

CITY OPERATIONS

Tuesday, July 22, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.

Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Bennion, Vice Chairman Anastasia, Alderman Crawford, Alderman Robinson, and Alderman McCall. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Frank Caputo, City Clerk; Lens Martial, City Auditor; Bridget Marshall, City Attorney; James Sprague, Director of Public Works, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Bennion called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, July 8, 2025)

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2025 meeting was made by Alderman Bennion, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

a. QR Code Parking

Alderman Bennion explained Mayor Aiello had sent out the requested information and explained \$104,000 is the budget projection, not including an additional amount for budget projections for lot permits. He asked what the fringe cost is on a part-time employee and Mr. Martial explained there really is none, besides workers compensation, and we pay a flat fee for everyone that works for the City. Alderman Bennion asked how many hours the employee would work and Mayor Aiello explained they would work 25 hours a week for \$25 an hour, which comes out of the Police Department budget. Alderman Bennion explained this is currently budgeted and is the same position that has been in the budget, and Mayor Aiello confirmed this.

Alderman Crawford asked when this plan will get rolled out, and Mayor Aiello explained the City was working on this but since the Council had questions, he was awaiting for decisions to be made. Alderman McCall explained she does not feel 60% occupancy of spaces for 8 hours is realistic. She explained when she went out to look several times, she felt it was more of a 40% utilization. She explained she was in support of this program initially because she was looking at how to diversity bringing revenue into the City that is not raising taxes and she thinks this was a good potential for that. However, she thinks we will be looking at closer to \$50,000 in revenue than \$104,000, and she thinks the amount of revenue we receive has to be worth it for the pain residents, people coming into the City, and businesses will feel with this type of parking, She

explained she does not see that at this time. She explained she spoke with businesses who were in opposition of this plan and described scammers who put stickers over the QR codes and people who do not want to give out their debit or credit card information. She explained sales have not been good with the economy for small businesses and they don't need another deterrent from customers. She explained meters aren't great because they make snow removal difficult and take away from the beauty of the streetscape. She explained QR Codes will stop people from coming to Olean and shop. She explained she is concerned the cost is not worth the benefit, and her own daughter has said she will not go downtown with the QR codes. She explained she doesn't see the return on investment, and doesn't think it will be worth the stress on shoppers and businesses.

Alderman Robinson explained he understands how small businesses in the downtown feel and that they believe they will be affected the same way they thought they would be affected by the roundabouts, but it's always hard to make a change. He explained he thinks the projected revenue might be a bit off but he believes it is still worth it to do some type of parking app. He explained it is a huge assumption that this will irritate shoppers. He explained you can raise prices or switch from free to paid parking, and if you have a good product, people will buy it period, and we see that in almost every market there is. He explained people will not avoid the downtown any more or less than they do now. He explained if there are things to buy, people will go there to buy them. He explained there is paid parking and QR code parking all over the place. He explained we seem to use the elderly as an excuse but the elderly are getting around just fine and using cell phones just fine, not having problems adjusting to today's era. He explained it's just another excuse to keep this City from prospering. He explained Wellsville has a smaller population and has metered parking with free weekends and some free parking time slots on designated streets. He explained Hornell has parking meters in certain zones and free parking on Sundays and holidays. He explained Dunkirk has rotational parking on even and odd days, and Corning and Batavia have free parking for 1-2 hours in designated areas as well as metered and permitted use through the cities. He explained Jamestown has an app for parking, as well as meter paying stations, permit parking, and free zones in certain areas with time restrictions. He explained populations less to, equal to, and greater than Olean and they all have some type of system. He asked why Olean wants to have free parking and explained it is missed revenue. He explained we need to install some type of app or some type of system, and we need to do this and stop kicking the can down the road.

Mayor Aiello explained the \$104,000 in projected revenue includes \$54,000 in parking ticket fines. HE explained we will be interviewing three candidates this Thursday for the parking enforcement position, and that help the City pick up more fine money than that. He explained they also did not include any of the potential parking revenue from West State or East State Streets, as they wanted to keep the estimate conservative. Alderman McCall asked if this means

we anticipate \$50,000 in revenue from the QR code parking and Mayor Aiello explained this is correct.

Alderman Crawford explained he and other Aldermen have heard numerous times about business employees parking on North Union Street and taking spots from customers and diners. He explained we need a Parking Enforcement Officer. He explained when no one is writing tickets, there is nothing stopping employees from parking on the street all day. He explained we don't want to push the cost of that job onto residents and shoppers with a QR code system, but we also do not want to raise property taxes to pay for the job either, so we are really sending mixed messages in that regard. He explained we have to try something new, and maybe it will work and maybe it won't. He explained nothing is set in stone, especially with a part-time position. He explained every municipal strategy with downtown businesses says to charge for premium parking, but still give the opportunity for free secondary parking. He explained if someone doesn't want to pay for parking, they can park on the side streets for free. He explained he still suggests a City lot should be free. He explained a lot of people were concerned that the dog park at Oak Hill Park would not be used because there was no parking, but a lot of people use it and walk there or park nearby and walk. He explained we are talking ourselves out of something before even trying it, and we can always back out. He explained he thinks most of the revenue will come from violations and tickets, not just revenue from parking itself. He explained we haven't even talked about what can happen with the additional revenue. He explained we have talked about the sustainability and longevity of the beautified downtown and we don't want volunteers to do all the work, so we could use this income to hire someone full-time to maintain the downtown. He explained we don't know until we try. He explained a big opportunity would be missed if we don't charge in the War Vets lot as that is a premium parking area as well.

Alderman McCall explained a fair amount of municipalities Alderman Robinson mentioned still have parking meters. She explained she is glad to hear the breakdown of the revenues as that was not how it was presented when it was sent. She explained she is not opposed to taking a look at this, but we aren't and will not get 60% occupancy downtown and we need to be mindful of that in our projections. She explained if we went from parking meters to QR code parking people would not feel like they had lost something. She explained we should look into how we can creatively bill for parking lots.

Alderman Anastasia explained the only reason he has a smart phone is because his flip phone broke and he couldn't get another one. HE explained the Mayor had to show him how to use a QR code because he had no idea. HE explained he believes there are seniors out there that don't have the technology to do it. He explained it will hurt sales tax revenue if people don't want to pay to park in the downtown. He explained he would be more in favor of paying for meters. He explained if he got a \$30 ticket after paying to park for two hours and going over that time he

would never come back. Mayor Aiello explained your phone will update you to tell you your time is almost up, and you can purchase more time from wherever you are.

Alderman Bennion explained a couple of years back he wanted to have a conversation about this, and he pictured it slightly different. HE explained it would have been good to have the total area included in the cost analysis, and explained most things are not walked back after they are approved regardless of whether or not they work out. He explained the Council has been told the position is unfillable and that we have not had a Parking Enforcement Officer for some time, and asked what has changed. Mayor Aiello explained we had no candidates for quite some time and we advertised again and three candidates have applied for the position. Alderman Bennion explained just because there are three candidates does not mean someone will stick in the job. He asked if \$54,000 is attainable for parking tickets because there is no enforcement now. He explained we do not want lots to be free because we receive revenue from lots that we would lose for permits. He explained if we expand too large we will push people to park in private lots and then will have other issues with private property owners. He explained on the enforcement side, we can enforce parking through the rest of the City, as he has received complaints about people parking all day, in handicapped spots, and the wrong way. He explained he thinks there needs to be 15 minute free parking as now people will check to see if they see a Parking Enforcement Officer and then will run in to do their business quickly. He explained he is not opposed in theory to the program, but as it is laid out he does not think the numbers work.

Alderman Robinson explained he thinks there should be free parking on side streets and in one City lot that is allocated as free whether it is the smallest or largest lot. He explained the other towns he looked into had some type of free parking somewhere. Alderman Anastasia asked if you have to use your credit or debit card and Alderman McCall explained you do. Alderman Anastasia asked who has access to that information once it is entered and Mayor Aiello explained ParkMobile would have this information. He explained you can also call the 800 number if you do not want to use the app. He explained most Aldermen were in favor of this during the budget process and he asked what the Council would like to do now. Alderman Bennion explained he would like to move to a PL for East and West State and North and South Union Streets and to leave the side streets alone. Alderman Crawford explained he would like to see paid parking in the War Vets Park lot. Mayor Aiello explained the reason they had paid parking on Hamilton and Laurens is because employees park there all day, and explained we could change to two hour parking there.

Alderman Bennion explained if you make all of the City lots free, you lose revenue from permits. Mayor Aiello explained that is \$47,000 in revenue. Alderman Bennion explained we currently use iChalk for 2 hour parking and explained these are two separate entities we would be paying a subscription for. Mayor Aiello explained iChalk will still be used to write tickets and explained

that is what the Police Department uses to write tickets. Alderman Robinson mentioned making one City lot free, and Alderman McCall explained we could make one free and have permit parking and paid parking in the others. Mayor Aiello explained there is a lot on Barry Street, one behind Community Bank, and the former OBI lot. Alderman McCall asked if the \$47,000 in permit revenue is split between the City lots and Mayor Aiello explained it is. He explained the lot at 1st and Sullivan has the least amount of renters in there.

Alderman Crawford explained the Council should talk offline to work out where parking should be paid and free. He suggested doing 2 hour parking in a City lot for free and then anything more than that is paid for with the QR code, unless a permit is purchased. Alderman Bennion asked all of the ideas be sent so this can be discussed again in one month.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Motorized Vehicles on City Sidewalks

Alderman Bennion explained this has come up a few times before. He explained Mayor Aiello sent out the Vehicle and Traffic Law today regarding scooters and Alderman McCall added there is a section in the law for bikes as well. Alderman Bennion explained he would like to do something to prohibit them from the sidewalk with the exception of mobility devices. Alderman Robinson explained he mentioned this at the December Public Safety Committee meeting, and explained we don't really have to come up with anything since a lot of this is legislation within the state. He explained we can tighten things up with our own legislation. HE explained he did sent a video to the Council and Mayor that shows someone riding on a sidewalk in front of a vehicle, ignoring the red light and almost getting hit. He explained this could have been catastrophic and if needed we should put something in place on top of what New York State has on the books to allow OPD to get motorized vehicles off of sidewalks.

Alderman McCall explained she thinks it goes back to enforcement. She questioned how this affects multi-use parths and explained she would be happy if there were no motorized bikes or scooters on them at all. She explained we need to gifure out how to proceed and what other restrictions we can put in. Alderman Crawford explained he is glad this has been brought up and asked the Mayor to talk to OPD about ramping up enforcement. He explained we had signs put up at the judge's request to make this enforceable, but we need enforcement to get these off the sidewalk. Alderman Bennion explained he was hoping to tighten up legislation if it is needed to get these off of the sidewalk. Ms. Marshall explained anything electric is not allowed on the sidewalk and Alderman Bennion asked she send him this legislation.

Alderman McCall explained we know enforcement works, and we need to figure this out on the enforcement side. Mayor Aiello explained he spoke with the Police Department today about increasing enforcement downtown and all over the City. Alderman Bennion explained the first

priority is to get these off the sidewalk and Alderman Robinson explained State legislation already says these are not allowed on the sidewalk. Mayor Aiello explained they are on sidewalks, running STOP signs, and going the wrong way on one way streets. He explained if something happens the motorist will be in trouble with insurance even if it is not their fault. Alderman McCall noted there is no insurance requirement for these electronic devices. Alderman Bennion explained the law states you need to wear a helmet on an electronic bicycle but most do not. Alderman Bennion asked about bicycles that are not powered by electric but have a small gas motor on them. He explained he would like legislation to prohibit these from the sidewalk as well.

5. Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Bennion, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.