



Onondaga County Legislature

HASSINA K. ADAMS
Clerk

NICOLE WATTS
Chairwoman

SPENCER BERG
Deputy Clerk

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 21, 2026 CHARLES E. GARLAND, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Garland, Ms. Block, Mr. Ryan, Mr. McCarron, Mr. Knapp
ALSO PRESENT: Chairwoman Watts; also see attached list

Chair Garland called the meeting to order at 11:46 a.m. The previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. **COMMUNITY LINK PRESENTATION:** Jamien “Jed” Desalvia, Student at Syracuse University
 - a. **INFORMATIONAL:** Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Aviation

(Attachment No. 1: Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Aviation PowerPoint)

- Mr. Desalvia introduced himself, explaining that he has always had an interest and was excited to get this assignment from Legislator Ryan
- Thanked the Sheriff's Office

History of OCSO Aviation

- Started back in 1975, Korean War era Helicopters like from MASH
- In 1979, decided they needed something bigger and worth the time and got a Bell Jet Ranger 206, which served until 1999
- Then they got a Bell 407, which is the one they have now

OCSO Aviation Today

- Three police deputies and a sergeant
- Onondaga County is one of the three counties in upstate New York with a helicopter, along with Niagara County and Erie County
- Back in 2014, New York state police, which had a large aviation unit consolidated as perhaps a cost-saving measure, to Rochester, Albany, Newburgh and Saranac

Equipment

- On the back, they have an infrared camera mounted
- They have a PA system, which is a good way to give commands to individuals on the ground. Such as a situation where someone is lost
- They have their Night Sun spotlight, from what I heard, if you're under it and its on, all the street lights go out because it's so bright

- And finally, they have the emergency landing pontoons on the skids
- In the cockpit, they have their display for the infrared camera, the radios, giving access to the aviation, fire, police, and EMS channels
- These are the only things in the cock-pit which are not analog, other than the pilots' phones

Air One by the Number

- Between 2021 and 2025, AirOne had 4,404 calls for service
- One thing to note is that the 2025 numbers will be lower because they had some preventive maintenance on the engine, which involved taking the engine out and getting a rental engine
 - This means they're not going out for regular patrol, only if there's a situation that requires deployment
- Calls outside of Onondaga County;
 - This was something Legislator Ryan requested to be explored, in last five-year period, only 77 calls were recorded, the most being in 2019
 - It's a resource for Central New York, but mostly in Onondaga County
- Missing and Lost persons calls, called "file sixes", many of them happened in 2024, and due to the mission only rule, due to the construction that was reduced in 2025
- Flight hours are calculated from the minute they turn it on. There's a massive amount of hours they're getting here
- Vehicle and foot pursuits are a big one. A couple of weeks ago there were a crazy couple of days
 - It's a helpful resource, one of the things it can do is allow officers chasing the vehicles to pull back and allow the suspect to think they are backing off, allowing them to drive more safely that way we can avoid unfortunate incidents
 - Allows officers to communicate, avoiding spooking the driver and allow cooler heads to prevail
- Shots fired incidents: anytime in the city or the county, when anyone hears gunfire, AirOne goes up to survey the area and see if anyone is running, tossing a gun or might be laying on the ground
 - It's a very big deal, makes it easy for ground units to communicate where someone is going
- Property and Navigation Checks; this isn't the same as officers on the ground are doing, these are checks of critical infrastructure and waterways
 - We recently had a state of emergency in the county because of high water levels, so sometimes it's not uncommon for everyone to be monitoring the waterways and make sure they're doing what they need to be doing
 - I actually had the opportunity to go up there while they were doing a navigation check over Oneida Lake, which was frozen over, to make sure people weren't going out with the ice collapsing beneath them or in immediate danger
 - Finally, there are crucial infrastructure checks, for instance, they'll do checks of the Micron site to make sure no one is trying to destroy a very critical piece of infrastructure
 - There have been stories about people destroying power stations, so having AirOne in the air doesn't just serve as a deterrent but also could help locate suspicious people in the area

Selected Operational Highlights:

- April 2021: assisted Oswego fire departments with a brush fire using a Bambi bucket (a large bucket used to scoop water from a lake and dump it on an outdoor fire);
 - Subsequently assisted Syracuse Police Department with an ATV/dirt bike detail, which will become more common, resulting in 8 tows and 11 tickets

- This is actually something I personally witnessed because it was in the University Hill Area, Syracuse Police and University Public Safety were looking for suspects and called in Air One to help
- They used an infrared camera to track the suspect back to the 800 Block of Lancaster Ave and to a house at 841 Ackerman Avenue. They illuminated the house, Syracuse DPS and PD came in, and arrested them, avoiding a big incident
- Assisted in pursuit of a shots-fired suspect who fled into the Onondaga Nation; suspect located and taken into custody
- ATV on the ice call: helped get them off the ice and into safe hands
- Assisted Nedrow units after a group of juveniles was menaced by an individual with a knife; got the victims back home and feeling safe, Air One assisted in tracking and locating the subject
- Assisted DeWitt Police in locating a 13-year-old suicidal subject who had left home after ingesting pills; subject located at Jamesville Quarry; police units and EMS directed to the scene
- Assisted in the rescue of individuals in Marsh in Clay and in the rescue of a dog (Cooper) from the river; the dog rescue made international news, including coverage in Australia; Deputy Taylor performed the rescue

Other Duties

- Other details include ATV and dirt bike enforcement and the Syracuse Nationals. If anyone lives in Clay or Liverpool, you're definitely very familiar with what happens around there when the Syracuse Nationals are in town
- Gun violence elimination details, which are basically the old operation impact details.
 - Just a proactive police presence in the city of Syracuse from the sheriffs, state troopers, city police, and other agencies, finding people who have warrants and getting them into custody and off the streets
- Dignitary carries escorts. President, governor, the pope, whoever might grace Onondaga County with their presence, they'll go up and make sure their transit around here is safe
- Community policing, so National Night Out, usually held over at Long Branch Park. Food, music; get to hang out and see a bunch of cops there
- School demonstrations, things for DWI, like a mock medevac and talking to students about why you shouldn't drink and drive
- General displays at certain events where they'll have the helicopter there for people to see, and trainings with sheriffs, fire departments, and other entities, so they know what it does
- Technical flights like surveys. Back in 2011, during the flooding in Syracuse, they brought then-Governor Cuomo up in Air One and allowed him to survey the damages

Takeaways

- Air One is among, if not the greatest, public safety resource in Onondaga County and Central New York, with so many different duties and so many things it can do.
- It very much deserves the investment it's getting. We're seeing a lot of growth coming from Syracuse University, Micron, and so many other entities, and having a platform like Air One that can accommodate all of that is very, very helpful.

Questions/Comments

- Mr. Garland: We first just want to thank you, that was a wonderful presentation. The questions I have, I was making check marks because you were hitting them
- Mr. McCarron: There's no greater resource to law enforcement than AirOne. Having been a person who worked on Operation Impact and been involved in many pursuits, it's always a reassuring public safety resource to have Air One coming up behind you

- I've heard the comparison that we don't need the helicopter because we have drones now and I strongly disagree with that
- There are a lot of things that the men and women of the Sheriff's Office and the helicopter can do that cannot be done with the drone program
- We recently saw them rescue people in Marsh and Clay and rescue a dog on the river. I'll do everything I can to support this helicopter
- Mr. Ryan: Thank you again
- Mr. Desalvia: I remember you asked me some specific questions so you can take a look at that
- Mr. Garland: With the spotlight, the current helicopter has been in service about 28 years, and with the replacement on the horizon, does the new one have night vision or anything of that nature to help troops on the ground?
- Mr. McCarron: The infrared camera detects heat on the ground, allowing them to track suspects and people in the darkness at night. While it's not night vision like you see on TV, it allows them to track people in the darkness
- Mr. Garland: The IR, thank you. And of course, you mentioned motorcycles and ATVs; living in the city, you see all of that. Thank you, and I am sure your mother in the back is very proud of you, as we are

2. **SHERIFF:**

- a. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of a Replacement Helicopter for the Sheriff's Department in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$7,400,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$7,075,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof
- Mr. Shelley: With that young man's presentation, I don't know what you need us for. It's obvious that our aviation program is saving lives
 - We recently saw Cooper, the dog being saved
 - Jim was the pilot on that one. Deputy Taylor in the back is the one who actually grabbed the dog, which made news in Australia
 - This program justifies itself

Questions/Comments

- Mr. Ryan: Once you get this bond, what's the timetable for the transition process?
- Mr. Shelley: The estimated time would be two years, two-year build time. Hopefully, that would be less. There's additional training to go with that because the new aircraft represents dramatic upgrades
- Mr. Garland: So instead of a lot of analog, I'll assume you'll have a digital aircraft. And what's going to be the life of the new one?
- Mr. Farley: We've had this one for 26 years. The new one can go another 26 years. The aircraft itself is well-maintained, but the technology in it is outdated
- Mr. Knapp: We've done a really good job over the years of maintaining this one, so that's been key. What are we looking at for a trade-in value?
- Chief Farley: I heard anywhere around \$1.2 to \$1.4 million
- Mr. McCarron: How is the helicopter facility doing out there?
- Mr. Shelley: That's been condemned since the '80s. It's not in good shape. To make it in real good shape would be quite an investment, not only to protect the equipment, but to protect our health; there's mold in that building
- Mr. Knapp: Our pilots, we've got the best that I know of. They're consummate professionals. Watching them do the things they do just for the dog rescue, the precision, the concentration, everything that took. They're wonderful ambassadors for the Sheriff's Department and the program

3. **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS - 911**: Julie Kolakowski Corn, Commissioner; Dana Smith, Deputy Commissioner

a. INFORMATIONAL: Emergency Communications (911)

- The Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is one of the most important systems in all of public safety. It's the backbone of how we talk to all police, fire, and EMS agencies and how we maintain our notes and all our information at the 911 Center
- Requesting CIP funding for hardware upgrades, including servers, gateways, and switches; this is the second half of a two-part investment, with the first half approved last year

Questions/Comments

- Mr. Ryan: What's the shelf life for these investments?
- Ms. Corn: Usually about five years. We are going to be in the market for a new CAD in a few years, so we need these things to maintain what we have now
- Mr. Ryan: When you say a new CAD, like an entire new system?
- Ms. Corn: We'll be in the market to decide if we're going to keep the one we have or move to another system. Technology is moving so fast that a lot of things could change in a couple of years, but we have to maintain what we have
- Mr. Garland: With this new system, you and I talked about AI. Do we have any checks and balances where emergency calls aren't inadvertently switched over to an automated system?
- Ms. Corn: Yes. So, you're talking about our non-emergency triage. So, we can talk about AI right now if you'd like
- Mr. Ryan: Is there an AI policy?
- Ms. Corn: Is there an AI policy? Can you be more specific?
- Ms. Corn: So, AI is something we have a policy on using the AI systems internally. Absolutely. Everything we do is policy-driven. It's a very tried and true system across the country, and how we use it is very personal to how we do it at our center.
 - Everything is based on our own policies and procedures internally to make the AI work for us, and everything is very structured in the way it's implemented
- Mr. Ryan: To develop that policy, obviously, there's best practice, but all that stuff is rapidly changing. What's the board or group that oversees that and is keeping up with it?
- Ms. Corn: There's one called the AI-assisted call taking. That's going to help us on the call taker side to do transcription, translation, summarization of calls; it's almost like an assistant to the call taker and will in no way to replace the call taker, but it helps them do their job more consistently and efficiently. It tracks location automatically. It helps with historical incidents
 - It's moving very fast, and we are actively working with the AI company about that on a regular basis. How we train our people, how we maintain that. I actually have a call this afternoon about this very topic.
 - There's the technology side and the human side, and we want to make sure those things always go together.
 - Just because the technology is moving super fast, we have to make sure that the human can keep up with it

- Ms. Corn: In terms of oversight, the Policy Review and Oversight Committee is the public safety committee that has representatives from all public safety agencies. I sit on that. It's chaired by Chief Cassalia, and bringing this system on board was reviewed through that committee
- Mr. Ryan: So, the AI company we use, what's the name?
- Ms. Corn: It is prepared, which is now prepared by Axon, or Axon 911
- Mr. Ryan: It's like a specific product for this sphere?
- Ms. Corn: Absolutely, 100%. The AI-assisted call taking is one. Another one is a quality assurance product. And then the third one is the non-emergency triage, which I believe was to answer your question, Chairman.
 - Non-emergency calls are about a third of what we get a day, about an average of 1,000 to 1,200 a day. By moving those calls to an AI bot, we can devote those resources to what our employees were hired for, which is to handle emergencies

b. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing Improvements to the E-911 CAD Intergraph System of the Department of Emergency Communications in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$900,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$900,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$900,000)

A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to approve this item. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing Additions to and Renovation of the E-911 Center 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 (\$500,000)

- The 911 center is a 30-plus-year-old facility. We have talked about this a couple of times over the years, and have determined it is more cost-effective to maintain the current site and expand rather than build a whole new one. This funding is for a design study to determine what that expansion would look like
- There is a building next door that is ready to come down, and that is the area we would be expanding into.
- The job is more complex today, and we know our community is growing with Micron coming; everything we do at 911 is based on population size, so if the population grows, the number of calls grows as well

Questions/Comments

- Mr. Knapp: Years ago, we dipped our toe in the water and there was some grant money out there to explore merging with other counties did anything ever come of that?
- Ms. Corn: It did not come to fruition and there hasn't been any new discussion about it
- Mr. Garland: With the renovation and expansion, normally, when you expand, that might mean hiring. With the growing reliance on AI, does expanding the facility also mean hiring more people?
- Ms. Corn: I'm not in a position to talk about hiring today. We will have to wait and see if the AI tools have any impact on how fast we can answer calls. What I can say is that the person currently dedicated to answering non-emergency calls will be freed up, and we are moving in a positive direction

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Knapp, to approve this item. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- d. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing E-911 Radio/GPS Location System Improvements in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$1,500,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$1,500,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$1,500,000)
- We have been working with law enforcement partners for about a year on adding GPS capability to portable radios; we currently have no way to track officers beyond their vehicles, and this would allow us to keep track of their whereabouts at all times as a safety issue

Questions/Comments

- Mr. McCarron: This is extremely important in instances of foot chases, or for firefighters who go into a building and we can't track which side they're on, EMS people this is a valuable investment
- Mr. Ryan: Does this GPS get added to the current radios or is it a new model?
- Mr. Smith: All existing radios will be upgraded they are already capable of doing it, they just need to be programmed that way. This funding covers that cost. The CAD Map will be integrated directly into the CAD map so dispatchers can see officer locations in real time
- Mr. Ryan: We own these radios?
- Mr. Smith: We own the entire radio system. Individual agencies own their radios, but everything is programmed and configured through our system. The programming cost is included in this funding request
- Mr. Ryan: So when we eventually replace the radios, we just continue buying the same model and pay for this GPS capability?
- Mr. Smith: Yes. And we are responsible for programming all radios, police, fire, and EMS
- Mr. McCarron: We talked a minute ago about possibly switching CAD systems in a couple of years. Will this GPS upgrade be compatible with a new CAD system, or is this just a short-term investment?
- Mr. Smith: This creates the capability in the radio system itself. If the CAD software changes down the road, integrating this GPS capability would be part of that future purchase
- Mr. Garland: With the radios we've had them for years and never had any way to track officers?
- Ms. Corn: On foot, no. Some newer body cameras do have GPS, but coverage isn't consistent across agencies. Since 911 owns the radio system, this allows us to make sure everything is integrated the same way so we can always reach out and track officer locations
- Mr. McCarron: Should 911 be the central point for tracking GPS locations in real time? Do you currently have access to GPS in the Axon body cameras?
- Mr. Smith: That's exactly why we went with the radio system that we control body camera access could change and we could lose that ability.
- Mr. Garland: With the handheld radios themselves, they also have a shelf life. How many more years do we get out of them?
- Ms. Corn: The radios tend to last a very long time, they're very ruggedized. It depends on when each agency purchased its most recent ones

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Ms. Block, to approve this item. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- e. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing E-911 Telephone System Improvements in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$4,000,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$4,000,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$4,000,000)

- Critical part of 9/11 infrastructure, it's actually what brings calls into the center.
- This is upgraded every 5 years. The new phone system called Carbine is cloud-based, which will integrate well with the AI software we have already invested in under the Axon 911 platform, and will save money on maintenance by moving away from server-based infrastructure
- This system is upgraded approximately every five years, and this is a full replacement. The previous server-based system takes up a lot of space and requires significant IT maintenance all of that will move to this company in a very secure and reliable way

Questions/Comments

- Mr. McCarron: Is anyone else around here using a cloud-based phone system?
- Ms. Corn: Not in our surrounding area we would be the first but across the country it is a clear trend
- Mr. Garland: With the cloud-based system does this mean we won't be reliant on servers?
- Mr. Smith: There is some server need, but very minor compared to what we were used to. Going cloud-based, you do have local hosts to maintain, but it is not as expensive or as robust. And with the electrical savings from fewer on-site servers, there could also be some operational cost savings
- Mr. Ryan: With the cloud-based system a lot of things are becoming subscription-based. How are we forecasting bonding and borrowing for the next ten years?
- Ms. Corn: We are not going to be coming back every year asking for more. We studied this carefully and know exactly what we are getting for the next five years. This is not going to be a situation where we're asking for subscriptions here and there
 - About 90 to 95% of costs are tied into the CIP.

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to approve this item. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. DISCUSSION OF CORRESPONDING OUTSIDE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

- a. Review of Submitted Resumes and Candidates for Board and Commission Vacancies, Chairwoman Watts
 - The Justice Center Oversight Committee has four members with expired terms. We are looking to fill four vacancies: two general members (no specific background required), one with civil rights experience, and one with prior law enforcement experience
 - Members must not be legislators. At least two and no more than four must have a civil rights advocacy background; at least two must have a law enforcement background, which can include current law enforcement
 - We are looking to move this forward in two weeks. I would welcome and appreciate if every member could come up with one person we would hopefully then have enough resumes
 - Legislator McCarron has many connections with the law enforcement community; Legislator Garland has many in the civil rights advocacy community. Please send resumes and/or names to myself and Legislator Garland and we will confer on candidates ahead of the next session
 - In light of a lot of the things that have been coming out lately, this highlights the importance of having a committee like this in place, equipped with the right people

C. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to adjourn. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTENDANCE



SPENCER BERG, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

COMMITTEE: **PUBLIC SAFETY**

DATE: **APRIL 21, 2026**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Julie Corn	911
Brian Donnelly Dan Mulvihill	CE OFF Finance
Kyle Madden	Legislature
MARK	BO