

ONEIDA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Oneida County Highway Department Conference Room
Thursday, April 30, 2026 8:00 a.m.

Committee members:	Present	Excused	Absent
Ted Cushing	X		
Bob Almekinder	X		
Billy Fried	X		
Dan Hess	X		
Greg Oettinger		X	

Also Present: Ben Rich/Interim Highway Commissioner, Dan Gleason/Highway Jeff Brown/Town of Lynne and Brian Jopek/Lakeland Times

1. Call to order and Chairperson's announcements

Ben Rich called the Public Works Committee meeting to order at 8:00 am noting the meeting was properly posted and ADA accessible.

2. Approve agenda

Motion by Almekinder/Fried to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

3. Election of Committee Officers

Nomination of Cushing for Chair by Almekinder.

Motion to close nominations by Fried. Motion carried.

Nomination of Almekinder for Vice Chair by Cushing.

Motion to close nominations by Fried. Motion carried.

Nomination of Fried for Secretary by Almekinder.

Motion to close nominations by Cushing. Motion carried.

4. Approve minutes of the Public Works & Solid Waste Committee meetings held April 16, 2026

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

5. Public comments

None

6. Future Meeting Dates:

- May 14, 2026
- May 28, 2026
- June 11, 2026
- June 25, 2026

7. Approve Vendor Vouchers

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

8. March budget to actual reports

Cushing noted receipt of the reports.

9. Out of County Travel for committee members and commissioner to the TDA Turnout for Transportation Roundtable in Wausau on May 20, 2026

Motion by Cushing/Fried to approve the out of county travel for committee members and commissioner to the TDA Turnout for Transportation Roundtable in Wausau on May 20, 2026. Motion carried.

10. Request for Jurisdictional Transfer of Willow Road, Town of Lynne and Pine Lake Road and Squirrel Lake Road, Town of Minocqua to the Oneida County Highway System

Jeff Brown reported the road was in poor condition and the Town of Lynne did not have the funds to reconstruct it as over 60 percent of the tax base fund were used to send their students to school in Price County. Brown explained the Town of Little Rice provided their fire protection noting the end of Willow Road was in a swamp and the heavy traffic from forestry trucks did not help. Brown reported the road was not eligible for ARIP funding because it was a major collector. Brown commented the town was planning to repair approximately 4 miles of the 12.45 miles of road but the remaining section would need to be completely reconstructed citing four and one-half inch ruts.

Rich confirmed the County would receive general transportation aid for the approximately 27.9 miles of road although reconstruction of the road would be an enormous cost to the County. Rich explained there were expensive structures including a bridge in the Town of Lynne, numerous 6 to 20 foot culverts in Minocqua and hundreds of smaller culverts throughout the road.

Almekinder commented a decision should not be made until further discussion had taken place.

Brown explained he attended a listening session with Senator Mary Felzkowski where he confirmed the road would not qualify for the ARIP program because of the seasonal weight limits. Brown noted the DOT would not reclassify the road because it met the criteria as a major collector.

Fried commented the transfer would shift the burden from the towns to the County noting it was not affordable to the Towns.

Rich explained the County would not have access to any more funding than the Towns noting the County was not keeping up with its current roads.

Fried commented the Town of Minocqua strongly felt they would like this taken to the county board noting he would be supporting the Town in making the argument this should clearly be a county road. Fried explained he was not anxious to put this burden on the County but the reality is the road would not be repaved for a year or two.

Brown explained that the bottom eight and one-half miles of the road was rutted and causing safety concerns noting he felt the County should share in that responsibility. Brown estimated it would cost the Town approximately \$350,000 to peel the blacktop off the road noting logging was a large component.

Almekinder acknowledged he needed to stick with his district and that he would like to see this go to the county board.

Motion by Hess/Almekinder to send it to the county board for further discussion.

Fried commented it would be prudent to develop a cost estimate to the County noting there was an idea to meet with the townships to see if there was support for the Towns to continue performing some of the maintenance on the roads.

Rich commented due to the distance from the Minocqua shop to Willow Road it would likely require a remote shed with a loader. Rich explained snow removal would be minor noting in addition to the construction costs and maintenance there would need to be a jurisdictional transfer.

The committee recommended inviting representatives to a meeting and attempt to have the road reclassified or change the eligibility requirements for ARIP funding.

Cushing recommended voting the motion down, bring it back on the next agenda and bring to the county board in June.

Motion defeated.

11. Approve purchase of new pickup truck for the commissioner

Rich reported the truck purchase was approved as a 2026 CIP noting the diesel was outside of the budget of \$55,000.

Hess commented the diesel would get considerably better fuel mileage.

Cushing noted they could exceed the amount budgeted as long as the funding was coming from the equipment fund.

Fried recommended checking if this would need to go back to the executive committee for approval to exceed the amount budgeted in the CIP.

Dealer	Make	Model	Price	Engine
Ewald	Ford	F-150	\$ 49,973.00	Gas
Ewald	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	\$ 49,665.00	Gas
Brickner's	Ram	1500	\$ 54,170.00	Gas
Rhineland GM	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	\$ 55,690.78	Gas
Rhineland GM	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	\$ 56,406.90	Diesel

Motion by Cushing/Almekinder to approve the purchase of the diesel truck contingent on checking if it needs to go to executive with the overage. Motion carried.

12. Equipment Updates

Rich reported:

- The shop started removing plows to get ready for construction season
- For safety reasons a rusted box on a baby dump truck was replaced with a stainless box that was on hand
- A new tandem axle truck should be delivered the following week
- The tar kettle was down while they wait for a part to be delivered from Milwaukee

13. Complaint Status Report

Rich reported there were a few new pothole complaints that were being taken care of later that day. In addition, they were replacing a few mailboxes but others were not their fault.

14. Commissioner's Report

Rich reported:

- The snow fence was removed from CTH K and STH 17
- Tree removal continued along CTH G

- He was waiting for DNR approval to replace a culvert on CTH K
- The crew was patching CTH O with mastic
- Bids for the three construction projects would be opened on May 5 noting three contractors performed site reviews
- Corre Engineering was at a standstill for design of the storm sewer until the Town of Schoepke makes a decision to move forward with their new building

15. Future Agenda Items

- Review of RMA letter to Dot
- Jurisdictional transfer request
- RFB results for 2026 road construction
- RFP results for electrical design

16. Public comments

None

17. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 am

Committee Chairman

Committee Secretary