

CITY OPERATIONS

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 – 6:10 p.m.
Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Members: Chairman Bennion, Vice Chairman Anastasia, Alderman Keary, and Alderman McCall.
Others: James Sprague, Director of Public Works, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Bennion called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Alderman Crawford, who was excused.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2025 committee meeting was made by Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

a. Motorized Vehicles on Sidewalks

Alderman Bennion explained the Council received the requested report from Chief Richardson which explains in the past month they have given out around 20 warnings, 11 City violations and one Vehicle and Traffic Law violation for bikes on the sidewalk. He explained Chief Richardson indicated the numbers aren't exact because of the way filtering happens, but Mr. Volz is working on different drop-down options that will allow the tickets to be filtered by bicycle or ebike. He explained the County also reached out and there are several municipalities having issues similar to ours, and the State is working on getting together some Vehicle and Traffic Law information about what municipalities can and cannot do, which they will filter to us when they receive it. He requested a follow up in two months to see if we have received information from the State as well as to have an update on numbers of tickets issued.

b. Tree Maintenance / Removal in Right-of-Way

Director Sprague explained he provided the Council with a memo that includes what is needed and associated costs for an in-house tree crew. He explained what he proposes would be for a City crew to do everything with trees except for the ones that are in wires, which we would still contract out. He explained he can't say this type of tree crew would completely eliminate the City's need for an outside tree contractor, but it would reduce the number of trees handled each year by an outside contractor to just a couple. He explained the total cost is pretty high and

includes a lot of capital up front. He explained approximately \$467,750 would be required for the purchase of trucks and other equipment. He explained if we do want to tackle this we will also need to put two employees back into either Streets or Parks, and although he did not go to the City Auditor to get the exact cost, he estimates the cost to be around \$80,000 per person. He explained although the capital cost is high and perhaps scary, the personnel cost is the annual cost that would need to be added to the budget.

Alderman Bennion asked about the cost to have City crews trim trees to eight feet and to trim trees to improve the visibility of signage. Director Sprague explained if we were to pull this back, the employees would still need training and would need to exchange their chainsaws for power pole saws. He explained this is a labor-intensive task and there is a lot of walking on foot on the streets. He explained they would also still need some kind of chipper as this trimming would generate a lot of limbs and the chipper would make managing those limbs much easier. He explained we could take a one ton dump truck and have a home-built box to go on the top to serve as a chip truck. He explained not included in this quote is a leaf packing truck that could double as a chipper truck. He explained there are a few options to consider.

Alderman Anastasia asked if we would bond for the new vehicles and equipment and Director Sprague explained he feels this needs to be a part of the City's overall Capital Plan for fleet and at this point, we are probably looking at bonding for these purchases. Alderman Keary explained the first year cost is \$467,000 plus \$165,000 for employees, and asked what the current contractor cost is. Director Sprague explained right now it is done backwards. He explained the Council gives him a budget and that is what we go out to bid as the maximum cost, and as it is a unit price contract, as we need service we hire out the contractor until we are out of money.

Alderman Anastasia asked if National Grid takes care of the branches that are on wires. Director Sprague explained we can request they do, but there is no guarantee we will get prompt service. He explained depending on the situation, we may still want to contact a tree company to get the right expertise to take down a tree that needs to be down for other reasons, but is also in the wires.

Alderman McCall explained what is put together is a great proposal, and explained this needs to be a part of our strategic planning. She explained we need to look at what can be done realistically in house. She explained she thinks the leaf vacuum would make sense and would welcome taking a look at the process we do now. She explained she does think we need to figure out the annual costs to maintain and remove trees in the subway. She explained she has always advocated for that, as we can't tell residents they can't do anything in the subway, can't take a tree down if they don't like it but then force them to pay half the cost when the tree is dead and needs to be taken down. She explained she thinks it is the City's responsibility since we put them there. She explained we need to reach out to forestry schools and Pfeiffer Nature Center to see if we can

find an arborist on an as-needed basis to consult for the City. She explained since we have been doing things backwards, we also need to see the cost actually needed annually for tree work and then build that into the budget. Alderman McCall asked if we have a final number on ash trees. Director Sprague explained we have 60 left and 10 are in need of prompt attention. Alderman McCall explained she would like to know how many have been taken down and at what cost.

Alderman Keary asked what percentage of time of year the tree crew would be working, and asked what we would do with the resources in the off-season. Director Sprague explained in his prior workplace the Parks Department handled tree maintenance, and they would do tree maintenance in the winter months and plant new trees in the spring. Alderman Bennion explained Parks would not be a bad place to put these employees as in the summer months they have a lot to do and perhaps we could utilize these employees instead of hiring summer help to reduce the cost effect. He explained he does not think a resident should pay to take a tree down in the subway as it is not their responsibility, and the City should not be putting trees in subways. Alderman Bennion asked that a preliminary plan be laid out by November so this can be included in the next year budget discussion.

Alderman Bennion asked about the tree issue in front of a North Union Street business. Director Sprague explained he has not received any direction on this, and explained he has to go out with the crew to see how much needs to be trimmed in order to leave the tree as well as allow vehicles passing by to see the name of the business. Alderman Bennion explained we need to follow up and see what is going on with the reconvening of the Tree Board.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

None

5. Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman McCall, seconded by Alderman Keary. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.