



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

TIMOTHY T. BURTIS
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 20, 2024 JULIE ABBOTT, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Kelly, Ms. Cody, Mr. Romeo, Mr. Brown

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Mr. Garland, also see attached list

Chair Abbott called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. ONONDAGA COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY: Jeff Brown, Executive Director

a. Confirming Reappointments to the Onondaga County Water Authority (Anthony Geiss, Jr., Benedicte Doran, Kenneth Gardiner) (*Sponsored by Mr. Burtis*)

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Are these paid positions?
 - Pay is \$3,300 per year
 - This is the only paid Board
- May be worth considering an increase
- Mr. Gardiner is Chair

A motion was made by Ms. Cody, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

b. Authorize a Public Hearing to Consider Recommendations of the Metropolitan Water Board to Amend the Currently Effective Schedule of Rates to be Charged for Water and Water Service Provided by the Onondaga County Water District (April 2, 2024 at 12:55 p.m.)

- OCWA buys water from the City of Syracuse on the southern portion of system (feeds Nedrow, Lafayette, etc.)
 - Southern rate has increased by approximately 135% since 2015
 - 3 times as much as northern portion
- City of Syracuse buys water from OCWA in northern portion of system (7th North Street)
 - Northern rate is \$1.27 per thousand gallons
 - Rate has not changed since 2015
 - Current rate does not cover the cost of providing water
 - Propose to increase the rate to be the same as the southern portion
- Explained rate differences to City officials
 - City officials understood and did not contest
- A rate increase to City of Syracuse will not be an immediate increase to city residents
 - Will be several years before increase has impact on city
 - Currently have hundreds of millions of gallons in water bank

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Please explain Metropolitan Water Board's (MWB) role and how that feeds into OCWA
 - Additional water source was needed in the 1960's; options were:

- Otisco Lake (which was OCWA’s water source)
 - Lake Ontario
 - Oneida Lake
 - Seneca River
 - Lake Ontario was the best option
 - 25 mile traverse from where water is received
 - County MWB was a wholesaler of water and operated the system
 - MWB sold water to OCWA; OCWA retailed it out
 - 2016-2017 MWB and OCWA merged
 - OCWA runs wholesale and retail system
 - The only reason MWB is still in existence is to set the rate
- Is the surplus water drawn from Skaneateles Lake?
 - 3% of system comes from Skaneateles Lake
 - OCWA pays the city for that water
 - How does the city have the bank?
 - At one time MWB operated the southern part of system
 - Instead of paying the city, it was agreed that OCWA would bank the water
 - When taken over, OCWA was required to pay for the water
 - When OCWA took over, the bank stayed there and the city draws off of that?
 - Yes, when needed for the northern part of the system
 - How much per year does city draw from the bank?
 - City is committed to \$50,000 for entire year
 - Anything more is taken from the bank; amount varies
 - If there was a major event, is there ability for the City of Syracuse to draw from Lake Ontario?
 - If there is a major event, OCWA is required to provide up to 10M gallons per day to the City of Syracuse
 - The City of Syracuse would need improvements to their system in order to accept that much

A motion was made by Mr. Brown, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

2. OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT: Jesse McMahon, Director

a. Amending the 2024 Onondaga County Budget to Accept Grant Funds from the New York State Department of State Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the Update of the Otisco Lake Watershed Management Plan (\$60,000)

PURPOSE: *The funding received from this grant is to update the Otisco Lake Watershed Management Plan.*

OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN:

In 2014, Onondaga County was the recipient of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Grant (LWRG) to create a Watershed Management Plan. The County, working with the Otisco Lake Preservation Association (OLPA) and CNY Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB) feel that the new focus on invasive species and recreation call for an update to this plan. An updated plan would help identify target areas around the Otisco Lake Watershed, and help focus action items and recommendations for future funding efforts. Partners from the 2014 plan included Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, Onondaga County Health Department, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. For this update, we would like to include the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County Water Authority. Updating the 2014 Plan is endorsed by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and would be less comprehensive and time consuming than a 9 Element Plan.

The LWRG Grant has been awarded for \$60,000, requiring a local match of 25%. The match was included in the Office of Environment's approved 2024 budget. CNYRPDB will be leading the plan's revision and implementing this grant.

FUNDING SOURCE:

New York State, through the Department of Department of State Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for \$60,000.

- This is a budget amendment to accept grant money from New York State for Otisco Lake
- Onondaga County will provide Otisco Lake with \$250,000 through the Blueways Fund
- Two studies have been done
 - Watershed Management Plan published in 2014
 - Drinking Water Plan done recently
- An updated Watershed Management Plan and current Drinking Water Plan is enough to qualify for funding
 - Do not feel a 9 Element Plan is necessary
- \$60,000 grant comes with \$15,000 local match
- Will be looking at existing Plan to see what has been done and what can carry over
- The same people will be involved with the updated Plan

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Fish cannot live and breathe in parts of Otisco Lake
- OLPA is all volunteer
- Who has the authority to implement the plan?
 - Use money to put the Plan into action
 - May need to contract with soil and water for bank stabilization
 - May need to hire private firm to treat invasive species
 - OLPA purchased a harvester to do some of the work themselves
- Currently bidding for potential weed management spraying; permitting required

Request: Field trip to Otisco Lake over the summer

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

3. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION: Shannon Harty, Commissioner

a. 2023 Transfer Resolution (\$145,000)

***Purpose:** WEP is seeking to transfer funds from professional services account to implement a cloud-based software program to improve and streamline WEP's management of inspection, permitting and licensing processes in Divisions which have direct interaction with third-party/public users. A transfer of funds is requested in order to use surplus in WEP's professional services account in the amount of \$145,000.*

***Summary:** The immediate implementation will include the Department's Plumbing Control, Industrial Pretreatment and Collection System Division(s). WEP administers a plumbing permitting and inspection program (code enforcement), via the issuance of installation permits, inspections, code violation investigations, and registration of licensed plumbing professionals who have obtained Master and Journeyman certificates under the purview of the Onondaga County Examining Board for Plumbers.*

With regards to the Industrial Pretreatment and Collection Systems Divisions, under authority of the Onondaga County Administrative Code, WEP established Rules and Regulations relating to the Use of the Public Sewer System and issues permits for discharge of stormwater, well water, ground water, cooling water, unpolluted water, industrial wastewater, sewage, and other wastewater into the County sewer system. Procedures for receiving, reviewing, and issuing determinations are in large part completed on paper forms. WEP is seeking to implement the cloud-based software to

streamline workflows which will lead to faster approval and reduced processing times. Additional benefits include accessibility for field staff performing inspections; automation to some tasks to reduce errors and ensure consistency, improved data analysis, a better customer experience, improved historical record keeping/access, and a digital process which allows for overall better documentation of procedures and task tracking, which ensures accountability and compliance requirements.

Fiscal Impact: \$0 net effect

- Funds will support a new digital interface called OpenGov
 - Kicking off software program with Plumbing Control Division
 - Smaller functions will follow
 - Other municipalities are using OpenGov with success
 - Will allow 24/7 business for Plumbing Control
 - Software will increase efficiency and allow workflow tracking

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Is there a cost savings?
 - Savings will be the ability to reduce delays in workflow and manage paperwork in a more efficient way
 - Hand held devices will allow communication in real time rather than paper
- How long will it take to roll out?
 - Hoping to have Plumbing Control online by the end of May 2024
- Is OpenGov cross-departmental or only WEP?
 - It can cross over to other departments but currently only within WEP
 - WEP will be using it for:
 - Plumbing Control Division
 - Industrial Permit Division
 - Sewer Maintenance teams
 - Eventually for house call requests, public complaints
 - Potentially for internal workflow
- As use is expanded, will that effect staffing needs?
- Will there be more emphasis on the IT side?
 - Do not foresee increased need for IT staff
 - IT support comes from vendor
 - Will use the program to measure workloads and determine where staffing and training needs are
- OpenGov is the host and WEP is using the platform
- Will OpenGov train employees?
 - Initial training and set up will be provided by vendor
 - Training videos will be provided for future employees
- Does WEP have full access to data?
- If contract ends, who has data ownership?
 - WEP retains ownership of data and record files if ever a new platform is needed

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

- b. Authorizing the County Executive to Enter into a Utility Work Agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation for Highway and Bridge Improvements**
- c. Authorizing the County Executive to Enter into a Utility Work Agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation for Highway and Bridge Improvements**

- Will talk about item 3b and 3c together
- Work is part of the Route 81 project; process started in 2023
- HC-140 contract states that NYS can make changes to county infrastructure at no charge to county
- Contract 1 was for the northern 81/481 interchange
- Contract 2 and 3 had no work that required an HC-140
- Contract 4 in item 3b is requesting to install a manhole and making other minor manhole changes
- Contract 5 in item 3c is requesting relocation of 48” trunk sewer and manholes near East Colvin Street off ramp

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Is the county involved in the direction of the sewer?
 - WEP, NYS and DEC have been involved in designing, reviewing and approving prior to presenting to Legislature

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to approve items 3b and 3c. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

d. Authorizing the Purchase of a Permanent Easement from WES-MA Farms, LLC for the White Pine/Route 31 Sewer Expansion Project

e. Authorizing the Acceptance of a Permanent Easement from Micron New York Semiconductor Manufacturing, LLC for the White Pine/Route 31 Sewer Expansion Project

- Route 31/Caughdenoy Road pump station will extend Oak Orchard service area
- The connecting force main to Oak Orchard predominantly follows a county or town right of way
- Have been negotiating with property owners to purchase rights to use 2 small sections of land
 - Item 3d WES-MA Farms; .65 acre easement at \$3,241
 - Item 3e Micron property; .5 acre easement donated to Onondaga County
- Will present additional easement purchase from National Grid when negotiations are complete

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Cody, to approve this items 3d and 3e. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Barber

TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE
DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2024

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
<i>Kristi Smiley</i>	<i>Finance</i>
<i>Ben Yaus</i>	<i>Law</i>
<i>Jesse McMathen</i>	<i>Env.</i>
<i>SHANNAN HARTY</i>	<i>COOPER</i>
<i>Jeff Brown</i>	<i>OCWA</i>
<i>Joe Frateschi</i>	<i>Legal Counsel</i>
<i>Jim Beebe</i>	<i>Leg</i>
<i>Darvie Lesniak</i>	<i> </i>
<i>John Desantis</i>	<i> </i>