



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

TIMOTHY T. BURTIS
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315.435.2070 • onondagacountylegislature@ongov.net • www.ongov.net/legislature

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE 2025 TENTATIVE BUDGET BUDGET REVIEW DAY 5 – SEPTEMBER 18, 2024 COLLEEN A. GUNNIP, CHAIR

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Ryan

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Mr. Meaker, Ms. Cody, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Olson, Mr. McCarron, Mr. Bush, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez; also please see attached

Chair Gunnip called the meeting to order at 9:44 a.m.

WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION: Shannon Harty, Commissioner, Eric Schuler, Deputy Commissioner

2024 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Recruiting initiatives for management positions resulted in 6 key management positions being filled. This allows for better workload distribution throughout the department and provides resources to move key department initiatives forward.
- The Department’s Capacity Management and Operation and Maintenance (CMOM) program for the CSD sewer collection system continues to meet and succeed regulatory targets for cleaning and inspecting County Owned/Lease sewer assets. These efforts are critical for ensuring sewer pipes are operating at full capacity and can handle as much water as possible during extreme storm events. The Department also executed a new pipe & manhole rehabilitation contract and has begun extensive rehabilitation work on key components of the system.
- Relocated key department functions (i.e.: Plumbing Control Division) to Metro WWTP in order to better serve the public
- Developed a new public-facing portal with OpenGov for Plumbing Permits, Public Complaints, Capacity Assurance, Industrial Pretreatment Applications, & Waste Hauler Permits. This will allow the review/approval process to be more efficient and transparent.

Key Infrastructure Investments:

- Entered construction on a significant project to renew critical infrastructure at Metro WWTP; nearly \$50M for the Clarifier & Gallery Improvement Project. This project is undertaking a complete renewal of core components that have outlived their useful service life and are critical in helping maintain regulatory compliance at the facility.
- Entered Bidding Phase for the \$25M Investment in the Camillus Force Main
- Entered Bidding Phase for the \$35M Investment in the White Pine Pump Station and Force Mains. This key project provides sewer service capabilities to areas of (T) Clay that historically lacked public sewers.

2024 BUDGET REVIEW

- Chemical pricing increases, biosolids contract modifications and delay in the dryer coming online has resulted in unbudgeted operating costs. We are continuing to monitor these increased costs and if necessary will request a budget transfer from salary accounts as result of continued vacancies
- All other operating accounts sufficiently funded to support the Department core functions for 2024.

2025 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2025 budget includes standard salary and wage increases consistent with the baseline budgeting approach, including the transfer of function of 3 financial positions into Financial Operations. The budget also includes various other personnel modifications all of which are budget neutral. Increases in the supply & materials and maintenance, utilities and rent accounts are due to price increases for chemicals, water and software support and maintenance. Helping to offset these increases is a decrease in the departments all other expenses line related to biosolids with the anticipated onboarding of the dryer.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Continue QA/QC of Sewer Unit assessment and industrial surcharge billing. As the County rate base grows with anticipated development, WEP needs to have rate structures that accurately reflect the cost of services provided.
- Further enhance the OpenGov platform to be a key public-facing tool for the Department.
- Integrate the newly-developed County-wide CIP Manager Program into OCDWEP Engineering Department workflows.
- Increase flow metering program to further diagnose capacity issues that exist in specific sections of County Infrastructure.

Key Infrastructure Investments:

- Continue to construct new sanitary infrastructure in the Oak Orchard service area to support current and future sewer needs to serve the Route 31 Corridor in (T) Clay.
 - Commence construction of large-scale investments at the Baldwinsville-Seneca Knolls WWTP, Meadowbrook-Limestone WWTP, rehabilitation of several pump stations and major sewer force mains (i.e.: Ley Creek/Liverpool FM) within the Metro service area.
- WEP budget can be found in section 5, pages 3-21
 - Over the last 3 years, the department overhauled its organizational structure with much success
 - Have 4 column structure with a Deputy overseeing each
 - Created and filled 7 critical management positions in 2024
 - 1 Deputy Commissioner of Administration
 - 6 Directors/Superintendents within Regulatory Programs
 - Recruiting candidates from private sector and out of state
 - Personnel requests for 2025
 - Will continue to build administrative branch of department
 - 2 vacant Director positions (hope to have filled by end of year)
 - Director of Health and Safety
 - Project Coordinator in Regulatory Programs
 - Management Engineer to oversee 4 drainage districts
 - Sludge truck drivers and MEO's
 - Compete with CDL drivers
 - Have a lot of turnover; need to create a path for retention
 - Will be transitioning fiscal functions back to Financial Operations
 - Will fall under Interdepartmental budget for 2025
 - Minor increase in chemical cost
 - Supply Chain is starting to normalize
 - 300 Account is seeing a minor increase
 - Budgeting a significant decrease in All Other Expenses account due to sludge hauling
 - Dryer is not running 100% yet, but will be running consistently going into 2025
 - Looking at alternate disposal options at lower sludge unit pricing
 - Capital Expenditures
 - Will be maintaining flat in Debt Service
 - Reflecting capital expenses in 2022
 - Have a lot of capital projects going out to bid or are in construction now
 - Will look closely at Debt Service line in years to come
 - Key strategies for 2025
 - Had 350% increase in water data; need a new system
 - Oak Orchard service planning (hired Program Manager)
 - Community-wide development
 - Continuing to advance OpenGov platform
 - Safety programs, staff development, training
 - Public outreach and education; will continue to make department known in community
 - Brought back annual WEP Fest event

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Appreciate the roster clean up
- Is creating a path for the MEO's next level career ladder additions?
 - There are different levels of heavy equipment with advanced hydraulic systems that employees operate

- Would like driver’s working with this type of equipment to be at a higher pay grade
 - New recruits may not have CDL; would like to hire into training position as MEO I; MEO II when CDL received
 - Want to have parity across titles and functions
- Do these grades stack up competitively with other municipalities?
 - Yes; county does not necessarily need to meet parity on salaries
 - Very competitive with private sector on benefits, paid time off
- When will the Management Engineer position be hired for?
 - Looking to recruit and hire in early 2025
- Are any union contracts coming up in 2025?
 - No, all will carry through 2025
- Section 5 page 10
- Please explain the disproportionate distribution of funds based on staffing
 - Finance
 - All departments have a “Program Narrative” breakdown
 - Internally budget is at a program level; expenses and revenue are recorded at that level throughout the year
 - This allows departments to manage programs from a financial and staffing perspective
 - The breakdowns are how the budget is managed internally and the staff that is associated with each program
- The Administration/Accounting/Personnel is at \$51M with 24 staff and the WWTP at \$40M with 238 staff
- Where is the gap?
 - Administration carries debt service (\$32M) and utility bills (\$9M)
- It was mentioned that managers are being hired from all over America
- As far as rank and file, how is the local hiring?
 - Workforce Development and Recruiting team is doing a lot of local recruitment
 - Public outreach, a new website, local advertising and building awareness is bolstering recruitment
- Went from burning gas to utilizing it (cogeneration)
 - Using methane gas at Metro to run cogeneration units
 - Had to make modifications to the interconnections to the grid to get National Grid approval
 - Should be functional by end of 2024
- What kind of savings is the county expecting from cogeneration?
 - Need to get them up and running before savings can be budgeted
- Section 2 page 23 talks about sewer units increasing by 3200
- Are those all new or is there something else contributing to it?
 - That is playing into the redefinition of the sewer unit
 - Spin down of the unit definition spins up sewer units
 - All are commercial and volume based customers
- In regards to being expensive, things look good for where WEP is at
- A few government organizations that people take for granted are WEP, OCWA, and OCRRA
- The only time anyone hears anything is when there is a problem
- Education and outreach is very important for the community to know what happens when it goes down the drain

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Robert Petrovich, Director; Nathaniel Stevens, Deputy Director

- *In partnership with the County Executive’s Office, the Onondaga County Office of Economic Development is playing an integral role in advancing the Micron project in Onondaga County. This work includes but is not limited to NEPA and SEQRA environmental permitting, interfacing directly with Micron on project requirements, and working with local, state, and federal partners to ensure that our community is ready to break ground in 2025.*
- *Continued site development on the White Pine Science and Technology Park. This 100+ acre site immediately adjacent to Micron will provide a home for critical infrastructure and supply chain companies’ integral to Micron’s operations.*
- *Partnered with local developers to advance supply chain opportunities and ensure that Onondaga County is ready to become America’s semi-conductor memory manufacturing hub.*
- *Assisted TTM Technologies with their \$122 MM expansion project in the Town of Dewitt. This project will double the current campus and is projected to create 400 jobs. The technology and products produced as a result of this project is strategically important to our local and national economy.*
- *Assisted Feldmeier with an eighty two thousand square foot expansion to their existing manufacturing facility.*
- *Assisted Clinton’s Ditch with a 120,000 square foot expansion of their existing facility.*
- *Assisted with funding local events such as the Southwest Showcase Sundays, the Latino Americano Festival, the NYS Blues Fest, and the Moonlight Movie Series.*

2024 BUDGET REVIEW

There are no areas of concern regarding the 2024 Budget.

2025 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2025 budget includes standard salary and wage increases consistent with the baseline budgeting approach. The budget also contains various personnel modifications all of which are being funded by the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- *Work with local companies to help them expand and grow in Onondaga County.*
- *Partner with local communities to develop sites that will attract new companies to Central New York.*
- *Continue efforts to attract supply chain businesses to Onondaga County in support of Micron.*
- **Micron**
 - Working with Commerce Department and Chips Program Office to develop a joint EIS document that will cover SEQRA and NEPA requirements for environmental review to advance the project
 - Expect to have a draft EIS around mid-December with public comment period to follow
 - Ground breaking and start of construction on or about November 1, 2025
 - Working every day with WEP, OCWA, OCRRA and National Grid
 - Fully focused on supply chain opportunities as it relates to Micron
 - Looking for co-location for key critical suppliers
 - Went to Taiwan in March to meet with various supply chain companies at the direction of Micron
 - County hosted same companies in June to talk about why it would make sense for them to locate here
 - At the request of Micron, will be going to San Francisco in November to assist in a supply chain event for:
 - Critical materials
 - Wet chemicals
 - Gases that are needed for production and operation
 - Micron recently opened an office in Onondaga County
 - Hired Jacobs Engineering to begin design work for Clay, NY project
- **TTM Technologies**
 - ~\$130M expansion; competed against South Carolina for project
 - Project will be supported with local incentives and a pilot
 - Will create 400 high paying six-figure jobs

- Feldmeier
 - Initially looking to locate in Iowa
 - Expansion is underway in Onondaga County
- Bluefors
 - Bluefors out of Helsinki, Finland acquired Cryomech
 - Cryomech was originally founded in CNY
 - Recently had ribbon cutting for expansion on a new 76,000 square foot facility
 - Will allow penetration of US market for cryogenic cooling components
 - Integral to supercomputing and quantum computing
- Clinton’s Ditch expansion
 - \$40M+ project will allow growth with a 120,000 foot expansion; will add jobs
- Continuing to advance projects moving into 2025 focusing on groundbreaking

Questions/comments from Committee:

- Please provide more information on the roster expansion?
 - Increasing staff by 4; need ED II’s and a second Deputy
 - Doing more with supply chain and Micron
 - Need to maintain local constituency
- Please explain the increase of County Services Revenue on page 6-2
 - Finance
 - For the last 3 years, County Executive (CE) made decision to reduce OCIDA’s payment to the County in order to reduce operational cost of the office
 - It was a time of many projects being developed and CE wanted to prevent a burden on OCIDA
 - Increase in revenue is due to increase in OCIDA’s payment to the County
- What was the one-time bump up for the Contingent Account last year?
 - Finance
 - Workforce Development funds
- Workforce Development funds are still in Contingent
- Is it still the goal to move forward with that?
 - Yes

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Marty Skahen, Director

2024 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2024 initiatives and accomplishments focused on managing our core programs and continue working to increase our production.

2024 BUDGET REVIEW

We received our entitlement grant for CDBG, HOME and ESG and applied for a new round of lead hazard reduction funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Department is forecasted to finish 2024 within budget.

2025 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2025 budget for Community Development reflects the funding necessary to address the priorities, opportunities and strategic initiatives for the department. The Budget also include the creation of Director of Lead Initiatives to replace the Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives as we phase out ARPA funds.

The 2025 Transfer to Grant Expenditure line includes \$1M for Lead Programing and \$1M for the Onondaga County Main Street Program.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To continue to implement the federal, state and local funded programs in order to assist individuals and communities throughout Onondaga County.

- Lead Hazard Reduction in Healthy Homes Grant
 - Reduced hazards in 62 units; have 49 in progress
 - 43 were in the city of Syracuse; 19 were outside the city
 - Total cost \$1.5M
- City of Syracuse Lead Grant
 - Completed 14 units; have 44 in progress
 - Grant will expire December 30, 2024
 - Will achieve 210 unit goal and expend all funds
- Shape Up Program
 - 7 homes owned by low to moderate income, elderly, or handicapped were rehabilitated; 15 in progress
- Shape Up for Veterans
 - Completed 32 projects; 24 in process (under contract or ready to bid)
- Ramp Program
 - Completed 3 projects; 13 in progress
- Housing Development Fund Company
 - Sold 4 homes to low to moderate income, first time home buyers
 - 7 homes in various stages of rehabilitation
 - Partnered with Home Headquarters with 5 vacant lots acquired from Land Bank to build homes
 - 4 are pending sale; 1 still open
- Will end 2024 year within budget
- 2025 budget proposes \$1M for Lead Programming and \$1M for Main Street Program
- Requested \$7.75M Lead grant (maximum allowed)
 - If received, will remediate lead hazards in 270 units
 - Should know in November 2024 if grant will be awarded

Questions/comments from Committee:

- Why are Contractual Expenses up?
 - Routine escalators
- Can you explain why the Housing Rehabilitation grants are back to the 23 level?
 - The money in 2024 includes the Lead grant
 - Normally this line only contains CBDG, ESG and HOME grants from HUD
- Please talk about the new things Community Development has taken on over the last couple years
 - Due to housing shortage, many initiatives are to drive housing
 - Senior housing
 - O-CHIP has been a big success
 - Started a hotel initiative to try and drive hotel room growth
 - Onondaga County Neighborhood Initiative
 - Partnered with Home Headquarters
 - Used COVID money; Legislature approved additional funds last year - going strong
 - Helps to provide low interest loans for folks wanting to fix up their homes
 - Lead grant has been very difficult
 - Had period of shut down and then lost contractor base because they were jammed up with other work
 - Was able to build contractor base back up by running training programs with Lead money
 - The last year has been a huge press on exhausting the Lead grant funds
- Please provide more detail on the Shape Up for Veterans “completed” and “in process” projects
 - Veterans are resistant to accepting assistance
 - Put a heavy focus on the fact that the funds are something earned and well deserved upon return from service
 - Spent \$600K of initial \$1M that Legislature provided; Legislature provided an additional \$77K more last year
 - Have another \$364K under contract

- Have seen good success with program and happy to be able to help so many veterans
- Does Shape Up for Veterans have the same income cap as the regular Shape Up Program?
 - Shape Up for Veterans Program has the same income cap, but veterans can be any age
 - Shape Up Program must be 62 or older
- Have there been encounters where a vet has just missed the income threshold?
 - There has been one exception because income was so close to missing
 - There is flexibility to make exceptions, but not if the income is way over the threshold
- Are the responsibilities for the new Director of Lead Initiatives the same as Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives?
 - Everything is exactly the same
 - Strategic Initiatives position was funded with ARPA money
- Please explain why Salaries is going down by almost \$600K
 - Finance
 - That is the Grant budget, not the Operating budget
 - It is an estimate of what will be charged off in Salaries
 - The new position will be charged to the Lead grant which does not live in this budget
- Is Federal Aid - Health revenue from previous year Lead grant?
 - Yes
- As far as houses being built, the county is using state and federal grants along with ARPA funds
- For the 5 houses built, how much is the average house costing the county?
 - Costing roughly \$400K; selling for \$180K
 - \$30K subsidy is provided through a state grant; leaving \$150K to be mortgaged
 - County then has a \$30K lien on house
- Is there anything preventing modular or pre-fab housing?
 - After purchasing the land, house and transportation costs; the savings are not significant
- How is working with the city on the Lead grants going?
 - When CD met with the city to see how to move forward, it was decided not to compete against each other for funds
 - The total dollars HUD is offering for this round of NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunities) is left over from previous federal years that other areas in the country did not use
 - The current federal year ends September 30, 2024
 - CD is applying now and anticipating a spring offering when the city would apply
 - There is not anything in the federal budget for Lead money this year
- Previously the county would take properties out of auction and give to the housing development fund company to be rehabilitated and sold to low/moderate income families
- Is there an update on this process?
 - Law Department
 - This will be the first year under the new local law for additional surplus procedures that were added to existing Tax Act
 - Auctions will be held from October 8-11
 - Once auctions are complete; Department of Real Property Tax will provide the courts a report of properties with surplus and one without surplus
 - Once approved by the court, the county will deposit a sum in a court trust fund account
 - Court will hold a distribution proceeding where creditors can make claims
 - Initial notice will be sent from the courts to the person potentially receiving surplus
- As far as potentially pulling a property out for the fund company, do we know how that will work yet?
 - Law Department

- Will be subject to surplus; will have to develop a fair market value
- Land Bank doing something similar with the city
- Finance
 - Law change was due to Tyler v. Hennepin County
 - Auctions have been done online since the pandemic
 - Results have been positive due to more interest and participation in terms of dollars flowing
 - From advocacy perspective, work was done locally to ensure the county’s interests were heard
 - The executive branch of the state government was supportive of ensuring that counties had the ability to continue with the auction process
 - Taking Administrative costs out is now statutory
 - County makes towns, villages, and school districts whole and then chases delinquencies
 - In the past, used surpluses to cover costs associated with chasing money; some cases took many years
- Community Development
 - Will work with Land Bank if more properties are needed until figured out
 - The money has an impact on program

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION: Marty Voss, Commissioner; Penny Donahue, Accountant 2

2024 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Paving Program - 114 Miles Treated: Hot mix (27.87 Miles), cold mix (13.55 Miles) surface treatment (72.15 Miles); Old Liverpool Paving project, Pleasant Valley Bridge waterproofing membrane, Whiting Road Bridge wing-wall replacement.

Design approval of the Bear Rd. Project, continued the design of 9 Federal aid and 2 Bridge NY projects; continued design coordination for Loop the Lake Phase IV– Salina Extension project.

Awarded Special Funding: Bridge-NY Funding for C -192 Peck Road Bridge over Chittenango Creek Rehabilitation project;

Rehabilitated 6 and replaced 4 traffic signal systems. All upgraded with camera detections systems, which now total 48 within the County inventory;

County Forces replaced over 2000' of storm drainage pipe (drive culverts, closed drainage runs, and cross culverts).

2024 BUDGET REVIEW

The Onondaga County Department of Transportation will finish 2024 within budget.

2025 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2025 budget includes standard salary and wage increases consistent with the collective bargaining agreement. Also included in the base are increased costs for contractual services and all other expenses due to contractual increases for Town and Village Plowing Contracts and custodial services.

Provision for capital projects is \$6M cash for 2025. This amount is first applied toward the required local share of the various federal aid projects contained in the annual Highway Work Plan which will be developed over the winter and brought to the Legislature for bonding approval in early spring of 2025.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 1. Staff – Staffing levels have improved but we still need more CDL drivers.*
 - 2. Continue to advance federal aid and state funded major projects outlined in the Work Plan*
 - 3. Manage the department’s core responsibility for snow & ice removal and highway maintenance while balancing the challenges of new and innovative infrastructure initiatives.*
- Loop the Lake Trail is in phase 4 (final extension into Salina from Murphy’s Island)
 - Currently going through environmental permitting, review and design process

- Environmental review needs to take place in order to get through the squishy area between Murphy’s Island and Onondaga Lake Parkway

Questions/comments from Committee:

- Did DOT increase 8 positions in 2024?
 - 8 positions were part of the title changes from Motor Equipment Operators to Highway Maintenance Workers
 - Making a dent in staffing but not where it needs to be
 - Still a very competitive labor market
- Have there been any projects or grant funding from the Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law?
 - Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTTC) is supplemented by this
 - County Fed Aid encapsulates a host of different programs
 - The Transportation Improvement Program is federal aid that supports the county, state and other localities across the county; all have pieces of that funding in projects
- How is the staffing?
- Is it still hard finding CDL drivers?
 - Bound by CDL standards and have to be able to pass pre-employment drug test
 - DOT is better now but could still use 20 more (5 in each shop)
 - 6 interviews scheduled for September 23, 2024
 - Typically 80% show up; 30% actually want a job
 - Training titles have worked out great
 - Enables recruitment of those without experience to receive in-house training
- After title changes and salary increases, are crews still being plucked by towns and villages?
 - Not so much towns and villages, but National Grid
 - County cannot compete with National Grid employees who make \$60-\$70 per hour with overtime
 - National Grid is very good at picking the best, brightest and most talented DOT drivers
 - Private sector pay will always more

Mr. May stated for the Record: “I do not think I ever saw you beg. I think you made a really good case for making the changes that we did and I am glad to hear it is working out alright. I appreciate that.”

- Can DOT go through the capital equipment/vehicle requests for the year?
 - DOT – Update on Vehicles
 - Will be taking delivery of 4 plow trucks in early December 2024 that were ordered in beginning of 2022
 - Waiting on 5 Gang trucks ordered in November 2023; current Gang trucks are falling apart
 - Currently taking 18-30 months for manufacture and delivery of equipment
 - Part of the trouble is the chips; components are not made here
 - Currently have \$1.4M requested
 - 4 plow trucks
 - 2 one-ton pick ups
 - 5 SUV’s
- Is it the delivery that is driving the modified number?
 - Finance
 - Had to pull money into the year that equipment will be delivered and then pay for it; \$1,400
 - DOT – Update on Facilities
 - In 2017 DOT did the borrowing and Plan for the North Area and Camillus facilities
 - Camillus
 - Completely tore down and rebuilt; in great shape
 - North Area
 - Planned to tear down but prices went through the roof during COVID
 - Deputy Commissioner worked hard (in-house) getting North Area and other facilities up to standard

- Restored building for highway maintenance
 - Roof, sewer, pipes, flooring, asbestos, cooling unit, backup generator
- North Area still needs some wiring and PA system
- Jamesville
 - Need to replace salt shed siding
 - Camera system
 - Concrete around the floor drains
 - Cracking in the foundation of the Administration building
- Marcellus
 - Bathroom needs to be updated
 - Working with village of Marcellus to connect to their sewer system
 - Will be starting in the spring 2025
 - Need new loading ramp at the salt shed
 - Gutters
 - Concrete on west side of building
 - Drainage
 - Overhead doors and roof (big sticker prices)
- Moving forward, what is the vision as far as material costs?
 - A lot is tied to the price of oil and petroleum
 - Everything DOT uses is hauled with diesel fuel and manufactured with petroleum oil in some way
 - Over the last 8 years, the price has gone from \$255,000 per mile to over \$300,000 per mile
 - Includes transportation, manufacturing, installation, labor
- What about salt?
 - Done pretty well with salt; changed vendors a few years ago
 - Towns and villages buy off county contract
 - County gets a better price than the state
- With asphalt being temperature rated, are contractors using the same amount year after year or are they making adjustments due to record high temperatures?
 - Quantities of asphalt are roughly the same
 - Asphalt is heated close to 300 degrees when it goes down
 - Warmer weather helps bake it in and dry out
 - Not seeing any loss over the summer
 - Winters are more destructive due to ice and water getting into the sub-base of the asphalt
 - Freezes overnight and cracks
 - Milder winters are making county road conditions last longer

PARKS & RECREATION: Brian Kelley, Commissioner

2024 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 2020 we have seen a rise in both passive and active recreation and our event numbers have also increased. We have proven to be invaluable to this community and as a department, we take great pride in that. The Department was able to complete several much-needed capital projects throughout our Parks addressing infrastructure, safety, and Park-wide enhancements. To highlight a few items:

In March and April of 2024 several Onondaga County Parks professionals, facilities & partners received awards for their dedication and contributions to the field of Parks and Recreation at the Central New York Recreation and Park Society Awards Ceremony and the New York State Recreation and Parks Awards Ceremony. The winners included:

Marissa Lathrop, Naturalist - Program Leader Award
Stephanie Reeves, Gardener - Environmental Leadership Award
Robin Augello, Public Information Specialist - Media Award

The following won awards at both the local & state levels:

Leiko Kiggins, Director of Recreation - David M. Guokas Memorial Award CNYRPS's highest honor/**State Distinguished Service Award**

Brian Kelley, Commissioner - Outstanding Service

Cindy Meili, Volunteer (Assistant Director at Veteran's Services)- Distinguished Citizen Award

Pickleball Complex - Exceptional Facility Design

Fishstock - Special Event Award - Partnership with Fayetteville Recreation Commission; Village of Manlius Parks & Recreation; Village of Minoa; Town of Manlius Recreation and New York State Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation.

On April 8th thousands of visitors from across the country converged on Central New York to see the Total Solar Eclipse and participate in various programs including events at Beaver Lake Nature Center, NBT Bank Stadium, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and Onondaga Lake Park.

The Cornell Cooperative Extension partnered with Onondaga County Parks this year to expand their community involvement and offer three weeks of 4H Summer Camp at Highland Forest, Pratt's Falls and Oneida Shores Park. These programs promote leadership, stewardship and teach a variety of environmental educational programs focusing on ticks/lyme disease, water quality, forestry and geology as well as hiking, orienteering, archery, and organized sports. The programs were a great success and we are looking to do even more in 2025.

At Beaver Lake, the Hidden Hills primitive trail was introduced, the first new trail at the park in over 30 years, a new accessible kayak dock was installed, and work on the replacement of the boardwalk of Beaver Lake's most popular trail which circumnavigates the lake started in September.

In the Southern District several miles of trails and roads were improved through major resurfacing and drainage projects. These projects included the replacement and installation of new trail markers and signage at Pratt's Falls and Highland Forest to create safer experiences for park patrons.

Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery not only stocked 58,875 trout into Onondaga County waters but also completed its 30th year of its popular inclusive fishing program, Time out to Fish and took part in the 4th Annual FishStock program which is a cooperative program during April break with Fayetteville Parks & Recreation, Onondaga County Parks, NYS Parks and several other agencies. At this program over 1,000 children adopt a fish and then release them from a bucket into Green Lake.

Oneida Shores continued its renovations to its launch area by installing new docks which will allow for public to be able to launch 8 boats simultaneously and will help us accommodate larger fishing tournaments. The new gate system was also installed and will be operational this month allowing us to capture launch fees when the ticket booth is not staffed. At Onondaga Lake Park, 2.5 miles of the East Shore Recreation Trail was milled and repaved to provide the public with a smoother and safer surface to bike and rollerblade, the pre-engineering site-work and planning for the Marina project started and site enhancements including bleachers, benches, additional windscreens and two shade structures were added to the new pickleball complex.

Lights on the Lake continued to shine bright bringing in 41,189 vehicles and collecting \$15,596 worth of donations during the Charity Nights highlighting several local and national charities like Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Party Princess CNY, Humane CNY, Second Chance Canine Adoption Center, St. Patrick Hunger Project, Launch and Baily's Boutique and over 1100 lbs of food for Feed Our Vets on Salute Our Troops Night.

The engineering and design work for Hopkins Road Park has begun with an overall site plan. This plan includes the design of three multipurpose synthetic convertible fields ("Super Field"). The Super Field would include the opportunity to convert to two 90' baseball diamonds, two softball diamonds, three youth soccer fields, regulation soccer and football fields. The site plan would also include restroom and concession improvements in addition to new lighting and spectator

seating. This project would be constructed in phases with phase one allowing for the construction of one Super Field and some park updates.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo's infrastructure projects including the replacement of the ozone system at the penguin exhibit, 16-foot perimeter fencing around zoo grounds and a new roof on the main building. The primate mesh and the HVAC are all underway or have been completed assisting in our reaccreditation with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Additionally the Zoo hosted Paint the Zoo Blue which raised funds for the families of Lt. Hoosack and Officer Jensen, added two baby patas monkeys to our collection, celebrated the second birthdays of our miracle elephant twins and with the combined efforts of the Friends of the RGZ were able to increase our support for various conservation projects by 114% cementing our commitment to sustainability and environmental education.

In an effort to offer increased accessibility for people with disabilities, Onondaga County Parks received a grant in 2024 to purchase several electric all terrain wheelchairs that will be based out of Highland Forest and Beaver Lake and two regular electric chairs that will be based out of Onondaga Lake Park. Additionally, an ADA compliant fishing jetty was opened at Onondaga Lake Park this year!

2024 BUDGET REVIEW

The Parks Department will finish 2024 within budget.

2025 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2025 budget includes standard salary and wage increases consistent with the baseline budgeting approach, as well as increases in supplies & materials, maintenance, utilities & rents, professional services and all other due to inflation and contract escalators. The 2025 budget request will allow the Parks Department to offer our full slate of programs, events, and daily amenities.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As Parks continues to fully operate at a high level and grow, we plan to take the lessons learned over the past several years with us into the future. We will be continuing our internal resource-sharing initiative and continue to increase efficiencies where possible department-wide. We plan on once again having all our events and continuing all our normal programming and operations in 2025.

The top priority for the Parks Department in 2025 is vehicles and equipment. 75% of our current vehicle fleet (271 active pieces of equipment) is over 10 years old, and we had 8 vehicles that were taken out of our fleet in 2023 and 2024. Safe and reliable vehicles and equipment are more important than ever as we have developed our Park District approach to management. Our fleet is integral to us in terms of being able to provide high-quality service to County residents. The 2025 budget provides continued funding to support our equipment replacement plan.

Questions/comments from Committee:

- Is the \$2M in the Grants budget for the Hopkins Road appropriation?
 - Yes
- Is the increase in the 103 part of the plan?
 - Yes, increasing Ranger salaries from \$22 to \$27 per hour
 - Increase of ~ \$58K; but also unfunded other positions
 - Explanation is in the write-up
- Is there something specific that explains the slight increase on the Professional Services line?
 - Escalators and interest
- What about the All Other line?
 - Dock installations, memberships and escalators went up
- Does County Service Revenue - Culture and Recreation include admission?
 - Yes

- Can Parks provide an assessment of admission situation?
 - Admissions are dependent on weather; great weather days will spike attendance
 - Beaver Lake and Highland Forest are busy year round when there is snow in the winter
 - Fees will affect those that are coming in and having an event
 - If Rangers are needed, will charge event coordinators for that cost
 - Onondaga Lake is busier than ever but do not have a means of taking attendance
 - Highland Forest is a big money maker when it snows
- Parks has done some cool stuff in terms of making exceptions for things like permits for E-bikes
 - Disability E-bikes are working out well
- Are there discounts for seniors and Military Veterans in certain parks or across the board?
 - Seniors can use all parks for free on Fridays (Freebie Fridays)
 - Veterans (plus up to 4 family members if accompanied by veteran) get free admission in all parks everyday
- What is the exhibit that Parks is asking \$8M for?
 - African Savanna - will be in the 2026 budget
- Is the tram included this year?
 - Replacement is scheduled to be in the budget for next year
 - If money left over in this year's vehicle budget, Parks will take a look at it
- What vehicles are Parks requesting for this year?
 - \$500K request
 - Ford cargo van for Onondaga Lake Park
 - Zero turn mower for Oneida Shores
 - 2 Cushman haulers (utility vehicles) for Onondaga Lake Park and Oneida Shores
 - ¾ ton pickup truck for Beaver Lake
 - Compact tractor for Beaver Lake
 - Bobcat for the Zoo
 - Payloader for the Southern District (Jamesville, Pratts Falls, and Highland Forest)
 - Gravely Atlas mower for the Southern District
- The number of vehicles mentioned sounds like a deal for \$500K, will that catch up the Parks Department?
 - Vehicles used by Parks include trucks, trailers, heavy equipment, mowers and specialized equipment
 - Consolidated efforts around vehicles that were 10-15 years old
 - \$500K received over the last 3 years has put Parks in a better position to catch up
 - Vehicle plan is budgeted and prioritized for the next 3 or 4 years
 - Requests will still come in for vehicles
- What is included in Rental Income?
 - Rent mini excavators and skid steers
 - Rental budget is a savior for vehicles going down and use of gators and golf carts for events
- Was fortunate to be at the Parks Society Awards
- It is not just a couple of awards, it was like sitting with the blockbuster movie at the Academy Awards
- It was well deserved to be recognized on a state level; kudo's to the whole Parks Department
- Henderson property on Otisco Lake is through the Office of Environment
- Helped negotiate with Finger Lakes Land Trust to purchase a giant parcel on the lake and keep it forever wild
- Parks Department had some involvement, is it a county park?
 - County Parks owns it as a preserve type setting rather than a park
 - County mows the trail from the parking lot down to the water once per week
 - Do not do permits, but receive calls that school groups may come in to do dendrology stuff
- There was talk about building an accessible fishing platform

- There is an anoxic zone and the lake is struggling; fish cannot live there
 - This property is completely different from everything else that Parks does
 - Parks is always open to suggestions and ideas on how to use the property
- Are the chances pretty good at pursuing a grant for the Lock at Long Branch?
 - Yes, needs to be repointed, the heavy cost comes in with brick and mortar
- Will Parks be doing any hiring specifically for the Veterans Cemetery?
- The only burials are on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays with 9 slots per funeral home
 - Would love to get veterans working at cemetery on the part-time line
 - The current setup is working wonderfully as a Department
 - Mondays and Fridays are reserved for taking care of the property (aesthetics, condition, capital improvements)
 - Trying to make it a premier cemetery
 - There are plenty of resources available to accommodate a burial on those days if needed
- In the future is there consideration to add another day?
 - Will address that down the road once expansion project comes to fruition
- How is the property, capacity wise?
 - The spoils were taking up a large chunk of land on the property
 - Particularly in the spot where a retention pond will be added to help with flooding
 - Figured out a way to get the spoils removed from the old burials
 - Going to cremations sites will provide more room
 - About 50/50 leaning towards cremation burials rather than standard burials
 - With the expansion, clearing everything and marking it in advance will be easier than clearing a section at a time
 - A lot of engineering and things to work out before getting to the expansion
- Hard to believe Onondaga Lake is setting up for Lights on the Lake
 - Started the day after Labor Day
- How did we do last year?
 - Did great, 41,189 vehicles went through last year
 - \$15,596 was raised on charity night
- How does that compare to years past?
 - COVID year was astronomical; 60,000 cars through
 - Average numbers are usually between 35,000 and 45,000

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **WAYS & MEANS BUDGET REVIEW – DAY 5**

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 18, 2024**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Knsti Smiley	Finance
Alexa Cain	Syracuse-con
Shannon Hartly	OCDWGP
Eric Schuler	OCDWGP
DAVE Snypon	OCDWGP
TAVIA HUGHES	Finance
Sirena Sharpe	Finance
Ben Yans	Law
Jennifer Paganelli	Fin Ops.
MB [Signature]	CE
Bob Petrucci	ED
Nate Stevens	Econ Dev
MARRY VOSS	DOT
Dan Mulinik	DMS
Elizabeth Bough Martin	Office of the Environment
Kim Hall	Parks
Brian Kelley	"
Mark Nicotra	"
Beth Mortas	Personnel
Selena Pappas	Personnel
Amy Lang	Personnel
Stacey Rhoades	Personnel
Patty Gonzalez	Comp.
Aime Loughlin	Comp.
Colin Strick	Personnel