



# Onondaga County Legislature

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Clerk

**J. RYAN McMAHON, II**  
Chairman

**KATHERINE M. FRENCH**  
Deputy Clerk

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

## WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE 2019 TENTATIVE BUDGET AUTHORIZED AGENCIES – SEPTEMBER 17, 2018 BRIAN F. MAY, CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Jordan, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Plochocki, Mr. Ryan, Mrs. Ervin

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Williams

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Chairman McMahon, Mrs. Tassone, Ms. Cody, Dr. Chase, Mr. Holmquist, Mr. McBride, Mr. Bush; also see attached list

Chairman May called the meeting to order at 1:03 P.M.

**ONCENTER, pg. 3-35:** Matt Hollander, CVE, SMG/Oncenter General Manager, Peter Casper, AGM/Director of Finance

Mr. Hollander presented the following:

### *SMG Oncenter 2019 Operating Budget Presentation*

#### *High Level Overview:*

<b>Attendance</b>	375,211	464,304	438,719
<b># of Events</b>	327	460	527
	<b>2019 Budget</b>	<b>2018 Forecast</b>	<b>2017 Actual</b>
<b>Adjusted Gross Income</b>	<b>4,659,288</b>	<b>3,953,980</b>	<b>4,472,395</b>
<b>Indirect Expense</b>			
Net Salaries, Benefits & Taxes	3,347,884	3,149,412	2,950,706
G&A/Contracted Services	644,437	749,642	713,484
Operational Supplies/R&M	303,295	309,936	301,193
Insurance	188,812	185,480	187,691
Utilities	660,674	721,101	661,093
Other	720,435	795,158	744,630
Depreciation Expense	45,138	45,138	65,671
<b>Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>5,910,675</b>	<b>5,955,867</b>	<b>5,624,468</b>
Net Income Before Other Exp & Income	<b>(1,251,387)</b>	<b>(2,001,887)</b>	<b>(1,152,073)</b>
Total Net Income	<b>(1,251,387)</b>	<b>(2,001,887)</b>	<b>(1,152,073)</b>
<b>ROTS Request</b>	<b>1,250,000</b>	<b>1,300,000</b>	<b>1,300,000</b>
<b>Capital Reserve Subsidy</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>250,000</b>

**Notes:**

- ROT subsidy request is \$1.25M versus subsidy of \$1.3M in FY18
- Capital Reserve request is flat at \$250K
- Chart shows FY2017 final results as well as FY18 Forecast since FY2018 results are impacted by Bowling

**Major Drivers:**Income

- Adjusted gross revenue expected to increase from FY2017 results by about \$187K due to increase in gross revenue from \$9.4M in 2017 to \$9.5M in 2019 and in increase in net margins (event profitability) from 47.2% in 2017 to 48.6% in 2019
- High level of confidence in achieving these revenues based on current booking pace including recapture of events displaced by Bowling

Expense

- Salary/Benefits Taxes increases driven by 2% planned salary increases, two positions adjusted to 2019 NY FLSA base salary levels for exempt employees, return of staffing levels to pre-Bowling levels; assumes 8% increase in health insurance cost and recognizes an 14% reduction in WC Insurance exposure rate
- Plan of work includes additional allowance for travel to support sales efforts, additional venue advertising, and additional employee training
- 2017 represents completed year with normal operations, indirect expenses impacted less by events therefore 2018 represents full year of operation
- Goals included in plan of work:
  - Venue marketing outreach - specifically pertaining to the enhancements made at the War Memorial, want to be sure all are aware, will use to bring new visitors to the venue; planning direct engagement with Visit Syracuse, working on enhancing the development of a direct sales and marketing focus, including identifying specific targeted groups, marketing and sales platforms we can work on together
  - Close look at food and beverage operation, especially those in the War Memorial, want to ensure highest level of service, maximize efficiency, elevate overall food quality and guest experience
  - Working closely with the Crunch and veteran's community, taking full advantage of the new suites and All Who Serve Club, ensure full utilization on non-Crunch days; continue outreach to veterans community to ensure the venue continues its mission as a true tribute to the veterans of the area
  - Working to establish enhanced capital programs, will include improvements to theater venues within the Civic Center to meet current and future needs

Mr. Knapp:

- Asked about the progress of various constructions projects, specifically the scoreboard and box seats

Mr. Hollander:

- Box seat sightlines will be amazing, Crunch excited about the opportunity it presents for them, SMG excited about the opportunity to create a VIP experience for other events; coming along very well and on time for the start of the Crunch season

Mr. Knapp:

- Scoreboard as well?

Mr. Hollander:

- Yes – working closely with installers and the Crunch to ensure work can happen in sequence.

Mr. Knapp:

- Asked Mr. Fisher for an update on the outside marquees

Mr. Fisher:

- Believe components will be delivered next week, will start with the Oncenter marquee facing the parking lot, will then install LED video boards on the marquees of the War Memorial on the State Street and Montgomery Street sides, also over the Will Call and VIP entrances, then install LED's for the Civic Center theaters

Mr. Hollander:

- All should be complete before the start of hockey season

Chairman McMahon:

- Two questions: 1) progress on the million dollar grant project at the Oncenter to make improvements to some of the meeting space, 2) what are some things you will spend the capital reserve subsidy funds on

Mr. Hollander:

- Have projects earmarked to fully utilize the grant resources, several elements of the projects will be going out to bid in conjunction with some consulting work being performed by AJP, in final review to go out for bid; asking bidders to give 2 alternatives specific to audiovisual items, 1) integrated built-in audiovisual 2) alternatives for mobile equipment that would accomplish those specifications and more, allows additional flexibility, sending out as a cohesive package, some of the elements require structure cabling - a new infrastructure backbone to support the content that will travel across the various video elements, trying to do this in a comprehensive way to make smart decisions and get the most bang for the buck

Chairman May:

- Are facility use fees being used for any of that work?

Mr. Hollander:

- Money from those fees is allocated to enhance our website, additional wraps, and graphics in the War Memorial and some operational equipment

Mr. Casper:

- Currently, the annual fee income is between \$275,000 and \$300,000

Chairman May:

- Asked Mr. Holmquist, the creator of that fee, if the website was a suitable use of the fee

Mr. Holmquist:

- I think so, that was the idea behind it, glad it's working

Mrs. Ervin:

- What is happening with the ADA improvements at the Civic Center and War Memorial; bathroom upgrades

Mr. Hollander:

- All the bathrooms within the War Memorial and All Who Serve Club were expanded, modified and beautified for full accessibility; Mr. Fisher may be able to speak in more detail

Mrs. Ervin:

- Asked Mr. Fisher if there were improvements at the Civic Center as well - is that in the same purview?

Mr. Fisher:

- Not so much as part of this project, although one of the things learned is that audiovisual and data networking between the buildings can be better tied together - head of the system will be at the Oncenter where all the programming for the various building video screens will be controlled, will make it easier for customer service and sales staff to deliver a good experience to all the Oncenter complex venues
- Had conversations with SMG about the capital portion of the budget, County Executive is proposing \$1.5 million for Oncenter improvements in the next 2 years, financed through bonds – Civic Center will be the focal point of those improvements as the theaters have fallen behind the other buildings

Mr. Hollander:

- This is consistent with plan of work for the year, coordinating with primary Civic Center tenants to ensure enhancements are cognizant of their needs now and into the future

**VISIT SYRACUSE, pg. 3-33, Line A695700: Danny Liedka, President/CEO,**

Mr. Liedka presented the following:

*Visit Syracuse 2019 Budget Presentation*  
*Danny Liedka*

*Request: \$2,496,000 – 24% YOY Increase*

- *Salaries up 27%*

- *Legal/Professional Fees up 50k*
  - *Bid Assistance up 40k*
  - *Marketing outreach 35k*
  - *Industry activities up 30k*
- Thank you for giving me a few minutes to talk about my proposed aggressive budget, it is aggressive for a reason, didn't take this job to be statuesque, looking to move the bar, asking for resources
- Salaries up substantially, propose film director under our organization, goal is to grow that industry, can take that to another level with resources, i.e. industry impact to Genesee Grande over \$500,000 for the past 14 months, real money, where people work and take advantage of the businesses in the market, 30 to 35 local film jobs, some union, over \$9 million spent on film in this area over the last year; many latch onto the film hub and the proposed scandal - totally separate and different, that is a venue used as needed for post editing or certain scene shooting, impossible for Mr. Vinal to move the bar on his own, need to be in CA and NYC marketing the tax incentives, currently just word of mouth which is not good enough, don't desire to be even-stein, want to push the envelope; also brought on new people last year 1 in our services department, a lot of new business coming in the next 2 years, need to service them properly, business that we haven't had for many years, which also effects other lines that I will get to, another person in social media, handles blog writing and helps with website content, a tremendous assist; heard you talk with the Oncenter about whether the website was a good investment – it absolutely is, \$1 in marketing returns \$30 dollars if you target the right people, a really wise investment, we spent a great deal of our money on technology upgrades this year, lag behind competitors in technology big time, transforming our website, have Visit Syracuse app, will help generate some funds to move our bottom-line in the future, also have new front person for stakeholders in the community, helping them understand what we can do for them through our website which has tools for hotels and restaurants to push their business, hasn't been utilized, sat ideal for a while
- Legal and professional fees up - big believer in doing an audit from an outside company annually, also will bring a concept to the legislature in the coming months that will require legal assistance (Tourism Improvement District)
- Bid assistance, i.e. fire chiefs coming back next year, haven't been here in probably 12 years, at the fairgrounds last time this time in downtown Syracuse, there are costs associated with servicing that group, will pay for transportation from all the hotels and assist with security for billion dollars' worth of equipment sitting in open lot, just one example, servicing these groups cost a tremendous amount of money, line will continue to go up as we grow and increase business, must take care of them or they won't come back; will change message to groups that vowed never to come back because of their experience here
- Marketing outreach – really throwing pennies at bigger problem, last few years spent about \$500,00 - \$550,000, one year had \$350,000 grant, the problem is you need the ability to look 3-5 years ahead, which will roll into the improvement district mentioned, must follow up on advertising campaign, find the right consumers and micro-target; haven't had a presence in Canada for a few years, low hanging fruit - especially the Ottawa market, should have huge presence there, should also be marketing to ACC fans
- Industry activities are targeted sales efforts to bring our staff in front of decision makers to bring in more business; look at increase as one time ask if able to get improvement district, believe all will like the concept, ask will be a lot lower and stable, can put together a 5-7 year comprehensive plan to market the area, currently, outside of Syracuse, not many meeting planners understand the city's revival, need to market influx of inventory, industry has been pretty flat, need to help that grow as the number of rooms continue to escalate

Chairman May:

- Clarified, he did not question the use of the internet, was whether or not to use the facility use fees

Mr. Knapp:

- The trails convention will be a big logistical operation, how does it look?

Mr. Liedka:

- Fortunate to receive some grant assistance for that convention, very taxing service logistics required; bid assistance up \$40k, just one of the new meetings, also have fire chiefs, and the one likely to have the biggest impact is the North America Travel Writers Association – journalist who write for major publications, in today's world everything is about blogs, followers, and those sort of things, these are the best of the best, will be in Syracuse for a few days, must transport, house and feed them; seen the impact the man from Forbes had after writing about the rival of Syracuse and the Marriott downtown specifically, word of mouth tremendous amount of return for investment, consumers relying less and less on advertisement buying 36% of the time, word of mouth, i.e. trip advisor is believable, 82% of the consumers will purchase
- The website will give people what they want, images of real people doing real things; Visit Syracuse will be a leader, think we will surpass our competition by year end, phones already ringing with people asking what we are doing differently
- Excited about the direction of this team

Mr. Plochocki:

- Previously meet with Mr. Liedka for answers to his questions, nice to deal with someone who understands what we are trying to do; big supporter of the bold things Mr. Liedka is trying to do, much potential

Chairman McMahan:

- Full disclosure - on the Visit Syracuse board also; budget paid for out of ROT, need an update on numbers to see if the spike carried over if there is a surplus may be able to do more on a one-shot basis, without that kind of spike we would be taking money away from another organization

Mr. Morgan:

- Can get projection and what has been collected

**Chairman McMahan stated he knows what they are projecting and what has been collected. He is asking all to agree on a year-end projection for ROT.**

Mr. Maturo:

- ROT is paid to us on a quarterly basis, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter coming up at the end of the month, can provide what we have to date and come up with an idea of where we think we will end up

Chairman McMahan:

- Important, need to make certain the money is there

Mr. Fisher:

- The 2017 year ended without much surplus, some was appropriated for costs associated with the bowlers still, have more costs - Mr. Liedka has done a good job of squeezing those sources but some money hasn't been sourced yet
- Also, some ROT was proposed directly to the Syracuse Jazz Fest which was moved into contingency, the surplus will, in part, depend on if those funds are moved back into ROT surplus

Chairman McMahan:

- Know about all those things

Mr. Fisher:

- Don't know what assumptions you want us to make

Chairman McMahan:

- Those streams aside want to see if we create surplus dollars

Mr. Liedka:

- Expected closeout of bowling expenses to be over \$90,000, worked very hard to reduce that number, final invoice at or just below \$50,000, saving about \$40,000

Chairman McMahan:

- We will get payment at month end, don't vote until October, good to have everyone agree on where this will end up

Chairman May:

- Asked Mr. Liedka to speak specifically about coordinated marketing efforts with the Oncenter and the arts community groups

Mr. Liedka:

- Oncenter has some big obstacles the average person would not understand, it is not the Oncenter, it is the climate, i.e. 300 person meeting, using Oncenter for meetings and staying in hotel, will take 3 hotels, must transport them, in the hotel business the profit is most extreme on overnight rooms, very difficult for food and venue outlets to make money, for the Oncenter to make their bottom line they need to charge room rental, the consumer won't pay room rental but the Oncenter still needs the rental so a hotel offers a rate and marks it up \$30 to \$40, collects those funds and pays the Oncenter the rental
- Two-thirds of the time the client says no because we are not competitive, rates are \$30 to \$40 dollars higher than our competitors; will bring solution for that to the legislature in a few months, will then market differently, in the meantime looking for best use events for the Oncenter, they understand filling up hotel rooms first but in the short-term understand the obstacles we have
- We have to be united - Mr. Hollander comes from a sales background, he and I will get along really well, will be an extension of one another as opposed to silos, will talk about conventions as one team, sends a good message to the meeting planner
- Visit Syracuse website has over 75,000 visits per month, average time spent on the site is over 10 minutes, average time on competitors site is 1 minute, our click-through rate is 4-5, people are going deep into our website, have the traffic and will use website and apps to promote the arts; craft beverage trail in place, will have museum trail
- More targeted efforts - talked about Canada, and ACC, that is where I would go if I had the funds today, will provide the biggest and quickest return

Mr. Ryan:

- Destiny has tried hard to get the Canadian market, which is good as they stay overnight providing ROT
- Armory Square businesses love ACC fans who travel with a lot of people and spend a lot of money – what would you specifically target and how does that all connect together for the entire area

Mr. Liedka:

- Before answering let me preference by saying a full downtown is not viewed as a problem in the suburbs, it drives higher rated business to the suburbs; ACC don't realize what we have to offer, they simply attend a game, have 1 pint or less, go to bed, then get in a plane and go home
- If I have access and can target directly to them they will extend their stay by a day or two, getting just 10% of those people to stay an extra night would be millions of dollars, need to be targeting those people and also development tours - low hanging fruit, these people are already coming, our job should be to get them to stay another night, given the amenities here it should not be too difficult, they are just unaware and once they get here it is too late

Chairman McMahon:

- Cheaper to fly out Monday than Sunday too, even cheaper on Tuesday

Mr. Ryan:

- Want to get them before they come to stay

Mr. Liedka:

- Continually market them so before they make those plans it is a longer stay, also some cross promotions, i.e. Canada comes down for shopping, the arts and hockey, should be marketing hockey to the arts people and arts to the hockey people, cross promotion gets them to spend a weekend instead of a night, package that with everything else here and it is a no-brainer, just need resources to do it; \$2 million wouldn't be enough to market appropriately, that is why we need a lift to push the marketing envelope and why I am aggressive in my ask

Mr. Knapp:

- From a 30,000 foot level what were some of the positive and negative thoughts from the bowler experience survey

Mr. Liedka:

- Have some general numbers, will look deeper than heads and beds, have to understand air travel and day tripper, will have hard numbers; reviews on Trip Advisor all positive and nothing but positive feedback from the bowlers, around 60,000 visitors came through, ROT should grow at least \$250,000 because of bowling and sales tax should be several million on top of that just for hotels, doesn't include food, entertainment, gas and things of that nature, it is a big thing to get our arms around; don't necessarily care for formulas because they are a little aggressive, will get real numbers we can believe in

Mr. Knapp:

- Did we do surveys on their quality of stay and experience here?

Mr. Liedka:

- Absolutely - 100% positive, nothing but great things

Mr. Knapp:

- New Expo Center at the fairgrounds, two-edged sword, working with the state to keep that occupied but don't want to hurt our own legacy businesses

Mr. Liedka:

- Don't think it will, inevitably there will be something they squabble over; bid very transparently written so that they would not cannibalize from the Oncenter or SRC Arena, different entity going after different type of business, ideal use of that building is the equine industry, very collaborative from day one, tremendous asset for the region if we all pitch in together, little things like getting the Oncenter at the table with them and identifying a sales campaign
- Main reasons for the improvement district:
  1. generate sales tax
  2. generate ROT
  3. create a comprehensive plan - from sales prospective hard to plan year by year and month by month, need to look at future years, very important moving forward

Mrs. Ervin:

- SU and Destiny getting together to do some marketing, how will that work with what you are doing?

Mr. Liedka:

- Good question, have to answer carefully, this is just a marketing agreement the university works out each year with a hotel to get that designation; we already work collaboratively with Destiny especially toward travel business where they have their own person that does that but they work pretty well with us, don't know that it would spike that nature of business here per se, gives hotel a good identity they needed coming into a market overloaded with inventory, good move on their part from a marketing standpoint

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ASSOCIATION OF ONONDAGA COUNTY, pg. 5-2 Line A659710: David Skeval, Executive Director**

Mr. Skeval presented the following:

**Agency Overview**

*The mission of CCE Onondaga is to bring discoveries made at New York State's Land Grant University (Cornell University) to Onondaga County for practical use with a purpose of improving lives, communities, and our economy. We work in the areas of Agriculture, Health, Nutrition, 4H Youth Development and Natural Resources. This is an everyday application of pragmatic education.*

*CCE Onondaga's general direction is to increase its offering of agriculture, environmental, health, youth development, and community/economic vitality programing to address challenges relevant to Onondaga County.*

**2019 APPROPRIATION REQUEST:**

- *County Appropriations increase to funding at \$286,979 (\$100,000 increase)*
- *Onondaga Ag Council funding decreased to \$0 (\$100,000 decrease)*
- *Water Environmental Protection fund increase of \$20,000 (from \$189,131 to \$209,131)*

***Increase to Appropriations:***

*The increase to our Appropriations (\$100,000) comes from moving our \$100,000 in Agriculture and 4H funding from the Onondaga Ag Council to Appropriations. County support for CCE Agriculture and 4H programs was renewed in 2013 through Ag Council funding. In that short time we have rebuilt the Agriculture and 4H programs, which is valuable to the County's effort to protect farmland and support our County's \$300 million agriculture economy. At the same time, 4H Youth Development has expanded to our urban communities while maintaining the connection to our rural communities. The \$100,000 will fully support our current Agriculture program at \$75,000 and partially supports our 4H program at \$25,000.*

***Why the additional funding through WEP?***

*The additional \$20,000 from WEP will help to support our environmental programs which focus on: Tick and Lyme disease, water quality and harmful algae blooms (HAB), management and detection of invasive species, community and urban forestry, 4H Youth environmental programs, Master Gardener volunteers, Tree Steward volunteers, food preservation, and urban agriculture. These programs affect the drinking water supply for Onondaga County residents, the water quality of Onondaga Lake, the health of our residents, the development of our youth population, and the food security of our residents. The \$20,000 increase approved last year translated into a \$13,200 increase after a reduction in County contracts.*

*Every year brings new environmental surprises and challenges, particularly those brought on by weather events, invasive species, and now, insect borne diseases. A great example of this is the threat posed by deer ticks, lone star ticks and long horn ticks. CCE Onondaga is working with Cornell faculty to educate residents and communities as to how to reduce risk of exposure, providing insect identification and testing for diseases. Another example is the threat to Skaneateles Lake water quality brought on by Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). CCE Onondaga, along with Cornell faculty, are conducting volunteer aided research in biological solutions to control HWA, as well as alternative tree species to replace the hemlock. The loss of adjacent hemlock trees will increase sedimentation in the lake and increase chances of additional HAB's. Our next challenge will be the spotted lantern fly which will impact forests, hops, and fruit trees.*

***Appropriations and WEP Funding provides a foundation:***

*In addition to directly supporting programs, the County Appropriation and WEP funding provides a foundation to acquire additional funding. For every \$18 provided by the County, CCE Onondaga is able to leverage an additional \$82 in support and funding.*

Mr. Knapp:

- The drinking water supply is a big topic, specifically Skaneateles Lake - talk a little about the work done out there

Mr. Skeval:

- Have had programming at Skaneateles lake for the past 18 years, address residential property, make sure people are educated on how to keep septic tanks up to date to limit nutrients entering the lake, and come up with alternative lawn care – beautiful lawns around the lake have copious amounts of chemicals applied to them, after rain storm all that material washes into the lake; look at the general landscape - anything from feral swine that occupied the lower part of the watershed a few years back to forestry practices, harvesting along the lake, to buffering zones with tree plantings and the latest with the HWA; monitor and educate people using the lake as to Asian Clam, Zebra Mussels, and being on the lookout for any other aquatic invasive

Mr. Plochocki:

- Put on a great program at Skaneateles High School, hundreds attended, constituents still talk about how wonderful that was and how helpful your organization is

Chairman May:

- CCE does an awful lot for very little, coming from a fairly rural town, see you guys out there a lot, great community engagement, services provided to farmers and landowners across the county is fantastic and appreciated; talk a little more about the deer and tick program, number of municipalities you are working with and that sort of thing

Mr. Skeval:

- Will probably be the featured topic at our annual meeting, October 25, 2018; currently working with 7 Onondaga County communities, specifically with managing local deer populations, working with the entire county as it goes to interfacing humans with ticks, had meeting with leading researchers from Cornell and counties across the state, stunning to learn and need to get the word out to communities that there may be some areas like a neighborhood or village where we may be able to impact the tick population by controlling deer population but by in large won't be able to lower the deer population across the entire county, ticks will be a way of life in Onondaga County, currently monitoring 2 new species of ticks in NYS, need to be aware of what those ticks look like and the new menu of diseases they bring along with them; focus will be how to stop the tick from attaching to you - use of permethrin and proper use of clothing will be key, likely one of the number one health issues we will face over the next 5 years; message is this is expanding beyond the deer issue, important for all to be paying attention to any kind of arthropod-borne illness

Chairman May:

- Not working with specific municipalities per se, just a general effort across the county at this point

Mr. Skeval:

- Yes, still going forward for those communities that want to manage the deer population to lower the tick population but need to pay attention to the rest of the county where that is not possible

Chairman May:

- Any movement by the state to fund and address this more as a statewide issue

Mr. Skeval:

- The state is trying to address the deer issue by making the environmental conservation law more liberal in how we are allowed to take deer; state more readily addressing tick education

Chairman May:

- Not necessarily money to municipalities

Mr. Skeval:

- Not that I am aware of

Chairman May:

- Is there a synergized HAB effort with OCSWCD or each doing your own thing?

Mr. Skeval:

- Definitely synergized, complement each other's mission, soil and water more on the service end - establishing environmental projects to keep nutrients from going in the water, we work more on the educational end, our collaboration on environmental projects is educating the farmers - put on workshops for the farmers and consult with them and their accountants on how to avoid tax liability and receive cost-sharing for environmental project
- Want to compliment soil and water and Farm Bureau – could not have ON Farm Fest without their help and the help of the host farms, many organizations in this county have synergies that work

Mr. Holmquist:

- Pilot deer and tick program started in Fayetteville, wildly successful because of the public engagement process, this was a model for others; quality of life issue, people would like to see expanded, understanding it is more difficult in rural areas but there are hot spots, such as Green Lakes and many areas of the city, much more can be done, hope the state gets on board, has been proven to work

**ONONDAGA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, pg. 5-2 Line A659720: Mark Burger, CPESC, Executive Director; Craig Dennis, Chair; Gwyn Olenych, Account Clerk III**

Mr. Burger presented the following:

### ***2019 BUDGET DEFENSE***

#### **Brief Overview**

- Formed March 6, 1944 by County Board of Supervisors, Resolution No. 60

- *Special purpose District created to develop and implement programs of soil, water and related natural resource conservation.*
- *The Districts natural resources programs and services include: technical assistance to farmers and landowners, physical support on County initiatives (EAB, Stormwater Management, Hydroseeding of road ditches), stormwater training programs, environmental education programs, and the annual Tree & Shrub sale.*
- *Most critical is the District's SLWAP to help address factors contributing to Harmful Algal Blooms for protection of the City of Syracuse's drinking water supply*

**Explanation of Significant Increases / Decreases in Expenses or Revenues**

\$3,366,043 =Total projected budget for 2019

\$3,083,543 will come from grant funds secured and contracts for services provided.

\$282,500 is the balance and is requested from the County.

The County portion is made up of:

- \$37,500 County Appropriation
- \$50,000 Outside Engineering support and sampling / equipment
- \$37,500 WEP for agricultural phosphorous reduction in sanitary district
- \$45,000 WEP administrative appropriation for services provided but not covered by Non-Point Source Pollution Control grants
- \$77,500 WEP to support County Stormwater Management program
- \$35,000 County Agricultural Council

The District has reduced its request to the County by \$25,000 this year as we are not the right fit for the monitoring program that was proposed a few years ago.

To date we have applied for 13 grants / \$2,065,364 and have received notice that we tentatively secured 6 grants / \$1,003,050.

County funds significantly help the District to leverage other grants. Last year the District provided an \$8.50 return on investment for every dollar the County provided.

**Any Personnel Changes?**

There are no changes necessary to personnel.

Annually / historically there are:

- 12 full-time employees
- 1 Volunteer (of 15 years) that works one day / week
- 1 Six-month intern from SUNY Morrisville
- 1 Six-month hydroseeding assistant
- 4 Six-week Water Chestnut hand-pulling team members
- 2 40-Hour unpaid interns from Onondaga Community College

Hello. I am Mark Burger, Executive Director of the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District and Program Manager of the SLWAP. With me is our Account Clerk III Gwyn Olenych and BOD Chairman Craig Dennis.

The County Board of Supervisors created the District by resolution of in 1944. We exist as an authorized agency.

The services and programs we provide fill an important niche to ALL county residents.

Likely the most important benefit we provide to the County is that we can plan and implement conservation projects on private property to benefit the public through NYS Soil & Water Conservation District Law.

Right now, that is, and has been, our most important work on agricultural and municipal lands within the drinking water supplies of Skaneateles and Otisco Lake Watershed's as it pertains to Harmful Algal Blooms and efforts to reduce nutrient inputs into the lake's.

Please know that we provide many other services and support throughout the County.

- Stormwater Management assistance to **WEP**
- Revegetation “Cleaned” road ditches and other municipal projects for County and other **DOT’s**
- Implementation of County Emerald Ash Borer program for **Office of Environment which benefits the County Parks system**
  - Just secured \$100,000 grant from US Forest Service to plant 300 more trees
- Plan & implement non-point source pollution prevention projects on **farms** as part of the NYS Agricultural Environmental Management program to help our farmers comply with local, State, and Federal environmental regulations with support from Ag Council
- Pull and remove aquatic invasive species known as Water Chestnut on the Seneca River for **Environmental Health Department**
- We also work in conjunction with Visit Syracuse for the past five years to help bring ~350 conservation professionals to a hotel in Syracuse each March for one week of environmental training

This year we have also:

- Provided a lot of flooding and drainage project assistance to Town’s of Tully, Skaneateles and Cicero
- Supported 75 requests for technical assistance from the general public in 2018
- Active participant in County Hazard Mitigation Plan update
- Continue to staff Agricultural Spill Response team that we started in 1994 for County and Skaneateles Lake Watershed
- Soil group worksheets for agricultural tax exemptions for farms
- Trained local contractors to meet NYS DEC Erosion & Sediment Control certification requirements
- Provided annual Tree & Shrub Sale to help “Green Up the County”
- Environmental education programming for high school students thru Enviro-Thon Competition

-For 2019 we are asking that you support our budget request of \$87,500 from the County Legislature. The rest of our money comes from competitive grant applications and fees for service.

-The project funding coming out of our office is part of the economic engine that has paid for the services of 75 local companies this year.

We want you to know that for every dollar you provided to the SWCD, we provided an \$8.50 return on investment! We “THANK YOU” for your continued support. I would be happy to address any questions you have.

Mr. Knapp:

- Provide a quick update on EAB ash tree removal

Mr. Burger:

- On track with yearly funds provided, will start to see light at the end of the tunnel 5 years down the road as far as getting those trees preemptively cut, have a good handle on the number of trees for injection; doing a tremendous job getting grants, just yesterday got \$100,000 grant for planting 300 trees
- First timber sale end of last year at Oneida Shores, very successful, Pratt’s Fall next possible location

Mr. Knapp:

- Provide a generic update on the latest emergency response

Mr. Burger:

- 3 small spills in the county this year; contractor providing service for dairy farm left one load hatch open, small spill when they downshifted at bottom of hill; we work closely with county Emergency Management, NYSDEC in Syracuse and farmers, ready to respond if needed, farmer facilitated cleanup themselves, coached the farmer on community relations needed

Chairman May:

- Back to the EAB - what do you mean by starting to see the light 5 years down the road?

Mr. Burger:

- Making good progress town by town, once municipalities are addressed will continue to wrap up the work in county parks, more of wildcard because things change and the industry changes, if the mortality curve is too fast we will have to use different techniques to get the remaining trees removed, in about 5 years we will have the bulk of county highway right-of-ways and municipal properties addressed

Chairman May:

- How much longer for inoculations

Mr. Burger:

- Ongoing, a small part of the budget, focus on priority trees

Chairman May:

- Would be nice to get there in 5 years, would be less than half of the forecasted cost - realize there will be some ongoing cost

Mr. Knapp:

- Eva Brown does a great job putting out bids and consistently comes in under the projection, also got certified as an inoculator saving the county from having to hire a forester

Chairman May:

- What is going on with algal blooms?

Mr. Burger:

- 24 hour a day opportunity, work closely with the city of Syracuse agricultural program in the watershed, Skaneateles Lake Association, CCE, farmers and nonfarm landowners, secured \$181,000 NYS grant to build stormwater wetland in the northeast corner of Skaneateles Lake, determined to be the most critical subwatershed in terms of water quality protection and filtration avoidance maintenance for the city, fall buffer tree planting in cooperation with CCE, they will get volunteers and we will provide the funding - another example of how we work collectively; ton of cover cropping going on this fall, farms growing corn for silage and some soybean ground; also working on policy changes to help farmers more easily comply with environmental regulations, need to find a way to work with other agencies to fund buffers if we want farmers to retire land close to streams and wetlands, need financial compensation in this economy

Mr. Jordan:

- Are ash tree inoculations indefinite?

Mr. Burger:

- Nothing has changed, the recommendation was 25-30 years to make sure the borer is gone and not returned to the community; inoculations are every 2-3 years, seeing a stronger presence of the borer, some trees have been inoculated every other year to survive the pressure of the insect; small piece of the pie, very inexpensive component

Chairman May:

- The number has been considerably reduced from what was originally proposed

Mr. Plochocki:

- Talk about the reduction in your budget due to not being the right fit for the monitoring program proposed a few years ago

Mr. Burger:

- The project was for environmental monitoring throughout the county, didn't come to fruition, no need to have the money in our budget, can be better used elsewhere

Mrs. Ervin:

- What was the project?

Mr. Burger:

- For some monitoring in the southern part of the county related to the incinerator

Mrs. Ervin:

- If you are not the right fit for the Covanta situation what is happening with that?

Mr. Burger:

- I do not know

Mrs. Ervin:

- Nothing was being done on this for the last several years, though we kept giving money?

Mr. Burger:

- Covanta has a monitoring program and is doing their regulatory piece, we are just not a part of that

Mrs. Ervin:

- My understanding was that you would be in addition to that process

Mr. Burger:

- There was some initial discussion to have some monitoring beyond what they were doing

Mrs. Ervin:

- That was what the money was being appropriated for the last 3 years

Mr. Knapp:

- The money was returned; we need to have a discussion

Mrs. Ervin:

- We can have that discussion but I wanted to make sure I was understanding

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

KATHERINE M. FRENCH, Deputy Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: 2019 BUDGET REVIEW OF AUTHORIZED AGENCIES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

NAME	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
PLEASE PRINT	
Danny Liedka	Visit Syracuse
Carol Eaton	Visit Syracuse
DAVID DUERR	CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Hillary Bartholomew	CCE Onondaga
DAVID SKEWAL	CCE Onondaga
MARK BURGER	on city SWCS
Kelly Burger	Law
mark Hollander, CVE	General Manager
Peter Casper	AGM/Director of Finance
Tara Venditti	Management + Budget
Jim Matho	Comptroller
Steve Morgan	Finance
Robert Durr	Law
William Fisher	County Executive

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: 2019 BUDGET REVIEW OF AUTHORIZED AGENCIES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

NAME	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
PLEASE PRINT	
Mark Matt	
Matt Beadnell	Comptroller