

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2023**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the thirteenth day of November 2023 at 6:30 pm at the City of Oneida Common Council Chambers, 109 N. Main Street, Oneida NY 13421.

The meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor, Michelle Kinville

<u>Attendees</u>	Present	Absent	Arrived Late
Councilor Szczerba	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Councilor Laureti	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Councilor Rossi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6:31pm
Councilor Kinville	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Councilor Pagano	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6:31pm
Councilor Simchik	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Also Present

City Attorney Nadine Bell	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire Chief Scott Jones	<input type="checkbox"/>
City Clerk Sandy LaPera	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parks & Rec Director Luke Griff	<input type="checkbox"/>
City Engineer Jeff Rowe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Police Chief Steve Lowell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Codes Director Bob Burnett	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Safety Com. Kevin Salerno	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comptroller Lee Ann Wells	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Councilor Elect Andrea Hitchings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**2024 CITY OF ONEIDA BUDGET DISCUSSION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS-SEWER
City Engineer-Jeff Rowe**

Deputy Mayor, Michelle Kinville, invited City Engineer, Jeff Rowe, to speak before Council to review the 2024 Budget for DPW and Sewer.

City Engineer Rowe reviewed each of his expense line items as noted below:

2024 BUDGET REVIEW

KEY POINTS

General Fund Expenses:

1620 Building Expense Line:

- Salaries/Buildings and Overtime are contractual.
- Overtime is for callouts/emergencies.
- Materials and supplies are for cleaning materials and paper supplies, electrical, plumbing, equipment maintenance, filters, hardware/building materials, ice melter, uniforms, etc.
- Electric and gas is an estimate of usage. Comptroller Wells advised that the reason this is low this year is due to solar credits, which is a General Fund project that charges back the Sewer Fund. She noted this depends on the sun and we have a \$65,000 credit currently with National Grid
- Contracts (MB/FD) include annual inspections for cooling towers, elevators and emergency generators, and elevator preventative maintenance, and HVAC maintenance (Honeywell)
- Municipal Building Generator Contracts are for routine maintenance of emergency generator for Municipal Building.
- Contracts (Justice Center) include dry sprinkler inspection, emergency generator preventative maintenance, fire alarm system inspection, HVAC maintenance (Honeywell), and security alarm monitoring. These are yearly contracts, in which the Comptroller breaks out the Justice Center from the Municipal Building, because the City receives a percentage of reimbursement from the State for the Court.
- Justice Center Generator Contracts are for routine maintenance of emergency generator for Justice Center. There is a specific line item for each generator.
- Contracts (Combined) are for garbage pickup.
- Postage was for everything except the Water Department and not the DPW specifically. It has been high due to Certified Mail for the Codes Department.
- Building maintenance and repair includes Justice Center entrance door replacement (reimbursed from Courts grant funding), and miscellaneous repairs.

Councilor Szczera inquired about copier contracts. The Comptroller advised that previously each department was being charged a different percentage for copier contracts, and she consolidated them a few years ago into one line.

1640 & 1660 Central Garage:

- Central Gasoline is for gasoline for fleet vehicles (all Departments). It was noted that the year-to-date figures are under budget for diesel and any remaining funds will be put back into the General Fund.
- Central Diesel is for diesel for fleet vehicles (all Departments).

- Central Vehicle – Police Repairs is for vehicle repairs for PD. Councilor Simchik inquired as to what the increase was for, as the City is leasing vehicles. He asked what the City is responsible for. Police Chief, Steve Lowell, explained that this is for tires for the Tahoes, which cannot be patched or plugged. Another expense is for oil, in which the price per barrel has doubled.
- Central Vehicle – Rec Repairs is for vehicle repairs for the Rec Department.
- EZ Pass is for NYS Thruway tolls. (created this year as a consolidated General Fund line)
- Central Office supplies includes office supplies.

3310 Traffic Expenses:

- Salaries are contractual
- Traffic overtime is for callouts
- Equipment line (street lighting maintenance and repairs) includes replacement of signal boxes. 2 signal boxes need replacement (Broad Street and Farrier Ave, West Elm Street and Broad Street) at \$10,000 each. (Removed from Mayor's budget). Street lighting maintenance (\$25,000 estimate) and repairs/replacements (\$17,500 estimate) for outside contractors to provide maintenance, repairs/replacements as needed. The City contracts with Sherrill to maintain some of the streetlights due to the fact that we do not have a large enough bucket truck or the training/certification to do this in-house. The DRI was mentioned, but this is just for Main Street and not other locations.
- Materials and supplies are for flag unfurlers, fiberglass flagpoles, flagpole mounting brackets, traffic paint, traffic paint supplies, and galvanized signposts.

3650 Demolition Expense:

- Demolition and removal costs are estimates for building at 210 Scononoda (\$200,000)
- Pre-demolition survey is required (\$40,000)
- Proposed to make this a bonded Capital Project

4068 Mosquito Expenses:

- Salary is for Mosquito Control Technician. He is also a MEO 80% of the year, 20% mosquito work.
- Overtime is for working during early morning and evening hours for application of herbicide and pesticide. Councilor Rossi questioned how often this person goes out, as it seems to vary City Engineer Rowe advised that this person usually goes out once a week during mosquito season.

- Materials and supplies include insecticide, herbicide, dry ice, PPE (protective coats and gloves).
- Other expenses are for DEC permits
- Training includes NYSDEC online recertification classes.

5010 DPW Administration Expenses:

- DPW Administration salaries are standard, and overtime is minimal. Councilor Kinville inquired as to why this line was higher. The Comptroller advised that a new person was not being added, but the Assistant City Engineer position was funded in 2023.
- Equipment line is minimal.
- Training line is for conferences, PE license renewal and professional memberships.

5110 Street Maintenance Expenses:

- Salaries are contractual.
- Overtime is for snow plowing, roadwork during Annual Street Resurfacing Program, and emergency call-ins.
- Equipment line is replacement of lawn tractor motor. Councilor Kinville asked about contracting out for lawn mowing.
- Materials and supplies are for grass seed, gloves, ear/eye protection, hardhats, chainsaw oil, etc.
- Road materials include stone, gravel, concrete mix, crusher run, hot mix asphalt, pavement crack seal, rip rap and temporary pavement patch.
- Tools are for rakes, shovels, and handheld tools.
- Work signs include traffic cones, paint, locks, supplies, etc.
- Tree Removal includes \$60,000 for tree removals and trimming. (Mayor budget reduced this to \$30,000). This is for trees that are too high or too close to utility lines.
- Stump Removal includes \$15,000 for stump removals and restoration. This is a new budget line to better track this expense. New trees will be planted soon, as Oneida is "Tree City USA" and that are suitable for an urban environment.
- Contracts are for beaver management and landfill fees. Councilor Laureti asked if the beavers were being done by the Rec Department; however, the Comptroller advised that the situation for the DPW is much worse (north of Elm Street, off Willow Street and Fitch Street). The DPW has not had much luck in finding a trapper. It was noted that the landfill has strongly discouraged bringing green waste as they are overloaded, according to Councilor Simchik.
- Rentals are for tub grinder rental for mulching of large yard debris (green waste) and other equipment (possibly topsoil screener).
- Travel-Meals is a union contract stipulation.

5132 Central Garage Expenses:

- Salaries at Central Garage are contractual.
- Overtime is due to Central Garage employees assisting with snow removal as needed.
- Equipment line includes heavy duty scan tool and automotive scan tool used for diagnostics. This is a purchase and not a yearly expense. Councilor Laureti asked if ARPA funds could be used for this. Comptroller Wells advised that we have \$130,329, is all we have left and can be used for this if the Council chooses.
- DPW Maintenance – Repair is for parts and repairs to loaders, backhoes, sweepers, passenger trucks, six wheelers and includes tires, batteries, plow parts.
- General Materials are for hardware, welding supplies and steel for fabrication, motor oil and hydraulic oil.
- Major Repairs are for sweeper conveyor belts, sander conveyor chains, and brine application unit pump and motor that require replacement. The mayor's budget reduced this to \$0. (To be purchased in 2023; \$0 in 2024).
- Tools are a stipulated allowance in the contract, \$1000 per year per person; total of \$3000.
- Contracts include on demand online repair manual, uniform service, welding cylinder lease, welding supplies, SGS Testcom (vehicle emission testing), EKOS fuel management software maintenance, repairs and service visits, diagnostic tool updates.
- Building Maintenance and Repair includes overhead door repair.

5142 Snow and Ice Expenses:

- Material supplies are for brine for road pre-treatment (salt and sand)
- Salt and sand are continually being ordered and delivered based on actual usage. Salt and Sand are bid out (State bid). This is \$70 per ton, with 600-800 tons at a time. The salt storage shed is full now.
- Travel – Meals is a union contract stipulation.

2024 Salary Schedule:

5010 DPW Administration

- The current Account Clerk is performing additional duties for 2 Departments (DPW and Sewer) including payroll processing, vouchers, resident questions, HSOB (High Strength Organic Waste) billing. Recommend that Senior Account Clerk be added to the 2024 Budget to allow opportunity for growth and advancement and maintain current personnel. (\$48,373 vs. \$38,966). This is a shared position (50% Sewer/50% DPW). This is not to add a person, but to change to a Senior Account Clerk. This is approximately \$7,207 which would be an increase of \$3,600 per fund.

Council briefly discussed lawn mowing and the number of Motor Equipment Operators needed and when new hires (MEO's) should start. Additional supervisors were also discussed due to retirement and the need for additional supervision. Councilor Rossi asked about the Assistant City Engineer position and why the salary line increased beyond the budgeted amount. This increased from \$60,000 to \$80,000. The Comptroller advised that because this position was not filled right away, there was money in the budget, so the salary was higher to attract an assistant. She noted that this is a Management Confidential position, and the Mayor can set the salary. Councilor Laureti inquired as to how it could be budgeted for one amount, and the person be hired for an amount higher than what was budgeted for.

Sewer Fund Expenses

- Salaries and overtime are contractual. Overtime is a projection.
- Equipment expense line is equipment for repairs and replacement, fire extinguishers, filters for plant, equipment for pumps, blowers, boilers, pump cores, and variable frequency drives.
- Materials and Supplies parts for vehicles, gloves (many are needed), parts for building maintenance, equipment maintenance, and electrical maintenance.
- Chlorine usage has increased due to operational changes to improve effluent quality.
- Polymer is for liquid cationic polymer which is used for chemical treatment at WWTP.
- Water usage at WWTP.
- Liquid iron salts are for chemical treatment at WWTP.
- Lab Supplies is for all laboratory testing materials and supplies.
- Pump stations line is for parts used for maintaining pump stations such as electrical, plumbing, and piping.
- Contractual Services is for professional contracts for permit sampling, lab services, operational assistance, CAST optimization and consultation.
- Other Expenses -Professional is for Cartegraph asset management program and Infiltration & Inflow investigation services (reduce infiltration and inflow in the system). A grant has been applied for that will hopefully fund the next phase.
- Utilities are projections.
- Audit Contracts and Fiscal Bonding Fees-this is for the annual audit and the bonding fees to renew the ban were being taken out of the project; however, it was depleting the amount available for the project as it is closing out and in order to finish what we need to, we need to budget for this. There was a brief discussion about the rates and completion cost, debt service etc.
- Building Maintenance and Repair is for misc. repairs, painting, etc.
- Vehicle Maintenance is for regular maintenance and repairs.
- Madison County Landfill is for biosolids disposal. Budgeted amount of \$25,000 is less than 2023 due to WWTP's improved processing and reduction in biosolids.
- Training line is for ongoing training for operators to maintain certifications.

- Lab Testing is for required sampling and testing. Additional sampling and testing needed for digester due to acceptance of HSOW (High Strength Organic Waste).
- Meals are a stipulation in the union contract.
- Payments Other Communities is to City of Sherrill for WW treatment costs for the Kenwood area which are sent to the Sherrill WWTP. Councilor Laureti questioned why the revenue did not offset the expense. Comptroller Wells explained that this was not strictly Kenwood but sewer was paying the water fund for water bills to other communities.
- Sanitary Sewer Materials is for materials and supplies (jet hose, pipe, stone, PPE) for repair of collection system.
- Office Technology Expense is for the Sewer Department portion of Tyler Software program.
- Reclaim Water PS is for operation and maintenance of pump station to Turning Stone for reclaim water used for irrigation (reimbursable from Oneida Indian Nation).
- Sanitary Sewer Equipment is for parts and repairs.
- Permits and Fines is for annual DEC permits.
- Potassium Permanganate is for chemical addition for odor control.

The Comptroller stated that in order to balance the budget, she put a sewer rate calculation in for Council to review, noting they have a couple of options. The proposed rate would be a 13.64% increase. She explained that at some point, the City will go to bond for the project and add another \$1M expense to the debt service. Currently, the City has \$470,000 in a bond reserve that cannot be used, because we do not have a bond on it yet. It will only cover half of what the increase is going to be in one year. The City will have this debt for the next 28 years to pay back \$55M plus interest. The Comptroller advised that she is hopeful for the high strength organic waste, which is helping the Sewer Fund. Bonding was discussed and interest rates. They agreed to think about this further.

The Special Budget Meeting for DPW and Sewer concluded at 8:00p.m.

Sandra LaPera, City Clerk

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Comptroller Lee Ann Wells	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Councilor Elect Andrea Hitchings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**2024 CITY OF ONEIDA BUDGET DISCUSSION
PUBLIC SAFETY (POLICE DEPARTMENT)
Police Chief-Steve Lowell**

Police Chief Lowell was welcomed by Council and asked to review the expense items of his budget. He said that his department has made significant changes and has applied for and received several grants. Chief Lowell went through his budget line items and explained the purpose of each.

- Save a Life Tour is a Traffic Education Program that is 100% reimbursable by the State for a teen driving program.
- Body Worn Cameras are grant funded.
- Crime Prevention-\$11,000, with \$8,000 being funded through the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee. The extra \$3,000 is for commodity items the officers hand out, including bike

helmets, stickers, etc.

- Equipment was moved and consolidated.
- Travel and meals for conferences and specialized courses that are not available locally.
- Education expense is a contract related item for continued education.
- Training is, in part, grant reimbursable, but also for ammunition costs and ongoing specialized courses to bring the department up to accreditation and policy standards throughout the industry.
- Chief's expense-professional memberships, accommodations, meeting cost
- Clothing is contractual.
- Material and supplies have been reduced from the 2023 Budget (fingerprint powder, evidence bags, property receipts, tickets, vehicle supplies, caution tape, NYS Law book updates, etc.)
- Stop DWI overtime is 100% grant reimbursable.
- Step overtime has increased and is through accommodation of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, Police Traffic Safety and Highway Safety (all grant reimbursable)
- Holiday is a projection based on incremental pay raises and is contractual.
- Police Overtime was increased. He requested 5 additional police officers, as over the next 2 years, he could potentially lose 7 people due to retirements. He is trying to avoid what happened this year when he was down 4 patrol officers, and had to maintain minimum shift strengths, account for military leave, time off and training to mitigate as much risk at the lowest possible number. He noted that overtime will be far more excessive if these positions are not filled.

Chief Lowell advised that the City might lose more people to the State Police and other departments, noting that it takes time to recruit and train. Lateral transfers should not be considered "just to fill a position", and the City should hire qualified candidates. He advised he is currently down 2.

The department has had significant increases in violent crime and the recent home explosion among others. They are working to combat all issues, from parking violations, to speeding vehicles to drugs downtown in order to progress forward. Councilor Laureti inquired as to where the overtime comes from. Chief Lowell advised that the overtime that is covered by the RVC I Grant comes out of his regular overtime salary line and then a journal entry is used to put it back into the overtime salary line to credit the expense on the regular overtime in the General Fund, so the grant is kept separate.

Chief Lowell explained the Civil Service list and the process associated with hiring new officers.

- Materials and Supplies-security cameras and radio repair lines were merged. Councilor Laureti asked if this included cameras at City Hall. Comptroller Wells advised that she did not have time to submit the critical infrastructure grant with what was needed for it, such as risk assessments. She did allocate \$50,000 for cyber security.
- Positions- Chief Lowell stated that he would like to move his support staff around. His current Telephone Operator, who does significantly more than that title dictates, would be moved to an Account Clerk position, and is requesting to add an additional Account Clerk position to manage the number of grants. He gave credit to Sergeant Mike Burgess and Account Clerk, Melissa Luck for the work they have done with the RVCRI grant through the Department of Justice. Based on their work, more grant funds have been awarded.

Chief Lowell is requesting the following:

- Telephone Operator position to become an Account Clerk position.
- Current Records Clerk position to become a "Police" Records Clerk. Chief Lowell advised that this position is vital to the Police Department
- Current Account Clerk to become a Senior Account Clerk-handles purchasing, grant projects, assists the Chief with timelines.
- Add an additional Account Clerk

This would result in an additional \$38,165, plus longevity (\$2,500).

Chief Lowell also addressed his request for 5 police officers, stating that it is a long process to hire, and he does not anticipate being at full staff over the next year, noting that this is a goal and would be budgeted for, but probably not filled in 2024. He stated they have 2 openings currently and believes he might be able to get 3 from the Civil Service list. He stated that if a bill passes the Senate, which is currently pending, it will allow for time served to go with the person from the County to the City. This could allow individuals to retire earlier than anticipated. He noted that other agencies will be affected by this, and all will be scrambling for the same candidates. He stated that by moving forward with training, grant projects for equipment and recognizing contracts, he is trying to build an environment that will entice candidates to come work for the City.

Chief Lowell asked the DCJS (Department of Criminal Justice Services) to come in and do a study on the Oneida Police Department, which kicked off last Friday. This is a no cost study and would be data driven. They will be looking at operational efficiency, agency workload, and best practices in the industry at a National and State level. He will have information for Council in 6-8 months.

Councilor Szczerba advised that they have some tough decisions to make. Chief Lowell stated that he is making decisions on decisions that were made years ago that he inherited, and he appreciates Council's position. The profession has changed over the last 30 years, there have been increased requirements and procedural changes requiring more time. Staffing has not increased to adapt to these changes and requirements. He stated he would like to increase partnerships and increase task force involvements at the Federal level, which would bring back potentially bigger yields on any seizures as well.

Council thanked Chief Lowell and advised they will discuss this and get back to him with their decision.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Rossi
Seconded by Councilor Szczerba

The special meeting is hereby adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

Sandra LaPera, City Clerk