



Onondaga County Legislature

HASSINA K. ADAMS
Clerk

NICOLE WATTS
Chairwoman

SPENCER BERG
Deputy Clerk

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 24, 2026 **MAURICE BROWN, CHAIR**

PRESENT: Mr. Brown, Leader May, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Bush, Ms. Denton, Leader Hernandez, Mr. Romeo
ALSO PRESENT: Chairwoman Watts, Mr. Thompson, Ms. Block, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Eriksen; also see
attached list

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. and asked the Clerk to call the roll. The previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE: Kristi Smiley, Chief Fiscal Officer

a. A Resolution Approving and Directing the Correction of Certain Errors on Tax Bills (*Sponsored by Mr. Brown*)

- Six total corrections before the committee
- Five related to sewer unit charges
- One grievance in the Town of Clay over assessed value, went through due process and judicial review

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown: Are there six corrections within Item 1.a.?
- Ms. Smiley: One resolution, including six total corrections

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. A Resolution Increasing the Income Limitation Relative to Partial Exemption from Real Property Taxes for Persons 65 Years of Age and Over (*Sponsored by Mr. Brown*)

- New York State passed a resolution increasing the exemption for those over 65 from a maximum of 50% to 65%
- County Executive and Legislature have historically been supportive of such increases
- Public hearing was approved at the prior month's meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. INFORMATIONAL – Briefing on Municipal Bonding Process (Kristi Smiley, Chief Fiscal Officer)

- Six steps in the debt process:
- Department Requests (March - May)

- Departments put together annual requests with scopes and dollar amounts
- Submitted through the Management and Budget Office
- Director of CIP Dan Mulvahill compiles throughout the summer reviewing the six-year spend plan
- Works with departments and County Executive's Office on priorities
- Debt schedule put together for CFO and County Executive to review against current financial status
- Capital Improvement Plan:
 - Culminates in CIP book reviewed with the Legislature as part of the annual budget process
 - Projects broken down by category, type of authorization (cash capital, bonding, or state/federal funding), and type of project
- Bond Authorization Resolution:
 - SEQR documentation pulled together by departments and reviewed by the Law Department
 - Bond resolutions prepared by outside bond counsel to ensure all maximum authorizations account for any previous resolutions
 - Approximately one month of preparation before authorizations reach the Legislature for final approval
 - Authorization for bonding is just that, it does not mean the County goes out that same year and bonds for those projects
 - Bond counsel is ORC, a nationally recognized firm that has worked with the County for years
- Bond Sale:
 - Projects reviewed annually based on department spending plans
 - Dan Mulvahill works through authorized and unissued bonds and tracks where spend is
 - County chases the spend, only bonds when necessary
 - Onondaga County has been very successful in fiscal management
 - Among the first counties to conduct an online bond sale, which can be watched in real time
- Debt Service Management:
 - Debt service covered each year as reflected in the budget book
 - Continual work with fiscal advisers to explore reissuances and lower rates
 - Bond proceeds invested properly to offset debt service costs
 - Reserve for bonded debt maintained, not all debt service is reflected in the budget book
- Redemption of Bonds:
 - Final step in the process, retiring outstanding debt

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown: How are priorities determined for the upcoming year?
- Smiley: Immediate need is the primary driver, failing systems, urgent conditions, along with countywide projects
 - Criteria are laid out in the CIP book; will send a link to the specific section
- Mr. Brown: Is bond counsel the same firm every year?
- Ms. Smiley: Yes, ORC has been the County's bond counsel for years; they are nationally recognized
- Mr. Romeo: Can you explain the bond management process again, how does leftover funding work?
- Ms. Smiley: If a project comes in under budget (e.g., \$700K spent on a \$1M bond), the remaining funds go into the reserve for bonded debt to pay down principal in future years without taking on new debt; bond proceeds are also invested in pooled safe instruments to generate interest earnings that are placed into the debt service fund to help offset costs
- Ms. Denton: Regarding bond issued documents on the finance page, are those year-to-year reports?
- Ms. Smiley: Those are the official statements for each bond year actually issued; each bond issuance produces a QIP showing the debt schedule; will follow up offline if a specific page is needed

- Mr. Burtis: Just to clarify, authorizing a bond that's smaller doesn't necessarily mean the County will bond for it?
- Ms. Smiley: Correct, the CFO has the ability to use cash instead, and for smaller issuances, the County often does so at year-end to keep debt service low

2. BOARD OF ELECTIONS: Archie Wixson, Jr., Commissioner of Facilities Management

a. Approving the Classification of an Unlisted Action Under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, Accepting the Short Environmental Assessment Form, and Accepting and Adopting the Negative Declaration in Connection with the Roof Replacement at the Onondaga County Board of Elections (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)

- Short form SEQR, negative declaration
- Existing facility; no environmental impact anticipated to natural or community environment
- Public funds require SEQR review; Items 2.a. and 2.b. are connected
 - 2.b. cannot proceed without 2.a.

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown: Can you confirm Items 2.a. and 2.b. are connected and that 2.b. cannot proceed without 2.a.
- Mr. Wixson: Correct two items

A motion was made by Mr. May, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing Roof Replacement at the Elections Headquarters in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$500,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$500,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)

- Replacement of a large roof section at the Board of Elections building
- \$500,000 sufficient to cover costs, including removal and replacement of HVAC units on the roof so that curbs can be rehabilitated (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown: Can you confirm the timeline for this project?
- Mr. Wixson: Duration will not be lengthy
 - Work unlikely to begin until mid-to-late April; roofer will be fully prepared in advance to shorten the replacement period as much as possible
- Mr. May: Nine other capital requests, routine maintenance and upkeep projects, were approved unanimously in committee this month and are not on today's agenda. Can we have an explanation as to why, given the Legislature's duty to maintain taxpayer-owned assets?
- Ms. Watts: Those items will appear on the March Ways and Means agenda. They were delayed one month for two reasons:
 - To ensure all legislators have a thorough understanding of the bond process, and
 - To have outside counsel in place prior to the vote
- Mr. Bush: I will be voting no. Not a wise expenditure given accessibility, parking, and safety concerns. County does not own the surrounding parking; time to find a facility that better serves residents and employees. Investing half a million dollars in a building the county may soon vacate is not spending money wisely. A temporary patch may be warranted if actively leaking

- Mr. McCarron: If the rationale was to better understand the bonding process, why were only some items removed and not all? Items like hazardous materials removal from County buildings could be a health risk to employees; the logic of applying the delay to only some agenda items is unclear
- Ms. Watts: The remaining bond items were understood to not be as urgent; they were essentially pre-authorizations for when funds would be needed. The BOE roof, however, had a more urgent nature; there were pictures showing deterioration.
- Mr. Brown: Point of clarification, as chair of Ways and Means, items will not be brought forward if there is discomfort voting on them; more questions remained about the bond process for the other items
- Mr. Bush: Is the roof falling in?
- Mr. Brown: Commissioner Wixon indicates it is not; however, pictures have been seen to the contrary; as noted at the Facilities Committee, if the County moves to another building, it would still own this one, and a building with a working roof is more marketable than one without
- Mr. Bush: If the building is assessed at \$500,000 and another \$500,000 is put into it, the county will not recoup a million dollars on the market; a private contractor could put a roof on for significantly less than the county would spend; does not want the roof collapsing on anyone, but this should be the first step toward finding a better-located facility
- Mr. May: I appreciate the answer and the desire to know more about bonding, but that does not explain why we voted on bonding in committee. We are here to lead, and sometimes leading is difficult; we have to make decisions that we are not entirely comfortable with. There is only so much information we can get. It is blatantly conspicuous that Oak Orchard is not on this agenda today as it should be. We have been going round and round for months with the same questions and the same answers, and we are not moving forward. I appreciate the response, but I do not accept it as a good enough reason. I will be abstaining from the vote
- Mr. Burtis: I agree with Leader May; I understand the ramifications of not bringing the other bonds to the floor today and it is concerning. I am not opposed to the spend at BOE; I have been there, I have seen the water and the challenges for employees firsthand. Prior to today, we searched for different options for BOE but nothing came to the forefront. This is our building. However, procedurally, I agree with Leader May that the other items should be here as they were voted on in committee. For that reason, I will also be abstaining

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Mr. Brown, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton, Ms. Hernandez) Noes: 1 (Mr. Bush) Abstentions: 2 (Mr. May, Mr. Burtis); MOTION CARRIED.

3. ONONDAGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY: Amanda Perrine, Executive Director

a. 2025 Transfer Resolution (\$55,500) (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)

- Requesting transfer of \$55,500 from 2025 operating budget to a facilities grant line
- Funds will be used to complete two masonry projects that could not be finished in 2025 due to procurement timing

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. SHERIFF'S OFFICE: Lisa Dell, Chief Civil Deputy

- a. 2025 Transfer Resolution (\$1,610,890) (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland*)
 - Requesting transfer of funds from the regular employee salary line (\$1,610,890) into three lines:
 - Overtime wages
 - Other employee wages
 - Contractual expenses

Questions/Comments:

- Ms. Denton: Can you provide a breakdown of overtime by division, is it primarily corrections or spread across divisions?
- Ms. Dell: Does not have those figures available but will provide a breakdown across all four divisions of the Sheriff's Department

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT: Archie Wixson, Jr., Commissioner

- a. 2025 Transfer Resolution (\$262,349) (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)
 - Requesting authorization for a transfer of \$262,349 to address a shortage in the 413 account, primarily utilities
 - Utility cost estimates fell short due to both National Grid rate increases and higher-than-anticipated usage during an exceptionally cold December
 - County spends millions annually on utilities, the majority of which runs through Facilities Management

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown: These utility costs, are they related to the broader trend of growing utility costs, and can we predict for this going forward so it doesn't happen again?
- Mr. Wixson: Rates have increased significantly over the last two years, both the rate itself and the usage. The county has had several mild winters and estimated costs based on known rate increases and consumer cost index, but fell short
- Mr. Burtis notes this was a concern going back even before the building renovations, the age and efficiency of the county's buildings raises ongoing utility cost concerns. A quarter of a million dollars miss is significant, but hopeful that building a longer history of usage will allow for better budgeting going forward
- Mr. Wixson: National Grid does not always provide sufficient advance notice of rate increases to allow for accurate budget-cycle adjustments
- Ms. Smiley: Adjustments have been made to major utility-using departments' budgets based on National Grid rate increases and seasonal projections for the coming year

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – ECONOMIC SECURITY: Kristi Smiley, Chief Fiscal Officer

- a. 2025 Transfer Resolution (\$280,000) (*Sponsored by Mr. Romeo*)
 - Requesting transfer of \$280,000 to grant line for computer replacements in the social services arena
 - Covers Children, Family, Economic Security, and Adult Long-Term Care divisions
 - New York State requires approximately one quarter of computers be replaced on a four-year cycle; software maintenance cannot continue on out-of-cycle machines
 - Will replace approximately 325 computers
 - Transfer is from surplus funds within the department budget, no request for additional dollars; consistent with practice in prior years

A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION: Odean D. Dyer, Commissioner

- a. 2025 Transfer Resolution (*Sponsored by Mr. Eriksen*)
 - Two components to this transfer:
 - Utility transfer of just over \$1.1 million
 - WEP is the county’s largest utility user; rates increased exponentially; next year’s budget reflects a significant increase in this line to prevent recurrence
 - Transfer into the all other expense account related to sludge hauling costs, right-sizing the account within the existing budget
 - All adjustments can be accommodated within the existing budget; requesting reallocation to close out 2025 books

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. May will be abstaining. Was scheduled for another meeting on the other side of the door during Committee discussion of this item, and cannot responsibly vote on an item discussed in a prior meeting under those circumstances. Expressed disappointment more broadly that legislator education and process concerns appear to be taking precedence over outcomes, today was not a good example of how things should go, and hopes for improvement going forward
- Mr. Romeo: Request for legal advice on abstaining, is there not a requirement for a personal conflict in order to abstain?
- Mr. Ockenden: Rule not known off the top of head; will follow up after the meeting
- Mr. Romeo: Noted there are restrictions on when abstaining may occur due to a general requirement to vote

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. Bush, to approve this item. Ayes: 6 (Mr. Brown, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Bush, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton, Ms. Hernandez) Noes: 0 Abstentions: 1 (Mr. May); MOTION CARRIED.

8. DISCUSSION OF CORRESPONDING OUTSIDE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Nicole Watts, Chairwoman

- a. Review and Discussion of Appointments to Outside Boards (*Attachment No. 1*)

- Each outside board and commission has been matched with a standing committee for appointments or confirmations
- Boards matched to Ways and Means:
 - Board of Ethics: Recent appointments have been made; no vacancies currently open
 - Charter Conflict Committee: Details regarding appointments are still being worked out; will circle back with more information
 - Onondaga County–Syracuse Commission on Human Rights: Two vacancies currently open for legislature appointments; legislators are asked to submit resumes or names to committee chair Legislator Brown and Chairwoman Watts for review and appointment resolutions
 - Deferred Compensation Committee: Three legislative members, including the Chair of Ways and Means; one appointment by the Minority Leader and one by the Majority Leader; leaders asked to provide their selections to Chairwoman Watts

b. Appointment of Chad Ryan to the Onondaga County Jury Board (*Sponsored by Ms. Watts*)

- Matter discussed in a prior committee meeting but not voted on at that time; brought to Ways and Means for action

A motion was made by Mr. Bush, seconded by Mr. May, to approve this item; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



HASSINA ADAMS, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE**
DATE: **FEBRUARY 24th, 2026**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Amanda Perrine	OCPL
Mark Carter	OCPL
Carl Hummel	Personnel
Jason Dean	Finance
Don Mulvihill	Finance
Kathleen Kearney	Finance
Arnie Wilkinson	Prop tax
Sirena Sharpe	Finance
Walter	Entertainment
Josh Schick	Public
Archie Wilson	OCFM
Kristi Smith	Finance

ATTACHMENT NO 1:
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



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OUTSIDE BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Ways & Means Committee

Board of Ethics

Established by Local Law 5-2023, the Onondaga County Board of Ethics consists of five voting members appointed by the County Executive, all subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the County Legislature. Members serve three-year terms and may serve up to two terms, for a maximum of six years. The purpose of the Board is to uphold ethical standards for county officers, employees, and appointed officials. The Board provides guidance on ethical conduct and reviews complaints. Its role is to promote honest and responsible conduct within the county government and to maintain public trust.

Current Appointments:

Hon. Anthony J. Paris

Appointed: 02/3/2026

Expired: 12/31/2028

Matthew Malinowski

Appointed: 12/16/2025

Expires: 12/31/2028

Bishop Colette Mathews-Carter

Appointed: 4/2/2024

Expires: 12/31/2028

Hon. John V. Centra

Appointed: 4/2/2024

Expires: 12/31/2028

Nancy Lowery

Appointed: 4/2/2024

Expires: 12/31/2028



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OUTSIDE BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Ways & Means Committee

Charter Conflict Committee

Established by County Charter, Section 106. The Charter Conflict Committee checks whether certain county officials or employees, especially those who are supposed to work full-time for the county, are allowed to have outside jobs or outside business interests in accordance with employment rules.

The Committee has five voting members, three appointed by the Chairman of the County Legislature and two appointed by the County Executive, all subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the Legislature.

Current Appointments:

- Chair Appointment 1 (VACANT)
- Chair Appointment 2 (VACANT)
- Chair Appointment 3 (VACANT)
- County Exec Appointment 1 (VACANT)
- County Exec Appointment 2 (VACANT)



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OUTSIDE BOARDS & COMMISSIONS Ways & Means Committee

Onondaga County/Syracuse Commission on Human Rights

Established by Local Law No. 5-2015, the Onondaga County/Syracuse Commission on Human Rights consists of thirteen members serving staggered three-year terms. Seven members are appointed by the County Executive and are subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the County Legislature; three members are appointed upon recommendation of members of the Legislature, and three members are appointed by the Mayor of the City of Syracuse.

The purpose of the Commission is to promote equal opportunity, investigate complaints of discrimination, and provide education and guidance on human rights protections. Its role is to support fair treatment, strengthen community relations, and advise county and city officials on policies that promote equity and compliance with human rights laws.

Current Appointments:

- Legislature Appointment: Paul Harvey
 - o Reappointed: 3/4/2025
 - o Expires: 12/31/2027
- Legislature Appointment: VACANT
- Legislature Appointment: VACANT
- County Executive Appointment: Adam Leslie
 - o Appointed: 6/3/2025
 - o Expires: 12/31/2025
- County Executive Appointment: Duane L. Reese II
 - o Appointed: 3/4/2025
 - o Expires: 12/31/2025
- County Executive Appointment: Lauren Rosenstein
 - o Reappointed: 3/4/2025
 - o Expires: 12/31/2027
- County Executive Appointment: Mary Grace Almandrez
 - o Reappointed: 3/4/2025



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- Expires: 12/31/2027
- County Executive Appointment: Bishop Dr. H. Bernard Alex
 - Reappointed: 3/4/2025
 - Expires: 12/31/2026
- County Executive Appointment: Agnes McCray
 - Reappointed: 3/4/2025
 - Expires: 12/31/2027
- County Executive Appointment: Liam O' Connor
 - Reappointed: 3/4/2025
 - Expires: 12/31/2027
- Mayor Appointment: Lyla Hue
 - Appointed: 06/18/2025
- Mayor Appointment: Taylor McFadden
 - Appointed: 08/21/2025
- Mayor Appointment: VACANT



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OUTSIDE BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Ways & Means Committee

Deferred Compensation Committee

Established by Resolution 148-92 and amended by Resolution 159-98, the Deferred Compensation Committee administers Onondaga County's deferred compensation (457) retirement savings plan for county employees in accordance with New York State Deferred Compensation Board regulations. The Committee consists of seven members, including three members of the County Legislature, the County Comptroller, the Chief Fiscal Officer, the Commissioner of Personnel, and one county union representative. Legislative members include the Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee and one member selected by each Floor Leader. Members serve in two-year terms; appointments are made by title and by each Floor Leader, and legislative confirmation is not required. The purpose of the Committee is to oversee administration and ensure compliance with the County's deferred compensation program.

Current Appointments:

Legislator: Vacant (was Dan Romeo)

Legislator: Vacant (was Colleen Gunnip)

Maurice Brown, Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee

Martin D. Masterpole, County Comptroller

Kristi Smiley, Chief Fiscal Officer

Carl Hummel, Commissioner of Personnel

County Union Representative