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

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

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

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

a. Approving and Directing the Correction of Certain Errors on Tax Bills
- Five applicants; Correction relates to an assessment on a vacant property in the Town of Geddes, which the town requested be fixed

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

b. INFORMATIONAL: 2025 Summary and First Quarter Report

(Attachment No. 1: Key Economic and Fiscal Indicators)

- Presented the county's first forecast for 2026; the packet provided contained three documents: key economic and fiscal indicators, the 2026 first forecast, and a current snapshot of the fund balance
- Reviewed the economic indicators monitored, discussed how 2025 closed out, walked through the first forecast for 2026, and concluded with an update on the current fund balance position
- Reconciled sales tax collections returned to more historic levels in 2024 and 2025, growing 1.5% and 1.9% respectively
    - First quarter 2026 collections currently up 7.5% compared to the same period last year, versus negative 1% growth in the first quarter of 2025
    - Results reflect strong economic activity, but remain cautious; inflation, consumer spending trends, and broader economic uncertainty could moderate growth for the remainder of the year
- County filled positions: approximately 55 additional positions filled compared to the first quarter of 2025; staffing has increased by about 205 positions since the first quarter of 2023
    - New York State Health program has been an important tool helping departments recruit and retain employees, reducing vacancy-related operational challenges

- Public assistance and Medicaid caseloads have stabilized over the past several years; caseload growth is expected to remain modest
  - Proposed changes to eligibility requirements, including expanded work requirements and more frequent eligibility reviews, could further reduce participation levels; economic conditions remain the most significant variable
- 2025 year-end results: the county ended 2025 with a $19 million surplus
  - In 2025, the county appropriated $33.2 million of fund balance but only needed to use $13.9 million to cover the full amount; this will be reflected in the Comptroller's annual comprehensive financial report
- Factors contributing to the surplus:
  - Investment earnings generated more than $12.8 million in 2025, approximately $8 million above budget
  - Sales tax growth finished at 1.9% for 2025 against a conservative budget assumption of 1% growth in 2025, generating about a $1 million surplus for sales tax
  - Salary savings totaled approximately $10.5 million for 2025; as staffing levels improve, salary expenditures are aligning more closely with budget
- Sewer fund utilized approximately 79% of the $11.4 million of fund balance appropriated in 2025, returning approximately $2.4 million to fund balance
  - Sewer fund faces significant long-term infrastructure and growth-related challenges; will require rate adjustments, strategic use of fund balance, prudent debt management, and continued cost control

<u>2026 First Forecast:</u>

- The county is currently projecting a year-end surplus of approximately $325,000 in the general fund
- Sales tax remains the primary positive driver; the 2026 budget assumed 1% growth in 2025 and 1.5% growth in 2026; based on 1.9% actual 2025 growth and current conditions, approximately 2% growth is forecast for 2026, an estimated positive variance of $5.2 million
- Investment earnings continue to outperform budget, currently projected to exceed budget by about $2.1 million
  - Pressures on current and future budgets: continued success filling vacant positions is reducing salary savings; several settled labor agreements are increasing ongoing personnel costs
  - Higher health insurance claims, prescription costs, and pension contributions, including Tier 6 impacts, along with increased Medicare Advantage expenditures, continue to place pressure on future budgets
- Foster care expenditures remain a significant challenge due to placement volume and rate increases
  - Medicaid remains one of the county's largest obligations; the county share is now at the statutory cap of $105 million annually; the state's intercept of enhanced federal Medicaid funding has shifted additional costs to counties
- Correctional health costs, specifically mental health, continue to rise
  - The county is also experiencing higher utility costs, including gas and diesel
- As the county begins preparing the 2027 budget and updating its multi-year financial plan, continued fiscal discipline will be critical to controlling recurring expenditures, identifying efficiencies, and making strategic investments
- Fund balance: using the county's adopted policy of a 15% fund balance target, the target equals approximately $167.3 million

- o The county ended 2025 with an estimated unreserved fund balance of $229.4 million; after accounting for outstanding encumbrances, the estimated unassigned fund balance stands at approximately $227 million, representing 20.4% of general fund revenues and exceeding the policy target by 5%

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Bush: What was the sales tax?
- Ms. Smiley: 7.5% this year for the first quarter this year so far
- Mr. May: Kristi, thanks, it's always good to get this report. I have to ask you to repeat one thing, it's hard to hear in this room sometimes. You said something toward the end, was that the constitutional cap, $105 million?
- Ms. Smiley: Yes, the Medicaid cap
- Mr. May: Will those comments be submitted in writing so I can revisit them?
- Ms. Smiley: Absolutely, I'd be happy to
- Mr. Romeo: Can you talk about that $105 million cap? How does that cap work?
- Ms. Smiley: Each county has a proportion; a number of years ago, they put in a soft cap, so we never have to contribute more than that, so that's our constitutional cap. I am concerned with some of the changes in the Medicaid program in terms of the state's ability to afford it, and whether they'll revisit and open that cap, which could put huge pressure on counties. It's something we continue to monitor, but it's concerning to me that it could be explored
- Mr. Romeo: And that cap has been reached in previous years?
- Ms. Smiley: Yes, we were up to the cap pre-pandemic, but then we received a share of the enhanced federal Medicaid dollars, which offset that amount. Two years back, the state ended up continuing to take all of that money for the state's portion and stopped pushing it down to counties
- Mr. Brown: I have a question in relation to the fund balance; I feel like I've asked this before and I apologize, but the 15% goal, how is that derived? Why not 20%, why not 10%?
- Ms. Smiley: It takes our total revenues from the prior year, minus pass-through sales tax and interdepartmental revenues, to get us to the figure the goal is based on; later on we also subtract any encumbrances based on how the year was ended
- Mr. Brown: My question is, why 15%?
- Ms. Smiley: This legislative body actually set that percentage. It used to be 10%; I believe it was increased to 15% about three years ago. It's also based on the fact that when we go out for our ratings each year, our rating agencies are actually looking for somewhere around 30% or higher. It's a delicate balance because we tax for that as well, so we have to protect ourselves for rainy days and stay fiscally solvent without over-taxing. That also impacts our credit ratings, so it's important that we don't go below that threshold; we're teetering even at the higher levels of our credit ratings, and fund balance is a large factor in that
- Ms. Denton: Can you explain how the weighted average county interest rate is calculated? It looks like it dropped from 3.4% in 2025 to now 2.9%, and I was wondering what's involved in that
- Ms. Smiley: That's across all of our accounts, even checking; our investment portfolio rate is much higher, but this reflects all of our accounts during this time period from last year to this year. As things at the Fed change, it impacts the interest rates
- Ms. Denton: Interest rates seem to be more around 5%, so that's why I was curious
- Ms. Smiley: Yes, that includes all of our accounts

2. **OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER:** Marty Masterpole, Onondaga County Comptroller
c. INFORMATIONAL: Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

(Attachment No. 2: Annual Comprehensive Financial Report)

- This annual report is presented every June alongside the CFO's report; paper copies were placed in mailboxes, a digital copy was emailed, and it is posted on the county website
- Key reference pages: pages five and six contain balance sheet information at the fund level; pages eight and nine contain the profit and loss statement at the fund level; the minor funds are detailed further on pages 54 and 57
- Fund balance decreased by $13.9 million in 2025, closing the year at $229.4 million as of December 31, 2025
  - Noted that while $33 million was budgeted for use in 2025 and only $19 million was used, resulting in it being reported as a surplus, in his view this still represents a $19 million decrease requiring use of the county's fund balance
- Sales tax came in $2 million over the adopted 2025 budget on an accrual basis
- Foster care costs were up $4.1 million and daycare costs were up $7.3 million, though both are offset in part by state reimbursements
- The Water Environment Protection (WEP) fund had an operating loss of $9 million versus budget; investments and interest on investments were down for the year

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. May: Can you qualify the semantics you were talking about a little more? Help us understand why you're calling it a loss, walk me through your perspective
- Mr. Masterpole: I'll bring it back to basic budgeting in my own household. If I have to spend a hundred dollars of my savings account because my bills exceeded my salary, that's a deficit year in my opinion. You have savings, that's what it's there for, I understand that. I'm saying the semantics of; if I budgeted and said, "I know I have a million dollars worth of bills and I know I'm only going to make $900,000 this year, well, I have $100,000 in savings," fine, but that's still a loss in my mind, that's not operating at a surplus. We ended the year in a surplus, oh, but we used our fund balance, that doesn't work for me. That's a personal opinion; 30 people in this room might have 30 different opinions, but my opinion is that's a loss
- Ms. Hernandez: Thank you for coming in and for giving this to us. You mentioned pertaining to foster care and daycare that we're reimbursed by the state; you don't have to tell us now, but do we know the amount or percentage the state reimburses us?
- Mr. Masterpole: I don't have the full reimbursable amount
- Ms. Smiley: Daycare is 100% reimbursement outside of our maintenance of effort. Foster care varies depending on the population and different things; I can get you an estimate
  - I understand what the Comptroller's saying. We used $13.8 million of fund balance in 2025, but the reason I say it's a $19 million surplus from a budgetary perspective is that we planned to spend $33 million of fund balance for specific targeted initiatives that this legislative body approved. Because we had savings, had that not been put into the budget, there would have been a surplus of $19 million. So in essence, we used $33 million and only spent $13 million. That's a $19 million surplus

- o The number's still the same regardless of where you look at it; we used \$13.8 million of fund balance, but we planned on using \$33 million
- Mr. May: Maybe just to add, again not an argument, this is good, this is great discussion. Part of it is, when a budget's issued and presented by this body, part of those considerations is the need to keep that fund balance at a responsible level. Just because it's growing doesn't mean we should keep it. I think everybody's more comfortable with the level it's at, but driving it up unnecessarily isn't a good idea either. We should budget fund balance when it's grown
- Mr. Masterpole: No, and the CFO made a good point. The bond rating agencies want us to have 30%. I believe the taxpayers want us to have zero; they want just enough money to get through the bills and not tax them for something that's sitting in the bank account. It's once again, I'd say, semantics and a difference of opinion
- Ms. Denton: This report really shows where we are as a county and how last year went. I want to highlight that in the back of the book there are different ten-year reports and a couple of charts, so I think is really important to look at, and I'll be diving through this as much as I can, because I think the more we understand this, the more we can take into account for 2027 budgeting. One question I have is, there are different reporting mechanisms in here for entities like the Friends of the Aquarium. How do they get added to our books?
- Mr. Masterpole: My understanding is that they're added from legislative action; anytime something gets on the books, so to speak, it's an action of the legislature that gets it there
- Ms. Denton: My question, too, is that OnWorks is a new one in here, and that didn't go through the legislature. How does that get added to the county's records?
- Mr. Britt: My name is Phil Britt, I'm the Deputy for Accounting in the Comptroller's Office. There are several component units, like Beaver Lake; the smaller ones are immaterial from an accounting perspective, so we're not required to include them
- Ms. Denton: But how do new ones get added?
- Mr. Britt: It depends on who sets the board, how much revenue they have, and how much expenses they have; it depends on county representation, and per the CFO's point, on who appoints them and what their revenues and expenses are
- Mr. Masterpole: And sometimes we have discussions like this with Bonadio to say, "What do you think, is this or is this not material?" They're split boards or split everything, so it's something we sometimes negotiate in or out
- Mr. Britt: Right, there's no standard that says we can't report all of them, but the question is what's the utility

3. **<u>COUNTY CLERK:</u>** Evan Karalunas, Principal Deputy County Clerk

a. Mortgage Tax Apportionment

- Mortgage tax allocated to towns and villages over the past six months, covering the period from October 2025 to March 2026
- Basic mortgage tax apportioned to towns and villages totaled roughly \$6.1 million, down 1% from the previous six-month period (April to September) but up 14% from the previous year

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

4. **DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Martin C. Skahen, Director

a. Authorizing the Onondaga County Executive to File the 2026 Action Plan for the Community Development Block Grant, Home Grant, and Emergency Solutions Grant Programs

- Requesting committee approval on how to spend the 2026 Community Development Block Grant, HOME Grant, and Emergency Solutions Grant, entitlement grants provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Grants are allocated based on a formula assessing community need; a steering committee reviews applications submitted by every municipality, and, for the Emergency Solutions Grant, applications from those who work in the homeless arena, then votes on how to allocate overall budget
- Relatively flat year to year, with a slight increase in some areas and a decrease in the Emergency Solutions Grant
- Every municipality that applied for a project was funded this year, along with normal allocations, including $5,000 for Arise and $50,000 for CNY Fair Housing

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown noted that the committee went in depth at the planning meeting and that his questions had already been answered there, so he had no further questions
- Mr. May: Marty, just a quick thanks; you and the team do a phenomenal job for that committee, which is all outside people helping us through the process and making those decisions. The preparation is about as professional as one could ever expect, it's fantastic, so decisions are easily arrived at thanks to the work. I just wanted you to know I really appreciate it

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

5. **ONONDAGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:** Martin E. Voss, Commissioner

a. Amending the 2026 Onondaga County Budget to Accept $1,871,936 in Additional CHIPS Funding from the New York State Department of Transportation and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements ($1,871,936)

(*Attachment No. 3: DOT 2026 Hot Mix List, Additional CHIPS*)

- Presented four supplemental state funding items previously discussed at the April and May work plan presentations; all are formula-driven based on mileage programs added to the state budget, now that the state budget has been adopted
- The additional $1,871,936 in CHIPS funding raises the county's allocation above the baseline figure included in the work plan
- A resolution is needed to invoice the state comptroller for the balance of the funds
- A list of paving projects was provided to the clerk and the program committee, with no questions raised at the program committee level

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

By unanimous consent, with no objection raised, the Chair took up Item 5.c. for a vote ahead of Item 5.b.

b. Amending the 2026 Onondaga County Budget to Accept $1,167,993 in Extreme Winter Recovery Funding from the New York State Department of Transportation and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements ($1,167,993)

- Extreme Winter Recovery (EWR) is an additional program; the allocation this year is $1,167,993

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

c. Amending the 2026 Onondaga County Budget to Make Funds Available for Use in Connection with the New York State PAVE-NY Program, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements ($1,924,970)

- The PAVE-NY program was reauthorized in the state budget; using the same formula with a different amount, Onondaga County's allocation is $1,924,970

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

d. Amending the 2026 Onondaga County Budget to Make Funds Available for Use in Connection with the New York State PAVE-OUR-POTHOLES (POP) Program, and Authorizing the Execution of Agreements ($1,283,313)

- This program, named by Governor Kathy Hochul, provides additional paving funds; the county's allocation is $1,283,313

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown noted that a small benefit of the budget being late is that Mr. Voss had to explain the programs in great length, leaving him feeling more comfortable with the items and with no further questions

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

6. DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL: Carl Hummel, Commissioner of Personnel

a. Accepting and Approving the contract between Onondaga County and the Onondaga County Sheriffs Captains Association

- Union contract for the Onondaga County Sheriff's Captains Association, the union representing police and custody captains; a small union
- The contract runs from 2025 through 2028 and is retroactive; it includes adjustments to wages, longevity, overtime, and clothing allowance, along with a couple of non-economic additions
- Total cost of the contract is just under $948,000 for the four-year term; details are included in the TA

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown: How many people are covered by this contract?
- Mr. Hummel: Seven

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

7. **ONONDAGA COUNTY WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** Dan Mulvihill, Administrative Officer

a. **BOND** – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of $320,000 Bonds of the County of Onondaga, New York, to Pay Costs of Certain Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for Said County ($320,000) *(Sponsored by Mr. Erikson)*

- Revised bond resolution for comprehensive asset renewal at Wetzel Road, specifically the engineering phase for clarifier rehabilitation
- This item was presented at last month's Ways and Means Committee at $400,000; the intent was to fully authorize the engineering phase and offset expenses as they occur with $80,000 cash, for a total of $320,000 in bonds, the total debt to be issued as allowed under local finance law
- Master Plan report and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) specified only $320,000 in bonds, so the resolution is being presented at a revised amount that matches the planning documents

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Brown thanked everyone involved for clarifying this; noted that it had made him uneasy, and while he understood it may have made things more difficult, those details matter, so he was glad it was corrected

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

8. **LOCAL LAWS:**

a. DISCUSSION: Amending the Onondaga County Charter to Impose a Term Limit on the Office of the Comptroller

b. DISCUSSION: Amending the Onondaga County Charter to Impose a Term Limit for the Office of the Onondaga County Executive and the Office of the Onondaga County Comptroller – Nodesia Hernandez, Majority Leader

- Ms. Hernanadez presented on items 8.a. and 8.b.
- A local law pertaining only to the county executive was brought forward; colleagues at that time asked that the comptroller also be included; version covering both offices was brought forward
  - A version combining the comptroller and county executive into one local law was not brought forward at this time; a separate local law has also been brought forward by Legislator Knapp
  - Both have 12-year term limits, meaning three four-year terms, one for the comptroller and one for the county executive
- Mr. Brown clarified that 8.a. pertains to the comptroller, and 8.b. pertains to the county executive and comptroller together

c. DISCUSSION: Amending the Onondaga County Charter to Establish Term Limits for the Office of the Onondaga County Executive and the Office of the Onondaga County Comptroller – David H. Knapp, County Legislature

- 8.c. also includes the county executive and comptroller
  - A couple of differences: four four-year terms, commencing with the term starting in 2030; next term will only be a three-year term
  - Negotiated with the other parties involved; the comptroller sent an email giving his support for term limits in general, without picking one version or the other; the county executive, who is working together to put something that will pass, will support this

Questions/Comments:

- Ms. Hernandez: This is a clarifying question. You said this one was negotiated with the comptroller and the county executive, the people involved in it. Did they negotiate 16 years, or did they just negotiate term limits in general, and which one negotiated the 16 years?
- Mr. Knapp: The term limits and the four four-year terms
- Mr. Brown: Was four four-year terms a sticking point? Why four four-year terms instead of three four-year terms?
- Mr. Knapp: Unlike the county legislature, where you do not have to give up your life to be a county legislator and can still have a job, either the comptroller or the county executive is giving up their career to do that job, and it has an end date. We want to make sure we get the best people possible; folks still have to get elected every four years, so they have to do a good job, but they know it is a 16-year total package if they are doing a good job and get reelected every four years, which would be the max, to make it a little more attractive since someone is walking away from potentially a career with a retirement and everything else
- Mr. Thompson: I would agree with my colleague that the county executive role is a different type of job, and that is reflected in the compensation for that job. We are not here asking for the county legislator job to be full time and paid commensurate to that of the county executive; we are asking for unified standards between the two co-equal branches of government. Before I was elected, before I was sworn in, it was determined that the county legislature would have three four-year terms; that is what I signed up for, that is what I agreed to do. I do not see that we should create a separate, different standard for a co-equal branch of government
- Mr. Romeo: Mine might be more of a legal thing. What happens if all three of these pass, and it is determined by what the county executive decides to do on signing off? How does that work?
- Mr. Ockenden: That's right
- Mr. Bush: I have a question, it is a little technical, but I need an explanation. The next election for comptroller and county executive will be next year, and they will have a three-year term instead of four years, correct? So how does that work into whatever we do, four-three, four-four? We are starting off with a three-year term instead of a four-year term. Can somebody explain how that is going to work?
- Mr. Ockenden: All of the local laws have that built in
- Mr. Knapp: 8.c. has it built in that it starts in 2030, after that three-year term; the three-year term does not count for anything, and then starting in 2030, when the next term is a four-year term, that is when the clock starts
- Mr. Ockenden: All of the local laws have some language in them acknowledging that a partial term, such as if the county executive gets elected in 2027 and resigns a year later with a replacement serving

the remaining two years, does not count toward the term limit. All of them build in excluding whatever happens in the next three years and do not start until the first full four-year term

- Ms. Denton: With that in mind, I think it gives another reason why it should be three consecutive terms and not an additional fourth, in my opinion
- Ms. Hernandez: Clarification, because as I said, we keep going back and forth and we do want to collaborate. We do want to get some term limits on as a referendum; you brought this to us, what are you looking for? Is it that you just want this piece of paper passed with Dave Knapp's name on it? How can we collaborate, how can we get these term limits on? Because we started out with term limits, we came back a couple of times, we gave you what you wanted, then you created your own. I am being serious, because we are having this conversation right here at Ways and Means: how can we get term limits passed?
- Mr. May: You did not give us what we wanted, you gave us what you wanted, we have got to be clear about that, that is number one. Number two, the collaboration comes out in the vote; we either support the same local law or we don't. I am not suggesting it should be all or nothing, but there are three viable choices here that will either get passed into a local law through a signature in the executive branch, or they won't. That is where we are right now, to answer your question
- Mr. Brown: I have a question, I guess, for Ryan, each of these is for referendum, correct? We are voting to give it to the voters, or is either of these just voting to enact?
- Mr. Ockenden: None of them have to go, but it was decided kind of universally at session that they all would go, and the body does have the ability to send it to referendum per our charter
- Mr. Brown: But we do not have to; we have the ability to enact
- Mr. Ockenden: You have the ability to do so, and in my opinion the legislature has decided to do that regardless of which options are ultimately adopted
- Ms. Denton: I want to make the clarification that if the legislature does not go to the voters, a future legislature could again change that, and it would go back and forth between this body. If the voters change it, they are changing our charter, and if there were another change in the future, the voters again would have to be considered and would have to vote on that. I also want to note that this is something the voters themselves said they wanted last year, when they voted for three consecutive terms for legislators, 12 years; that was put in the standard last year and the voters overwhelmingly supported it, so it makes sense to propose that same standard on these other offices
- Ms. Watts: If multiple laws get on the county executive's desk, let's say both combo laws get on his desk and he signs both of them, what happens?
- Mr. Ockenden: I do not know why you would; I can't foresee getting into that situation. We would have competing ballot propositions, and if both passed; I think we all should know better than to get into that position
- Ms. Hernandez: That is just what my statement was going to be, it is just a competing batch. You say you did not get what we wanted in the beginning, but we did come back a couple of different times, and then you just put one on that you wrote up yourself
- Mr. Brown: I have a question for both bill sponsors: why aren't legislators included in one, why not one law covering all three, why just these two?
- Mr. Knapp: We already have a law in place for legislators; this one is for the administrative branch, and per my earlier comments, I think it is two very different jobs, so it is appropriate to have two different versions for the two different branches of government
- Mr. May: Last year, when we were deliberating legislative terms, I actually had a similar thought at one point, and I got the exact same answer, for what it is worth. So it did not go anywhere

- Mr. Bush: Could Legislator Knapp explain again the timeline he chose for his versus the timeline for A and B, because it does not seem to sound right to me
- Mr. Knapp: Again, we negotiated ours with the county executive. The comptroller had already said he would support term limits in general, and this is what he will sign. The take-home message is, if we want term limits, it has to be signed by the county executive, that is where our government is set up, checks and balances; you have to negotiate between the legislative branch and the executive branch, and this is what we came up with that will be supported by the legislative branch, which has to agree to this. If we want to pass it and have a veto and maybe a big press conference, then that is that
- Mr. Brown: I will just acknowledge, on the record, as we are having this discussion, I think 16 years is a long time. I do not think of elected office as a career, I am not a fan of career politicians, but we are all allowed our opinions. I think it is a service you do, I liken it to a tour of duty; I have a military background, so that is why. When you deploy, you do not deploy for 16 years, because that would be really intense on your family, just like this job is really intense on your family
- Ms. Hernandez: So did the comptroller and the county executive sit down and chose 16 years, or did just the county executive choose 16 years?
- Mr. Knapp: Again, the comptroller sent a letter saying he supports term limits, so I am figuring he will support 12 or he will support 16, as long as it gets through. The county executive is the one who has to sign it, not the comptroller, so that is why it is important that he is on board. We are not just talking about Ryan McMahon with this, we are talking about in perpetuity down the road; this three-year gap is irrelevant, we are talking a hundred years down the road, so we cannot just look at today's terms, we have to anticipate down the road as well
- Mr. Ryan: Just to be clear, if this body passed 12 years and the county executive vetoed it, this body could override that
- Mr. May: To clarify Legislator Knapp's response, it seems like we are driving toward a commitment for 16 years; we do not have a commitment for 16 years, and I want to be very clear about that. We do not have the right to speak for each other, certainly not for the county executive. The result of our discussion, which I believe was even in the media, was that 16 would be considered, so we have a shot at creating a local law that actually passes if we drive toward the 16, but I want to make clear there was no commitment or expectation for 16 years, because that was not the case, it was not that kind of negotiation
- Mr. Brown: As a point of clarification, was there ever any discussion within any of the sponsors to make a law that we, as Legislator Ryan pointed out, we have the ability to pass it without the veto pen? Have we ever discussed something that we would be comfortable with, even if the executive would not be? The comfort of the current or future executive is not as important to me
- Mr. May: We have not had that kind of discussion with any of the five or six local laws that have come before this body. For the record, we would welcome those conversations
- Mr. Brown: Thank you. I will just say that I think we should start thinking about what is best for the people of Onondaga County, not necessarily just something that will get signed; I think that should be our guiding principle, versus just getting whatever can be signed off

Seeing no further discussion, the discussion concluded; no vote was taken on Items 8.a., 8.b., or 8.c.

9. <u>COUNTY LEGISLATURE:</u> Nicole Watts, Chairwoman

a. INFORMATIONAL: Discussion of Budget Schedule and Responsibilities

- Reviewed the 2027 budget process schedule; legislators received a draft of the schedule earlier in the week, and the schedule is planned to be finalized by month's end
- The 2027 budget season is planned to begin with the County Executive's presentation on September 15, followed immediately by presentations from CFO Smiley and Comptroller Masterpole the following day
- Following those presentations, joint committee meetings between the Ways and Means Committee and the relevant program committees will be held, allowing informed and intentional questions on the budget for the departments within each program committee's purview
- Following the joint committee meetings, the regular program committee meetings will include an agenda item to discuss the budget; committee chairs will then report back to the Ways and Means Committee on any additions, cuts, or contingencies proposed by their committees for their respective departments
- The Ways and Means Committee will then finalize its report, targeting completion by the end of September, with a public hearing planned for October 1 and a regular Session on October 6 for a full legislature vote

C. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

HASSINA K. ADAMS, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **WAYS AND MEANS**
DATE: **JUNE 24, 2026**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPT/AGENCY/ORGANIZATION
Matty Voss	OCDoT
Evan Karalunas	OCClerk
Penny Donahue	Fin Ops / DOT
Marty Stalen	CD