



Onondaga County Legislature

HASSINA K. ADAMS
Clerk

NICOLE WATTS
Chairwoman

SPENCER BERG
Deputy Clerk

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – MAY 19, 2026 GREGG ERIKSEN, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Eriksen, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Meaker, Mr. Thompson

ABSENT: Mr. Garland

ALSO PRESENT: Chairwoman Watts, Majority Leader Hernandez, Minority Leader May, Ms. Block;
also see attached list

Chair Eriksen called the meeting to order at 1:17 p.m., and previous meeting's minutes were approved.

A. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

B. Presentation of Resolutions and Local Laws:

Chair Eriksen took the agenda items out of order.

1. **ONONDAGA COUNTY WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** Odean D. Dyer, Commissioner
 - a. A Resolution Approving Improvements for the Onondaga County Sanitary District in and for the County of Onondaga, New York

A motion was made by Mr. Eriksen, seconded by Mr. Meaker, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- b. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$12,500,000 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 (\$12,500,000)
 - BSK, Baldwinsville Seneca Knolls Oxygen System replacement project; focused on reliability, efficiency, and reducing operations and maintenance costs

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Eriksen: Which facility is this going to be at?
- Mr. Dyer: Baldwinsville Seneca Knolls
- Mr. Eriksen: Just for clarity for anyone following along at home, all of these items are in the CIP, is that correct
- Mr. Dyer: Correct
- Mr. Eriksen: These were all scheduled to occur this year?

- Mr. Dyer: Correct
- Mr. Eriksen: Are we replacing any infrastructure with this one?
- Mr. Dyer: Yes, we are replacing the existing oxygen system; at the end of its useful life; somewhere in the 30-year range

A motion was made by Mr. Meaker, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- c. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$1,430,000 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 (\$1,430,000)
 - Department-wide building and site improvement project; looking to repair, replace, and renovate various components throughout department buildings; more of a repair and replace situation than brand new
 - Mr. Thompson: Give an example of the type of things you would be repairing and replacing; seems pretty extensive at \$1.43 million
 - Mr. Dyer: Brick and concrete work on different buildings; overhead door replacements; roofing repairs; those are the major ones

A motion was made by Mr. Eriksen, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- d. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$675,000 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 (\$675,000)
 - Department-wide project for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing; allows for continued reliable operations, improves safety, maintains compliance with regulatory agencies
 - Mr. Kelly: Was this one in line with what we had projected or was it increased to keep up with current market demands?
 - Mr. Dyer: In line with what we have
 - Mr. Thompson: This question could relate to all of them; are these improvements keeping status quo or do you see them improving efficacy and efficiency?
 - Mr. Dyer: A mixture of both; certain items we need to ensure we're able to continue to run, in that case we replace in kind; these department-wide projects are for maintaining the status quo; the larger CIP projects are focused on efficiencies and getting to better operations

A motion was made by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Meaker, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- e. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,000,000 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 (\$2,000,000)
 - Metro Plant annex; Harbor Brook pump station renewal project; rehabilitate and upgrade aging pump station; improve reliability and maintain safe operations

- Mr. Eriksen: Which facility?
- Mr. Dyer: Metro Plant; Harbor Brook pump station on the plant
- Mr. Eriksen: About how old is the infrastructure being replaced?
- Mr. Dyer: 1978

A motion was made by Mr. Eriksen, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- f. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,500,000 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 (\$2,500,000)
- Metro UV project; comprehensive asset renewal; study was done to determine which way to go; this ask is to act on that
 - Mr. Eriksen: Is there water treatment that happens with this?
 - Mr. Dyer: Water disinfection
 - Mr. Eriksen: Is that the primary item in the bond or can you describe anything else this is going to be addressing?
 - Mr. Dyer: Singularly focused; UV system needs upgrading; cutting edge when installed 40 years ago at the Metro plant

A motion was made by Mr. Eriksen, seconded by Mr. Meaker, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- g. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$16,500,000 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 (\$16,500,000)
- Meadowbrook Limestone rotary drum thickener; will help with efficiency of the plant; focused on odor control, being a good neighbor to residences around it; will also help with reliability of the plant
 - Mr. Thompson: Located where?
 - Mr. Dyer: Meadowbrook Limestone
 - Mr. Eriksen: I believe this one is going to help us comply with the consent order, is that correct?
 - Mr. Dyer: Yes
 - Mr. Meaker: This is in the Brewerton area?
 - Mr. Dyer: Meadowbrook Limestone, correct

A motion was made by Mr. Meaker, seconded by Mr. Eriksen, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- h. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$13,700,000 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 (\$13,700,000)

- Wastewater transportation system improvement project; focused on pipe and conveyance; consent related; handles pump stations and capturing systems
- Mr. Eriksen: Is this a systemwide item?
- Mr. Dyer: Yes
- Mr. Eriksen: What kind of infrastructure are we going to be replacing?
- Mr. Dyer: Upgrades at Kirkpatrick Street pump station; sewer lining

A motion was made by Mr. Eriksen, seconded by Mr. Meaker, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

- i. BOND – A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of \$400,000 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 (\$400,000)
- Wetzel Road treatment plant; clarifier rehabilitation project; looking to improve primary clarifiers which are original to the plant
 - Mr. Eriksen: How old would that be if it's original?
 - Mr. Dyer: Plant was built in 1971
 - Mr. Meaker: This is the Wetzel Road plant; could you tell me what a primary clarifier is?
 - Mr. Dyer: Primary clarifiers are at the beginning of the treatment process; once the larger constituents are taken out, the flow goes into a tank that takes out the next level of constituents, the slightly finer items that miss the screens; the tank has a rotating arm that pulls out all the sludge that is not floating and kicks that out to additional treatment; sends water along a different path through secondary and tertiary treatment
 - Mr. Meaker: So it's a very important piece of infrastructure
 - Mr. Dyer: Yes, absolutely

A motion was made by Mr. Meaker, seconded by Mr. Eriksen, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Eriksen, Kelly, Meaker, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland); MOTION CARRIED.

Questions/Comments

- Mr. Thompson: We're hearing a lot about very old infrastructure being brought back up to standard; saw some stories over the weekend of a lot of waste, not just human waste but garbage, in the inner harbor; are these upgrades, when you talk about pipes, conveyance, and containment, going to help mitigate some of that in the areas we're trying to beautify and make accessible to people? I recognize the garbage can get into the system in a lot of different places; is any of this going to help mitigate those issues?
- Mr. Dyer: No guarantee unfortunately; each of these projects is focused on ensuring we can continue to clean and capture what we need to capture when it comes to floatables and constituents in water; cannot speak to it specifically handling each individual park or body of water; a lot of these things come with stormwater runoff and that is not something WEP's goal is to treat; looking to separate stormwater versus rainwater; important to recognize there is a very distinct difference, and a lot of these floatables come along after large rainstorms
- Mr. Thompson: With these infrastructure upgrades, will that make us have better capacity to deal with storm events? I imagine pipes get clogged or grates are breaking down

- Mr. Dyer: All of these projects will allow us to be a little bit more efficient in how we handle storms; we have specific projects for increased capacity and specific projects for maintaining capacity; most of these are maintaining current capacity and ensuring we're able to handle what we are currently being given
- Mr. Kelly: A lot of the issues come from the CSOs and that's being addressed through the I-81 project in at least one capacity
- Mr. Dyer: Correct
- Mr. Romeo: One of the things I'm thinking about is these 1970 dates you're giving and how these facilities are way past their useful life; do we have internally a capital management plan that leads to the CIP where we can look at each item and think about a replacement schedule so we're not doing so much catch-up because things are 60 or 70 years old?
- Mr. Dyer: We do have an asset management team within WEP; the goal is to make sure we're staying on top of each asset and ensuring we get the useful life out of it; concerned with responsible spending of taxpayer dollars; the maintenance team and operations team are on a daily basis taking care of different situations; we don't look at things on an age basis; we look at whether operations are reaching the end of useful life and whether there are things internally we can do to continue getting proper operations out of the assets; once we see on the horizon something that could possibly fail, that's when we come in and take care of these capital projects; before that it's all about continued maintenance, making sure we're operating within the parameters we're given, and squeezing as much life out of each asset as possible
- Mr. Kelly: These are all operational functional facilities; it's not as if we're locking the door and throwing away the key; there's a threshold with any infrastructure where investing in new infrastructure becomes the more efficient method; it's not as if these facilities aren't doing their job
- Mr. Dyer: Correct; they're currently operational, they're doing their jobs, and at the end of the day we're telling the facilities that they can do more

2. **ONONDAGA COUNTY COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:** Donald Gates, Member
 a. INFORMATIONAL: Overview

(Attachment No. 1: Agenda – June 19, 2026; Attachment No. 2: Agenda - June 21, 2022; Attachment No. 3: Meeting Minutes – October 18, 2022; Attachment No. 4: Council on Environmental Health Meeting Tracking Table February 2018 Meeting)

- Group has been struggling with its existence; joined the group back around 2008, 2010; was just a serving member through those years with different chairs; chair recently resigned last year; down to about four or five council members in September; now serving as chair
- In past years found it a very valuable experience; citizens committee of a cross section of people with expertise; includes a representative from the county legislature and from the executive's office
- In the last year, struggling with the appointment process; due to retirements within different offices, appointment letters and getting people appointed has become stalled; had a conversation with the county exec's office yesterday
- Currently not pushing or having meetings because they are not officially appointed; serve two-year terms; does not feel there is any legitimacy; working with the county exec's office to get letters out; has people who would like to be appointed
- Council could play a valuable role for the legislature and the executive's office; mandate in local law requires stakeholders involved in county government; past membership included broad representation, farming, housing, a cross section; debate and discussion during meetings was informative for stakeholders and could give informed advisory to the county and county legislature

- Included examples of an agenda, meeting minutes, topics discussed, and recommendations that were made
- Also slowing things down: in the past there was always a staffing member within the Department of Health to take minutes and set up meetings; person who did it was there for about 15 years, a county planner, then retired; next person from the county health office took another job; person who took that job in September took another job; county health is trying to get staffing back to normal
- No staff person to help carry out minutes and agendas; all members are volunteers
- Advisory body; listens to various issues; writes reports for the county executive and county legislature for informed citizen input into policy proposals

Questions/Comments

- Mr. Eriksen: Is there anything we can be doing to help with the appointment process?
- Mr. Gates: Waiting for the county exec's office to send the appointment letters and want the process to be followed; those appointments should then come to the county legislature for approval so everybody can weigh in; feels the ball has gotten rolling; council needs to be staffed properly so someone can take minutes and help put together a report, which the law requires yearly; will follow up with the county exec's office; also need to find new members
- Mr. Eriksen: When's the last year that an annual report was issued?
- Mr. Gates: Would have to ask; the meeting minutes were very extensive and almost comprised the report; would like to get it back to a yearly report; the key to that is having somebody within county health who can do that; council members would always approve minutes and give feedback on agendas and the report
- Mr. Thompson: How many vacancies are there currently?
- Mr. Gates: Supposed to have nine; currently two people waiting to be officially appointed, then myself and two others, so tentatively five, but none of us have received appointment letters; would like to get four more and welcome anybody's recommendations for those positions
- Mr. Thompson: Could you describe the characteristics of someone you would want serving on this board?
- Mr. Gates: An expertise in an area; having a farmer on the board was always interesting to hear the farming perspective on issues, whether it be land use, development, or regulations; also had a developer, you got to hear the housing issues; somebody very knowledgeable and interested in current local policy; you want some generalists; my background is social studies teacher in the school district but have an undergrad in environmental planning from ESF; the value of this council is for people in the private sector to learn the valuable services the county is providing; septic systems, large farms next door to housing developments, tick issues, these all came up; anybody with an expertise or general interest
- Mr. Thompson: Based on what you have worked on, what are some pressing environmental concerns you wish you had a team to dig into?
- Mr. Gates: One is Micron; taking a more nuanced view of the potential issues around land use development around Micron, whether it will affect people's septic systems and well water; another is farmland and how we preserve it; we're looking at how we're managing our land use, balancing the economic value of farmland and housing development, which is all under more pressure with Micron; there's also a lot of tension right now between solar farms and large farming practices; those are just two that jump to mind
- Mr. Thompson: In terms of engaging the public, do you see this committee as something with a public-facing component or public education role?
- Mr. Gates: It has a way to inform the public; with the tick and Lyme disease issue they would come to us for input about what they were trying to get people to know about the issue and how to go about it;

all meetings are public, sometimes newspaper reporters show up, and the public is always invited to come to hear the different people speak about whatever issue is on the agenda

3. **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (DEC):** Jeremiah W. Thompson, 4th District Legislator
 - a. Email communication from DEC relative to Onondaga Lake Mercury

Attachment No. 5: Marina Question Responses

- Mr. Eriksen noted that DEC is going to come next month; one of the items is the mercury found in Onondaga Lake; ask a few questions in writing and get some written answers

Mr. Eriksen turned it over to Mr. Thompson to read the written DEC responses into the record

- Mr. Meaker: Is that an email you could forward to us?
- Mr. Eriksen: It just came in this morning; yes, we need to forward this
- Mr. Thompson: Questions were submitted a while ago and the response came in this morning; submitted to the clerks, part of the public record; some responses are long so may truncate some for time but they will be in the record

Mr. Thompson read the written Q&A responses into the record:

- How much mercury was found in the marina project on the eastern shore of Onondaga Lake near Liverpool?
 - Sediment samples within the marina basin had mercury levels ranging from 0.031 to 5.7 milligrams per kilogram; eight of the 17 samples had concentrations that exceeded the Onondaga Lake ROD mercury cleanup goal of 2.2; the work in the marina is within the limits of Onondaga Lake but is a small area, capping approximately 1.9 acres compared to 475 acres, and volume of material removal approximately 2,500 cubic yards compared to 2.1 million cubic yards
- Is there a safe or acceptable level for mercury and how far above that level was this?
 - The Onondaga Lake monitoring and maintenance plan includes a record of decision which sets the mercury probable effects concentration at 2.2 milligrams per kilogram or lower; the Mercury PEC is based on direct toxicity to sediment-dwelling organisms; the Mercury PEC of 2.2 needs to be met at each location; exceeding the PEC of 2.2 results in an action level at which remediation is required
- Has all the mercury been removed from the marina area and how was this accomplished?
 - The work in the marina has not yet been performed; the county will have more information about the work schedule; approximately 2,450 cubic yards of sediment will be removed from the perimeter of the marina basin
 - Samples will be tested post-excavation to confirm remaining sediment contaminant levels are below the ROD remediation goals; the cap will be consistent with the remedy performed in other parts of the lake and will consist of a one-foot cap including six inches of sand covered by six inches of gravel; the marina will need to be drained; once mercury is removed, sediment will be disposed of at an offsite approved facility
 - The county is responsible for properly transporting and disposing of any contaminated sediment; Onondaga County is the lead agency; DEC provides oversight in all aspects of remedial activities, including reviewing and approving plans and ensuring work is performed in accordance with those plans and applicable regulations

- Mercury is a bioaccumulative heavy metal; primary pathway for exposure to humans is through consumption of animals that have eaten other animals that carry mercury; fish still carry a lot of mercury in that lake; mercury biomagnifies up the food chain
- Reporting indicates there are no plans for expanded testing in the lake; do you believe additional testing in other areas is warranted?
 - Sediment sampling was performed outside the marina basin during the remedial investigation and long-term monitoring and did not exceed lake criteria; includes a location at the mouth of the marina and another to the east; samples collected in 2000 and 2021 did not exceed criteria
 - Monitoring has not indicated additional mercury exceedances are present in the lake; if ongoing and future monitoring indicates potential concern, additional sampling would be performed
- Does the presence of mercury suggest the potential presence of additional chemical elements or compounds that could be hazardous and should we be testing for those?
 - Sediment sampling was tested for an array of compounds including volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, pesticides, PCBs, and metals; mercury was the only contaminant that exceeded the Onondaga Lake ROD criteria
- Mr. Thompson: That is the extent of the information received; would like for the group to think about questions to follow up on when DEC is here in person in June
- Mr. Eriksen: Will have a copy of that for everyone; DEC could not be here today but will be here in June; wanted to get whatever information we could out there sooner rather than later and hopefully have more of a dialogue next month
- Mr. Thompson: Would encourage and invite questions pertaining to this from the public; there is a citizen watch group in his district paying attention to things happening on the western shore of the lake; anticipating questions about that for the DEC in June

4. **CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ONONDAGA COUNTY:** David Skeval, Executive Director

a. INFORMATIONAL: Overview

(Attachment No. 6: Annual Report; Attachment No. 7: CCE PowerPoint Presentation)

- Executive director for 14 years; professional background in forestry, worked as a forester for 25 years
- Last year: approximately 450 different events and workshops; connected with over 34,000 direct participants; connected with 1.6 million people through media
- Founded 1913; originally started as Farm Bureau; in the early 1950s the federal government said federal money could no longer be used to advocate; split from Farm Bureau; Farm Bureau is the advocacy and lobby group, CCE is strictly on the education side
- From a governance standpoint most closely resembles a school district; given existence by county law 224, a state law; exists as a subordinate government agency; 501(c)(3) status with the IRS but not a not-for-profit; does not receive funding from Cornell University; Cornell University has an endowed side and a statutory side where the College of Ag Life Sciences and the College of Human Ecology exist
- Local; been around for over a century; employees receive state benefits; receive a little funding from New York State to help develop programming
- New York State is the only state extension system where county associations are autonomous from its land grant university; every county in New York State has a county association; all extension programming is custom fit to the county

- Morrill Act 1862, signed by Abraham Lincoln; sought to democratize education by providing a chance for higher education to the working class; very little effort being put into life sciences such as agronomy and animal husbandry
- 1887, Hatch Act passed; experiment stations set up across the US; ours is on Route 20 in Geneva, now rebranded as the AgriTech Center for New York State
- Research was sitting on the shelf and not being put to use; here comes the idea of extension; the very first ag extension agent was in Broome County; his name was John Barron; brought the research off the shelf down to the farm fields and met the farmers where they were; within four years every county in the United States had an extension agent
- Job is to pull together stakeholders, get input on an issue, be the conduit to Cornell University and other land grant universities, find the latest research, translate it, bring it back to communities, deliver it, measure impact, and then inform the research process; works in reverse as well; not simply a one-way street
- Delivers 71 different educational programs; works within four main program areas: youth development, agriculture, natural resources, and health and nutrition
- Natural Resources
- Tick, Lyme, and deer tick identification; water quality for Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake; stream studies; master forest owner program; community tree stewards; community tree buy program; hazard tree training; arborist certification training; tick research; arthropod-borne diseases; insect identification; wildlife issues; community deer management planning; rain barrel workshops; rain garden workshops; landscaping for water quality; climate steward program; waste streams; outdoor safety including noxious weeds and disease-carrying insects
- Does a lot of work with WEP, a contracted funding source from the county; also works with the Office of Environment, County Parks, and the Health Department
- Tick and Lyme work since 2015; huge rise in Lyme disease cases in this area down through the Bellevue neighborhood; currently doing a lot of work with personal protection; also working to lower deer numbers, that is the landscape level of trying to mitigate tick populations; best area to work on is personal protection because you never know where you're going to pick up a tick
- Work on the ecology side; everything having to do with ticks, high tick populations, how to keep them off; deer ticks carry six other neurological diseases beyond Lyme; Asian longhorn ticks and the Lone Star tick bring a whole other buffet of diseases
- Community forestry work since 2004; got kicked off because of the Labor Day storm; community tree steward program trains citizens in fundamentals of tree planting and care; tree buy program and community forestry planning with municipalities; last year helped write \$140,000 in DEC grants brought to two communities; currently working on a \$700,000 grant proposal for 10 municipalities; used to call it urban forestry but changed to community forestry to include any place that had streets such as villages
- Water quality very important topic; Skaneateles Lake is the main drinking water supply for a large part of Syracuse; work mostly on residential effects; shoreline armoring, making sure septic systems are being pumped, limiting spraying on lawns; work with municipal DOTs on nonpoint source pollution from road ditches; work with farmers receiving environmental funding; now also working on Otisco Lake; Otisco Lake has always been part of the aqua system and people appreciated that this year when the water main broke in the Clay neighborhood; paying attention to loss of hemlocks in ravines adding sediment into the lake
- Climate steward program brand new; trained and certified person to teach and coach; volunteer program where citizens pick up climate projects
- Agriculture and Food Systems

- Farmland protection work since 1997; stopped the erosion and loss of farmland to development and reversed the trend; in 1965 had 300,000 acres of farmland; by the mid-90s had dropped to 150,000 acres; since the farmland protection plan was developed, back up to 175,000 acres; New York State purchases of development rights brought approximately \$25 million in capital to farms
- Other area of farmland protection is working with farm businesses to make them profitable; economic protection is one of the best things for farmland
- Full program list: grown program, farm fest program, fifth grade dairy day, ag literacy, food preservation, value-added production, agritourism, farm worker health, avian flu, spotted lantern fly, soil testing and interpretation, New York State DEC pesticide credits, master gardener program, urban farming, food aggregation, voice of the farmer garden, CNY Regional Market, maple production, native pollinators for orchards
- CNY Regional Market: involved in writing most proposals over the last three years; received first \$5 million bump for food aggregation and processing; \$18 million set aside in the state budget to continue improvements
- Farm dairy day and ag literacy meant to connect the consuming public in Onondaga County with the farms that produce so much
- Onondaga County is the 10th largest ag economy in the state; 7th largest dairy county; number 10 in apples, number 16 in vegetables, number 10 in field crops; prior to Micron, third largest economic sector in the county
- Value of agriculture is not just economic; it is the ability to feed ourselves; approximately 120 commercial farms; one-tenth of 1% of the population feeds 350,000 people per year; upstate Niagara dairy plant employs many people and does not exist without milk coming in from farms 10 miles south
- Ag workforce development: submitted proposal for \$400,000 to work with CNY Works; farm labor is one of the top two issues every time talking to farms; underemployed communities literally 10 miles from farms while farm workers are brought in from far away; no connection has ever been made between CNY Works and farms
- Master gardener program: 50 master gardeners; blocks and bloom program picks a different neighborhood in the city of Syracuse each year; pick a neighborhood that is a little downtrodden, get it dressed up with a nice garden, and the rest of the neighborhood wants to do the same; working well in Rochester for 10 years now
- Voice of the Farmer Garden at the New York State Fairgrounds: contracted by New York State to install; 40 raised beds, just put in an orchard, grapevines, hops; about making connection with the public with everything grown in New York State; also a place to teach residents how to garden; spring gardening workshop tonight at the fairgrounds
- Health and Nutrition
- Main health and nutrition program over the past 10 years has been the SNAP-Ed program; supplemental nutrition assistance program, educational component; over 30,000 workshop participants in this county over 10 years; managed on a regional basis covering six other counties; 110 community partners; teaching people how to safely cook, how to acquire food, how to take limited resources and do the best for their families; brought \$11 million into Onondaga County
- SNAP-Ed program ends September 30th this year; advocating for bridge funding; believe \$200,000 per year can keep the work going; 3,000 people per year educated on stretching resources
- Ramped up food preservation program to help with food security; stretch produce from the garden or bought from the CNY Regional Market
- Avian flu has touched CCE in two ways: threat to dairy herds; also helping the health department get dairy farm workers immunized with seasonal flu because the combination of avian flu recombining with seasonal flu would be very concerning; would be a lot worse than COVID
- Youth and Family, 4-H

- 4-H summer camp, 4-H youth fair, 4-H clubs, archery program, public presentations, sewing, cooking, animal sciences, Coleman lanterns, orienteering, gardening, youth projects, youth mental health and educator training, character camp, capital days, team leadership, positive youth training
- Youth mental health is a primary focus; applied for funding
- Environmental summer camp in its third year; hosted by Onondaga County Parks and Syracuse City Parks; reservations filled within about two weeks
- Primary importance of all 4-H activities is instilling positive youth development: respectful of others, responsible, kind; making sure they know they are doing good and encouraging them to do better
- Organizations CCE provided foundations for the development of: Jubilee Farms, the Brady Farm, the Gifford Zoo Teaching Garden, Syracuse Grows, the RISE Agriculture Program, OAC Forestry Program, SASPA Park Association, Syracuse City Parks Gardens, the Dr. King School, Salt City Harvest Farm, Municipal Tree Committees, the Syracuse Urban Food Forest, the Elmwood Park Sugaring Program, Community Rain Gardens, and the Southwest Community Garden
- 20 staff; 150 volunteers; 11 elected board members; two appointed from the legislature; thanked Chairwoman Nicole Watts for getting the appointments done quickly
- Funding: 15% from Onondaga County; 20% from New York State; 62% from contracts; federal is approximately 0.4%
- Emerging issues: SNAP-Ed and nutrition education; CNY Regional Market ramping up; agricultural workforce development proposal; avian flu; food preservation ramping up; youth mental health; afterschool enrichment programs; farm worker health

Mr. Meaker left the meeting at approximately 2:34 p.m.

C. Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Eriksen, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to adjourn the meeting. Ayes: 3 (Eriksen, Kelly, Thompson) Absent: 1 (Garland, Mr. Meaker); MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Hassina Adams, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DATE: MAY 19, 2026

NAME (Please Print)	DEPT/AGENCY/ORGANIZATION
ODEAN Nye	CECWEP
Don Gates	CEH
Don Mulvihill	Finance