

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 13, 2017**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the thirteenth day of November, 2017 at 6:30 o'clock P.M. in the Council Chambers, Oneida Municipal Building, 109 N. Main Street, Oneida, NY.

Meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor Jim Chamberlain

PRESENT: Mayor Leo Matzke, Councilors Al Cohen, Michael Bowe, Erwin Smith, Helen Acker and Thomas Simchik

ALSO PRESENT: City Clerk Susan Pulverenti
Comptroller Lee Ann Wells

DISCUSSION - 2017 MAYORS BUDGET

Deputy Mayor Jim Chamberlain said that there will be no questions taken from the audience, as this is a budget work session for the Common Council. He said the first item they would like to discuss is salaries, and he turned the meeting over to Councilor Bowe. Councilor Bowe said he prepared an outline of the percentages of increases for department heads over the last three years and for what is projected for 2018. A discussion ensued. Mayor Matzke said that he called several other communities who have the same assessed value as the City of Oneida to compare their rates, citing Johnstown, Cortland and Ogdensburg as examples. He said that he used the percentage rate of 2.75% and then gave a block amount. City Comptroller Wells said that these increases also bring every department head up to forty hours. The Mayor said that this year is a realignment of salaries, adding that we are using less money from taxes and more from sales revenue. Councilor Bowe stated the various percentages using his chart, and the Mayor said that Councilor Bowe is not looking at it in the same way as he did. Councilor Bowe asked the Comptroller to check over his numbers, and she said she would do so. Councilor Smith inquired about employee evaluations, and the Comptroller said they are currently looking into standard evaluations for all employees, including department heads.

The discussion turned to the proposed Codes Department and a proposed promotion/salary increase to Assistant Codes Enforcement Officer. Deputy Mayor Chamberlain said this would have to go through Civil Service for approval and testing. He said that it is not the intent to make one a department head. He said that the Housing Inspector job description would be modified to include Assistant Code Enforcement Officer. The Deputy Mayor said that this way there would always be someone available during vacations, sickness, etc., making the department much more efficient.

Discussion moved to the Assessor position. Mayor Matzke said that his budget calls for a part-time Assessor. He said that Madison County is looking into overseeing the assessment duties for the entire County through shared services, as currently each municipality has their own assessor. The Mayor said that this would be a way for the City to recoup some funding that the county receives from the state. Councilor Smith questioned where the funds for payouts due to retirements in the fire department next year are located in the budget, as well as the funds set aside for training any new recruits. Deputy Mayor Chamberlain said that they may be able to do a lateral move and noted that the Civil Service test for Fire Chief is scheduled for early next year. Mayor Matzke said that he cut the short-shift overtime in the Fire Department, as they already had an overtime account. It was noted that the short-shift line was added to the budget a few years ago to keep track of overtime before the shifts were at full staffing. The repayment for a workers comp claim and the projected date for reimbursement was discussed with the Comptroller. The Council had a brief discussion relating to whether the Civil Service examination for Police Chief should be a promotional or open test. The Council discussed and compared the Police Chief and Fire Chief salaries. Councilor Smith said that the Fire Chief makes less than several of his officers because of overtime. Councilor Bowe said that unlike the unions, a new salary can be set when someone retires from management.

The Mayor said that in his budget is a half-year salary (\$45K) for a City Administrator, and Councilor Bowe said that would be \$90K for next year. Councilor Bowe said that the Sewer and Water Funds would help finance a City Administrator. Mayor Matzke said that the solar array is predicted to be up and running by February, adding that most of the solar panels are in place. He said they are waiting on National Grid.

Mayor Matzke said that about 10 years ago, the Mayor and Council at that time decided that when a block grant was written they wanted 100% of the grant to go back to the residents, leaving the City to cover the costs for administering the grant. The Mayor said that the City will begin asking for the administrative fees when applying for block grants, so approximately 80% will go to the residents and 20% will go to the Planning Department for administrative costs.

The Mayor said that he put \$50K in the budget for sidewalks and would like to address those sidewalks that are the most dangerous. He asked the Council to prepare a list from their respective wards. Councilor Cohen said there are still sidewalks that were damaged by City trees that have not be repaired. Mayor Matzke said that he put in additional funding for trees, as he said we have to think long term, noting that many of the City's large trees may become unstable. The Mayor said that he included more funding for summer concerts, and it was suggested possibly utilizing Allen Park, the Historical Society, the Elks Club front porch, as well as Higinbotham for different concerts.

The Mayor said that the Recreation Department has included additional lawn equipment for the projected mowing that will need to be done in the flats. Councilor Acker said that she is working with Senator Schumer's office relating to additional expenses the City will incur in the flats after the grant is completed. The Mayor said that he also included a small amount for refurbishing the tennis courts. A question arose with respect to the DPW salaries, and the Comptroller said there has been some employee movement within the DPW and Sewer departments. The Mayor said the DPW is adding two new laborers. Councilor Bowe said that when he left the City there were 16, and it will be up to 13 next year. The Mayor said this is needed to accomplish the tasks that need to be done. The Council talked about the possibility of hiring an engineer to manage the WWTP, including handling all the current updates needed at the plant. Discussion included capacity issues because of HP Hood and Oneida Castle looking to hook into our system. The Mayor said that the Water Fund Balance is huge and water rates are projected to increase 4.5%. Deputy Mayor Chamberlain said that are lots of things happening in the Water Department, adding that he trusts the Water Superintendent's figures.

The Council discussed a variety of issues including the creation of a Capital Reserve Fund, leasing of trucks, bonding and obtaining grants for infrastructure. The Comptroller said they are looking at new computer software for the City, as KVS is outdated and virtually has no support system in place when problems arise. She said they are still looking at software demonstrations. The Mayor said that any new computers and printers would all be tied into the same project.

Deputy Mayor Chamberlain said that the Water and Police portions of the budget will be discussed at Thursday's meeting, the Recreation and Fire budgets would be discussed on Monday, November 20th and DPW/Sewer would be discussed after the regular Council meeting on November 21st. The City Clerk said she would notify the Department Heads.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Acker

The special meeting is hereby adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA, NEW YORK

Susan Pulverenti, City Clerk