



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**DAVID H. KNAPP**  
Chairman

**MELANIE VILARDI**  
Deputy Clerk

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## WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE 2021 TENTATIVE BUDGET ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE DEPARTMENTS – NOVEMBER 6, 2020 TIM BURTIS, CHAIRMAN

### OFFICE OF THE CLERK

November 6, 2020

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. May, Mr. Rowley, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Williams, Mrs. Ervin

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Chairman Knapp, Ms. Cody, Mrs. Abbott-Kenan, Ms. Kuhn, Dr. Chase, Mr. Holmquist, Mr. McBride, Mr. Bush, Mr. Kinne; please see attached

Chair Burtis called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. He pointed out the room exits, asked everyone in attendance to sign in, and for speakers to use their microphones.

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** (5-12) Frank Mento, P.E., Commissioner; Shannon Harty, P.E., Deputy Commissioner; Rustan Petrela, CIP; Lisa Consiglio, Fiscal Officer; Andy Ohstrom, Administrative Director

Mr. Mento:

- Good Morning - introduced his team as is listed above
- Challenging year but staff came together with a new commitment to flexibility - staff has more than stepped up to the task at hand – team work has been terrific – getting job done in 2020 dispute challenges
- In 2021 will work smarter, prioritize and reprioritize efforts to pull through
- Continue to advance major initiatives: consolidation and CIP
- Happy to take any questions regarding 2021 budget

Mr. Knapp:

- Thanked employees for persevering – like a dairy farmer – Christmas is just another day – appreciate all your work
- Status of the 2020 fund balance

Mr. Mento:

- Fairly good shape for 2020 – last time he was in front of the Legislature he asked for chemical addition
- Will end 2020 in the black
- As of now budgeted \$4M in fund balance – don't think we will need all of the \$4M but will use some

Mr. Knapp:

- Supplies and materials are going up \$1.5M – assume this is for chemicals

Mr. Morgan:

- Forecast for sewer fund – projected WEP will use about \$1.7M less than was appropriated

Mr. Jordan:

- At Ways and Means Mr. Mento indicated that with change in formula looking at \$1.2M increase in revenue – budget shows about \$600K - where is the \$1.2M reflected in the budget

Mr. Mento:

- The volume reduction was projected to be about \$1.2M but deferred and uncollected line item doubled bringing it down to \$500-\$600K

Mr. Morgan:

- Similar to property tax levy in real property - when you lump them it nets to \$599K

Mr. Jordan:

- Other question relates to DOT future presentation
- Accomplishments include structural work to collect runoff in the garage directing it towards a storm sewer which connects to the sewer and gets treated
- Goal was to separate these two – perhaps because contaminated runoff

Mr. Mento:

- WEP's hope and desire is to treat only contaminated water but City has combined systems

Ms. Premo:

- The garage is in the North area

Mr. Voss:

- Parking lot was graded so instead of going into Sheriff's bay it goes to drain
- It is in Dewitt but eventually goes to the City and makes its way to treatment

Mr. May:

- Brief update on the sewer takeover – what is next

Mr. Mento:

- January to March of this year - four leases signed which took time and effort to work with the local municipalities; paused from March until August - behind the scenes implemented work in Meadow Brook Limestone ("MBLS") to start using the \$9M - will spend \$2-\$3M by year end

Mr. May:

- Which ones have not yet signed?

Mr. Mento:

- Syracuse and Dewitt have not yet signed

Mr. May:

- Disappointed to hear

Mr. Mento:

- First quarter of 2021 will start phase two in Seneca Knolls area– municipalities will work with us in that area– the logical next step because infrastructure is relatively new and financial constraints

Mr. May:

- Asked if municipalities in that area need to take action

Mr. Mento:

- No action needed – WEP will be meeting with Lysander, Baldwinsville, and Van Buren – prepare their resolution process and then will be presented to this Legislature

Mr. Burtis

- Appreciate the work in Brewerton
- How many vacancies at WEP?

Mr. Mento:

- Total roster is 393 people; 65 vacancies – 45 are unfunded – moment in time for us – hope that when things get back to normal critical positions could be filled

Mr. Rowley:

- Adopted budget – \$4M then modified was \$5.6M what was that to fund?

Mr. Mento:

- Reflects \$1.6M for White Pines

Mr. Rowley:

- Projected to use \$5.7M?

Mr. Morgan:

- Expected to use about \$1.7M less than that - \$4M which is what was initially adopted – will spin up a fund balance of \$5.7M – only using the \$5.7M less the \$1.6M surplus

Mr. Rowley:

- In consolidated line item for -\$11M what is driving that – seems up over prior years – cash flow?

Mr. Rowley:

- Summary of fund balance for all funds – consolidated is broken out within WEP

Ms. Venditti

- Don't have the detail – believe it is the Lake clean up

Mr. Morgan:

- Probably should be lumped together – versus having the Lake broken out
- Future will show one line item for the drainage district fund balance

Mr. Jordan:

- Status of the Amended Consent Judgment (“ACJ”) – budget shows \$.5M relating to ACJ
- Future plan for the Lake improvement office

Mr. Mento:

- Moving forward with DEC to get a Consent Order which will remove County from the lawsuit - ongoing, heavy negotiation so once that is signed, optimistically in the next several months – then petition the Federal Court to get us out of ACJ

Ms. Consiglio

- Lake improvement office is needed for continual monitoring

Mr. Jordan:

- Will the office be able to close down within the next year?

Mr. Mento:

- Fair to say within a year – would like to get Consent Order wrapped up and put the lawsuit behind us

Mr. May:

- Zero vehicles in the budget

Mr. Mento:

- Vehicle budget is same as last year – looking to get an Aqua Tech – takes two years to procure – and several light duty pickups to replace aging fleet

Mr. Kinne:

- Why was the sewer rate not raised and left flat – pipes are not getting younger – seems it is best to increase incrementally instead of raising \$10

Mr. Mento:

- Decision was made to hold the sewer unit flat – work will get done with what we have

Mr. Morgan:

- Not proposing any decrease in service; decreasing gallons per unit shifts revenue from residential to commercial and still allows WEP do their job

Mr. Kinne:

- Not accusing or implying anyone of not doing their job but at some point we are going to have to bite the bullet and do some work – more reasonable to do gradual

Mr. Morgan:

- CE sees a pandemic and will not over burden the taxpayers
- Next year we will have a more methodical look at sewer rate increase and fund balance

Mr. Mento:

- Was careful in opening remarks to say this is a moment in time and not long term

Mr. Knapp:

- The last two to three years have seen substantial increases in the unit rate

Chair Burtis thanked Mr. Mento and adjourned the meeting at 11:40 am

Respectfully submitted,



MELANIE VILARDI, Deputy Clerk  
ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

## ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **WMS 2021 BUDGET REVIEW**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 6, 2020**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
M. E. To	WEP
K.C. Hall	Parks
Bri Kelly	Parks
Kristi Sures	Fun Ups
Jennifer Fricano	Parks
Christina Whiteside	
MARY ROSS	DOT
Alicia Wynn	EM
Brian Donnelly	CE
Yvette Velasco	LAW
Lori Tarolli	LAW
MBTRIMO	CE
Don Weber	Finance
Kevin Sexton	IT
Michelle Clark	IT
Isabelle Harris	CE
Carl Hummel	Personnel
Rustan Petrela	WEP
SHANNON MANN	WBP
LISA CANSIGLIO	WBP
Phil Britt	Comptrollers
MATT HOWARD	Asm - ONCENTER

