



# Onondaga County Legislature

**HASSINA K. ADAMS**  
Clerk

**NICOLE WATTS**  
Chairwoman

**SPENCER BERG**  
Deputy Clerk

## **WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 28, 2026**

### **MAURICE BROWN, CHAIR**

**PRESENT: Mr. Brown, Leader May, Leader Hernandez, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Bush, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton**

**ALSO PRESENT: Chairwoman Watts, Mr. Thompson, Ms. Block; also see attached list**

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

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

##### **a. INFORMATIONAL: Presentation on the Budget Process**

*(Attachment No. 1: Budget Process)*

- In May of each year, the county begins development of the baseline budget; the process starts by preparing the first forecast for the current year, examining expenses and revenues, and determining any pressures on this year's and next year's budget
  - Team puts together the cost of current services at next year's prices; even with no decisions made, the budget will increase every year due to inherent cost drivers:
    - Contractual wages
    - Associated fringe and benefits
    - Mandated programs
    - Inflation on supplies
    - Utilities and contractual escalators; budget is over \$1.5 billion, those are large increases
- Once baseline expenditures are compiled, they are compared against projected revenues to assess the county's fiscal position
  - Majority of revenue sources are either formula driven or fixed reimbursements tied to expenditures, limiting direct control over revenue growth
  - Major streams like sales tax are largely influenced by broader economic conditions rather than local policy
- In recent years, the county operated in a favorable fiscal environment where revenues exceeded baseline expenditure growth, resulting in structural surpluses
  - Driven by post-pandemic factors that temporarily elevated revenues while suppressing baseline budgeting costs:
  - Historic sales tax growth, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, and enhanced federal Medicaid assistance
  - Reduction in safety net programs for several years; those are starting to increase again as the 2026 budget was developed
- For the first time in several years, the county faced a structural deficit in the 2026 budget; expenses were outpacing revenue
- During surplus years, the county was deliberate and disciplined

- Invested in one-time expenditures such as infrastructure improvements, fleet updates, and technology
- Funding was also used strategically to generate future sales and property tax growth
- Closed the 2026 gap with relative ease
- In July, departments receive their baseline budget
  - Departments are asked to review for accuracy, submit technical adjustments such as staffing changes, and propose decision packages
    - Decision packages can include new initiatives or programs, one-time expenses, and increased staffing
- Throughout July and August, requests are reviewed by the CFO and county executive team and evaluated against available resources and county priorities
- Results in the county executive budget, presented to the legislature on or before September 15th
  - On the first day of budget presentations, the county executive presents policy direction, strategic priorities, and a high-level overview of the spending plan
  - On day two, the CFO presents what is driving expenditures and revenues and how they have changed from the prior year
  - Presentation is variance-driven, so the legislature can see what changed and why
  - Walk through closeout of the previous fiscal year, the current year forecast, and the multi-year forecast to provide context on the county's overall financial position and emerging pressures
- After the CFO presentation are departmental budget presentations
  - The county works collaboratively with the legislature on which departments present; presentations focus on departments with significant new expenditures, major policy or programmatic changes, and the county's largest cost centers
  - A written budget overview is provided for every department covering program changes, staffing changes, and major expense and revenue drivers
- The last part is legislative review:
  - Ways and Means proposes amendments in the Ways and Means report
  - A public hearing is held October 1 through 10
  - The full legislature must adopt the budget by October 15
  - The county executive may veto any increases by October 20
  - The legislature must consider any vetoes by October 25
  - The budget must be adopted by the first Monday in November; if not, the county executive's submitted budget plus all increases not vetoed becomes the adopted budget

### **Questions/Comments**

- Mr. Romeo: What procedures would be triggered and how do we engage with you in terms of adapting on the fly with something as major as a COVID situation?
- Ms. Smiley: During COVID there were multiple factors, including significant new expenses for departments and employees, and loss of revenue as the state slowed down reimbursements and reimbursement for programs was not guaranteed; the county put a budget austerity in place, reducing budget lines to ensure the budget could be balanced for that year; the county also instituted an additional step in the procurement approval process, reviewing every purchase through the lens of whether it was an emergency or absolutely needed versus something that could wait; anytime the county anticipates slowed revenue growth, it looks at implementing austerity measures to ensure fiscal stability; there was reporting out to the legislature throughout that time period as well; expenditure reductions were done executively, in partnership, with many conversations throughout
- Mr. Romeo: Were you able to do that without us, or are there things where you would need the legislature to get together?

- Ms. Smiley: Reducing expenditures was done executively, but in partnership with the legislature; there were many conversations throughout
- Mr. May, adding to Ms. Smiley's comments, noted there was a ton of communication with the legislature as revenue streams dry right up, including sales tax and food tax; there was legislative action along the way and staffing considerations that needed to be addressed; it was more than a reactive time, it was a proactive time; the county learned a lot about what happens when revenue dries up and certain outbound functions cannot happen; there was a lot of communication continuously throughout the process
- Mr. Brown: Is the community able to interact with the process before the public hearing phase, and if so, where would you suggest that be?
- Ms. Smiley: A lot of that happens throughout the entire year with departments at the programmatic level; departments like Health and Children and Family have a lot of different events out in the community and community feedback; there are always ways to reach out to departments; although the official budget process begins in May, those conversations don't start in May, there is continual feedback throughout the year as forecasts are done and departments are experiencing different things, talking with county executives about new priorities

2. **ONONDAGA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** Nicole Watts, Chairwoman

a. Calling for a Public Hearing on the Tentative 2026-2027 Budget of the Onondaga Community College (May 26, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.) (Sponsored by *Sponsored by Mr. Brown*)

- A typical public hearing called for as required for the OOC budget; the May meeting located at OOC is when they will do the budget presentation; looking to get that on the calendar so it falls within the window needed to approve the OC budget

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

3. **DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:** Kevin J. Sexton, Chief Information Officer

a. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing a Comprehensive Technology Refresh, in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$1,600,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$1,600,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$1,600,000) (*Sponsored by Mr. Brown*)

*(Attachment No. 2: Onondaga County IT 2026 CIP)*

- Mr. Romeo: The digitalization of the civil service process, I've asked HR about it several times because it's something I'm interested in, just didn't know if IT had a perspective in terms of how that transition is going or where it's at
- Mr. Sexton: It's been online to a certain extent, but this is Carl's question
- Mr. Hummel: Implementing a new software package from a company called NEOGOV
  - The first module, called Insight, is nearing completion and will be the online application piece, allowing people to apply online, pay for exams online, and pass information back and forth
  - The second module, called Onboard, has been started, and once someone applies, tests, and is hired, they can be onboarded digitally as well, accessible on computer and mobile platforms
    - Expect to be live with the application process sometime this summer, probably end of summer for Onboard
  - Third module will start up at that time, called Learn; training platform
    - All three will run together seamlessly, passing information from the first time someone engages with the county about a job all the way to their first day at their desk and beyond

- It really isn't involved with the process because it's an outside vendor and a cloud-based platform; the Deputy Commissioner, Anne Marie Donohue, is project manager
  - There have been a few bumps but things have smoothed out, and expect to be live sometime this summer

*Presentation by Mr. Sexton:*

- Gist of the CIP is to upgrade or replace either equipment or application environments in the county's network or cloud-supported environments to:
  - Stay on current versions
  - Better secure the environment
  - Maintain or improve performance
- Overall CIP request is \$3.8 million; this year's bond resolution request is \$1.6 million
- Looking to address a number of environments for this year:
  - Compute nodes and chassis hardware supporting all server and virtual machine environments
    - Over 800 servers running on virtual machines; looking to replace older IBM blade servers this year
- A couple of items slated for 2027, not part of this bond resolution:
  - Backup storage for the forensic science center to improve performance on backups; overall enterprise storage environment for all active data on the county network
  - Replacement of PCs, laptops, and docking stations; some have been around seven to eight years, all still running Windows 10; need to get them up to Windows 11
  - Number of aged monitors getting beat up and smaller in size
  - As new machines are replaced, looking to upgrade Microsoft licensing; part of this spend
  - Introducing a back cloud object storage environment, an immutable backup system; looking to have more off-site presence for backups
    - Currently limited to forensics and 911; looking to have all mission-critical environments backed up off-site in addition to on-site
  - Upgrading a large number of network equipment, mainly network switches, firewalls, and wireless access points for devices at or coming to end of life
  - Replacing a good number of phones every year for the VoIP environment and all related peripherals
    - Next year looking at fiber replacement for some buildings downtown; not part of this bond resolution
  - Final item for this year: upgrade the Kronos environment, the timekeeping management system which feeds payroll; important to get on a current version; part of the \$1.6 million bond resolution for this year

**Questions/Comments:**

- Ms. Watts: Do any of these upgrades have to do with ADA accessibility requirements or the changeover of the website?
- Mr. Sexton: These specific items do not, but they support the overall environment where people will be accessing ADA-compliant documents; the county upgraded the website this year and still has a challenge of getting older PDFs into a compliant form
  - IT is working with the legislature on that, and in the meantime is implementing a solution in the near term that will allow those older PDFs to be viewed in accessibility mode on the website; a plan still needs to be developed going forward with all the various departments who submit PDFs so that they are in compliant form

- Mr. Brown: What does the outreach with the different departments look like when updating their systems?
- Mr. Sexton: IT has liaisons at all departments and works with department heads; Teams meetings are set up to include a number of people; training documentation and sometimes training videos are distributed
  - IT has a formal change management process where the team meets weekly to go over all changes going into production environments, identify potential risk, and determine the appropriate form of communications, whether that is an email to everyone in the county or just a targeted notification to users of a specific system
- Ms. Denton: Do we have a recycling program for old equipment, and how does that work?
- Mr. Sexton: We do; have a vendor we work with; before any disc drives or computers are sent out, they are wiped so there is no data on them; the facilities department has contracts with e-recycling vendors that come in and take all equipment away and take care of it from there
- Mr. Romeo: With the server investment this year and the mention of going to cloud backup in future years, is transitioning to the cloud something we are interested in, and what does the future of that storage look like?
- Mr. Sexton: The county has made big investments in the cloud over the years but has not made a big investment in terms of backing up in the cloud; the reason is that it becomes an operational spend that grows the budget
  - If a capital investment is made in an on-premises backup solution that is kept for eight to ten years, the total cost of ownership becomes much less than the overall spend in the cloud
  - That said, the cost of cloud ownership keeps coming down every year, and once it becomes practical and the executive's office and the legislature are comfortable growing the budget to support cloud backups, the county will look to move in that direction
- Mr. Brown: How do we project platform and subscription cost increases, and how do we go about planning for that?
- Mr. Sexton: It is a huge concern; spend with vendors like Microsoft is going to continue to increase because all software vendors are moving away from one-time costs to annual subscription models; the legislature over the last few years has been good about allowing IT to increase its operational spend a little bit for those reasons
  - IT starts the 2027 budget process now, asking vendors what the increase looks like for next year and what migration to the cloud will cost, and then works with the CFO's team to incorporate and communicate that
- Mr. Brown: Is there a formalized change management plan, or is it ad hoc department by department, and is that something we would be able to see internally?
- Mr. Sexton: IT team has a change management process; meet weekly to go over all changes going into production environments; not only for awareness but to identify potential risk and identify what forms of communications are needed, whether an email to everyone in the county or just a targeted notification; for example, if implementing something in the PeopleSoft financial system, a notification goes out to all users or management level in PeopleSoft; some other departments might have their own change management that they manage

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

**4. ONONDAGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE:** Tobias Shelley, Sheriff; Sergeant James Farley, Chief Pilot; Deputy Michale Bradley, Instructor Pilot

- 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 (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland*)
- Here to talk about the bond for a new helicopter; aviation program has been around since the 70s; looking to push that aviation program into the future
    - Although it's an expensive program, when you look at the work this aviation program does and divide that over the amount of time we'll have the helicopter, the cost isn't that much
    - When you start putting a price tag on a Cooper the dog from Baldwinsville and you look at the other lives like that it's saving, the program justifies itself

**Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. May: Resolution calls for \$7,075,000; capital plan shows a different number; are we putting cash against it?
- Ms. Smiley: The sheriff has found some funds within their own budget to help offset some of the costs; that's why the actual bond issuance is less than the total project cost
- Mr. Burtis commented he is a long-time supporter of AirOne and is glad the county is moving forward with a new bird; supported in every way; it is reasonable that a community the size of Onondaga County would have a helicopter; there is a cost but it is reasonable; it is a lifesaver and helps the sheriff's office do the job it is tasked to do
- Mr. Brown: Have fully 180 turned on the helicopter, was against it and now is for it because of the good it can do; gets calls from community members who just see the helicopter up and don't know what's going on; is there a way for community members to see what the helicopter is doing, why it's flying in their neighborhood, and if not, should we create that?
- Mr. Shelley: A lot of what we're doing is in progress; no easy way to put that out; don't want to interfere with a police investigation; if involved in something out of the ordinary, the public information officer is notified and can post through that way
- Mr. Farley: A lot of what the helicopter is doing is in progress, so there is no easy way to put that out; the county does not want to interfere with a police investigation; when the helicopter is involved in something out of the ordinary, the public information officer is notified and can post through official channels; there are also apps, like FlightAware, where people can track the aircraft and see where it is at all times
- Mr. Brown commented he has reached out to Tom from the sheriff's office about the helicopter when constituents come to him; going forward it would be helpful to have something formal, even if 72 hours after the fact so it doesn't interfere with anything in progress; has gotten at least three constituents come to him just wondering what's going on and every time it's been something totally reasonable and totally justified; the concern is just having that transparency available for people
- Mr. McCarron: The county has a live CAD dispatch system with some limited public access to active calls; if a resident has an immediate concern about the helicopter flying over, they may be able to go online, look at the CAD system, and see if there are any calls in their neighborhood
- Mr. May: The county has made investments and gotten grant money to enhance the drone program; it serves a distinctly different purpose than the helicopter; can you speak to where both are going and how the helicopter program is impacted by that in terms of efficiency or safety?
- Mr. Shelley: Will have Sgt. Farley speak to that; he has written papers on the comparison between the drone platform and the AirOne platform
- Mr. Farley: A lot of people think he would be anti-drone because he is pro-helicopter, but there are roles for both; drones are a great tool; the difference is drones are more location specific; for a vehicle pursuit

you can't take a drone because you're going to cover a large geographical area and a drone only operates from line of sight

- Drones also can't perform rescues; until a drone can go pick somebody out of a river, it can't replace a helicopter; a pilot has a different aerial view and can determine things differently than from the drone view
- Drones are really good for sending into a house to search for a suspect but can't replace a helicopter yet
- Ms. Hernandez: When do you start doing maintenance on a helicopter?
- Mr. Shelley: Maintenance is continual; the FAA says this many hours requires this much maintenance; for example, over the summer of 2025 the engine had to be rebuilt, required by the FAA hours; current ship is in really good shape; maintenance is outstanding and required by the hours
- Mr. Brown: Does the bond funding cover maintenance or does that come back to us separately?
- Mr. Shelley: Maintenance is in the yearly operating budget
- Mr. Bush: Do we have a timeline for when we can expect the new helicopter to be in operation?
- Mr. Shelley: Depends on Bell Helicopter who is building the new ship; two-year build time; no way to push them along, no negotiation
- Mr. Farley: Spoke to Bell last week and they're talking about 18-24 months
- Mr. Bush: As soon as the Legislature approves this at our next session, you'll be putting the order in, I assume?
- Mr. Farley: We want to place the order in because, according to Bill, prices are just going to keep going up, still not where they want to be
- Mr. Shelley: To put those increases in perspective, since starting this push three years ago, the same exact helicopter has gone up a million dollars
- Mr. Romeo: Do we have anything available for when the helicopter is down for maintenance, any kind of spare or alternative?
- Mr. Shelley: There is no spare helicopter
- Mr. Farley: Normally when there is a major component overhaul, such as the engine, a rental part is used while the original is being overhauled; can rent an engine, can rent blades; for a small item you're not going to rent a gauge, but for major overhauls rental parts are available
- Mr. Romeo noted that in thinking about the current helicopter being needed for the next two years, knowing how old it is, they would be able to rent pieces to keep it moving for that time period
- Mr. Farley: Most parts are available; if it's a small item, not renting a gauge, but for major overhaul, we have rental parts
- Mr. Meaker: I would like to first thank the sheriff and the pilots; the job is already dangerous enough being a sheriff and then flying in the air and saving people's lives; it is remarkable and he has seen some stuff up close; the question in regards to the current helicopter, is that going to be traded in and will that be through this deal with Bell?
- Mr. Shelley: expecting approximately \$1.2 million trade-in but don't know for sure because we don't know the condition the helicopter will be in two years; could get more because of the recent engine overhaul, could get less, but should be \$1.2 million or more
- Mr. Meaker: That price can't be determined until the actual day of trade-in, 18 to 24 months down the road?
- Mr. Sheriff Shelley: Correct; anticipating \$1.2 million but there could be other factors

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

**5. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS – 911: Julie Kolakowski Corn, Commissioner; Dana Smith, Deputy Commissioner**

a. **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) (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland*)

- First item is the CAD dispatch refresh project; two-year project; all about updating the existing hardware, servers, gateways, and switches that are part of the CAD system
- The CAD system is the backbone of the entire 911 system when it comes to communicating with all first responders in the field; all notes are taken in the CAD system from the calls and then communicated out to the field through laptops in all police, fire, and EMS vehicles; very critical infrastructure
- Not about replacing the current system; CAD systems usually have about a five-year life cycle; will be coming back in a few years to talk about that; this is to update very important pieces of equipment that keep the CAD system functioning properly
- This year is a little more than half of what was asked for last year to complete that project

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

b. **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) (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland*)

- This is about expanding and renovating the current 911 center
- Have talked in years past about studies and whether it makes sense to stay at the current center or move to a brand new facility; working with the county executive's office, it is definitely more cost-effective to stay
- What is being asked for is not a commitment to doing that yet, but to have a design of what that would look like at the current facility
- Looking to expand in the direction of the building next door, which is falling down and ready to come down; lots of land there; would be moving in that direction
- Also to renovate the current center, which needs very important things like windows, bathrooms, and kitchens
- If approved in the future, the estimate in the CIP is approximately \$20 million; not ready to talk about that part yet; this would be for the design
- 

**Questions/Comments**

- Mr. Romeo: In this design work, do you expect them to include tearing down the building next door because you'll need that space?
- Ms. Corn: Correct; had an estimate for that; it's several years old but it's about \$250,000; will see what that costs now with inflation

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

c. **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) (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland*)

- This one has everything to do with absolutely critical officer safety; may be surprised to hear that the county cannot currently track officers on foot
- There is some GPS capability in body cameras but that is not consistent across the board; this would allow GPS in portable radios; the capability exists in vehicles and works very well, but not on the actual individual
- This would give that capability; \$1.7 million over two years; law enforcement agencies have asked this be brought forward; the county owns the radio system

#### Questions/Comments

- Mr. Brown: Would this just be for the sheriff or how would it work?
- Ms. Corn: All towns and villages, all police agencies
- Mr. Romeo: Will this also be available for others using the radio system, like ambulance?
- Ms. Corn: This funding was specific to law enforcement, but that capability would definitely be important for other agencies with the priority being law enforcement
- Mr. Romeo: If an entity wants to use that, would they request it and then you would come back to us, or can they just opt into that?
- Ms. Corn: Would probably have to come back unless somebody wanted to fund that on their own on the fire and EMS side
- Ms. Denton: Is there ongoing cost with this; is this buying equipment and then continuing to service it, or is there a contract?
- Ms. Corn: Radios are similar to other 911 type equipment like CAD or the phone system; continuous updates every five years on average; radios are probably the most ruggedized and last the longest; eventually yes but not expected in the near term
- Mr. Romeo: It's just a software update for the radios, correct?
- Ms. Commissioner Corn: More of a software update on the current radio; will have to touch every radio though because it is already built in
- Mr. Smith: There is a specific channel that data gets pushed from the radio automatically to the 911 center and it is integrated into the CAD map; the officer doesn't have to do anything more than have the radio on and the radio will transmit that burst of data and plot them on the map

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

d. **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) (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland*)

- Upgrade the phone system; most critical in terms of timeliness; current phone system has an expiration coming up this summer; this is the five-year life cycle on the phone system

- Moving from a server-based phone system to a cloud-based phone system; will save costs on the maintenance side and save time and resources on the IT side
- Company is not just nationally known but known worldwide; called Carbine and has just been acquired by Axon; Axon 911 is the system being invested in, which also integrates with the AI program Prepared that the county has already previously invested in; they are going to be linked as partners; great investment for the county

### Questions/Comments

- Mr. Brown: Goes back to a conversation had last October at the public safety committee meeting; in reference to the manning of the system and the human impact, are we prepared, do we have the scale available to run this efficiently, are there any concerns?
- Ms. Corn: No concerns; working with staff really diligently to read their needs and help them; a lot of change management and helping people be comfortable with these things; the tools are there to make their jobs easier; once they get accustomed should be in really great shape; technology is going to change so fast, that is what all the new challenges will be and what they are preparing for; the companies will be helping as well
- Mr. Romeo: Question is about the cloud storage; we just heard from IT that there weren't efficiencies on the IT side but with you there are; do you know what kind of percentages or why?
- Ms. Corn: Thought he might ask that; it depends on what you're investing in; done the homework and really tried to package all of those additional costs into this CIP; not expecting onesie-twosie types of things down the road; also have grant funding that can support needs; does not expect to be coming back to ask for things over and over again to maintain this
- Mr. Romeo: Do you have an expected savings, either a percentage or a dollar amount?
- Ms. Corn: In the realm of about \$500,000 in maintenance cost
- Mr. Brown: Just in relation to the AI portion, we are going to be working with Axon; do we know if they will own the data or if we will, and are they able to share it?
- Ms. Corn: The county will own the data; everything is owned by Onondaga County and they won't have the ability to share it without the county's consent
- Mr. Burtis noted he appreciates that the design for E911 is on the table; glad the county is moving forward on the building that is falling over and on the telephone system and the advances there; glad to do it and would like to move the item

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

6. **ONONDAGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:** Martin E. Voss, Commissioner, Chris Roberts, Civil Engineer Onondaga County DOT
- a. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing Various Bridge Improvement Projects in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$1,490,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$1,490,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$1,490,000)  
(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)

Bond resolutions support the work plan; went through the work plan line by line at program committee; brought extra copies for those who were not at program committee

- Get money from federal, state, and local government to support the construction program in the summer; budgets are done in the fall; because the county relies on both federal and state government, don't have all budget numbers until the state adopts a budget in April

- Work plan lays out how federal, state, and local dollars will be spent; local dollars are a combination of cash and bonding; with a couple of notable exceptions like COVID and a couple of tough fiscal years, typically bond every year for highway and bridge repairs
- Federal dollars are the lion's share of construction and design funds at about 85%; state funds are about 10%; local share is 5%; local bonding and cash leverages a lot of money back from state and federal government
- Because the state has not yet adopted a budget, will have to come back with resolutions to accept that state money and there will be additional projects done with those funds
- Resolution 6.a.: \$1.49 million bond to support the bridge program for this year; specific projects are listed in the work plan

### **Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. Romeo: More of a question about understanding how the finances work; saw that some of the funding is used for CHIPS; understanding is that it's a formula used on roads over a certain period of time to determine how much you're getting; is that right?
- Mr. Voss: When he worked in Albany in the 90s it was called Marchelli, still calls it that; it's called the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program; the state has a formula based on mileage; Onondaga County has right around 800 miles of county highway; every county, city, town, and village gets a pro rata share based on their mileage; like school aid but without all the manipulation
- Mr. Romeo: What about the state and federal other funding shown; are those also formulas or are there restrictions on what you can use it on?
- Mr. Voss: Uses the basket analogy; the federal government passes a transportation bill, a big huge T bill, lots of money for the whole country
  - New York State gets a pro rata share based on population and mileage; after the state takes their chunk, what's left goes to the MPOs; the MPO is the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council; himself, Mary Robinson, representatives from the state DOT, and occasionally folks from towns and villages divvy that up at SMTC; what you see here are the projects budgeted out of that five-year capital plan from the federal government, the state's match, and the local share
  - Number changes every year because there's a different amount of federal aid depending on what projects are in design, what projects are going to construction
- Mr. Romeo: When negotiating at the SMTC level, it's pretty flexible in terms of what you need it for and what you're able to use it for?
- Mr. Voss: There are different programs for different things; there is certain money that is only for urban areas and certain programs that are for rural; the county does a good job trying to come to consensus at the SMTC executive committee on who needs what and when and who is ready to go; typically the city and the county work very well together at SMTC to make sure all needs are being met and no one is left without resources
- Mr. Romeo: When you are negotiating at the SMTC level, it is pretty flexible in terms of what you need it for and what you are able to use it for?
- Mr. Voss: There are different programs for different things; certain money only for urban areas, certain programs for rural; do a pretty good job trying to come to consensus at the SMTC executive committee on who needs what and when and who's ready to go; a lot of variables affect construction, weather, budgets, occasionally politics; try to work things out among themselves and have a pretty good record of that; typically the city and the county work very well together at SMTC to make sure all needs are being met and no one is left without resources

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

- b. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing the Reconstruction and Construction of Improvements to Various Highways in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$7,110,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$7,110,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$7,110,000) (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)
- Item 6.b. is the highway bond; supports the paving program, the projects, and the paving lists for what is in the budget so far without the additional state money anticipated when the state gets around to passing the budget
  - Page three of the work plan shows the bond issue and where it is going in the fourth column; breaks out what will be done with those funds

**Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. Romeo: That is why I saw that CHIPS funding coming from there
- Mr. Voss: CHIPS number is a baseline number that has been consistent every year since Brian Donnelly was commissioner; comfortable knowing the county will get at least that from the state; that number fluctuates every year; will come back to talk about Pave New York and EWR and all the other acronyms; all driven by the same formula and as long as the state continues funding them, happy to spend them down; typically those numbers go up in even years and down in odd years because it's Albany and that's how everything works

***A motion was made by Mr. Bush, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve item 6b; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

- a. Amending the 2026 County Budget to Fund in the First Instance 100 Percent of the Federal Aid Eligible Costs at a Maximum Amount of \$184,000 for the Right-of-Way Acquisition Phase of the Seventh North Street (CR 45) Paving Project, PIN 3756.76, Authorizing the Acquisition of Real Property in the Town of Salina for Highway Purposes, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$184,000) (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)
- This is a federal aid resolution for the Seventh North Street construction project; the county will do a rebuild of Seventh North Street; based on public forums, the community has asked for sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and other improvements
  - This allows the county to go forward with right-of-way acquisition, which does not mean taking people's property; the county needs a little room to get an easement to put in the infrastructure it will be building; the county law department will need to negotiate with property owners to finalize these

**Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. Romeo: Are you going all the way to the city line, and are you working with the city on their portion?
- Mr. Roberts: The project limits run from the railroad bridges, which is the city line, all the way to Electronics Parkway
- Mr. Romeo: Are we working with the city to see if they want to take on the portion from the railroad bridge to Hiawatha, which is also not in great shape?

- Mr. Voss: That segment is city-owned; the city does not currently have a project there but is aware that the county has this project; SMTC currently has an ongoing study within the city along Seventh North with some improvements it will recommend to the city

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

- b. Amending the 2026 County Budget to Pay in the First Instance 100 Percent of the Federal and State Aid Eligible Costs at a Maximum Amount of \$6,236,750 for the Buckley Road Paving Project, PIN 3756.70, Authorizing Execution of Agreements, and Rescinding Resolution No. 50-2025 (\$6,236,750)  
*(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)*
  - c. Amending the 2026 County Budget to Pay in the First Instance 100 Percent of the Federal and State Aid Eligible Costs at a Maximum Amount of \$8,075,000 for the Construction Phase of Onondaga Boulevard (CR 240) Paving Project, PIN 3756.75, and Authorizing Execution of Agreements (\$8,075,000)  
*(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)*
  - d. Amending the 2026 County Budget to Fund in the First Instance 100 Percent of the Federal Aid Eligible Costs at a Maximum Amount of \$220,000 for the Right-of-Way Acquisition Phase of the Canalways Trail Salina Extension (Phase 2) Project, PIN 3757.02, Authorizing the Acquisition of Real Property in the Town of Salina for Highway Purposes, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$220,000)  
*(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)*
  - e. Amending the 2026 County Budget to Fund in the First Instance 100 Percent of the Federal Aid Eligible Costs at a Maximum Amount of \$960,000 for the Design (Scoping I-VI) and Right-of-Way Incidentals Phase of the Old Liverpool Road Improvements Project, PIN 3757.05, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$960,000) *(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)*
  - f. Amending the 2026 County Budget to Fund in the First Instance 100 Percent of the Federal Aid Eligible Costs at a Maximum Amount of \$720,000 for the Design (Scoping I-VI) and Right-of-Way Incidentals Phase of the Jamesville Toll Road Bridge (C-902) over the Susquehanna Railroad Project, PIN 3757.15, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (\$720,000)  
*(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)*
- Items 6d through 6h are pay in the first instance federal aid resolutions; in order to get the state comptroller to release federal funds, the county must advance the money first; the county then enters a contract with the state; the state comptroller requires certified legislative resolutions to reimburse those funds to the county; the county is paid back

**Questions/Comments:**

- Ms. Denton: On 6d, we are rescinding the 2025 resolution; can you explain why?
- Mr. Voss: Costs changed, so the resolution needed to be amended; the old one is being rescinded so the county is not double-dipping with the state

***A motion was made by Mr. Romeo to consolidate items 6d through 6h into a single vote, seconded by Mr. Burtis; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

***A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve items 6d through 6h; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

- g. Authorizing the County Executive to Amend a Five Year Agreement with the State of New York for Snow and Ice Control on State Highways for the 2024-2029 Seasons to Increase the 2025-2026 Season Estimate and Amending the 2026 County Budget Accordingly (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)
  - The county plows several hundred miles of state roads for NYSDOT; the county invoices for direct expenses; since the salary scale was changed a couple of years ago, labor costs have gone up, fuel costs have gone up, and salt costs have gone up; this amends the existing contract to allow the county to invoice at the higher amount and get full reimbursement for costs

**Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. Brown: Do we pay for fuel per gallon?
- Mr. Voss: Yes, but the county has an annual contract so it is not as volatile as what a regular consumer would pay; costs still go up and still need to be budgeted for; with these multi-year agreements with the state, typically three-year agreements, the county has to keep on top of that as costs change

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

- h. Regarding Snow Plow Services Provided by the County and Local Governments within the County: Amending the 2026 County Budget to Accept Additional Revenue from New York State, Making Funds Available for Use, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)
  - This is an adjustment to last winter's, 2024-2025, contract with the state to allow the county to accept what the state calls a severity payment for additional costs incurred due to the nature of the winter; the severity factor was 1.585, resulting in additional revenue of approximately \$3 million

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

**7. DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION: Brian Kelley, Commissioner**

- a. Amending the 2026 Onondaga County Budget to Accept a Grant from the New York Statewide Investments in More Swimming (NY SWIMS) Initiative Overseen by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (\$50,000) (*Sponsored by Mr. Ryan*)
  - Onondaga County Parks was awarded \$50,000 from New York SWIMS, a state grant to reimburse municipalities through certain counties and large cities to incentivize lifeguard recruitment, retention, and training and to improve swimming opportunities throughout the state
  - Eligible counties were charged with working with municipalities within their county; Onondaga County Parks worked with and will establish IMAs with seven municipalities: the Towns of Skaneateles, Camillus, Manlius, Salina, Van Buren, and Geddes, and the Village of Jordan; each municipality will get \$4,000 for documented raises, retention bonuses, training, and materials or equipment purchased from May 2024 through September 2025
  - The remaining \$22,000 will go to the county for training, training equipment, and lifeguard raises

- The City of Syracuse separately applied for and received its own \$50,000 grant; it will be able to fund its pools and do what it needs to do this summer as well

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

**8. COUNTY LEGISLATURE:**

- a. Appointing Two Directors to the Onondaga County Tobacco Asset Securitization Corporation (Dan Romeo and Chad Ryan) (*Sponsored by Mr. Romeo*)

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

- b. A Local Law Requiring Commercial Establishments to Notify Customers of the Use of Biometric Identification Technology (*Sponsored by Ms. Hernandez*)
  - Law protecting consumers in Onondaga County from their private data being sold to third parties; requiring commercial businesses to post signage saying that biometric identification technology is being utilized within their stores
  - New York State is currently working on some bills; becoming a hot topic; about four different senators trying to pass some legislation; two assembly members passing legislation; the city of Syracuse is also interested in passing some legislation
  - What is basically being done in Onondaga County as legislators is saying they want to protect customers, protect their privacy, and want businesses in Onondaga County to post signage saying it is being utilized within their businesses

*This item was considered and will be referred to session.*

- c. Local Law to Authorize Onondaga County to Accept and Appropriate Gifts, Contributions, and Donations, and Repealing Laws No. 3-1996, 10-2007, and 4-2025 (*Sponsored by Ms. Hernandez*)
  - Local law would add Friends of the Onondaga County Aquarium to the list of other friends groups the county has, like Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Friends of Beaver Lake, and Friends of Carpenters Brook Fish Hatchery
  - Sets a limit for donations from friends groups to the county at \$10,000; if Onondaga County receives a donation from this nonprofit, that donation would need to be accepted by this body by resolution, just as the Friends of the Zoo or Beaver Lake would already have to do
  - If this had been in place months ago, the legislature would have been notified of the \$5.7 million donation before it was transferred to the county and would have had to accept that donation by resolution
  - Gives the county legislature a check on these transactions where they can ask questions and stay more informed about the fiscal health of these entities and the future investments into facilities
  - If a donation is under \$10,000 from a friends group, the chair of the legislature and the chair of the appropriate committee would be notified of each gift, contribution, or donation accepted by the CFO; also adding floor leaders with this update, so they would also be notified
  - Clarifying that each notification in the quarterly report should be itemized; would see the date, the amount, and get an idea of how many donations; quarterly reports would continue to be due March 1st, June 1st, September 1st, and December 1st
  - Proposing to update this law to clean up past versions; original law for gifts and donations was passed in 1996; friends group changes were updated in 2007; accepting of donations for the aquarium with no

limits was approved in 2025; instead of needing to reference three different laws, repealing the past versions to pass this new law that still includes almost all the same language from 1996 and 2007; the only difference is adding the Friends of the Onondaga County Aquarium and clarifying the reporting requirements

- Committed to increasing transparency on this project that has now used over \$105 million of taxpayer dollars in one way or another; proposing these common sense changes and looks forward to hearing thoughts on the proposal

#### **Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. Brown: Will this proposed local law make the Friends of the Aquarium subject to any different reporting or structural requirements than the Friends of the Zoo or Friends of Beaver Lake?
- Ms. Denton: It would be the same
- Mr. Brown: What we saw last month kind of caught everyone off guard; if this law was in place, would we have had notice of something like that, and how much notice would that have given us?
- Ms. Denton: It would have had to be placed on the agenda; potentially brought through committee or on the session agenda
- Ms. Denton: County Attorney, would you like to add anything?
- Mr. Ockenden: I think you got it
- Mr. Bush: All friends groups will be under the same guidelines; what happens when money is given to a friends group, who has jurisdiction over how that money is spent?
- Ms. Denton: For nonprofits the New York State Attorney General has the purview of that
- Mr. Bush: If money is given to a friends group like Friends of Carpenters Brook, who governs how that friends group handles that money; is that money really given to the county or to the friends group?
- Ms. Denton: The state oversees them
- Mr. Ockenden: If money is donated to the friends group and not to the county, the friends group's internal processes oversee that; the county has nothing to do with it; it is different if the friends group then turns around and makes a donation to the county, that is when this local law comes into effect
- Mr. Bush: Who has oversight of all these friends groups?
- Mr. Ockenden: They are run independently as their own nonprofit organizations with their own boards and presidents; they are meant to be separate from the county
- Mr. Bush: The county does not sanction the friends groups, that they form themselves and do whatever they want to raise money, and he thinks the county needs to be careful about its association with friends groups if it does not have oversight of how the money will be spent
- Mr. May: You almost have to go back to the enabling legislation that enables friends groups to exist; they specifically exist to support the county and the delivery of these parks or programs; from there, the friends groups become viable and receive money from supporters
  - The friends groups have the prerogative as their own separate entity to then push money toward the county; an example is the Friends of Beaver Lake, which is helping to underwrite some of the cost of the boardwalk; the board governs its own activities, but the legislation clearly defines what their purpose is
- Mr. Brown: It's my understanding of this law is that once a friends group decides to give money to the county in excess of \$10,000, that resolution comes before the legislature. Reporting requirements built into the law, including quarterly reports, saying the legislature cannot celebrate progress if it does not have the reports, that is very important.
- Mr. Thompson: Regarding donor anonymity, if the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo receives a donation of \$10,001 and gives that to the county, at that point would the body voting to accept the donation know the identity of the original donor, because it says in the legislation that it itemizes the donor and the amount; is that still preserving the anonymity of the 501?

- Ms. Denton: This body would have to accept a donation over \$10,000 from a friends group by resolution; any donation to the county directly at or above \$1,500 would also require acceptance by resolution; anything lower than those levels would still be reported but would not require acceptance by resolution
  - The body voting would vote on the dollar amount; the itemized donor information would be held by the chair, floor leaders, and the appropriate committee chair; a legislator not in one of those positions would be voting simply to approve the acceptance of that dollar amount but would not necessarily be privy to who donated

*This item was considered and will be referred to session.*

- d. Standard Work Day and Reporting (*Sponsored by Mr. Brown*)

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

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

- a. Review and Discussion of Vacancies and Prospective Candidates for Outside Boards and Commissions

- The Human Rights Commission has a candidate put forward by Mr. Brown; the resume will be distributed to all legislators in advance of session and the appointment will be waived into session if it moves forward
- There are additional boards and commissions connected to Ways and Means with current vacancies; legislators are asked to direct names of prospective candidates to Mr. Brown and Chairwoman Watts

**10. LAW DEPARTMENT (EXECUTIVE SESSION):**

- a. Settlement of Rivas v. Onondaga County, et al. (N.D.N.Y., Case No. 5:19-cv-00844 (BKS/TWD))

***A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to go into executive session to discuss a pending litigation matter; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

*The committee entered Executive Session at 12:33 P.M. which ended at 2:52 P.M.*

***A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to resume the committee meeting; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

**C. Adjournment**

***A motion was made by Ms. Denton, seconded by Mr. Burtis, to adjourn the meeting; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hassina K. Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "A".

HASSINA K. ADAMS, Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature