



Onondaga County Legislature

HASSINA K. ADAMS
Clerk

NICOLE WATTS
Chairwoman

SPENCER BERG
Deputy Clerk

JOINT MEETING OF THE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW DAY 4 MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 18, 2026 MAURICE BROWN & CHARLES E. GARLAND, CO-CHAIRS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Brown, Mr. Garland, Leader May, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Bush, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton, Mr. Knapp, Mr. McCarron, Mr. Ryan, Ms. Block

MEMBERS ABSENT: Leader Hernandez

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairwoman Watts, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Meaker; also see attached

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Chair Brown and Public Safety Committee Chair Garland co-presided over the joint meeting, with Chair Brown yielding the gavel to Chair Garland to conduct the proceedings.

Chair Garland introduced Daniel .H. Wears, Commissioner of Emergency Management.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Daniel H. Wears, Commissioner

(Attachment No. 1: Onondaga County Emergency Management, 2027 Executive Budget Written Statement; Attachment No. 2: Emergency Management Local Projects)

2026 Initiatives & Accomplishments

- Recognized the team, full-timers and part-timers
- Carryover from 2025, water transmission main break with OCWA
 - No one went out of water
- Increased investments from the County Legislature and County Executive
 - Building programs out, more robust; planning, training and exercise programs
- Hosted an active shooter incident management class; highly sought-after
 - First agency in New York State to host it
- Hosted an extreme heat workshop, working primarily with human needs agencies
- Emergency operations center; about 35 to 40 agencies partner
 - Later this year, a functional exercise in the EOC
- EMS study; initial draft under review
 - Final version and presentation to EMS agencies over the next month or so
- Drone as a first responder program funded in the 2026 budget
 - Pilot program; proof of concept for further investment and expansion

- Initial information to first response agencies as they are dispatched
- Reduce the number of first response vehicles; less traffic, less dangerous situations on the roads

2026 Budget Review

- Expect to be under budget

2027 Budget Overview

- Salary increases, baseline budgeting approach
- Small increase in part-time employee expenses; support for special events
 - Corresponding increase to revenue

2027 Strategic Priorities

- Continuing the drone as a first responder program; finalizing proof of concept
 - Contractor NUAIR, a local expert in UAS and drone programs
- Implement parts of the EMS study
- Funded out of a grant program, build an incident management team
 - Support agencies on larger scale incidents, i.e., large scale flooding

Questions/Comments:

- Working relationship between emergency management and Micron? Communications with the developers? Their emergency management plans? How will the two offices inter-react?
 - Working with Micron close to four years
 - Presentations with hospitals, 911, NAVAC, Clay Fire, City Fire as hazmat, tech rescue
 - Meet quarterly; understand their risk profile
 - Idaho about 18 months ahead; good indicator
- Interdepartmental charges disproportionately high in terms of a ratio, looking at other departments; what's driving that?
 - Done by percentage from the prior year
 - Often reconcile those at the end of the year
- Something within their work? Almost as much as employee benefits; other departments only about half
 - Own building; facilities management charges
 - IT disproportional; computers and devices in the EOC
- Other miscellaneous revenues, line 57; what's inside of that?
 - Amphitheater; command vehicle there for every show; billing for the personnel
 - Cost neutral; increasing revenue as well as expenditure
- Section four, page 12, account 668720, transfer to grant expenditures, \$750,000 in 2026; not in the 2027 executive budget; what was that money for?
 - Drone as a first responder program
 - NUAIR; FAA compliance, waivers, licensing, program development, training for pilots, purchasing first hardware

- Account 641020, overtime, the same in 2027; why no change?
 - Very limited need
 - Field response coordinated with part-time employees
- Coordination for getting ambulances to hospitals, emergency vehicles down Route 31? Preparing for those contingencies?
 - Will improve when the rail spur goes live
 - No major issues with the Route 31 corridor
 - NAVAC, Clay Fire, Cicero Fire, Sheriff's Office; handled at their level
 - EMS study looks at growth related to Micron
- I-81; steps taken proactively so the community remains navigable?
 - Not an area we have authority for
 - Monthly meetings with the 81 team, city fire; on their lists for notifications of closures
 - Focus on agencies, particularly EMS
 - City will handle that directly with state DOT
- CIP renovations to the building; initial just to get started, now renovations to get rolling?
 - Renovated the upstairs; offices, emergency operations center, classroom space
 - Classroom space very heavily used; open to every police, fire, EMS agency
 - Basement focus on things unique to this community; don't want to duplicate
 - Swing space; CPR class, virtual reality training
 - Driver simulators for police cars, fire trucks, ambulances
 - Apartment type room, as in Monroe County
 - Incident command training simulator
 - Final things haven't been decided
- Account 694010, training, flat at \$11,000?
 - Majority on the travel side for part-time employees
 - A lot of the training hosted is free; training in Oriskany usually also free
- Emergency preparedness supplies flat at \$95,000; why?
 - Not really a need
 - Federal grants have a line item for supplies and materials
- Grants around \$80,000 to \$90,000, federal and state; what percentage of grant funded operations depends on federal and state aid? If reduced, what would that affect first?
 - Reduced a little; absorbed with a shift in personnel
 - First year with a significant reduction in the annual allocation; hasn't had a huge impact
 - One grant cycle behind
 - Should be okay
- Local projects; surge initiative?
 - No good funding source going into COVID
 - Seed money to help agencies with the initial cost as a larger scale incident ramps up

* Mr. May arrived at the meeting at approximately 9:46 a.m.

Chair Garland introduced Julie Corn, Commissioner of Emergency Communications (911).

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS (E-911): Julie Kolakowski Corn, Commissioner; Dana Smith, Deputy Commissioner

(Attachment No. 3: Onondaga County Emergency Communications Department, 2027 Executive Budget Written Statement)

2027 Budget Overview

- Two deputies, Esteban Gonzalez and Dana Smith
- Budget has not changed very much from last year
- Minor increases on salary lines and maintenance and utilities lines; inflation and contract escalators
- Overtime continues to exceed budget; cost of doing business in a 911 center that is twenty-four seven
 - Minimum number of staff at any one time
- Reached all goals at the beginning of this year; fully staffed
 - Lost individuals; resignations, retirements
- Very hard to train; at least two classes a year
- Costs overtime to train
- Monday, new class starting, a class of eight

Major Projects

- AI program up and running
 - Non-emergency triage tool; non-emergencies up to a third of calls
 - Emergencies transferred to a 911 person
 - 911 staff not being replaced by AI; unload non-emergency calls
 - Transcription, translation coming soon, up to 50 languages, summarization, flags keywords
- New phone system procurement done; by the end of the year or early next year
 - Cloud-based; works in tandem with the AI system
 - Saves money on maintenance; saves space
- Persons in Crisis; collaborative effort with the Department of Children and Family Services
 - Pilot program with the Syracuse Police Department; expanding into the county
 - Fully integrated with the CAD system for mobile crisis dispatch
 - Crisis counselor on site twenty-four seven

Questions/Comments:

- AI policies, emergency versus non-emergency, liability; issues? Concerns with the quality of the AI?
 - Quality control process in place
 - A person monitors the system
 - Used across the United States; tried and true
 - Policies in place before implementing

- Liability; challenged in any courts?
 - No; worked with the DA's office
 - Part of the discovery process; evidence in court
- New hires; retention rates? Quantify by stayed a year, stayed three years?
 - Never 100% out of a class; on average, 75% successful
- Attribute that to the work itself or competitiveness of pay scale?
 - Not competitiveness at all; job not for everyone
 - Training process about six to 12 months
- Resources for mental health support for employees?
 - Mental health team, peer support team, wellness team
 - CARES UP grant from New York State; quiet room, exercise room, newsletter
- Which AI system?
 - Prepared
- Overtime, line 641020, flat; why no increase?
 - Balance those accounts between the three
 - Able to absorb that within the total county budget
 - Overtime has come down this year; left flat
- Account 691200, employee benefits, \$673,000 increase; larger than the salary increase; what drove that?
 - Salaries up just under \$13 million, benefits closer to \$17 million
 - Health costs, Medicare Advantage program, pension contribution rates
- CIP, \$21 million expansion; more feasible to have a new building or location?
 - Much higher cost
 - Radio tower; more cost effective to expand
 - This year's approval for architect and design
- Training; aptitude of whoever you're hiring?
 - Classroom training eight to 12 weeks; sitting next to a person roughly eight to 12 weeks
 - Communications training officers write reports every day
- AI helping with salaries and overtime?
 - Too soon to see
- New staff since the CIP?
 - Spring class; four out of five did not make it through
 - Next class starts next week
- Classes eight to 12 weeks? Rolling?
 - Yes
 - Looking to stagger them
 - Only so many new people on the floor at one time

- Translation an AI operation?
 - Yes; up to 50 languages; part of the new phone system
 - Now, call a third party; will happen live and in real time
- Requirements for the job; a certain degree?
 - High school diploma or equivalency and 18 years of age
- Official AI sharing policy?
 - Same as always; very close hold
 - Not released outside the public safety system; contractor does not have access
- Staffing study said about 17 more positions needed; plan for progress? No additional positions here
 - Refer to the County Executive's office; sufficient with current staff
- Mental health person for 988; an employee of yours, an outside contractor, a county employee?
 - 988 employee; partnership
- Does that program add to or relieve pressure on our employees?
 - Not trained to answer mental health calls to that degree; transfer to them
- Time covered throughout the day?
 - Very close to twenty-four seven
- \$2.6 million in grants for professional services; what is that for?
 - Two grants from the state, SICG and PSAP
 - SICG used to be for radios; now AI, CAD, all systems
 - PSAP the smaller one; operational
- Maintenance, utilities and rents line, \$4.4 million; IT software in there?
 - Software, electric and utility bills, radios, tower site generator maintenance agreements
- Does the 911 Center do its own IT?
 - Works with IT; anything specialized to the department lives in the department budget
- 911 center expansion and renovation; authorized half a million dollars; update on design or engineering?
 - Updates to the center; windows and lighting
 - Building next door could be torn down and rebuilt
 - Rethink the operations floor; who else could be on site
 - Classroom that was bigger; office space
- Translation specific to 911 centers, or exploring using it across county operations?
 - Tied to the 911 phone system
 - Current contract countywide; third party
- AI value; tracking against certain KPIs? How that information is going to drive your business?
 - Staffing challenge will probably never go away
 - Maybe one less person working; not going to move that needle right now

- Common operational picture; 911 data to first responders in real time
- Breaking down silos; smart purchases
- Technology costing more over time; not asking to reduce staffing; will make us better, faster, more efficient
- Positions; mental health person on site doesn't show up; something we contract out?
 - 988 person; can take advantage of their resources for our own staff
 - No county person
 - Peer support team of about 10 or 12 people; confidential
- Maintenance, utilities, and rents, \$113,000 increase, account 694130; what specifically accounts for that?
 - Utilities, software maintenance, contractual escalators, maintenance costs for the generators
- Account 694080, \$2.6 million professional services in the grant fund; state aid public safety revenue the exact same amount; what is that for?
 - PSAP, the Public Safety Answering Point Operations Grant; GIS plotter, AI software
 - Second and larger one, the State Interoperable Communications Grant; computer-aided dispatch software, hardware, radio updates, records management systems
- Service or need reoccurring; grant also reoccurring?
 - Yes; based on county population and 911 center size
- What could this legislature do to serve you better?
 - Modernization
 - What we do impacts all of the other agencies; smart decisions at the beginning
- Partnering with local universities or colleges for training?
 - Reality is access to the 911 system
 - Internal and external trainers

Chair Garland introduced Kristen Jackson, Probation Director.

DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION: Kristen Jackson, Director

(Attachment No. 4: Onondaga County Probation Department, 2027 Executive Budget Written Statement)

2026 Initiatives & Accomplishments

- Grant to enhance violence intervention and diversion programming for youth
 - With the Department of Children and Family Services, launched a new contract; intensive case management for youth and families
- New pretrial release structure with the Center for Justice Innovation
 - Increase since bail reform
- Dedicated domestic violence unit
 - Was coupled with the sex offender unit; divided it; GPS monitoring
 - Cognitive behavioral interventions, supported by a DCJS grant called STRIVE

- Collaborating with the District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, Syracuse Police Department and Vera House; domestic violence high risk team
- Hosted second annual Municipal Police Training Council certified basic course for peace officers
 - Nine week training program
 - First probation department in the state to do it; cost savings
- Community engagement; STRIVE and GIVE grants
 - GIVE, the gun violence intervention grant from DCJS
 - Syracuse Police Athletic League, Book Buddies, Building Men program; presence in Armory Square, Destiny, community pools, libraries
- Central New York threat assessment management and strategy team
 - Juvenile school-based threat assessment coordinator
- Research project with DCJS, fully funded; University at Albany and the Finn Institute
 - Youth violence trends, interventions, outcomes

2027 Budget Overview

- Standard salary and wage increases; baseline budgeting
- Travel and training flat from 2026; moving that training program into the department
 - Mostly employee mileage and parking
- Professional services and contractual services flat from 2026
 - Case management system, PowerDMS software, polygraphs, medical laboratory services, interpreter services
 - Pretrial release program; alternative to incarceration case manager; cognitive behavioral intervention therapies
- Increase in state aid, primarily pretrial release and raise the age programming

2027 Strategic Priorities

- Maintaining adequate staffing and supervisory capacity
- Caseloads diminished slightly, but the people on probation are changing
 - Just shy of 150 people on probation for using a gun
- Strengthen juvenile justice and raise the age services
- Specialized supervision for domestic violence and high risk individuals
- GPS monitoring cost increasing
- Peer support program; wellness committee
- Succession planning; leadership capacity

Questions/Comments:

- New contract with DCFS for youth intervention; cost?
 - Difficult to say right now; splitting that cost between DCFS and the probation department
 - Raise the Age and STSJP funding, violence intervention grant
- What is that program doing?
 - Youth Advocates Program; nationally recognized model
 - Relentless engagement
 - Helping the family support the youth

- Great feedback
- Who are we contracting with? Local, national?
 - Youth Advocates Program Inc.; national, hiring local staff
- More dangerous clientele; certain offenders get two probation officers at a time? On-site visits with more than one officer?
 - Generally, yes
 - Sometimes necessary to do home visits on your own; restitution, financial crimes
- Increase in crimes against probation officers during visits?
 - No
 - Trained in defensive tactics, de-escalation, conflict resolution
- Annual report?
 - Not specifically; quarterly reviews; nothing published
 - DCJS dashboard by department
- Section four, page 33; \$610,000 increase, only \$37,000 to salaries; employee benefits up more than \$400,000, interdepartmental charges \$100,000?
 - Flat funded positions; turnover
 - Benefit line, increases in healthcare costs
 - Interdepartmental charges, service department salary and benefit costs
- Account 695700, contractual expenses non-government, increase of \$365,000; page 34?
 - Grant funded page; STRIVE increases, youth grants
- National group hiring local; credible messengers?
 - No
- CIP six year plan; probation has nothing?
 - Not right now
- 700 line, the general fund, \$957,000, non-government contractual expenses; line 695700, unchanged; what does that cover?
 - Pretrial release, the Center for Justice Innovation; Helio Health case manager, ATI programming; Moral Reconciliation Therapy
- Department vehicles or reimburse?
 - Three vehicles
 - One transport vehicle with Raise the Age; transporting youth to Hillbrook if a judge remands them
 - Two for training, the field, details
 - Majority of officers use own vehicles
- Requested vehicle list and mileage information
- What could we do to serve your office better?
 - Great with the County Executive's proposed budget
 - Always great at listening

The committees recessed at 11:05 a.m., to reconvene at 11:15 a.m.

Chair Brown called the meeting back to order at 11:24 a.m.

SHERIFF: Tobias Shelley, Sheriff

Overview

- Under budget every year
- Five requests; every one we can justify

2027 Budget Requests

- Funding for the director of support services, the wellness officer
 - Grant from then Senator Mannion, now Congressman Mannion, for two years; not renewed yet
 - Hard to quantitate; protected by HIPAA
- 37 positions added to Jamesville Correctional Facility; back to where we were
 - Facilitate the proposed move by the County Executive to close the downtown jail and move operations to Jamesville
 - Can't move the work until the workers are in place
- Second boiler operator at Jamesville
 - Maintenance worker reaching retirement age; carry over
- Jujitsu program for recruits since 2024; 85 members
 - Not in place long enough for factual data
 - Marietta, Georgia, since 2019; 48% drop in officer injuries, 53% decrease in suspect injuries, 30% decrease in use of tasers
 - Body leverage and holds; de-escalate
 - \$47,000 cost far less than an injury or a lawsuit
 - Deputy hurt in booking; knee cost over \$100,000, not counting overtime
- Fleet; proforma vehicle allocation a quarter of a million dollars
 - 238 vehicles; doesn't cover oil changes and inspections
 - Responding patrol car on average six years old
 - 38 vehicles over 120,000 miles; 83 over 80,000 miles
 - Industry standard 20% replacement every year, i.e., 47 vehicles; asking for 35
 - \$225,000 proposed gives five cars, a 2.1% replacement
 - \$1.522 million request equals 35 vehicles
 - Will save money on maintenance and the overall cost of the fleet

Questions/Comments:

- How many vehicles over 100,000 miles?
 - 38 over 120,000; 83 over 80,000
 - Trading in at 70,000 to 80,000, about \$20,000 per vehicle instead of \$3,000
- When started, recycling vehicles at 80,000 miles; nothing worse than breaking down on the way to an emergency call; fleet needs to be improved

- General OT proposed at \$8.6 million; how does that align with the forecast for 2026? Matches 2025
 - Fairly consistent; jail in 2025, 125,000 hours overtime
- Contractual a decent bump; what's that about?
 - All unions except DSBA received very good contracts; DSBA pending
- Wouldn't that show in the 101? Contractual expenses, non-government
 - Biggest increase, the contract for correctional health services; vendor changed at the end of last year
 - Some increases for mental health services
- Jujitsu, the \$47,500 discrepancy; the price of jujitsu?
 - Yes; vendor not raising the price
- Employee benefits difference significant; contracts?
 - Correct; settled contracts
 - In the 2027 budget, refund all positions at Jamesville; increasing by 91 funded positions; no impact on the 101 line
- 37 positions request; offline conversations with the department and administration within the next week or so; same on vehicles
 - 37 positions already on the roster; anticipation that Jamesville is going to be closed; unfunded
 - Only positions being funded the ones currently filled; asking for those 37 to be funded
- How many years in a row under budget?
 - Every year as sheriff
- Section three, page 107; 2025, 795 authorized positions; 2026, 756; 2027, dropped 20; eliminated or unfunded?
 - Union negotiated contract; title dropped
- Program for digital permit amendments; funding in this budget? A priority?
 - Not aware of any surrounding county doing that
 - New program purchased; pistol permits done digitally at the office
 - Have to verify the firearm from the FFL with the receipt
- 37 positions not filled; plan on filling them this year?
 - Potential; hired 222 sworn members
 - Two unions; can't have a downtown deputy work at Jamesville
- Fund and fill all those positions and then close downtown; what position does that leave us in with downtown staff?
 - Carefully manage through the transition
 - Any position we fill at Jamesville, less overtime
- Mentioned in the CIP, next year fund a study related to the move; how will that play in with funded positions?
 - Existing buildings remodeled for an infirmary; move the workers, then the work

- Can't move workers until construction is completed?
 - Correct
 - Rikers Island; new jails in the boroughs in six to eight months
- Vehicle fleet \$725,000 last year, \$225,000 this year; both different from \$1.5 million; cutting puts us further behind?
 - Will continue to fall behind
- Vehicles breaking down on shift?
 - Yes
- Last year's levels; long-term help without the full 20%?
 - Number of vehicles last year, 15; standard is 47
 - Asking for 35; can justify every vehicle
 - Reeled in every unnecessary take-home car
- Requested vehicle inventory, mileage information; vehicles likely to hit 80,000 in the next year for a long-term plan
 - Trading in at 70,000 to 80,000; maintenance savings will fund the fleet
- Director of support services, the wellness officer; still listed in the 101?
 - Not eliminated; grant funded position
 - 101 line sufficient if the grant dollars do not continue
- Person in that job there January 1st?
 - Yes
- Requested update regarding support services personnel, grant funded position; needs to be renewed on January 1
- Practice for any grant funded program or position contingent upon the continuation of that grant funding; pathway for funding that position is there; consistent with the last several years
- Jujitsu; officers trained to de-escalate in another way?
 - Taught verbally; presence; jujitsu when it turns physical
 - Only investing in those going through academies; pay per person
 - Marietta, Georgia, seven years of data; two years here
- Incidents where an officer had to use it?
 - Survey of 57 deputies, 18 responded; can provide
- Relationship with the city and holding responsibilities; city pays for those services; where does that show up in the budget?
 - Abstract with the City of Syracuse since 1974; arraignments; 30 days notice by either party
 - Accepting all the liability; city pays \$9 million
 - Account 590042, services other governments public safety; reduction based on the 2025 reconciliation
- Requested abstract relative to City of Syracuse agreement for arraignment of offenders
 - Included in the budget resolution

- E-bike laws and enforcement countywide?
 - Since Raise the Age and Bail Reform, no consequences
 - Nothing short of trying to pull them over, usually futile
- Page 103, account 694010, travel and training reduced by \$47,500; why?
 - Jujitsu
 - Includes extraditions; can't predict
- Custody, page 108; with the merger into Jamesville, will the amount come down?
 - Absolutely
 - Structure rotting on the inside; 30 years old on paper, more like 130
 - Immediate savings with a new building, second maintenance worker
 - Cost savings combining the workforce, especially upper ranks
- City abstract \$8.9 million; just for the lockup? If the city were to do its own, would all of that cost go away?
 - Yes
 - \$9 million doesn't come to the sheriff
 - Would save 11 positions in transport
 - City struggling to hire; not proposing to end this
- CIP sheriff radios, \$133,000; first phase of a larger program?
 - Project ending
- Air One; annual cost of the older one versus maintenance of the new one?
 - Don't have those numbers; closed the deal two days ago
 - Once so many hours, required maintenance; last year, a rebuilt engine, about a half a million dollars
- Vehicle pursuit policy; rationale?
 - Meets national and state standards for accreditation
 - Very restrictive; notify the sergeant or watch commander immediately; most often cancelled
 - Potential to chase you down and catch you
- Vehicle crashes from pursuits in the past calendar year?
 - February incident; deputies never pursued; car cams prove that
- Lost any or damaged any as a result of the pursuit policy?
 - Not that can be recalled; accidents on the way to a pursuit
 - Had suspects ram our cars
- How can this legislature support you better?
 - Ask questions; make educated decisions
 - Can justify everything
- Damage during a pursuit the cost of doing business; glad the pursuit policy hasn't changed
- Cutting the automotive replacement line by 33%, 66%, not doing business
 - Startup money; better fleet for less money

- Vehicle maintenance in maintenance, utilities, and rents?
 - Separate; most automotive goes to WEP for the maintenance; charged back
 - Maintenance about a million dollars last year; oil changes, repairs

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committees, the meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m. The committees will reconvene on Monday, September 21, 2026, at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



HASSINA K. ADAMS, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

MEETING: **BUDGET REVIEW DAY NO. 4,**
JOINT BUDGET MEETING OF WAYS & MEANS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 18, 2026**

SPEAKER NAME (Please Print)	DEPT/AGENCY/ORGANIZATION
Jan Weas	EM
Kristen Jackson	Probation
Krista Smiley	Finance
Brian Donnelly	CE Office
Jesse Dean	Finance
DONNA BRISCOE	PERSONNEL
Sheriff Shelley	OC SO
Martina Chatter	Self
Chief Lisa Dell	OC SO