



# Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA  
Clerk

DAVID H. KNAPP  
Chairman

MELANIE VILARDI  
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York  
13202 Phone: 315.435.2070 • Fax: 315.435.8434 • [www.ongov.net/legislature](http://www.ongov.net/legislature)

## COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2021 DEBRA J. CODY, CHAIR

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mrs. Tassone, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Bush, Mrs. Ervin

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Chairman Knapp, also see attached

Chair Cody called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m. *A motion was made by Mrs. Ervin, seconded by Mrs. Tassone, to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the previous committee meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

1. **ONONDAGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:** Brian Donnelly, Deputy County Executive
  - a. **Confirming Reappointments by the County Executive to the Onondaga County Public Library Board of Trustees (Timothy Mulvey, Edward Kochian)**

Mr. Donnelly:

- Reappointments to the Library Board, both existing members
- Tim Mulvey currently with State Attorney General's Office; Ed Kochian longtime proponent for the Library's former Deputy County Executive, both up for reappointment, terms will end in December 2026

*A motion was made by Mrs. Ervin, seconded by Mr. Bush, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

2. **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT:** Archie Wixson, Commissioner
  - a. **Authorizing an Agreement with the City of Syracuse Relating to the Use of the City Fuel Facility at the City's Department of Public Works by Onondaga County Vehicles**

- Resolution for new contract for City of Syracuse for Onondaga County Vehicles to be able to fuel at their fueling station
- Mechanism to pay the fuel charges for those vehicles fueling, any county vehicles
- Done in the past, every 3 years have to do this, comes with a one year contract with two renewals; expired a few weeks ago, need to get this back into place again
- Approval from City of Syracuse, Common Council and Mayor to have this resolution approved

Chair Cody stated that this has been going on for a while, and Mr. Wixson commented every three years.

Mr. Bush asked if there were any financials that would indicate what the county has paid the city for upkeep, repairs, or renovations of their fueling station (part of the contract). Mr. Wixson replied there is a small fee attached to the contract used for upgrades to their facility. Two and half years ago they upgraded their metering technology and billing technology including a hardware/software package. Mr. Wixson said he has been told the city was using those funds for facility improvements. Management Budget has passed information on that.

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

**b. Amending the 2021 County Budget to Accept Revenues from the New York State Unified Court System and City of Syracuse to Replace Funds Expended for Certain Facility Projects (\$641,149)**

Mr. Wixson:

- Resolution for Facilities to receive funds for the interest paid on projects, both courts and SPD projects
- This accepts funds which can be put back into the Capital account, where initially taken from
- Part of 5 year contract with NYS Unified Court System; they can request projects from county; Facilities' gives them estimates and project information on what that will cost; once they approve, move forward
- Following year get reimbursed for expenses; couple years ago renovated 2 court rooms at \$586,000, they paid; funds put back into capital account for the next project
- Had situation with Crime Analysis Center at PSB; renovated area on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of PSB to accommodate their new Crime Analysis Center, which is part of their involvement with DCGS
- Combined effort with County Facilities, DA, Syracuse Police Department, State Police Department
- State Police shared the cost, provided furniture, carpeting, and some technology equipment; county did not front any money, but had to front money to perform construction
- Facilities had to share cost; balance share for the City Police Department was \$65,000; what they committed to
- Instead of putting on the abstract, they used grant funds, city funds; they sent a check; going into same account to replenish for other projects

*A motion was made by Mrs. Ervin, seconded by Mr. Bush, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

**3. PARKS AND RECREATION:**

**a. Amending the 2022 County Budget to Make Funds Available for the Construction of an Aquarium (\$30,434,751)**

Ms. Primo summarized the benefits of this project to the community:

**“Aquariums have a strong track record of being catalysts for economic and community development”**  
ConsultEcon 2021 Onondaga County Feasibility Study

- Generate substantial new economic activity (\$51.9 million annually)  
(Economic Impact of Construction Period \$63.2M)
- Expand employment opportunities with hundreds of new jobs (423)  
(Direct and Indirect Construction Jobs = 274)
- Grow tourism economy
- Catalyze Inner Harbor revitalization and private real estate investment (project over \$200M of private investment)
- Create new fiscal revenues
- Enhance Onondaga County brand
- Provide new educational opportunities
- Enhance quality of life

Facilities Committee 12/14/21 1

Ms. Kuhn asked if the feasibility study will be placed online at any point. Ms. Primo stated yes, it will be online today. Ms. Kuhn said people will have some time to go through it, therefore, they will need more time. Ms. Kuhn stated that recently WEP talked about a project bid out for \$15.5 million, but because of cost overrides, supply chain issues, and getting experienced workers, they need another \$7 million. Does the \$85 million for the total project take into consideration the problems that people are having now with supply chain and costs related to that? Ms. Primo replied that they received these numbers in October, and they are 2021 numbers, so yes. Ms.

Kuhn stated that the county's unemployment rate is low now, and people are having trouble filling jobs. How does that relate to the job numbers that Ms. Primo is projecting? Ms. Primo replied that these jobs would not be filled for over 2 years from now. Ms. Kuhn asked if they are construction jobs. Ms. Primo answered no, if funded today, the construction would not start for another year. Ms. Kuhn asked if the environmental study had been done yet, and Ms. Primo replied no, it will be done with the engineering and design. Ms. Kuhn asked Ms. Primo if the money she is asking for today is for engineering and design. Ms. Primo replied yes. Ms. Kuhn said the projection for attendance is about 500,000, which comes out to about 1,600 people per day for 365 days a year. She asked for clarification on how that is a reasonable number. Ms. Primo stated that they will be open almost every day of the year with the exception of some holidays. Weekends will be higher attendance and weekdays lower. They will have students attend during the week. Also, summers will be busier, and winters will be lighter. Chairman Knapp asked how many folks the zoo gets annually. Mr. Fox replied about 340,000 – 350,000 people a year. If there is a new exhibit, it can go up to 370,000 – 380,000. Chairman Knapp said they are almost there. Mrs. Ervin said she was asked by someone why the county is not doing a fresh water aquarium. Mr. Bottar replied that they have not started the design process yet. The discussions had over the past few months include a combination of fresh water exhibits and salt-water exhibits. He referenced the Tennessee aquarium's original design, which was primarily a fresh water aquarium featuring species from around the world. What the industry says is there are other successful aquariums around the world. Including salt-water exhibits is part of the formula. He would anticipate fresh water exhibits. Fresh water is far more engaging and part of this design.

Ms. Kuhn asked what the entrance fee is for the zoo for adults and children. Mr. Fox replied it is \$9.50 for adults and \$6.50 for children. Ms. Kuhn asked what the entrance fee for the aquarium for adults and children will be. Mr. Fox replied that they are not completely decided on that, but somewhere in the vicinity of \$21.00 per person for an adult, and it would go down from there. Like many facilities including the zoo, when it is going to be slower, they do half price for everyone. Same method for the aquarium. Mr. Bottar said it is important to know that the consultant looked at ticket pricing for other kinds of attractions (i.e. ballgame, amphitheater), and they are very familiar with going rates in this community. \$21.00 is a hefty price tag, but based on other attractions, it would clearly indicate the county would be able to achieve the same level of pricing in a brand new facility.

Ms. Kuhn asked if they are familiar with the Atlantic magazine of 2019, where they talk about issues of sustainability of fish, and what is going on in the oceans and lakes with fish dying. Mr. Fox said he is very familiar with it and has spoken to those folks. Their mistakes are obvious, and they have discussed it. As far as wild fish, there are lists that zoos and aquariums use for what species are to be harvested. With technology, they learn more about reproducing species. If the aquarium moves forward, Mr. Fox said they would start conversations now about what they would want in terms of species.

Chair Cody stated that this resolution will be presented again as an informational item tomorrow on the Planning & Economic Development Committee. She said they are not ready to take a vote on this today. Ms. Kuhn asked if there will be a vote on the committee tomorrow. Chair Cody said she does know, as it is up to Legislator Holmquist. Anybody that would like to attend that committee is welcome to do that. Mr. Bush asked if Chair Cody can give him the precedence of which committee will vote on this first. Mr. Bush said Chair Cody is passing it off to another committee to act on it, where this committee is not going to act on this proposed resolution. Mr. Bush asked if that is what she is doing. Chair Cody said there are many times that the Legislature does this. The committee considers an item, and because it falls into multiple committees purview, each committee will look at it. Depending on some factors, it may go to Ways and Means to be voted on. Ways and Means would be the final committee to vote on it. Mr. Bush stated the following committee will not have a sense of what this committee feels towards this resolution if there is no action taken today. Ms. Velasco commented that this does not have to be voted on. It just has to be considered. They can look at the minutes and see how this committee had conversation. Ms. Kuhn said she does not understand why there is a problem with having a vote. Chairman Knapp said that it is up to the chairperson. Chair Cody said she knows Ms. Kuhn is waiting for the feasibility study to be put online, and she is still hearing from constituents. Chair Cody is not sure the committee is ready to vote on this. Ms. Kuhn said she respects Chair Cody's decision. The reason she would vote no today is because there is not enough time for this community to see the feasibility study. Chair Cody replied she thinks that is fair.

The more information the better.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

### ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE

DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2021

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Ted Fox	Parks - Zoo
DAVID BOWEN	CMF RPD/B
Bri Kelly	Parks
Dan Kwashnuk	Soc PA
MB Penco	CE
Tenisha Murphy	CE office
Brian Donnelly	CE office
Tara Vendetti	Mgmt. + Budget
Yvette Velasco	Law
Isabelle Harris	CE office