department at the time, and/or private citizens social media posts.

When every element of that "mess", every "alleged" codes violation, every accusation of " a hostile work environment" is eventually thrown out... by third party outside investigators, or by a judge and DA, determined to be false, without merit or proof...nothing but lies.

Then It is time to hold those responsible for spreading those lies accountable.

Two former codes officers eventually faced consequences, one was fired, another eventually resigned. And well....we have 4 new members of the Council this term.

That misinformation campaign was fueled by hundreds of FOIL requests, and literally thousands of email's, by just 2or 3 individuals. That misinformation campaign was also fueled by alleged breaches of confidentiality, and ethics violations by members of the Council.

The taxpayers in this City shouldered the cost of that misinformation campaign, not just in the lost productivity of the dedicated employees in City hall who were legally required to respond to those FOIL requests, but in the outside Council legal costs, for those aforementioned third party investigations, and court appearances by Codes.

Now the city has been served with a summons, by the same citizen largely responsible for the majority of those FOIL requests, emails, and misinformation campaign.

That citizen is bringing legal action not only against the City of Oneida, Mayor Rossi, and his wife, but Madison County, Chenango County, and New York State. That citizen also has two Class A misdemeanor's pending against him, for harassment and Criminal contempt charges. The bench and jury trials for those allegations should be scheduled the first quarter of this year.

"We are free to make our own decisions, but we are not free to control the consequences of those decisions."

And that is why I'm blabbering away in front of you this evening. For that misinformation campaign to end, for the negative press, the negative perception of our City to end...there needs to be consequences for the bad decisions that a few have made.

The Common Council has investigative powers regarding that alleged Ethics violation. A precedent needs to be set, that ethical violations by any city employee, elected, or appointed official's are NOT acceptable.

Likewise, the deliberate spreading of lies, slander, accusations of illegal activities, against city employees, and elected officials, MUST have consequences. Harassing, and/or threatening behavior, slander, defamation of character, and filing false statements, are all subject to legal action.

It's time to make this all stop, and turn this communities focus to the real issues...to positively move our City forward.

Comments from Brahim Zogby

Submitted via email 1/5/26

ATTACHMENT B

CONGRATULATIONS on your election and selection as members of the Common Council, City Clerk Offices, Mayor, City Manager and City Attorney! It is heartwarming to see some old faces and new ones, to lead the City of Oneida into its future. You will have to decide what Oneida NEEDS or what it merely WANTS. Hopefully, you will select what is best for our growth as a city and not what seems to be politically expedient at the moment.

You will be judged on your actions, your votes and your behavior at meetings of the council!

Sometimes these actions are misinterpreted or misrepresented by others in media reports or on social media, or simply in private conversations.

However, you are very fortunate that beginning this year, with the help of all involved, you will be able to LIVE STREAM your meetings of the common council to the public. Viewers will actually SEE for themselves, in real time the City Government at work. There will be no more inaccurate gossip about what someone said at the meeting. The citizens who are interested can view the goings on from the comfort of their home, car, vacation location on a cellphone, computer or tablet or anyway they get their news. They no longer have to wait a week to find out what happened from their neighbor or some newspaper or an inaccurate social media post.

IMMEDIATE LIVE coverage that can be recorded for review and broadcast LIVE!!!

Minutes of the meetings will be more accurate and recorded! The City Clerk will no longer be straining to hear who said what!

This is not a dream. You can make it a reality. Talk among yourselves and figure it out. The City Manager will help you along with the Comptroller to find the funds. The City attorney will easily write the legislation required, if any!. You can probably vote and unanimously approve by the next meeting and have it in place by February 2026. What do you say?

Mr. Zogby further added:

The speaker referenced the commendations presented to Mr. Dave Jones, noting that without recordings, such recognitions are only reflected in the minutes and cannot be viewed by future generations. The speaker encouraged the Council to work collaboratively to implement meeting recordings, suggested that the City Manager and Comptroller assist in identifying funding, and stated a belief that outside funding sources may be willing to

support transparency efforts. The speaker also offered assistance and urged the Council to act sooner rather than later.