

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 4, 2025

A Special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the fourth day of December 2025 at 6:19 pm at the City of Oneida Common Council Chambers, 109 N. Main Street, Oneida NY 13421.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rick Rossi.

<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"/> _____
Kyle Lovell, CM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Councilor Szczerba	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Councilor Laureti	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Councilor Hitchings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Councilor Winchell	<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 Nadine Bell	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Safety Comm. Dave Jones	<input type="checkbox"/>
City Clerk Sandy LaPera	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Councilor Elect Cimpi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fire Chief Scott Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Councilor Elect McHugh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police Chief Steve Lowell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert BRITTON-ONEIDA

Mr. Britton stated that, although he understands it is too late with the budget already up for a vote, he would have preferred to pay approximately seventeen cents per day for an additional officer on duty, noting that the alternative will now cost taxpayers more in overtime.

Mr. Britton also raised questions about the lawsuit's status and potential reimbursement of attorney fees from the involved party, reminding the Council that a previous lawsuit tied to Mayor Rossi cost taxpayers \$17,000 that remains unpaid. City Manager Lovell confirmed that the City has received a Notice of Claim

and sent it to the insurance carrier, who will be appointing counsel.

OLD BUSINESS: None

REPORTS:

- **Mayor's Report:**
Mayor Rossi also reminded residents of the Parade of Lights scheduled for December 5th on Main Street, preceded by the tree lighting at Higinbotham Park at 5:30 p.m. He stated that the event gets bigger and better every year and includes storytelling and an appearance by Santa Claus
- **City Manager's Report:**
City Manager Lovell reiterated the prohibition on overnight parking on City streets and requested that residents assist in spreading the message. He pointed out that, in light of the recent snow accumulation, it is more important than ever that everyone be informed.

City Manager Lovell echoed the Mayor's comments about the Parade of Lights, adding that the Kallet will be open and noting that this will be his second time attending, with the first being "amazing."

City Manager Lovell extended his thanks to the Council for their work on his first budget, noting that he sincerely appreciated the input, discussion, and collaborative approach.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Special Budget meeting of November 13, 2025, are hereby approved as presented.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Winchell
Seconded by Councilor Hitchings

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Special Budget meeting of November 17, 2025, are hereby approved as presented.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Winchell

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the regular meeting of November 18, 2025, are hereby approved as presented.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Moved by Councilor Simchik

Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, that Warrant No. 23, checks and ACH payments in the amount of \$2,841,235.62 as audited by the Voucher Committee are hereby approved for payment in the usual manner at the discretion of the Comptroller or a third party duly retained by the City of Oneida to perform such services.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

ADOPT 2026 CITY OF ONEIDA BUDGET

RESOLUTION 25-219

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, to adopt the 2026 City of Oneida Budget.

Mayor Rossi	YES
Councilor Szczerba	ABSENT
Councilor Laureti	ABSENT
Councilor Hitchings	YES
Councilor Winchell	YES
Councilor Pagano	YES
Councilor Simchik	YES

MOTION CARRIED

ADOPT MISCELLANEOUS UTILITY BILLING

RESOLUTION 25-220

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

RESOLVED, to authorize the Miscellaneous Utility Billing and unpaid service charges, water rents, and sewer taxes in the amount of \$77,271.08 to be inserted into the 2025 assessment roll to be re-levied into the 2026 tax roll.

Mayor Rossi	YES
Councilor Szczerba	ABSENT
Councilor Laureti	ABSENT
Councilor Hitchings	YES
Councilor Winchell	YES
Councilor Pagano	YES
Councilor Simchik	YES

MOTION CARRIED

ADOPT A LOCAL LAW AMENDING SECTION 12.2 OF THE ONEIDA CITY CHARTER TO REQUIRE A SUPERMAJORITY VOTE OF THE ONEIDA CITY COMMON COUNCIL TO REMOVE THE CITY MANAGER

RESOLUTION 25-221

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Home Rule Law, a proposed local law titled "A Local Law Amending Section 12.2 of the Oneida City Charter to Require a Supermajority Vote of the Oneida City Common Council to Remove the City Manager," was presented and introduced at a regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida held on November 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on such proposed local law on November 18, 2025 and by the Common Council of the City of Oneida and proof of publication of notice of such public hearing, as required by law, having been submitted and filed, and all persons desiring to be heard in connection with said proposed local law having been heard, and said proposed local law having been in the possession of the members of the Common Council of the City of Oneida in its final form in the manner required by Section 20 of the Municipal Home Rule of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of the Proposed Local Law has previously been determined to be an unlisted action for purposes of the State Environmental Quality Review Act, and the Common Council has determined that a short environmental assessment form ("EAF") was required in connection with this matter; and

WHEREAS, said EAF has been prepared and has been reviewed by the Common Council and the Common Council has considered the adoption of said Local Law, has considered the criteria contained in 6 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 617.7 and has compared the impacts which may be reasonably expected to result from the adoption of said Local Law against said criteria; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to enact said Proposed Local Law.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is

RESOLVED, that the Common Council has determined this action shall have no significant adverse impact on the environment; that, accordingly, an environmental impact statement ("EIS") shall not be required; and that this resolution shall constitute a negative declaration under SEQRA; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Oneida, Madison County, New York, does hereby enact Local Law No. 3-2025 as follows:

"CITY OF ONEIDA

A Local Law Amending Section 12.2 of the Oneida City Charter to Require a Supermajority Vote of the Oneida City Common Council to Remove the City Manager

Be it enacted by the Common Council of the City of Oneida as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Intent

The Common Council of the City of Oneida does hereby find that the position of City Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the City, charged with overseeing daily operations, implementing Council policy, and ensuring continuity in the administration of public services. To safeguard the stability and professional integrity of the office of City Manager, and to insulate it from undue political influence, it is the intent of this Local Law to require a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the Common Council to remove the City Manager.

Section 2. Amendment to Section 12.2 of the City Charter

Section 12.2 of the City Charter of the City of Oneida is hereby amended to read, in its entirety, as follows:

“§12.2 Removal.

The City Manager may be suspended or removed by a resolution approved by the City Council which shall set forth the reasons for the proposed suspension or proposed removal. A copy of such resolution shall be served immediately upon the City Manager. The City Manager shall have 15 days in which to reply thereto in writing, and upon request, shall be afforded a public hearing, which shall occur no less than 10 days nor more than 15 days after such hearing is requested. After the public hearing, if one be requested, and after full consideration, the City Council by a vote of no less than two-third (2/3) of the whole number of the City Council may adopt a final resolution of suspension or removal.”

Section 3. Severability

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part thereof directly involved in the controversy.

Section 4. Effective Date

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law.

Mayor Rossi	YES
Councilor Szczerba	ABSENT
Councilor Laureti	ABSENT
Councilor Hitchings	YES
Councilor Winchell	NO
Councilor Pagano	YES
Councilor Simchik	YES

MOTION CARRIED

SCHEDULE YEAR-END CLOSEOUT MEETING

RESOLUTION 25-222

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

RESOLVED, to schedule the City of Oneida year-end closeout meeting for Wednesday, December 31, 2025, at 9:00a.m.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVE BID-TIMBER SALE

RESOLUTION 25-223

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

RESOLVED, to approve the highest bid meeting specifications from Baillie Lumber Co. in the amount of \$43,175.00 for the timber sale bid that occurred on November 11, 2025, on City of Oneida owned property within the City of Oneida Watershed.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti
MOTION CARRIED

BUDGET TRANSFERS/AMENDMENTS

RESOLUTION 25-224

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

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

	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>
2025 Budget Adjustments		
\$ 4,528.00	002.9010.0806.0000 ERS Retirement	002.8300.0444.0000 Water Office Technology Expense
To re-allocate funds for the ERS Retirement December Invoice		
\$ 1,859.16	003.9010.0806.0000 ERS Retirement	003.8110.0444.0000 Sewer Office Technology Expense
To re-allocate funds for the ERS Retirement December Invoice		
\$ 2,500.00	001.5142.0416.0000 Travel & Meals	001.0001.0912.0000 General Fund Balance
To allocate funds to cover the contractual meals expense		
\$ 1,875.00	001.8020.0400.0000 Planning Contracts	001.0001.0912.0000 General Fund Balance

To allocate funds to cover consultant expenses

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

ADVERTISE FOR BIDS-WATER DEPARTMENT CHEMICALS

RESOLUTION 25-225

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Simchik

RESOLVED, to authorize the Purchasing Agent to advertise for bids the following chemicals for the Water Department for the contract year of 2026:

- Liquid Chlorine and Sodium Hypochlorite
- Liquid Caustic Soda
- Liquid Aluminum Sulfate
- Liquid Zinc Orthophosphate and Liquid Polyphosphate

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

CONTRACT EXTENSION-2026 OPTION YEAR-CARUS, LLC

RESOLUTION 25-226

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Winchell

RESOLVED, to authorize the City Manager to sign the 2026 Option year contract extension with Carus, LLC for Potassium Permanganate during the renewal term of January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, to include the same terms as the signed 2025 Contract.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION: Councilor Winchell inquired as to what this was for, to which City Manager Lovell advised that it was for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

AGREEMENT-AXON ENTERPRISES

RESOLUTION 25-227

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

RESOLVED, to authorize the City Manager and/or the Police Chief to sign a renewed contract with Axon Enterprises for the continuation of the Body-Worn Camera program, including renewal of the associated service agreement.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF ONEIDA TO CO-SPONSOR THE UNITED STATES 250th BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION ON JULY 4, 2026**

RESOLUTION 25-228

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

WHEREAS, the year 2026 marks the 250th birthday of the United States of America, a milestone to be recognized and celebrated throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, a committee has been established through the American Legion on North Main Street in the City of Oneida to coordinate a community-wide celebration commemorating this historic occasion; and

WHEREAS, the planned celebration includes the use of Vet's Field for a Car Show, Food Trucks, Craft Vendors, Family Activities in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department, and

additional attractions such as a petting zoo and hot-air balloon walk-in experience, culminating with a parade along the traditional Memorial Day Parade route and a fireworks display; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion will undertake responsibility for raising all funds necessary to support the planned events and activities; and

WHEREAS, the organizers have requested that the City of Oneida serve as co-sponsor of the event, and that the City provide appropriate municipal support services, including necessary police, fire, and parks and recreation assistance, as well as insurance coverage for the event under the City's insurance umbrella as additional insured; and

WHEREAS, the celebration will also engage local businesses and community partners in decorating and promoting this patriotic milestone, helping to foster civic pride and community spirit throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oneida recognizes the historic significance of this national celebration and wishes to support the effort to provide a memorable and meaningful community event for residents and visitors alike;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Oneida hereby approves the City's participation as co-sponsor of the United States 250th Birthday Celebration on July 4, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City shall provide municipal support services as needed for the safe and successful operation of the event, including police, fire, parks and recreation assistance, and will extend insurance coverage for the event under the City's policy as additional insured; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that City staff are authorized to coordinate with the American Legion and designated liaison to ensure successful planning and implementation of the event.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS: None

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Simchik

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Szczerba/Laureti

MOTION CARRIED

The regular meeting is hereby adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

Sandra LaPera, City Clerk