

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MAY 20, 2026
MINUTES**

Committee members present: Chairman Billy Fried; Debbie Condado; Michael Tautges; Dan Hess, Russ Fisher.

Unexcused Absence: Holewinski, Cushing

Call to order: Chairman Fried called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. in the County Board Room of the Oneida County Courthouse. The meeting has been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting law and the facility is handicap accessible.

Approve Agenda:

Motion/Second: Hess/Fisher to approve today's Agenda with the order of items at the Chair's discretion. All "Aye"; Motion passes.

Approve Minutes of May 6, 2026:

Motion/Second: Hess/Condado to approve the Minutes of the May 6, 2026 Meeting. All "Aye"; Motion passes.

Public comment: None

Ehlers – 2026 Bug Tussel Debt Review: Sean Lentz from Ehlers presented an update regarding Bug Tussel. Lentz explained that Ehlers is a Public Finance advisor, their roll is to work with the County and staff to understand the issues the County is facing and to assist in decisions being made. Finance Director Tina Smigielski reported that the County had entered into a financial agreement with Hilbert Communications, which owns Bug Tussel, and we cosigned a loan for Bug Tussel with the intent for them to expand broadband in the County. Smigielski reported that Ken Kortenhoff in coordination with IT Director Jason Rhodes is monitoring the operations side of the project. Smigielski went over the financial aspect that includes approving draws from the bond-funded Project Fund and monitoring to ensure that Bug Tussel is making the principal and interest payment on the bonds. Smigielski noted that if there was a shortfall, the County would have to pay/honor that loan arrangement. Smigielski explained that they have asked Ehlers to review the current status of the arrangement looking into 2027, as Bug Tussel will have to start paying, instead of the bond funds that are funding the payments. Smigielski noted that they will need to start paying soon, and we need to make sure Bug Tussel/Hilbert Communication can honor those payments. Smigielski reported that additionally, Bug Tussel has approached other counties as well as Oneida and has made an informal request to enter into a second tranch of bond issuances. Smigielski explained that the informal request of funding is larger than the first. Lentz presented the existing Bug Tussel project Financing. Lentz explained that the debt was issued in 2023, the borrower is Bug Tussel/Hilbert Communications. Lentz noted that at this time, only interest payments have been paid and is scheduled to be interest only until 2029. Lentz explained that there is a 30-year repayment term on this debt. Lentz reported that Bug Tussel/Hilbert Communication has not paid any of the interest debt payments out of their funds, this has been paid with the Bond funds that were borrowed. Lentz noted that \$24 Million is Oneida County's portion from the 2023 Financing Project. Lentz stated that it is Bug Tussel/Hilbert Communications responsibility to make the payments. Lentz explained that extra money was borrowed in the event that Bug Tussel/Hilbert Communication does not make a debt payment, money can be used from that Debt Service Reserve to make payments. Lentz noted that there is one year's worth of payments in this account. Lentz explained that the County committed to replenishing this fund if it gets depleted, one year's worth of payments and interest is \$1,975,498.

Lentz noted that the money is invested. Lentz explained that Oneida County is committed to replenishing this Debt Reserve any and every year it does get depleted. Lentz explained that the three years of Capitalized Interest that is borrowed, is expected to cover almost all of the interest payments. Lentz reported that there is a potential of approximately \$250,000 to be due if project revenues are insufficient. Lentz noted that it will get paid, however it may be determined that it needs to be paid from either the Capitalized Interest Fund or the Debt Reserve. Smigielski stated we are covered through 2026, if the Capitalized Interest Account is used, the County would have to replenish the fund. Smigielski stated this could potentially be included in the 2027 levy. Lentz stated this can be levied for or use cash to pay; to levy you would have to borrow to be allowed to levy. Lentz explained that if any issues do occur, the first year that it would impact the County's budget would be for the 2028 budget year. Smigielski clarified that the County is good through 2026, if the County had to use the Capital Interest Account that would need to be repaid. Discussion regarding when those funds would need to be replenished. Lentz went over the informal request for additional funds, discussing the proposed repayment, interest and terms. Smigielski stated that we are now at a "wait and see" to see if they actually make a formal request. Smigielski stated that we should be provided a feasibility study from Bug Tussel if they do request additional funds.

Approval of Bug Tussel Draw # 2023 – 168 in the amount of \$204,541.32: Smigielski explained that some time ago the Executive Committee gave direction that when the project funds reached \$1.25 Million, that all draws would be presented to the Executive Committee. Smigielski stated that this draw down would bring the fund balance below the \$1.25 Million and was put on the agenda before feedback from Bond Counsel was received regarding the interest from the fund. Smigielski reported that interest income has to be put back into the Project Account and used for project costs. Smigielski stated that over \$1 Million in interest income was added back in, making the balance \$2.3 Million at this time which is above the \$1.25 Million threshold.

Resolution to Amend the 2026 Budget to Add the NG9-1-4 GIS Grant Capital Project: Land Information Director Sara Chiamulera presented a grant that was awarded to Oneida County. Chiamulera stated that there were 4 projects in the grant and there is a 5% match needed. Chiamulera explained that the County would need to provide the money up front but will be reimbursed as the projects are completed. Chiamulera reported that she is asking for \$580,803.03 with the intent to get reimbursed \$401,993.48, noting that her department will put \$57,122.00 toward the project. Rhodes explained that the quote for the servers was only good through March, the cost for the GIS servers has now increased and that quote is good only through Friday. Rhodes reported after that date the vendor will no longer be selling hardware. Rhodes explained they are looking into a plan B to go straight to the manufacturer, Lenovo, to purchase equipment. Rhodes stated they are having a hard time getting desk tops/lap tops through them at this time. Discussion regarding projects. Hartman stated that maybe this should be put back on the Agenda for the June 3rd meeting. Chiamulera agreed that there may be better numbers at that time. Smigielski stated that there are Contingency Funds but not for this amount. It was determined to be placed on the next Executive meeting as an Agenda item.

Break called at 9:59 am

Return from break 10:06 am

2027 Budget Schedule and Kick-Off Letter Approvals:

Fried explained that these letters and memos were presented at the last meeting to be reviewed. Fried asked if there were any concerns or conflicts with the memo or the dates. Fried stated the week of October 5th will be the Public Meetings. Smigielski reported that the schedule is sent out so everyone can plan ahead. Smigielski noted that the only date that cannot be moved is the date the Tax Levy needs to be filed at the state. Smigielski noted that the memos and letters will need to be signed by the Supervisors.

2027 Staffing Requests:

Lueneburg stated that the memo and forms will be sent out and due back in July. Lueneburg presented her updates/changes to the forms and memos. Fried noted that the Efficiency Study is being updated and questioned if the departments will be looking at the old study or will it be the updated. Hartman stated that the departments have until June 26th to make changes, if their portion is updated they can use the updated version. Hartman noted that it should be completed before budget hearings. Discussion regarding permanent part-time positions and potentially doing the same request forms for those positions. Lueneburg noted that there are 15 part-time positions in the County. Smigielski was not in favor of adding more required forms for the departments. Fried expressed support to move forward with the presented memos.

Out of Home Care Update – Human Services:

Hess reported that they were informed that the projected deficit for Out of Home Care is expected to be \$1.5 Million for 2026.

Monthly reports (including invoices paid, budget to actual) and department updates:

- a. LRES – Lueneburg presented her reports.
- b. Finance – Smigielski presented her reports, stating these are standard.
- c. ITS – Rhodes presented the IT planning update.
- d. Treasurer – The reports were in the packet.
- e. County Clerk – Hartman presented her reports.

Public comment: None

Dates and items for future agenda/meetings:

The next meeting date was set for June 3, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Fried adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

