



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 19, 2025 JULIE ABBOTT, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Kelly, Ms. Cody, Mr. Romeo, Mr. Brown

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis; also see attached list

Chair Abbott called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

- 1. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** Odean Dyer, Commissioner; Eric Schuler, Deputy Commissioner; Cydney Johnson, Deputy County Executive; Dan Mulvihill, Administrative Officer, Financial Operations
 - a. 2025 Transfer Resolution (\$2,100,000)**

***Purpose:** WEP is seeking to transfer funds from Regular Salaries and Employee Benefits to All Other Expenses for the supplementary costs associated with unpredicted sludge/biosolid disposal. Sludge/biosolid disposal costs have increased due to delays in getting the Metro WWTP sludge dryer fully operational, which has resulted in unbudgeted expenses. A transfer of funds is requested in the amount of \$2,100,000.*

***Summary:** The 2025 410 – All Other Expenses budget assumed that the Metro Sludge Dryer would be fully functional. The dryer, when operational, will remove significant amounts of water from the waste biosolids, reducing the tonnage of material to be disposed at a landfill. Unforeseen delays in getting the sludge dryer fully functional has regrettably increased the removal costs for sludge/biosolids resulting in costs exceeding the 2025 All Other Expenses Budget. To cover costs already incurred, as well as costs projected through the end of this year, a transfer of \$2,100,000 is being requested for the 410 – All Other Expenses account, with \$1,500,000 coming from 101 – Regular Salaries and \$600,000 from 120 – Employee Benefits.*

***Fiscal Impact:** This will have no impact on the budget – net \$0.*

Ms. Johnson presented the following information:

- Cost overrun due to the dryer issue and having to move the sludge, which was not budgeted this year
- Monitoring situation closely and cautiously optimistic
- Sludge dryer is not operational at this time, and there is no timeline currently

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Cody, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

- b. A Resolution Calling a Public Hearing in Connection with the Proposed Adoption of an Amended Schedule of Sewer Rents for the Onondaga County Sanitary District (October 14, 2025 @ 12:55 P.M.)**

Mr. Dyer and Ms. Johnson presented the following information:

- Pertains to the amount of gallons per year for each unit, and cost per unit
- How WEP gets funding for projects and maintenance
- There will be an adjustment
- Sets the rate for 2026; Finance Department has done great work and will be extremely accurate

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- What will the lowering of gallons be?
 - Do not know, but will get it
 - Will know more as it gets closer into budget; this is the first step

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

c. BOND: A Resolution Approving Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for the County of Onondaga, New York

- Resolution listing out the projects
- Goal to make sure there are funds available to maintain what WEP has, and giving the public a service that works

d. BOND: A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$11,000,000 Bonds of the County of Onondaga, New York, to Pay Costs of Certain Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for Said County (\$11,000,000) – Backup information is on file with the Clerk

- Meadowbrook Limestone upgrades

Mr. Dyer and Mr. Schuler presented the information for items 1e – 1i and 1k.

e. BOND: A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,275,000 Bonds of the County of Onondaga, New York, to Pay Costs of Certain Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for Said County (\$2,275,000) – Backup information is on file with the Clerk

- Department wide mechanical and electrical improvements is a catch all
- Various scopes, and as things fail, need bigger dollars to replace long-term assets
- Done every year for last several years and need to replenish the accounts

f. BOND: A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,425,000 Bonds of the County of Onondaga, New York, to Pay Costs of Certain Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for Said County (\$2,425,000) – Backup information is on file with the Clerk

- Department wide building and site improvements includes (i.e.) overhead doors, roof replacement, paving, drainage improvements, concrete repairs
- Engineers get things done, and now replenishing for the fall

g. BOND: A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$10,000,000 Bonds of the County of Onondaga, New York, to Pay Costs of Certain Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for Said County (\$10,000,000) – Backup information is on file with the Clerk

- Ley Creek Phase 1 – started in 2019 and continuing to get project finished
- \$10M use for next design phase
- Timeline – after resolution passes, WEP can start putting out docs for construction
- Liverpool Ley Creek ready for bid in September; part of resolution asks for authorization to use a grant previously issued to the county for \$10M
- Next phase will be another design phase for stretch of piping along railroad

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- There is a current max estimated cost and additional cost, so what is the current max estimated cost?
 - FinOps:
 - WEP goes through multi step process – notice of PH, public hearing, approval setting amount of maximum

- costs spent on the projects, then once there is a max cost, county can fill in amount in bonds or cash
 - First resolution sets the max costs, then the committee votes on the bond resolutions after
 - Current max cost set for Ley Creek is \$27.3M
 - County has a \$10M grant from NYSDEC
 - Additional cost of \$10M increases max cost and total spend on project
 - Current max cost is what is currently allowed in the budget for the projects
 - Additional cost will increase (bonds)
 - New max cost is the total budget
- The initial amount authorized for (i.e.) Meadowbrook was \$441K, and now the committee is approving an additional \$11M; was the county off on the initial estimate?
 - FinOps:
 - That was the initial amount authorized
 - Do not authorize large projects in full until there is an idea of what construction will look like after design and engineering
 - (i.e.) initial \$441K was offset with cash and funded for design and engineering phase; now will know what construction costs will be (90-95%); will get max cost and borrowing for construction
 - Current max cost is phased in
 - Typically annual upgrades for housekeeping will always go up
- h. BOND: A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$14,700,000 Bonds of the County of Onondaga, New York, to Pay Costs of Certain Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for Said County (\$14,700,000) – Backup information is on file with the Clerk**
- Metro substation – aging and need to upgrade
- Building a new substation right next to current, while older is still active
- Once new substation is online, will demo old substation
- Lifespan of substation varies, but they can last 50 years; depends on the individual components within
- Lead time – when placing order for the parts, it can take up to a year
- i. BOND: A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$15,050,000 Bonds of the County of Onondaga, New York, to Pay Costs of Certain Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for Said County (\$15,050,000) – Backup information is on file with the Clerk**
- Various pump station upgrades throughout county; several have needs and targeting each as WEP goes along
- Includes:
 - Design RFPs for Camillus, Liverpool, Nedrow, and Manlius
 - Construction funding for Lakeside Pump Station overhaul
 - Rehabilitation of pipelines exhibiting signs of failure throughout sewer district
- j. BOND: A Resolution Approving Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for the County of Onondaga, New York (\$1,000,000) – Backup information is on file with the Clerk**

Mr. Mulvihill presented the following information:

- Metro Thickener – submitted application to the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYSEFC)
- NYSEFC allows county to finance through them with a lower interest rate
- County is in good standing with borrowing rates, but for larger environment related projects, will finance through EFC
- Thickener project is 99% done, but current max is \$4.7M
- Need to increase to \$5.7M to account for contracted HVAC work
- County has offset with cash already, and HVAC done
- Need to increase max cost to match what the contracts are; once everything is good, can proceed with financing
- EFC a huge supporter with Onondaga Lake cleanup
- Current rates vary from 3.8-4%; EFC might be 3.5% - looking at millions of dollars, so every little bit helps

- Believe the rates fluctuate; plus every 10 years, EFC can do refunding (did refunding last year)
- This is a good deal for county; state wants to make sure water is clean

k. A Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of a Permanent Easement from the Town of Lysander Relative to the West Entry Pump Station – Backup information is on file with the Clerk

- No cost ask
- Secured authorization last year for funding; now need authorization for SEQR and easements
- Project ready to go to bid - pump station upgrades

A motion was made by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve item 1c. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to approve item 1d. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve item 1e. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Ms. Cody, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve item 1f. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Ms. Cody, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to approve item 1g. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve item 1h. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Cody, to approve item 1i. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Ms. Cody, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to approve item 1j. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve item 1k. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

ATTENDANCE

The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE
DATE: AUGUST 19, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
ERIC SCHULER	OCDEP
DEAN DYER	OCDEP
Dean Krucz	CE
Dan Mulvihill	DMB
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
John D	Leg
Jason Dean	Finance
Rick Moriarty	Post-Standard
Sirena Sharpe	finops
Jim Beebe	Leg.
Ethan LaMontagne	Leg.
Cyndy Johnson	C.E. Office
Ryan Ockenden	Law