

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 15, 2025

A meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the fifteenth day of July 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the Common Council Chambers, 109 N. Main, Oneida, NY 13421.

The meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor Steve Laureti.

<u>Attendees</u>	Present	Absent	Arrived Late
Mayor Rossi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Kyle Lovell, CM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
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 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"/> _____

Supervisors

Matt Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mary Cavanagh	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Brandee Henderson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Michelle Kinville	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Also Present

City Attorney Nadine Bell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Safety Comm. Dave Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
City Clerk Sandy LaPera	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assist. Police Chief Will Clark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fire Chief Scott Jones	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Chief Steve Lowell	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

PUBLIC HEARING: A Local law to amend the Oneida City Charter to abolish the elective position of City Chamberlain

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

A PROPOSED LOCAL LAW TO AMEND THE CHARTER OF THE ONEIDA CITY CODE TO ABOLISH THE ELECTIVE OFFICE OF THE CITY CHAMBERLAIN

RESOLUTION 25-130

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

RESOLVED, that the Public Hearing to amend the Charter of the Oneida City Code to abolish the elective office of the City Chamberlain be hereby opened at 6:31 p.m.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

APPEARANCES

JOE MAGLIOCCA-429 GRAND ST.

Resident Joe Magliocca asked that all revisit the approach that was used during the last election cycle to promote the City Manager referendum—clear, simple, and straightforward messaging. All candidates running for elected office this year who support the current resolution should actively discuss it with constituents. This includes sharing your support through campaign materials, and once again, all should consider using yard signs. Last time, supporters of the City Manager form of government and Republicans, led the charge. He stated that he did his part on the Democratic side and will encourage Democratic candidates, noting that while he doesn't speak for them—he will ask that they do the same if they support it.

Mr. Magliocca advised that the proposal to abolish the elected City Chamberlain position was previously presented to voters during the 2021 election cycle. It failed largely due to a lack of public education on its purpose and, more importantly, its benefits to the city and its taxpayers. The city's last two elected Chamberlains illustrate the need for office oversight, local control, and defined work standards—one was accused of misappropriating funds, and the other operated under a summer schedule with Fridays off.

Mr. Magliocca advised that the City of Oneida is currently one of only two or three municipalities in New York State that still elect a City Chamberlain and noted that it is time to move forward. A strong public information campaign—similar to the one that successfully promoted the City Manager referendum—is crucial. It's about bringing responsibility, structure, and accountability to this office.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

**A PROPOSED LOCAL LAW TO AMEND THE CHARTER OF THE ONEIDA CITY CODE TO ABOLISH THE
ELECTIVE OFFICE OF THE CITY CHAMBERLAIN**

RESOLUTION 25-131

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, that the Public Hearing to amend the Charter of the Oneida City Code to abolish the elective office of the City Chamberlain be hereby closed at 6:33 p.m.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)
MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT: None
OLD BUSINESS: None

REPORTS:

- Mayor's Report None
- Supervisor's Report Supervisor Mary Cavanagh provided an update via email:
 - In an effort to boost attendance and engagement, I'd like to remind everyone of a grant funded opportunity for chaperoned groups/families ages 8-15 to attend the Madison County fair for free with transportation and food vouchers with registration by July 20th. It's a great chance for young people to explore the wide range of possibilities in Madison County and in agriculture while connecting with our local community.
 - They are still looking for volunteers to help throughout the fair. This is a great opportunity to receive community service hours.
 - Reminder Open Farm Day throughout Madison County is Saturday July 26.
 - The Senior Picnic is on Aug 6th. Transportation may be provided, and tickets are available upon registering by calling the OFA at 315-697-5700. Guests under 60 may attend with a senior for \$9.25. The location is Chapman Park on the lake in the Town of Sullivan.
 - Finally, our Child Care Assistance Program funding has run out, and we are not able to open new cases. Basically, NYS opened the eligibility for more people to qualify but did not increase funding, so we are forced to stop all recertifications, as are all other counties in NYS. We called OCFS and they said more funding will not be available until next year.For more information on any of these events, please contact the City Clerk's office- 315.363.7378.
- City Manager's Report
City Manager Lovell reported that he had recently returned from vacation and was in the process

of addressing a substantial number of emails accumulated during his time away. He extended his appreciation to Fire Chief Scott Jones for overseeing operations in his absence and acknowledged the Department Heads for their continued support.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the regular meeting of July 1, 2025, are hereby approved as presented.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, that Warrant No. 14 checks and ACH payments in the amount of \$351,632.24 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: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

MONTHLY REPORTS

RESOLUTION 25-132

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

RESOLVED, that Monthly Reports from the City Clerk, City Engineer, Codes Department, Fire Department, Parks and Recreation Department, and Police Department are hereby received and placed on file.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

**ADOPT A LOCAL LAW AMENDING THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF ONEIDA TO ABOLISH
THE ELECTIVE OFFICE OF CITY CHAMBERLAIN**

RESOLUTION 25-133

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Home Rule Law, a proposed Local Law titled "A Local Law Amending the Charter of the City of Oneida To Abolish the Elective Office of City Chamberlain" was presented and introduced at a Regular Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida held on July 1, 2025; **and**

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on such proposed Local Law on July 15, 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 environmental review under SEQRA, an environmental impact statement (EIS) was not required, and a negative declaration was issued on July 1, 2025, pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) determining that this action will have no significant effect on the environment thus concluding the SEQR review process; **and**

WHEREAS the enactment of said Proposed Local Law is subject to a mandatory referendum pursuant to Municipal Home Rule Law § 23; **and**

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

NOW, THEREFORE, it is

RESOLVED that the Common Council of the City of Oneida, Madison County, New York, does hereby enact a Local Law as follows:

CITY OF ONEIDA

A LOCAL LAW AMENDING THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF ONEIDA TO ABOLISH THE ELECTIVE OFFICE OF THE CITY CHAMBERLAIN

Be it enacted by the Common Council of the City of Oneida, this local law amends the Charter of the City of Oneida and the City of Oneida City Code to abolish the elective office of City Chamberlain.

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY.

This local law is enacted pursuant to the New York State Constitution and New York Municipal Home Rule Law § 10.

SECTION 2. PURPOSE.

In accordance with Section 2.1(A) of the Oneida City Charter, the City Chamberlain for the City of Oneida is an elective City officer with a two (2) year term. The Common Council of the City of Oneida has determined that it is desirable to abolish the elective position of the City Chamberlain. The purpose of this Local Law is to effectively effectuate such change, at 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 2027. Said change would be subject to a mandatory referendum. Therefore, an additional purpose of this local law is to place on the November 4, 2025, general election ballot, a referendum item which allows the electors of the City of Oneida to decide if they wish to abolish the elective office of City Chamberlain.

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT OF THE CITY CHARTER SECTION 2.1(A).

So that Subsection (A) of Section 2.1 of the Oneida City Charter, titled "Elective officers: terms," shall be amended so as to read, in its entirety, as follows:

- "A. There shall be elected by the qualified electors of the City a Common Council consisting of the Mayor and six Councilors, a City Judge, a City Justice and four Supervisors. All elective City officers shall be elected for a two-year term except the Supervisors, who shall be elected for the same term of office as Supervisors of the towns of Madison County and the City Judge and City Justice who shall be elected for six-year terms. One Councilman shall be elected by the qualified electors of each of the six wards. The qualified electors of the First, Second and Third Wards shall together elect two Supervisors. The qualified electors of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Wards shall together elect two Supervisors."

SECTION 5. MANDATORY REFERENDUM.

Pursuant to Municipal Home Rule Law Section 23(2)(e), this Local Law shall be submitted for approval to the electors of the City of Oneida at the next general City election to be held on November 4, 2025.

SECTION 6. VALIDITY & SEVERABILITY.

If a court determines that any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this local law or application thereof to any person, firm or corporation, or circumstance is invalid or unconstitutional, the court's order or judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of this local law, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this local law or in its application to the person, individual, firm or corporation or circumstance, directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment or order shall be rendered.

SECTION 7. **EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Local Law shall be effective upon filing with the office of the Secretary of State. Pursuant to Municipal Home Rule Law § 23, this Local Law is subject to a mandatory referendum, and this may not be filed with the Secretary of State until a referendum has been conducted approving this Local Law.

RESOLVED, that a proposition will be put before the voters at the General Election to be held on November 4, 2025, and the Clerk of said City is hereby authorized and directed to cause to be included in the Notice of the Election the following proposition which shall read as follows: "Shall Section 2.1(A) of the Oneida City Charter be amended to abolish the elective position of the City Chamberlain?"

Councilor Szczerba:	<u>NO</u>
Councilor Laureti:	<u>YES</u>
Councilor Hitchings:	<u>YES</u>
Councilor Winchell:	<u>YES</u>
Councilor Pagano:	<u>YES</u>
Councilor Simchik:	<u>YES</u>
Mayor Rossi	<u>ABSENT</u>

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION: City Attorney Bell noted that the local law requires a mandatory referendum and must pass in November to be enacted.

DESIGNATE COMMON COUNCIL AS DUE PROCESS HEARING OFFICERS

RESOLUTION 25-134

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

RESOLVED, that in accordance with the City of Oneida Water Department Rules and Regulations, the Common Council will conduct any due process hearings for termination of water service as per Article XIX. B. 4.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BIKE AND PROPERTY AUCTION

RESOLUTION 25-135

Moved by Councilor Winchell
Seconded by Councilor Hitchings

WHEREAS, the City of Oneida Police Department has accumulated unclaimed, impounded, or surplus bicycles and other property; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oneida deems it appropriate and in the public interest to dispose of such items via a public auction in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and City policy; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council has determined that the proceeds generated by this auction should be directed to enhancing the Police Department's capacity by funding the procurement of equipment and outreach materials;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Oneida as follows:

1. The Police Department is authorized to conduct a **Bike and Property Auction** on **Saturday, August 30, 2025**, beginning at **9:00 a.m.**, at **City Hall, 109 North Main Street, Oneida, New York**.
2. Notice of the auction shall be published at least **ten (10) days prior** to the event in accordance with state and local requirements, and the auction shall be open to the public.
3. All auction proceeds shall be deposited into a designated City account with reference to **"Police Department Auction Proceeds."**
4. Funds from this account shall be exclusively used for the purchase of necessary Police Department equipment and hand-out items for community engagement and public safety initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution takes effect immediately and remains in force until the authorized fund is fully expended for its intended purpose.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

**AGREEMENT WITH MADISON COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ONEIDA CITY POLICE
DEPARTMENT FOR THE SUPERVISION OF ONE TANF SUMMER YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT**

RESOLUTION 25-136

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

WHEREAS, Madison County Workforce Development (MCWD) administers the TANF Summer Youth Employment Program to provide meaningful work experience to eligible youth; and

WHEREAS, MCWD has offered the opportunity for one TANF Summer Youth Employment Program participant to be placed with the Oneida City Police Department for the summer of 2025; and

WHEREAS, the participant will work a maximum of twenty-two (22) hours per week, Monday through Thursday, under the supervision of the Oneida City Police Department; and

WHEREAS, all costs associated with the youth's summer work experience, including wages and workers' compensation, will be paid by Madison County Workforce Development;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Common Council of the City of Oneida, that the City Manager is hereby authorized to execute an agreement with Madison County Workforce Development and the Oneida City Police Department for the supervision of one TANF Summer Youth Employment Program participant in accordance with the terms outlined above.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)
MOTION CARRIED

AGREEMENT-AUCTIONS INTERNATIONAL INC.

RESOLUTION 25-137

Moved by Councilor Winchell
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, to authorize the City Manager to sign an agreement with Auctions International, Inc., 11167 Big Tree Road, East Aurora, NY 14052 for the sale of government vehicles, machinery, equipment and all other surplus assets for 2025.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

BUDGET TRANSFERS/AMENDMENTS

RESOLUTION 25-138

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

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

	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>
2025 Budget Adjustments		
\$ 50,000.00	001.1315.0403.0000	001.1315.0101.0000
	Comptroller Contracts	Comptroller Salaries
<i>To re- allocate funds for contracted outsource Comptroller services as approved by Res# 25-83 4/15/25</i>		

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

AGREEMENT-MRB GROUP-KALLET ASSESSMENT

RESOLUTION 25-139

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with MRB Group, 145 Culver Road, Suite 160, Rochester, NY 14620, for professional services related to the assessment of the Oneida Kallet Civic Center.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Szczerba inquired about whether this was the same company the city dealt with in the past. City Manager Lovell stated this is not the same firm we previously worked with. This is the actual architectural and engineering firm that developed the original design schematics for the Kallet. He advised that they conducted a brief walkthrough approximately two weeks ago. City Manager Lovell advised that although he typically prefers not to rush projects of this nature, New York State released the new BRICS grant on June 15th, with a submission deadline of August 15th—leaving only a 60-day window.

He noted that the firm was kind enough to visit the site on Juneteenth, during which they conducted a full walkthrough of the property. They took measurements and photographs. City Manager Lovell stated that their goal is to provide us with a full renovation cost estimate, which will focus strictly on an exterior facelift. Significant funds have already been invested in HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and roofing systems, so this effort will strictly address the facade and the area out front.

The cost for the full design is approximately \$6,300. The BRICS grant provides funding from \$250,000 up to \$15 million and requires no matching funds. We anticipate that the renovation estimate will likely fall in the range of \$500,000 to \$750,000. The grant guidance is somewhat vague, and while not clearly written, that ambiguity may encourage a high number of applicants.

He stated that given the investment we've already made and the Kallet's role as our de facto community center, City Manager Lovell firmly believes our project will score competitively. He concluded stating "that is why we've moved quickly to push this through within a 30-day timeframe."

NEW BUSINESS: None

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0
Absent: 1 (Mayor Rossi)

MOTION CARRIED

The regular meeting is hereby adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

Sandra LaPera, City Clerk