

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**DECEMBER 17, 2024**

A meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the seventeenth day of December 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at the Common Council Chambers, 109 N. Main, 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mary Cavanagh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brandee Henderson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michelle Kinville	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 Chris Militello	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fire Chief Scott Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Chief Steve Lowell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

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Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

**PROCLAMATION:**      Oneida Health Auxiliary Light A Light Program  
Sara Reinhardt, Foundation Director

# *Proclamation*

## *City of Oneida - Office of the Mayor*

WHEREAS, the Oneida Health Auxiliary began in 1915 to support the needs of the hospital, its staff, and patients by providing comfort care items that are not included in the operating budget, and the Auxiliary has hosted several fundraisers and special events throughout the years to fund the needs of patients and residents alike, **and**

WHEREAS, the Oneida Health Auxiliary's Light a Light Program is a touching way to honor loved ones, special friends, and all people who make life better through the generous donations received from the community members, **and**

WHEREAS, a monetary gift in honor of those luminaries purchased through the Light a Light Program will directly benefit the patients and residents of Oneida Health and its Extended Care Facility in Oneida, **and**

WHEREAS, thanks to the generosity of donations received throughout the years, the Auxiliary has been able to purchase recliners, bariatric chairs, a portable cardiac monitor, and other items needed for patient and resident care, **and**

WHEREAS, the Auxiliary Members, through their dedication and tireless efforts, support and make a positive difference for Oneida Health, the many patients and nursing home residents, and for the entire community, **and now therefore**

I, **Rick Rossi, Mayor** do hereby proclaim December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, as:

### *Oneida Health Auxiliary's Light A Light Program Day*

in the City of Oneida and encourage all residents to join me in thanking the Oneida Health Auxiliary for all that they do to help our Community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand  
and affix the official seal of the City of Oneida on this 17<sup>th</sup>  
day of December 2024.

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Mayor Rick Rossi

**PUBLIC HEARING:** A proposed Local Law to create a new chapter titled "Murals" in the Oneida City Code

#### OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

#### A PROPOSED LOCAL LAW TO CREATE A NEW CHAPTER TITLED "MURALS" IN THE ONEIDA CITY CODE

#### RESOLUTION 24-297

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, that the Public Hearing on a proposed Local Law to create a new chapter titled "Murals" in the Oneida City Code, be hereby opened at 6:33p.m.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### APPEARANCES

##### RALPH KOHLER-ONEIDA

Ralph Kohler, a Federal employee with approximately 40 years of experience in public policy, expressed concerns regarding the proposed Mural Local Law. He emphasized that "a vague law is a bad law" and advocated for providing as much clarity as possible within the regulation. In the interest of transparency, he questioned the origins of the law and urged those voting in favor of it to explain why they believe the regulation, as currently written, is a good idea—not based on its intent, but on its actual provisions. Mr. Kohler requested that the proposed law be tabled and revised to address these concerns. He further emphasized that if the council must proceed with a vote tonight, he believes they should vote no.

Mr. Kohler advised that he received a response from City Manager Lovell; however, he did not feel that the response provided answered his questions.

Mr. Kohler provided the council with written comments sent prior to the meeting via email outlining his position that he asked to be received and placed on file with these minutes. **(ATTACHMENT A)**

##### BRIAN BORTREE-ONEIDA-yielded minutes to Ralph Kohler

##### ROBERT BRITTON-ONEIDA

Mr. Britton further addressed the topic of murals, noting that other municipalities allow them without issue and have received no complaints. He expressed confusion as to why the city perceives murals as a problem. Mr. Britton stated that he does not believe a law is necessary and argued that building owners

should have the freedom to paint murals on their property.

#### FRED MEYERS-ONEIDA

Fred Meyers stated that contrary to Mr. Kohler's belief, when something goes to the Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals, there is widespread community participation, and they have great insight as to what to look for with regard to murals. He further advised that the PCZBA is one of the best and most active boards in the city that approve the murals.

Mr. Meyers stated that he feels Nadine (Bell), the City Attorney, wrote a good law that is not specific with regard to sizes, because buildings are different sizes, and it is hard to say that one size fits all. Mr. Meyers advised that the PCZBA is the proper place to have this, not a Sign Board or other, noting that they approved the mural for the Barber Shop.

In his opinion, Mr. Meyers stated that a degree of vagueness in the law is not detrimental, as it allows for flexibility, which was a key goal when pursuing a form-based code rather than a rigid, strictly codified law. He referenced the \$10 million grant as an example of the benefits of maintaining flexibility. Mr. Meyers concluded by expressing his hope that the council votes in favor of the proposed law.

### **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **A PROPOSED LOCAL LAW TO CREATE A NEW CHAPTER TITLED "MURALS" IN THE ONEIDA CITY CODE**

#### **RESOLUTION 24-298**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

**RESOLVED**, that the Public Hearing on a proposed Local Law to create a new chapter titled "Murals" in the Oneida City Code, be hereby closed at 6:44p.m.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** To discuss the submittal of a grant application for Round 9 of the Restore NY Communities' Initiative to facilitate revitalizing urban and rural areas, disadvantaged communities, and stabilizing neighborhoods. Pursuant to the requirement of the grant application, a description of the location, size, and nature of each property included in the application, whether the property is proposed to be demolished, deconstructed, rehabilitated, or reconstructed, and the status of property located at 136 and 138 Madison Street is below:



Restore NY Communities Initiative - Round 9 - 2024 Municipal Grant Program Property Assessment List Municipality: City of Oneida Project: Madison Street Revival						
Site Name:	Property Address:	Square Feet:	Current Zoning Classification	Zoning Upon Project Completion	Project Type	Building Category
	136 Madison Street	11,025	Mixed Use	Mixed Use	Rehabilitation	Vacant
	138 Madison Street	3,900	Mixed Use	Mixed Use	Rehabilitation	Vacant

#### OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

#### GRANT APPLICATION-ROUND 9 OF THE RESTORE NY COMMUNITIES' INITIATIVE 136 MADISON STREET AND 138 MADISON STREET

#### RESOLUTION 24-299

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

**RESOLVED**, that the Public Hearing to discuss the submittal of a grant application for Round 9 of the Restore NY Communities' Initiative to facilitate revitalizing urban and rural areas, disadvantaged communities, and stabilizing neighborhoods in accordance with the above referenced chart, be hereby opened at 6:45p.m.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### APPEARANCES

None

#### CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

#### GRANT APPLICATION-ROUND 9 OF THE RESTORE NY COMMUNITIES' INITIATIVE 136 MADISON STREET AND 138 MADISON STREET

#### RESOLUTION 24-300

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

**RESOLVED**, that the Public Hearing to discuss the submittal of a grant application for Round 9 of the Restore NY Communities' Initiative to facilitate revitalizing urban and rural areas, disadvantaged communities, and stabilizing neighborhoods in accordance with the above referenced chart, be hereby closed at 6:45p.m.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

#### ROBERT BRITTON

Robert Britton addressed the council to discuss the repercussions for individuals who fail to comply with the rules regarding the chicken permit. He expressed concern about those who disregard the regulations and inquired about potential actions, such as revoking permits, to prevent such violations from occurring in the future.

Mr. Britton also emphasized the need for the city to offer pay that is competitive with other municipalities. He noted that the city invests in training officers, only for them to leave for better-paying positions elsewhere.

#### JOE MAGLIOCCA

Mr. Magliocca stated that he was present to discuss recent changes to the City Code with regard to Mobile Food Vendors and locations. He stated that although there were 2 Public Hearings, the language referenced vendor locations, which he stated were never made public until after the resolution was passed at the last meeting.

**Clerk's Note: The locations were published on the City website as part of the Packet and available to the public on Thursday, November 28, prior to the vote on Tuesday, December 3, 2024.**

Mr. Magliocca expressed concern that Section 4-C is overly restrictive. He highlighted two provisions: 4-C (1), which requires locations to be specifically designated and approved by the Common Council through resolutions, and 4-C (2), which mandates that vendors select from this pre-approved list. Mr. Magliocca believes that all the designated locations present logistical challenges. While he has concerns about each location, he chose to address one in particular at this time:

**LOCATION 1:** described as Freight House Alley. The location shown is incorrectly identified on the map as being on Fright House Alley or James Street, when in fact it is located on Oneida Street. Mr. Magliocca clarified that the Oneida Rail Trail Plaza, also known as City Center Plaza, was specifically envisioned and designed as a public gathering space. This space includes features such as a bench, bike rack, picnic table, landscape seating wall, and informational kiosk, all intentionally placed to serve that purpose.

The informational kiosk features a community bulletin board on one side and an Oneida Rail Trail/Erie

Canal map on the other. Additionally, a large historic sign is located on the East Railroad Street side of the kiosk. This sign is one of seven placed throughout the city, highlighting the rich railroad, canal, and industrial history that defines our community. He stated that the owner of Firehouse Hotdogs, has often referred to this area as "his dining room," which adds to a vibrant, welcoming downtown.

Mr. Magliocca emphasized that designated locations for additional food vendors should be situated immediately adjacent to the plaza rather than moved away from it. He proposed alternative locations, including areas to the east of where Firehouse Hotdogs has historically operated and along the curb on Oneida Street, directly adjacent to the plaza.

While Mr. Magliocca believes the locations were determined in good faith, he emphasized that members of the public and prospective food vendors should have the opportunity to participate in an ongoing discussion about these locations. He encouraged the city to actively seek comments and thoughtfully consider any reasonable changes proposed by the community and vendors.

#### RALPH KOHLER

Mr. Kohler shared his thoughts on the ongoing controversy between the Barber Shop and Codes, expressing hope that the matter can be resolved by the Barber Shop owners allowing Codes to re-inspect the property. He noted that resolving this issue would help avoid further media attention and allow focus to shift to more pressing matters.

Mr. Kohler clarified, in response to Mr. Meyers' comments, that he was not suggesting the issue be tied to the approval of signs, but rather that the law should align with the signage regulations regarding content. He expressed his belief that scale should not be a concern and stated that, while he largely agrees with Mr. Meyers' comments, he feels certain aspects of the law's content should be removed.

Mr. Kohler concluded by asking for an update on the Kallet, noting that he has raised this inquiry several times before. He urged the council to be transparent about any plans and expressed his anticipation for a response regarding the future of the property.

#### PETER HEDGLON

Peter Hedglon noted that the Charter requires the proposed budget to be presented on or before October 30th for the following year. He questioned why preparation for the 2026 budget does not begin on January 2, 2025, instead of waiting until November and December. He argued that the limited timeframe is insufficient to effectively address a \$17 million budget.

Mr. Hedglon emphasized the need for a serious effort to educate the public about the city's finances and to provide opportunities for residents to engage with city leaders about their priorities—what the public wants, needs, and, most importantly, what they are willing to pay for. He expressed his belief that the most recent budget process was, in his opinion, a combination of serious consideration and grandstanding. He referenced ideas proposed by Councilor Laureti, for which he filed a Freedom of Information request, noting that these ideas deserve thorough evaluation and public discussion. He stressed the importance of presenting both the pros and cons of each idea, along with a detailed business plan outlining potential savings and costs.

Mr. Hedglon noted the lack of a clear definition, specific economic plan, or actionable details, which he described as "fillers." He emphasized that selling capital assets to fund a current-year budget is a one-time solution and not a sustainable strategy. While there was discussion about keeping taxes as low as possible,

he pointed out that there was no corresponding discussion about the potential consequences of such an approach.

Mr. Hedglon acknowledged the desire to reduce or eliminate tax increases during an election-year budget but emphasized that the primary focus should be on what is in the long-term best interest of the city, rather than on political expediency. He urged the council to lead residents in a comprehensive discussion about what the community needs, what it wants, and what it is willing to pay for.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Councilor Winchell stated that he and City Manager Lovell have been having discussions about the Kallet.

**REPORTS:**

- **Mayor's Report:** Mayor Rossi wished everyone a Merry Christmas
- **Supervisor's Report:** Supervisor Matt Roberts also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and stated that the county budget was passed underneath the tax cap of 2.5%, but also noted that they were higher last year, when the city was lower. He thanked the City for their hard work and efforts. He also advised that sales tax has been increasing and we are 1-2% above the budget.
- **City Manager's Report:** City Manager, Kyle Lovell read from a prepared statement, which is included in these minutes as **ATTACHMENT B**.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, that the minutes of the regular meeting of December 3, 2024, are hereby approved as presented.

Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**APPROVAL OF WARRANT**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, that Warrant No. 25, checks and ACH payments in the amount of \$977,277.56 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: 7  
Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MONTHLY REPORTS**

**RESOLUTION 24-301**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

**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: 7  
Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**ADOPT A LOCAL LAW IMPOSING A THREE (3) MONTH MORATORIUM ON WIND ENERGY  
CONVERSION SYSTEM (WECS) USES WITHIN THE CITY**

**RESOLUTION 24-302**

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 Imposing a Three (3) Month Moratorium on Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) Uses Within the City of Oneida," was presented and introduced at a regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida held on November 19, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held on such proposed local law on December 3, 2024, by the Common Council of the City of Oneida and proofs of publication of notices of such public hearings, 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 a Type II action for purposes of environmental review pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and that this action will have no significant effect on the environment, thus concluding the SEQR review process; and

**WHEREAS**, this Local Law was duly referred to the Madison County Planning Department for

review and recommendation pursuant to Section 239-m of the General Municipal Law of the State of New York, which has returned the Local Law for local determination finding it will have no county-wide impact; 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 of 2024 as follows:

**"CITY OF ONEIDA  
PROPOSED LOCAL LAW OF 2024**

**A LOCAL LAW IMPOSING A THREE (3) MONTH MORATORIUM ON  
WIND ENERGY CONVERSION SYSTEM (WECS) USES WITHIN  
THE CITY OF ONEIDA**

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

**Section 1. Title**

This local law shall be known as the "Wind Energy Conversion Systems Moratorium Law of the City of Oneida."

**Section 2. Findings and Purpose**

The City Council of the City of Oneida finds that the proliferation of Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) within the City has raised concerns regarding potential impacts on national security and public safety, particularly as communicated by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) in Rome. Therefore, the purpose of this local law is to enact a temporary moratorium on the issuance of permits for the permitting, construction and installation of new WECS and the processing of existing applications while the City Council conducts a review and proposes amendments to existing laws and regulations governing WECS installations.

The City has been working to develop amendments to existing laws and regulations governing WECS installations and recognizes that additional time is needed to effectively do so.

**Section 3. Moratorium on Wind Energy Conversion Systems**

A. Unless permitted pursuant to Section 5 hereafter, from and after the date of this local law, no application for a permit, zoning permit, zoning variance, building permit, operating permit, site plan approval, subdivision approval, certificate of occupancy, certificate of compliance, temporary certificate, or other City-level approval of any nature shall be accepted, processed, entertained, approved, approved conditionally, or issued by any board, employee, official agent of the City of Oneida, for the

placement, construction, erection, or installation of a new Wind Energy Conversion System (WECS) within the City of Oneida.

1. This moratorium shall be in effect for a period of three (3) months from the effective date of this local law and shall expire on the earlier of: (i) the date three (3) months from said effective date of this local law, unless renewed; or (ii) the enactment by the City Common Council of a resolution indicating the City Common Council is satisfied that the need for the moratorium no longer exists.
2. This moratorium shall apply to all zoning districts and all real property within the City.
3. Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) which have previously been approved or are located on City-owned property are hereby expressly excluded from this moratorium.

#### **Section 4. Review and Amendments**

During the moratorium period, the City Council shall conduct a comprehensive review of existing laws and regulations pertaining to WECS installations within the City of Oneida.

The City Council shall engage in dialogue and consultation with the U.S. Department of Defense, the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), and other relevant stakeholders to address concerns regarding national security and public safety.

Based on the findings of the review and consultations, the City Council shall propose amendments to existing laws and regulations governing WECS installations within the City of Oneida.

#### **Section 5. Relief from Provisions of this Local Law**

A. The City Common Council reserves to itself the power to vary or adapt the strict application of the requirements of this local law in the case of unusual hardship which would deprive the owner of all reasonable use of the lands involved.

B. Application for relief shall be filed in triplicate with the Planning Department together with a filing fee of \$250.00. The application shall specifically identify the property involved, recite the circumstances pursuant to which the relief is sought and the reasons for which the relief is claimed. Any costs, including expert consulting fees or attorney's fees, incurred by the City, shall be reimbursed to the City by the Applicant. The Common Council shall apply Use Variance criteria as set forth in the New York State General City Law, Section 81-b in reviewing any application for relief.

C. The Common Council may refer any applications for relief herein to the Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals for its advice and recommendations, but all decisions on granting or denying such relief shall be made solely by the Common Council after determining whether or not the requested relief is compatible with any contemplated amendments to the City Zoning Law. Unless completely satisfied that the proposed relief is compatible, the Common Council shall deny the application.

D. The Common Council shall conduct a public hearing on any request for relief within forty-five (45) days of receipt by the Planning Department and shall issue its final decision on requests for relief within thirty (30) days from the date of the public hearing.

## **Section 6. Penalties**

Any person, who shall construct, reconstruct, relocate, enlarge or modify any site to be used for a WECS installation in violation of the provisions of this local law, shall be subject to:

A. A fine not to exceed One Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisonment for a term not to exceed fifteen (15) days, or both. Each day a violation continues shall be considered a new violation.

B. A civil action inclusive of injunctive relief in favor of the City to cease any and all such actions which conflict with this local law and, if necessary, to remove any constructions, improvements, or related items or byproducts which may have taken place in violation of this local law.

## **Section 7. Enforcement**

This local law shall be enforced by the Code Enforcement Office of the City of Oneida or such other zoning enforcement individual(s) as designated by the Common Council. It shall be the duty of the enforcement individual(s) to advise the Common Council of all matters pertaining to the enforcement of this local law.

## **Section 8. Severability**

If any provision of this local law is found to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

## **Section 9. Repeal of Inconsistent Laws**

All laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this local law are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

## **Section 10. Effective Date**

This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State."

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

**MOTION CARRIED**



**ADOPT A LOCAL LAW CREATING A NEW CHAPTER 96, TITLED "MURALS,"**  
**IN THE ONEIDA CITY CODE**

**RESOLUTION 24-303**  
**TABLED**

Motion to table by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Local Law creating a new Chapter 96 in the Oneida City Code to regulate murals within the City of Oneida was introduced at a regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida held on December 3, 2024, pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Home Rule Law; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held on such proposed local law on December 17, 2024, by the Common Council of the City of Oneida and proofs of publication of notices of such public hearings, 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**, no other agency has the legal authority or jurisdiction to approve or directly undertake the enactment of a local law 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 (SEQRA) with respect to the proposed enactment of said Local Law, with the result that the Common Council shall act as lead agency in this matter; and

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

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is

**RESOLVED AND DETERMINED**, that there are no other involved agencies, that the Common Council shall act as lead agency, that the enactment of the proposed Local Law is an unlisted action for purposes of SEQRA review, and, upon review of the Short Environmental Assessment Form, it is determined that the action will have no significant effect on the environment, thus concluding the SEQRA review process; and it is further

**RESOLVED**, that the Common Council of the City of Oneida, Madison County, New York, does hereby enact a Local Law of 2024 as follows:

"CITY OF ONEIDA

LOCAL LAW 2024

A LOCAL LAW CREATING A NEW CHAPTER 96, TITLED "MURALS,"  
IN THE CITY OF ONEIDA CODE

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

SECTION 1.

So that a new Chapter 96, titled "Murals," shall be added to the Oneida City Code, which shall read, in its entirety, as follows:

§96-1 Purpose.

The City of Oneida recognizes the aesthetic value of murals in the community. Artists, property owners and community residents are encouraged to work together in the creation of public art murals to beautify the environment and promote community pride. Any group or individual that wishes to paint or create a mural must obtain permission from the property owner, whether it is a private individual or public agency. Painting murals on public or private property without permission of the property owner is illegal and punishable by law. The City does not condone any type of illegal graffiti or art, irrespective of artistic content.

§96-2 Definitions.

As used in this Chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

MURAL - A painting, mosaic, fresco, or other permanent artwork attached or applied directly to the outside of a structure. It is usually a graphic display that covers all or a portion of a wall and depicts a scene or event of natural, social, cultural or historic significance.

§96-3 General guidelines.

- A. These guidelines provide anyone who wants to install a mural with a reasonable process that safeguards both the interests of the community and those of the individual building/property owner. The guidelines are designed to assure that murals within the City of Oneida enhance the community's appearance without confusing drivers and/or pedestrians or causing any other negative impact on public safety or welfare.
- B. In reviewing a proposal for a mural, the following criteria shall be considered:
  - 1. Location, with consideration of safety issues, maintenance, and building geometry.
  - 2. Number of murals within close proximity.
  - 3. Size, with consideration of the local streetscape.

§96-4 Detailed guidelines and criteria.

In addition to the general guidelines above, the Planning Commission/ Zoning Board of Appeals shall evaluate mural proposals based on the following:

A. Design.

- 1. Relevance of the piece to the building or City, its values, culture, and people. Murals within the City of Oneida should be based on one or more of the following themes: natural beauty; history of the City; school pride; or other relevant themes.

2. Prohibitions.
  - a. Murals shall not be allowed in any residential zoning district.
  - b. Murals with moving parts.
  - c. Murals affixed, applied, or mounted above, upon or suspended from any part of the roof of a structure.
  - d. Murals that project away from a wall surface.
- B. Suitability of the work for outdoor display, including its maintenance and conservation requirements.
- C. Relationship of the work to the site and the community, especially how it serves to activate or enhance public space.
- D. Appropriateness of the scale of the artwork.
- E. Site selection considerations.
  1. Is the site visible and accessible to the public?
  2. Does the mural enhance the site where it is located?
  3. Does the mural enhance the overall public environment?
  4. The mural should not obscure windows or entranceways nor disrupt normal pedestrian circulation.
  5. The mural should not disrupt the site's landscaping and maintenance requirements.
  6. The mural should not be so large as to overwhelm adjacent architecture or become a visual distraction.
  7. The mural should not detract from its surroundings nor create blind spots where illegal activity can take place.
- F. Construction and maintenance.
  1. Murals shall be well designed and incorporate high-quality materials that enhance the overall appearance of the site and do not adversely affect the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians. Materials may include paint or other media appropriate for exterior use, such as tile or mosaic. Materials shall be long-lasting and graffiti-resistant to the greatest extent possible.
  2. Colors, though vibrant, should be complementary and harmonious with the exterior colors of the building structure, as well as consistent with the chosen theme. Neon, fluorescent, or reflective-type colors or materials are discouraged.
  3. The mural shall be designed and supervised by a qualified artist/muralist, one with sufficient knowledge and experience with the application of mural materials.
  4. Mural size shall be determined by the wall surface to be covered. Smaller walls may be completely covered. On large walls, murals should be large enough to dominate the wall surface but not so large as to overwhelm the local streetscape. Generally, one mural shall be permitted per structure.

5. The proposed mural, by its design, construction, and location, shall not obscure or detract from the significant architectural features of the building structure, nor should the building's architecture be altered to accommodate the mural.
6. The proposed mural, by its design, construction, and location, shall not have an adverse impact on adjacent properties or permitted uses. If the mural requires special lighting or other related construction, all applicable permits shall be required as part of installation. No flashing or moving lighting is permitted. No internal illumination is allowed.
7. Routine maintenance of an artwork becomes the responsibility of the building owner and/or sponsoring group where the artwork is located. As part of the contractual requirements, the artist should develop a maintenance program in cooperation with the building owner or manager for the proper long-term care of the artwork.
8. If, for whatever reason, the mural falls into disrepair, the building owner shall be notified, in writing, and required to make necessary repairs within 120 days. If the repairs are not made within the specified time, the City reserves the right to repair the mural at the owner's expense, remove the mural at the owner's expense, or cover the mural with opaque paint at the owner's expense.
9. If property ownership is transferred, all obligations for mural construction, maintenance and repair shall be assumed by the property owner.

G. Application review and approval process.

1. An applicant desiring to install a mural on is required to submit a formal application, a scaled color rendering of the proposed project, and a photograph showing the building location of the proposed mural to the City offices for review by the Department of Code Enforcement and the Planning Commission/ Zoning Board of Appeals.
2. Mural proposals that do not meet the design criteria/guidelines may be denied by the Planning Commission/ Zoning Board of Appeals or accepted with required modifications.
3. Mural proposals must comply with any applicable New York State Department of Transportation rules and regulations regarding visual appearance and possible effect on traffic in the area of the mural. Written approval from New York State Department of Transportation may be required, depending upon location of the mural.

H. Schedule.

1. Mural installation must begin within 60 days of approval and must be completed within six (6) months of the start date. If these dates are not met, the Planning Commission/ Zoning Board of Appeals may, at its discretion, revoke the mural permit. A one-time extension for an additional 60 days may be granted if the request is submitted in writing prior to the end of the initial 60-day period.

SECTION 2. 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 3. Effective date.

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

Vote to Table:

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

Attorney Chris Militello requested an Executive Session to discuss employment matters concerning specific individuals and collective bargaining negotiations. Following the Executive Session, action was taken on one of the discussed items. The resolution regarding the Collective Bargaining Agreement was moved forward for a vote after the session.

**AGREEMENT-NELSON ASSOCIATES**

**RESOLUTION 24-304**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Winchell

**RESOLVED**, to approve the execution of an agreement, which shall be effective December 6, 2024, by and between the City of Oneida and Nelson Associates Architectural Engineering, 1 North Park Row, Clinton, NY 13323-1536 for professional engineering services provided to the City of Oneida Water Department, executed by the City Manager as per the terms of NAAE Proposal No. 6143.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**AGREEMENT-CITY HISTORIAN (2025)**

**RESOLUTION 24-305**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, to authorize the City Manager to sign an agreement with Ariel Bero, 369 Lenox Ave., Oneida, NY 13421, as City Historian, as per the 2025 City of Oneida Budget.

Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0  
**MOTION CARRIED**

BUDGET TRANSFERS/AMENDMENTS

**RESOLUTION 24-306**

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>
<b>2024 Budget Adjustments</b>		
\$ 6,400.00	001.1315.0101.0000 Comptroller Salaries	001.9011.0807.0000 Police & Fire Retirement
<b><i>To re-allocate funds to cover payouts for resignations</i></b>		
\$ 10,000.00	001.1315.0403.0000 Comptroller Contracts	001.9011.0807.0000 Police & Fire Retirement
<b><i>To re-allocate funds to cover outsourced services</i></b>		
\$ 2,000.00	001.1620.0404.0000 Postage	001.9011.0807.0000 Police & Fire Retirement
<b><i>To re-allocate funds to cover expenses for postage</i></b>		
\$ 18,700.00	001.3310.0101.0000 Traffic Salaries	001.9011.0807.0000 Police & Fire Retirement
<b><i>To re-allocate funds to cover payouts for retirements</i></b>		
\$ 12,850.00	001.9710.0700.0000 Debt Service Interest	001.9011.0807.0000 Police & Fire Retirement
<b><i>To re-allocate funds to cover debt service interest expenses through 12/31/24</i></b>		
\$ 1,500.00	001.7140.0103.0000 Rec Maint Salaries	001.9011.0807.0000 Police & Fire Retirement
<b><i>To re-allocate funds to cover part-time salaries due to increased rentals</i></b>		

Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**2025-2029 HYDRANT AGREEMENTS**

**RESOLUTION 24-307**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, to authorize the City Manager to sign the following Hydrant Agreements:

- 2025-2029 Seneca Fields Apartments Hydrant Agreement
- 2025-2029 Empire Farms Hydrant Agreement

Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**ANNUAL COURT CLEANING CONTRACT**

**RESOLUTION 24-308**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Winchell

**RESOLVED**, to authorize the City Manager to sign the Agreement by and between the New York State Unified Court System, Sixth Judicial District, the Kilmer Building, 31 Lewis Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Binghamton, NY 13901 and the City of Oneida for cleaning services for the interior of the City of Oneida Justice Center, as well as minor and emergency repairs, and preventative building and property Maintenance of said facility.

Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**AGREEMENT EXTENSION (REVISED)-CHRIS HENRY CONSULTING SERVICES**  
**(PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT)**

**RESOLUTION 24-309**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings  
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

**RESOLVED**, to authorize the City Manager to sign a revised agreement, in a form approved by the City Attorney, for an extension of six-months (January 1, 2025-June 30, 2025) with Chris Henry, with a mailing address of 109 Meeker Ave., Utica, NY 13502, for consulting services rendered in connection and to assist with those duties performed by and assigned to the City of Oneida Planning Director.

Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**TO APPLY FOR FUNDING UNDER ROUND 9 OF THE RESTORE NY COMMUNITIES' INITIATIVE  
MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE REHABILITATION OF MADISON STREET**

**RESOLUTION 24-310**

Moved by Councilor Winchell  
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**WHEREAS**, the City of Oneida is eligible for grant funding under Round 9 of the Restore NY Communities Initiative Municipal Grant Program, and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has considered proposals that qualify for funding under the program and selected one project to be included in an application that will be submitted to Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) as follows: The rehabilitation of the following properties on Madison Street: 136 Madison Street parcel id number 30.72-1-64; 138 Madison Street parcel id number 30.72-1-65 (Madison Street Revival Project). The project will rehabilitate the over 14,925 square feet into mixed-use buildings that will contain 15 live work units with an as-completed square footage of approximately 14,987.

**WHEREAS**, this project is consistent with all existing local plans, the proposed financing is appropriate for the project, the project will facilitate effective and efficient use of existing and future public resources so as to promote both economic development and preservation of community resources and the project develops and enhances infrastructure and/or other facilities in a manner that will attract, create and sustain employment opportunities in City of Oneida.

**WHEREAS**, the Common Council has conducted a public hearing as to the enactment of the proposed application at the Oneida City Hall located at 109 North Main Street, Oneida, New York on December 17, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, at which time all persons interested in the subject were heard; and

**WHEREAS**, notice of said public hearing was provided at least five (5) days prior to the date of said public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation within the City of Oneida.

**NOW, THEREFORE, it is**



**RESOLVED AND DETERMINED**, that the Common Council hereby supports and will sponsor an application for Restore NY funding for the Rehabilitation of the following properties on Madison Street: 136 Madison Street parcel id number 30.72-1-64; 138 Madison Street parcel id number 30.72-1-65 in Oneida, NY 13421 and will administer the grant in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations established by ESDC, and

**RESOLVED AND DETERMINED**, that the City Manager or Acting City Manager of the City of Oneida is hereby authorized to submit applications, expend funds including application fees, and sign any agreements required by ESDC for grant funding that results from the application.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**RESOLUTION 24-311**

Motioned by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, that the meeting is hereby adjourned to Executive Session at 7:14 p.m. for the purpose of discussion of an employment matter of particular people and for discussion of the collective bargaining negotiations.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**PRESENT:**      ☒ Mayor      ☒ City Manager      ☒ Council      Attorney Chris Militello

1. Discussion was held to discuss an employment matter of particular people and to discuss collective bargaining negotiations.

Motioned by Councilor Winchell

Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, that Executive Session is hereby adjourned to the regular meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Mayor Rossi stepped out prior to this vote

**MOTION CARRIED**

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT (PBA)**

**RESOLUTION 24-312**

Moved by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Simchik

**RESOLVED**, that the Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City of Oneida and The John R. Deschamps Sr. PBA (aka Oneida City PBA) for the period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027, as ratified by the union, be hereby approved.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Hitchings

Seconded by Councilor Simchik

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The regular meeting is hereby adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

**CITY OF ONEIDA**

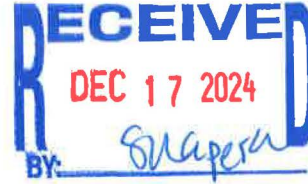
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Sandra LaPera, City Clerk

**Sandy Lapera**

ATTACHMENT A

**From:** Ralph L. Kohler, Jr. <ralphkohler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 10:25 AM  
**To:** Rick Rossi; John Monaghan; Monique Ludwig; Andrea Hitchings; Jim Szczerba; Rob Winchell; Steve Laureti; Tom Simchik  
**Cc:** Sandy Lapera; Peter Hedglon  
**Subject:** Mural Proposed Law



Members of the Common Council,

I am sending you a draft of my planned public hearing comments ahead of tonight's meeting because I think these are important considerations for the proposed law.

I hope that you will address the questions therein during the meeting, especially if it is put to a vote.

By way of background I am a federal employee with approximately 40 years of public policy experience, and I want to graduate school at Maxwell as did our city manager.

In the spirit of transparency I would ask where the proposed mural law came from, Why the originator believes it is appropriate now what research went into it, who has comparable laws and how they compare, and an explanation from those of you who vote on why you think this is a good or bad idea now.

I don't believe the mural law is fit for purpose, and I don't believe you can make it fit for purpose in a discussion this evening. I therefore urge all to table this and ask that substantial revisions be made for possible later consideration.

My objections to the law is that it is vague in numerous areas. First and foremost are the First Amendment issues. This law contemplates having the city determine weather and how property owners may express themselves on their property. I don't know whether anyone will challenge this, but it's clearly unconstitutional in my view.

I don't believe the city can Dictate to property owners how they can express themselves in murals any more than they can dictate what yard signs say during election season.

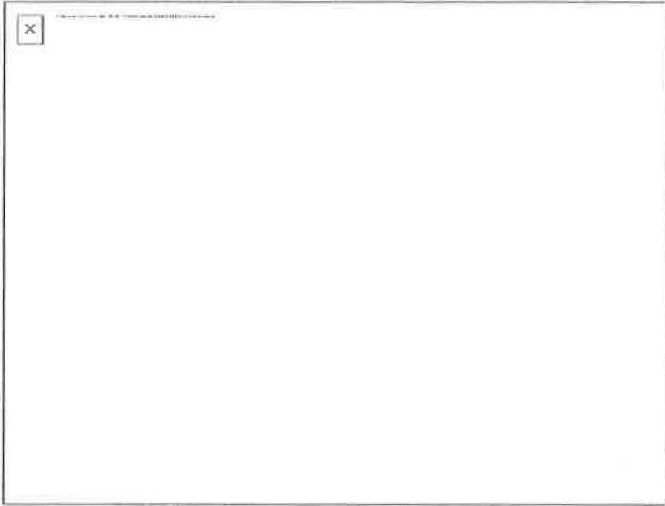
A review of the city's existing sign laws, 190-15, "sign requirements", Provides no oversight role for the expressions on those signs, as is entirely appropriate.

I don't think you can be asking about the relevance to the city's values, culture or people. I don't think you should be asking whether it enhances the site because that's dangerously close to evaluating expression. And if you do, protest murals on those topics might make some unhappy.

I don't think you can approve or disapprove specific colors because the city believes they clash with the surrounding property.

As written, your sizing requirements appear to be arbitrary. I don't know how a mural overwhelmed an area, And some of the Most interesting murals I've seen cover entire walls or even multiple walls. You might be able to dictate the scale of the artwork, but I'm not at all clear what that means, and you should not try.

Here's a photo I took during the chicken light debate several months ago during the "chicken debate" while I was in San Jaun. It shows a mural of a woman holding a chicken, a pineapple and a key. It takes up the entirety of this wall, which is an apartment building, Therefore a residential structure. I don't know whether you think this would be inappropriate and scale, But you see the telephone pole there to get an idea of its size.



There are dozens of murals like this in this part of San Juan. The scale of some of them is much larger than this (there's one where a part of a face takes space similar to this one). Scale is often part of the allure. I don't think you should be trying to limit the scale of murals.

I don't see how you're going to qualify artists/muralist, And I recommend you not try and I doubt you will, except when there are other issues. Since you're not going to try you should probably remove that paragraph from the law.

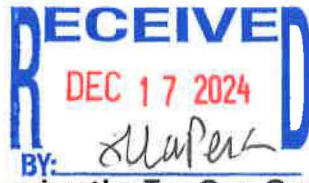
You might be able to get away with listing what themes are allowed, but I recommend against it.

If you limit murals to being directly attached to buildings or painted directly on buildings there are several criteria which don't seem to make a lot of sense here.

I'm not going to keep nitpicking all the ways this proposed law attempts to dictate expression, including sizing, placement, scale, colors and theme or its other problems. I will simply say it is clearly unconstitutional and has other problems and can't be fixed this evening.

Best regards,

Ralph



ATTACHMENT B

## **Speech on the Importance of Passing the Tax Cap Override for the City of Oneida, NY**

Good evening everyone,

I'd like to begin by speaking directly to the heart of what makes our city and its government truly great—the spirit of **collaboration**. In these challenging times, it is easy to get caught up in division and disagreement. But I am before you today with a simple but powerful message: **collaboration in politics is not just a lofty ideal—it is an absolute necessity** for the future of Oneida.

As members of this Common Council, all of you are entrusted with the sacred duty of representing the people of Oneida. We are here to **serve** our community, and **together**, we can move our city forward. But **only if we set aside personal differences, work collaboratively, and unite around the common good.**

**Now, collaboration does not mean agreeing on everything.** It means having the strength and maturity to listen to one another, to respect differing opinions, and to understand that our shared goal is to make Oneida a better place for all its residents. Our residents expect us to work together—not as rivals, but as partners in service. When we come together with mutual respect, we create solutions that reflect the true spirit of Oneida: unity, progress, and care for our community.

As we face the important decisions ahead of us, I urge each of us to remember the words of **John F. Kennedy: “Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer.”** What matters is not the ideology we box ourselves into, but the responsibility we have to the people of Oneida.

Together, we can achieve incredible things. But only by working in collaboration, keeping the interests of the people first, and moving forward as one. And this now leads me to where we are tonight:

As many of you know, the state of New York imposes a tax cap on local governments, restricting the annual property tax levy increase. While this cap is meant to limit tax burdens, it has also placed the city of Oneida in a dangerous position. Without the ability to override this cap, we will be forced to make decisions that will hollow out the services and infrastructure that make this city the vibrant, thriving community we all cherish.

Let me be clear: **this is not just about taxes; this is about the future of Oneida.** The time for action is now.

**The Importance of a Responsible and Fiscally Sound Tax Rate**



One of the fundamental principles of good governance is the ability to maintain a responsible and fiscally sound tax rate. As Benjamin Franklin wisely said, **“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”** In this case, a responsible tax rate will help us prevent a future crisis where we are forced to make drastic cuts to essential services—cuts that would harm our residents, destroy our community’s character, and derail our city’s future growth.

We must be honest with ourselves: if we do not maintain our current adopted budget, we risk *draining* our general fund, *losing* critical staffing, and *abandoning* the services that our residents *depend* on. Our police, fire, and public works departments—the very backbone of public safety in our community—are at risk.

### **The 7.5% Tax Rate Increase: A Responsible Approach**

I know that any tax increase is uncomfortable. But let me assure you: **a 7.5% tax rate increase is the most responsible, middle-of-the-road adjustment we can make to keep Oneida moving forward.** It is not excessive, nor is it designed to punish our taxpayers. It is an essential step to ensure that we can maintain services and keep our city strong.

To put this in perspective, the average assessed home value in Oneida is approximately **\$113,373**. With a 7.5% increase, the average property owner will pay **\$81 more per \$100,000 of assessed value** annually, or about **\$6.75 per month**. Let that sink in: a modest increase of less than \$7 a month, **just a cup of Starbucks**, can keep our city from unraveling.

I believe we have reached an inflection point. As Winston Churchill once said, **“To each, there comes in their lifetime a special moment when they are figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing, unique to them and fit for their talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds them unprepared or unqualified for that which could have been their finest hour.”** Our moment is here, and the time to act is now. If we fail to tax responsibly, we will regret it for years to come.

### **BY NOT working to maintain our adopted budget for 2025**

, here are the immediate and devastating consequences we will face:

- **Critical Staffing Levels Cannot Be Maintained**

We cannot *afford* to lose the vital services that make Oneida the community we love. If we are forced to make cuts, we risk eliminating **critical staffing levels** across essential departments, including public safety, parks and recreation, and public works. The **safety of our city**, the quality of our parks and events, and our ability to provide the services that our residents expect will be compromised.

And make no mistake: if painful cuts must be made, **I strongly believe that we cannot afford to eliminate our Parks and Recreation Department.** Our parks are the heart of this city. They host events that bring our community together. They provide our children with safe places to play and grow. Our residents **love** the events, the activities, and the sense of community that our Parks and Rec team has worked tirelessly to build. Losing this department would strip Oneida of what makes it special.

- **Tentative Contract with the Oneida Police Benevolent Association (PBA) Will Have to Be Completely Redone**

We have reached a tentative agreement with the PBA, but if we do not maintain our adopted budget, we will be unable to honor that agreement. This will force us to go back to the drawing board with the police union, risking disruption to our police force and potentially diminishing the safety of our community. We are already at critical staffing levels, with morale eroded and many of our experienced officers leaving for neighboring PD's. I cannot over stress the critical significance of moving forward with this contract.

- **Inability to Begin Negotiations with Our Fire Union**

Similarly, we will not have the funds necessary to begin negotiations with our fire union. If we cannot offer competitive contracts to our fire fighters, we risk losing the skilled professionals who keep us safe during emergencies. Our **fire department** is an essential part of our city's safety, and we cannot afford to let it weaken.

- **Depleting Our General Fund Balance and Destroying Our Credit Rating**

The most dangerous consequence of all is that without this override, we will be forced to deplete our general fund balance to make ends meet. In doing so, we will **destroy our credit rating**—and let me be clear, **our credit rating is our lifeline.**

A strong credit rating allows us to borrow money at favorable rates, making it easier and cheaper to invest in infrastructure, emergency services, and community development projects. Without a strong credit rating, borrowing costs increase, and taxes on our residents will ultimately rise to cover those costs. We cannot afford to let this happen.

As Thomas Jefferson once said, **"The government you elect is the government you deserve."** We deserve a government that is capable of making tough but responsible decisions. A government that has the foresight to maintain its financial health and ensure that our future is secure.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, the tax cap override and our adopted budget is not just a matter of dollars and cents. **It is a matter of protecting our city's soul.** It is about

safeguarding the future of Oneida, preserving our character, and ensuring that we can provide the services that make our community strong and connected.

We have a chance, right now, to make the responsible decision that will protect our city for generations to come. By maintaining our adopted budget, we ensure that we can maintain critical staffing, honor our contracts, and protect our city's financial future. We will keep Oneida moving forward, maintaining the services and infrastructure that make us *who we are*.

Many years ago, Abraham Lincoln once wrote to his son that: **“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”** As we face this moment, we can create a future for Oneida that is strong, vibrant, and sustainable. But we must act today.

I urge you all to support our adopted budget. Let us preserve the heart and soul of Oneida—before it's too late.

Thank you.