



# Onondaga County Legislature

**DEBORAH L. MATURO**  
Clerk

**J. RYAN McMAHON, II**  
Chairman

**KATHERINE M. FRENCH**  
Deputy Clerk

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES OCTOBER 17, 2018 MICHAEL E. PLOCHOCKI, CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dr. Chase, Mrs. Tassone, Ms. Cody, Mr. Burtis  
**ALSO ATTENDING:** *See attached list*

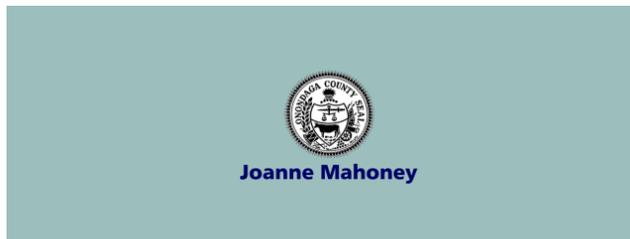
Chairman Plochocki called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

*A motion was made by Dr. Chase, seconded by Ms. Cody, to waive the reading of the proceedings from the previous committee. MOTION CARRIED. A motion was made by Dr. Chase, seconded by Mr. Burtis, to approve the minutes of the previous committee meeting. MOTION CARRIED.*

1. **OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT:** Travis Glazier, Director
  - a. **BOND RESOLUTION:** A Resolution Authorizing the Ash Tree Management Program in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$750,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$750,000 Bonds of said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$750,000)

Mr. Glazier presented the following:

### REVIEW OF THE ISSUE



**Emerald Ash Borer – An invasive specie that will kill most green and white ash trees in Onondaga County over the next decade**

The County was awarded a \$250,000 grant to perform an inventory of ash trees on County Property.

Onondaga County identified 46,000 ash trees that were on or near County property and were a fall threat to humans, infrastructure or easements.

The Onondaga County Ash Tree Management Plan Strategy is produced in 2014 using the tree inventory to formulate the plan.

In 2016 the Onondaga County Legislature adopted the County Ash Tree Management Strategy and provided the first partial funding to implement the plan.

ASH TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY  
BONDING REQUEST

Travis Glazier  
Onondaga County Office of  
Environment

- Grant awarded in 2012; believe 1<sup>st</sup> partial funding was \$350,000 cash then 2 bond authorizations at \$750,000 each

## ASH TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Remove 95% of identified ash trees, inoculate 5% and replant 10% of those removed with non-host trees.

44,000 to be removed, 2,300 inoculated, and 4,400 replanted.

Annual borrowing of \$750,000 to fund this effort for about 15 years.

Remove about 5400 trees per year

- Only cut between October and April, will cut a chunk of trees this fall; plan calls for 2300 trees to be treated, however the treatment is based on inches, treating very large trees so the number being treated is far less than originally proposed due to the amount of pesticide needed per inch, still works out mathematically
- Received several \$25,000 grants, used primarily for tree planting, not enough grants to cover all the costs
- Soil and Water identified the lumber tree stand, generated about \$5,400

## PROGRESS TO DATE

9,300 Removed to date, there will be roughly 11,000 by the end of 2018. Cutting takes place after October 31<sup>st</sup> and ends in April so we are just about to start the 2018-19 cut season.

400 Standing trees treated, the number of trees will likely vary due to application of pesticides being based on inches of diameter width of the trees.

1,430 have been replanted and most of the grant funding received has been for replanting of trees to help offset this cost.

- Trees treated every 2 years, primarily located in parks to help preserve canopy or keep important trees, i.e. tree at NBT Bank Stadium
- Keeping ahead, being proactive is cheaper; dying trees are very expensive and dangerous to trim, become fall hazards during wind storms

Mr. Burtis asked if the plantings were doing well and if there was any sense of fall out. Mr. Glazer responded that most plantings are on Park's property and they keep good taps on the saplings. Also, Soil and Water has a maintenance plan for the first year, ensures they are getting water and well maintained. Planted trees are doing well and are a good investment. Mr. Burtis said that the scrub brush has filled back in at the Oneida Shores cut location; it seems to have been a wise thing to do. Mr. Glazer stated that this is a very good environment for growing trees and was a forest at one point.

Chairman Plochocki stated that originally the Office of Environment proposed a 15-year plan, borrowing all the money in one swoop, which would then allow them more freedom to cut and remove things as they wanted. The legislature decided to break things up and give roughly \$750,000 each year in hopes that as technology improves there may be new trends that could save money.

***A motion was made by Mrs. Tassone, seconded by Dr. Chase, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

## 2. **WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** Tom Rhoads, P.E., Commissioner; Michael Lannon, P.E., Deputy Commissioner, Dan Jean, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent

Chairman Plochocki stated that all four item under WEP call for a vote to hold a public hearing. We are not voting on the substance, and the projects may not be advanced at the same time; these are not final decisions, just first blush.

Chairman Plochocki asked that projects occurring in the plant be pointed out during the tour.

### a. **A Resolution Calling a Public Hearing in Connection with Proposed Improvements for the**

## 2017-18 IMPLEMENTATION

14 total cuts in Camillus, Cicero, Clay, DeWitt, Geddes, Manlius, Onondaga, and Salina with a net 7,000 trees removed.

207 trees treated (5051 inches) in County Parks – Onondaga Lake Park, NBT Bank Stadium, and Rosamond Gifford Zoo

736 trees planted – Onondaga Lake Park, Oneida Shores and Hopkins Road Park

One revenue generating lumber cut at Oneida Shores

## 2019 BONDING REQUEST

This will be the third full year of funding the adopted plan.

The Ash Tree Management Plan will be about 25% complete by the end of 2018.

Onondaga County is on schedule and continue to keep ahead of EAB which makes tree removal more inexpensive and less of a threat to the public.

OCSWCD has 2018-19 cuts marked ready for this cutting season.

The Onondaga County Office of Environment is requesting \$750,000 bond authorization for 2019.

## Onondaga County Sanitary District Related to the Metro Thickener Rehabilitation Project (\$3,730,000)

Mr. Rhoads:

- Thickener complex near the end of the tour; several vintages of WWTP on the Metro campus, meeting held in the 2007 era of the plant, there is a 1978 era, the digester portion is 1959 era and there is an 1920's era outfall
- Thicken sludge in large concrete tanks - equipment, and electrical items associated with the tanks, and the tanks themselves need restoration, critical to the biosolids performance and reduction of disposal costs
- Using asset management approach – only rehabilitating portions of the thickener complex sensitive to risk, consequence, and the likelihood of failure, don't have resources to replace everything

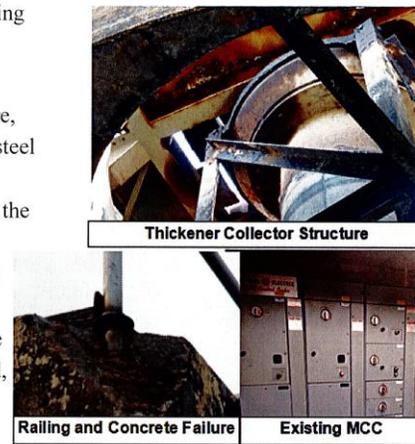
Dr. Chase asked if we would be dealing with other pieces of this down the line. Mr. Rhoads responded that we will have to continually rehabilitate on a normal cycle. The electrical equipment has a 15-20 year life expectancy, mechanical equipment 20 – 30 years at best, tanks might have 50+ year life but while the tanks are out of service a coating will be added to preserve that asset and lengthen its life. We will continue to reinvest, instead of replacement, as a more cost-effective approach.

- Will discuss the project in detail next month; Commissioner's public hearing has been held

### Project Components

In 2016, the County Legislature approved funds for engineering design services for the rehabilitation of the Metro WWTP Thickener Complex. The project includes the following:

- Replacement of the thickener mechanism, collector structure, and catwalk (see the picture to the right showing corroded steel structure which is also a work platform);
- Rehabilitation of the concrete thickener tank (see picture to the right showing failing concrete);
- Rehabilitation of the existing Motor Control Center (MCC) (shown in a picture to the right);
- Replacement of HVAC and electrical components that have exceeded their useful life and insure proper ventilation; and,
- Installation of a new sludge tanker off-loading station (operational efficiency improvement).

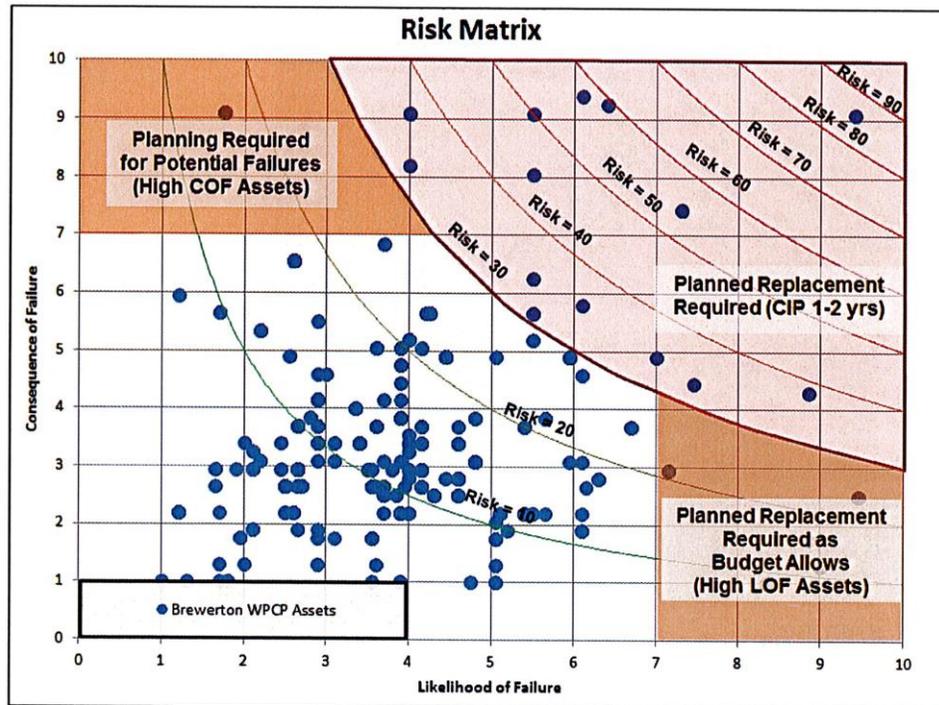


Mr. Burtis questioned if the motor control center (MCC) would receive an upgrade and if efficiencies would be found in that. Mr. Rhoads responded that there will be some efficiencies. The MCC is more of an electrical component than control and it is one of the lower energy consumers of this project. This is a giant fuse box that has seen its better days.

***A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Ms. Cody, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

### b. Resolution Calling a Public Hearing in Connection with Proposed Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District Relating to the Brewerton WPCP Asset Renewal Project (\$12,575,000)

- 1974 plant, some dechlorination upgrades in 2016, mainly original equipment; capital engineering project evaluated plant in 2014, assessment divided into levels of priority, only doing what is absolutely necessary to maintain the plant
- Scarce resources, doing phased implementation of repairs for operation and control center, aeration systems, blower replacements, aging concrete, masonry, and structural steel, and laboratory update



- Trying to get arms around the risk projects in the upper right corner; \$2 million dollars' worth of improvements to date, propose \$12 million with this project, cost \$70 million to replace; offered tour of the Brewerton plant to see the necessity for these improvements, afraid we won't meet our permit without improvements
- New blowers will provide tremendous energy efficiencies, controls, and building code will be improved
- Parade of Homes built on the fence line in 2014, concerned with odor control issues, asking more and more from these old plants, continually presenting them with new challenges

Mr. Burtis questioned if the odor would come down with these improvements. Mr. Rhoads responded that it is not a perfume factory. We will be installing activated carbon odor control to remove odor from portions of the facility that present the most opportunity. Mr. Burtis stated that he wasn't sure if this was just part of the business or something that needed to be fixed. Mr. Rhoads responded that this will help. There are a couple areas of the facility that are uncovered. Dry and low flow days cause the system to slow down and odors build up in the conveyance systems where water becomes septic and brings odors when it arrives at the plant. We will work on the headworks area of the plant and related immediate areas where odors are in the system.

***A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Dr. Chase, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**c. A Resolution Calling a Public Hearing in Connection with Proposed Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District Related to the Metro Digester Phase II Improvements Project (\$27,680,000)**

- Will see digesters on the tour, constructed in 1959, after organic digestion digesters treat the solids inorganically, convert waste to energy making methane, also reduces the amount of solids to be disposed of, critical to our process
- Treat waste anaerobically – natural bacteria consuming waste without oxygen; digesters must be kept warm, big project, 4 huge tanks generating explosive methane gas, have health and safety issues
- Seeing is believing with this project; much old and obsolete equipment, difficult to find parts for maintenance



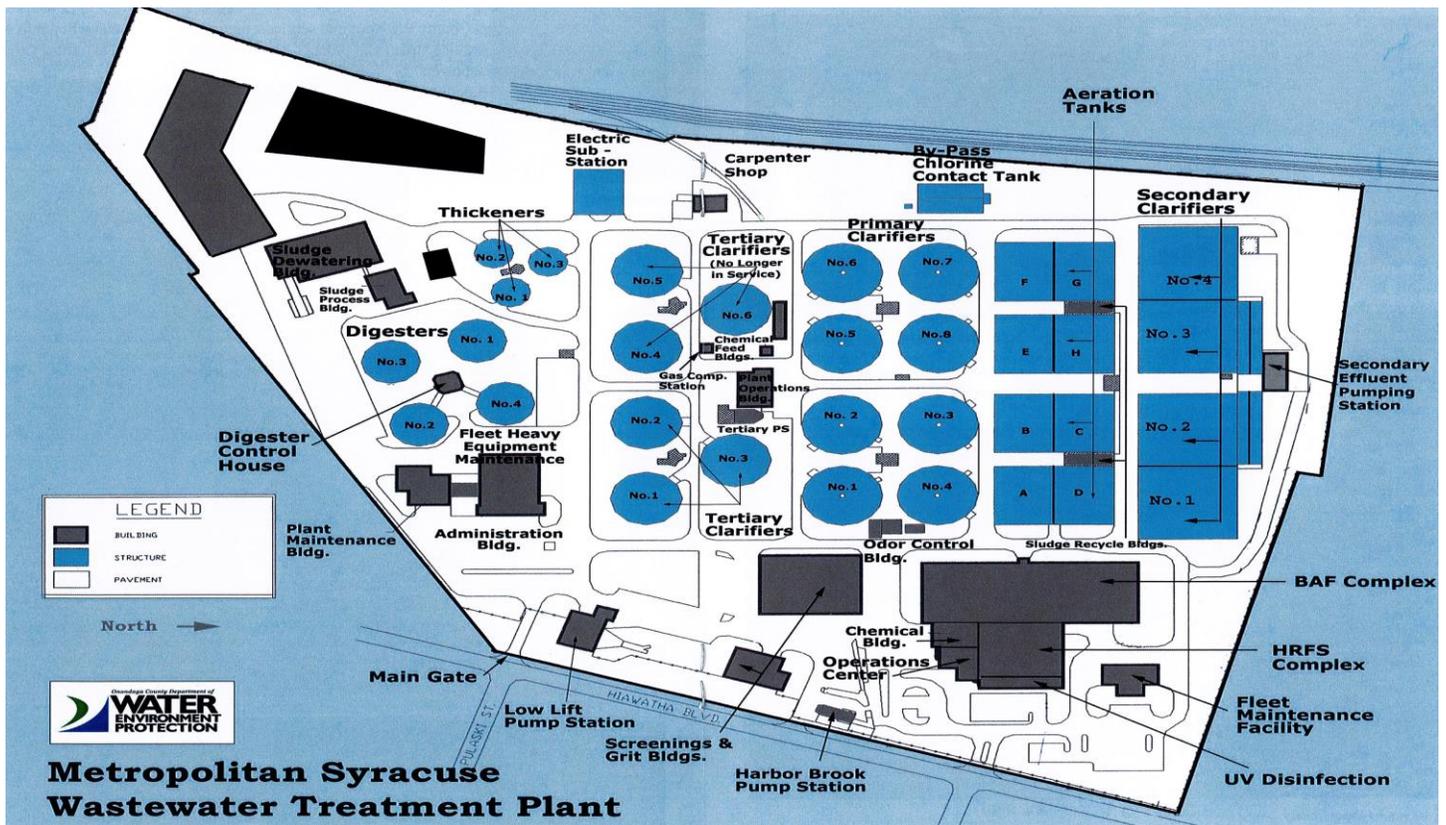
**Figure 8: Secondary Digester 4 Roof Tilted (Left side of black cover is lower than right side by several feet). Gas storage is limited due to cover height travel restrictions caused by tilted roof. AM drivers – loss of capacity and full function.**

- Cannot run roof up and down more than 3 feet, originally 15 feet to enable gas storage, looking at significant problems if we don't do something, not just health and safety issues, when the digesters are not operational the amount of solids to be disposed of goes through the roof, costly operation if not in good working order
- Not asking to replace everything, tanks and roofs need some love; propose gas bubbles for gas storage; received grant from NYSEDA for 2 cogeneration units, \$1.3 million, won't have to flare gas, use digester gas to heat the entire campus and the digesters themselves, surplus gas is converted into electricity, some cost benefits,
- Complex project, wall to wall replacement would cost well over \$155 million, asking to renew, repair and refurbish assets rather than replace

In answer to Mrs. Tassone, Mr. Rhoads stated that this will be a 3 to 4-year project. Only one digester can be taken out of service at a time and this is complex work with a high degree of risks. Mrs. Tassone asked if the job would be bid. Mr. Rhoads responded absolutely, we are fortunate to have two strong companies right in our backyard and there are others.

In answer to Dr. Chase, Mr. Jean stated that one of the primary digesters will be coming down first while they construct two gas bubbles. We will need the gas bubbles to maintain the beneficial reuse of the gas when number 4 is taken out of service. Mr. Rhoads added that number 4 will then be converted from a secondary and gas holder to a primary digester which will improve our ability for good digestion and gas storage.

In answer to Mr. Burtis, Mr. Rhoads stated that we have never done a gas bubble but have visited the technology in Ithaca. Mr. Jean stated we also visited Cortland which has a top roof mounted version; Ithaca has a slab. We will have a slab mounted version as it makes sense for the real estate we have available. Mr. Burtis asked if the gas bubbles would be located next to the digesters. Mr. Rhoads referenced the campus map:



All but one tertiary tank has been removed, which will provide the lawn area for the gas bubbles. Dr. Chase asked if they were as big as they look. Mr. Lannon responded that they are roughly 50 feet high x 60 feet wide. Ms. Chase said that the gas can then be used for power. Mr. Rhoads stated that the stored gas can be used for heat or converted into energy using the 2 additional cogeneration units proposed via grant funds.

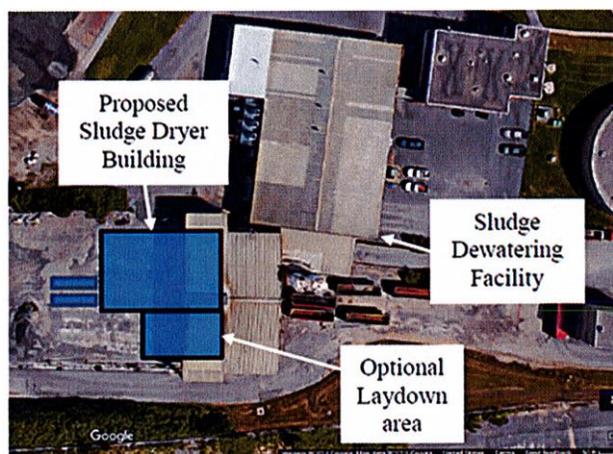
**A motion was made by Dr. Chase, seconded by Mr. Burtis, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.**

**d. A Resolution Calling a Public Hearing in Connection with Proposed Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District Related to the Metro Biosolids Drying Project (\$15,106,000)**

- Project proposed in 2016; dispose of biosolids in a landfill, currently 30% solids and 70% water, heated drying of the sludge will reduce disposal costs
- Payback period between 8 and 11 years for landfill disposal, will likely be additional opportunities for land use moving biosolids to farm fields certain times of the year, will improve payback, probably not able to sell just move off campus for disposal
- Energy efficient project, design-build technology, install 2 dryer units and build a building to house them; end of the tour will see what this cake looks like, will convert cake to pellets



**Biosolids Dryer System Example**



**Location of Proposed Biosolids Dryer**

In answer to Dr. Chase, Mr. Rhoads said that the biosolids can be taken to any approved landfill in NYS. It is hauled by transfer and disposal contract and the hauler determines the location. Historically it has gone to the Ontario County Landfill or the Seneca Meadows Landfill. When the volume of material starts changing other landfills might be interested as well.

In answer to Chairman Plochocki, Mr. Rhoads said that the return on investment was an 8 year period; industry looks for a 3 year period but this still makes sense for us. Mr. Burtis said that the factors that changed since 2016 are the cost of fuel, the disposal, and green – we are going to make something of it. Mr. Rhoads responded that the making something of it is not in the payback; being conservative, based off costs of current disposal contract.

Chairman Plochocki asked for confirmation that all the projects were plant-based repairs with no pipework outside of the plants. Mr. Rhoads responded that the Brewerton project has a tiny bit of headworks. The very front of the plant receiving manholes have to be restored so they will construct a bypass system to do a pump around; have to build these things while the plant is still in operation. For the most part, these are all inside the fence. Chairman Plochocki said that similarly as a result of these projects capacity will not be change as this is maintenance, not overall capacity expansion. Mr. Rhoads responded that we will enjoy a little bit of capacity in the digester complex but we are not adding to the capacity of the Metro WWTP. There is more than enough capacity if we didn't have extraneous flow, i.e. Brewerton would probably be running half plant year round, and on our worst days we need a plant and half. If we got rid of the extraneous flow we would have tremendous capacity system-wide.

Mr. Burtis said that drying of biosolids is new and asked if there was someone ahead of us. Mr. Rhoads responded that we are following Endicott, and are excited about the Gryphon dryer and the ESCO process. It has been used agriculturally and that technology is now moving into our industry.

***A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Ms. Cody, to approve this item. Passed unanimously: MOTION CARRIED.***

#### e. ACJ Report

### Report from the Commissioner

As another construction season comes to a close, we are busy wrapping up green street improvements in CSO 060/077 – specifically on Comstock and South Avenues. As reported in the 2017 Annual Report, CSO 060/077 is a high volume/high frequency overflow. When this project is completed later this year, these improvements, which include underground infiltration trenches, bioretention areas, and street trees, will capture over 14 million gallons of runoff annually. This CSO will also be abated by opportunities developing in the Manley Fieldhouse area and with the reconstruction of I-81. The County’s proposed Long Term Control Plan also anticipates continued investment in CSO 060/077 which is part of the Midland ACJ budget.

Additionally, the City of Syracuse is working on including County green infrastructure design into their annual road reconstruction program for Berkeley Drive, Ostrom Place and S. Geddes Street. The streets will have infiltration trenches and infiltration manholes and will add to stormwater capture totals in these much needed areas of the City.

With the cooler weather quickly approaching, Fall is a great time to consider planting a tree. Trees not only bring beauty to the landscape and nature to an urban setting, they also play an important role in helping control stormwater runoff and keeping pollutants out of our waterways. Save the Rain, along with our community partners, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), Onondaga Earth Corps., the City of Syracuse, and countless neighborhood volunteers, have successfully planted over 8,000 street trees throughout the combined sewer district. The next community tree planting event is scheduled for October 27, 2018 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The meeting place is Seals Community Center at Kirk Park, 300 W. Borden Ave, Syracuse. We hope you can join us.

Fall is also a good time for cleanup and encouraging property owners to bag their leaves to help keep debris out of storm drains and catch basins. Leaves and street litter combine to reduce sewer capacity and can eventually end up in Onondaga Lake as pollution (connect the drops). In this same regard, the County’s skimmer boat contractor has collected nearly 10 tons of trash from the shores on the inner harbor this year. The street sweeping contractor has removed 99 cubic feet of debris in the orphan CSO areas, maximizing the effectiveness of the combined sewer, while minimizing the potential for overflows. Everyone doing their part helps.

One last reminder for Fall – when preparing for the winter season, don’t forget your rain barrel. Make sure your rain barrel is winter-ready by properly draining and cleaning it, and disconnecting it from any downspouts. Store it upside down or in your shed or garage to ensure it will be ready for spring.

In closing, I’d like to take this time to remind everyone that the application deadline for GIF grant funding is December 13, 2018. A boundary map of the priority areas is posted at <http://savetherain.us/green-improvement-fund-gif/>.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom Rhoads, P.E.  
Commissioner

- No longer doing gray projects
- Green projects mainly street work, Fire Station No. 5 coming up, McKinley Park was a nice project
- Green Improvement Fund applications continue, Bellevue Country Club project will remove water that comes into the sewer from all their parking areas and one of their ponds

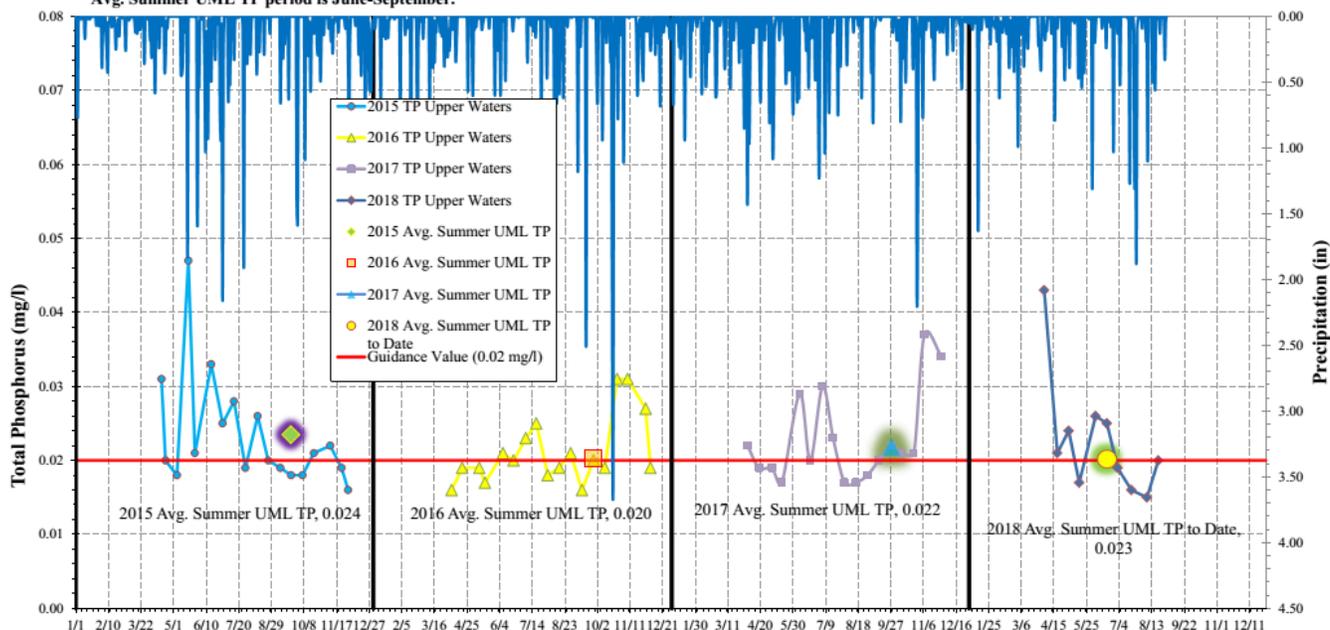
**Onondaga Lake - South Deep Upper Waters  
Total Phosphorus  
2015-2018**

2018 Data are Provisional

NOTE: Upper waters= 0m, 1m, and 3m samples

Avg. Summer UML TP period is June-September.

Note: Last result is from the 8/21/2018 Sampling event.



- Total phosphorus in the lake is on target for the year, target of 0.2 mg/l, at 0.23 mg/l thus far, tremendous considering all the construction; no significant algae blooms on Onondaga Lake because the nutrients going into the lake are being managed

Chairman Plochocki stated, “County Executive Joanie Mahoney will be leaving and I would be remiss if I did not note, for the record, the tremendous contribution that her leadership has been to sewer infrastructure repair in general as well as the Onondaga Lake project in specific. Quite literally the Save the Rain program in its current conception would not exist if it were not for her vision. In short, her involvement and her influence with this committee, and with sewer infrastructure in generally, cannot be overstated. And, I would like to think I speak for the whole committee when I wish her well in her new endeavor.”

**3. Tour**

**The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m. for the tour.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Katherine M. French*

KATHERINE M. FRENCH, Deputy Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

## ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONDATE: OCTOBER 17, 2018

NAME	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
PLEASE PRINT	
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Holly Granat	Office of Environment
Sue Fassler	WEP
Bill Kinne	LEG
Tim Burtis	LEG
TOM RHODES	WEP
Dan Jean	WEP
Mike Lawson	WEP
Dan Jean	WEP
Bob Durr	Law
Travis Glazier	Office of Environment