



Onondaga County Legislature

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Clerk

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Chairman

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Deputy Clerk

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WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE 2026 TENTATIVE BUDGET BUDGET REVIEW DAY 4 – SEPTEMBER 18, 2025 COLLEEN A. GUNNIP, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. May, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Romeo, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Garland, Ms. Hernandez
ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Mr. Meaker, Ms. Cody, Ms. Fiato, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Olson, Mr. McCarron, Mr. Bush, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Brown; also please see attached

Chair Gunnip called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m.

COMPTROLLER: Marty Masterpole, Comptroller

Comptroller's Office 2026 Budget request

641010 Total salaries-The 2026 Proforma Budgeted 641010 Total Salaries Line of \$2,171,013 is up from prior year budget due to salary increases and adjustments for Auditor I positions in payroll.

641030 Part Time Salaries Flat to year over year adopted budget

693000-Supplies-Flat to year over year adopted budget

694130-Maintenance Utilities and Rents-Flat to year over year adopted budget

694080-Professional Services – Flat to year over year adopted budget

694100-All Other Expenses-Flat to year over year adopted budget

694010-Travel and Training -Flat to year over year adopted budget

- 2024 issued 19 audits
- 2025 issued 11 audits, but should be in the same vicinity of 2024 by end of year
- Down an Auditor; Auditor II promoted to Payroll Auditor
- Miscellaneous revenues increased \$17,247
 - Most is reimbursement for the President of CSEA, who is an employee of Comptroller's Office; salary and benefits reimbursed by CSEA
 - \$4,500 audit fee
- Roster
 - Most are double with HELP positions – HELP position is backed up by a permanent position
 - When HELP positions expire, the people will move to the permanent position, then HELP positions go away

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- What does the Auditor I adjustments in payroll mean?
 - Auditor I adjustment was last year
 - Had Account Clerk III's doing Auditor 1 work – came to Legislature for approval
 - In 2023, employees were Account Clerk III
 - In 2024, Legislature approved Auditor 1 positions with no additional money (had vacancy to use for funds)
 - Filled Auditor I positions in 2024
 - After the CSEA employees are off probation, they move to the step they had previously
 - All Account Clerk III were step 4, then were Auditor I step 1, but moved to step 4 after probation
- Explain the increase in Miscellaneous Revenue
 - Misc. revenue in 2024 was \$63K

- Difference between \$76K to \$63K is the increase for CSEA President
- Also includes \$4,500 for housing development audit fee as increased revenue
- \$12K plus is increase in salary and benefits from CSEA
- Will Comptroller's have the grant for record management again?
 - It is done; can always digitize more, but stored what is used regularly
 - Got grant in year 1, did not get grant year 2, and did not apply for it in year 3; finished
 - State Archives grant allows one application from each county; County Clerk applied this year and did not compete

COUNTY CLERK: Emily Bersani, County Clerk

The Office of the County Clerk has had steady progress in 2025 in strengthening our services, our team, and our infrastructure. Year to date, the office has processed more than 83,000 transactions, collecting over \$26 million, of which five (5) million was collected as mortgage tax (basic tax; also have additional for Centro; April –Sept. 2025 was \$2M, and total collected is \$10M). We have continued our digitization efforts and have indexed and scanned thousands of documents into the electronic database. In addition to the quantitative achievements of our office, we have been busy with a variety of other initiatives and accomplishments. These include: coordinated five (5) naturalization ceremonies in collaboration with US Citizenship and Immigration Services and the NYS Supreme Court; purchased a photo ID printer for the Veteran FAVOR card program and continued to recruit new participating businesses; Created an automated menu to streamline calls to the appropriate employees; brought the County Clerk's office into the community by launching an initiative with the county libraries; passed a local law allowing a Domestic Partnership registry in Onondaga County; and began work on the office renovations via the Capital Improvement Plan.

From 2024 to 2025, the office saw a deliberate increase in budgetary allocations focused on personnel. We increased the salary budget for management/confidential employees in 2025 to ensure their compensation remains competitive in the current job market and reflects the responsibilities and skills required in these key leadership roles. In addition, increasing investment in training has allowed us to focus on professional development, including conference attendance and leadership training.

The budget for the County Clerk's Office will remain consistent in 2026 with the 2025 allocation, with the only increase being in the salary line to account for cost-of-living adjustments and step changes. We will continue to build on our current efforts within our budget. We anticipate the total revenue to continue to exceed the total appropriations and looking ahead, we will strategically prioritize the digitization of historical records. In 2026 and beyond, the office will continue to build leadership capacity among staff and look for innovative improvements in service delivery.

The office could not have accomplished anything without the dedication of the Deputy Clerks, who work hard to ensure accurate record keeping, efficiency, and excellent public service. We are also grateful to our partners in the Department of Finance and County Legislature for helping us create a budget that allows us to serve effectively.

- County Library initiative to be at every library by end of next year offering notary services, FAVOR card, answering questions, teaching people how to use the websites
- Since May, have had 7 Domestic Partnership registrations totaling \$245
- Renovations in the County Clerk's office to start in the spring

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- How is the extended passports going?
 - Pilot program – opening office every other Wednesday from 4-6pm for people to apply for passports
 - Busy counter with people coming in at the end of the day
 - Had 4 appointments the first session; next one is next week
- When going to the libraries, do they bring the County Clerk system, or do they use the library computer to use what is open to the public?
 - County Clerk system is accessible remotely; use County Clerk laptop and bring photo ID printer for veterans
 - At Camillus Maxwell Memorial Library, had 2 people sign up for the FAVOR card
 - Notary services can be done anywhere

- Will there be a need to add staff, as there are no vacancies?
 - Have not tapped into Seasonal Aide opportunity; room in the budget for that next year
 - No need for roster changes
 - Will have retirements causing natural staff changes

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Joseph Coolican, First Chief Assistant District Attorney; Michelle Robbins, Administrative Officer

Thank you for all you have done for my office in the past year. I am more than pleased to report that the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office continues to thrive. We continue working daily to ensure justice is provided to each and every one of this county's residents and visitors. To date, we have taken 23 serious felony cases, including homicides and sexual assaults to trial and obtained guilty verdicts on 21. We handle thousands of cases during any given year and in each of them we strive to assist victims in what may be their darkest moments, while always respecting the rights of the accused. We generate over four million dollars in performance-based grant money annually. Due to the efforts of my office, as well as a number of agencies and organizations, incidents of homicide committed with firearms, shots fired and shootings with injury are at their lowest level in the City of Syracuse in the last 10 years.

I am proud to be the District Attorney that Governor Kathy Hochul and Attorney General Letitia James called when they needed a Special Prosecutor to investigate and prosecute Corrections Officers at both Marcy and Mid-State Correctional Facilities in Oneida County for the unconscionable murders of Robert Brooks and Messiah Nantwi. While the investigation and now prosecution have consumed time and resources, I am immensely proud of the way members of my staff have responded to this unprecedented challenge. Based on the Governor's observations, she has personally asked for my assistance in bringing much needed common-sense reforms to the corrections system.

Working hand in hand with County Executive Ryan McMahon and County Comptroller Marty Masterpole we commenced the first criminal prosecution of hotel owners who failed to pass on legally obligated room occupancy tax monies. This money rightfully belongs to Onondaga County taxpayers, and we have every expectation it will be returned to them.

I have written before of the unprecedented negative effects discovery reform has had on our ability to bring justice to every citizen. I am proud to say that the District Attorney's Association of the State of New York was instrumental in pushing real, common-sense discovery reforms into the 2026 New York State Budget under the leadership of Governor Hochul. Those reforms took effect this past August and we have already observed the benefits in ensuring true justice can be served.

We continue to attract some of the best and brightest law graduates to my office. I promise you I will not rest on our laurels. We will continue to work diligently and with innovation to deliver justice to the citizens of Onondaga County within the confines of the budgetary allotment you provide.

- Fully staffed with the best quality attorneys seen in over 2 years; Magna and Summa Cum Laude graduates
- Over 10 years ago, GIVE (Gun Involved Violence Elimination) created for evidence-based solutions to gun violence
 - Provided funds to combat gun violence in major metropolitan areas in NYS – Syracuse being one
 - Partnerships with law enforcement and service providers in the community
 - Happy to report that gun violence numbers in the City of Syracuse are the lowest they have been in 10 years
 - Last year was a record and beating it this year
- Based on success, state now funding similar program for intimate partner violence – STRIVE (Statewide Targeted Reductions in Intimate Partner Violence)
 - Providing funds to stand up program similar to GIVE
 - Last week commenced interviews for Coordinator and Analyst positions
 - Attending symposium in Albany to lay groundwork to battle this crisis
- Discovery Reform
 - Process where Prosecutor shares evidence and information about any pending case
 - In 2020, state enabled policies and laws that crippled prosecutors
 - DA always does what is obligated, but deadlines and guidelines were onerous and consumed many resources
 - In August, reform was done that rolled back some of the onerous deadlines and penalties applied when things were not turned in on time

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Is there a way to provide numbers for gun violence?
 - Absolutely can provide numbers as of 1st week in September
 - Have annual meeting where Crime Analysis Center provides; can provide to Chairman
- Talk about the changes in the 2026 budget
 - Earlier this year, had Accountant II that was made Fiscal Officer
 - Based on increased duties with grant funds and ensuring meeting requirements to apply for and receive grants
 - Increase in salary, but historically a union position making overtime
 - Coordinate Stop DWI and receive funds in overtime to do
 - Now MC, no longer can receive overtime
 - Increased salary to what the person made before and recognize promotion
 - Funds covered by Stop DWI program; no hit on bottom line, shuffling dollars
 - Created Senior Assistant DA
 - Deal with STRIVE program and another supervisor to manage the increased number of ADAs
 - People in past covered 2 bureau duties
 - Felony Trial Bureau and Grand Jury Bureau Chief – created position to separate them out
 - Investigators are sworn Police Officers that partner with other agencies and participate with DEA Task Force
 - Work with multiple agencies combatting drugs in Onondaga County and City of Syracuse; particularly fentanyl
 - Historically could use drug forfeiture funds – money taken from drug dealers
 - Can no longer use forfeiture funds for this, and asked to use additional funds to continue to do it
 - All money recouped through forfeiture
- Is the funding already in the budget for the position being created?
 - Yes, that is the understanding
- What are the increases in the grant line?
 - Finance:
 - Majority of increases are for STRIVE grant
- There was a program where money was given to get the guns from the streets
 - Gun buyback program historically done by NYSAG office
 - Conflicting information if its decreasing gun crime
 - County does not participate
- If the Marcy trial goes over budget, is there a mechanism for reimbursement from the state?
 - Already received a grant of up to \$3M to cover costs; do not expect expenses to exceed that
 - Money will cover expert witness expenses, technology, etc.
- Under grants, the Employee Benefits are at \$1M
 - Fringe and benefits are 50%; can see salary line above is \$2.6M
 - Covering benefits for salaries charged to grants
- How does the modified Employee Benefits line up?
 - Finance:
 - Will look at modified
 - DA:
 - Might be the STRIVE positions creating; hired by Lemoyne College; pay Lemoyne's fringe vs. County's
 - Finance:
 - Yes, went under Contractual line
 - Some salaries planned to bring on in-house were actually contractual
 - Contracted would go to that line instead

SHERIFF: Sheriff Tobias Shelley; Undersheriff Jeffrey Passino

2025 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At the commencement of 2025, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office successfully concluded the 2024 Fiscal Year within its allocated budget. Throughout 2025, we have steadfastly upheld our commitment to fiscal responsibility. Moving forward, we will continue to prioritize prudent budget management to support public safety and advance Onondaga County's long-term goals.

Wellness Program

The Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Wellness Program, launched in March 2025, is dedicated to supporting the well-being of our members and their families. The program provides enhanced access to a comprehensive range of services, with a designated Director of Support Services serving as a direct point of contact for personalized assistance. Since its inception, the program has supported over 30 members in addressing challenges related to occupational stress, mental health, substance use, estate planning, family matters, and more. The Director of Support Services is actively collaborating with local businesses to secure valuable services and discounts including nutrition and meal planning, stress management, and resources for healthier living. The program also acknowledges the demanding nature of our member's roles, offering recognition and support from academy training through ongoing service to promote resilience and success in the law enforcement environment. The Wellness Program is dedicated to expanding its service beyond our agency to include members of the local police, fire, and emergency services community. Our primary focus is to strengthen our peer support program by integrating these agencies, establishing a family peer support initiative, and providing ongoing education on wellness topics to enhance resilience and well-being for all.

Sewing Program

We are very proud to announce that in January of this year, Jamesville Correctional Facility launched a sewing program for incarcerated individuals. To date, twelve individuals have successfully completed the program and earned certificates. The program has produced stuffed animals and handcrafted clothes for children in need. These items were generously donated to the McMahan Ryan Center and St. Luke Baptist Church in Syracuse, supporting our commitment to rehabilitation and community engagement.

2025 BUDGET REVIEW

In Fiscal Year 2025 the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to the prudent and effective management of its allocated budget. This agency will continue to proactively pursue alternative funding sources to augment the approved budget, ensuring sustained operational excellence.

2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Onondaga County Sheriff's Office has submitted its proposed budget for 2026, prioritizing several critical areas: the acquisition of additional vehicles, personnel adjustments, and the continuation of the Jiu Jitsu Law Enforcement Academy Training Program. These initiatives are either essential for maintaining compliance with mandatory requirements or strategically designed to enhance the Sheriff's Office ability to deliver exceptional public safety services to the community.

2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Vehicles- *To ensure a reliable and cost-effective vehicle fleet, we respectfully request an increase of \$893,500 to the current proforma vehicle allocation of \$225,000, resulting in a total request of \$1,118,500 for the acquisition of 28 vehicles. This funding supports a 12% fleet replacement plan, optimizing maintenance costs and maximizing resale value. Due to market changes, notably the discontinuation of the Chevrolet Malibu, the cost of unmarked vehicles has increased by approximately \$8,600 per unit. This adjustment is critical to maintaining the operational readiness of our fleet. Additionally, we request \$365,619 for vehicle equipment and \$50,000 for supplementary fleet items to support our law enforcement mission.*

Personnel Adjustments- *To improve operational efficiency and ensure compliance, we propose the following personnel changes, which align with the directive to maintain staffing levels below the 2021 adopted budget of 652 fully funded positions. The current roster consists of 628 funded positions, including 92 unfunded Corrections positions. Adding five positions will bring the total to 633, with two fully funded by grants. These changes uphold fiscal responsibility while strengthening operational effectiveness and compliance. They are as follows:*

- **Director of Support Services:** *Transition this position from grant-funded to budget-funded. While additional grant funding was secured, reallocating these funds will support expanded programming and partnerships with Fire, EMS, and local law enforcement agencies.*

- **Boiler Operator Maintenance Worker (1 position):** *Add one position to address increased infrastructure demands resulting from the expanded population at the Jamesville facility.*

- **Custodial Worker 1:** *Move the 2 Custodial Worker 1 positions from the 103 payroll to the 101 payroll. By transferring laundry duties from inmates to these workers, we can reallocate sworn Deputy positions (salary: \$53,195) to critical mission roles, achieving savings compared to the Custodial Worker salary (\$36,572).*

- **Records Compliance Manager (1 position):** *Add one position, fully funded by the Discovery Grant, to ensure timely completion of discovery tasks and FOIL requests for digital content, supporting the prosecution of pending cases.*

Training- *We respectfully request an additional \$47,500.00, consistent with the 2025 allocation, to support the Travel and Training budget line for the Law Enforcement Jiu Jitsu program. This initiative, originally approved and funded by the Onondaga County Legislature for the 2024 year, provides specialized training for police, custody, and correction recruits. The program was designed to address community expectations for law enforcement by enhancing training, improving the understanding and application of use-of-force principles, and offering alternatives to deadly force. Its objectives include improving officer training outcomes, increasing retention rates, reducing excessive force and injury claims, and minimizing incidents involving deadly force. A key component of the program is an independent five-year study conducted by the vendor to evaluate its effectiveness on law enforcement activities. Due to the program's recent implementation, insufficient data is currently available to complete this study. We appreciate your consideration of this funding request to ensure the continued success of this vital initiative.*

- 2023 and 2024 came in under budget
- Not sure about 2025 due to state ready inmates
 - State strike in February dumped state ready inmates onto Sheriff
 - Had to run 2 pods on overtime
- Fleet of 235 cars
 - Requesting 12% replacement
 - Not a single take home car, unless person has to answer phone at night to respond to emergencies
 - \$200K budget is ~8 cars
 - Last year, cost per car went up \$8,600
 - 12% replacement would be 28 cars
 - i.e. in last 7 days, patrol car transmission gave out while responding to an emergency; 170K miles
 - Investing in fleet will save on maintenance
 - Need startup money to get fleet where it needs to be
 - Can sell cars on auction and get more money for them
- Cameras in jails will pay for themselves in lawsuits
- Congressman Mannion gave direct support services for a wellness person
 - Asking to make that position permanent
 - Have money for the position this year and next year
 - Work for position continues to build as fire departments, emergency services, and others get involved
- Boiler Operator position – Jamesville
 - Does not only maintain boilers, but the entire facility
 - Compare jails, Jamesville is ahead of downtown due to the way it is maintained, and cheaper to do business
 - Person doing maintenance currently will be retiring soon; enough work for 2 people
- Custodial Worker position
 - Have 2 on 103 line
 - Traditionally had deputies supervise inmates doing laundry at Justice Center
 - Have 2 Custodial Worker I positions on 103 payroll
 - Currently have inmates doing laundry, which requires a Custody Deputy sit outside the room and watch the inmates
 - Not a good use of time for a Custody Deputy, who could be watching inmates in housing units
 - Hired civilian staff to do laundry; do not need inmates to do laundry – no requirement
 - Laundry was not getting done and getting pinged by Commission of Corrections, because inmates are required to

- get laundry done on certain cycles
- Moved the task to civilian workers
- Custodial Worker I positions are \$38K/year; Custody Deputy starts at \$53K
- Would like to move the positions to 101 payroll
- Currently have one part-time person, and they cannot keep up; need 1 fulltime and maybe 1 part-time
- In past, Custodial Worker I's did laundry in Jamesville

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- The Custodial Worker I was not included in this budget?
 - Correct
- Are there any take-home cars today?
 - Yes; one Lieutenant gets a car contractually and does not answer phone at night
 - Everyone else with a take-home car has to answer their phones at night for emergencies, which justifies the car
- What is the timeline on the grant that is funding the Director of Support Services?
 - Funding will run out at the end of 2026
- Does the same hold true for the Boiler Operator?
 - That is not grant funded
 - There used to be 4 Boiler Operators that maintained the facility
 - Now just 1, who is due to retire; instead of 4, trying to get 2
 - Currently unfunded
- Please speak to the Records Compliance
 - Grant funded position
 - As cameras come online, have been receiving more FOIL requests
 - 2 Police division deputies take a lot of time with FOIL requests
 - Would like to move this responsibility to a civilian, which is a grant funded position
 - When there is a call with cameras on for 1 hour with 6 deputies, that is 6 hours of watching and redacting for FOIL
- Jiu Jitsu has been restored by the Legislature in the past; please talk about the program, enrollment, any anecdotal information, etc.
 - Have to look at nationally what is going on
 - i.e. LAPD has program and working for them to prevent injuries
 - So new to the Sheriff, there is not enough data to show it is working in Onondaga County
 - If it is working for the LAPD, it should work for the County
 - Participation – all recruits participate; Sheriff pays per visit per person
- Grant revenue under state aid increased ~\$489K and overtime increased \$492K; is there any correlation between them?
 - Finance:
 - Like DA's Office, Sheriff's Office also received a STRIVE grant, will see increases on both
 - Sheriff:
 - Some OT does not catch up to the budget
 - Amphitheater runs on OT, but is reimbursed overtime; shows paying it out, but not when they get paid
- What is the decrease in state aid under General Funds of \$102K?
 - Finance:
 - Discovery Funds; not a decrease
 - Requirement of how much DA received; will see decreases in other lines from additional funding in prior years
- Are there 2 additional Police on the roster?
 - Yes; funding within
- How many vehicles can the Sheriff buy with the funding in the proposed budget?
 - 8, but looking for 28 (12%)

- With 103 line savings, does the Sheriff know what the savings will be by not having inmates there?
 - Big savings is not having a deputy watch inmates on overtime
- What is the amount of overtime that will be saved?
 - Paying part-time on 103 and in budget
 - Money and salary stays the same and moves to 101 budget
 - Savings is decrease in Deputy salary at time and a half; would be straight time at reduced rate
- How does the county have 92 unfunded Corrections positions, but still operating Jamesville?
 - Finance:
 - Although the positions are unfunded, the dollar amount is there for the positions
 - Money is in salary line, but “u” and “P” are different
- Is there a way for the Sheriff to apply for another grant for the (Director of Support Services) position? Or is the grant over?
 - Met with Governor Monday and promised a lot; state still owes Sheriff \$1.5M for watching state inmates
 - Want to know the position is funded
 - If states gives more money, will give it to the county
- Is \$365K for fleet equipment an aggregate of what the Sheriff anticipates for patrol unit replacement, and is it considering what is being carried over?
 - Equipment includes the car, light bar, cage, crash bar, etc.; will carryover a lot
 - United Radio has contract for the work
- What amount of cars can the Sheriff have to operate if it is not 28?
 - 28 gives a 12% replacement
 - Would like to be able to trade cars in at 70K-80K miles while they still have value; could get \$18K-\$20K vs. \$3K
 - Maintenance budget would go way down; also makes fleet safer

Chair Gunnip called for a recess at 10:34 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:55 a.m.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS: Kevin Ryan, Commissioner; Dustin Czarny, Commissioner

Thank you to Onondaga County Legislators for the opportunity to present our 2025 budget request. Representing the Board of Elections today are Democratic Commissioner Dustin Czarny, serving since January 2013, and Republican Commissioner Kevin Ryan, appointed in January 2025.

The Onondaga County Board of Elections employs 24 full-time staff, including the two commissioners, along with 22 seasonal machine custodians during election periods. We currently serve over 313,000 active registered voters. To meet this responsibility, we administer ten Early Voting sites, 146 Election Day polling places, and deploy more than 1,000 inspectors for both the June primary and the November general election. We also provide support for village, school district, library, and fire district elections throughout the year.

Improvements in the Executive Budget

The County Executive's proposed 2026 budget addresses many of our needs for 2026. It maintains the four additional positions added by the Legislature last year (two Election Clerk 1 and two Machine Custodians) and upgrades two Election Clerk 1 positions to Election Assistant 3s. This change will allow us to reorganize the registration department under a Chief Registration Clerk, better aligning our operations with state guidelines and addressing the growing demands of registration services.

The additional staff provided last year have already reduced workload pressures. Onondaga County averages one full-time election employee for every 16,000 voters, lowest ratio in New York State, where the average is one employee per 7,000 voters. Despite this, we are not requesting new full-time positions for 2026. With our new management structure, recent hires, and investments in technology, we are meeting current registration and election demands without significant overtime. We are pleased to report no backlog going into the 2025 general election, with all registrations processed within the 7-day window required by law.

The Executive Budget also funds our 103-budget line, which covers Election Day and Early Voting inspectors, our largest cost category. It reflects projected increases in the minimum wage. We also support the increased training budget, which will enable cross-training and prepare staff for position changes expected in 2026.

Challenges for 2026

Looking ahead, 2026 will bring significant challenges. We anticipate a full countywide primary in June, with statewide and congressional races on both party lines, and expect higher-than-usual turnout for a midterm year. With the addition of a Chief Registration Clerk, we will be well-positioned to train temporary staff quickly if needed, and we are preparing for higher-than-average absentee and vote-by-mail requests.

We also continue to assist 14 school districts and 12 villages with their elections. Eight villages have transitioned to November elections, while four remain in March and one in June. We anticipate that additional villages and school districts may require Board of Elections administration due to new data reporting requirements at the election district level.

Another major development is the implementation of the Even-Year Election Law in 2026. It is unclear at this time what challenges this will present next year as we grapple with implementation.

Finally, we will be replacing nearly all our Know Ink poll pads in 2026. A state grant will allow us to upgrade to 11th-generation iPads at no cost to county taxpayers. Approximately one-third of our poll print pads will also be replaced, with the remainder still under useful service life.

Future Long-Term Issues

Looking further ahead, New York State has authorized joining ERIC, the interstate voter registration compact. Should the Governor sign the bill, we may see expanded registration requirements that will require adjustments over the next several years. While not expected to impact 2026 directly, this will likely affect operations by 2028.

We also continue to work with the County on facility improvements at 1000 Erie Blvd West. Recent upgrades include a generator, funded through federal and state grants, and HVAC repairs. Longer-term, we urge funding for additional maintenance needs, including but not limited to an upgrade of the cooling system in the server room, carpet replacement, additional office buildouts, painting and warehouse upgrades.

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and attention to our 2026 budget. We appreciate your continued support of our office as we prepare to meet the demands of an expanding electorate and evolving election laws. We are also submitting our 2024 Annual Report, and additional statistics are available at onvote.net.

- Since Mr. Ryan took office in January, Commissioners have been working to change the culture at BOE and rectify mistakes from past
- Have turned a corner and mistakes will not happen again due to changes in the budget last year by the Legislature
- Requested creation of Elections Clerk III position (Chief Registration Clerk) – included in Exec budget and urge Legislature to keep it, as it is necessary
- Building
 - Money in the budget for the building
 - Roof first, then address other long-term capital needs
 - When discussing the building with the administration, it was decided to keep it as the location is convenient for the voters and public, and the offices and warehouse for machines can be kept in same location
- Satisfied with the budget put forth by the County Executive
- Legislature added 4 employees to BOE budget last year
 - BOE has been able to keep up with no mandatory overtime
 - Voter registration processing has to be within 7 days of receipt and BOE is doing it within 4 days
 - Employees able to do other things like machine prep, teaching, assigning techs, etc.
 - In past, would have people on OT doing registration to catch up
- Working with both sides of the aisle addressing things and getting systems in place
- Only 4 employees are in the same position as they were last year
 - Lot of moving around and turnover
 - Lot of new training and cross training

- Most problems in the building stem from the roof; no other option (besides a new building) except to fix the building that is centrally located and has the ability to house employees and the machines
- Have talked with City of Syracuse about the road and walkway, as the traffic can be intense
- Chief Registration Clerk
 - New position at higher pay that will be easier to retain
 - Dedicated employees for Gubernatorial and Presidential years to train staff and produce effective registration and vote by mail applications
 - Registration is 90% of work done; having someone solely trained and knowing that is their only job is important

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- What may be coming in the future that the county may need to be prepared for?
 - Even year legislation – working way through final step in court
 - If upheld, moving local offices to Gubernatorial year will create ballot issues to deal with
 - More people on the ballot – may have OT in April or May
 - Every metric pointing to be a high turnout for a Gubernatorial year (like 2018 when BOE went over budget)
 - Will let the Legislature know if BOE is required to put out more inspectors if needed
 - It may necessitate going to 2 page ballots – may not be able to get the number of races on one side of ballot in a font size voters can read and understand; as well as not inundating BOE with high costs
 - Could move up to a 22” ballot – will have to see how many positions are on the ballot
 - Working with increased efficiency this year, and have confidence it will continue next year
 - Will endeavor to meet challenges next year and use OT as last resort; only bring on additional staff in temp basis
 - Vacancies can occur, which BOE may not know of until March next year
 - Will be open and transparent with the Legislature, if even year elections has impact
- With this even year legislation, the concern is that the odd year local elections will be even less with less to do; how will that affect BOE staff?
 - Reality is there will still be a need to conduct an election, whether for 1 race or 30
 - Will still need polling places throughout the county with poll inspectors and poll site managers
 - Will still be processing petitions, challenges, potential primaries
 - Even with the shift, the BOE work will not stop; will be less petitions to process, but still process
 - 2027 will still have County Executive and County Comptroller election
 - Will not see full drop off until 2029
 - Will still have DA, County Clerk, Judicial elections, village elections, city elections
- Assume that the 101 is up due to the 2 Chief Registration Clerks (1 for each) that are showing as Election Assistant III
 - Yes; Election Assistant III
 - Taking place of Election Clerk I positions that were at \$35K/year – harder to recruit
 - Proposing to eliminate lower paid elections positions
 - One challenge was recruiting and retaining personnel – job starting at \$35K/year is not attractive to a candidate with any qualifications
 - Able to recruit and retain personnel; will have someone solely to handle registration issues
- What is the grant funding for?
 - Much of that funding has been spent on new voting machines
 - Have not recouped money from state
 - Would like this resolved by January 1st; want all money owed to Onondaga County back
 - \$20K Unexpected Budget
 - Anything over budget for temp employees, NYS put in \$20K to put against it
 - Not sure what will use for, as the elections have not happened yet
 - Will use on personnel or other uses allowed
 - Postage Grant
 - Pays for postage
 - Looking to get van on that grant
 - ✓ 15 yr old van
 - ✓ Moves ballots to post office
 - ✓ Working with state board to be able to use money left over to buy van; not county taxpayer dollars

- ✓ Do transport ballots back and forth, which is why postage grant could be eligible to use to buy van
- ✓ On occasion may use van to transport voting machine to polling place
- ✓ Have to identify what percentage is used for postage; only allowed to use appropriation with postage use
- ✓ 90% of use of van is postage meaning BOE can use 90% of purchase via grant
- Unused grant funds – BOE comes up with proposed use and has to discuss with state board
- Does the county or employees pay for the lot adjacent to BOE?
 - Parking lot is across the street
 - County leases space from owner of property to use as needed
 - On days of overflow, people walk across Erie Boulevard to get to lot – no sidewalk, not well lit, high traffic road
 - Have had conversations on what to do, and the only alternative is moving downtown
 - Previously BOE was on the 15th floor of Civic Center and the machines were stored at a warehouse in Eastwood
 - Currently employees do not pay for parking, which is important
 - Wherever BOE is, they need a place where the public can come off the street and not pay for parking
 - Parking is challenging with classes and employees going across the street
 - Met with City of Syracuse to make improvements
 - Rent paid annually; next door is auto repair renting U-Hauls and other side is train tracks
 - This is best option for BOE right now; improving facility is important and grateful funding is included in budget
- Is parking a problem on a daily basis?
 - Primarily with training classes for inspectors
 - Employees are asked to park across the street, so inspectors can park in lot adjacent to building
- Do the BOE Commissioner’s feel the correct steps were taken to clear up, address and move forward without the bumps that happened last year?
 - Yes; additional positions the Legislature provided
 - End of year report showed metrics on how BOE go to where they were
 - Addressed the “that’s the way we’ve always done it” phrase and examined everything to make sure most efficient
 - The way BOE had always done things clearly was not working
 - Tried to change the culture of the Republican side of BOE and had significant turnover in personnel
 - Current staff is doing their job more efficiently and effectively than in the past
 - Not simply changing personnel but management of the office
 - Pledge to this body and committed that what happened in the past, will not happen again

REQUEST: Final response to NYS BOE that BOE provided.

- There is a third-party that has a building with a lot and storage on the south side that may work for BOE
 - Relocating is a process that BOE would work through administration
 - Money has been appropriated for the roof; when one project starts, others are sure to follow
 - Important to have accessible location to public, where they can drop off a voter registration form, ask a question, and ideally have a polling place there
 - If there is another facility, it is something to talk about down the road
 - Any facility would have to provide basic needs
 - If changing facilities, may need to work with Attorney General’s Office as a preclearance county
 - If the local community came up with a solution, would hope the AG’s office would not give road blocks

DIVISION OF PURCHASE: Dan Hammer, Director

2025 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2025 year included procurement of goods and services related to several major County Initiatives, including renovation of the Sheriff’s evidence area, development related to a downtown hotel, lights on the lake storage, design services for upgraded Hopkins Park fields, and Onondaga Lake marina improvements, along with several other key projects. We are on track to conduct 200+ public bids. Significant improvements were made to the Supplier Portal to allow for better transparency for vendors to view quotes and bid opportunities, increasing procurement competition. In addition, for the third year in a row the Division of Purchase was honored by the National Procurement Institute with an Achievement of

Excellence in Procurement award. Onondaga County was one of three public agencies in New York State to be recognized for this award, and the only County awarded.

2025 BUDGET REVIEW

Purchasing is forecast to finish 2025 within budget.

2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2026 budget includes standard salary and wage increases consistent with the baseline budgeting approach.

2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Division of Purchase expects to have a busy year in 2026 as we continue to support general operations for County departments, the City of Syracuse, the Syracuse City School District, Otsego County, City of Oswego, and several local towns and villages. Key projects such as wastewater improvements related to economic development projects in Clay will require time and attention. In addition, the Division of Purchase will continue to expand training for internal and external customers to improve our procurement processes.

- Three units
 - Buyer Unit
 - Reviews all requisitions for compliance and issues
 - Purchase orders for 10,000 vendors
 - Do 25,000 POs per year
 - Bid Unit
 - Oversees and administers NYS bidding process for large dollar items
 - Materials Management
 - Oversees auction process for end of life items
 - Does \$500K for county; about \$1.5M total
 - Free service for towns, villages, and school districts to drop off their stuff; Purchasing administers at no cost
- Collectively help departments do their jobs
- Help departments acquire the goods and services needed to fulfill their operations
- Do so effectively with compliance and maximizing buying power
- 2026 budget direct appropriations are negative – salary savings
- \$50K appropriation in previous year's budget, but no longer have – for contract management overhaul
 - In process of doing and ongoing
 - Working with IT to develop a dashboard
 - Hired outside help to review contract templates and processes
 - Adding software to help manage certain processes where necessary
- Awarded the Achievement of Excellence for Procurement by the National Procurement Institute
 - Worked a long time to get
 - Have to achieve a certain score, which does not happen overnight; took years of growth to achieve
 - One of 49 counties to receive it nationwide
 - Only others agencies in NYS to receive it were the New York-New Jersey Port Authority and NYS Office of OGS

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- How many funded vacancies?
 - Finance:
 - 1 funded vacant
- Explain Grants
 - Work with auctions
 - Have consolidated with other agencies and do work on behalf of other governments
 - Always eligible for shared service grants; apply when they come up
- Is Purchasing using an auction service?
 - Yes, use GovDeals; do not charge county; use buyer's premium

- i.e. If \$100 for the sale, GovDeals charges 8% on top of that; using for everything
- Is Purchasing still reaching out to local communities and municipalities to do their purchasing?
 - Not actively seeking; it is more of a global strategy beyond the Purchasing office
 - Not turning folks away, especially local towns and villages
 - Always assist where possible
 - Still handle Syracuse City Schools, City of Otsego and Oswego County
- Several years ago, the County passed a resolution on scoring bids to ensure local businesses have help
 - Did 2 things:
 - Passed best value legislation allowing to score bids
 - ✓ NYS law of public bidding is going with the lowest
 - ✓ This allowed qualitative information to go with it to score it
 - ✓ Cannot score for being local
 - ✓ (i.e.) can say that if the bid is for collision repair, someone should be onsite within 2 hours
 - If someone is low enough and within a 10% threshold, can choose the local vendor over someone else
- What floor is Purchasing on?
 - 13th floor (Civic Center) and offices are done
- Is there an increased cost to the county with capacity increases for helping other municipalities?
 - No; use outside vendor, who is always willing to sell more stuff – the more the better
 - If consolidated to one site, it is easier for the vendors
 - County does not get the money; no additional administrative fee
- As far as monitoring, does the county keep track of what comes in, what goes out, and where the money goes?
 - GovDeals handles all of it; as well as tracking
 - County has warehouse space for drop offs and staff; have someone who interacts and schedules pickups, works with vendors, and finalizes the deal

PARKS & RECREATION: Brian Kelley, Commissioner

2025 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the next few days, you'll hear from several departments commonly referred to as "essential" or "mandated." At Onondaga County Parks, we believe we are equally vital. Each day, our parks demonstrate what it truly means to be essential, offering social, economic, health, and environmental benefits to everyone who visits. This brief overview highlights some of the achievements, projects, programs, and events that make the Onondaga County Parks Department one of the best in the state, and the one I'm proud to call the best I know.

In March, Onondaga County Parks was once again recognized by the Central New York Recreation & Parks Society (CNYRPS) with several prestigious awards.

- ***Spirit of Tom White Award*** – Gary Lopez
- ***ABCD Award*** – Karl Bryers
- ***Special Event Award*** – Eclipse Party at Beaver Lake Nature Center

All three winners have been nominated for state-level recognition at the upcoming New York State Recreation & Parks Society (NYSRPS) Awards in November.

At Beaver Lake Nature Center, the new boardwalk was completed in May, significantly improving access for hiking, birding, and educational programs. The community response has been overwhelmingly positive, especially from winter recreation enthusiasts eager for an enhanced cross-country ski season. A \$1 million grant from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has been secured for Phase 2, which will complete the loop.

Highland Forest welcomed a new playground in early May. Designed with nature-themed elements like rock formations and treetops, it quickly became a favorite among young visitors from across the southern part of the county.

This summer, we proudly partnered again with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to host 4-H Summer Camps at Pratts Falls, Highland Forest, Oneida Shores, and for the first time, Long Branch Park. These weeklong camps blend outdoor recreation and environmental education to foster leadership, compassion, and community awareness. Sold-out camps at Beaver Lake and the Rosamond Gifford Zoo served hundreds of children, offering hands-on learning in ecology, conservation, animals and their habitats, helping to shape the next generation of environmental stewards.

In 2025, we continued to see great success in some of the region's most beloved events like Lights on the Lake, Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Celebration, Golden Harvest Festival, Scottish Games, and Brew at the Zoo, alongside over 100 smaller events and more than 500 educational programs and school tours. Thanks to a strong snowfall season, Beaver Lake and Highland Forest became winter hotspots, drawing thousands for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. This led to notable increases in equipment rentals, season passes, and sleigh rides.

At the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, our beloved elephant twins Yaad and Tukada, were joined by six red wolf pups, (a critically endangered species), a baby Muntjac (one of the world's smallest deer), and the only Marco Polo Argali sheep in North America, who was placed in our care by the USDA and is part of an ongoing federal court case. Visitors were also introduced to the Canine Champions for Conservation, a live action dog show who travel the country educating people about animal adoption, responsible pet ownership and the broader work of dogs in conservation efforts. Major infrastructure projects were completed, including repaved interior walkways, new elephant barn windows and the replacement of the penguin tank filtration system. Upcoming projects this fall include an improved public address system, boiler replacement in the main building, and a comprehensive Facility Conditions Assessment to guide future planning around critical infrastructure systems.

Hopkins Road Park began construction of a new turf super field in August. Once completed next summer, it will support softball, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and football, and will become a premier tournament venue with year-round usability. Field lighting, scoreboards, and seating are also included.

The Onondaga Lake Park Marina will undergo a full renovation and expansion—adding a retaining wall, short-term dockage, fueling station, parking upgrades, lighting, and utility improvements. Dredging will restore original depths. Construction is scheduled to begin by year-end.

A mini-bid is in development for the engineering and redesign of Oneida Shores' campground bathhouse, restrooms, and beach buildings, facilities that date back to the 1960's and are in desperate need of repair. This project has the potential to completely change the way our park is experienced and how well we can serve our patrons who come out to camp and swim at Oneida Shores.

The Willow Bay Parking Lot RFP is in the final review stage and will be awarded shortly. Improvements in this parking area, which serves three Onondaga Lake Park picnic shelters and hundreds of other daily visitors, will create a safer, more efficient layout while addressing chronic spring flooding issues.

In addition to the major initiatives, numerous smaller-scale improvements were completed in 2025 including new flooring and lighting in the Community Room and Wildlife Viewing Room at Beaver Lake, UV water purification systems at Pratt's Falls and Highland Forest, paving at the Oneida Shores Campground, the automated gate at Oneida Shores Boat Launch, and a metal roof on the Saw Mill Creek Shelter at Onondaga Lake Park. These investments extend the life of our facilities, enhance safety, and will help to maintain the high quality of visitor satisfaction across the system.

In every season, at every park, Onondaga County Parks proves its essential role in the lives of Central New Yorkers. We are proud of what we've accomplished in 2025, and are even more excited for what lies ahead.

2025 BUDGET REVIEW

The Parks Department will finish 2025 within budget.

2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The 2026 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 2026 budget request will allow the Parks Department to offer our full slate of programs, events, and daily amenities.

2026 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 programing and operations in 2026.

The top priority for the Parks Department in 2026 is service contracts. These service contracts are critical to maintaining vital Parks equipment that can no longer be maintained with existing staff and funding. \$125,000 was added into the Parks 2026 budget for these service contracts that will help us keep our Zoo and baseball stadium up to the high standards our patrons expect.

Additionally, beginning January 1, 2026, Parks is proposing an increase in rental rates for the three lodge facilities operated by Onondaga County for the first time in nearly a decade. This adjustment is necessary to bring pricing in line with current market rates, and to help offset the growing costs of facility upkeep, maintenance, and ongoing updates. These increases are estimated to bring in an additional rental revenue of \$115,000. The lodges continue to be popular venues for weddings and a variety of other events and gatherings, and we remain committed to ensuring they are safe, well-maintained, and accessible to the public. However, after more than ten years without any significant pricing changes, the current rates no longer reflect the true cost of operations or the fair market value of similar rental spaces in the region.

Skyline Lodge will increase from \$750 to \$1000 on Friday and Sunday, with a Saturday Premium of \$1500 and from \$500 to \$750 on Monday - Thursday. In alignment with that, Arrowhead Lodge will increase from \$700 to \$1000 on Fridays and Sundays, with a Saturday Premium of \$1500 and from \$325 to \$750 on Monday - Thursday. This helps us to standardize our rates at our two premiere facilities. At Camp Brockway, the rental rate would increase from \$450 to \$750 on Friday - Sunday, and from \$225 to \$375 on Monday - Thursday as this space has no air conditioning and fewer amenities than Skyline and Arrowhead. Additionally, Parks will institute a catering permit, where caterers who are being paid to provide services at our facilities must register and pay an annual fee of \$175. This fee is estimated to produce another \$10,500 and will ensure these vendors have all the appropriate permits and insurance policies.

We appreciate the Legislature's consideration and support in implementing these long-overdue adjustments that will greatly assist with the future sustainability of our lodge facilities.

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- What is the issue with the catering permits?
 - Parks had an exclusive caterer at Highland Forest; no longer there and not serving the public
 - New program is where everyone can bring in their own caterer to the Lodge
 - To do that, want to know who the caterer is
 - Want to make sure the caterers have their insurances and permits
 - Vendors will be charged \$175 for their ability to profit heavily from Park's infrastructure
 - Currently, Parks is thousands below market value at the lodges
 - The increase will help with that and with caterer leaving, lost \$20K in commissions
 - Revenues will help make up for the loss
- Please explain the Professional Service for Grants budget increase of \$120K with a matching number under state aid transportation?
 - Finance:
 - Not an increase, but the budget for 2026
 - Pass-through for snowmobile clubs

- There is a decrease in the vehicles line, so is there anything Park's needs?
 - Should be okay
 - Money out of the Perpetual Care account of 200K offsets that
 - Able to purchase mowers and other stuff to move around the department – resource sharing
 - Will be okay this year, but request may be up to \$500K next year
- How many funded vacant?
 - 92 total funded with 10 funded vacancies
- Is the \$2.5M under Grants Interfund Transfers Hopkins?
 - Hopkins was a \$7M project total
- There was a release of contingency this year (Hopkins); is that the funds coming in?
 - Finance:
 - Would not be Hopkins, as they would see the offset
 - Sports tourism ROT out of 2025 budget; in Transfer to Grant line that went into project account
- Will the marina be ready to go by year end?
 - Yes; still waiting on permitting from DEC
 - Will do project in 2 phases – starting with bathhouse, which will make constituents happy
 - Get that built with no displacement
 - Once permitting in place, will move forward with walls, etc.
- Talked about a pavilion by pickleball courts
 - Had lots of discussion
 - Have shade structures, but a pavilion is not in CIP yet
 - Have to flush out a location
 - When put in courts, there were force mains and utilities running through where the courts are
 - Have to look at that too
- How is ash tree removal coming along in the parks?
 - Onondaga Lake Park, Jamesville and Pratts Falls are complete
 - Still have them in Highland Forest – trying to mitigate 50 miles of trail is very tough; still in process
 - Soil and Water has been great and stuck to what they said they would; been accommodating about program needs
 - Still have 2 or 3 other parks to go
- Does the county still log at Highland?
 - No; 6 or 7 years ago, did massive clear cut
 - Forest Management Plan scheduled next cut in 2026 or 2027
 - Foresters still think it is pretty thin; will hold off for a bit

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: BUDGET REVIEW - DAY 4

DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Pete Head d	Comptroller
Phil Britt	
Martin Mastropole	
James Conroy	
Sarah Graf	
Ann Debejian	Personnel
Amy Lang	Personnel
Stacey Rhoades	Personnel
Mary Washo	Fin Ops
Joe Coolican	DA's
michelle Robina	DA's
Lucy Loke	DA's
Mawreen Murphy	OCSO
Sherriff Shelley	OCSO
Dan Hume	Purchasing
Doreen Conway	OCBOE
Desiree Lafave	OCBOE
Elaine Denton	Resident
Sandy Miller Martino	FinOps
Melissa Colambo	Fin - ops
Jennifer Paganeli	Fin ops
Kristen Dean	Finance
Steven Buff	Finance
Emily Bersani	Clerk
Jim Haskell	Clerk
TRISHA Shelley TRISHA	OCSO
Yvonne D. Bruscia	Personnel
Nicole Walsh	BOE
Vanessa Terrett	BOE
DJ Wiegand	BOE