

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 19, 2014**

A meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the ninetieth day of November, 2014 at 6:30 o'clock P.M. in Council Chambers, Oneida Municipal Building, 109 N. Main Street, Oneida, NY.

The meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor Helen Acker

PRESENT: Mayor Alden M. Smith (arrived at 6:45 p.m.), Councilors Brahim Zogby, Michael Bowe, Erwin Smith, Helen Acker, James Chamberlain and Thomas Simchik

ALSO PRESENT: City Clerk Susan Pulverenti
City Engineer Jon Rauscher
Comptroller Linda Pease
Water Superintendent Art Smolinski
Mosquito Control Technician Robert Haldenwang
MEO Tom Simchik

DISCUSSION OF 2015 MAYOR'S BUDGET

Opening Remarks

Deputy Mayor Helen Acker said this is a working session for the budget and she would like to go line by line through the budgets, as has been done with other departments.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Water Superintendent Art Smolinski stated the Council needs to start with expenses, not revenues, as that is what the water rates are based on. Rates are projected to increase \$0.10 for the outside district, and the rates for the inside district will remain the same. He said the Water Treatment Plant operates 24-7, seven days a week with five employees, two IA operators and three 2A operators. As he is anticipating a retirement next year, he will be hiring a new employee as a trainee to do shift work, because it takes a minimum of one year to get the required license. Mr. Smolinski explained the out-of-title line using the example that in the absence of the Chief Operator, someone is assigned to that title for the day, and per the union contract they are paid at a higher rate. The equipment line at \$42K is much lower than last year when they purchased a new track hoe. The materials and supplies line includes water bills, door hangers, charts, etc. Chemicals are all put out for bid. The General Maintenance line is the catch all for the department, which includes, asphalt, clamps, valves, chlorine equipment repair, boiler repairs, etc. The contingency line is used for unexpected expenses and noted he transferred \$17K from contingency to equipment for the small dump truck to be purchased this year. He said you don't spend contingency, it is used to transfer to other accounts. He said contingency is a better place to budget unexpected expenses, rather than padding all the accounts. The electric and gas line is estimated at \$148K. He explained that if the Lake Street Pump Station is activated to pump water to fill the tanks in the City, it costs \$3,000 to run those pumps for 15 minutes. The Pump Station is estimated to run two or three times a year; however, he noted that last year they squeaked by without having to turn the pumps on. The Superintendent reminded the Council that his budget was put together back in August. The insurance line (0441) is budgeted at \$50K because a breakdown was never received from the Comptroller. Under hospitalization, the Water Superintendent said \$325K or \$330K is a more accurate number than the proposed \$355K for health insurance. Budgeted in debt service for 2015 are the principal and interest payments on the BAN (Bond

Anticipation Note) for the Fish Creek Crossing Project, and in 2016 the bonding for the Fish Creek Crossing Project will be done. During his hour long presentation of the Water Budget, the Water Superintendent detailed each budget account line, explained the retail and wholesale rates, how costs are broken down, and the various maintenance agreements.

In the revenue lines, the Superintendent said that the metered water sales line will have to be modified with any changes to the budget. Mr. Smolinski explained how the Marble Hill Water Contract with the Oneida Indian Nation works. He said the value of scrap has risen, adding that the department scraps all old leaded brass fittings, meters, etc. The Water Superintendent said that he submitted a balanced budget to the Comptroller in August and doesn't know why it was changed.

HYDRANT

The hydrant taxes are levied on every dwelling within 600 ft. of a hydrant per the law. The Hydrant Contracts line is for the maintenance of private hydrants, such as Leibl's, HP Hood, Nye, etc. The fee is approximately \$70 per hydrant, and they are billed depending on how many hydrants each account has. This is a benefit to the customers, as it ensures in terms of fire protection, that the hydrants are receiving the proper maintenance. Plus, the customer does not have the added expense of purchasing a \$30K back flow prevention device, which would be required by Law without the Hydrant Maintenance Agreement with the City. The Water Superintendent said the material and supplies line is lower, as they have enough hydrants currently in stock. Since 1990, they have replaced approximately 300 hydrants (55%) of the 548 hydrants maintained. He said they inspect and pump all hydrants, and the hydrants are in excellent condition. The fund calculations are based on actual work done, with snow being the biggest driver of expense to the Hydrant Fund. The Water Superintendent reiterated that rates and revenues are driven by expenses and explained how the calculations are done.

PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET

The City Engineer prepared a power point display of the Public Works Budget, including Traffic, Mosquito Control, Administrative, Street Maintenance, Snow and Ice Removal, Storm Sewers and Dams, Yard Waste, City Hall and Justice Center, Central Garage, and Sanitary Sewer Conveyance, which is attached to these minutes.

Codes Department

The Codes office does new construction, renovations, zoning and sign review. The jump in the expense line this year is for \$20K, which is for a replacement vehicle and purchasing a used vehicle vs. a new one off the State bid was discussed. Fuel costs are now being broken down per the individual department use. Training is credit based and required. The revenues are for building permits, signs and certificate of occupancies.

Buildings and Grounds – City Hall, Justice Center, Kallet Capital

Buildings and grounds covers City Hall, the Justice Center, some of the Fire Department and the Kallet Civic Center Capital Budget. Revenue through the Justice Center includes a \$15,125 court contract, which was just received, so the amount has to be modified, as the budget was prepared back in August. The City Engineer listed all the items that are not included in 2015 the budget, i.e. lobby renovations, former PD renovations, exterior entrance improvements and signage, office renovations, HVAC software upgrade (system is from 1997, and the cost is approx. \$30K), the Justice Center roof replacement (the inside is new, roof has some leaks), and a new emergency generator. The Mayor said he would reach out to Senator Valesky and Assemblyman Magee for grant monies to update the front entrance of City Hall.

Utilities are the big expense at City Hall. There has not been a large return on the program where the City put in lower wattage lighting. He said they are looking into a possible drain on the electric somewhere in City Hall. The salaries line was changed for the building mechanic and janitor because floor waxing needs to be completed. It takes approximately 4 weekends of overtime to strip and wax the floors at City Hall and in the Justice Center. The telephone/cable/cell phone expenses were discussed, and the Comptroller said she would look into why the City pays long distance. The Comptroller said they met with the County relative to their phone system, and the cost of \$200K was not feasible. The City Engineer went over the various contracts for City Hall and the Justice Center. The Planning Department put together a grant application for the Kallet Civic Center for a roof and steam boiler, and we were awarded \$250K. The City Engineer budgeted \$200K for the Capital Project, and because the Recreation Director did not budget for the \$50K for the Recreation Center, the Capital project will need to be modified.

Staffing

Charts of the DPW categories breakdown and historic costs were displayed, and the existing framework of employees was discussed. The City Engineer said and the Mayor concurred, that this budget is \$100K less than those of the last five years. Public Works receives revenue for NYS Arterial Maintenance of Rt. 46 and Lenox Ave. in the amount of \$50K, which has remained the same over the years, and the Mayor said he would discuss those costs with Senator Valesky and Assemblyman Magee as well. The City Engineer said they are one man down because of a retirement and displayed his proposed framework for employees. The breakdown of current staffing was explained. He budgeted for two part-time summer laborers to do yard waste during the summer, as approximately 32% of time in the summer is spent taking care of yard waste. The City Engineer said there are only enough employees to fill the plow trucks, so unless a full time laborer is hired, there will be no sidewalk plowing done until the streets are cleared. A brief discussion ensued relating to commercial tree contractors leaving tree clippings by the road. The City Engineer said the funds averaged for the overtime line are reactive and not planned overtime.

Traffic Department

The tasks for the Traffic Department include street signs procurement, installation and repair, specialty signs, pavement markings for City streets and parking lots, hanging of flags and Christmas ornamental lights downtown. Engineer Rauscher explained the traffic budget overview, including salaries, equipment and materials, and contracts and building.

Mosquito Control

The City Engineer said while trying to get the budget down, the Mosquito Program was cut from the 2015 budget. The tasks for Mosquito Control include larvicide and adulticide spraying, mosquito traps, notices of spraying, maintaining vehicle and equipment, and the annual report of chemical applications to the NYSDEC. The costs were assessed, and the actual impact to the General Fund Budget would be \$31, 637, although there are no funds allocated in the budget for mosquito control at this time. Mosquito Control Technician Bob Haldenwang explained the impacts when mosquito spraying was stopped in 2010 and resumed in 2012. He explained how mosquitoes lay their eggs, how the eggs hatch, and the schedules for spraying. Aerial spraying estimated at \$12K, if done, would only kill larva that have hatched. Aerial will not work alone; it is the ground spraying that is the maintenance. The City Engineer displayed a map of the areas sprayed and the areas where traps are set. The County doesn't do routine spraying because of the nuisance; they just have someone to do the mosquito counts to check for EEE. If Mosquito Control is put back into the budget, the sprayer needs to be replaced at a cost of \$13,500, as it is old and parts to repair it are not available.

Administrative/Engineering

The City Engineer displayed a diagram outlining all the active projects and other tasks. In the salaries line, the City Engineer budgeted for a new Staff Engineer, whose salary would be split 50/50 from General Fund and Sewer Fund. This would be an engineer out of college who can help out on the paving projects, resident requests and basic support for City Engineer. This would also be someone who could possibly take over for the Water Superintendent or City Engineer down the road. The other new position budgeted for is a part-time account clerk to be the point person to coordinate with the Comptroller's office. A discussion ensued regarding the current senior typist's duties. Councilor Bowe said that position is union and the current employee has worked for the City over 20 years. City Engineer Rauscher said they consist of multiple departments all coming into one office with one person to process and track the paperwork. The Mayor said there is more clerical support in other departments than in the DPW, and the City Engineer shouldn't be spending his time tracking down vouchers and purchase orders. \$14K for a GIS system will be removed from this budget and paid for out of sewer.

Street Maintenance

City Engineer Jon Rauscher provided a budget overview of the street maintenance budget. He outlined the goals, equipment and materials, fuel, utilities, contracts, rental equipment, and training/meals lines. The Mayor said there will be a five-year cycle setup for paving. The Mayor said funding will be decided with different assessments. The Planning Department has a \$50K sidewalk grant received through Senator Valesky's office. The Comptroller asked Jon to provide a capital project sheet for this grant. Discussion included contracting out for sidewalk replacement vs. having it done in house. The City Engineer said he will meet with the Deputy Comptroller with regard to all of the salaries lines in his budget to be sure they are all accurate. The City Engineer said that he uses this for internal tracking, and he doesn't have to show this to the Council if they don't need that information. Councilor Acker said this is not the final result and Councilor Simchik said it will depend on how many employees there are. The City Engineer outlined the Street Maintenance Capital listing various streets, the condition of the paving, and pavement age. The expected CHIPs funding this year is \$258,232.60.

Snow and Ice Control

This includes plowing operations, salt application, City parking lot plowing, sidewalk plowing, and snow bank removal. He explained the current operations listing the vehicles, salt applicators, salt and sidewalk plows. Most plowing routes are about 4 hours long, and the goal is to make those about a three hour route. The goal is to be more efficient in snow removal and use less material utilizing a brine system. The City uses approximately 6100 tons of salt per year.

Capital – Truck Replacement

Vehicle #19, a 1999 international, is projected for replacement in 2015. The City Engineer explained a program used by other municipalities with good luck that involves the purchase of a truck and then the dealer buys back of vehicle after a certain amount of years. This program would result in a cost savings. Changing to a brine system would create a 20% reduction in salt. The City Engineer said he has been discussing this system with the Hamilton Superintendent, who uses the brine system, and it has resulted in a savings for the township. Canastota and Cazenovia are also using the brine system, as well as the NYSDOT on Lenox Avenue here in Oneida, where we could buy the product from.

Storm Sewers, Streams and Dams

An overview of the tasks, salaries, and materials was presented. The only difference this year is a contract with MCSW for Creek Debris Removal in the amount of \$5K. This would be for prevention purposes.

Yard Waste

Tasks include spring and fall cleanup, scheduled weekly bagged waste pick up, and weekly tree branch curb chipping. Approximately 32% of crew time is spent performing yard waste duties.

Central Garage

An overview of the Central Garage was briefly discussed including salaries, OT, equipment, materials used for the different department vehicles, tools and contracts. The historic costs were also outlined.

SPECIAL MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The Council agreed to schedule the following special meetings to discuss the 2015 budget for 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers on Monday, November 24th, Tuesday, November 25th, Monday, December 1st and Wednesday, December 3rd. A regular meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday, December 2nd and if time allows, the budget can be discussed under old business.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Zogby

The special meeting is hereby adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA

Susan Pulverenti, City Clerk