



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York, 13202
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PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE 2024 COUNTY BUDGET OCTOBER 5, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

Livestream available at www.facebook.com/OnondagaCountyLegislature

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. May, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Burtis, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Kinne, Mrs. Ervin
ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Rowley, Ms. Gunnip, Ms. Cody, Ms. Kuhn, Dr. Chase, Mr. Olson,
Mr. McCarron, Mr. Bush, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Garland

Chair May called the 5:30 p.m. public hearing to order at 5:37 p.m. and stated that the resolution of the Legislature authorizing the public hearing had been entered into the record. The Clerk answered Chair May that the notice had been duly published.

- Everyone is here to talk about the 2024 operating budget for Onondaga County as presented by the County Executive to the Legislature, as reviewed by the Ways and Means Committee of the Legislature
- Full vote of the Legislature will be next Tuesday
- County Executive came over with 15% proposed rate decrease and \$9M cut to property tax levy
- Significant increases year-over-year for workforce dev., housing, lead abatement, foster care and daycare
- Ways and Means Committee and Legislature responded to refinements and alignments to the baseline budget
- Substantial increases were made to public safety investments

Chair May called the following speakers to the podium:

1. Dom Cambareri, Syracuse Challenger Baseball (*statement attached*)
2. Marianna Pernia, Constituent (*statement attached, read Oceanna Fair's statement attached*)
3. Amy Dugliss, Executive Director of Advocates Incorporated (*statement attached*)
4. JJ Potrikus, Constituent
5. Jennifer Savastino, Constituent
6. Rich Puitaki, Constituent
7. Patti Marvin, Constituent (*statement attached*)
8. Kathleen T. Koss, Constituent
9. Philip Delaney, Constituent
10. Jill Hurst-Wahl, OCPL Trustees President (*statement attached*)

11. Anne Messenger, Board Chair of the CNY Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Alliance (*statement attached*)
12. Maurice Brown, OCC Student Advisor (*statement attached*)
13. Nick Cappoletti, Constituent
14. MacDonald Carden, Constituent
15. Herman Card, Constituent

Chair May asked if there were any other speakers wishing to be heard, and there were none.

The public hearing was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jm', followed by a long horizontal line.

JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

County Executive McMahon, Chairman Rowley, Chairman, May and Honorable Members of the Onondaga County Legislature:

My name is Dom Cambareri. I am the 21-year volunteer Executive Director of Syracuse Challenger Baseball, the largest and oldest special needs Little League International Challenger Division program in the country! I am also the Founder and volunteer Fundraising Board Member of the all accessible, all-inclusive Carrier Park Field of Dreams in Dewitt.

I have the honor and privilege of requesting your support for funding in the 2024 County budget for the Carrier Park "Superfield of Dreams" expansion project! We are not politicians, but we parents and volunteers here to help our kids fulfill the rest of our dream, and we would like your support.

We believe that this is a glorious opportunity for the County, the Town of Dewitt, and the CNY community to collaboratively secure the future of Syracuse Challenger Baseball and the future of generations of children and adults with all differing abilities and special needs to participate and play in a variety of inclusive, unified, and adaptive sports at the "Superfield" expansion of the Carrier Park Field of Dreams!

Consider the following:

The families and players of Syracuse Challenger Baseball are the inspiration and driving force behind "Carrier Park Field of Dreams".

In 2006, the Syracuse Challenger Baseball players had no baseball fields of their own. Host field sites were often not available and difficult to access or navigate by many of our players with physical impairments. The terms "Unified" and "inclusive sports" simply did not exist, and all assessable fields were no where to be found. Despite these significant obstacle obstacles, Syracuse Challenger Baseball

In 2012, Syracuse Challenger Baseball and the Town of Dewitt led a presentation to the CNY community with plans for a novel, first of its kind, all inclusive, all accessible sports and recreation athletic complex, the Carrier Park Field of Dreams. I would like to paraphrase then County Comptroller, now Judge Bob Antonacci, who commented: "For Syracuse

Challenger Baseball to not have accessible fields at which to play, is not only unacceptable, but is un-American.”

We were able to inspire the CNY governmental officials, officials, foundations, businesses, and local philanthropically minded individuals and families to embrace our vision and "dream" of completing an "all accessible, all inclusive" complex for children and athletes of "all ages and all abilities."

Although our dream was bold and big, and we did not have a dime, in 2016, we were able to collectively, as a community, build a beautiful, inclusive sports complex with two championship baseball/softball diamonds, gateway buildings, concessions, seating, and walking areas.

On June 26, 2018, in a resolution, presented then Chairman and present County Executive Ryan McMahon and Ways & Means Chair Brian May, County Legislature unanimously declared that Onondaga County would adopt the **“Think Differently” Initiative**: That County Government would act in a more inclusive way for individuals with special needs and disabilities. As an example of placing the “Think Differently initiative into action, this Legislature referenced the County’s investment into the Challenger Carrier Park Field of Dreams.

In 2020, Carrier Park was further enhanced by a state-of-the-art special needs playground and three all-accessible championship basketball courts. We believe that now is our time to "complete the dream", and build a magnificent multi-use "Superfield," and have Carrier Park serve as a model for all communities in America and send a message that inclusive, unified and adaptive sports do matter!!

The Superfield will provide Syracuse Challenger Baseball the ability, for the first time in our 41-year history, to play all our players and 16 teams in three divisions at one truly accessible field complex.

Carrier Park has truly become an instrument of force for diversity and inclusion of athletes of ALL abilities in sports and recreation.

Let me share some examples:

- Carrier Park hosts the amazing Move ALONG adaptive and competitive wheelchair basketball league
- Carrier Park has been the site for Special Olympics softball;
- Carrier Park hosts an adult unified kickball league administered through Advocates.
- Carrier Park has helped catapult Syracuse Challenger Baseball in the national limelight. On August 25 and 26th of this year, 26 Syracuse Challenger Baseball players participated in the Challenger Division Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA.!
- As a result, Senior Little League International officials plan on visiting Carrier Park in Spring 2024 not only to review our complex as a model for inclusive baseball, but also to learn about the organization strategies implemented by Syracuse Challenger Baseball as a template for the development of Challenger programs across America.
- And the success of Syracuse Challenger Baseball and Carrier Park will be featured in a documentary that will hopefully debut nationally in 2024.
- Thanks to Micron Technology's investment into our community, we will soon have 50,000-60,000 new families in CNY. The CDC tells us that 1 in every 6 children are diagnosed with Developmental Disabilities – soon we will have to provide 1000's of children with additional structures, services and supports to meet their need for healthy and active lifestyles.

The Carrier Park Field of Dreams and the "Superfield" expansion are the structures and supports necessary to accomplish this goal.

We hope Onondaga County will join us in becoming the nation's leaders in effectuating real change and create hope for our children and families of all abilities to live those healthy and active lifestyles.

Together, we can finish our dream "Superfield" and forever change the landscape of accessibility and inclusive sports and recreation for our families and CNY community!!!!

I would like to conclude inspirational message. Everything God does is done with perfection. When God brings children with special needs and families who require special care into the world, the perfection that God seeks of us is the way that we, as a community, provide those children and families with hope and opportunity to succeed in life with dignity and respect.

As you consider our request for support, I ask that you consider your roles as parents, grandparents, and mentors to the children in your lives. You attended all their travel ball games and cheered them on as they pursued team and individual success. You attended their concerts and dance recitals. You applauded them at their karate promotions, school plays, and class proms. You guided them to academic excellence and instilled in them core values of serving faith, family, and friends. In essence, **you prepared your children for the world.**

Let me submit to you that if we all put our differences aside and work collaboratively together to complete the superfield of dreams, together we will have prepared the world for our children and achieved our level of God's perfection.

Remember this: When a special needs child comes to the Carrier Park Field of Dreams, looks up at their Mom or Dad and asks: **“Do you think they will let me play?”** - there will be no more anxiety, there will no more fear, and the tears will be wiped away because our answer is **“Yes, you can play!!!! Yes, you will play at the Carrier Park Field of Dreams.”**

In my advocacy efforts, I speak with community members who are frustrated by the lack of improvements to safe housing and access to testing and treatment for lead. Despite funding for lead abatement there are holes in the county budget plan. There are still obstacles to care that are unnecessary and time consuming for all concerned. And the amount allotted seems like a drop in the bucket. We need to define our success in terms of measurable goals, how many more children have we tested, what are our numbers by race and place, how compliant is the landlord, how quick is the remediation, how and whom have we safely housed.

And one overarching question who will enforce and oversee the improvements.

As you may be well aware, In 2019 the county health department cut testing for lead at WIC appointments leaving an estimated additional 1500 children untested. Recently community residents demanded and helped to bring forward the mobile testing van. Designed and staffed to go out into the community to events this was to help be a panacea to the removal of other easy and available testing.

For those of you who are not yet aware, the mobile testing van has been going out, staffed and educating community members at events It has been to at least eight such events since August, But in that time frame it has only set up testing for 4 individuals and turned away others who requested on the spot testing. It has potentially missed hundreds of children that could have been tested. . and According to the county plan, the testing van will be put away beginning in November. I see no reason why; certainly a heater could be put into the van, but I and others are left wondering, what is going on and why does it seem there is such resistance to listening and meeting the community where it is?

I would urge our representatives today to think not only about the money going into the budget but what are our goals? Is our goal to eliminate lead poisoning in Onondaga county? Or isn't it. If our goal is to eliminate lead poisoning then It needs more than a fraction of a percent in the budget, it is not enough. There must be specificity and targeted approaches, legislation and tools to hold landlords accountable to take responsibility, we must encourage transparency and accountability, we must eliminate barriers for communication between healthcare providers and schools, we must make it easier for families to get the services they need and get them the remediation they need for their homes, we need testing. Please bring back easy widespread on the spot testing.

Submitted by: Marianna Pernia Onondaga county district 17

I have a statement from Mrs. Oceanna Fair, Co-chair of the board of directors of Families for Lead Freedom Now.

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and Elected Leaders,

Family duties prevent me from being here tonight.

As county executive Ryan McMahon has noted, a budget is a statement of values and priorities.

Let us note the county executive's proposed, multi-faceted funding approach. Funds for lead hazard remediation; funds for "Lead it Go" enrichment services for lead-poisoned children, and funds to help families re-locate, temporarily or permanently, due to the need to fix lead hazards in the home.

I welcome funding to tackle the tragic and completely preventable childhood lead poisoning crisis in Onondaga County. By my math, this 2.5 million dollar proposal is less than two-tenths of one-percent of the 1.476 billion dollar proposed budget.

I urge the county legislature to do better. The safety and health of our families means we should spend every available dollar for safe, affordable housing for all our children – now.

Certainly, this requires co-operation from our landlords. And so where are county funds to bring them into compliance?

The "Lead it Go" program needs a bigger, bolder footing. Public reports say only 100 children will be enrolled. However, the community need is likely hundreds of children per year. The county budget can and should value and prioritize these children's enrichment. But let me be clear: "Let it Go" enrichment is secondary intervention. Preventing lead poisoning is primary prevention, and should be our primary goal.

Many of us have gotten hoarse calling for temporary housing assistance when remediation is needed in a family's rental home. Today, this principle is embedded in the city of Syracuse's Lead Ordinance.

If we seek to make a difference this year, will there be funds to help every family who needs assistance? Will there be public reports about this program? Will there be a dedicated hotline? I urge you to adopt useful tools of transparency and accessibility around this initiative, and the funding so every family with this need gets assistance.

Finally, I add my voice to the call for full and proper use of the Lead Van. In July, I attended a press conference where every indication was given this \$200,000 initiative would start testing children within weeks, and at scale. Hundreds of families at past WIC clinics successfully navigated blood-lead testing in prior years. It is a big disappointment to hear that, so far, only four families have obtained testing from the lead van in eight community events.

Let's truly make history by making lead poisoning history – in the next years, not decades, ahead.

**Respectfully submitted: Oceanna Fair, Co-Chair, Families for Lead Freedom Now,
Syracuse NY, October 5, 2023**

- I am Amy Dugliss, Executive Director of Advocates Incorporated.
- Advocates provides services for over 1,000 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.
- We are also an employer of 13 hundred dedicated professionals. In total, we represent over 2,000 voters.
- As a Challenger baseball coach and Advocates kickball coach, I have witnessed thousands of people's lives

being profoundly impacted by participation in inclusive recreation activities hosted at Carrier Park's Field of Dreams.

- On behalf of the 1,000 people we serve and 13 hundred people that we employ and their families,
- we ask for your support of the Carrier Park "Superfield" Expansion.

Fwd: Challenger Baseball Field of Dreams

Patti Marvin <pattimarvin13@gmail.com>

Thu 10/5/2023 5:02 PM

To: Tammy Barber <TammyBarber@ongov.net>

NOTICE: This email originated from **outside** of Onondaga County's email system. **Use caution** with links and attachments.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Patti Marvin** <pattimarvin13@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Oct 4, 2023, 8:52 AM

Subject: Challenger Baseball Field of Dreams

To: <kenbush@ongov.net>

Cc: Patti Marvin <pattimarvin13@gmail.com>

Good morning Mr. Bush-

We have become aware of a measure in the county legislature to support funding to complete the Challenger Field of Dreams in Dewitt.

Our daughter has played Challenger Baseball for 16 years, she looks forward to the start of each season and misses her teammates and coaches when the season ends. To attend a Challenger game is incredible with coaches, parents, and support from local baseball teams making each game unforgettable and exciting for all attending.

The Director, Dom Camberari has worked for 30+ years to make this league available to every person who wants to join. The league motto is "Yes, you can play!" The efforts of the team Directors including Dom, Dee Perkins, and Jennifer Savastino resulted in the Syracuse Challenger Baseball Team being invited to play at the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. in August, a once in a lifetime opportunity for the 15 players and their families who were chosen to attend. This was celebrated by the entire Challenger Baseball League at a special ceremony on Sept. 16th including Senator Mannion, Ryan McMahon, and Mayor Walsh. September 16th was declared Challenger Baseball Champions Day!

To complete the Field of Dreams would bring the 240 players together to play in the same space. Presently the Senior, Adult, and Junior teams are scattered in fields across the county. The expansion would also provide recreational opportunities for supported Soccer and Football teams to play. When you build it, they will come-

The Directors, Coaches, Team Players, their Family & Supporters thank you for your service to our communities and for your support.

Very Truly Yours,

Patti Marvin

My name is Jill Hurst-Wahl. I am president of the Onondaga County Public Library Board of Trustees.

As the library system for Onondaga County, OCPL works with every public library in the county. That is 21 public library locations outside of the City of Syracuse including libraries in Baldwinsville, East Syracuse, LaFayette, and Elbridge...along with 10 branch libraries and library outlets in the City of Syracuse, and the Central Library on Salina Street. In total, 32 library locations across nearly 800 square miles, available to the County's approximately 468,000 residents.

The businesses and residents who are being attracted to Onondaga County are looking for good infrastructure – roads, sidewalks, water and sewer systems, power grid, K-12 schools, daycare, and libraries. Public libraries provide information, services, and programs to families, senior citizens, school age children, and even young children who are just learning how to communicate. Public libraries are a resource for businesses of all sizes, including entrepreneurs who are looking to fill an emerging need in the community. Our public libraries serve everyone, no matter their age, ethnic origin, preferred language, or political stance. Our doors – both physical and virtual – are open to everyone. And you have likely seen library services provided at farmers markets, eldercare facilities, and community events, because we believe that we need to bring services to where people are.

Funding for OCPL helps all our public libraries across the County, because OCPL's services assist each of them. Therefore, thank you for including \$15,514,898 for OCPL in the 2024 County budget. Your willingness to fund OCPL acknowledges the importance of public libraries in your communities. Thank you for supporting libraries.

Onondaga County Legislature, 10/5/23 - 3 min.

Good evening, Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature.

I'm Anne Messenger, Board Chair of the Central New York Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Alliance, and a passionate advocate for the health and safety of us and people way beyond this room. I'm here to make an ask that I hope will stick with you as you tackle tough budget choices.

The Lyme Alliance's request is simple...and vital. We ask for \$75,000 in 2024 County funds. We're about prevention, symptom recognition and knowing where to find help. This money will help educate our families, friends and neighbors about the growing and insidious danger of tick-borne diseases.

Four years ago, the Lyme Alliance began as a small group of volunteers. Today, we're a thriving nonprofit with four paid staff members, a committed board and a legion of volunteers. Our reach is undeniable, with over a million digital interactions on our robust social media platforms. And with this growth come challenges.

Statistics are crazy. In the past decade, the incidence of tick-borne diseases has skyrocketed by over 400 percent. Let me be clear, that figure, while the most recent, is an old one - 1998 - and we RN, know it's an undercount.

Ticks continue to wreak havoc, spreading not just Lyme disease but a staggering 20 tick-borne diseases in total, some prevalent right here in Onondaga County, with more on the horizon. And as our reputation as a trusted source of information grows, so does the demand for help. Calls, emails and texts flood in, overwhelming us.

Our healthcare professionals are deep in clinical work, while our researchers are bent over microscopes in their labs. They are diligent in their work, but for now – with no vaccines, no dependable tests – there are no silver bullet answers.

Our work, as I mentioned, is education. County funds will help us build on what we've done. This year alone, we've educated 6,400 people through workshops held in various venues, from Rotaries to farmers markets, highway departments and YMCAs, libraries, senior centers and youth camps. We've distributed 5,000 handouts and 2,800 tick kits, equipping people to protect themselves.

In July, the Leg approved \$100,000 for Upstate's free tick testing lab—a gift to one of our key partners, Dr. Saravanan Thangamani. It was a powerful, bipartisan demonstration of our County's recognition of the importance of his team's work.

That's the recognition the Lyme Alliance is looking for in our \$75,000 ask of the County.

We want to say you are at our back.

Thank you, all.

Maurice Brown

Esteemed Legislators fellow Onondaga County Residents.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on our county's budget. I stand before you deeply concerned about the current state of our county's budget, particularly its failure to address the pressing issue of housing.

First, there are specific lines items I'd like to oppose such as new money for Body Worn cameras that turn on Automatically, as well as 6 million in new money for "sports tourism." On these two items I'll be brief. Asking the public to spend 15 million dollars on "Body Cameras that turn on Automatically" instead of asking our sheriffs to turn their cameras on is backwards. The technology is there, we just need to update our SOPs in regards to this practice.

The second of those is the 6 million dollars for Sports Tourism. I love a good ballfield, as much as anyone else, but we're in a housing crisis. Prioritizing economic development over our people is a mistake and one we should avoid at all costs.

Housing is not merely a matter of shelter; it's a fundamental human right. It's a cornerstone of stable communities and a catalyst for economic growth. Yet, as I perused the budget, I found a glaring gap – a lack of substantial allocation for housing initiatives, specifically low income and affordable housing.

We cannot ignore the fact that our county is facing a housing crisis. Families are struggling to find safe and affordable places to live. Last month, we had lost one of our youngest residents after her parents were evicted and forced to sleep in their car overnight.

Our neighbors, friends, and even coworkers are being priced out of their homes, forced into precarious living situations, or, worst of all, ending up on the streets. This is not the hallmark of a thriving community.

Investing in housing isn't just a moral imperative; it's also a wise economic choice. Affordable housing strengthens our workforce, attracts businesses, and fosters a sense of belonging among residents. It's an investment in the future of our county, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their income, has the opportunity to live in dignity and security.

I urge you, esteemed members of the Legislature, to reconsider the budgetary allocations.

Let us prioritize housing initiatives that create affordable options, prevent homelessness, and promote inclusive, diverse communities. Collaborate with local organizations, explore innovative funding mechanisms, and learn from successful models in other regions. Together, we can make Onondaga County a place where everyone has a home they can afford, a place where families can thrive, and a place we are all proud to call home.

Thank you for your attention, and I trust that you will take these concerns to heart as you make decisions that will shape the future of our community.