Onondaga County Legislature

HASSINA K. ADAMS
Clerk

NICOLE WATTS
Chairwoman

SPENCER BERG
Deputy Clerk

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FINAL REVIEW OF THE 2027 TENTATIVE BUDGET

BUDGET REVIEW DAY 10 – SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

MAURICE BROWN, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Brown, Leader Hernandez, Leader May, Mr. Bush, Mr. Burtis, Ms. Denton, Mr. Romeo
ALSO ATTENDING: Mr. Garland, Mr. Meaker, Ms. Block

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 9:26 a.m.

Chair Brown noted that the committee would first take up the non-budget-related items, including the non-budget-related local laws. It would then recess to finalize the Ways & Means report. Upon resuming, it would take the Ways & Means report item by item, along with budget-related items, including budget items related to the local laws. The committee planned to recess until 1:00 p.m., at which point it would vote on the Ways & Means report. Chair Brown asked for a motion to take the agenda out of order, to allow the non-budget-related items and non-budget-related local laws to be taken up before the Ways & Means report, with the budget-related items and budget-related local laws to follow the report.

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. May, to take the agenda out of order; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A. RESOLUTIONS

1. **2026 Transfer Resolution** *(Sponsored by Mr. Eriksen)* – Odean D. Dyer, Commissioner
   - Amending the 2026 county budget to provide for the transfer of funds to pay for additional costs associated with sludge and biosolid disposal
   - Moving $1,281,490 from the contingent account to the all other expenses account

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

2. **2026 Transfer Resolution** *(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)* – Amanda E. Perrine, Director
   - Transfer of $212,000 from the library books and materials budget line to the library professional services budget line

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

3. **Authorizing the County Executive to Enter Into a Lease Agreement** *(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)* – Archie Wixon, Jr., Commissioner
   - Lease with the City of Syracuse for the terminal lands, previously conveyed to the City of Syracuse
   - L-shaped strip of land, over 500 feet by 50 feet; about 29,050 square feet
   - Lease for $1 per year, for the benefit of Onondaga County to improve and to use

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

4. **Accepting and Approving the Contract Between Onondaga County and the Onondaga County Deputy Sheriff's Benevolent Association** (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland)*

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

5. **Approving and Directing the Correction of Certain Errors on Tax Bills** *(Sponsored by Mr. Brown)* – Kristi Smiley, Chief Fiscal Officer

- Two tax corrections related to similar units
- One same owner, different parcel; the other based on additional water consumption data

Questions/Comments:
- Do we keep track if the same property comes up multiple times?
  - Certainly do, yes.

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

6. **Confirming the Appointment to the Board of Directors of the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (Dr. Jaynelle D. Nixon)** (*Sponsored by Ms. Denton)*

- Confirms appointment of Dr. Jaynelle D. Nixon to the Board of Directors of the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation
- Fills the seat vacated by Chairman Brown, who is stepping down from the Land Bank board

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

7. **A Resolution Establishing the Onondaga County New American Affairs Council, A Temporary Advisory Board of Citizens, to Study and to Provide Recommendations Regarding Services for "New Americans"** *(Sponsored by Ms. Watts)* – Nicole Watts, Chairwoman

   - Establishes New American Affairs Council
   - Requested by the New American community; prompted especially by the County Executive's food pantry grants announcement and SNAP cuts affecting the New American community

- Not exclusive to food access; broader review role, similar to the Accessibility Council
- Drafted with the New American community, Law Department, New American leadership, and City of Syracuse; includes ex-officio City of Syracuse seats; approximately 50% of New American community lives within city limits
- Seats focused on public safety, public health, and other county-related issues; expertise drawn from the New American community and other backgrounds
- Continental representation: Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe/Eastern Europe, Caribbean for diversity of perspectives
- Set up almost identically to the Accessibility Council, focused instead on New American affairs

Questions/Comments:

- Any changes from the Health & Human Services draft?
  - No actual changes; the city confirmed how the draft would be used
  - Given city appointments, required to confer with the mayor and council
- What about funding?
  - No funding, fully volunteer, similar to the Accessibility Council
  - Reviews departments; focuses on one issue per year, starting with food access
  - Any funding needs identified would go through the regular budget process; no budgetary action needed to set the Council up
    - Example: could review whether departments have adequate funding for interpretation services, e.g., language-line costs billed back to departments; any resulting funding request would come through committee and the legislature's budget process

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

B. LOCAL LAWS:

a. **Amending the Onondaga County Charter and Administrative Code to Change All References to "Chairman" to "Chair", and Any References to the Chair of the Legislature as "His" and/or "He" to "Their" and/or "They"** (*Sponsored by Ms. Hernandez*) – Nodesia Hernandez, Majority Leader

- Outdated charter language; the new chair being a woman
- Respectful of anyone who might identify with something else; gender neutral; changing it to chair, not chairperson

Questions/Comments:

- Comment:
  - Proud to have first chairwoman
  - As former chair, never cared if called chair in the chambers
  - In the chambers, one thing, outside, doesn't understand where this perspective is coming from
  - Charter written in 1965, customary at the time
  - Doesn't think it needs to change
- Is it currently known in the charter as chairperson?
  - Chairman

Item a. was considered and will advance to session

b. A Local Law Amending Local Law No. 2-2012 Regarding the Onondaga County Source Separation (*Sponsored by Mr. Eriksen*) - Michael McCrisky, Acting Executive Director, OCRRA

- Adds to-go cups to the recyclable materials stream; first update to the law since 2012

Questions/Comments:

- Does the law have to specify materials, or can it stay broad?
  - Other counties or solid waste organizations may have broader laws
  - Legislature could consider a broader change in the future; these are the minimum updates for now

Ms. Watts thanked OCRRA for seeking to stay on top of the latest technology for the environment

Item b. was considered and will advance to session

c. Amending Section 608 of the Onondaga County Charter and Section 6.13 of the Administrative Code, Relating to County Executive Transfers of Unencumbered Appropriations (Sponsored by Mr. Romeo)

- Updates thresholds for legislative notification of transfers
- Low end for notification increased from $1,500 to $3,000
- Action-required threshold increased from $7,500 to $10,000
- Spells out existing exemptions such as salaries and settlements, previously not written out, just done
  - For exempted transfers exceeding $10,000, legislature receives a report; legislature decides whether to pursue further

Questions/Comments:

- What are the dollar amount limits again?
  - $3,000, low end for notification of transfers
  - $10,000, threshold above which legislative approval is required
  - For exemptions exceeding $10,000, a report to the legislature is required

Item c. was considered and will advance to session

Note: A question arose over whether ONHOME is a budget item. It was clarified that ONHOME is only a local law establishing the LDC, with no operating budget impact; the related $500,000 and four community positions are being brought forward separately as an executive initiative resolution, to be reviewed October 6, outside the operating budget.

Chair Brown, finding there was no further business, stated the committee would recess until 1:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to recess until 1:00 p.m.; Ayes: 4 (Brown, Hernandez, Romeo, Denton) Abstained: 3 (May, Burtis, Bush). MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Brown called the meeting back to order at 1:19 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to reconvene the meeting; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Brown:
Chair Brown outlined the order of business. The committee would take the Ways & Means report item by item, voting on each change to the County Executive's proposed budget, and then vote on the report as amended. It would then take up the budget related resolutions, followed by the budget related local laws. He reminded everyone that further amendments can be made at budget session on Tuesday, October 6, and that the public hearing on the budget is Thursday, October 1, at 5:00 p.m. in the Legislature chambers.

Chair Brown thanked the executive team, Personnel and all the departments for staying professional through a strenuous process and for answering the committee's questions in a timely manner. He also thanked the Legislature's staff and the legislators.

Leader May:
Thanked colleagues on both sides of the aisle for a respectful process. He thanked the department heads, especially CFO Smiley and Deputy County Executive Donnelly, and the legislative staff. He added that the County Executive and his team gave the committee a responsible budget as a starting point.

Leader Hernandez:
Ms. Hernandez thanked Mr. May for his patience, and Mr. Burtis and Mr. Bush. She noted she hopes the Legislature passes a budget in the best interest of housing, food pantries, and residents of the city and county.

Chair Watts:
Chairwoman Watts thanked the committee chairs for the extra load they carried this year and thanked the Ways & Means Chair for navigating the process.

C. WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Onondaga County Ways and Means Committee respectfully reports it has completed its 2027 budget review process.

The Committee carefully and thoroughly reviewed the County Executive's proposed budget for the 2027 fiscal year, along with the Capital Program and Budget Message as presented to the County Legislature, pursuant to the provisions of Article VI of the Onondaga County Charter.

The Committee has held more than dozen meetings with respect to the 2027 proposed budget, examined the various appropriations and revenues recommended by the County Executive and believe that the Proposed Budget as submitted to the County Legislature will be adequate for the needs of Onondaga County for the ensuing fiscal year, with the following exceptions and recommendations which are herewith proposed, to wit:

01 - AUTHORIZED AGENCIES - FINANCIAL

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A659410 CNY Arts		30,000
Total Appropriations		**30,000**
Revenues:		
A590005 Non-Real Property Tax Items		30,000
Total Revenues:		**30,000**

Net Local Share:		**$0**

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Denton, to approve a $30,000 increase to CNY Arts; Ayes: 4 (Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton) Abstain: 3 (Mr. May, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Bush). MOTION CARRIED.

05 - FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A694080 Professional Services	75,000	
A666500 Contingent Account		75,000
(Note: Professional Services)		
A674600 Provision for Capital Projects	250,000	
A666500 Contingent Account		250,000
(Note: Provision for Capital Projects)		
Total Appropriations	0	
Net Local Share:		**$0**

A motion was made by Mr. May, seconded by Mr. Bush, to approve moving $75,000 from Professional Services to the Contingent Account; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve moving $250,000 from Provision for Capital Projects to the Contingent Account; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

19 - COUNTY CLERK

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A641010 Total-Total Salaries		5,455
(Note: County Clerk Salary)		
A691200 Employee Benefits-Interdepartmental		3,028
Total Appropriations		**8,483**
Net Local Share		**$8,483**

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. Bush, to approve an increase of $5,455 in Total Salaries for the County Clerk salary, and $3,028 in Employee Benefits; Ayes: 5 (Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Bush, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton) Noes: 1 (Mr. May) Abstain: 1 (Mr. Burtis). MOTION CARRIED.

236520 - COUNTY GENERAL UNDISTRIBUTED PERSONNEL EXPENSES

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A644180 Provision for Sal & Wage/Ben Adj	482,259	
Total Appropriations	**482,259**	
Net Local Share:	**$482,259**	

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve a $482,259 decrease in Provision for Salary and Wage/Benefit Adjustments; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

25 - COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A694080 Professional Services		30,000
(Note: Outside Legal Counsel)		
A666500 Contingent Account		50,000
(Note: Legislative Initiatives Grant Funds)		
Total Appropriations		**80,000**
Net Local Share:		**$80,000**

A motion was made by Ms. Denton, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve a $30,000 increase in Professional Services for Outside Legal Counsel; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve $50,000 in the Contingent Account for the Legislative Initiatives Grant Funds; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

33 - WATER ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A694080 Professional Services	420,000	
A666500 Contingent Account		420,000
(Note: Professional Services - Miller Strategies)		
Total Appropriations		**0**
Net Local Share:		**$0**

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve moving $420,000 from Professional Services to the Contingent Account; Ayes: 4 (Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton) Abstain: 3 (Mr. May, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Bush). MOTION CARRIED.

351 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A668720 Transfer to Grant Expend	250,000	
A666500 Contingent Account		250,000
(Note: Local Farm & Food Security Pilot Program)		
A668720 Transfer to Grant Expend		250,000
(Note: Ag Council SOFSA Partnership)		
Total Appropriations		**250,000**
Net Local Share:		**$250,000**

A motion was made by Ms. Denton, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve moving $250,000 from Transfer to Grant Expenditures to the Contingent Account; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to approve an increase of $250,000 in Transfer to Grant Expenditures; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

352 - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A668720 Transfer to Grant Expend	2,000,000	
A666500 Contingent Account		2,000,000
(Note: Gen Z Down Payment Assistance Program)		
Total Appropriations		**0**
Net Local Share:		**$0**

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to move $2 million related to the Gen Z Down Payment Assistance Program to the Contingent Account; Ayes: 5 (Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Bush, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton) Noes: 1 (Mr. May) Abstain: 1 (Mr. Burtis). MOTION CARRIED.

37 - BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A641010 Total-Total Salaries		24,000
(Note: Commissioner Salaries)		
A691200 Employee Benefits-Interdepart		13,320
Total Appropriations		**37,320**
Net Local Share		**$37,320**

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. May, to approve an increase of $24,000 in Total Salaries and a corresponding benefits increase of $13,320, with a net local share of $37,320; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

43 - HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Create 2 Peer Specialists (Grade 7; $49,805-$54,843)
Create 1 Case Manager (Grade 9; $58,493-$64,497)

Net Local Share		**$0**

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Denton, to create two Peer Specialists and one Case Manager; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

47 - LAW DEPARTMENT

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A694080 Professional Services	500,000	
Total Appropriations	**500,000**	
Net Local Share	**$500,000**	

A motion was made by Mr. May, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve a decrease of $500,000 in the Professional Services line; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

69 - PARKS & RECREATION

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A674600 Provision for Capital Projects	312,500	
A666500 Contingent Account		312,500
(Note: Provision for Capital Projects - Honeywell Consent Decree Funds)		
Total Appropriations		**0**
Net Local Share:		**$0**

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to move $312,500 into Contingent Account from Provision for Capital Projects; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

79 - SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A671500 Automotive Equipment		500,000
Total Appropriations		**500,000**
Net Local Share		**$500,000**

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve an increase of $500,000 for Automotive Equipment; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

81 - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES - ECONOMIC SECURITY

Create 1 Social Services Program Coordinator (Grade 35; $92,698-$107,366)

Appropriations:	**Decrease**	**Increase**
A641010 Total-Total Salaries		95,381
A691200 Employee Benefits-Interdepartmental		52,936
A695700 Contractual Services Non-Government		5,000
(Note: Juneteenth)		
Total Appropriations		**153,317**
Revenues:		
A590015 Federal Aid		37,420
A590025 State Aid		9,441
Total Revenues		**46,861**

Net Local Share **$106,456**

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Denton, to create one Social Services Program Coordinator, Grade 35, with Total Salaries of $95,381; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Ms. Denton, to approve $5,000 in Contractual Services Non-Government for Juneteenth; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to approve revenues of $37,420 in Federal Aid and $9,441 in State Aid; Ayes: 6 (Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. May, Mr. Bush, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton) Abstain: 1 (Mr. Burtis). MOTION CARRIED.

83 - DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Create 6 Case Workers (Grade 10; $62,715-$69,188)

Net Local Share **$0**

A motion was made by Ms. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. Romeo, to create six Case Workers, Grade 10; Ayes: 5 (Mr. Brown, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Bush, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Denton) Abstain: 2 (Mr. May, Mr. Burtis). MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve the Ways and Means Report as amended; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. BUDGET RELATED RESOLUTIONS

8. **Adopting the Annual Budget for the County of Onondaga for the Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 2027, and Ending December 31, 2027 and Authorizing the County Executive to Enter Into Contracts With Other Governmental Units in which Appropriations and Revenues are Approved by Adoption of the 2027 Budget** *(Sponsored by Mr. Brown)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

9. **Providing for Various Personnel Changes Related to the Adoption of the 2027 County Budget and Amending the Onondaga County Salary Plan** *(Sponsored by Mr. Brown)*

Questions/Comments:

- Did we get the personnel roster cleanup yet?
  - Not yet; just about have it complete

Item was considered and will advance to session

10. **Authorizing Onondaga County to Pay the Difference in Pay Between Military Base Pay and Base County Salary to County Officers and Employees While Performing Ordered Military Duty** *(Sponsored by Mr. Brown)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

11. **Providing Continuous Individual and Family Dental and Health Insurance Benefits Through December 31, 2027, at County Expense for Those County Officers and Employees During Their Active Military Duty** (*Sponsored by Mr. Brown)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

12. **Approving and Authorizing the Industrial Wastewater Surcharge Billing Rates and Amending Resolution No. 136-2025** (*Sponsored by Mr. Eriksen)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

13. **A Resolution Adopting an Amended Schedule of Sewer Rents for the Onondaga County Sanitary District** (*Sponsored by Mr. Eriksen)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

14. **Designating Visit Syracuse as the Agency Authorized to Make Application to the New York State Department of Economic Development and to Receive Matching Funds Therefrom Under the New York State Tourist Promotion Act for January 1, 2027 Through December 31, 2027** (*Sponsored by Ms. Denton)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

E. LOCAL LAWS

d. **A Local Law Relating to Certain Fees Collected by the Onondaga County Health Department and the Center for Forensic Sciences for Medical Examiner and Forensic Laboratory Services** *(Sponsored by Mr. Romeo)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

e. **A Local Law Amending Certain Fees Collected by the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Related to the Project Lifesaver Program and the Onondaga Law Enforcement Information System (OLEIS), and Amending Local Law Nos. 6-1983, 18-1992, 2-1996, 6-2007, 20-2002, and 18-2009** *(Sponsored by Mr. Garland)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

f. **A Local Law Providing for the Establishment of Plumbing Fees Collected by the Department of Water Environment Protection** *(Sponsored by Mr. Eriksen)*

Item was considered and will advance to session

g. A Local Law Initiating "ONHOME," a Housing Development Financing Corporation
(Sponsored by Ms. Watts)

- No operating budget impact; a related $500,000 executive initiative resolution for four community positions is expected October 6
- Chairman Brown: Called it a significant step for Central New York, and said he was honored to be one of the seven votes taking that step

Item was considered and will advance to session

Chair Brown thanked everyone for their work and instructed attendees to sign the Ways & Means Report with the Clerk.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,



HASSINA K. ADAMS, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature