

FINANCE

Thursday, March 26, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman McCall, Vice Chairman Crawford, Alderman Bennion, 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, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman McCall called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, March 24, 2026)

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2026 committee meeting was made by Alderman Forney, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

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

Alderman Crawford explained he reached out to NYCOM to make sure the language he uses is correct.

A motion to amend the proposed budget to restore and fund the Water and Sewer Superintendent position with the associated salary and benefits reflected in the water and sewer fund minus a previously granted stipend in the position for additional personnel oversight and responsibilities was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Ayes, Aldermen Keary, Forney, Crawford, and Anastasia; noes, Aldermen Robinson, Bennion, and McCall. Motion carried.

Mayor Sherburne explained she has looked into this as well, and in the Charter the duties of this position are actually the duties of the Director of Public Works, making this a redundant position. She explained she looked at the CSEA contract, which includes a flow chart of water and sewer employees, and it does not include a superintendent. She explained after removing this position we will be following our charter and the CSEA contract exactly how it is specified. Alderman Crawford explained this is a funded position covered under civil service as a part of the existing budget. Mayor Sherburne explained she respectfully disagrees, and explained she is taking care of City functions, departments, and employees. She explained this raises water and sewer rates

for our residents for a redundant position. She explained she has to be fiscally responsible for rates and we are trying to get a budget handled while telling constituents that we don't care that this is a redundant position that we are going to make them pay for. Alderman McCall explained nothing is a done deal so far for the budget. Mayor Sherburne explained none of the Aldermen have asked her opinion or come to her to discuss this, and she finds that offensive. She explained the Council thinks they can decide if a job is needed or not, but they are not behind the door seeing everyday functions and jobs that are needed for the City.

Alderman Crawford explained he has sat on this Council for ten years, and he respectfully disagrees as well as three other Aldermen. He explained he appreciates the insight that is being brought forward but he believes this position is warranted and it serves a purposes. He explained Section 2 of the Charter gives the power of the purse and finances to the Council, and the Council feels slighted that four of the seven want his position and it has not been included. Mayor Sherburne explained the Council did not ask her about this position, and Alderman Crawford explained he did not find out until he was in this room. Mayor Sherburne explained he was not present at the meeting when this was brought up, and no one has asked her why she would be cutting this position. She explained she is assessing issues within the City and who handles what job and what descriptions are. She explained when you have a redundant job you need to take notice of what is really needed and what is not. She explained we cannot have a redundant job with this type of budget. She explained the Council made this decision without talking to her and explained she did not make this decision lightly. She explained we have to look at what the Charter says and what departments require. She explained the Council should have respected her part in the City government, as she respects theirs.

Alderman McCall explained she has asked that after this meeting the Council gets their proposed changes to her for the budget so she can draft a letter for the Mayor, and she still offers them the opportunity to do that. She explained she has discussed this with the Mayor and she has a good sense of where she sits with the reasons for the change. She reminded the Council that while they can restore the funding in the budget, they cannot restore a position. Alderman Crawford agreed that hiring and firing is in the purview of the executive branch. Alderman McCall encouraged the Council to reach out to the Mayor if they have questions and want to discuss this position. Alderman Anastasia asked if the position has been put back into the budget and Alderman McCall explained the money has been put back in, but the Council cannot put the position back in. She explained we will move forward going through revenues and she will be putting together a letter for the Mayor with requested changes to the budget. She explained her goal is to get this to the Mayor by next Thursday to give her time to work on it, so the budget can be finished prior to the Council getting back together the day before the budget is due to vote on it.

Alderman Forney explained there has been no collaboration as far as the statements made by the Council regarding this position, and explained she has sat here for the past year listening to the concerns of residents and other communities. She explained the Council is being told this is overreaching about this position but the City comes to the Council each year asking for funding for new positions, and now the Council is saying this is an important position and the demand is there, so the funding needs to stay there for it. She explained when we are talking about funding a position, it is not an overreach.

Alderman Robinson explained he finds it interesting that the Council has sat here listening to the same thing, but are on two opposite sides. He explained as a reminder, the Mayor decides personnel, and the Council controls the allocation of funding. He explained the City of Olean Charter states in section 3.006 that the Mayor shall have the power to remove, suspend or terminate, subject to approval by a 2/3 majority vote of the Common Council. He explained to the Council's knowledge, this position is no longer being funded as it was removed from the proposed budget, and that is why the position is still filled until the end of the current budget. He explained to date the Council has received nine emails suggesting the Council should not cut the position, which they didn't, as well as one suggesting the Mayor advanced this without a proper study. He explained a study isn't needed, and Taylor Laws and New York State's labor laws are well documented, and New York is an at-will state. He explained the letters received contained numerous buzzwords like leadership and continuity, a valuable asset, and the ability to analyze problems. He explained this position was created as a reaction to a problem that resulted in a lawsuit, despite the issue being the first time it had ever happened of that magnitude. He explained it was an anomaly, an isolated incident, but in typical fashion legislators put a solution in place that cost taxpayers over the years and are now trying to defend and justify that decision. He explained this position has been in place for years, yet the same problems existed throughout the tenure of this position, which brings us back to the buzzwords used in letters. He explained this is not a knock on the individual, but on the position itself. He explained we have multiple individuals in positions to allocate duties and responsibilities within their purview without overburdening the DPW Director. He explained this is a solution that the City has failed to implement in numerous departments in his tenure. He explained this is his opinion, of course, but he has also been in management his entire working career, and he has learned that as leaders, you will encounter tough decisions to mission critical matters that will essentially affect people negatively.

Alderman Robinson explained he understands, no one wants to see anyone lose a job. He explained as far as the management structure in some City departments, particularly water and sewer, we have identified there are multiple levels and more "leaders. He explained the Mayor has exercised her right to acknowledge and address this redundancy. He explained when you are communicating with multiple levels, when information passes from one level to another with

multiple levels, by the time we get to the last person, the information is skewed. He explained the wording isn't the same, the instruction isn't the same, and the end result will be different due to a lack of proper communication on the correct levels. He explained this is just the nature of the beast.

Alderman Robinson explained some of the Aldermen have stated why this position is needed, but have apparently forgotten what has been visible to the public eye. He explained a common complaint was a lack of grant writing to help this City obtain additional funding for our sewer and water infrastructure. He explained until recently, this has not been done by this position, especially on a consistent basis. He explained the levee was presented to the Council in 2022, yet it did not gain traction until within the past couple of years, and he questions why something that would affect so many within the City was delayed for so long. He explained storm water overflows and sewer discharge issues have created a well-documented disaster for Olean residents and our neighbors down the river, and when additional studies were requested by the City, the Council learned of an existing I&I Study that the City paid for and never acted upon. He wonders why this is. He explained known storm drains have not been improved despite the I&I Study and recent requests from the Council to come up with a plan and fix them. He asked where the plan is for those that were too difficult or too costly to do in-house.

Alderman Robinson explained this Council has been the epitome of let's cut taxes and save money, but this is a \$120,000 a year position, plus benefits. Alderman McCall explained with benefits this position costs the City around \$190,000 per year. Alderman Robinson explained this is 2 ½ percent the Council has just put back into the budget, and based on history Alderman Anastasia won't vote yes on it anyways. He explained the Council put the funding back in, but the body will not be there, so what are we doing? He explained the more this goes on, the more he will throw everything out on the table to say this is why we don't need this position here. Alderman Anastasia explained he can respectfully disagree. He explained he thinks this will save the City money in the long run, with grants for water and sewer line issues, lead pipes, and meter changes. He explained he is not going to let a Council member tell him how to vote.

Alderman McCall explained we need to remember we are talking about a position, not a person in a position. She explained we are looking at difficulties and benefits. She explained she would encourage the Council to remember things they have said need to happen if this position remains, and explained if it does remain, it needs to be more tightly managed. She explained we are voting to restore funding, not a person, and if this position suits the City at this point in time. Mayor Sherburne explained she encourages every Council member to talk to her, and we can talk about each project that we are faced with and what we are going to do moving forward to adhere to the Order on Consent. She explained we have received money from Albany for an engineer specifically to help fix that problem, and explained this is not something this position would be

able to tackle. She explained she has sat in numerous meeting about this, and she is fully aware of everything we need to complete and who is in place to take care of things in the positions we have. She explained the last thing she wants is to move forward to fix the infrastructure and eliminate a position that would be handling that. She explained we need to have an engineer, and we need to keep a new Civil Engineer in this budget. Alderman McCall explained the great thing about the Council is that we have seven minds and seven independent opportunities to think about things. She explained she will let the Mayor know about the Council's requests next week.

Revenues (continued)

Mr. Martial explained the Special Patrol Officer line was decreased to \$125,230, and interest revenue was decreased to \$80,000 based on what we collected last year and so far this year. He explained he budgeted \$6,000 in revenue for business licenses and a reduction in dog licenses to \$10,000. Alderman McCall explained she cannot remember the fee, but based on this number we do not have nearly all of the dogs in the City licensed. She explained she would encourage residents to do their civil duty and get their dogs licensed. Alderman Crawford explained he thinks this is a requirement under Ag and Markets Law. He explained years ago we had the idea about having an Animal Control Officer to enforce dog licensing, but it was not cost effective.

Mr. Martial explained rental permits for Code Enforcement was decreased by \$1,000 and occupancy permits was kept the same. He explained building permits was increased to \$205,000 as the Fire Chief feels this is doable based on construction coming into town with a costly permit cost. He explained he reduced fines and forfeited bail by \$2,000 based on prior revenues. He explained he has increased both deed countersign and tax searches to \$4,000. He explained he has budgeted \$1,500 for rental of real property based on last year's revenue, and he kept sale of scrap and materials at \$100 as we don't know how much we will sell this year at this time. He explained other unclassified revenues, which is a line where we place funds that we receive that have nowhere else to be put, was kept at \$7,818. He explained we expect to receive \$231,000 for the Fire Department personnel service grant reimbursement. He explained he kept maintenance of arterial highways the same, and noted he has reached out to the State to see if we will be receiving funds for the current year budget but we are not hearing back from them. Alderman McCall asked what we receive this for, and Mr. Marital explained it is for the maintenance of the State highways located within the City, Route 16 and Route 417. Mr. Martial explained the revenue sharing line is AIM funding, and he has kept this the same.

Mr. Martial explained bed tax revenue is currently listed at \$280,000. Alderman McCall explained while this is listed in revenues, we want to ensure this is not being used to cover the expense side of the budget. Mayor Sherburne explained she believes what will happen is the revenue will stay in the general fund to be used for items in the general fund, but it will be reserved for specific

items. She explained at this point the bed tax revenue is offsetting the tax levy, and once in a special reserve that will be different. Alderman McCall explained her concern is that this will again be used to balance the budget, and it will be dwindled down with nothing to show for it. Alderman Bennion explained we want to have these funds placed into a reserve so they are not used in day-to-day operations. Alderman Anastasia noted Ms. Kerper wanted to use \$30,000 of these funds for our share for the bus. Alderman Bennion explained taking this out and not using it for day-to-day expenses adds about 3 ½ percent into the budget levy. Alderman McCall explained when the Council agreed to the bed tax, it was to be able to market Olean and make improvements. Alderman Robinson explained he thought having a reserve for the funding would keep it safe, even listed as a revenue. He explained that way it will be there for the purpose we stated and cannot be used for recurring day-to-day expenses. Mayor Sherburne explained there are some things in the budget that qualify for this funding. Alderman McCall explained she has asked Ms. Kerper to put together a comprehensive plan. She explained she knows moving funds to capital projects is not the correct way to do things, but funds are moved so that they can be earmarked and used for what they are intended for. She explained if any of this \$280,000 is being used for things in the current budget, she would like a breakdown of what that would be. She explained this is something she will be asking for feedback from the Council on prior to sending the letter to the Mayor.

Mr. Marital explained he reduced mortgage tax to \$140,000 because we budgeted \$165,000 last year and are at \$139,000. He explained he kept the temporary State aid at \$260,000, which we have been getting for the last few years. Mayor Sherburne explained until the State budget passes she does not know if the bump in funding is going to occur, and she does not recommend we use that to balance the budget because if it is not available next year we will end up with an issue in future budgets. Alderman Crawford explained he agrees, and explained there are enough one-off repairs and investments we can make to the City if we obtain that funding. He explained without knowing the longevity of those funds, we would be best suited to use them to address key critical items that one one-time expenses. Alderman Anastasia explained he spoke with the local spokesperson from the Governor's office who assured him we will receive \$780,000. Alderman Crawford explained every now and then we get an opportunity for funds that we can make a difference with, and Mayor Sherburne explained these funds will not be allocated to us until they pass the budget. Alderman Crawford explained there is no guarantee they will be the same every year and Mayor Sherburne agreed.

Mr. Martial explained State aid for court security went up to \$91,000 based on personnel raises. He explained youth services remained the same, and Alderman McCall asked if we will still receive this funding if we are no longer utilizing the St. John's facility. Mayor Sherburne explained we will still get this funding. Mr. Martial explained for the Police Department personnel service grant, if we hire six employees, we will get the entire amount. He explained for sales and use tax he did

98% of the prior year collected based on Council direction. Alderman Bennion asked if we know what we collected at the end of the prior budget year, and explained the final portion of the prior fiscal year will help to estimate what we will collect this year. He explained he believes the PL was for the prior 12 calendar months, not the prior fiscal year. Alderman Crawford explained that is correct. Alderman McCall explained we do not want to be in another position where we overestimate sales and use tax and end up in another spending freeze. Mr. Martial explained utilities gross receipts is decreased \$15,000 based on what we received last year and so far this year. He explained he added cannabis tax revenue, as we receive a portion of what the County collects for taxes from the cannabis shop in Olean. He explained he increased franchise fees by \$15,000 based on what was collected last year and so far this year.

Alderman Crawford asked about addressing changing fees, and asked if there are any adjusted fees or costs accounted for in this budget. Mr. Martial explained only ambulance fee changes are included, and explained the Mayor is working on something with Code Enforcement. Ms. Taylor noted fees were increased for the last two budgets. Alderman Crawford explained he wants to ensure we keep an eye on that and amend fees as needed.

Alderman Bennion explained the SRO revenue went down because of the loss of an SRO in the schools, and asked if that position went back to the patrol unit and if it is accounted for in the 100 line. Mayor Sherburne explained this is correct, and we are hoping we can fill an SRO position in the schools. Alderman Bennion asked if we do, if that \$76,000 will be put back into the revenue, and Mr. Martial explained it will. Alderman McCall explained the Civil Engineer position stayed in the budget, and the proposed part time summer help positions were removed. Mayor Sherburne noted one part-time position in Parks is included, as well as a mechanic's assistant. Alderman McCall explained we need to consider the positions taken out and being added in when submitting comments for the Mayor.

Mr. Martial explained in water revenue, other sales and BQ Energy were kept the same. He explained he added NRG credits, as we do get some, for \$1,000. He explained usually we would get these funds and put them into an expense line, but we cannot do this according to the State auditors. He explained water sales has a 4% increase, or \$193,601. He explained interest revenue is budgeted for \$5,000 and explained we have collected \$4,800 so far this year. Alderman Bennion asked if the revenue was calculated with the removal of the water tiers adjusted in the past, and Mr. Martial explained he will need to discuss this with Director Sprague. Ms. Taylor explained in the last budget the tiers changed to one tier for residential and commercial, and two tiers for industrial. Alderman Bennion explained we need to ensure this is properly calculated for revenues.

Mr. Martial explained he budgeted BQ Energy revenues at \$200,000 based on last year. He explained sewer rents have an increase of \$279,500. He explained other sewer charges is

budgeted at \$1,500, sewer services from other governments at \$650,000, and dike maintenance at \$4,000. He explained interest revenue is increased based on the prior year and what has been collected so far this year. Alderman McCall asked if the \$650,000 for sewer services from other governments takes into consideration the Council's recommendations for out of City residents and government entities. Mayor Sherburne explained these are based on actuals of what we have been getting and this has nothing to do with the increase of rate for Allegany. Alderman Crawford explained we cannot count on something that is not contractually obligated. Alderman McCall explained she understands that, but she thinks this is a reason sewer rates went up 6%. She explained she does not want Olean residents subsidizing sewer for those outside our City, and she hopes we get this situation remedied.

Alderman Bennion explained Ms. Olson sent out clarification that if all positions that were split were put back into the general fund, the general fund would have an additional 3% increase. He explained this is moving 3% of this increase to water and sewer, which is why we are seeing water and sewer rate increases. He explained he is fine with this because not-for-profits don't pay taxes, but they do pay for water and sewer, and we need to have a more equitable distribution of those fees. Alderman McCall explained when we talk about contractual increases, salaries and fringe, they accounts for, conservatively, 75% of our budget. She explained average contractual increases are 3%, so we are pretty much above the 2% tax cap before we even start the budget. She explained when we add positions we need to be mindful that these are long-term costs that the City will carry. She explained we need to keep these things in mind when we look at what we need to continue City services and add tax burdens on residents.

4. New Referrals for Consideration

None

5. Committee Reports

None

6. Executive Session

A motion to enter into executive session to discuss matters leading to the discipline of a particular person in accordance with Public Officers Law Article 7, Section 105 subparagraph 1(f) was made by Alderman McCall, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session began at approximately 6:45 p.m.

A motion to adjourn from executive session was made by Alderman McCall, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session adjourned at approximately 7:15 p.m.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman McCall, seconded by Alderman Bennion. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.