

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 16, 2017**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the sixteenth day of November, 2017 at 6:30 o'clock P.M. in the Mayor's Conference Room, 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 (arrived at 7:25 pm), Michael Bowe, Erwin Smith, Helen Acker (arrived at 7:45 pm) and Thomas Simchik

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Clerk Susan Pulverenti  
Comptroller Lee Ann Wells  
Councilor-Elect James Coulthart  
Acting Police Chief Paul Thompson  
Water Superintendent Art Smolinski

**DISCUSSION - 2017 MAYORS BUDGET**

*Water Department*

Water Superintendent Art Smolinski said that meter consumption has remained the same for 7-8 years with no large increases. He said next year's sales are projected at 827MG, which is down from the early 90's when sales were 933MG. He said there has been some growth in consumption from HP Hood, and Ferris is moving, but they are just changing to another district that the City serves. The Superintendent said they are replacing two crew trucks next year (\$37K each), which will be nine years old. He said that the Department pays \$436K in County, Town, Fire District and School Taxes on property owned outside the City, noting that the dam and water treatment plant are assessed at \$5-6M, with the total assessment at \$14M. With respect to chemicals, he said there may be changes in costs for caustic and chlorine because of the hurricane.

Superintendent Smolinski said he has budgeted for \$82K for water main replacement, which will cover approximately 2,300 feet of main. He said the Water Department maintains 85 miles of main. He explained the type of mains that are installed and the time involved for replacing mains in different locations/projects. He said that the bonds for the tank project (\$270K per year) will be paid off in 2019, and the Fish Creek Crossing Project (\$250K per year) will be paid off in 2029. He said that the first Dam Rehabilitation Project bond payment is anticipated to begin in 2020, and that would bring the total bonding costs up to \$600K per year. He said that there is a lot of money in the Water Fund Balance, but there are also many improvements and projects pending to pay for. The Superintendent said that he will be taking a revised amount of \$199K out of the Water Fund Balance this year.

Superintendent Smolinski said that there are currently six employees at the Water Treatment Plant, including one trainee who has to work one year before he can operate the plant. He said there are three employees eligible for retirement, with one expected to retire. He said they are continuing with the Meter Replacement Program whereby meters over 19 years of age are replaced, noting that 82 are scheduled for replacement next year. The Comptroller said that the Water Superintendent and his staff have been sitting in on the demos for the new software, as the software will encompass billing for water/sewer. Under contracts, he said that a Leak Survey of the water lines is in the budget. He said that a survey was done three years ago that found four leaks in 85 miles. He said that currently we are losing about 104K gallons a day, which is enough to supply HP Hood's water for a day. He said that leaks amounting to about 45K gallons a day are estimated to be repairable leaks. The Superintendent said that in the Lab Testing line, testing will be completed as per EPA and State requirements. He said that the salary line is down 2%.

Superintendent Smolinski said that salaries, debt service and property taxes are the largest portions of his budget.

Water Superintendent Art Smolinski said that the total Water Budget is \$3.57M, which is broken down into cost centers; distribution, billing, customer service and wholesale/retail customers. He said that water rates of \$1.9M are paid by quarterly customers, \$400K paid by monthly customers, and \$1.2M by the wholesale customers. The Superintendent said that water rates will increase by 20 cents to \$4.66 per 1000, up from \$4.46 per 100. The wholesale rates will stay the same.

The Superintendent said in the Capital line there are several projects to be undertaken using current funds. He said that Tank Mixers (\$117K) at the Baker Reservoir are planned. These will provide mixing and consistent turnover in the tanks, along with improving disinfection residual and preventing thermal stratification in the tanks. The Water Treatment Plant generator will be replaced (\$100K), as parts are not readily available for the current 1979 generator. A Preliminary Engineering Study (\$100K) will be conducted to construct a second Clearwell tank, which would permit cleaning maintenance of the current tank when off line and to also install aeration (oxygen) and mixing to remove THM's. He stated there are new regulations to clean the tanks every three years, which is difficult to do when the tanks are in use. He said that he is estimating the cost for the new tank to be about \$1M.

The Water Superintendent explained the historic water rates and said that the water rate climb is less than inflation. He said that the Oneida Water Department is very competitive when comparing the City's water rates to those of surrounding communities. He cited the City of Rome and the Upper Mohawk Valley Water Authority as both charging higher rates than Oneida. Councilor-Elect Coulthart said that the City provides certain services at no cost where other municipalities charge "a-la-carte" to their water customers. Superintendent Smolinski outlined what the estimated costs are to tie into other water systems to provide more water for the City. He explained that after many studies, it is less expensive to produce the water ourselves than to bring it in from elsewhere. He said our system dates back to 1925-1926, and to keep it up to date they are looking at replacing the transmission main at a projected cost of \$16.2M. He said they are continuing work on the project to stabilize the dam, which is estimated at \$5.7M. He estimated the cost to renovate the 38 year old Water Treatment Plant at \$3M. This total of \$25M in repairs will add about \$1.60 to the water rates for everyone. A brief discussion was held with respect to the State Revolving Loan Fund, and the amount of water available on the department's permits. He said that the plant is currently producing 2.5MGD. A brief discussion ensued with respect to painting the hydrants two colors vs. one color to save costs/time and/or color coding the hydrants. In response to a question, he said that the service in the flats will be kept up and running. The Water Superintendent requested that the Council look at his annual report, as all the pertinent information is included within it. Councilor Bowe thanked the Water Superintendent for his informative presentation.

#### *Police Department*

Acting Chief Paul Thompson said that the Capital Fund has three new patrol vehicles (\$100K). He said that normally 30K to 40K miles per year are put on police cars, and a two year turnaround would be ideal; however, the Mayor has recommended a 3/2 cycle. He said that by the time the new vehicles arrive in the spring, the newer cars will have 100K miles on them (and another 100K in idle time), adding that after 100K miles, the repair costs are significant. Acting Chief Thompson said that he is planning to stay with the Explorers, as they are the best value. The Council briefly discussed the three-year lease purchase for the vehicles bought previously, and the Comptroller said the City saved on the interest rate. She said the final (third) payment has been made on those vehicles, and the City now owns them.

The Acting Chief said that overtime has been low in the last couple of years. He said there is a younger force with less time to take off, and they are working at a lower rate when they do have overtime. He said that the STEP overtime is grant funded for traffic enforcement, adding that he just found out that they received the grant. He said that buyouts, which are contractually mandated, are now going through a different line. The Council questioned if \$3K could be taken from the gas/oil line, and Acting Chief Thompson said yes, as the cost of gas is consistent and less than what it was years ago.

The Acting Chief said the clothing line is contractual, adding that it will include vest replacements. The Holiday line has jumped, as more employees are using other categories of time off and holding their holiday time for buyout at the end of the year. He said there are three officers eligible to retire, besides himself, but he doesn't know for sure if any will be retiring. The contracts line includes the live scan (contracted with Onondaga County), copy machine, and replacing microfilming with a newer technology. He said there are contracts for radio repair, and the vehicle maintenance line was set up so that individual departments could be tracked by the Central Garage for their vehicle maintenances. He said that typically a variety of training programs are available at no cost, adding that the vast majority of that line goes for ammo, armor, etc. Acting Chief Thompson said that the Cops Program/Neighborhood Watch is something that the Mayor would like to start and pattern after Rome's program. Councilor Simchik inquired if the office technology expense line could be bundled in with the rest of the computers/computer software, and the Comptroller said no. Councilor Acker thanked the Acting Chief for his budget.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

#### **RESOLUTION 17-310**

Motioned by Councilor Acker  
Seconded by Councilor Smith

**RESOLVED**, that the meeting is hereby adjourned to Executive Session at 7:58 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.

Ayes: 6  
Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**PRESENT:** Mayor, Councilors, Comptroller, Police Chief

Discussion was held regarding a personnel matter.

Motioned by Councilor Bowe  
Seconded by Councilor Acker

**RESOLVED**, that Executive Session is hereby adjourned to the regular meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Ayes: 6  
Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Acker

The regular meeting is hereby adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

CITY OF ONEIDA, NEW YORK

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Susan Pulverenti, City Clerk