

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Tuesday, December 2, 2025 – 6:55 p.m.

Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Crawford, Alderman Bennion, Alderman McCall and Alderman Robinson. Others: Lens Martial, City Clerk, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Crawford called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Alderman Forney, who was excused.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, November 4, 2025)

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2025 committee meeting was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Bennion. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

a. Comprehensive Needs Report – Municipal Building

Alderman Crawford explained Director Sprague sent a memo regarding this to the Council. He explained there is a pretty lengthy evaluation of needs, and he explained Director Sprague recommends we pursue an architect and possibly combine the City Garage design with the Municipal Building design to save money. He explained being a larger project might get the interest of more architecture firms that will give us a better price. He explained he suggests that after the beginning of the year, we pursue an RFP to get an architect and explained we should do this sooner rather than later to see what sort of cost we are looking at when looking at a design. He explained Director Sprague noted we may be missing out on some grants if we keep doing one-off repairs, and explained if we coordinate activities and plan for significant improvements, we are more likely to get significant improvements done with increased efficiency and may have more opportunity for grant funding and reduced overall costs with long-term planning.

Alderman Robinson explained he wants to emphasize that the report clearly states that the Municipal Building is only one of multiple buildings that the City owns and operates that needs repairs and upgrades. He explained we need to keep in mind while we are doing repairs on a building that there are others that need repair and upgrading. He explained this is certainly a large project. Alderman Crawford explained he does not want to make it sound like we are prioritizing the Municipal Building, but if there are cost savings to have an architect to do a

design for both the Municipal Building and the City Garage, then we should look into it so we can figure out what is needed and what costs are in order to prioritize. He explained shovel-ready projects are also more likely to get grants, and the City has benefitted from that on numerous occasions. He explained he knows we have a lot going on after the first of the year but he would like to see this discussed again and not get kicked down the road. Alderman Robinson explained he agrees we need to find an architect, make the City Garage a priority, and look for grants. Alderman Bennion asked if Alderman Crawford would be giving direction to Director Sprague moving forward, and Alderman Crawford explained he will. Alderman Crawford explained he will ask Director Sprague to build out an RFP for the first quarter.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Public Comment

Alderman McCall explained the Council would like to give the public the opportunity to participate in meetings so we can hear what they have to say, but they have to wait an hour or more until they can speak and she would like to revisit that. She explained she has shared a resolution that Alderman Crawford worked on with Ms. Taylor, and explained she is not married to this but we should look through it to see what makes sense. She explained she has spoken with Alderman Bennion regarding this, and ideally people should know what is on the agenda and what the Council is voting on, and should be able to share their opinion prior to the Council taking a vote. She explained she has no issues with the three minute time limit or with a lot of the things in the resolution, but she wants to see how everybody feels about revising this. She explained she would also like to have the information out there so that people know what to expect when coming to a meeting. She explained sometimes people can't be here for two hours waiting to speak.

Alderman Bennion explained he feels public comment should be moved in front of resolutions, although we can't guarantee that we won't have a long Committee of the Whole so people could still be here for an hour or more before having the opportunity to speak. He explained he does feel it should be done before resolutions so if someone wants to talk about an item to be voted on, they can. He explained he agrees with the sign in sheet but he feels it should be given to the Council President right before the public comment portion so someone who was originally not going to speak has the opportunity to change their mind when hearing discussions. He explained he does feel we should be better about getting names and locations for speakers.

Alderman Robinson explained the reason we changed public comment was due to a one-off event, and it is something that happened that never should have happened. He explained the Council are all full time employees and professionals, and are here as volunteers. He explained

he can't be here all night, and when we have budget meetings they are often long and drawn out while the Council is working, thinking and making decisions for City residents. He explained when it comes to public comment we can do it before resolutions, but if another incident happens it could prevent the Council from conducting business that they volunteer to do. He explained hopefully we don't have another issue does the road. He explained better planning for agendas would also allow for the public to reach out to the Council with comments prior to a meeting.

Alderman Crawford explained moving public comment to before resolutions is not going to prevent people from sitting for an hour or two before having the ability to comment. He explained he thinks some of the frustration with longer meetings is during summer session and if long meetings are an issue, we should go back to meeting four times a month during the summer. He explained having public comment at the end of the meeting allows the Council to do the business they need to do. He explained there are multiple avenues of transparency and communication for the Council. He explained public comment after resolutions allows decisions to be made without undue pressure. He explained it also allows the Council to ensure the public is actually informed about what is going on, because when comment was before resolutions, often speakers would leave during the middle of the meeting when they were finished. He explained it would be worth it to do a sign-in sheet.

Alderman McCall explained she thinks we should go ahead and make some adjustments, and feels we should not be voting on things before the public has the opportunity to speak about them. She explained we want the public to be more informed and she would challenge every Alderman to consider how they would like public comment to be, if they were a member of the public speaking to the Council. Alderman Bennion explained if 20 people are here to talk with 3 minutes each, we will listen to an hour of public comment regardless of when it occurs during the meeting. He explained people are partaking in the meeting and giving their opinion, and he feels we are devaluing their opinion when we vote before they have the opportunity to share it. Alderman Robinson explained if there is another issue during public comment we can call the portion closed and move on.

Alderman McCall explained she will put this in as a PL for a vote. Ms. Taylor noted this requires publication, so it will not be on next week's agenda. Alderman McCall explained she would like sign in to go until when the public comment portion starts. Alderman Robinson explained he would like the timekeeper to be the Council President or their designee, not just the Council President, as it is difficult to pay attention to comments while also watching the time.

5. Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

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