

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 5, 2025

A meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the fifth day of August 2025 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 Mayor Rick Rossi.

<u>Attendees</u>	Present	Absent	Arrived Late
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Also Present

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

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

SWEARING IN CEREMONY: Swearing in new firefighters (Ceremony at 6:15pm)

PROCLAMATION: Purple Heart Month (accepted by American Legion Commander, MJ Borst, and Purple Heart recipient, Marlin "Corky" Rine)

THE CITY OF ONEIDA IS PROUD TO BE A PURPLE HEART CITY

Honoring Our Nation's Heroes

The City of Oneida is officially listed as a Purple Heart City—a designation that honors and recognizes the sacrifices of our military men and women who were wounded or killed in combat while serving our country.

This designation reflects our deep appreciation for the bravery, service, and patriotism of Purple Heart recipients and the enduring impact of their sacrifices.

What Does It Mean to Be a Purple Heart City?

- **Official Recognition**
The City has adopted a resolution formally recognizing Purple Heart recipients and pledging to honor them in word and deed.
- **Commitment to Honor**
We are part of the National Purple Heart Trail, a symbolic network of cities and landmarks that pays tribute to those wounded in defense of our nation.
- **Civic Pride and Respect**
The City proudly displays signs at key entry points, reminding all who pass through Oneida of our gratitude and support for our combat-wounded veterans.
- **Ongoing Tribute**
Oneida is committed to honoring Purple Heart recipients through public events, proclamations, and continued community awareness.

Let us never forget the price of our freedom—and those who have borne it.

Thank you to all who have served, and especially to our Purple Heart heroes.

CITY OF ONEIDA, NY
"A City with Gratitude"

Proclamation

City of Oneida - Office of the Mayor

WHEREAS, the City of Oneida has always stood in strong support of our military veterans and holds deep respect and admiration for the men and women who have served — and who continue to serve — our nation with honor in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart is the oldest military award still presented to service members, originally established as the “Badge of Military Merit” by General George Washington in 1782. It is awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have been wounded or made the ultimate sacrifice in combat against an enemy of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Military Order of the Purple Heart works to build a community of support among combat-wounded veterans and their families, promote patriotism, advocate for veterans’ issues, and — above all — ensure that the bravery and sacrifice of these individuals are never forgotten; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oneida believes it is our duty and privilege to honor all recipients of the Purple Heart, recognizing the tremendous courage of those who risked — and in many cases gave — their lives to protect our country and fellow citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rick Rossi, Mayor of the City of Oneida, do hereby proclaim August 7, 2025, as

“PURPLE HEART DAY”

And I call upon all residents to honor and remember the sacrifices made by our Purple Heart recipients, and to express our lasting gratitude for their extraordinary service to our nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affix the official seal of the City of Oneida on this 5th day of August 2025.

Mayor Rick Rossi

PUBLIC COMMENT: None
OLD BUSINESS: None

REPORTS

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor reported that the National Night Out event was a great success. He and the City Manager attended, noting that over 70 people were already in attendance shortly after the event began. He thanked everyone who helped organize the event, specifically recognizing the Parks and Recreation Department and the Police Department for their efforts, and commended the team for a job well done.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Appreciation for Recent Event Collaboration

A heartfelt thank you to the Parks and Recreation team and the Police Department for organizing a fantastic event. The turnout was phenomenal, and feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive. Everyone commented on what a great time they had. I look forward to this event again next year. Your dedication and hard work are truly appreciated.

2. Storm Recovery and Flood Mitigation

Substantial cleanup efforts have been completed throughout the City. While a few residents are still in need of assistance, we are prioritizing those requests and addressing them as quickly as possible.

We are actively developing a tentative flood mitigation plan, which includes:

- Community feedback integration
- Vegetation removal and dredging in key drainage ditches
- Daily field operations for the past several weeks

Once finalized, the comprehensive plan will be presented to the Council to encourage further discussion and input.

3. Cybersecurity and Readiness

The City will host its first-ever cybersecurity tabletop exercise on August 25, simulating an adversary attack on municipal IT infrastructure.

Key details:

- Fully grant-funded through a \$50,000 NYS cybersecurity grant (awarded in 2021)
- Must be completed by August 31
- Intended to identify system vulnerabilities and areas for improvement
- Invitations extended to members of Council and selected community stakeholders

This initiative represents a significant step forward in assessing and enhancing our cybersecurity posture.

4. Financial Overview

General Fund:

- Revenue: \$9.57 million (42.8% of budget)
- Expenses: \$9.55 million (44.6% of budget)

Water Fund:

- Revenue: \$2.85 million (33.6% of budget) – slightly behind due to seasonal billing factors
- Expenses: \$2.6 million – currently showing a small surplus

Sales Tax Revenue:

- 2.3% below budget
- Still reflects a nearly 2% increase from the same time last year

Overall, the City's financial health remains strong and steady.

5. Operational Updates

We are pursuing Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) to support various DRI projects.

Notably:

- A meeting was held with developer Ed Riley and his team
- Demolition work on the Oneida Hotel begins Monday
- Permits were pulled today
- Residents will begin to see site activity, including the placement of dumpsters and demolition crews

This marks a significant milestone in our redevelopment efforts, and we are excited to see this long-anticipated progress begin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Winchell

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the regular meeting of July 15, 2025, are hereby approved as presented.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Moved by Councilor Winchell

Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, that Warrant No. 15 checks and ACH payments in the amount of \$1,516,899.84 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: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

**INTRODUCE A LOCAL LAW AMENDING SECTION 190-26.2(E) OF CHAPTER 190 OF THE ONEIDA CITY OF
CODE TO REDUCE THE MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS AND REQUIRE BLASTING
DETERMINATION THROUGH GEOTECHNICAL STUDY**

RESOLUTION 25-140

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Pagano

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Oneida adopted Local Law No. 10 of 2022 establishing §190-26.2 of the City Code to regulate wind energy facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) has advised the City that wind turbines exceeding 200 feet may adversely affect national defense radar systems, necessitating height limitations for wind energy projects; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council also seeks to protect the public and nearby properties by ensuring that the required geotechnical report for any wind energy facility application contains sufficient detail to determine whether blasting will be required during site development; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to §190-45 of the City Code and New York General City Law §27-a, the proposed zoning amendments must be referred to the Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals (PCZBA) for advisory review; and

WHEREAS, no other agency has the legal authority or jurisdiction to approve or directly undertake the enactment of local laws in the City of Oneida, such that there are no other involved agencies within the meaning of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) with respect to the proposed enactment of said Local Law.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, that there are no other involved agencies, that the Common Council shall act as lead agency and that the enactment of this proposed Local Law is an Unlisted action under SEQR, thus requiring the preparation of a Short Environmental Assessment Form; be it further

RESOLVED, that the Common Council shall conduct a public hearing as to the enactment of the

proposed Local Law at the Oneida City Hall located at 109 North Main Street, Oneida, New York on August 19, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, at which time all persons interested in the subject shall be heard; be it further

RESOLVED, that the proposed local law is hereby referred to the City of Oneida Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals (PCZBA) for review and recommendation; be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Clerk is hereby directed to publish and post notice of said public hearing as required by law.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

**CITY OF ONEIDA
LOCAL LAW 2025
A LOCAL LAW AMENDING SECTION 190-26.2(E) OF CHAPTER 190, TITLED "ZONING,"
OF THE ONEIDA CITY CODE**

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

Section 1.

So that Section 190-26.2(E)(1)(a)(9) of the Oneida City Code shall be amended to read, in its entirety, as follows:

- "[9] A geotechnical report shall be furnished which shall, at a minimum, include the following information:
- [a] Soil engineering and engineering geologic characteristics of the site based on soil-site sampling and testing.
 - [b] Foundation design criteria for all proposed structures.
 - [c] Slope stability analysis.
 - [d] Grading criteria for ground preparation, cuts, and fills, and soil compaction.
 - [e] Blasting analysis evaluating site conditions, geological formations, proximity to structures, and environmental sensitivities."

Section 2.

So that Section 190-26.2(E)(2)(b) of the Oneida City Code shall be amended to read, in its entirety, as follows:

- "b. Maximum overall height. The maximum overall height of any wind energy conversion system shall be 200 feet. The maximum height shall be measured from the ground

elevation to the top of the tip of the blade in the vertical position.”

Section 3. Validity and severability.

If any section or part of this local law is declared invalid or unconstitutional, it shall not be held to invalidate or impair the validity, force or effect of any other section of this local law.

Section 4. Effective date.

This local law shall be effective upon filing with the office of the Secretary of State.

RESOLUTION TO RESCHEDULE COMMON COUNCIL MEETING DUE TO ELECTION DAY

RESOLUTION 25-141

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

WHEREAS, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Common Council is set for **Tuesday, November 4, 2025**, which coincides with general Election Day; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with State law and to avoid interference with election operations, the City finds it prudent to reschedule the Council meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Council seeks to ensure full participation of its members and public attendance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Common Council meeting originally scheduled for **Tuesday, November 4, 2025**, be and hereby is **rescheduled** to **Wednesday, November 5, 2025**, at the same time and location previously advertised; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Clerk is authorized and directed to:

1. Publish legal notice of this rescheduled meeting in the official newspaper.
2. Notify the public, Council members, staff, media outlets, and all appropriate parties.
3. Update all relevant public postings, including the City’s website and municipal bulletin boards, to reflect the change.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

BUDGET TRANSFERS/AMENDMENTS

RESOLUTION 25-142

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		
\$ 40,000.00	003.8110.0200.0000 Sewer Equipment	003.0003.0912.0000 Sewer Fund Balance
<i>To allocate funds to purchase parts, motors, valves and equipment for routine maintenance and repairs</i>		
\$ 4,000.00	001.3410.0109.0000 Training Overtime	001.3410.0413.0000 Fire Training
<i>To re-allocate funds for overtime incurred during training</i>		
\$ 125.00	001.1620.0404.0000 Copier Leases	001.1410.0200.0000 Clerk Equipment
<i>To re-allocate funds for service agreement for copier</i>		
\$ 8,000.00	001.8020.0400.0000 Planning Contracts	001.8020.0101.0000 Planning Salaries
<i>To re-allocate funds for the approved contract services to the Planning Dept.</i>		
\$ 20,000.00	001.3120.0317.0000 Police Clothing	001.0001.0912.0000 General Fund Balance
<i>To allocate funds to purchase contractual uniforms for new hires</i>		
\$ 100,000.00	001.3410.0114.0000 Fire Short Shift Overtime	001.0001.0912.0000 General Fund Balance
<i>To allocate funds to cover the expenses for remaining open shifts in 2025</i>		
\$ 30,000.00	001.3410.0102.0000 Fire Overtime	001.0001.0912.0000 General Fund Balance
<i>To allocate funds to cover overtime due to contractual obligations</i>		

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

BOARD REAPPOINTMENT-BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW (JIM CHAMBERLAIN)

RESOLUTION 25-143

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, to approve the Mayor's reappointment of Jim Chamberlain, 610 W. Elm Street, to the Board of Assessment review for a 5-year term.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

AMEND 2025 ADOPTED BUDGET-SALARY SCHEDULE CHANGE (PLANNING)

RESOLUTION 25-144

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

WHEREAS, the 2025 Adopted Budget includes both the Director of Planning and Economic Developer/Planner positions; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Planning position is currently unfunded, and the Economic Developer/Planner position is funded; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager desires to fund the Director of Planning position and eliminate the Economic Developer/Planner position;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2025 Adopted Budget Salary Schedule is hereby amended to:

1. Increase the Director of Planning position from zero to one funded position; and
2. Decrease the Economic Developer/Planner position from one to zero.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Comptroller is authorized to make the necessary budgetary adjustments to reflect this change.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

BOARD APPOINTMENT-TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

RESOLUTION 25-145

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, to approve the Mayor's appointment of Cindy Bortree, 444 Leonard Street, Oneida, NY 13421 to the Traffic Safety Board to fulfil a term vacated by former member, Kathy Malinowski, who resigned on June 1, 2025, expiring on December 4, 2027.

Ayes: 4
Nays: 0
Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik
MOTION CARRIED

APPROVING THE CONVEYANCE OF CITY OWNED REAL PROPERTY SITUATED ON PHELPS STREET, ONEIDA, NEW YORK TO THE MADISON COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, SUBJECT TO ENUMERATED CONTINGENCIES

RESOLUTION 25-146

Moved by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

WHEREAS, by Local Law No. 3 of 2012, the Common Council of the City of Oneida created Chapter 36, titled "Conveyance of Property," and declared it to be a policy of the Common Council to protect, promote and revitalize economic growth and commercial development within the City; **and**

WHEREAS, the Common Council, having recognized the stated mission of the Madison County Industrial Development Authority ("Authority") to cultivate development to generate and enhance the livelihood of area businesses, industries, communities, and citizens, and enrich the overall quality of life, has authorized the conveyance of real property owned by the City of Oneida to the Authority to facilitate economic growth within the City of Oneida; **and**

WHEREAS, in the interest of commercial development and to promote economic growth in the City of Oneida's downtown business district, the Common Council wishes to convey certain commercially zoned real property, being Tax Parcel Nos. 30.72-1-81 and 30.72-1-84, situated on Phelps Street, in the City of Oneida, County of Madison, State of New York, consisting of approximately 0.25 acres and improved by asphalt pavement parking spaces, to the Authority; **and**

WHEREAS, to ensure the receipt of "fair market value" for such commercial real property, a real estate appraisal has been performed by Eriksen E. Stropp, MAI, NYS Certified General Appraiser

#46-4452, of Stopp Appraisal, dated July 11, 2025, wherein the value of such real property has been determined to be \$20,000.00 calculated at approximately \$1.75 per square foot, a copy of which appraisal is attached hereto and incorporated herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that there are no other involved agencies, the Common Council will act as lead agency on an uncoordinated basis, that this is an unlisted action and, after reviewing the short EAF submitted in support of this proposition, the Common Council hereby determines that the proposed action will result in no significant adverse environmental impacts and therefore this Common Council renders a negative declaration for purposes of SEQR; **be it further**

RESOLVED, that the findings and reasons supporting this negative declaration are as follows:

- The Common Council recognizes that the Madison County Industrial Development Authority, whose mission is to promote and cultivate economic development, is best suited to identifying viable opportunities for economic growth and development and has the resources necessary to facilitate and enable such opportunities. The proposed land conveyance stands on its own merits as it would greatly benefit the City of Oneida's downtown commercial business district if the Authority can facilitate the use of such real property in a manner that would result in economic growth and development.
- The real property is presently improved for parking purposes. The conveyance of title shall not result in any improvements or alterations to the property, or a projected change in use. Consequently, lot coverage and impermeable surface area shall not be increased and drainage and storm water runoff shall not be impacted by the instant conveyance, nor shall there be any increased demands on existing public utilities; **be it further**

RESOLVED, that the Common Council does hereby approve the conveyance of aforementioned real property owned by the City, Tax Parcel Nos. 30.72-1-81 and 30.72-1-84, situated on Phelps Street, in the City of Oneida, County of Madison, State of New York, to the Madison County Industrial Development Authority in accordance with the following terms and conditions:

1. The property shall be conveyed, without consideration, to the Authority for use by the Authority for purposes of commercial growth and economic development and title shall remain in the City, but the Authority shall have the use thereof for so long as its corporate existence shall continue and, while said real property is under its jurisdiction, control and supervision, such shall be exempt from all taxes and assessments.
2. In the event such property may be sold or conveyed by the Authority, the Authority shall pay, as reasonable consideration to the City of Oneida, an amount to the City of Oneida that shall not be less than \$20,000.00, in accordance with the aforementioned appraisal, prepared by Stropp Appraisal, together with such closing costs and legal fees as have been incurred by the City of Oneida to effectuate such conveyance.

3. In the event the Authority does not sell or convey such real property to a private entity in furtherance of economic growth and development within one (1) year from the date of this resolution, this conveyance shall become null and void and the jurisdiction, control and supervision, of such real property shall revert to the City of Oneida; **be it further**

RESOLVED, that the Mayor of the City of Oneida is hereby authorized to execute any and all deeds or other documents necessary to complete the conveyance of title of said parcel of land.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS: None

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Pagano

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (3) Laureti/Szczerba/Simchik

MOTION CARRIED

The regular meeting is hereby adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

Sandra LaPera, City Clerk