



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**TIMOTHY T. BURTIS**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

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## WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – JUNE 25, 2024 COLLEEN A. GUNNIP, CHAIR

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. May, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Romeo, \*Mr. Ryan, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Garland

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Chairman Burtis, Ms. Cody, Mr. McCarron, Mr. Brown; also see attached

Chair Gunnip called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

### 1. COUNTY LEGISLATURE:

- a. **Confirming the Appointment to the Board of Directors of the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (Maurice Brown) (Sponsored by Mr. Burtis)**

Mr. Ryan requested to be a cosponsor.

*A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

### 2. TRANSPORTATION: Martin Voss, Commissioner

- a. **Amending the 2024 Onondaga County Budget to Accept \$12,477 in Additional Chips Funding from the New York State Department of Transportation and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$12,477) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)**

***Purpose:** This legislation will authorize the County to accept \$12,477 in additional Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funding as approved by the New York State legislature. The formula for CHIPS in the 2024-25 SFY included an increase to the CHIPS allotment that the Onondaga County Department of Transportation annually receives.*

***Summary:** The \$12,477 in additional CHIPS funding will be applied to Hot Mix and Cold Mix paving, and Bituminous Surface Treatment programs of the Onondaga County Department of Transportation's 2024 work plan.*

***Fiscal Impact:** The 2024 budget will be adjusted to accept these funds and to create a capital project account for use in 2024.*

*A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. May, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

- b. **Amending the 2024 Onondaga County Budget to Accept \$1,167,993 in Extreme Winter Recovery Funding from the New York State Department of Transportation and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$1,167,993) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)**

***Purpose:** This legislation will authorize the County to accept \$1,167,993 in Extreme Weather Recovery (EWR) funding from the New York State Department of Transportation as approved by the New York State legislature. EWR funding in effect serves as a one-time increase to the CHIPS allotment that the Onondaga County Department of Transportation annually receives.*

**Summary:** The \$1,167,993 in additional funding will be applied to Hot Mix and Cold Mix paving, and Bituminous Surface Treatment programs of the Onondaga County Department of Transportation's 2024 work plan.

**Fiscal Impact:** The 2024 budget will be adjusted to accept these funds and to create a capital project account for use in 2024.

List of projects on file with the Clerk

**A motion was made by Mr. May, seconded by Mr. Knapp, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.**

- c. Amending the 2024 Onondaga County Budget to Make Funds Available for use in Connection with the New York State Pave-NY Program, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$1,935,049)**  
(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)

**Purpose:** This legislation will authorize the County to accept \$1,935,049 in funds from the 2024-2025 New York State Pave-NY program. The purpose of the Pave-NY program is to improve the physical condition of local roads and help foster regional economic growth.

**Summary:** The \$1,935,049 in additional funding will be applied to Hot Mix and Cold Mix paving, and Bituminous Surface Treatment programs of the Onondaga County Department of Transportation's 2024 work plan.

**Fiscal Impact:** The 2024 budget will be adjusted to accept these funds and to create a capital project account for use in 2024.

List of projects on file with the Clerk

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

- d. Amending the 2024 Onondaga County Budget to Make Funds Available for use in Connection with the New York State Pave-Our-Potholes (POP) Program, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$1,290,033)**  
(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)

**Purpose:** This legislation will authorize the County to accept \$1,290,033 in funds from the 2024-2025 New York State Pave-Our-Potholes (POP) Program. The purpose of the POP program is to assist municipalities with the rehabilitation and reconstruction of local highways and roads.

**Summary:** The \$1,290,033 in additional funding will be applied to Hot Mix and Cold Mix paving, and Bituminous Surface Treatment programs of the Onondaga County Department of Transportation's 2024 work plan.

**Fiscal Impact:** The 2024 budget will be adjusted to accept these funds and to create a capital project account for use in 2024.

List of projects on file with the Clerk

**Questions/Comments from the committee:**

- Is there a list of potholes?
  - Do not let potholes last
  - Program requirements and eligible projects are the same as CHIPS and Pave NY
  - Use these funds for paving projects
  - If there is a pothole, will always try to handle same day

**A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. May, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.**

**3. HEALTH DEPARTMENT:** Dr. Katherine Anderson, Commissioner**a. Authorizing the Onondaga County Health Department to Accept a Gift of Consulting Services (\$53,000) (Sponsored by Dr. Kelly)****PURPOSE:**


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*Receiving a gift in kind of consulting services from ZS Consulting to advance planning for sustainable and maximally effective community health worker (CHW) models to support priority Health Department initiatives.*

**BACKGROUND:**


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*Onondaga County Health Department recognizes the critical need to enhance its community healthcare services and better serve its diverse population. To address this need, the county is seeking sustainable ways to expand their engagement of community health workers (CHWs), with a particular emphasis on supporting maternal/infant health and the health of refugees and immigrants.*

*As part of this initiative, the county seeks to systematically explore CHW models that have proven successful and sustainable in communities across the county. In doing so, OCHD will develop a CHW model/s that is tailored to the needs of our community and informed by national best practices. This will result in more effective CHW models that will support OCHD's mission of improving access to healthcare, health education, and health equity for all residents.*

*ZS consulting is a management consulting firm that provides strategy, operations and technology services for leading healthcare organizations. They are offering their services to conduct a six week intensive engagement with OCHD to perform: 1) an internal review of local stakeholder perspectives on desired features of CHW models, 2) external reviews and comparisons of CHW models used by other cities, counties, and states, and 3) summative workshops with key local stakeholders to select the optimal model framework/s and next steps. The estimated value of this in-kind professional service is \$53,000.*

**BUDGET IMPACT:** \$0

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***A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. May, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**b. INFORMATIONAL: A Local Law Relating to Certain Fees Collected by the Onondaga County Health Department Bureau of Disease Control (Sponsored by Dr. Kelly)****PURPOSE:**


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*The Bureau of Disease Control is requesting to update the fee schedule to include the cost of private-stock vaccine.*

**BACKGROUND:**


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*To increase efficiencies, all Article 28 operations (public health care facilities that are governed by state law) have been centralized under the Bureau of Disease Control. The BDC now oversees and operates the department's immunization clinics.*

*The Immunization Clinic is mandated to provide immunizations to students (including certain post-secondary students) who cannot pay for or receive their NYS required vaccinations from a health practitioner in the prescribed timeframe. Those vaccines are provided through the NYS Vaccine for Children (VFC) program.*

*New American (NA) arrivals are provided medical-assistance through the Refugee Medical Assistance program. Children with Medicaid qualify for VFC, however, adults with Medicaid (including NA) do not meet the State's guidelines for the Vaccine for Adults (VFA) program.*

*The BDC also provides select vaccines to patients in the Bureau of Disease Control / Sexual Wellness Clinic that is covered by grant programs serving our clients.*

*We propose to follow best practice and establish a fee schedule for private stock vaccine. The expectation is not to become a vaccine provider, but rather as a safety net, be able to recover insurance payments when private stock is needed. The intention of the fee schedule is not to transfer the provision of immunization services costs to patients; this would enable the County to bill insurances (where eligible).*

*A list of vaccines and the current range of fees the County pays for them is attached.*

### **FUNDING / BUDGET IMPACT:**

*None. We are proposing to bill insurances when we provide private stock vaccines.*

- Allows Health Department (OCHD) to effectively bill for private immunization services
- Last couple years, noticed increased need to fill in gaps; not take over primary care services with vaccinating children
- More and more children having trouble getting vaccines they need
- OCHD has to go beyond stock supplied by state and federal government, and look to buy private vaccine stock
- Current law only allows for cost of administering vaccine, not cost of vaccine (cost anywhere between \$10 - \$250)
- Local law would allow OCHD to be able to bill at cost for vaccine and administering costs; not for profit

### **Questions/Comments from the committee:**

- Would this include billing private insurance, as well as Medicaid (or whatever applies)?
  - Yes; Currently have programs: Vaccines for Children and Vaccines for Adults
    - Vaccines for Children is a federal program, where OCHD allowed to give vaccines to children without insurance, who are on Medicaid
    - Vaccines for Adults – adults with Medicaid currently are not allowed to get free-of-cost vaccines through that program, and OCHD is not able to bill their insurance
  - Expanding the law would allow OCHD to bill insurance companies and recoup the costs
- Is there money in the OCHD budget to purchase the vaccines?
  - Yes; looking at projecting how much OCHD would need to purchase going forward
  - Expect to have budget savings to allow buying the vaccines
  - Primary goal to track what the revenue is to know how to anticipate this going forward
- Has OCHD done this program before and were not been able to charge for the vaccine cost?
  - Have been doing programs to provide vaccines to underserved populations in the city for some time
  - Challenge – (i.e.) vaccinating children with private insurance, who cannot get into provider before school – cannot use existing vaccine stock to vaccinate them
  - Challenge – (i.e.) large number of new Americans arriving in the community with Medicaid – do not have program currently to allow to bill insurance for the cost of vaccines
  - Last year and this year, had to branch a bit to providing vaccines to these individuals to fill the gap – have not been able to bill to recoup the costs
- What kind of costs?
  - Several thousand dollars
  - Smaller expansion than likely will have to do
  - Number of new Americans coming and expanded need for childhood immunizations, believe the costs will be higher
- Does the county hold clinics, or do people have to come to the county?
  - Yes; have vaccine clinics couple times a week
  - During back to school season, have them more frequently – very well advertised
  - Individuals can make appointments, or drop in to get vaccines
  - It is located in the basement of Civic Center
  - Making plans to work with state for regulatory clearance and mobile vehicle needed to get out into community and make it easier for people to get the services

***A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**4. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** Shannon Harty, Commissioner**a. Personnel Resolution** (*Sponsored by Ms. Abbott*)

**Purpose:** *The Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection (WEP) is seeking legislative authorization for the creation and funding of a Deputy Commissioner of Administrative Services (WEP). This Deputy Commissioner position will be responsible for the oversight of administrative personnel and human resource processes for the Department – including Employee and Labor Relations (ie. Workplace policies/procedures, complaint and disciplinary investigations and discipline, payroll, employee record keeping), Workforce Development (ie. Recruitment, Hiring, Onboarding, Workplace Safety, Training, and staff development) and Public Communication and Outreach. Executive management of these functions is crucial for aligning organizational goals with talent strategies, ensuring optimal utilization of resources, and fostering employee growth and engagement. The Deputy Commissioner will be responsible for advancing WEP’s Workforce Redevelopment strategy and cultivating a culture of innovation, retention, and adaptability. Effective leadership in this area will also safeguard against legal compliance issues and promote diversity and inclusion, further bolstering Department productivity and reputation.*

*Authorization of appointment up to Step 12 will allow WEP to provide a competitive job offer and salary to attract and retain optimum talent in this competitive job market.*

**Summary:** *A Deputy Commissioner of Administrative Services is needed to provide executive oversight of human resource functions and ensure a cohesive Workforce Redevelopment program throughout the entire department.*

**Fiscal Impact:** *Appointment authorized by this resolution will be funded within the existing 2024 101 budget. There is no fiscal impact to the 2024 Operating Budget.*

- Authorization to create and allow an Advance Step for 4<sup>th</sup> Deputy Commissioner
- Position is critical for overseeing administrative functions – personnel, HR, workforce development branch of WEP
- 3 years ago, started looking at rebuilding WEP program, created Directors including Personnel and Labor Relations, as well as Workforce Development
- Critical thing for Deputy Commissioner is to provide supervision and coordination of those programs to ensure the Directors have support needed to:
  - Build new employees handbooks
  - Create new processes and procedures
  - Workforce development
  - Safety and training
- Lot of new personnel in need of proper personnel support
- Hope to get someone to get workforce development to next level

***A motion was made by Mr. May, seconded by Ms. Abbott, to approve this item. Ayes: 6 Abstentions: 1 (Ryan); MOTION CARRIED.***

**5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Martin Skahen, Director**a. Authorizing the Onondaga County Executive to File the 2024 Action Plan for the Community Development Block Grant, Home Grant and Emergency Solutions Grant Programs (\$3,174,230)** (*Sponsored by Mr. Knapp*)

**PURPOSE:** *Authorize and adopt the 2024 Action Plan which serves as the application to HUD for 3 entitlement grants: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Grant, and Emergency Solutions Grant. The Action Plan has been reviewed and approved by the CD Steering Committee.*

**OBJECTIVE/WORK PLAN:** *To obtain our “base funding” from HUD. The total application amount is \$3,174,230.*

**FUNDING SOURCE:** *Federal funding from the US Department of Housing & Urban Development*

**BUDGET:** *See below*

<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT</b>		<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>% change</b>
County		\$ 1,962,532	\$ 1,957,700	-0.2%
Clay		\$ 303,603	\$ 303,603	0.0%
<b>Total Grant</b>				
		\$ 2,266,135	\$ 2,261,303	-0.2%
<b>Reprogrammed Balances</b>				
<b>Program Income</b>		\$ 107,310	\$ 107,310	0.0%
<b>Total Available</b>		\$ 2,373,445	\$ 2,368,613	-0.2%
	Capital Projects	\$ 815,218	\$ 889,907	
	Housing Rehabilitation	\$ 350,000	\$ 241,445	
	Housing Rehab (Prog Income)	\$ -	\$ -	
	Commercial Rehabilitation	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	
	Rehab Delivery	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000	
	Administration	\$ 453,227	\$ 452,261	
	Housing Counseling	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
	Fair Housing	\$ 50,000	\$ 80,000	
	Homeownership (Prog Income)	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	
	Contingency	\$ -	\$ -	
	<b>Total</b>	\$ 2,373,445	\$ 2,368,613	
<b>CDBG FLOAT LOAN</b>				
<b>Home Ownership Activities</b>				
<b>HOME GRANT</b>				
		\$ 731,487	\$ 633,131	-13.4%
	Housing Rehabilitation	\$ 548,615	\$ 474,848	
	Home Ownership Subsidies	\$ -		
	Non-Profit Housing Activities	\$ 109,723	\$ 94,970	
	Administration	\$ 73,149	\$ 63,313	
	<b>Total</b>	\$ 731,487	\$ 633,131	
<b>EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT</b>				
		\$ 169,584	\$ 172,486	1.7%
	Administration	\$ 12,719	\$ 12,936	
	Projects	\$ 156,865	\$ 159,550	
	<b>Total</b>	\$ 169,584	\$ 172,486	
<b>Grand Total</b>		\$ 3,274,516	\$ 3,174,230	-3.1%

<b>No.</b>	<b>Municipality/Agency</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Req CDBG</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Project Total</b>	<b>Proposed Funding</b>
	Town-Camillus	Camillus Senior Center ADA Restroom Improvement	\$ 50,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 50,000
	Town-Cicero	Skyway Park Accessibility	\$ 50,000	\$ 12,500	\$ 62,500	\$ 50,000
	Town-Clay	Steelway Blvd South repaving	\$ 102,407	\$ 34,136	\$ 136,543	\$ 102,407
	Town-Fabius	Shackham Rd Paving	\$ 50,000	\$ 162,009	\$ 212,009	\$ 50,000
	Town-Geddes	Fay Road Park ADA Accessible Playground/improvements	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 50,000
	Town-Lysander	Bilyeu Ln & Sumac Dr Resurfacing	\$ 50,000	\$ 32,322	\$ 82,322	\$ 50,000

	Town-Onondaga	Kelley Brothers/Anthony Santaro Park Improvements	\$ 50,000	\$ 12,500	\$ 62,500	\$ 50,000
	Town-Salina	Bear Trap Creek Trail Improvements	\$ 50,000	\$ 17,000	\$ 67,000	\$ 50,000
	Town-Van Buren	Canton Woods Senior Center roofing	\$ 50,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 50,000
	Village-Camillus	Road Reconstruction & Paving	\$ 50,000	\$ 27,380	\$ 77,380	\$ 50,000
	Village-Fayetteville	Senior Center Cottage	\$ 37,500	\$ 12,500	\$ 50,000	\$ 37,500
	Village-Jordan	N Hamilton Drainage - Sidewalks & Curbing	\$ 50,000	\$ 16,790	\$ 66,790	\$ 50,000
	Village-Liverpool	Birch & Sixth St Playground Phase 2	\$ 50,000	\$ 39,490	\$ 89,490	\$ 50,000
	Village-Manlius	Run Mill Park Playground	\$ 50,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 50,000
	Village-Minoa	Sidewalk replacement	\$ 50,000	\$ 1,288	\$ 51,288	\$ 50,000
	Village-N Syracuse	Toll Road Park Improvements	\$ 50,000	\$ 12,900	\$ 62,900	\$ 50,000
	Village-Solvay	Charles Ave Park Phase 2	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 50,000
	CCE	Community Forests	\$ 28,707	\$ 11,051	\$ 39,758	\$ -
<b>Municipality Total:</b>			\$ 918,614	\$ 931,866	\$1,850,480	\$ 889,907
<b>Fair Housing</b>						
1	ARISE, Inc	ARISE Housing Referral & Advocacy Program	\$ 8,918	\$ 50,450	\$ 59,368	\$ 5,000
2	CNY Fair Housing, Inc	Fair Housing Education & Enforcement	\$ 50,000	\$ 111,000	\$ 161,000	\$ 80,000
<b>Fair Housing Total:</b>			\$ 58,918	\$ 161,450	\$ 220,368	\$ 85,000
<b>Requested Total</b>			\$ 977,532	\$1,093,316	\$2,070,848	\$ 974,907

- Budget flat this year; Block Grant and Home Grant down a bit, Emergency Solutions up a little bit
- Able to fund all applicants who applied
- Only exception was CCE, which were not funded for 3<sup>rd</sup> year in row
  - Consistently slow spender and not making the program a priority
- Large demand for the money, so need to get it out to those who need it and will spend it

*A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Ms. Abbott, to approve this item.*

**Questions/Comments from the committee:**

- Why were those 2 categories down (grant funds)?
  - These are formula grants called entitlement grants; CD does not apply for them
  - Federal government uses range of factors, which is impossible to figure out why one is up or down
  - Last 4 years it has been flat, but the categories go up and down

A vote was taken on the item. ***Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**b. Amending the 2024 County Budget to Make Surplus Room Occupancy Funding Available for use in Support of a Hotel Initiative (\$4,000,000) (Sponsored by Mr. Knapp)**

*Tourism and convention business have served as a key driver of revenue and growth with respect to the local economy. Key to that success has been an abundance of diverse and quality hotel rooms and meeting spaces. In recent years, we have seen a significant number of hotels come offline and subsequently jeopardize our ability to attract new convention business or accommodate visitors and tourists to the area.*

*Further compounding the issue is the massive influx of people expected as result of the investments being made by Micron at the White Pine Commerce Park. In 2025 another major tourism attraction will be coming online with the Onondaga County Aquarium at the Inner Harbor. We will be hosting a variety of conferences including the New York State County Clerks Association and the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs. These are just a few examples of the clear and immediate need for new, quality hotel rooms in Onondaga County. To incentivize this private sector investment, Onondaga County has created the Onondaga County Hotel Initiative.*

*The Onondaga County Hotel Initiative will be seeded with \$4,000,000 and award grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$750,000 to developers to assist in closing funding gaps in new hotel construction and/or incentivize existing hotels to add rooms to their current hotel stock in Onondaga County. Criteria will be established to grade each proposal including, but not limited to, type of hotel, how quickly it will come online and location.*

*Onondaga County Community Development will operate the Onondaga County Hotel Initiative and funding awards will be made on a rolling basis.*

*Developers will submit documentation showing they have a viable project, financing in place and identify the projects funding gap to proceed. After initial review of the developer's submission, a meeting with the developer and the Onondaga County Hotel Initiative review team will be held. The review team will consist of the Director of Community Development, a representative from the Office of the County Executive, the chair of the Onondaga County Economic Development and Planning Committee of the County Legislature as well as representatives from Visit Syracuse, CenterState CEO and ASM. Developers who are awarded this funding will be notified by Community Development and the disbursement of funds will be determined between the county and the developer.*

*Information on proposed projects to be considered for this funding may be submitted electronically at: [cd@ongov.net](mailto:cd@ongov.net)*

*If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Marty Skahen, Director of Community Development, at [martinskahen@ongov.net](mailto:martinskahen@ongov.net) or 315-435-3558.*

- Convention business key part of Onondaga County's economy – generates ROT and sales tax
- ~2 million room nights booked/year in Onondaga County
- 1 in 11 workers is employed in hospitality industry; regional tourism a \$1B industry generating \$45M in local taxes
- Micron estimates generating 40,000 room nights/year
- 2 big hotels going offline – Sheraton is becoming a dorm; Crown is becoming apartments
- Downtown convention business is losing biggest players
- Hotel initiative is like OCHIP for hotels
- OCHIP very successful, developers grateful for help in trying to close gaps to move projects forward
- Use \$4M ROT funding to close gaps developers face with hotel projects
  - Can be new construction or expansion of hotel rooms
  - This is not remodeling existing rooms
  - It has to add rooms
- Will form hotel review team
  - Will meet with developers to review documents, project scope, funding, and financial difficulties they are facing
  - Committee will then determine the amount of the grant to give to the project ranging from \$50,000 - \$750,000
  - Items for determining funding will be based on:
    - Capital expenditure for the project
    - Number of rooms
    - What the construction timeline is (sooner the better)



- Jobs it will create
- Regional significance
- Need to incentivize developers to get hotels online fast

**Questions/Comments from the committee:**

- Will the committee be used to develop the scoring system to rate applications?
  - Yes, committee will be involved
  - Treat like OCHIP – get a few apps and bring in for meeting
  - Committee will be involved with meeting with developers, hearing about the project and rating projects
  - Will have initial meeting to go over program and explain where CD is at, then ask members
  - People on committee all have different range of knowledge
  - Community Development will show the framework and get feedback from committee
- Is Community Development looking at already existing vacant hotel properties (i.e. Electronics Parkway)?
  - If there is a hotel offline and a developer has a plan for it, they will be eligible for the money
  - That is a huge convention and meeting hotel that is offline
- Will Community Development be initiating the process or recruiting?
- Will it be a high priority for the committee to initiate or seek a developer for a downtown hotel?
  - Anticipate will go like OCHIP, where there are people who have projects that are not working financially
  - Will hear immediately from those trying to do a project and need the money to help
  - Had multiple waves of applications with OCHIP
  - CD will talk up program, but need developers to have plan and come to committee to show why need financial help
- Will the committee be able to come back to Planning for information on progress?
  - Yes
- What is in ROT?
  - Finance
    - \$8.6M after close out of 2023
    - After this it would leave \$4.6M surplus ROT
- Is the project proposed at the Everson lot separate from this initiative?
  - Everson will be put out to RFP
  - Person who would get this project would qualify and could apply for this funding
  - They will have to show in their financial model, where there is a gap, and why they need it

***A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. May, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**6. SHERIFF: Ben Yaus, First Chief Deputy County Attorney**  
**a. Authorizing the Acceptance of an Access and Parking Easement from Jemal's Fayette Park LLC**  
**Regarding 401-415 South State Street** *(Sponsored by Mr. Olson)*

- Sheriff's Administrative building, 420 E. Genesee St. – Pistol Unit
- Building behind it is getting developed into residential apartments (old Boys and Girls Club)
- Its an area where Sheriff's vehicles are parked – 8 spots; front ¼ of vehicles are on private property
- Have had long standing informal arrangement
- One thing holding up development is lack of easement to permit parking and have access from E. Genesee - one way in and out
- Will have access to and from facility and park; as long as current owner is there, will have right to park
- In future do not see getting rid of the vehicles; formalizes agreement

***A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. May, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**7. COUNTY CLERK:** Lynne Walker, Clerk III**a. Mortgage Tax Apportionment**

- Covering October 2023 – March 2024
- Providing apportionments to towns and villages – little over \$4.7M
- Decrease of about 8% from previous year – assumption of interest rates low, bought years ago, and not wanting to sell
- Not a lot of movement on real estate market
- Compared to previous report, April 2023 – September 2023, had 7% decrease

*A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. May, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

**8. OFFICE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:** Monica Williams, Chief Diversity Officer**a. Amending Resolution No. 330-1997 Regarding the Membership of the Onondaga County/Syracuse Commission on Human Rights** (Sponsored by Ms. Hernandez)

- Reducing number of Human Rights Commissioners from 24 down to 13
- HR Commissioners are out in the community and doing the work
- Reason for this resolution is because it is hard to get a quorum for a vote
- Currently have 10 members – County Executive has 3 appointments currently to be appointed
- No one will be removed from the committee
- This was solely about having a quorum for voting items; if there is not quorum, the items are pushed off
- The Commissioners were offered changing meeting times to possibly help, as well as offering to change spaces
  - Currently using Beauchamp Library
  - Space and meeting times were all convenient
  - Do phone calls and emails to the Commissioners, but difficult getting a quorum
- Do have voting items, for instance approval of minutes that they do want to not be able to approve
- Voting items
  - Recommendations to the Executive are voted on
  - Sometimes there is discussion and depending on the discussion, there may be a vote on which way to go
  - Some feel a recommendation is not necessary, but they need to do more work; others feel the opposite
  - Other agenda items like minutes, which they have to have approval for
  - Sometimes vote on particular item in community they want to work on, when there is not a consensus
    - i.e. food deserts

*A motion was made by Ms. Abbott to approve this item.*

- Commission meets monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., and July is the only month they do not meet
- Law
  - Currently an even member board as well, which is hard for tie breakers
  - Legislature has 1 recommendation outstanding, which is an appointment by the entire Legislature
- Currently 2 Executive appointments and 1 Legislature appointment open

*Mr. Garland seconded the motion made by Ms. Abbott. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

**9. FINANCE:** Don Weber, Director of Real Property Tax; Steve Morgan, Chief Financial Officer**a. INFORMATIONAL: A Local Law Opting Out of the Exemption from Taxation for Certain Energy Systems under Real Property Tax Law Section 487**

Mr. Weber presented this resolution.

- In 2017/2018, NYS decided by 2030 to get 70% of energy through renewable sources – big push for solar energy

- NYS enacted property tax exemption for large scale solar farms
- Gave local governments 3 options
  - Do nothing and allow solar farms to be completely tax exempt
  - Let them be exempt, but require developers to make PILOT payments negotiated by local government
  - Eliminate exemption to have them pay taxes
- Seeing many solar farms come through with 29 in the pipeline; not many operational (only getting payments from 1)
- Lot of variation in what the developers are proposing for PILOT payments
  - Start at about \$3,000/mw; NYSERDA was pushing this for local governments to accept
  - Now seeing most recent are close to \$7,000/mw
- 3 years ago, NYS implemented a solar model to help assessors value solar farms (most do not have expertise for this)
  - Solar model was putting out values closer to \$250,000 - \$350,000, when developers were spending \$6M to build
  - Lawsuit and injunction, so assessors could not use solar model for a few years
  - NYS changed the law – solar model is now mandated and has more reasonable values
- County proposing to get away from exemptions and PILOT agreements and use the state solar calculator
- Opt out of exemption applies only to county taxes (not towns, villages or school districts who can choose what to do)
- Negotiating PILOT agreements has been one of the hardest things
  - 3 sets of lawyers (county, town, school and/or village) coming up with separate PILOT agreements for same property
  - Billing and collecting also problematic
- i.e. Camillus property proposing 2.5mw solar farm – want to pay \$4,000/mw which is \$10,000/year
  - Put project in solar calculator and that property would pay closer to \$20,000/year in taxes
- Landowner still paying taxes on the land, the solar on top of land is what would be exempt
  
- Law
  - Becoming more prevalent with more requests
  - Trying to get town, village and school together and justify a less than reasonable rate
  - Cannot go above original taxation amount; taking substantial amount of time

#### **Questions/Comments from the committee:**

- Are these companies already getting state and federal subsidies?
  - Finance
    - Yes, they are receiving large state and federal tax credits, then asking local property taxpayers to subsidize them even farther
  - Law
    - Companies are getting far into process before reaching out to county indicating they might be economically feasible without the county (how late the county is brought in for critical PILOT payment)
    - Not sure how much incentive the PILOT payments are making
  - Finance
    - Getting lowest percentage
    - What companies are paying is in total (proposing \$3K - \$4K/mw) – county only getting 12-15% of it
    - It is based on proportion of tax rates
    - County brought in at the end, when companies already agreed on a number with town, village or school attorney
- From the county perspective, does the net result make the project a little more expensive?
  - Finance
    - Yes, at end of day, the solar farms are financial instruments
    - These are downstate developers looking to achieve a right of return over 20 years
    - How much can they recoup in the life of the panels
    - The solar pieces are not owned by the property owners, the land is leased
- The more continuity among municipalities across the state on how this is done, the less disadvantaged local municipalities will be within the process
  - Law
    - People will see the county opted out – they can then use solar calculator to build into development equation
    - Does not help construction costs, but the yearly rental value, lease payment, and how much to pay in taxes
    - Gives companies more information up front (versus swing in PILOT payment)

- It will be whatever the solar PILOT says multiplied by 11% county tax rate – calculates yearly payment
    - Have list of 21 counties that have opted out (i.e. Niagara, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Clinton, Montgomery)
  - Finance
    - 4 towns and 8 school districts within the county have opted out
- Was the original intent to incentivize solar and give tax breaks to incentivize companies to build solar farms?
  - Finance
    - Yes, NYS did (incentivized)
- Would this disincentivize people to do this?
  - Finance
    - Potentially
    - Under prior County Executive, decision made to be exempt and not require PILOT payments
    - Started requiring PILOT payments
    - Last year made intention clear with resolution; developers know county would always require a PILOT payment
    - Currently inundated with solar projects, and Finance is administering PILOT process they are not set up to do
    - Working with Law Department, and on the same page of disallowing the exemption
- Would this clarify the solar formula?
  - Finance
    - The company will get a tax bill from the county instead of making a PILOT payment
    - Assessment is determined by the solar calculator
    - Every year it will change – assessors yearly will plug number into solar calculator
    - There will be degradation of solar panels over time and assessment will go down until they swap out panels
    - There are quite a bit of state tax credits for developers outside of this – quite a bit of money
- Is this just solar, or does it apply to wind?
  - Finance
    - Wind and anaerobic energy systems, but there are none in the county; but would apply to those
  - Law
    - Would be opting out of wind as well
- What kind of financial impact does the county expect to have?
  - Finance
    - Will vary project to project
    - Anything in the works now would fall under old parameters (will not change current PILOT payments in place)
    - This will be new projects coming online after adoption of this local law
- Do the current PILOTs have an expiration?
  - Law
    - Yes, 15 year PILOTs
  - Finance
    - Oldest one is from 2017
- Is there any discussion of earmarking the additional revenue for a similar incentivizing program for alternative energy sources?
  - Finance
    - No, because it is property tax revenue; increasing tax base by doing this
    - Will add to tax base, which theoretically will lower tax rate for everyone else
    - Revenue driven by this will not be significant, especially with lion's share in PILOT program
- Solar farm developers are getting state and federal funding, but with local governments, they were waiting to apply for exemptions; are these developers waiting because they do not expect to pay?
  - Finance
    - PILOT comes after as property tax exemption; it is not helping get the project off the ground
    - Going first to town for permits and zoning, then may not realize they have to go to county – bringing in later and asking if the county is okay after the town agrees on PILOT

\*Mr. Ryan left the meeting.

- Suggestion to use the revenue to help homeowners reduce costs associated with energy by using alternative forms of energy; county is still benefiting from those alternative energies
- Not giving tax break to people spending money on solar farm but homeowners needing assistance
  - Finance
    - Will think about it, and it will lower the tax rate; not separate revenue stream generated by this
    - This is to clean up the administrative process
- The reason the landowners (mostly farmers) are moving towards solar farms is because the state and federal government are raising the costs for them to do business
- Costs to landowners/farmers has raised exponentially
- It forces landowners/farmers to go in this direction, which takes viable farmland out of production

**b. INFORMATIONAL: 2023 Review & 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Forecast**

Mr. Morgan presented the following information:

ONONDAGA COUNTY

2024 First Quarter Indicators

## Key Economic and Fiscal

**Inside this issue:**

Indicator	Period	2024	2023
Unemployment Rate: Onondaga County	Q1	4.0%	3.5%
Employed Persons by Month (in 000's): Onondaga County	Q1	213.40	223.80
Employed Persons yr-over-yr (in 000's): Onondaga County	Q1	0.6	5.0
Overall Consumer Confidence: New York State	Q1	76.9	75.0
Consumer Price Index (all items) - Inflation Rate	Q1	3.2%	5.8%
Weighted Average County Interest Rate	Q1	3.7%	2.1%
Reconciled Quarterly Sales Tax Collections % Chg CYTD	Q1	1.7%	7.2%
Auto Sales CYTD: Onondaga County	Q1	5,975	5,796
Gasoline Prices per gallon paid by Onondaga County	Q1	\$2.70	\$2.93
Retail Gasoline Prices per gallon in Upstate NY	Q1	\$3.30	\$3.47
Onondaga County Clerk Fees CYTD	Q1	\$524,537	\$509,485
Lis Pendens CYTD	Q1	341	339
Existing Home Sales CYTD: Onondaga County	Q1	636	584

Average Median Home Price YTD: Onondaga County	Q1	\$259,391	\$246,400
Onondaga County Filled Positions	June	3,044	2,953
Average Monthly Public Assistance Caseloads YTD	Q1	5,239	4,685
Average Monthly Medicaid Caseloads YTD	Q1	36,335	41,003

CYTD = Cumulative Year-to-Date (January - Period listed)

\*February data for Public Assistance was pulled from WMS to account for error in usual report’s data

**Economic Indicators (January – March)**

- Used to gauge what the economy is doing and what it will do
- Reconciled quarterly sales tax collections – huge difference between last year 1<sup>st</sup> quarter at 7.2% and 2024 at 1.7%
  - Payments through May will bring to ~3%
  - Starting to see sales tax come back to reality this year
- Public Assistance Caseloads
  - Bump first quarter last year versus this year
  - Still have pandemic era benefits out there coming to an end
  - Will see more and more pressure on Safety Net programs

**2024 First Quarter Forecast**

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Modified	2024 Dpt_Projected
<b>Revenues</b>				
Property Tax Levy	156,449,957	155,415,437	146,225,244	146,225,244
Deferred/Uncollectible	(7,865,128)	(11,046,649)	(13,460,442)	(13,460,442)
Prior Year Collections	9,973,366	8,822,004	11,418,733	11,418,733
Pilots/Interest & Penalties	9,718,058	9,320,495	9,499,790	9,499,790
Room Occupancy Tax	4,466,508	5,871,508	9,400,808	9,400,808
Abstract Charges	11,053,758	13,117,066	14,752,089	14,752,089
Sales Tax - County Portion	339,835,896	362,854,751	350,785,566	370,338,620
Sales Tax - Municipalities/School Portion	114,166,298	121,956,847	116,928,522	123,613,725
State Aid	93,448,222	99,449,205	111,820,865	110,899,220
Federal Aid	91,921,079	103,070,787	106,172,258	112,245,245
Interdepartmentals	54,199,132	56,175,485	60,390,267	60,031,797
Project Fund Close-Outs	0	0	0	0
All Other	36,058,486	50,884,862	38,591,820	43,802,965
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>913,425,631</b>	<b>975,891,797</b>	<b>962,525,520</b>	<b>998,767,794</b>
<b>Appropriations</b>				
Mandated Programs	238,035,738	280,535,430	299,013,904	303,452,900
Wages	162,837,646	168,344,108	187,218,771	185,585,746
Benefits	72,810,614	76,228,352	88,075,270	88,075,270
Contracted Services	66,516,458	72,377,978	78,670,280	78,054,224
Interfund Transfers	77,804,788	123,711,826	76,308,470	76,231,423
Debt Service	17,918,889	19,027,668	17,540,188	17,540,188

Sales Tax - Municipalities/School Portion	114,166,298	121,956,847	116,928,522	123,613,725
Interdepartmentals	48,386,980	51,394,483	53,265,604	53,198,887
All Other	125,950,571	39,192,893	46,859,811	46,276,167
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>924,427,982</b>	<b>952,769,584</b>	<b>963,880,819</b>	<b>972,028,529</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>				
Fund Balance	0	0	100,000	100,000
Carryover Fund Balance	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
Local Dollars	11,002,351	(23,122,214)	1,255,299	(26,839,265)

### 2023 - Revenues

- Ended 2023 with \$23M bottom line surplus
  - Includes \$30M appropriated fund balance approved by Legislature for various initiatives for Plan Onondaga
  - True operating surplus in General Fund was \$53M
  - After appropriating the \$30M, it dropped to \$23M
- Main Drivers for surplus
  - Sales tax continues to outperform expectations
    - Ended 2023 with 6.7% growth in sales tax
    - Anticipated growth of 2% current year and another 1%
    - Drove \$30M of the \$53M surplus
  - Interest and Earnings on Investments
    - Current market conditions are such that Finance has never seen
    - Average interest rate of 3.7%, but misleading - have money tied up in investments well over 5%
    - Using cash balance to fund government
    - Produced almost \$10M surplus over anticipated in 2023

### 2023 - Appropriations

- Salary and Wages – source of savings in 2023
  - Limitations on being able to fill positions
  - Had success with HELP program, along with Executive’s proposal of upgrading positions
  - 100 positions more filled over last year
  - ~3,000 person workforce will always be in process of filling positions
  - Forecasting closer to salary budget with success in filling positions
- Sewer fund
  - \$2M surplus
  - Spending was main driver – inability to fill positions
  - Creating traction with upgrades and advance steps
  - Sewer fund balance at \$35M
  - Infrastructure improvements to be made as development occurs will put pressure on Sewer Fund
  - Will need strategy of rate adjustments, fund balance use, reserve for bonded debt use, and control of expenditures
  - Mixed strategy in ensuring providing infrastructure needs to projects in pipeline and be fair to rate payer
- Total governmental fund balance at \$577M
  - All-time high for county
  - Grew \$81M from 2022
- Total government funds cash position is \$541M

### 2024 Projection

- Projecting ~\$27M surplus this year
  - All surplus driven by revenue – same as explained with 2023 results

- Sales tax
  - Projecting \$20M county share using 2% this year
  - First quarter 1.7% growth, and currently at 3%
  - Ending in 2023 put county in strong position to meet and exceed this year’s budget
- \$5M projected surplus in Earnings on Investments
- Concerning areas
  - Foster Care
    - Continues to put enormous pressure on budget and statewide as well
    - Product of pandemic and changes at federal level
    - Push to use Kin Care (family)
      - Previously families would take in relatives, but not become certified foster homes
      - Push to make them certified foster homes, resulting in county paying them
      - Good thing for child and family, but costs more money
    - Do not control the rates paid – state has increased rates last few cycles
    - Have consultant to look at program – should have more detail when CFS comes over to present budget
    - Hopefully will have strategies for investing in interventions where the county has some control
  - Daycare
    - No local dollar impact with state and federal funds
    - Projected from gross perspective to be over by \$6.5M
    - Positive – all funded by federal and state money
    - Federal and state government made huge push with affordable childcare being a priority
    - Program has been modified in terms of eligibility requirements, paying absences and opening door for more families to access affordable daycare
    - County Executive capital program to help centers to make improvements to capital structure
    - Attention and money has gone to this space; will continue to see this grow
    - Required by state to have local maintenance effort; have been budgeting for
    - May have to make decision to increase local kick
    - Do not expect dollars to continue to flow in as they have
- Wages
  - Still projecting surplus in wages
  - Currently have ~3,044 filled positions
  - In process of filling another 160 positions
  - Some 24/7 operations and human services are racking up overtime due to vacant positions
  - Hope to rebalance this with progress on filling positions
  - CFS has benefited from upgrade to Caseworker title and the HELP program
    - Takes 18 months – 2 years before sending new Caseworker in to help
  - Will continue to use mix of overtime and temporary salaries to make it work

Fund Balance Analysis

2023 Revenue	\$ 975,891,797
Less: Sales Tax Pass Through	(121,548,410)
Less: Interdepartmental Revenue	(56,175,485)
Total Revenue for Fund Balance Calculation	\$ 798,167,902
Current Fund Balance Goal 15%	\$ 119,725,185
Unreserved Fund Balance 12/31/22	\$ 190,069,831
<b>Appropriated in 2023</b>	
2023 Surplus/(Deficit)	23,121,884



Unreserved Fund Balance - 12/31/23	\$ 213,191,715
Less: Encumbrances	(1,222,691)
Appropriated in 2024	<u>100,000</u>
Unassigned Fund Balance - Estimated	\$ 212,069,024
Amount of Fund Balance as a %	26.6%
Amount of Fund Balance over (under) 15% Goal	\$ 92,343,838

- Current fund balance 15% goal is \$119M
- Fund balance at end of 2022 at \$190M, then factor in 2023 surplus of \$23M = \$213M fund balance
- Finances have never been stronger

#### Questions/Comments from the committee:

- What rate is the county at for borrowing?
  - Will not know until go out to market
  - Schedule to sell bonds in October; hoping for rate cuts
  - Bonds issued last year in low 3s; previous year half that
  - Hoping there is rate cut in September to help
  - Cash position allows county to move forward with capital projects
- How much cash did the county use for projects?
  - All items brought over this year will be bonded
  - This year, instead of bringing all projects, then using cash; already made decision before bringing bond resolutions
  - There were items that did not come over that cash was used for
  - At any time, Finance can choose to use cash instead
  - Anything under \$1M brought over by a department, Finance has been looking to use cash
  - Will have big issuance this fall of up to \$100M; big part is STEAM school, which will be reimbursed
- Has it been 2 years of one-time appropriations at the end of the year?
  - Yes
  - Have had couple budget cycles with structural surplus – more projected revenue than expenses
  - Brought over one-time initiatives (i.e. Lead, mental health in schools)
  - This will be coming to an end; can only maintain structural surplus for so long
  - Strategy will see is tapping into fund balance for these initiatives to invest in (i.e. housing and other areas)
  - Baseline approach ensures departments have the funds needed to operate – but it will get to a point where baseline will be more than sales tax growth
  - Currently telling departments what their budget will be, but ensure it is enough to do the job at current service levels; if there is an ability to do more, the Executive will tell departments (as long as aligning with priorities)
  - May see some investments in the 2025 budget, but will have ability to fund those without becoming an unsustainable drain on county finances
  - Did not want to stand up new items, then turn around in a couple years to cut it (because no new revenue source)
- Is the monthly caseloads discussion in connection with the rollover pandemic?
  - Yes, Family Assistance and Safety Net
- Any idea when the eligibility will change or go away?
  - Based on conversations with the department, most is in result of the pandemic era programs sunseting
  - i.e. ERA money helped people stay in homes and apartments; plus others
  - Those programs have, or will be, waning – will see pressure on those Safety Net Programs
- Please explain why the mandated programs under appropriations on the forecast have gone through the roof
  - Medicaid – when doing 2024 budget, state intercepted federal money the county had been receiving related to the

- Affordable Care Act
- Increase in Indigent Defense hourly rate (well past due)
- Those 2 things were a \$15M - \$16M hit
- Daycare growing mainly on gross side with plenty of revenue to support it
- Foster Care
- Most mandates have been fairly stable for a while
- State budget this year did not have any significant costs to counties
- What is an ideal fund balance?
  - Legislature policy is 15%
  - NYS Comptrollers monitoring uses 20-25% for best potential fiscal health score
  - 15% is as good a goal as any; having substantial savings is key to entering unchartered territory
  - Overage – have to have plan for sustainable use; not using it to plow into balancing operating budgets
  - Up to 20% with potential issues on the horizon
  - Anything over that, use for investing into initiatives to support and move community forward
  - Top of sheet shows formula – take out pass-through sales tax and interdepartmental revenue

**10. COMPTROLLER:** Phil Britt, Deputy Comptroller/Accounting

**a. INFORMATIONAL: Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)**

*Annual Comprehensive Financial Report is on file with the Clerk*

- Fund balance in excess of \$200M
- Over \$540M cash; huge increase from 2022
- Interest and Earnings on Investments over \$21M
- Serial Bond Principle Only Debt down \$13M (excluding OTASC)
- EFC principle down \$16M
- Comptroller directive to automate - worked with IT to automate production of ACFR, using Docuware to go paperless
- ACFR pages 5 - 6 is balance sheet at fund level; pages 8 - 9 is P&L at fund level
- Will not see special revenue funds there (OnCenter/CD); those are on pages 54 - 55, 56 and 57

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

## ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: WAYS &amp; MEANS COMMITTEE

DATE: JUNE 25, 2024

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
<del>Donna Anderson</del>	<del>OCAD</del>
Katie Anderson	OCAD
J. Alexander	OCAD
D. Liedke	VSFR
P. Britt	Camp
J. Conroy	Camp
<b>MARY VOIS</b>	<b>OCBOT</b>
Kristi Smiler	Finance
Donald Weber	Tax
Penng Donah.c	<del>OC</del> Fin OPS/OCOT
Jill Feljander	Camp
Patricia - Gonzalez	Camp
Emily E. Bersani	Clerk
Tasha Luskow	clerk
Lyone Walker	clerk
Marty Skelton	CD
Shannon Emery	WFO
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Melissa Colombo	fin ops
Steve Morgan	CFO
Mr Jim Beebe	Leg
John DeSantis	Leg
Joe Fratechi	Leg