

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**NOVEMBER 12, 2024**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the twelfth 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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:10PM
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"/>	Other: _____	<input 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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**2025 CITY OF ONEIDA BUDGET**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
Fire Chief-Scott Jones

Fire Chief Scott Jones presented his 2025 Budget expenses to council, addressing the following line items:

**001.3410.0101.0000    SALARIES**

Council inquired about the difference between the total in the salary schedule (\$2,089,096) versus the 2025 salary line (\$2,102,096). The Comptroller advised that the Fire Salary line includes \$13,000 for monthly cell phone reimbursements that are paid out of the Salary line.

Council agreed to remove \$31,200 from the Salary line for the part-time Fire Inspector, which has been recorded in the General Fund. The Mayor advised that his thought process was to have something similar to what is done in the school system, whereby a retired person is hired part-time to perform the inspections; however, the Mayor did agree that this can be removed until a decision is made regarding Commercial Code inspections.

Chief Jones noted that while he appreciated the Mayor's perspective, he observed that appointing a part-time individual to this role has led to communication challenges with business owners and consumers, mainly due to the limited hours during which the inspector is available.

#### **001.3410.0103.0000 RETIREMENT**

Historically, this expense has not been included in the budget. However, Chief Jones noted that two individuals are set to retire in early 2025, and the stated figure accounts for the payouts for their accumulated vacation and sick time. He explained that this cost is usually offset by the remaining salary, but he wanted to inform the Council that it will impact either the salary line or the overtime line unless funds are specifically budgeted for this purpose.

#### **001.3410.0107.000 EMS TRAINING OVERTIME**

Chief Jones explained that the initial requested amount of \$5,000 (standard yearly training for EMS) was an oversight on his part. He clarified that while the 7 members currently participating in the Paramedic Program can be funded by a grant from the point it was accepted onward, there are 4 months at the beginning of the year during which the City must cover the overtime costs for this training. For these 7 individuals over the 4-month period, the estimated total cost would be approximately \$25,000. Therefore, Chief Jones requested that this line item be adjusted to \$30,000.

Chief Jones highlighted the potential to allocate surplus funds from this year to the Paramedic Program, emphasizing its value to the City's services. He noted that in June 2027, New York State plans to eliminate the Critical Care EMS level. Currently, the City has seven personnel at this level, which is just below Paramedic. Without completing the necessary training by 2027, these individuals will automatically be reclassified to a lower level.

There was discussion about the feasibility of conducting EMS training during regular work shifts to reduce the reliance on overtime. The training is a self-paced, online program that requires approximately 20 hours per month. City Manager Lovell stated that he would look into this option further in consultation with Chief Jones. He also mentioned that while he had no issue with paying overtime for testing, the mandatory state training might be manageable during regular work hours. Mayor Rossi added that there is additional training conducted during the day outside of this program.

#### **001.3410.0114.000 SHORT SHIFT STAFFING OVERTIME**

This line item will impact the regular overtime budget. Chief Jones explained that if the two individuals retire in the first quarter of the year, the process of hiring and training their replacements would delay their start until early December. This would result in two vacant positions requiring overtime coverage during that period. He emphasized that while this is an estimate, a portion of their remaining salaries would also be utilized to help offset some of the overtime expenses needed to fill these gaps. Chief Jones

estimated that there would be roughly 151 shifts that could potentially be left short with those two retirements, noting that a full shift is 6 however, it is typically 5 when someone is off.

**001.3410.0408.000      NEW HIRE EXPENSE**

With the anticipated retirements, the \$26,000 would be allocated to cover the costs associated with onboarding two new recruits. This includes expenses for training, equipment, uniforms, physicals, and other related needs. Chief Jones advised that he believes one individual will be retiring the end of January and the other then end of March.

The Fire Department segment of the Budget Meeting work session concluded at 5:50 p.m.