

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 7, 2024

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the seventh day of November 2024 at 5:00 pm at the City of Oneida Common Council Chambers, 109 N. Main Street, Oneida NY 13421.

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

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Arrived Late</u>
Mayor Rossi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Kyle Lovell, CM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6:24PM
Councilor Szczerba	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5:10PM
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5:12PM
Councilor Simchik	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Also Present

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

2025 CITY OF ONEIDA BUDGET
DPW-SEWER

City Engineer-Jeff Rowe

City Engineer Jeff Rowe addressed the Council to discuss the 2025 Budget for the Department of Public Works and Sewer. He advised that because John Monaghan was not able to attend to discuss Water, that portion of the budget would not be discussed this evening.

Councilor Winchell advised that he would need to leave early due to another obligation.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1620-Building Expenses

The council discussed adding back in the \$30,000 removed from the Electric and Gas Line (001.1620.0401.000); however, Deputy Mayor Laureti will ask the mayor about the rationale behind the change.

☐ **Action Required (1)**

1640 and 1660-Central Garage

There was discussion about the possibility of lowering the amount of this line item for Central Vehicle-Police Repairs (003.1640.0403.001) since the Police Chief had requested new leased vehicles that should not need repairs for at least 3 years. This request was approved on November 6. The council agreed to revisit this.

☐ **Action Required (2)**

3310 Traffic Expenses

There was discussion about the reason why the salaries line was lowered, and City Engineer Rowe advised that an employee had retired, and the amount reflected this individual's longevity.

Line item 001.3310.0300.0000 for Materials and supplies includes flags, street signs, streetlights, tools, office supplies, traffic paint, traffic paint supplies, misc., Bucket truck inspection/supplies and two traffic boxes (Broad/W. Elm and Broad/Farrier). Engineer Rowe advised that there were nine streetlights that needed to be replaced for an estimated total of \$33,900. There was discussion about the possibility of replacing five streetlights in 2025 and four in 2026, to which he agreed could be an option. The Council requested more information on the condition of the streetlights and the boxes. The Deputy Mayor advised that he would reach out to the mayor for his thoughts on this, and City Engineer Rowe advised that he would provide more information on the condition of the street lights and boxes.

☐ **Action Required (3)**

The Council agreed to remove the requested \$1,500 from the Building Maintenance and Repair Line (001.3310.0405.0000). The Acting Comptroller will remove this.

3520 Animal Control

Deputy Mayor Laureti inquired as to what this line item is for, and Councilor Simchik advised that this was used for feral cats in the past, as well as beavers and any other issues that might come up involving animals.

3650 Demolition Expense

The Council agreed to remove line-item expenses for Environmental Surveys (001.3650.0400.001) \$1,000 and Protective Measures (001.3650.0400.0002) \$1,000. These will be addressed during the year on a case-by-case basis. Acting Comptroller Wells will remove these items.

4068 Mosquito Expense

There was a brief discussion about the salaries line and why there was a decrease. City Engineer Rowe advised that the employee would not be starting until April 1.

5010 DPW Administrative Expenses

City Engineer Rowe advised that the requested amount in the salaries line was to allow for a title/position change for his current Account Clerk to become a Senior Account Clerk. The council agreed to add this back in (001.5010.0101.000) since this clerk does work for both the DPW and the Sewer Department. The expense of the increase for the position change would be charged to both funds.

City Engineer Rowe advised that he would be leaving toward the end of next year, and he also was allowing for a higher salary to attract a candidate to fill his position.

There was discussion about the Training line (001.5010.0413.0000), and City Engineer Rowe advised that this was for the Civil Engineering Tech to pursue a 4-year degree should he decide to do that. He currently holds a 2-year degree.

5110 Street Maintenance Expenses

There was discussion about the Equipment line (001.5110.0200.0000) and the condition of and need for the specified equipment. The mayor removed the full requested amount of \$46,400, to which Deputy Mayor Laureti advised that he discuss this with the mayor.

The council decided to revisit the issue after receiving reasoning from the mayor. Additionally, the City Engineer advised he would gather more information regarding the condition of the equipment.

☐ Action Required (4)

City Engineer Rowe advised that he had no issue with the reduction in the Road Materials line (001.5110.0314.0000).

There was discussion about the Tree Contract (001.5110.0402.0000) and Stump Removal (001.5110.0402.0001) and the Council left these alone. As there is a surplus of \$6,000 in the Stump Removal line this year, it was agreed that this amount should be moved to the Sidewalk Maintenance line (001.5110.0408.0000). The requested amount for that line was \$150,000, which was cut by the mayor. The Council agreed that this needed to be put back in due to the condition of sidewalks in the city that need to be repaired and/or replaced.

There was discussion about the grant, whereby there is a match, and the City needs to spend money to receive these funds.

5132 Central Garage Expenses

There was discussion about line items for DPW Maintenance Repair (001.5132.0300.0000) and Major Repairs (001.5132.0303.0000) and why the mayor reduced these amounts. Deputy Mayor Laureti advised that he would discuss this with the mayor.

☐ Action Required (5)

5142 Snow and Ice Expenses

There was discussion about the Salt and Sand line item (001.5142.0315.0000) reduction from the requested amount, and it was decided that this would be left as suggested by the mayor and adjusted if needed in 2025.

SEWER

City Engineer Rowe advised that the Equipment Line (003.8110.0200.0000) could be lowered to \$100,000 from the requested amount of \$160,000. The Acting Comptroller will make this adjustment.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

The City Engineer reviewed his requested Capital Projects to include the following:

- 18-3 WTP Second Clearwell
- 24-2 DRI Project (Downtown Infrastructure and Streetscaping)
- 24-3 DRI Project (AYSO Soccer Field)
- 24-4 DRI Project (Upgrade of Facilities at Veteran's Memorial Park)
- 25-1 Annual Street Resurfacing
- 25-2 Higinbotham Brook Culvert (Construction Phase)
- 25-3 Fleet Fueling Tank Replacements
- 25-4 Construction of new DPW Facility
- 25-5 Equipment Replacement-Bobcat Skid Steer Loader
- 25-6 Equipment Replacement-Sidewalk Snowplow
- 25-7 Equipment Replacement-Utility Tractor
- 25-10 Purchase of Street Sweeper

CAPITAL PROJECT 18-3 WTP SECOND CLEARWELL

The city received a \$1M grant which requires compliance with Buy American Build American requirements for the Clearwell Project, helping to offset costs associated with this project. Initially, the city was notified of this grant for the Lake Street Pump Station Project which was already in progress following issuance of a notice to proceed. It was determined that compliance with BABA requirements would have raised the project's costs by 30% and extended the lead time for pumps and MCC by another 20-30 weeks. To avoid complications, Water Superintendent Monaghan corresponded with USEPA, resulting in the acceptance of earmarking funds for the Clearwell Project instead, rather than "muddying the waters" with a project that was already underway. He noted that this project has been put on the back burner because of the dam project, however, now that the dam project is underway, they would like to proceed with the Second Clearwell project.

CAPITAL PROJECT	24-2	DRI PROJECT- DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETSCAPING
	24-3	DRI PROJECT- AYSO SOCCER FIELD
	24-4	DRI PROJECT-UPGRADE OF FACILITIES AT VETERANS FIELD

City Engineer Rowe advised that the DRI projects are 100% reimbursable.

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-1 ANNUAL STREET RESURFACING

In 2024, 20 streets were resurfaced for approximately \$675,000, which will be reimbursed through CHIPS (100% reimbursable).

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-2 HIGINBOTHAM BROOK CULVERT (Construction Phase)

Phase I for the Higinbotham Brook Culvert is underway and contractors will be starting this in March of 2025, with the second phase being the section from Main Street to Elizabeth St., with an estimated cost of \$850,000.

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-3 FLEET FUELING TANK REPLACEMENTS

Fleet Fueling Tank Replacements-the diesel tank system is currently down, and they are using a temporary tank, which they are reluctant to move forward with right now due to the cost.

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-4 CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DPW FACILITY

The DPW (Department of Public Works) garage built in the 1920s is now in a state of deterioration and poses significant operational challenges, such as difficulties with truck ingress and egress. The proposal includes relocating this obsolete facility from Sconondoa Street, which currently lies within a flood zone. An estimate has been prepared for the total cost of this relocation. Additionally, there is a DASNY (Dormitory Authority of the State of New York) grant for \$1.9 million, but the project must be completed before reimbursement is provided.

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-5 Equipment Replacement-Bobcat Skid Steer Loader

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-6 Equipment Replacement-Sidewalk Snowplow

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-7 Equipment Replacement-Utility Tractor

The equipment Capital Projects are to replace aged equipment that has been identified as beyond their useful life.

CAPITAL PROJECT 25-10 PURCHASE OF STREET SWEEPER

The current street sweeper has been identified as outdated and inefficient. Despite still owing \$117,000 on it, there is no market interest in a trade-in. City Engineer Rowe has suggested his willingness to explore various alternatives to address this issue. Previously, the idea of sharing the equipment with the City of Sherrill was considered but deemed impractical.

COUNCIL SUMMARY

ACTION ITEMS

How much do we have in the sidewalk reserve fund? What is the estimated cost of the sidewalk project and does this cover the flags in the worst condition only or all sidewalks in the city?

- Per Lee Ann Wells, there is currently \$45,000 in the sidewalk reserve account. According to City Engineer Rowe, the city has secured grant funding from two sources. The first grant is with DASNY for \$150,000 and is 100% reimbursable. We received this grant in 2018 and have previously requested five separate extensions. The second grant is with the CNY Regional Planning and Development Board (RPDB) for \$350,000 and is 50% reimbursable. The RPDB grant can be utilized over several years but must be completed within 5 years. The total estimated cost for sidewalk replacements is \$535,000 (2025 Dollars) which includes the sidewalks in the worst condition (generally those which have experienced tree upheavals). The total estimated costs for sidewalks in the worst condition is only \$125,000 (2025 Dollars).

The Council decided to change the electric and gas (1620.0401) back to \$100,000 based on YTD activity, unless the Mayor had other reasoning for lowering it? Credits? (Action Item 1)

- Per Lee Ann Wells, the current year to date (payments are currently through September) expense for this line is \$38,059.67. There is a monthly chargeback that is required that credits the General Fund for the usage that was applied to the Water & Sewer Fund. This was set up when the initial solar project was constructed, and it was determined that the solar project is a General Fund project. Since National Grid applies credits to the WWTP & some Water facilities, the City is required to journal those credits back to the General Fund. The WWTP usage of the Remote Net Metering Credits applied through National Grid has grown considerably with the plant expansion. That, along with the solar generation due to the sunlight this year, has allowed for a lower than budgeted expense in 2024.

The council will advise if they still want this to go back to \$100,000.

How is the salary of the Account Clerk to Sr. Account Clerk determined? It appears to be a 22% (\$8,554) increase.

- The salaries are outlined in the CSEA Collective Bargaining Agreement and cannot be altered without an agreement from the CSEA Union.

The Council approved six new vehicles for Police on Wednesday. Council would like to determine if Central Vehicle Police Repairs (0403.0001) can be lowered due to having a large number of vehicles being brand new/under warranty. (Action Item 2)

- Per City Engineer Rowe, based upon this information, the amount for Police Repairs can be reduced to \$10,000.

There were nine streetlights marked for replacement. The Council inquired about the location of these lights and their necessity. (Action Item 3)

- Per City Engineer Rowe, Shawn Palmer (Traffic Control System Specialist) has developed an inventory with the location of these street light poles. He is out of the office and the information will be provided next week.

Requesting rationale from the mayor on decreasing the equipment line (5110.0200) by \$46,400. (Action Item 4)

For 001.5110.0200.0000 Equipment, the Department Requested Budget amount is \$46,400. This includes the purchase of a new brush hog (\$5,200), box plow for skid steer (\$12,500), push camera (\$12,800), and zero turn mower (\$15,900).

The brush hog is utilized for mowing operations and will replace the one that was stolen earlier this year. Attached is a cut sheet for the new brush hog. The existing box plow is outdated, requires frequent repairs and is not able to be used during heavy snow events due to its excessive weight. The box plow for the skid steer will be utilized for snowplow operations in parking lot areas. Additional information for the box plow is attached. The push camera will be utilized for televising sewer laterals to determine existing conditions including blockage, pipe break, etc. Currently, DPW has a sewer push camera however it is beyond its useful life, needs frequent repairs and replacement parts are costly and/or difficult to find. Attached is a cut sheet for the new sewer push camera system. The new zero turn mower will replace an existing mower that is nearly 18 years old (2007). Attached is product literature for the new zero turn mower.

Action Item 5: Deputy Mayor Laureti is waiting for a response from the Mayor on this item.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Hitchings
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: (2) Councilor Winchell and Councilor Pagano left early

MOTION CARRIED

The special meeting is hereby adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

Sandra LaPera, City Clerk