

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 13, 2019**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the thirteenth day of November, 2019 at 5:30 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, Michael Bowe, James Coulthart, Helen Acker (arrived at 5:40 p.m.) James Chamberlain and Thomas Simchik (arrived at 5:43 pm)

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Leo Matzke  
City Clerk Susan Pulverenti  
City Engineer Eric Schuler  
Comptroller Lee Ann Wells

**Opening Remarks**

Mayor Leo Matzke opened the first special meeting by stating that this year's budget is very tight. He said that when he started the budget process, he had to shave off \$1.5M to get it down to where it is now. He said that his discussions with the City Engineer were excellent; a matter of give and take.

The City Engineer said that with respect to road resurfacing, there are three types of funding: CHIPs, Pave NY and Extreme Winter Recovery. He said that the Extreme Winter Recovery has been cancelled, Pave NY has not been stated to be renewed and as far as the CHIPs funding, nothing has been allotted to date. The Mayor said that per the budget, if all the CHIPs funding comes in, we will have \$450K. The City Engineer said that if we do not receive the \$300K in CHIP's, then catch basins and other small repairs will be completed. He said that there is \$50K in a separate grant for sidewalks, but that grant is tied to specific street locations. The Mayor recommended that the Council limit any bonding until 2023.

Councilor Bowe inquired about downtown upgrades, noting the appearances of downtown Canastota and downtown Hamilton. The City Engineer said that although downtown is part of State Rt. 46, it is classified as a "touring route," and there is nothing that the state will do to help with any upgrades. He said that this classification was designated 30-35 years ago when the Arterial Maintenance Agreement was penned.

The Comptroller said that the conversion of taxes to the new software will be on January 6, 2020. She said that the Recreation Department is not in the new system, as they have their own software. She said that 16 computers in the Police Department will need to be updated to Windows 10.

**City Engineer**

City Engineer Schuler said that with respect to buildings, there is no change in the salaries. He said that overtime is for night and weekend work, such as snow removal, floor waxing, painting, etc. In the equipment line, he said that he had budgeted for new fire extinguishers, as the building's extinguishers have expired and need replacement; however, the Mayor cut that from the budget. Councilor Acker said that it is not fair to require fire extinguishers of our businesses and not of ourselves. After a brief discussion, \$1K was put back in to cover the cost of the extinguishers. In the supplies/materials line for buildings, he said that funds were budgeted to replace the entry carpets that are very worn. Leasing of the carpets was briefly discussed noting that the City use to lease, but it was more expensive. The City

Engineer said that supplies budgeted by his department tend to be shared with the Recreation Department, but there will be no more sharing of ice control products. He said that the minimal plumbing monies budgeted are for miscellaneous parts. The Comptroller said that she is projecting a \$40K savings from the solar project in our electric/gas budget line.

The City Engineer said that they have consolidated the IT contracts. He said they have budgeted \$40K for HVAC Honeywell preventative maintenance, noting that this is much less than in previous years. In the building maintenance line, the Mayor decreased his request from \$22,500 to \$12,500. Discussion of this line included renovations of the old Police Department side of City Hall, and the possibility of renting that side and building to suit a tenant. Councilor Coulthart said that he would like to have a place in the lobby to display the findings of the City Historian.

The Comptroller said that several lines have been modified with respect to the Central Garage. She said that Water and Sewer Departments pay for their own repairs, Central Vehicle Repair is all other departments, except for DPW, which is Central Garage. The City Engineer said that repair costs have dropped considerably since switching to Enterprise. The City Engineer said that they had two sidewalk plows out for the last snow storm, and they will try to stick with two this winter. Councilor Bowe started a discussion with respect to plowing the sidewalk up to Walmart, as that is a State Highway. He said that the City should be reimbursed by the State for doing so. The City Engineer said that they get their brine for the roads from the State, which is a good trade off. The City Clerk said the sidewalk to Walmart was not in the original plans, and the City encouraged the State to include that as part of the project. Councilor Acker said that sidewalk is very well used.

Councilor Bowe questioned the structural engineering and demolition costs in the 3620 line. He said that the Mayor had removed funding from those lines. After a brief discussion, the Council decided to add \$5K back to the structural engineering expense line (total \$7K) and \$5K back to the demolition line (total \$15K). The City Engineer said it has to be prioritized as to what order the buildings are coming down. He said that once a list of properties is comprised by the Assessor, it will come to the Council for determination, noting that there is a \$150K Capital Project for demolitions in the budget. Moving onto the mosquito portion of the City Engineer's budget, Engineer Schuler said that this portion of the budget is what it is. He said that recertification classes are required to be an applicator.

The City Engineer said that the allocation in the salary line for DPW administration had the percentages shifted around. He said that this is a bare bones budget. The Council discussed the items removed by the Mayor, including an air-tow trailer and trench box. The City Engineer said that trailer was to haul the skid steer, rather than having to drive it everywhere it was needed. He said that replacing skid steer tires is very costly at up to \$800 per tire. He said they have one trench box, but the one requested is larger than the one they currently have. Council continued discussion talking about the use of Auctions International for gently used equipment, as well as, the terms of the City's Purchasing Policy.

He said that materials and supplies in the 5110 line are less than last year. In the tree contract line, the Mayor had decreased the line by \$11K. After discussion, the Council put back \$5K, and the City Engineer said that because Oneida is a "Tree City", when one is cut down, another goes up. He said that in the sidewalk maintenance line, the Mayor decreased it by \$25K, and a long discussion ensued. The City Engineer said that last year he went out to bid for sidewalks, and the bids came back astronomical. He said there are only so many hours in the day, and our staffing is at a minimal with all the projects his department has during the course of the year. In the equipment line, the Mayor pulled \$32,250 for miscellaneous equipment, and the City Engineer said that he is alright with that, while noting that these were items in last years budget also. He said that the major repairs line is similar to last years budget. Engineer Schuler stated that there is a big increase in software replacement that will be used to track how much gas is used by each particular department, as currently there is no way to track gas usage. He said that he believes the Police and DPW use the bulk of the gasoline. He said that he had purchased a box

plow this year and had budgeted to get another for the loader at a cost of \$10K, but this was cut by the Mayor. He said this is not critical, but having this creates less damage as it floats over manholes and curbing. The Council discussed and put back in \$10K for the box plow. As far as the Kallet contracts, he said that one contract for \$8K came through from the Recreation Department, and the Council would need to speak with the Rec Director about that cost. The storm sewer portion of the budget remained the same and listed the items that are replaced every year. He asked that the Council consider a part-time person for Pat Baron in Codes. The Account Clerk for Water and Code's salary will be listed as 55% from the Water Fund and 45% from the General Fund. The City Engineer said that clerk is very busy, not only with Water Department work, but with handling many of Pat's phone calls, as she has a direct line for Codes on her desk in the Water Department.

Engineer Schuler said that they are considering a minimal increase in the water rates. He said that the increase will be used to help cover the costs for the Glenmore Dam Project. He reminded the Council that the Dam project was approved by the voters of the City to spend the \$8M, but he anticipates the cost being greater than that. He said that currently there aren't any grant programs that the City would qualify for to help offset the costs. With respect to the rest of the water portion of the budget, he said that the bulk of the items are standard fare. The Comptroller briefly discussed the Vehicle Reserve Funds and summary of the 2020 vehicle leases. The City Engineer said that there has not been an increase in sewer rates since 2002. He said that to keep with inflation, a 42.62% increase is needed. He said country-wide, there has been a 5.8% increase yearly, and there again we have had none. Engineer Schuler displayed a chart showing the prediction of sewer rates over the next 30 years. He said that if there are big increases of 20% for the next two years, the revenues will start to match up, and then the City can go with nominal increases to keep up with inflation. The Council thanked the City Engineer.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Coulthart

The regular meeting is hereby adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

**CITY OF ONEIDA**

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Susan Pulverenti  
City Clerk