

**MINUTES OF THE ONEIDA COUNTY
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
September 11, 2025**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Steven Schreier, Diana Harris, Debbie Condado, Billy Fried, Russ Fisher

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Patti Finlan (Branch I), Michael Schiek (Judge - Branch I), Judge Mary Sowinski (Judge - Branch II), Heidi Ihn (Branch II), Brenda Behrle (Clerk of Courts), Andrew Kaftan (Corporation Counsel), Tracy Hartman (County Clerk),

Late: 10:00 a.m. Terri Hook (Sheriff's Office), 10:00 a.m. Amanda Young (Sheriff's Office), Grady Hartman (Sheriff's Office), 10:17 a.m. Justin Fralick (Information Technology)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Schreier called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. at the Oneida County Courthouse, Committee Room #2, stated the meeting notice had been posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and noted accommodations would be made for handicap accessibility.

APPROVE AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the Agenda with the ability to move agenda items around as needed (Condado/ Fisher, PASSED 5-0).

APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the August 14, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes (Harris/ Condado, PASSED 5-0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SCHEDULE COMMITTEE MEETING DATE(S)

The next meeting was scheduled for October 9, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

BILLS, VOUCHERS AND LINE ITEM TRANSFERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS

Chairperson Schreier noted all vouchers and line item transfers were received and within budget. No concerns and no vote taken.

CIRCUIT COURT BRANCH I

2026 Budget Request

Last month the committee had concerns with where money was going to. Judge Schiek advised the money would go towards court appointed attorneys to help move cases

through due to a backlog of cases due to no attorneys. Statewide problem. Schiek and Judge Mary Sowinski will be presenting statistics to the State.

Money not carried over and was unsure if money could go to general. Levy money could back to general fund,

Schreier advised they don't allow to offset levy expenditures and to always verify.

Judge Schiek advised money would go towards Guardian ad Litem, mediations, and competency exams.

Schreier informed it's at the department discretion and should be used in most practicable way to expedite cases.

T. Hartman pointed out to committee that Branch II budgeted an additional \$36,500 for that as well.

Finlan stated funding went up from \$43,500.

Attorney John Hogan acting as court commissioner for small claims charging \$100.00 per day. Money well spent. Hogan is resolving cases which do not lead to small claims trials. Hogan is not being split with Vilas County. Going to see more expenses, less revenue. Overall its \$10,000.00 less than last year. Proposed reducing Guardian Ad Litem from \$65,000 to \$60,000

MOTION: To amended Branch I's Guardian ad Litem budget of \$65,000 to \$60,000 for 2026 and forward onto the Executive Committee Budget hearing (Fried/ Harris, PASSED 5-0).

CIRCUIT COURT BRANCH II

2026 Budget Request

No changes other than the additional funding that Branch I presented. Increase to employee insurance and dental but percentages are exactly the same.

Discussion regarding State money would be applied the same way. Page 2 under court appointed attorney was referenced with the prior year actual being \$33,000 but asking for \$52,000 this year. Quite a fluctuation over three years. The current actual of this year is \$16000 with \$19700 so far.

Fried asked if their department was going to go over \$57,000.

Ihn advised they anticipated for court appointed attorney fees in their original request because of the problem with the public defender's office.

Sowinski informed they received a letter on August 21, 2025, from the State Director of State Courts Office on August 21, 2025, clarifying the specifics to that funding to the

addition on the base and not to the jail payments or anything else. It's just an addition to the base circuit court.

MOTION: To send Circuit Court Branch II budget to Executive Committee budget hearings (Fisher/Condado, PASSED 5-0)

CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

2026 Budget Request

Behrle advised no changes to the budget except increase for interpreter fees. Need for interpreters state wide. It is mandated at times to appoint an interpreter for cases. The state aid is based on last year's numbers. Interpreter fees have been increasing over the past several years. Current actual is \$4,990 and it is projected to be \$6,000

Increase due to wages, health insurance, retirement health insurance, postage.

Discussion on County Ordinance Forfeitures, Bond/Defaults, Jail Assessment, Holding Clerk of Courts. Money was always budgeted for county ordinance and forfeitures. Debt collection is done by State Debt Collection not a private company. Looking towards putting money towards interpreter fees next year. No anticipation of added revenues to adjust budget numbers.

MOTION: To amend the Clerk of Courts budget with the amended increase for other professional services from \$3,000 to \$5,000 and then forward onto the Executive Finance Committee (Fried/Harris, PASSED 5-0).

CIP form was submitted for installing comprehensive audio/visual system in the first floor hearing room which would be similar to both Branch (I and II). Currently the Family Court Commissioner, circuit courts, and visiting judges currently use hearing room. The current set up in not meeting the needs of the courts with many complaints received. Current estimated funding is \$28,000, which included the \$23,527.45 EPA Audio Visual, Inc. estimate. EPA Audio Visual, Inc. was the same company that installed the audio/visual system in Branch I, Branch II, and the Sheriff's Department. Buildings and Grounds estimated \$3,700 for their time and material for this project. Materials costs likely to increase by the time the equipment is ordered and installed as this project would not begin immediately.

MOTION: To approve CIP request and forward onto the Executive Committee meeting (Harris/Condado, PASSED 5-0)

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Proposed 2026 Budget

(See Exhibit 1 – A La Carte Potential Cuts to the Sheriff's Office)

Sheriff Hartman highlighted revenue changes. In 2025 took 1.4 million of the state inmate money. Same budget for 2026. Currently have 108 state inmates. Contracted for 111.

Averaging 108 inmates at \$60.00 per day with 4% going to Buildings and Grounds to cover their expenses. Pay more for food and medical. \$51.46 was the previous rate.

Schreier inquired about potential impact of prison closures. Lengthy discussion held.

Ambulance increase in revenue \$528,000 to \$624,000 due to not budgeting for intercepts this year. Will not affect any contracts currently in place.

Non-personnel – overall decreased, moved money around, not adding any programs or people, reflected in budget. This is a contract renewing year. Personnel costs within range of budget. Fiscal impact is \$25,908 (health insurance not included). Over budgeted and might be able to lower.

Counting on Hazmat to move to Rhinelander Fire Department. Grants from ONSO but dispersed to City.

Minocqua Dispatch amount has stayed the same.

Fried proposed amending the budget from \$15,000 to \$18,000. This is a benefit to the northwest area of the county, taxpayers, and a good use of levy money.

MOTION: To amend Minocqua Dispatch budget from \$15,000 to \$18,000.

Discussion held regarding motion

MOTION: To amend the Sheriff's Office budget an additional \$3,000 and forward onto the Executive Committee (Condado/ Schreier, Passed 5-0)

Radio System Upgrade Update

2019 Radio tower upgrade project with new equipment is nearly completed. Tower in Minocqua is not owned but it is our equipment on the tower. Generator head gasket failed during last ice storm. \$50,000 for generator set to be installed. ONSO would like to give some funds back and keep a line item open that funds can be used to help replace things when they break. Currently there is \$25000 for building and grounds.

MOTION: To create a line item for continuation of appropriations for radio and emergency services repairs for 2026.

Discussion held regarding motion to create a line item for continuation of appropriations for radio and emergency services for 2026.

MOTION: To approve the amended motion and forwarding onto the Executive Committee (Schreier/Fried PASSED 5-0)

Fall Ride Grant Update

Sheriff Hartman informed committee that ONSO received the grant amount.

Informational only. No vote taken.

Harris left meeting at 11:42 a.m.

CORPORATION COUNSEL

2026 Budget Request

T. Hartman advised expenses are small

Current wages for two existing staff and new Corp Counsel. It's anticipated approximately \$9,000 in PTO payout for next year. Insurance based on wages in offices. Expenses are small. No way to minimize paper services. Decreased printing and duplications. T. Hartman noted increased membership dues for Bar Association, Child Support Association, local and State Bar. Increased training conference fees \$1500.00. Fugle will still be attending.

MOTION: To approve Corporation Counsel's 2026 budget as submitted to next meeting (Schreier/Condado, PASSED 4-0)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment was given.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None

ADJOURN

11:50 a.m.

Steven Schreier, Chairperson

Amy Jewell, Committee Secretary

Diana Harris, Vice-Chairperson