

**ONEIDA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS & SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

**Oneida County Highway Department Conference Room
Thursday, February 5, 2026 8:00 a.m.**

Committee members:	Present	Excused	Absent
Ted Cushing	X		
Bob Almekinder	X		
Billy Fried	X		
Dan Hess	X		
Robb Jensen	X		
Student Representative:			
Matthew Carpenter	X		

Also Present: Lisa Bauknecht/Solid Waste Director, Alex Hegeman/Highway Commissioner, Ben Rich/Highway, Jenifer Lueneburg/LRES Director, Scott Holewinski/County Board Chair and Dan Gleason/Highway

1. Call to order and Chairperson’s announcements

Committee Chair Ted Cushing called the Public Works and Solid Waste Committee meeting to order at 8:00 am noting the meeting was properly posted and ADA accessible.

2. Approve agenda

Motion by Jensen/Fried to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

3. Approve minutes of the Public Works & Solid Waste Committee meeting held January 22, 2026

Motion by Fried/Hess to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

4. Public comments

None

5. Future Meeting Dates:

- February 19, 2026
- March 5, 2026 Jensen noted he may not be available
- March 19, 2026 Fried requested to be excused from the meeting

6. January Monthly Vendor Vouchers and Budget to Actual Reports

Bauknecht presented the reports to the committee for review.

7. Worker’s Comp Report 4th Quarter 2025

8. Compost Update

Bauknecht reported corporation counsel emailed her to confirm their results were the same in addition to the deadline to dispose of the material.

9. Solid Waste Report

Bauknecht reported following the discovery of a camera and an e-cigarette smoldering she was researching how to promote accepting those products safely.

10. Future Agenda Items

Compost update

11. Approve Vendor Vouchers

Motion by Jensen/Almekinder to approve the vendor vouchers as presented. Motion carried.

12. Invoices Paid and Budget to Actual Reports

Hegeman presented the reports to the committee for review noting since 2025 was not closed the county reports may change but the state report was complete. Hegeman reported the state RMA was over approximately \$160,000 to \$165,000 over budget.

13. Worker's Comp Report 4th Quarter 2025

Hegeman presented the report to the committee.

Lueneburg explained 2025 costs were down from 2024 noting claims were reviewed to see if there was anything that could be done to prevent incidents.

14. Crew and Office Work Schedules

Hegeman reported data was available beginning with the 2018/2019 winter noting there were four years of winters working five, eight-hour days and three full winters working four, ten-hour days. Hegeman explained they collected data for total hours worked for storm events to compare the total overtime hours with total regular hours in addition to call pay received on Fridays for each workweek using the average 2026 wage to calculate those costs for both the state and county. Hegeman commented the average PTO and Comp Time balances were included as well as theoretical mobilization cost savings comparing working four to five days a week.

Gleason commented data from the current winter was not included in the average since it was not finished; however, he estimated the average winter hours could increase from approximately 7,000 to 8,000 hours once the season was through. Gleason explained the total winter-storm event hours for both regular hours and overtime were then projected using the respective averages from both the five-day and four-day workweek seasons. Gleason commented he used the percentage of call pay hours incurred on Fridays for the four-day workweek and the five-day workweek as a percentage of total hours worked using the average 2026 wage to project the cost of each.

Gleason explained if the total projected hours were increased to 9,000 hours using this methodology, total costs for a four-day workweek including benefits would increase by \$8,300 noting overtime hours would increase by 302 hours but regular hours are reduced by the same. Gleason explained using the last eight years of storm event wages through January 30, 2026 on average the state paid 59.3 percent and the county paid 40.7 percent of those wages and benefits. Using the largest winter in the last eight years of 9,000 hours, and without accounting for the mobilization costs savings, Gleason estimated the total additional cost of the four-day workweek to the county including benefits would be \$3,381. Fried commented prior to being told today it may be neutral, he was told costs ranged from \$15,000 up to six figures initially.

Gleason agreed he could make that same assumption if he only looked at Fridays without accounting for the impact to the rest of the week and how those wages were billed.

Fried questioned how the additional overtime could affect both PTO and comp time banks. Gleason reported as of January 30, not accounting for administrative staff the average PTO bank balance was 222 hours and the average comp time bank balance was 32.95 hours.

Gleason explained using 9,000 hours for a winter season would increase projected overtime by 300 hours that potentially could be saved as comp by the 16 employees on those 16 beats.

Hess questioned how much comp time and PTO was paid out.

Gleason commented he would need to defer to the finance department to confirm those numbers, however, he believed most of the employees did not have large balances paid out but he was not comfortable making that assumption.

Hess noted it was not only the cost to the county but also to the state.

Cushing commented no matter what the numbers were everything boiled down to the sheet weighing the pros and cons adding that for 25 years they had met their budget.

Hess commented Mondays should be off since it would be very difficult to manage overtime at the end of the week if working Monday through Thursday.

Hegeman reported he reached out to the majority of the counties in the state and 29 counties reported working four, ten-hour days year round and 4 others working some modification such as four/nines and a four hour day on Friday.

Fried commented based on what he was presented by others opinions he felt there might be numbers missing and he was concerned there was something compounding that was not on the sheet. Fried added meeting the budget was not the only answer and if there was other money from labor to spend in those other areas maybe the department would not need to ask for \$1.5 million for road construction or loans. Fried commented he would challenge the commissioner to maximize the dollars in the budget by making the labor less noting if the department remained on four, ten-hour days, he would hold him accountable to manage it in the most efficient way.

Hess commented the other consideration was public perception.

Fried noted if it was the perception he would need to have the numbers to make the agreement for it.

Almekinder commented after being in business for 45 years employee happiness was very important to him noting a happy employee produces and an unhappy employee finds a way not to produce.

Holewinski commented the finance director provided information that was not included and the committee should see those documents and study this a little more. Holewinski commented he had also spoken with Darcy and this report is the opposite of what both finance directors told him. Holewinski recommended have the finance director attend the meeting.

Hegeman commented he would meet with the finance director to go over the numbers and ask her to attend the next meeting.

Holewinski noted the finance director was working on the yearend financial audit and did not have the time right now.

Hess recommend finishing out the year on four/tens and then make a decision based on the actual numbers.

15. Winter Maintenance Policies and Procedures for State and County Highways

Hegeman reported he did not have any updates for the committee.

16. CTH D Sand Lake Boat Landing Parking Requirements and Project Update

Hegeman reported the DNR required a minimum of 17 parking units and the removal of any stalls would create issues for resource management because it would not meet what had been defined as adequate public access. Hegeman also reported there was a request for an

additional \$800,000 primarily to help fund the new driveway but the DOT did not seem confident the request would be approved so the DOT agreed to leave the entrance where it was. Hegeman commented a request for \$200,000 to complete the bridge project, however, would likely be approved.

Hegeman reported he had not applied for a grant from the WVIC since he could not get firm numbers on what was needed, however, he had inquired about purchasing a plank to install on the ramp which the WVIC builds in house.

Fried recommended Hegeman reach out to Karl Jennrich regarding the DNR's project in Minocqua to understand some of the correspondence and the permitting process.

Hegeman commented he had a conversation with the company Minocqua uses to manage fees and questioned if the committee would like to have something formal brought back.

Jensen commented he felt the boat landing was recreational and should be transferred to forestry so Hegeman can focus on the bridge project.

Fried commented it was important to get some revenue even if the landing was transferred to another department.

Hegeman commented he would bring back a proposal for the launch fee.

17. Rhinelander Shop Facility Plan

Hegeman reported Kraus Anderson was working to rework and cleanup the presentation noting the potential for additional cold storage to the west of the facility. Hegeman explained he had the RFP's to bring designers on board for the approved 2026 CIP projects.

Fried commented he did not envision doing anything other than working on the current campus and recommended moving forward with the approved CIP projects.

Jensen commented there were things did not know such as:

- Would the site need a retention pond
- If needed the estimated cost to remove contaminated soil
- What were the ADA requirements for any improvements
- Does the site allow for future expansion
- The estimated prep costs of a new site
- Were there opportunities to work with the City for sewer and water for a new site
- Would the City consider taking over Kemp Street
- What is the commercial value of the current site
- What was the economic commercial development impact of the site
- What are the financing options of \$16.5 million versus \$22 million
- Are there other funding assistance sources

Jensen noted the \$16.5 million estimate did not include a retention or fencing adding he needed those numbers questioning if there was a problem holding off on the two CIP projects. Jensen added the County Board had not had this information to make decisions.

Fried commented he believed they had some of it and some of it was assumptions of his opinion. Fried noted if they ever needed more room they have other property. Fried commented he would like this to last another ten to twenty years adding they had been kicking the can for ten, twenty years.

Jensen commented the people he had spoken with questioned putting money into a facility to make it last how much longer versus a facility that would last fifty to seventy years and would provide an opportunity to add on if you want to move other departments to the site.

Cushing noted they needed to address the electrical even if they chose to relocate.

Fried commented no one from the City had attended a meeting.

Jensen commented he did not see a way to pay for the project without borrowing which would require the approval of 16 county board members.

Motion by Almekinder/Fried to go ahead with the three CIP projects for 2026. Motion carried; Jensen opposed.

18. Approve Resolution to Purchase Patrol Truck Attachments

Motion by Almekinder/Hess to forward the resolution to the county board for the attachments as consent. Motion carried.

19. Approve 2026 Beaver Removal Contract

Motion by Almekinder/Jensen to approve the 2026 beaver removal contract for 2026. Motion carried.

20. Equipment Updates

Hegeman explained there was no shortage of work for the mechanics noting seven trucks were down. Hegeman reported there were four trucks at the builders and was optimistic those would be delivered before the next winter.

21. Complaint Status Report

Hegeman reported there was a complaint on CTH D about snow and ice in front of a mailbox restricting mail delivery.

Fried reported he spoke with a business owner that felt the plow driver was plowing snow into the entrance to his business.

Hegeman explained they could try to slow down but there was not much more they could do because the snow needed to be removed.

Holewinski suggested plowing the snow to the left before plowing to the right.

Rich explained the front plow could be turned but the trucks and the wing are set up to put every to the right.

Hegeman commented he explained to the owner the route had been vacant with multiple drivers so it was not one driver doing it and the snow needed to go somewhere.

Fried commented there were pictures supposedly showing in front of the business the sidewalk was brown but white before and after. Fried noted he did not think anyone did anything wrong but questioned if there was anything that could be done.

Holewinski suggested Hegeman contact the business owner and let them know the driver would try to slow down when plowing that corner.

22. Commissioner's Report

Hegeman reported they made approximately 7,500 tons of additional sand with all of the deliveries to the towns completed in addition to working on picking up trees and patching.

Hegeman reported the DOT granted permission to work on milling off the heaves on the bypass. Hegeman also reported a new employee would be starting February 16 and the department would be fully staffed.

23. Future Agenda Items

- Highway department campus projects
- CTH D boat landing update
- Crew and office work schedules
- Update on winter maintenance procedures

24. Public comments

None

25. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 am

Committee Chairman

Committee Secretary