

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 – 6:50 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 Amy Sherburne; Lens Martial, City Auditor; James Sprague, Director of Public Works, and Tiffany Taylor. Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, January 6, 2026)

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2026 committee meeting was made by Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Bennion. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

a. Shared Use Path / Downtown Business District Sidewalk Plowing

Director Sprague explained he posed the question to Mr. Bearfield, the Streets Maintenance Supervisor, and he pulled together a majority of the information on the memo he sent out based on his experience with the crews and equipment that we have. He explained they defined the site as North Union Street from State to Laurens, West State Street from Union to 7th, and East State Street from Union to Barry. He explained they determined how many miles of sidewalk that is, but we have to remember that a large amount of that sidewalk is wider than typical sidewalks. He explained the shared use path is probably three passes with a sidewalk snowplow, and the business district would be three or four. He explained they worked through the numbers, the equipment we would need and the staff we would need. He explained right now we do not have the staff, and if we did acquire two new pieces of equipment for this we would need to find two more staff members to run the equipment. He explained the total cost is eye opening and we are talking hundreds of thousands of dollars to do this.

Director Sprague explained this is an example of when we can make the numbers we want at the end based on how much area we are including. He explained he doesn't think the assumption for the time needed to do the plowing is a variable but the number of snow events is hard to predict. He explained we are looking at a couple hundred thousand dollars for equipment, tens of thousands of dollars in service each year, plus a couple of new staff members. He explained this would allow us to get the sidewalks plowed once per day, per snow event. He explained it is

tough to plow a street during the day when cars are out and moving, and it would be foolish to try to plow a sidewalk while pedestrians are moving due to safety issues. He explained even though sidewalk plows are smaller they will still slip and slide, and a pedestrian stepping out the door of a business could be a problem. He explained they typically look at a window to plow streets between 2 and 6 or 3 and 6 a.m. He explained we are really tightly restricted to that for sidewalks in the business district, and explained we should be done and out of the way when businesses open. He explained they sidewalks would really get plowed once a day and if it keeps snowing, the property owner would need to take care of it from there,

Alderman McCall asked if we hired two new people to do this, what they would do the rest of the year. Director Sprague explained the biggest thing they would do is related to trees. He explained they have been asked in the past to put a bigger effort on trimming vegetation around traffic control devices. He explained they could probably put a crew out all summer just lifting street trees. He explained the street crew is just over half of what it has been historically, and there is tons of work for the street crew to keep two additional employees busy. He explained when he spoke with Mr. Bearfield about his budget and what he wants to propose, he said if he could be given anything, he would want two more employees. He explained if we decided to do this, two new employees would be welcome and used all year.

Alderman Bennion explained business owners are required to clear only so many feet of their sidewalk, and asked about the section of pavers the City put in that the snow plows up to and leaves a huge pile of snow. He asked what the liability is for people trying to climb over that pile to get to the sidewalk. Director Sprague explained it is probably already our liability since most of the snow came off of the street, not the sidewalk. Alderman Robinson explained he always felt we should be responsible for certain aspects of the sidewalk, but the sidewalks in the business district have been there, we didn't just add them. He explained it was already mentioned in the ordinance it does not have to be cleared for the entire width.

Alderman Robinson explained with snow being pushed up on the curb, if someone is walking over the snow pile, they could break their leg trying to maneuver from their vehicle to the sidewalk. He explained there is liability no matter what we do or where we go, He asked if anyone has reached out to other cities to see how they get rid of snow and if they provide a service like this, He explained we need to be cognizant before we have this out and push this. Alderman McCall explained Franklinville plows all of their streets, and that is less than the downtown and shared use paths. She explained we can look at what they do and what they use. She explained she doesn't think we should ever decide to reinvent the wheel. She explained there is always liability but we should make sure with the City Attorney so we go into this eyes wide open. She explained probably at this point we are looking at starting this next year, but she does not think we should slow down the process of looking at this.

Alderman Bennion explained he did notice in the memo the plows for the sidewalk are purpose built. He explained it would be foolish to not look at small cab tractors that can be used for other things as well. He explained it seems the numbers quoted were intentionally high to scare the Council because the City does not want to do this. Director Sprague explained these are the correct numbers, and explained he has looked into equipment like this in the past. He explained he demonstrated a model four or five years ago that was \$168,000, although that was a top of the line model. Alderman Bennion explained there needs to be a reasonable way to meet in the middle. He explained if this is a staffing issue we can address it, and we don't need the top of the line equipment. Alderman Robinson explained money going towards equipment could instead go toward employees. He explained we do need to look at all-purpose equipment that can be used for more than just plowing.

Alderman Anastasia explained we should look into what other cities our size do. He explained he would hate to have the City start something that is not going to be cost effective and that will put us in a hole. Her explained we are talking about adding two additional employees and we haven't seen the budget yet, and don't know what the tax rate could possibly be. He explained we have to see what is proposed to see if we would support this in the budget. He explained businesses have been clearing the sidewalks for years.

Alderman Crawford explained he was thinking more in line with a side by side with a plow. He explained he would ask Director Sprague and Mayor Sherburne to go back to the drawing board to see what we can do with what we currently have. He explained we do have a part time position for other seasons for the downtown beautification, and he feels this could be made into a full time position. He explained someone could use the side by side to take care of the shared use paths. He explained he would be more interested in seeing something like that proposed if we were to revisit this. He explained many businesses are good at clearing sidewalks and others aren't, but it all comes down to enforcement. He explained he would welcome a discussion between the Council and Mayor about addressing the enforcement aspect and revisiting a complaint-based system. He explained we could easily send someone down through the business district or main thruways to see businesses that fail to shovel their sidewalks. He explained he thinks we need to have a separate conversation about this. Alderman Bennion explained clearing snow from sidewalks is up to the Department of Public Works to enforce, not Code Enforcement.

Alderman McCall explained there is still a larger piece of who is responsible for the maintenance of shared use paths. He explained we put those in front of businesses and people's houses that didn't necessarily want them, and questioned what happens if they crack. Alderman Bennion explained there was a smaller committee working on that, and Alderman McCall explained she would be happy to work with this committee to come up with a solution. Alderman Bennion

explained this committee will meet with Director Sprague and Mayor Sherburne to get the conversation going.

Alderman McCall asked this be revisited in eight weeks.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

- a. PL #04-26: (Crawford) To amend the City of Olean Code of Ordinances Section 24-135 to prohibit parking on the southeast corner of North 9th Street at its intersection with Washington Street for a distance of 20 feet south.

Alderman Crawford explained this request came from a resident. He explained the intersection is right across from Worden Avenue, and there is not a lot of parking on Worden so people parking on Washington or North 9th right up to the intersection. He explained this makes it difficult for people to see. He explained he talked to residents about putting a sign there, and noted he is asking for the setback that is mandated by the Vehicle and Traffic Law. Alderman McCall asked if this is just an enforcement issue because you can't park that close to the intersection, and if we are going to have to do this on every street. She explained she is not against this, it is just an issue on every street. Alderman Crawford explained a vast majority of the parking issues come from Worden due to the shortage of off-street parking. Alderman McCall suggested putting something out with the next water bill as there may need to be some education on the setback for parking.

Alderman Bennion asked if this is a request for signs on both sides or just one corner. Alderman Crawford explained residents were in favor of starting with just one side. Alderman Bennion asked if this needs to be published first as it is already in the vehicle and traffic law, and suggested Mayor Sherburne look into that with the City Attorney. Alderman Robinson asked if any tickets have been given because that would be the first deterrent to parking that close to the intersection. Alderman Bennion asked why parking is not allowed on Worden, and Alderman Crawford explained the street is not wide enough, Alderman Bennion asked if we can work with Director Sprague to have residents be able to park on the street. Alderman Crawford explained there is some makeshift parking but there is no raised portion of sidewalks so a lot of cars end up parking on the sidewalk. He explained between the driveways and limited spots, it is super tight, He explained he would be happy to look at that and see if there is any way to improve it.

A motion to approve PL #04-26 was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to City Attorney for Resolution.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

A motion to approve committee reports was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Robinson, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.