

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
JULY 14, 2020

**DRAFT**

A special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida, NY was held on the fourteenth day of July, 2020 at 7:00 o'clock P.M. in the Kallet Civic Center, 159 Main Street, Oneida, NY.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Helen Acker

PRESENT: Councilors Carrie Earl, James Coulthart, Michelle Kinville,  
Brandee DuBois and Thomas Simchik

ABSENT: Councilor Michael Bowe

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Christopher M. Militello  
City Clerk Susan Pulverenti  
Comptroller Lee Ann Wells  
Recreation Director Luke Griff

**DISCUSSION OF THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT FACILITY USE POLICY**

The Common Council went through the proposed policy section by section with their comments, and the Mayor said that recommendations will be provided to the Rec Director for addition/removal from the draft policy.

In Section 1, the fees for damages and cleanup costs were discussed. Recreation Director Griff said it is hard to keep a credit card on file like they do in hotels, because some pay through the Rec Desk program and they don't see it. The Director said that an hourly rate for cleaning can be established, noting that damage/cleaning doesn't happen very often.

In Section 3, questions regarding the Recreation facilities and the Kallet portions being uniform were raised. It was proposed that the Kallet have its own portion in the policy.

In Section 5, the actual costs were questioned. The Recreation Director outlined the costs for both the Recreational facilities and the Kallet, including when they were last updated. A suggestion to have every item that could be rented out clearly listed as available to the public. Councilor Simchik recommended that fees be established by Council resolution should the Council want to increase the rates, so the policy doesn't have to be changed each time a fee is modified. The Director said that the rental fees are quite reasonable, as evidenced by the fact that they sometimes have to turn people away because of unavailability.

The Council discussed adding that "the failure to follow any rules will result in denial of future use" to the front page in bold print and again under general conditions of use (1H), as well. The Recreation Director said that he will include that wording in the policy.

Council discussed the "age" of who is considered an adult and said they would like to specify an age, 18 or 21 (Section 6). A lengthy discussion ensued, which included the age of lifeguards and park program employees. It was noted that a rental agreement is in place for the Kallet, as it was decided to use age 21 for the Kallet and age 18 for other facilities.

The Liability Insurance requirements were discussed at length. The Director said when renting a recreation facility, the homeowner would have the responsibility of insurance. If a renter, that could be different, as an insurance company may not cover with renter's insurance. Most commercial entities would have an umbrella on their insurance policy that would cover facility rentals and name the City as an additional insured; however, a homeowner's policy may not meet the \$1M limit. The Director said that there are websites where you can apply for insurance for a specific event. It was suggested that charitable benefits must align with a non-profit, and the Director said that there may not be non-for-

profits out there who would want to align using their liability insurance for an event. The Mayor added that many non-profits have a specific purpose and couldn't do this for someone else's event. The Attorney said that insurance requirements may need to be modified for the Kallet use, and it was suggested that a separate use policy for the Kallet be created and included in the Facility Use Policy. A lengthy debate on adding a "charitable events" category using the non-for-profit fee category ensued. It was decided that, because of too many discrepancies over what could be considered a "charitable event", there would be rates for non-residents, residents and non-profits only.

The existence of a Volunteer Policy was briefly questioned, and the Director asked if this would be for a Facility Use Policy. It was noted that there is a difference between a coach and volunteer, such as a team mom. The Mayor said that effective this year thorough background checks are planned to be done through the Police Department, noting that obviously with COVID-19 nothing is going on at this time. The City Attorney said that this is a completely different subject than the Facility Use, but added that a volunteer policy is worthwhile and should be created. The Rec Director said the City has approximately 20 volunteers per year. Mayor Acker said that she will work with Fire Chief Dennis Fields, the City's Task Force Chairman, and the Madison County Health Department to establish the criteria for reopening the department. She said that she has to wait for the State Guidelines before creating any opening conditions.

It was requested that policies be posted on the City website. The Mayor said that we are looking at creating another website, as we only have one person working extremely hard to take care of that, plus all the other IT work.

The Mayor said that with respect to access to the buildings, there are no swipe cards as they cost \$50K per door, and the City does not have the funding for that. The Mayor said that she works with the Department Heads on any preventative maintenance schedules.

The Comptroller suggested that the Facility Use Policy include that no cash is accepted; payment should be made by check, money order or credit card only. She explained that an invoice would be created and paid either at the Recreation Department or directly to the City Chamberlain. Mayor Acker reiterated that the fees should always be by separate Resolution of the Council, so the fees can change and the policy stays the same. The Recreation Director said that he will have a separate section for the rules of the Kallet.

Michelle Farwell, Oneida, said that there should be a code of conduct and sportsmanship code for the coaching staff, volunteers and youth (both on and off the field). She said that she is glad that the Mayor has implemented background checks, as we want to make sure that all the kids are safe.

Councilor Earl said that she wanted to be sure the City is aware of the softball tournament being advertised by the new "Downtown Oneida – It's Time for a Change" Facebook page using Vet's Field. The Rec Director said that the group has spoken with the Recreation Coordinator, but it hasn't gone any further as of yet. Councilor Earl suggested that someone reach out to them with regard to the COVID-19 regulations. The Mayor said this is not a City event, and everyone should know about social distancing and masks.

The Mayor said once the Director has updated the draft policy with what the Council wants, it will come back to the Council for review before it goes onto the agenda for final approval.

Motion to adjourn: Councilor Kinville

The regular meeting is hereby adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

**CITY OF ONEIDA**

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Susan Pulverenti  
City Clerk