

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 13, 2018**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the thirteenth day of November, 2018 at 6:00 o'clock P.M. in Council Chambers, Oneida Municipal Building, 109 N. Main Street, Oneida, NY.

Meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor James Chamberlain

PRESENT: Councilors Alan Cohen (left at 6:46 pm), Michael Bowe, James Coulthart, Helen Acker and Thomas Simchik (arrived at 6:05 pm)

ABSENT: Mayor Leo Matzke

ALSO PRESENT: City Clerk Susan Pulverenti
Comptroller Lee Ann Wells
Police Chief Paul Thompson
Recreation Director Luke Griff

DISCUSSION - 2019 CITY OF ONEIDA MAYOR'S BUDGET

Police Department

Deputy Mayor Chamberlain said that Police Chief Thompson's budget will be discussed first and then Recreation's. He said once those budgets are complete, he would like the Council to review what has already been discussed.

Police Chief Thompson said that during his tenure of being in charge for the last two and a half years his department has dealt with in excess of two dozen meth labs, made dozens of arrests for other drug related offenses, and experienced their first in-custody death, a home invasion, and the first homicide in several years. He said THAT over the last 10-15 years, the work load on the officers has increased dramatically, citing reporting requirements for domestic incidents and mandatory arrest provisions of the domestic violence law, mental health issues and arraignment procedures. He said that his department has made a concerted effort to have more of a police presence in downtown to cope with the population that hangs out in that area; however, the lack of staffing has hindered their efforts. Chief Thompson said that over the past ten to twelve years they have lost the equivalent of two positions, one through attrition when a retired officer was not replaced and another when the 4 and 3 work schedule was implemented. Chief Thompson said that the police department has always run on a bare bones budget, as outside of payroll, the department's spending is minimal. He said that they have cut the training budget, and other non-payroll lines have been stagnant for years. The Chief said that this year's budget includes the addition of two police officers, which are a critical component for the department to keep up with their ever increasing workloads and will bring the department back to the staffing levels they had in 1980-1990's.

Police Chief Thompson said that he also requested in his budget \$6,000 for two digital radar speed reader signs; however, that was reduced to \$3,000 at the Mayor's stage. The Chief explained that the signs are portable, easily located to various areas of concern, and store a significant amount of the data. He said that funding was sought through both Assemblyman Magee's and Senator Valesky's offices without success.

The Chief said that his expense line was restored in the amount of \$2,500. He said this line was cut several years ago, but it impacts their ability to conduct events and provide giveaways. He reminded the

Council that they are currently planning the Public Safety Days for this coming spring. He said there is also a new line for funds, which were previously provided by the DA's office. He said that his contracts line increased slightly to cover any additional costs relating to the live scan program and for the new wire surveillance system, which the DA's office paid for the first year, but his department is responsible for the \$1,600 yearly fee going forward. The Chief said that he has two patrol cars in his capital program. He then asked the Council if they had any questions.

The Deputy Mayor asked about the speed control devices, and a discussion ensued. The Chief said last year he had a quote for two devices for \$5,600, noting that the costs do vary. He said there are many areas of concern, so two could be used. In response to a question, the Chief said that the stored data includes the traffic count by hours of day, days of week, high and low speeds, and when speeding is more prevalent. Councilor Acker asked about grant availability, and the Chief explained there are no grants; this would be more of a "member item" through your State representatives. Councilor Acker said motorists see these signs and slow down. Councilor Cohen said there are traffic safety concerns with school buses. Chief Thompson said that they get multiple calls from people reporting speeding vehicles on their streets, and the speed control devices would be very helpful in making the department more efficient. The Mayor's Neighborhood Watch Program was also mentioned. The Police IT line increased, and the Comptroller said she would check with the IT Department for a breakdown.

The Police Vehicle Maintenance line was dropped \$10K at the Mayor's stage and another discussion began, which included the cost of tires and current vehicle mileages. The Council opted to add \$5K back into vehicle maintenance. Vehicle replacement was discussed with the Chief noting they still haven't received the vehicles that were ordered last year. The Chief said that they would like to stay on a schedule of two cars per year. The Chief said that he has a young department, with two probable retirements at the end of the year. He said then it will be at least five years before any further retirements. The Chief explained the holiday pay and meal reimbursements. Councilor Cohen asked about the plate readers, and the Chief said those were paid for through a grant, but parts availability is now an issue and the cost for a new one is \$30K. The Chief said that with respect to training, Lt. Lowell is a Taser instructor, which is a savings to the City. The Council at that point decided to add \$3K for another speed control device and additional brackets. The Chief thanked the Council for their time.

Recreation Department

The Council's discussion of the budget continued with Recreation Director Luke Griff. The Council started with the salary lines and a lengthy discussion began. The Director explained the different part-time positions and what their duties entailed. He noted that a full-time Park Maintenance Worker was included in the budget in place of the part-time maintenance worker and that cost is included in the 103 salary line; however, \$17K more would be needed to fill that position. Director Griff said depending on what happens with the Kallet, the 103 line may need to be modified. A question arose with respect to Rec Department revenues, and the Director said that the Mayor raised those revenues. The discussion renewed in relation to the various recreation employees, as well as the salary lines related to the pool. The Comptroller said that she would provide a complete salary breakdown to the Council tomorrow.

The discussion moved to the park beautification line and \$1K was removed, which would bring the amount back to what was originally requested. The contract line for concerts/entertainment was also brought back to the originally requested amount of \$4K, removing \$1K. Director Griff said that the software they currently use for their Department is much less expensive than purchasing the software package from Tyler Technologies.

With respect to the Recreation's Capital portion of the budget, the Council asked about the problems at the pool last year, and Director Griff said they had issues with the transformer, liner, safety issues and the need to comply with the Health Department. He said that the bleachers at Vets need replacing, and they

will be repurposing the \$2K worth of lumber put on the bleachers last year. He said that he is looking at refurbishing the tennis courts at Allen Park and Vet's Field. He explained that preventative maintenance is needed at Vet's court. Director Griff said that there is \$100K in the budget for a new gym floor, and he passed around a sample of what he would like the floor to be. He said that the gym gets the most use. Councilor Acker questioned if our insurance would cover some of the water damage, and the Director said he would check into that. He said there is also \$50K in the budget for a new gym roof. In the 416 line for travel and meals, he said that he hopes the Recreation Coordinator can go to the conference this year. The Council briefly conferred and removed \$500 from that line. The Director said there are two new lines for an art camp and rail trail camp budgeted for \$1K each. Councilor Acker asked the Director once again to please check with the insurance company on the gym floor. Director Griff thanked the Council.

Recap of Budget to Date

Councilor Bowe said that we are now at 4.23%. The Deputy Mayor said that he wanted to be sure that the City Historian was listed in the budget at \$500 per year, and the Comptroller said yes. The City Clerk said this would be a stipend with an annual agreement executed. The Fire Chief's vehicle was briefly discussed, noting that the Council added \$20K back into the budget for the purchase of a pickup truck. The Council said that this item is up for reconsideration. It was mentioned once again that the gym floor has been kicked along over the years. The line for feral cat control was looked at, and the City Clerk said that we have not received any invoices for the year from Operation Wild Cats as of this date. The Comptroller said that her budget includes a new part-time payroll clerk, adding that payroll consumes three days every other week. City Comptroller Lee Ann Wells said that the current Civil Service Officer is knowledgeable, but part-time and temporary. She said that when the former Civil Service Officer Peg Margo worked for the City she handled all the retirement, health insurance, new hires, benefits, etc., and this has now all been picked up by our Deputy Comptroller, along with the duties she already has, including payroll. The City Clerk added that Ms. Margo did all the union negotiation paperwork as well. The Comptroller said that she wants to be proactive, so as not to be left in the same position the City was in when Ms. Margo retired.

The next budget meeting will be on Wednesday, November 14th at 6:00 p.m. with the City Engineer.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Bowe

The special meeting is hereby adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

Susan Pulverenti
City Clerk