FINANCE

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman McCall, Vice Chairman Crawford, Alderman Bennion (arrived late), Alderman Keary, Alderman Forney, Alderman Robinson, and Alderman Anastasia. Others: Mayor Amy Sherburne; Jennifer Fairbanks-Black, Chief of Staff; Lens Martial, City Auditor; James Sprague, Director of Public Works; Ron Richardson, Fire Chief, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman McCall called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Alderman Bennion, who would be arriving late.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Thursday, February 26, 2026)

3. Unfinished Business

    a. PL #15-26: (Sherburne) Budget 2026 – 2027.

Alderman McCall explained the Council heard a lot of numbers when we were here last week and a lot of changes were made. She explained behind the scenes everyone is working to make this budget palatable to our residents. She explained changes have been made to payroll lines and adjustments have been made for overestimates in debt interest. She explained discussions have occurred regarding City credit card fees and explained like every other business, we need to start passing those costs to the end user, causing a decrease in the budget. She explained we are down from an 18.69% increase to a 10.82% increase and we are just at the beginning. She explained as the Council has worked with the Mayor and the Mayor has worked with her staff, the goal has been to have a tax rate that is reasonable for residents while allowing services to continue.

Mayor Sherburne explained she is happy to see the reduction in the rate increase. She explained this was the point of going through the budget line-by-line with this new software. She explained we started with a number that was unreasonable to all of us, and have been going through tightening things up and making sure all of the numbers are accurate. She explained hopefully this is the only year we will run into this learning curve with the new software and explained we are getting a handle on it now. She explained if anything does not look accurate, we research it and get to an accurate number. Alderman McCall thanked the Mayor and Auditor for new budget printouts with highlighted changes.

At this time, Alderman Bennion entered the meeting.

Department of Public Works (continued)

Director Sprague explained there is substantial increase in the Personal Service line in the Parks budget because there is one person added to the labor in this workforce. He explained there is a reduction in overtime corresponding to this. He explained there is an increase in Uniforms and Protective Clothing to cover consumable supplies, and the increase to Light and Power is similar to other raises due to costs we have been seeing lately. He explained there was a reduction in Miscellaneous Contracted Services which is a reflection of what we have done so far this year, where we had $15,000 budgeted and have only used $2,400 so far.

Alderman McCall asked if the increase in the 100 line item is the cost for a new parks maintainer at $47,500 and Director Sprague explained it is. Alderman McCall asked if this is also includes the four part-time summer help for a total cost of $35,800, and Director Sprague explained this is correct. Alderman McCall explained this is an additional $83,000 in terms of new staff. Alderman Anastasia asked what the new full-time employee would be doing. Director Sprague explained this is a parks position entry level laborer. He explained they will be emptying trash cans, cleaning bathrooms, and working special events. He explained this position would take some heat off of our existing staff so we can tend to our parks better than we have been doing. He explained we have talked a lot about trees in Oak Hill Park, and there are a fair amount of ornamental beds that are not getting attention. He explained we also want to address the hillside at Oak Hill Park and when this is done, we will need the additional labor to maintain that. He explained this is an attempt to get us back to where we were so public spaces and parks look the way we hope they would.

Alderman Crawford asked if the additional Streets position has been removed in this budget update and Mayor Sherburne explained it has been. She explained they are hoping they can cross-train a position between these two departments so in the winter this position could also be used for snow removal and maintenance of sidewalks. Alderman Crawford asked if there are union issues having someone work in both Parks and Streets and Director Sprague explained cross-training has been done in the past, although it was stopped for reasons he is unaware of. He explained we are talking about people with the same civil service title and paygrade. Alderman Crawford explained he would be in favor of moving forward with the part-time help, especially during the summer, in Streets and Parks, but he is not in favor of expanding the Parks Department with full-time staff at this time. Alderman Anastasia explained even though the tax increase has gone down, he doesn't feel we should be adding positions at a 10% tax increase. Alderman Robinson explained he feels with the cost of salary plus fringe, budgeting more for overtime far outweighs that difference. He explained he agrees with the other Aldermen that the numbers don't match with bringing in new personnel.

Mayor Sherburne explained where we are at now, and what we are going to see is it will always be an issue maintaining all of the parks we have, as we have an enormous amount of parks in the City. She explained with snow removal this year, we could start earlier in the day and that does not affect the issue of a shortage of equipment. She explained we are only taking care of things five days a week right now and the idea is we need to have people on the weekends who have the weekdays off. She explained this administration values events that we have been missing and feels these events add to our tourist dollars. She explained with more events on the weekends she would hope staff would improve the amount of projects being done and she feels we wil be stretched very thin trying to keep up with things with current staff. She explained we have an enormous amount of gardens that we rely on volunteers to take care of and they are not maintain all of them. She explained we could schedule differently but we only have so many bodies doing an enormous amount of work all year. She explained as we collect bed tax money and improve on our events, this positions would be especially beneficial. She noted if we take out this position, we would need to me mindful and increase overtime.

Alderman Bennion explained he agrees that we should not add this position. He explained we have potentially four part-time people in Streets, one part-time in Electric, and now potentially four part-time in Parks, while we only had four total part-time in these departments last year. He explained this is more than doubling our part-time help. He explained he runs a season-based industry, and you hire for peak season, not year-round. He explained he would rather go that route and work for efficiency rather than adding labor and fringe on top of it.

Mayor Sherburne explained she thinks there might be room to reduce the part-time help, but that is up to DPW. She explained they are working with the crews as-is and she does not know what their day-to-day looks like and how they have things scheduled. She explained she would like to invest int eh workforce, and we have people retiring so we are building our workforce back up again. She explained we could also consider part-time working all year rather than just during the summer. She explained the Council has expressed more interest in services such as clearing sidewalks, and we have a vehicle to do that. She explained she wants to ensure we are delivering services and the only way we can do that is with strong labor. Alderman Crawford asked if this additional position is being committed to plowing shared use paths. Mayor Sherburne explained this is a year-round position that could be utilized for snow removal as well as other things. She explained we all live here and see what we are lacking, and she would like to get to a seven day workweek with this position being a cross-trained position.

Alderman Bennion explained he is leery of cross-trained positions because when we have asked for things in the past, we have heard that it is not the employee's job. He explained the Council asked for park bathrooms to be open and it was a whole thing to try to keep them open because everyone said it's not their job. He explained cross training does not sit well with him personally.

Mayor Sherburne explained she feels things can be improved upon with every administration, and Alderman Bennion explained his concerns are from the union's issues with the work. Mayor Sherburne explained she had a discussion with the union about different jobs, and the idea is to have them share in duties. She explained she doesn't know about conversations prior to her, but from her conversations with the union, members are willing and asking to be able to do different job duties. She explained the Streets supervisor asked if he had her permission to cross-train and she told him he does. She explained she understands the Council's thoughts, but at this point she feels cross-training should happen and she will work to change the mindset of the Council about this.

Alderman Keary explained his only question is about the contract. He explained if the contract says cross-training may occur, that is on their will, not the City's. He explained he is not in favor of this without knowing the contract rules. Director Sprague explained this is not so much a part of the contract, but rather a part of civil service job descriptions. He explained each job description has a line that states the employee will do other jobs as required, which allows for the cross-training. Alderman Anastasia explained he wants to hear from the CSEA Labor Relations Specialist about this, not our local union members.

Alderman Crawford explained he could get on board with expanding personnel if there is an increase in demand for the position. He explained for the last number of years we have gone to outside contractors for mill and paves, while when he was first elected as an Alderman it was done in-house in order to stretch our dollars further. He explained he believes we split the cost of a zipper 50/50 with the Town of Olean, and under a prior DPW Director we were doing the work in-house to stretch CHIPS dollars. He explained that has changed to hiring a contractor, and we don't mill and pave as many streets as we could if we did it internally. He explained if that is the process and the Street Department is focused on filing potholes and patch work, then he doesn't see the need for a cross-trained position. He explained if there is opportunity with the new engineering position to do more work in-house, then he could be in favor of this.

Mayor Sherburne explained we can absolutely have the discussion with the union and get clarifications. She explained moving forward she feels cross-training is a positive thing for our entire workforce and she will be looking at and pushing that. She explained she feels clarification from the union on this issue will help make a difference in the Council's decision. Alderman McCall expressed concerns of out-of-title pay when cross-training positions, and Mayor Sherburne explained it will depend on what we are cross-training job duties with.

Alderman McCall explained she feels there is a lot of hesitancy to add a new position but if there is some clarification that cross-training would be uncontested by the union, without out of title or extra overtime costs, then it could possibly be considered. She explained the Council's thoughts in the past are not just about the increase in salary but also the corresponding increase in fringe benefits. She explained we have $650,000 to $700,000 that we pay out annually for employees who do not take the City insurance and they get the buyout, and our buyouts exceed any major company that we know of. She explained a large percentage of our budget is employees, insurance and buyouts, and the Council encourages buyouts to be reduced or removed during union negotiations. She explained we cannot sustain that number.

Alderman Robinson explained the training line item was decreased to $100, where last year it was $2,000 and year-to-date $647 has been spent. He explained he wants to ensure that employees are properly trained, especially if we are cross-training, and he wants to ensure that this line item is properly funded.

Alderman McCall explained at the moment we will leave the position in the budget, and then will come back to this when we have more information from the union. She explained we need to have a much larger conversation in the future about cross-training not just for this position, but for all positions. Alderman Bennion explained this year we talked about sidewalk plowing and were told the side-by-side couldn't do it and it would be an astronomical cost to plow sidewalks. He explained now we are hearing one person can do it with the equipment we have. He explained until we can get more efficient and show the demand, he is not in favor of looking at additional employment. He explained when you quantify the amount of time of six workers driving fifteen minutes to their break spot to take a break, then drive fifteen minutes after their break back to work, that is a full time person and a huge figure City-wide. He explained 100 lines are what cost us money. He explained we don't have the equipment for more employees.

Director Sprague explained there is a significant increase in Light and Power for the Stadium, reflecting changes in pricing that are across the board. He explained other than that, the costs in the Stadium budget are pretty much unchanged. Alderman McCall explained the Council asked Mr. Martial to include in the budget document actuals for the last quarter from the prior year so they can use this information to see reasoning for cost increases. She explained we are looking at potentially being over budget for Light and Power already this year.

Alderman Bennion asked what the status of the press box refurbishment project is that was laid out previously in capital outlay. Mayor Sherburne explained last year the interior was completed and this year we are looking at the exterior. She explained we are looking to paint the exterior and with the 100 year anniversary of the stadium coming up, we are looking at the possibility of sponsors to paint it. Director Sprague explained there are always things in the stadium that we are looking at repairing, so we carry an allowance in the budget to allow us to be able to fix things as they come up. Mayor Sherburne explained there was capital outlay last year for an actual planned project, while this year we are looking at just regular maintenance and repairs. She explained she does not believe there is any more work to do inside of the press box.

Alderman McCall explained the Council would like to see more use of the stadium. And then if we make more money we can invest in the upkeep. She explained it seems like historically we have not broken even, and this is where the Council has had concerns in the past. She explained we need to look at how to utilize the stadium more and bring in more revenue. Mayor Sherburne explained she had a meeting with the Oilers and they have stepped up their league. She explained we could have a discussion with them about what they charge, as it is very low, and potentially look at increasing what they pay us to use the stadium. She explained they are very proud of where they are as far as the league goes and the teams that are coming to play them, and we would like to showcase that we have this team better and market better. She explained she is definitely open to more discussion with them and for more collaboration with what they are doing.

Alderman Crawford asked if the school pays to use the stadium for football, and Alderman Bennion explained they do not and explained he believes we have a shared use agreement with them. Alderman Crawford explained he thinks we should revisit this, just given the utility costs alone. He explained he is not looking to gouge the school district, but we all pay school taxes and if anything they should be able to contribute towards offsetting the utility costs.

Alderman Bennion asked if there is any way to track employee's time and cost when they are working a stadium event, and Mayor Sherburne explained we can do this moving forward. She explained at the end of the day it is mostly Parks staff who open up the stadium. Alderman Bennion explained last year we had $9,000 in revenue and $42,000 in expenses, not counting staff. He explained he is not trying to gouge users, but we need to try to close this gap. Alderman McCall explained we need to determine what actual costs are and Alderman Bennion explained the Police Department goes to some stadium events as well so we are potentially tracking on multiple 100 lines. Alderman McCall explained she would like to see the overall cost of operations when moving forward.

Director Sprague explained Landfill budget has one line for Miscellaneous Contracted Services. He explained he increased this amount to be sufficient given the amount that we incurred for the previous fiscal year. He explained this is a regulatory requirement that we have to meet and there is not a lot of room for discussion on this. He explained the annual cost changes at times because of regulatory and analytical requirements changing year to year.

Police Department

Chief Richardson explained we will be reimbursed with grant funding for six positions included in the 100 line item. He explained we are not required by the grant to hire all six employees this year, but we will be losing 3-4 people between now and July and we need to send at least three to the academy in May. He explained we will be down at least 8 positions. He explained the actual cost to the City for Personal Service will be less due to the reimbursement for the six positions. Alderman McCall explained the Council wanted to have new hires in the training process prior to a retirement, and she feels this is a practice the Council has encouraged that the department has done. Chief Richardson explained employees who go to the academy in May will not be on their own until the end of December, so it is quite a process. He explained the salary for all six is roughly $63,000 for each position for a total of $392,000. Alderman Bennion explained $648,450 is in the revenue line for the grant, and Chief Richardson explained the rest of the grant costs are for fringe benefits. He explained we are also reimbursed for the salary of one School Resource Officer, and there is a second School Resource Officer position that we will be reimbursed 65% of by the school if we fill the position.

Chief Richardson explained line item 102 is what holiday pay is paid out of, and $18,366 of the amount in this line will be reimbursed by the state via the grant for the new employees. He explained there is also funding in this line item for officers that retire as we will be paying out holidays, vacation time and comp time for these employees. Alderman Robinson asked if there is a cap on vacation earned, and Chief Richardson explained there is a five week cap per year. Alderman Robinson explained there is usually a cutoff to use this time, and Chief Richardson explained typically one week can be carried over. He explained we have extra funds in the current budget because one officer chose to stay who was going to leave, and another changed their retirement date.

Alderman Vernon explained this should be accounted for differently than it is here. He explained if there is money that is owed then it needs to be allocated differently. Mr. Martial explained this is shown as a liability in the financial statements. Alderman Crawford explained if there is a probability that someone is going to retire then we need to list the payouts as a liability until they are paid out by the city. Chief Richardson explained, unfortunately, an officer only needs to give a 30 day notice before their retirement, so we predict these numbers the best we can.

Alderman Crawford asked if the increase in overtime by $15,000 is needed with the potential of additional employees. Chief Richardson explained he asked for $90,000 last year and it was dropped to $75,000. He explained we could do less overtime with additional officers but it is really hard to tell. He explained ballpark, we are usually in this area. Alderman Anastasia asked if we are hiring six new people, and Chief Richardson explained we are. He explained when we find good employees, it is a process to get them through the academy and trained. He explained he does not think we will be fully staffed at 40 officers for a couple of years.

Chief Richardson explained Court Security is reimbursed by the State. Alderman Crawford asked if the school reimburses for crossing guards and Chief Richardson explained they do not. Alderman McCall explained this is potentially another opportunity for a conversation. Chief Richardson explained the Records Matron increase is contractual, and the Special Patrol Officers that are budgeted are reimbursed entirely by the school district. He explained the Motor Vehicles line has increased because we have three leases coming due soon. He explained there are between 120,000 and 135,000 miles on these cars and one needs a lot of work. He explained we only have about $1,400 in equity per vehicle. He explained to replace them with Durango's we are looking at a lease of $12,000 per year per vehicle, but it is municipal leasing so at the end of the lease we own the vehicles for $1. He explained there are also costs associated with upfitting and graphics. He explained the rest of the line is for leases we already have. He explained the Chargers that are retired out will go to other departments where they can be used in the City.

Alderman McCall thanked Chief Richardson and explained the Council has long asked that vehicles be included in line items. She explained she is appreciative that these have been built into the budget and that at the end of the lease we own the vehicles. She explained she also likes using the old vehicles elsewhere in the City to prevent other purchases. Chief Richardson explained with the turnaround time. If he waits until June to order the vehicles will not be ready until around October. He explained if he gets a commitment on the vehicles he can get them ordered and have the first by July. Alderman Bennion asked if we expect an increased vehicle count with an increased number of officers and Chief Richardson explained we do not.

Chief Richardson explained the grant we have pays for salaries and fringe benefits, but the officers will need radios, body armor and body cameras that will be at our expense. He explained he increase Communication Equipment to purchase radios for the new officers as well as to purchase one spare radio. He explained the grant for body cameras expired last year, and during the last budget discussions a large increase in the line item was discussed. He explained now that we have body cameras we really can't get rid of them, and part of this increase includes cameras for the new officers. He explained he will be watching for grants again for these. Alderman McCall explained we could look into a potential grant that would cover costs for both body cameras and a new camera system on the municipal building. She explained she understands it is a lengthy process to go through footage.

Chief Richardson explained he has increased Uniforms and Protective Clothing for body armor for new employees, as well as to replace body armor that is five years old as this is its lifespan. He explained we receive roughly half the funds back for body armor from a grant. He explained the school also reimburses us for the cost of body armor for one SRO, for 65% of a second SRO, and for all SPOs. He explained this line also includes funding for the uniform allowance for all officers. He explained Miscellaneous Contracted Services increased for range costs for three ranges during the year, and noted that the insurance company would really like us to do four. He explained Other Contracted Services increased quite a bit because when we hire people we have to do fingerprinting, physicals and psychological evaluations, and we had to add in funding for six new hires. He explained they have budgeted for six people to go to the academy in Travel and

Training at a cost of $5,000 per person. Alderman Robinson asked if this is paid for by the grant, and Chief Richardson explained it is not. Alderman McCall explained when you look at the overall budget there is a 22% increase, but when you back out the new positions that are reimbursed it is actually a much smaller increase.

Alderman Bennion asked why the revenue lines are decreasing for the SRO and SPO positions. Chief Richardson explained we only have one SRO right now so the other positions are being filled with SPOs. He explained last year we were short-staffed so we removed one SRO and filled the position with a part-time SPO who is a retired officer. Alderman Bennion asked if revenue will increase if we fill this position, and explained he is curious why revenues are projected to decrease. Mr. Martial explained he will look into this and get back to the Council.

Chief Richardson explained 100 line increases in Dispatch are contractual, and we are estimating the cost of overtime. Mr. Marital explained the 102 line has a 420% increase and he explained in the past, when people got their holiday pay it came out of the 100 line but now we have broken it out and put it into the 102 line. Chief Richardson explained he was not aware we were making this change. Mr. Marital explained he will discuss this with Ms. Sherlock tomorrow to ensure the 100 line item is correct with this change. Chief Richardson explained they need a new portable radio in dispatch, which is why there is an increase in Miscellaneous.

Chief Richardson explained Animal Control is budgeted for $55,000, which remains the same. He explained we could probably reduce this amount to $45,000. He explained we never know how much we are going to spend out of this line item. Alderman Crawford asked if we break even on this, and Chief Richardson explained we do not break even. Alderman McCall explained adding the year-to-date with the final quarter of the prior year brings us to $48,000, so she would not want to decrease this amount.

Mr. Martial explained he will check with Ms. Sherlock on the Dispatch 100 lines. Alderman Bennion asked where we are with the shared kennel with the Town of Olean and Mayor Sherburne explained they have received a grant and our match is around $35,000. She explained we are waiting on more details on that. Alderman Bennion asked if want to build this cost into the budget, and Chief Richardson explained this is a one-time capital project.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

None

5. Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman McCall, seconded by Alderman Forney. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m.