



CITY OF ONEIDA COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date:	May 19, 2026	Presiding:	Rick Rossi, Mayor
Time:	6:30pm	Clerk:	Sandy LaPera, City Clerk
Location:	Common Council Chambers	Meeting Type:	Regular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special <input type="checkbox"/>

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rick Rossi, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Attendees

	Present	Absent	Arrived Late
Mayor Rossi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
City Manager Lovell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor McHugh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Cimpi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Pagano	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____
Councilor Simchik	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> : _____

Also Present

City Attorney Bell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attorney (Other)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Chief Jones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Chief Lowell	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

PRESENTATION: BRiDGES Tobacco Control Program (See Attachment A)

PUBLIC HEARING: A Local Law amending Chapter 190 (Zoning) of the Code of the City of Oneida regarding Wireless Communication Facilities and Towers within the City of Oneida

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

**A LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 190 (ZONING) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ONEIDA
REGARDING WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITIES AND TOWERS WITHIN
THE CITY OF ONEIDA**

RESOLUTION 26-78

Moved by Councilor Jones
Seconded by Councilor Simchik

RESOLVED, that the Public Hearing on a Local Law amending Chapter 190 (Zoning) of the Code of the City of Oneida regarding Wireless Communication Facilities and Towers within the City of Oneida is hereby opened at 6:37pm.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0
Absent: 0

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

APPEARANCES

None

DISCUSSION: The City Attorney advised that comments had not yet been received from the Planning Commission or Madison County and suggested that the Common Council may wish to keep the public hearing open until those comments were received. Accordingly, the Council did not close the public hearing and chose to table closure until the referrals are returned from the Planning Commission and Madison County.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

**A LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 190 (ZONING) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ONEIDA
REGARDING WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITIES AND TOWERS WITHIN
THE CITY OF ONEIDA**

**RESOLUTION 26-79
TABLED**

Motion to Table Resolution by Councilor Cimpi
Seconded by Councilor McHugh

RESOLVED, that the Public Hearing on a Local Law amending Chapter 190 (Zoning) of the Code of the City of Oneida regarding Wireless Communication Facilities and Towers within the City of Oneida is hereby closed at ____pm.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed Tabled

PUBLIC COMMENT

BOB BRITTON-ONEIDA

Bob Britton addressed the Council and encouraged members to work together rather than engage in finger-pointing or divisiveness. He stated that the City would accomplish more if the Council functioned as a unified team and expressed hope that the remaining year and a half of the term would be productive and free from the conflict seen in prior years.

Mr. Britton also voiced strong support for the airplane memorial project, stating that honoring those who served in the military and those who did not return is invaluable and that the cost of the project should not outweigh its significance.

He further commented on several City expenditures, including the ongoing maintenance costs associated with the Oneida Rail Trail, the construction of a bridge, and investments intended to attract bicyclists traveling along the Erie Canal Trail. While cyclists travel through the region, he questioned why more are not stopping in Oneida and suggested the City should explore ways to better capitalize on the economic opportunities the trail presents.

Finally, Mr. Britton noted that Fire Department overtime has been a concern for several years and urged the Council to work with the department to identify a long-term solution that could help reduce costs and save taxpayer dollars.

GREGG MYERS-ONEIDA

Gregg Myers stated that, in anticipation of the public hearing regarding the proposed local law governing storage trailers, he contacted colleagues throughout New York State to determine whether other municipalities had adopted similar ordinances. He asked whether the City had reviewed comparable laws from other communities so that it would not be "reinventing the wheel."

Mr. Myers stated that, while the proposed local law was a good start, he found several provisions to be vague and believed that a number of common situations in the City were not clearly addressed. He cited examples including towing companies that store disabled vehicles on their lots, construction contractors who may bring equipment and materials into the City for major

projects, industrial properties with longstanding equipment and permits, previously approved site plans where conditions have changed over time, and shipping containers or trailers that have remained on properties for extended periods.

He also questioned how the law would be implemented, specifically asking whether there would be a defined timeframe for compliance and how long property owners would have to correct any nonconforming conditions before being subject to enforcement.

In response, the City Attorney stated that these were valid questions and explained that the purpose of the public hearing scheduled for June 2, 2026, was to provide an opportunity for such concerns to be raised and addressed on the record before the Common Council considered adopting the proposed local law. She encouraged Mr. Myers to present his comments and questions at the public hearing so they could be considered and made part of the record.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilor Dave Cimpi stated that he had several items he wished to follow up on. He noted prior discussions regarding the distinction between properties located inside and outside the City for tax purposes and stated that he had not seen any action on the proposed Charter change related to that issue. He also referenced previous discussions concerning the distribution of tax revenues between the City and Madison County and noted that no further information had been presented.

Councilor Cimpi also requested an update on efforts to address homelessness, noting that the issue had been discussed extensively approximately one month earlier.

Finally, Councilor Cimpi reiterated a point he raised early in the Council's term: that the Common Council should identify what it wants to be known for and what it hopes to accomplish during its tenure. He stated that he believes the Council should focus on establishing shared goals and working together collaboratively to move the City forward.

The City Attorney responded that the issue of the inside and outside districts has not been ignored. She advised that City Manager Kyle Lovell had reached out to her regarding the matter and explained that she has been researching the issue, but that it is complicated due to the City's tax structure and the services currently provided within each district.

She explained that there are services and improvements provided in the inside district that are not necessarily provided in the outside district, such as sidewalks, lighting, hydrants, and similar infrastructure. She stated that the Council would need to consider whether those costs should remain district-specific or become shared City-wide expenses.

The City Attorney further explained that cities, villages, and towns are structured differently for taxing purposes. Villages generally tax as one unit, while towns often have separate districts for services such as sewer, lighting, drainage, and fire protection. She noted that any change to the existing district structure would likely involve a formal process, including review by the State Comptroller.

She stated that she would continue researching the issue and provide the Council with additional information once a clearer roadmap is available.

Councilor Janet Jones asked whether, once that roadmap is developed, the Council could review projected costs and revenues over a three- to five-year period. The City Attorney responded that the issue could not lend itself to a gradual phase-in, as the districts either exist or do not exist.

City Manager Kyle Lovell stated that he has been reviewing this matter and one option to consider would be to maintain the existing district structure while equalizing the tax rates for the inside and outside districts.

Mayor Rossi added that he agreed this approach may be worth exploring given the many factors and complexities associated with modifying or eliminating the current district structure.

Councilor Janet Jones asked whether Comptroller Lee Ann Wells could prepare projections showing what the City's finances would look like if the tax rates for the inside and outside districts were equalized.

Councilor Nathan Smith stated that the City should also consider conducting a city-wide reassessment. He noted that this issue has been discussed several times by both the current and prior Common Councils. Councilor Smith acknowledged that a reassessment can be costly, but stated that, based on the sale prices of some homes, even assessments at 80 percent or 60 percent of market value may not accurately reflect current property values. He suggested that a reassessment, while expensive, may be necessary to ensure assessments are equitable and up to date.

SUPERVISOR'S REMARKS: None

MAYOR'S REMARKS:

Mayor Rossi reminded the public that the Oneida Memorial Association will host its 137th Annual Memorial Day Parade on Friday. The memorial ceremony will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Triangle Park, followed by the parade at 7:00 p.m. A gathering will be held afterward at approximately 8:15 p.m. at the American Legion. The Mayor encouraged residents to attend and participate in the event.

Mayor Rossi also promoted the upcoming car show that will be held as part of the City's 250th Anniversary Celebration on July 4. He noted that the event will feature 12 classes and cash prizes. Registration will take place from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., with judging beginning at noon. He added that a "Mayor's Choice" award will be presented and encouraged the public to attend the celebration.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

City Manager Kyle Lovell provided a brief update regarding the City's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). He reported that the City was notified earlier in the day by the Department of State and HCR (Homes and Community Renewal) that the Paul Marco building project (Redevelop the Lerman Building for Commercial and Residential Uses) had officially been terminated. As a

result, \$1.141 million in DRI funding has been released and is now available for reallocation to two other previously approved projects from the previously approved Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

Mr. Lovell stated that the two-remaining State approved DRI projects are the Kallet Theater and Higinbotham Park. He noted that the reallocation of the funds to the remaining approved projects will be forthcoming with input from council and the community.

Mr. Lovell also provided an update regarding property maintenance at the Route 5/Genesee Street project site. He stated that the developer had offered to hire a contractor to mow the property as a gesture of goodwill in response to complaints from neighboring residents. However, after further discussion, it was determined that there may be an existing arrangement involving the seller's realtor and a third-party regarding mowing of the site, which has complicated the matter.

Mr. Lovell stated that the situation remains unresolved but emphasized that the property remains subject to the City's property maintenance requirements. If the grass is not maintained in compliance with City Code, the City will take the appropriate enforcement action. He thanked Arthur Kerr and the developer for their willingness to assist and noted that additional updates would be provided as the matter progresses.

Mr. Lovell concluded by thanking the Mayor for highlighting the upcoming Memorial Day Parade and stated that he looked forward to attending.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilor McHugh
Seconded by Councilor Cimpi

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on May 5, 2026, are approved as presented.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 1 (Smith)

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Motion by Councilor Simchik
Seconded by Councilor Smith

RESOLVED, that Warrant No. 10, including checks and ACH payments totaling \$539,237.20, as audited by the Voucher Committee, is hereby approved for payment in the usual manner at the discretion of the Comptroller.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

**ADOPT A LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 80, TITLED "INSURANCE," OF THE CODE OF THE
CITY OF ONEIDA**

RESOLUTION 26-80

Moved by Councilor Simchik
Seconded by Councilor McHugh

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Home Rule Law, a proposed local law titled "A Local Law Chapter 80, Titled "Insurance," of the Code of the City of Oneida," was presented and introduced at a regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Oneida held on April 21, 2026; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on such proposed local law on May 5, 2026, by the Common Council of the City of Oneida and proof of publication of notice of such public hearing, as required by law, having been submitted and filed, and all persons desiring to be heard in connection with said proposed local law having been heard, and said proposed local law having been in the possession of the members of the Common Council in its final form in the manner required by Section 20 of the Municipal Home Rule of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of the Proposed Local Law has previously been determined to be an unlisted action for purposes of the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") and the Common Council has determined that a short environmental assessment form ("EAF") was required in connection with this matter; and

WHEREAS, said EAF has been prepared and has been reviewed by the Common Council and the Common Council has considered the adoption of said Local Law, has considered the criteria contained in 6 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 617.7 and has compared the impacts which may be reasonably expected to result from the adoption of said Local Law against said criteria; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to enact said Proposed Local Law.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is

RESOLVED, that the Common Council has determined this action shall have no significant adverse impact on the environment; that, accordingly, an environmental impact statement (“EIS”) shall not be required; and that this resolution shall constitute a negative declaration under SEQRA; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Oneida, Madison County, New York, does hereby enact a Local Law as follows:

“CITY OF ONEIDA

A LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 80, TITLED “INSURANCE,” OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ONEIDA

Be it enacted by the Common Council of the City of Oneida as follows:

Section 1. AUTHORITY.

This local law is enacted pursuant to the New York State Constitution and New York Municipal Home Rule Law §10.

Section 2. PURPOSE.

This City of Oneida finds that it is essential to the public health, safety and welfare that once a fire has damaged or destroyed a building, cleanup must occur, and when necessary, demolition and removal of buildings and debris from the premises by the property owner. The intent of this Local Law is to compel property owners to clean up properties and where necessary complete demolition and removal of buildings and debris before collecting insurance proceeds pursuant to §22 of the General Municipal Law.

Section 3. AMENDMENT OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ONEIDA CHAPTER 80, ARTICLE I

So that Chapter 80, Article I of the City Code of the City of Oneida, titled “Use of Fire Insurance Proceeds to Satisfy Municipal Liens,” be amended to read in its entirety as follows:

“§80-1 Notice of Intention to Claim.

Whenever the City of Oneida has an existing lien for taxes, special ad valorem taxes, special assessments or municipal charges arising by operation of law against real property, as defined in §22 of the General Municipal Law, which have remained undischarged for a period of one year or more and there is fire damage to the real property for which a claim for proceeds of a fire insurance policy insuring the interests of an owner of the real property may be made, the City

Chamberlain, or their designee, shall file a notice of intention to claim against the proceeds of fire insurance policies with the State Superintendent of Insurance for entry in accordance with §22 of the General Municipal Law, the New York State Insurance Law and all rules and regulations promulgated by the New York State Department of Insurance with respect to this procedure.

§80-2 Conflict with Other Provisions.

The provisions of this Article shall not be deemed or construed to alter or impair the right of the City to acquire or enforce any lien against property but shall be in addition to any other power provided by law to acquire or enforce such right.

§80-3 Release of Proceeds.

Whenever the proceeds of a policy of fire insurance will be or have been paid to the City instead of an insured, all or part of such proceeds may be paid or released to the insured if the insured satisfies to the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, that the affected premises have been or will be repaired or restored, that such repairs or restoration are in the public interest, and the insured is issued and complies with an agreement entered into pursuant to this Article. To secure such payment or release of proceeds the insured must notify the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, within 30 days after the mailing to the insured of a notice of the service of the certificate of special lien pursuant to this Article, of the intention to restore or repair the affected premises and must file with the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, a completed application with all required supporting documentation, unless the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, grants an extension for a stated period of time.

§80-4 Conditions of Release of Proceeds.

The release or return to the insured of any amount to which he or she or it would otherwise be entitled to claim shall be subject to the following conditions:

- A. Such release or return shall be subject to the repair or restoration of the affected premises, in accordance with applicable building laws, to the condition it was in prior to the time the lien of the City of Oneida arose, or to an improved condition.
- B. The insured shall file with the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, an application, in affidavit form, with such supporting documentation as the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, shall require, containing the following:
 - 1) A complete description of the nature and extend of the damage to the insured premises and of the condition of the premises prior to the time the lien of the City arose;
 - 2) A complete description of the nature of the repairs or restoration to be undertaken and the cost thereof;
 - 3) A statement as to the source of funds needed to complete such repairs or restoration if the insurance proceeds are not sufficient therefor;

- 4) The name and address of each contractor who will effect such repairs or restoration;
 - 5) An estimated time schedule showing how long the repairs or restoration, and each phase thereof, will take; and
 - 6) Such other information as may be required by the City to enable it to determine whether the repairs or restoration are in the public interest and will be or have been timely and properly made.
- C. Upon a preliminary approval of an application by the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, and the Code Enforcement Officer and/ or Fire Marshal, the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, may enter into a written agreement with the insured, which shall set forth the terms and conditions for the release and return of all or part of the proceeds, and the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, is hereby authorized to enter into such an agreement of behalf of the City of Oneida.
- D. The repairs or restoration required by the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, upon the advice and recommendation of the Code Enforcement Officer and/ or Fire Marshal, shall be completed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement prior to the release or return of any part of the insurance proceeds; provided, however, that the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, may, upon the written request of the insured and in its sole discretion, approve a prior release of such proceeds or a portion thereof, in a lump sum or installments, where the insured certifies and demonstrates that such release is required to permit such repairs or restoration to go forward. Any such insurance proceeds released or returned prior to the completion of the repairs or restoration required by the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, may be paid directly to the contractors responsible for making such repairs or restoration. Such payment shall, to the extent thereof, release the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, from further liability to the insure.
- E. Whenever the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, releases the entire amount of the proceeds prior to compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement, the insured shall post an undertaking in an amount sufficient to assume the restoration or improvement of the property.

§80-5 Termination of the Right of Insured to Assert Claim.

If the insured (1) fails to notify the City of his or her or its intention to repair or restore the affected premises, (2) fails to file a completed application pursuant to this Article, or (3) fails to enter into an agreement with the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, or comply therewith within the time set forth, the right of the insured to assert a claim against the insurance proceeds, except to the extent they exceed the amount of the lien, shall terminate.

§80-6 Fund for Insurance Proceeds.

There shall be established in the City a fund for the deposit of fire insurance proceeds to be held and applied in accordance with this Article. Such funds shall not be held together with the general tax levies in the general fund.

§80-7 Disposition of Funds.

Until such termination, any insurance proceeds received by the City of Oneida shall be deposited in a special fund and shall be retained therein. Upon termination of the insured's right to claim against the proceeds, the proceeds and any interest accrued thereon shall be applied to the liens affecting the premises in a manner to be determined by the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, and may be transferred to the general fund.

§80-8 Continuance of Liens in Effect Until Paid.

The lien or liens against the affected premises upon which the special lien against proceeds is based shall continue in full force and effect, except that such lien or liens are or have been paid.

§80-9 Purpose of Agreements

Any agreement entered into by the City Chamberlain, or a designee thereof, pursuant to this Article shall be for the purpose of preserving and evidencing the right of release of the special lien created pursuant to this procedure and shall be subject solely to the provisions of this Chapter. Any repair or restoration performed in anticipation of a release of insurance proceeds shall not be deemed to be a public work or City project nor to have been done pursuant to a City contract."

Section 4. SEVERABILITY.

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part thereof directly involved in the controversy.

Section 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law."

- Councilor McHugh YES
- Councilor Cimpi YES
- Councilor Smith YES
- Councilor Jones YES
- Councilor Pagano YES
- Councilor Simchik YES
- Mayor Rossi YES

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

**RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT OF THE CITY OF ONEIDA COMMON COUNCIL
TO ACT AS LEAD AGENCY**

Proposed Action: City of Oneida Sewer Collection System Improvements Project

RESOLUTION 26-81

Moved by Councilor Simchik
Seconded by Councilor McHugh

WHEREAS, the City of Oneida (City) is proposing the City of Oneida Sewer Collection I&I Improvements Project (Project), located in the City of Oneida, Madison County, New York; and

WHEREAS, the Project has been classified as a “Type I Action” as defined by the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) in 6 NYCRR Part 617.4; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the City of Oneida Common Council to assume the role of “Lead Agency” for purposes of conducting an assessment of the Project pursuant to the State Environmental Review Process (SERP) and SEQRA; and

WHEREAS, Part I of a Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) has been completed, reviewed by the City of Oneida Common Council, and will be circulated to all Interested and Involved Agencies for purposes of establishing the City of Oneida Common Council as “Lead Agency” in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617.6(b).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED AND DETERMINED, that the Mayor of the City of Oneida hereby is authorized to sign Part I of the FEAF (page 13); and it is further

RESOLVED AND DETERMINED, that the City of Oneida will send said Part I of the FEAF and associated site figure to the attached list of “Interested and Involved Agencies” under cover of a “Notice of Intent to Establish Lead Agency” letter for purposes of establishing Lead Agency status under the SEQRA/SERP; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Mayor of the City of Oneida and the Common Council, together with the City of Oneida Attorney and B&L, are hereby authorized to take all actions, serve all notices, and complete all documents required to give full force and effect to this determination.

The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

Councilor McHugh YES
Councilor Cimpi YES
Councilor Smith YES
Councilor Jones YES
Councilor Pagano YES
Councilor Simchik YES
Mayor Rossi YES

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

DISCUSSION:

The City Attorney explained that the action before the Council was the initial step in the environmental review process under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). She noted that, because of the significance of the project and pursuant to the regulations set forth in 6 NYCRR Part 617, the Common Council would designate itself as Lead Agency for purposes of conducting the environmental review.

She further explained that this designation allows the City to move forward with the next steps in the SEQRA process. She noted that involved and interested agencies, including Madison County, may respond with comments or identify environmental concerns that they believe should be addressed as part of the review process. Those comments would then be considered by the Common Council before any final determination is made regarding the project.

RECEIVE/FILE BID RESULTS-WATER TREATMENT PLANT BOILER REPLACEMENT

RESOLUTION 26-82

Moved by Councilor Simchik
Seconded by Councilor Pagano

RESOLVED, to receive and place on file the bid results for the Water Treatment Plant Boiler Replacement project. No bids were received in response to the solicitation.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0
Absent: 0

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

DISCUSSION:

Councilor Janet Jones noted that earlier in the year the Council discussed receiving a limited number of bids on certain projects, including several projects that received no bids. She asked whether the City had developed a more formal process for soliciting bids and whether there was a policy in place to ensure that bid opportunities are widely distributed.

The City Manager explained that, in addition to publishing legal notices as required, department heads are encouraged to directly contact contractors and vendors with whom they have previously worked and to cast as wide a net as possible when seeking bids.

Councilor Nathan Smith stated that he would like to see this practice formally incorporated into the City's purchasing policy so that it becomes a standard procedure rather than an informal approach that could be lost over time.

Councilor Lynne McHugh noted that there are online marketplaces and bid-posting platforms used by other municipalities and suggested that the City explore additional methods of advertising bid opportunities to increase competition and improve the likelihood of receiving responsive bids.

The City Attorney responded that the City already has a purchasing policy that addresses bid procedures and suggested that the policy could be reviewed to determine whether revisions are needed to codify additional outreach requirements.

BUDGET TRANSFERS AND AMENDMENTS

RESOLUTION 26-83

Moved by Councilor Simchik
Seconded by Councilor Jones

RESOLVED, to approve the budget transfer and amendments as outlined by the Comptroller or a third party duly retained by the City of Oneida to perform such services.

	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>
2026 Budget Adjustments		
\$	10,000.00	
	003.8110.0412.0000	003.0003.0912.0000
	Madison County Biosolids	Sewer Fund Balance
<i>To allocate funds to cover expenses associated with the Madison County Invoicing of biosolid transport</i>		

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

NEW BUSINESS

Under New Business, Councilor Dave Cimpi asked why the Common Council no longer discusses the monthly departmental reports during Council meetings.

Mayor Rossi responded that, during his six years on the Council, the reports have generally been received and placed on file without formal discussion. The City Attorney added that, in earlier years, department heads occasionally attended meetings to answer questions regarding their reports, but over time that practice appears to have evolved, possibly due to concerns about the cost of requiring department heads to attend evening meetings when there may not be specific issues to discuss.

Councilor Cimpi stated that he had several questions regarding the reports. The Mayor indicated that he was welcome to raise those questions during the meeting.

Councilor Dave Cimpi asked Fire Chief Scott Jones whether the Fire Department had expended approximately one-half of its overtime budget as of the end of April, based on information contained in the monthly departmental report.

Chief Jones confirmed that this was accurate and explained that the Department began the year fully staffed but subsequently lost one firefighter to retirement and another to a lateral transfer. He also noted that one firefighter was required to return to the academy after sustaining an injury at the end of the prior year. As a result, the Department is currently operating below full staffing levels, which has led to increased overtime costs.

In response to questions regarding staffing, Chief Jones stated that the Department has operated with six firefighters assigned to each shift, with five on duty at all times, for approximately 20 years. He noted that this staffing level is established in the collective bargaining agreement and represents the minimum staffing level he considers necessary to safely operate the Department.

Chief Jones explained that, unlike law enforcement agencies that may receive assistance from neighboring agencies, the Fire Department has limited ability to rely on outside resources, although volunteer mutual aid is available when needed.

Councilor Cimpi expressed concern that the Department may exhaust its overtime budget well before the end of the fiscal year and asked what steps were being taken to address the issue. Chief Jones explained that funding for additional hires had been requested during the budget process and stated that filling vacant positions would significantly reduce overtime costs. He noted that the Department recently completed civil service examinations and is exploring the possibility of hiring experienced firefighters through lateral transfers.

Chief Jones acknowledged that, if staffing shortages are not addressed, the Department could face similar overtime challenges in the upcoming budget year. He stated that retirements are difficult to predict because employees are only required to provide 30 days' notice but emphasized that he is actively working to fill vacancies and stabilize staffing levels.

Councilor Dave Cimpi stated that the issue of overtime is not unique to the Fire Department and noted that the Police Department has also experienced significant overtime costs. He expressed concern about the impact these expenses may have on the City's financial position and emphasized the importance of continuing to monitor overtime usage closely.

Mayor Rossi commented that preparing and maintaining the City budget has become an ongoing balancing act. He noted that the City experienced a 7 percent increase in costs in the prior year while continuing to operate at minimum staffing levels.

Mayor Rossi stated that, in his opinion, the City has reached a point where there is little remaining from the budget. He noted that the City has already combined positions and implemented other cost-saving measures and suggested that the focus should now shift toward identifying new sources of revenue rather than pursuing additional reductions in spending.

EXECUTIVE SESSION RESOLUTION 26-84

Motioned by Councilor Simchik
Seconded by Councilor McHugh

RESOLVED, to enter into Executive Session at 07:19 p.m. for the purpose of:

- Personnel
- Litigation (proposed/pending/current)
- Collective negotiations
- Real property transaction (value affected by publicity)
- Medical/financial/credit history (particular person/corp.)
- Public safety/cybersecurity
- Other (specify): Seek advice of counsel

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

Attendees: Mayor City Manager City Attorney Other: _____

Councilors: All Absent:

Executive Session adjourned to the regular meeting at: 07:52 p.m. with:

No action taken Action taken: See motion in open session (Ref. _____)

Motion to adjourn regular meeting by Councilor Cimpi
Seconded by Councilor Smith

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

MOTION RESULT: Passed Failed

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the regular meeting adjourned at: 07:53 p.m.

Certified by: Sandra LaPera _____
City Clerk, City of Oneida, New York