

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 – 6:20 p.m.
Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

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

1. Roll Call

Alderman Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

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

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

3. Unfinished Business

a. Shared Use Path / Downtown Business District Plowing

Alderman McCall explained the Council needed to check with Director Sprague about this. She explained there are other communities that do their downtown districts, and she is hopeful with the side-by-side purchased that this will be an option. She explained she is looking at the downtown and shared use paths that we have. She explained we need to put a cost on this, as manpower is a cost, and explained she would like to see the feasibility of doing this for the winter. She explained she thinks the Council collectively feels the 8 and 10 foot shared use paths should be the City's responsibility to plow. She explained she does not want to go into spring without movement on this. She explained she is also looking to do the downtown district, and explained this is not a directive to DPW but rather a collaboration to see if this is feasible to accomplish.

Director Sprague explained off the top of his head, he cannot say if this is feasible because he does not know if we have the right pieces of equipment. He explained the side-by-side would be helpful for this, but we are not going to be able to do that much with a single person and a single piece of equipment. He explained we need to delve deeper to see what we have that we could utilize. He explained he would be very reluctant to put a truck on the sidewalks, and it needs to be a smaller piece of equipment that would have less impact on the sidewalks. He explained we may have that type of equipment and are just not utilizing it at this point but he is unsure. He explained he will need to get together with the Parks Department to see what they have.

Alderman Robinson explained the downtown district was identified as the State and Union roundabout south to Greene Street, north to Pizza Hut and adding in Main Street, east to the bridge and west to Seventh Street. He explained there are pros and cons to this. He explained the Council did pass a resolution that required sidewalks to be cleared to a distance of four feet in places, not the entire sidewalk. He noted repair and replacement is an entirely different topic for conversation. He explained liability can go both ways, both with pedestrians slipping on sidewalks as well as increased risk for City employees who are doing the extra work. He explained this would be a free benefit to the businesses but it is coming from the City taxpayer's cost. He explained the shared use paths being installed by the City are an extra burden on residents, but the wide sidewalks in the business district are preexisting. He explained we could have agreements with business owners to reduce liability, but those agreements rarely hold up in court. He explained residents are not properly using iWorQ for recording sidewalk issues so that DPW can clear the sidewalks and bill the property owners. He explained we already have the burden of parks, City-owned sidewalks, and City facilities on our employees and equipment. He explained City staff can barely keep up with what we have now, and he questions how we can add more to their workload without endangering them. He explained like trees in subways, he can see where the City should be responsible for part of the side walks but he can see where moving that responsibility to the City could be catastrophic. He explained we need to work with DPW to see if we have the proper equipment and see what it would look like to do this with the employees we have. He explained we also need to ask ourselves if we are doing this for businesses, what we are doing for our residents. He explained we also need to be careful how we word things and need to work with the DPW Director and City Attorney to decide if we are going to move forward.

Alderman Crawford explained he would like to hear a proposal from DPW on how to provide this additional service. He explained he would be interested to see a service like this expanded but he knows there are costs that come with it. He explained as much as he would have liked to see this rolled out yesterday, it is probably a discussion for the budget season, especially with manpower and the possible necessity of an additional position. He explained we have asked if we have the equipment to do the work, but we need to consider if we have the manpower as well. He explained any time we ask for an additional service to be provided he would like to see a proposal with the cost to us with supplies, vehicles, and manpower, and then we can continue to have the conversation. He explained he hears everyone is scared of liability, but we plow our roads and are liable for those. He explained he feels we sometimes try to hide behind "increased liability", and explained we need additional time to understand this.

Alderman Anastasia explained he thinks it is premature for the City to take this over now. He explained we need to work with the City Attorney and DPW Director. He explained we need a plan to protect the City from liability if we are going to do this, and have to decide how often we

will plow and then when the business owners will have to do it themselves. He explained he does not feel we have enough manpower to do this now and explained this is really a large area that will take some time. He explained we need to get costs on this and see if it can be done efficiently without putting the City in jeopardy.

Alderman McCall explained Director Sprague needs to look into things to see if we have the staffing and equipment needed. He explained he does not see this as an additional liability for staff as they are already plowing, and explained anything that benefits businesses also benefits residents, especially the downtown where residents shop. She explained we do need to be mindful of liability but not hide behind it as a reason not to do it. She explained she does not want this to take another two years to get accomplished. She explained she would like to see this discussed in another month. Alderman Robinson explained this is an additional liability for staff as when you have more responsibilities and are working more overtime you can become more fatigued and are at a bigger risk of being injured. He explained he is going to wait for the DPW Director to give the Council feedback and a cost assessment. He explained we will circle back in mid-January and Director Sprague explained he will be able to give a better update then.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

None

5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

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