



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

COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES – JUNE 17, 2025 DEBRA J. CODY, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Knapp, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Ms. Gunnip, Mr. Romeo; also see attached list

Chair Cody called the meeting to order at 11:34 a.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. PARKS & RECREATION: Brian Kelley, Commissioner

a. Amending the 2025 County Budget to Provide Additional Funding for the Future Needs of the Onondaga County Veterans Memorial Cemetery (\$208,759.76)

- Parks would like to spend the remaining balance out of Perpetual Care Funds on needed equipment
- Perpetual Care Fund monies are restricted to the Cemetery and have to be spent for and on the Veterans Cemetery
- Confident that all refunds have been given back out of that account for those that have paid and received the money back once burials went free

PURPOSE:

To amend the 2025 County budget to provide additional funding for the future needs of the Onondaga County Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN:

To fund the perpetual care and improvement of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery, an account was established in the Trust and Agency Fund to accrue interest from portions of burial fees and to advance payments for burial fees and it is necessary to transfer the funds from the Trust and Agency Fund to the Veterans Cemetery Improvement Fund to be spent on the future needs of the Veterans Cemetery.

FUNDING SOURCE: Trust and Agency Account for Veterans Burials

BUDGET: \$208,759.76

Perpetual Care Fund \$208,879.76

- In the event that there is additional burial refunds, there is a separate account to facilitate those refunds.
- Vehicle/Equipment Requested:

ExMark 144" Mower - \$70,000.00

- Replaces – Three John Deere Frontliner Mowers (2003, 2013, 2013)
- Due to use and age, the current mowers have reached the end of their useful life. The cost of repairs needed exceed the value of the mowers. Some parts needed are no longer available/made.
- 144" Mower: Purchasing a 144" Exmark mower for the Veterans & Loomis Hill Cemeteries is crucial for maintaining the vast and meticulously groomed grounds with efficiency and precision. The cemetery spans a large area, requiring extensive mowing to keep the landscape in pristine condition, befitting the honor and respect owed to the veterans interred there. The 144" mower, with its substantial cutting width, would significantly reduce mowing time, allowing maintenance staff to cover more ground quickly and with fewer passes. This increased efficiency would not only save on labor costs but also minimize equipment wear and fuel consumption. Additionally, the Exmark mower's superior cutting capabilities ensure a uniform, high-quality appearance, preserving the

dignified and serene atmosphere of the cemetery. Investing in this equipment is essential to uphold the high standards of care and respect deserved by the veterans and their families.

- *Primary Job Functions: This unit is twice the width of our standard mowers and will cut the time needed to mow both cemeteries, completed twice a week, in half.*
- This type of equipment makes Parks more efficient and allows the cemetery to look like it should
- With burials Tuesday – Thursday, this will allow for maintenance on Mondays and Fridays, as well as make up for bad weather days

2025 Ford F450 Dump Truck - \$75,000.00

- *Replaces – 2011 Ford F450 Dump Truck (purchased in 2011)*
 - *Vehicle # 7011*
 - *Mileage – 16,280*
 - *Since 2021, out of service for 232 days*
 - *Since 2021, repair costs has been \$10,666.41*
 - *Due to use, the current vehicle is rusting and falling apart. In addition, the vehicle is showing overall wear and tear due to the daily use hauling soil, rocks, spoils, and other items in the grave digging/filling process.*
- *Dump Truck: Replacing the Veterans Cemetery's existing one-ton pickup truck with a new one-ton pickup is a necessary investment for Cemetery operations for a number of reasons, the most important being our commitment to providing the highest standards of care for our veterans' final resting place. The current vehicle has served its purpose for a number of years, resulting in increased maintenance costs and decreased reliability, which hinders our ability to efficiently carry out essential tasks such as transporting equipment, maintaining the grounds, and assisting with burials. The biggest issue being the deteriorating dump bed, which is crucial for moving of materials in the grave digging process. Current models offer improved fuel efficiency and reduced emissions, aligning with our commitment to environmental sustainability.*
- *Primary job functions include: Assisting with burials, maintaining the grounds, snow plowing, and transporting heavy materials and equipment.*
- Have to remove and haul the spoil pile for every burial; there are 6,500 graves
 - Parks is responsible for digging, moving spoil piles and keeping up the conditions of the cemetery
 - This vehicle will help with burials, snow plowing, and installing head stones (better way to transport head stones to and from the garage)
 - Try to get all head stones in before Memorial Day
- Dump truck and mower are both gas

Kubota SCL 1000 with bucket, auger, and forks- \$40,000.00

- *Replaces 2x John Deere Tractors (Age unknown) and rental of various pieces of equipment.*
- *The purchase of a Kubota SCL 1000 with auger and forks for the Onondaga County Veterans Cemetery is a practical and efficient replacement for two aging tractors currently in use. This compact, track-driven machine offers enhanced versatility and maneuverability, allowing staff to safely move multiple heavy marker stones (120 lbs per stone) and efficiently bore holes for cremation burials. Its compact size and precision controls will also allow better access to tight spaces between graves, which is especially important for maintaining and positioning second interments within existing plots. The rubber tracks distribute weight more evenly than traditional tires, significantly reducing damage to the cemetery grounds—an important consideration in preserving the dignity and appearance of the site. Additionally, compatible implements such as a soil conditioner or tree stump grinder could be rented as needed, offering cost savings over renting separate or larger skid loader systems. The SCL 1000's multi-functional capabilities will streamline operations, reduce manual labor, and support the respectful maintenance of this honored space.*
- *Primary Job functions will include: Assisting with burials, cremation burials, maintaining the grounds*
- Seeing an increase in cremation burials over the course of time, almost 50/50
- When looking at Cemetery expansion for more space, found crypts would not work due to flood plain; where they can get more room and be more efficient is having dedicated cremation sites

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- What is the plan for the old equipment?
 - It will go to County auction
- With the mower replacing 3, is there any concern of having 1 bad piece of equipment?
 - No, this mower is efficient and Parks has a mowing crew for the southern and northern districts
 - The cemetery sits with itself, and a mowing crew comes in and out; have one mower on site
 - If there is a break down, there are plenty of mowers that can be sent in
- Will this take care of the Perpetual Care Fund?
 - Yes
- Moving forward there is no more Perpetual Care Fund
 - No, after this it is operating budget (conversation for vehicle line)
 - In the event that there are other burial refunds, there is another account dedicated for that with funds
- What is the lead-time on all the equipment?
 - Everything is ready to submit; sometimes a month or longer wait
 - The truck may take longer

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

b. INFORMATIONAL: Update on current projects; Mark Nicotra, Deputy Commissioner

Hopkins Park

Bid opening 6/18/25 – 2pm

- Design from CPL are not done; a lot of County work has been better than expected
- Hoping for shovels in the ground in September/opening mid-summer (next summer)

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Having not been there in a while, there is a parking lot in the middle, fields on the left and fields on the right?
 - Yes, when entering the fields on the right, that is where this field is going
 - There will still be fields on the left
 - Future years in the CIP (2027 & 2028)
 - 2027 - hoping to do the amenities around the field
 - 2028 - may be ready to go after another field in the back
 - This will be on the right hand side where fields 2 & 3 were
 - More lights in the park and able to accommodate bigger things
 - If Parks builds out Hopkins and Town of Dewitt builds out Carrier Park, should be able to get everything
 - 40-60 team tournaments at Hopkins
 - Pull in what DeWitt has, would be able to get national and world stuff
 - Closest turf complexes are in Jersey, Baltimore, etc.
 - Positioning county to be in a good spot for Northeast super fields (i.e. baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse)
 - Community is in favor, as the county is not displacing the softball and baseball players
- Is traffic mitigation being built in?
 - Yes, when building out the second phase, Parks will need it
 - Previously thought they would need a light, but engineers comfortable with turn lanes onto Electronics Parkway
 - Will happen with next 2 phases; need service road in the back to get to those fields
 - Had \$6-7M for this project and the service road in back was costly
 - Decided to go with what is easiest, getting the turf put in and will ask for other stuff down the road

Onondaga Lake Marina*100% Design**Submitting Joint Application to DEC/Army Corp – 6/17**Hope to get out to bid by 8/1/25*

- Would like to start in the fall and be ready for May, but all dependent on permitting from the DEC

2025 Completed Projects*Primate Mesh Replacement – RGZ**Campground Paving- Oneida Shores**Elephant Grinder Pit Replacement - BLNC**Phase 1 Boardwalk Replacement – BLNC**Playground Construction – Highland*

- Phase 2 of the boardwalk at Beaver Lake in CIP to finish next year and received commitment from Friends for \$250K
 - All designed and ready to put out to bid
- Hopkins complex – all designed in first wave of engineering, can be phased out as they get the money

Veterans Cemetery*Removal of the Spoils Pile – began November 2024**Re-engaged w/Engineer to progress Expansion – March 2025*

- Cemetery has large spoils pile from burials building up since 1988 needing to be removed to move forward with cemetery expansion; had contractor working since the Fall to remove spoil piles and big rocks
 - Have a machine to sift top soil, so there is top soil available for Parks or anyone else in the county
- Re-engaging with engineers who put the first plans together for the expansion of the cemetery
 - Moving forward with clearing out the rest of land and setting up for burials

Design Mini Bids*Willow Bay Parking Lot*

- Lights on the Lake Warehouse
 - Current building is in transition with a new owner
 - With the cost of rent and OSHA inspection, it is not conducive to continue
 - Location for storage in Willow Bay area near archery and old BMX track

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- How big is the storage going to be?
 - Big, warehouse type facility to house everything have
- Where is the current one?
 - It is Bianchi's warehouse on Long Branch Road

*Maintenance Garage – BLNC**Assessment Study – RGZ***RGZ Zoo**

- Putting in a mini bid out for the Assessment at the Zoo
- A lot of moving parts at the Zoo and things that need to be refreshed
- Will give Parks a document of what needs to be done and what the priorities are

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- What is the timeline?
 - Not sure, has to go out to bid, write up the specs
 - Once bid comes back, 2-3 months for the study
 - Hope to have the document by the end of the year

- Infrastructure account gives Parks flexibility, but trying to set up maintenance and operations lines in CIP
 - Covers Parks in emergency situations
 - Currently using the infrastructure account is taking from one to do another
 - i.e. If there is an emergency at the zoo, might have to pull from Onondaga Lake Park
 - With a line item within the CIP, gives flexibility and room to make some repairs

Paving Interior – to be completed – June 20th

Penguin Ozone – finishing up

HVAC System – in process

PA system – bid awarded

Elephant Windows – Beginning July 2025

- Redid the roofs at the Zoo
- Replacing the HVAC system – removed the old boilers and installing new ones
- Rehabilitated the Ozone system on the penguin exhibit
- Redid the grinder pit in the elephant barn (moved to outside of elephant barn to make it easier to get to for maintenance)
- Salt Springs Paving has finished up the paving of the interior
 - Had to close down half the zoo
 - Allowed ½ price admission

c. Tour

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

DATE: **JUNE 17, 2025**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Mark Nicotra	PARKS
Daniel Rameo	Res
Dan Kranz	CF
Colleen Gunning	Co. Leg
Sandy Miller Mortens	Fin Ops
Brian Kelley	PARKS
John DeSantis	Leg
Joe Frateschi	Counsel