

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS – OLEAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING

IN ATTENDANCE WERE: ALDERMEN ROBINSON, BENNION, KEARY, FORNEY, McCALL, CRAWFORD, AND ANASTASIA. OTHERS: MAYOR WILLIAM AIELLO; FRANK CAPUTO, CITY CLERK; BRIDGET MARSHALL, CITY ATTORNEY; LENS MARTIAL, CITY AUDITOR; GREGG PIECHOTA, CITY ASSESSOR, JAMES SPRAGUE, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, AND MICHIKO McELFRESH, MAYOR'S SECRETARY.

Alderman Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked that the record show that all Aldermen were present.

1. PL #87-25: (Bennion) To authorize the removal of unused, non-working lighting on North Union Street.

Alderman Robinson said that the Council received a recommendation from a city employee and asked Director Sprague if he had anything to add to the recommendation. Director Sprague had nothing else to add. Alderman Forney said that she read the recommendation and asked why they did not consider the water issue initially if that made lights unviable. Director Sprague said that he believes it was considered, however the challenge was finding a manufactured electronic device that would provide the various control functions that had been requested.

Alderman Forney asked if what was originally going to be used met those requirements. Director Sprague said he could not answer that. Alderman Forney said that she trying to understand why we did all of the installation if it was not a viable option.

Alderman McCall loves the idea of having the lights down town; however, the lights have been installed for years. She added that 5 of the 17 strands do not work or have other issues. She stated that the City Electrician gave them a recommendation that they do no work. She added that they came in with a Frankenstein approach, fixing the lights with a box, which does not meet commercial and industrial standards and it has no protection against liquids, thus making them unviable. She added that the City should invest in new overall lighting for North Union Street, as the lighting across the street is not enough to brighten the street.

Alderman Forney said she did not know what the original reasoning was to invest in the lighting, but added that we invest in things that are not forward facing for our community and that we should consider a way to invest in the lighting for beautification purposes.

Alderman Bennion said that he is not against the lighting, but is against continually spending money on this project. He said that there are no guarantees that it will work and there are no

warranties. He stated that it is time to find something that is feasible and that works. He also stated that we need more streetlights on North Union Street. He is prepared to move along and find something different.

Mr. Keary said that he attended the testing; the testing proved it worked in the building; however four strands did not work. He said that even he as a layman knows that you can get waterproof boxes to run the wire through at Home Depot, so in his opinion the City Electrician did not do his due diligence. He stated he would like to continue with the project for two more weeks.

Alderman Crawford said that he would like to see the project through. He added that he would like to see what the City Electrician has in mind. He thinks that people would like to see it come to fruition. He would like to know what a commercial installation would entail and cost.

Alderman Robinson would like to see the lights; however, significant man-hours have already been put into the project. He pointed out from the report that the controller can get wet and said that we could go to Home Depot to purchase, but what is \$5 retail is \$20 for the City due to prevailing wage. He stated that other issues in the report include product sourcing and quality, software functionality, operational logistics as well as how long the product will last. He stated that the electrician indicated that putting any additional money into the lights sets the City up for failure. Mr. Robinson stated that we wasted money and he would like to consider it a failure. He would like to direct the City to find some commercial grade product that would benefit the City.

Alderman Anastasia said that he wants lights but after reviewing the e-mail from the City electrician, he does not think it is viable. He said that he would like more lights in general on the street. He thinks the issue has been beaten to death and since it cannot be done in a cost efficient way it is time to move on.

A motion to approve PL #87-25 indefinitely was made by Alderman Bennison, seconded by Alderman McCall. No voice vote, therefore no action in the Regular meeting.

2. PL #92-25: (Aiello) To reassign the City of Olean Tree Removal Contract 2025-2026 to Decker Tree Services.

Alderman Anastasia explained that he has received complaints on Decker Tree Service regarding a property they own on Fall Road. He said the company left wood chips and old street logs on the property and the residents would like them removed. He added that he received a phone call from Justin Decker and they discussed the issue. Mr. Decker said he would remove the debris; however, he did not give a time frame. Alderman Anastasia asked to postpone this discussion until he can get more facts from Alderman Decker.

Alderman Bennion remembered that at the last meeting they had said if it was not cleaned up by this meeting they would go back to issue an RFP. He would like to stick to their decision

Alderman Robinson said that this is a topic that is not clear as Decker was the second bidder, but because of circumstances received the bid. Prior to receiving, it turned out that they had an order to remedy, which was completed as per Codes standards but debris was still in the lot...

Alderman Bennion clarified that they did meet the standards of Codes.

Alderman Robinson asked if it should be push it out for another two weeks and asked if the Mayor had spoken to Codes.

Mayor Aiello said that he did have a meeting with codes and the Chief. Decker did meet the minimum standard set by Codes. Mayor Aiello said that he was not happy and it will not happen again.

Alderman McCall said that she would rather have no hire than a bad hire. In addition, stated that we need to be very clear of the quality of the work we expect.

Alderman Robinson said that he would hope that they hold City contractors to a higher standard especially considering this issue. He added they should postpone indefinitely

A motion to postpone PL #92-25 indefinitely was made by Alderman Bennion, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

Alderman Robinson directed Director Sprague to reissue the RFP.

3. PL #102-25: (Aiello) To confirm the Mayoral reappointment of Gregg Piechota as City Assessor for the term October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2031.

Mayor Aiello explained the Assessor's terms are state mandated for six years and Mr. Piechota's term is ending.

A motion to approve PL #102-25 was made by Alderman Anastasia, seconded by Alderman Keary. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

4. PL #103-25: (Aiello) To authorize the Mayor to enter into the updated Order on Consent as submitted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Mayor Aiello deferred to the City Attorney Bridget Marshall. She said it was drafted by the State and both she and Brad Camp reviewed. She said that Mr. Camp made some technical changes and the State accepted those changes.

Alderman Robinson asked if the civil penalty and asked how the \$7, 0000 initial payment was going to be paid. Mayor Aiello responded that through the sewer funds or contingency.

Mr. Robinson noted that a set of stipulations have to be met by 3/1/2026 and asked if the City has a plan.

Mayor Aiello read a note from Brad Camp that stated that he spoke to Andy Farra from DEC, they have hired Rambo Engineering who will start flow monitoring in a few weeks. The work that they are doing will satisfy the new consent order milestone 1, A-F. They will have to move on digitizing the City utility maps and make them usable with either ESRI or ARC GIZ or the equivalent by March 1, 2026,

Alderman McCall noted that there is a hard deadline for November 30, 2026 to disconnect the storm water system from the sanitary system.

A motion to approve PL #103-25 was made by Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman McCall. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to Regular Meeting for Resolution.

5. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Robinson Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:33 p.m.