

ONEIDA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Oneida County Highway Department Conference Room
Thursday, June 11, 2026 8:00 a.m.

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

Also Present: Ben Rich/Highway Commissioner, Dan Gleason/Highway, Katie Bauknecht/Sugar Camp Town Chair and Mike Kortenhof/Public

1. Call to order and Chairperson's announcements

Chair Ted Cushing called the Public Works Committee meeting to order at 8:00 am noting the meeting was ADA accessible and posted according to Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

2. Approve agenda

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

3. Approve minutes of the Public Works Committee meeting held May 28, 2026

Motion by Almekinder/Hess to approve the minutes of May 28, 2026. Motion carried.

4. Public comments

None

5. Future Meeting Dates:

- June 25, 2026
- July 9, 2026
- July 23, 2026

6. Approve Vendor Vouchers

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

7. 2027 Staffing Request

Rich commented following the committee's recommendation to increase LTE wages he planned to include the increase in the request, however, now believed it would require a resolution. Rich explained increasing the starting wage from \$18.73 to \$21.21 and reducing the number of positions from eight to seven would result in an approximate savings of \$500. Fried questioned if having fewer positions would affect the ability to generate revenue. Rich explained it would not affect the current year because funding was not available for additional work.

Motion by Fried/Cushing to bring back a resolution requesting to increase the LTE wage one level on the pay scale. Motion carried.

8. Sand Lake Boat Landing Launch

Katie Bauknecht commented because town officials were not notified ahead of time they did not know how to respond to calls from the public regarding the signs. Bauknecht questioned the process for the fee implementation for the launch.

Almekinder commented the fee was implemented to raise revenue to maintain the launch after it was discovered the county owned the landing.

Rich explained maintenance could potentially include repairs to the ramp and mowing.

Gleason added initially there was the belief the DNR would require reconstruction of the parking lot in order not to lose parking if the entrance to the landing needed to be moved because of the bridge reconstruction.

Bauknecht commented her main concern was that they were not notified so they could provide answers to the public. Bauknecht noted the town plowed the landing for over thirty years and there should be some credit for that adding she was getting a lot of frustration from people regarding both the QR code and the cost. Bauknecht requested the committee reevaluate the fee and come up with a statement explaining what the funds will be used for that can be placed on the town website. Bauknecht question if the committee had any options that she could take to the town board meeting the following Monday.

Bauknecht added if the fee continued the sign should be reworked with an option for cash.

Almekinder commented cash would require the money to be collected and since there was no power the fees could not be automatic without cameras.

Bauknecht commented there could be an option for the town to collect the fees weekly for the county. Bauknecht noted it was reasonable to ask for a donated launch fee but after not having a fee for over thirty years, the signs wording seemed aggressive. Bauknecht suggested the committee look at the landing because both the parking lot and launch remain functional. Bauknecht commented the town might have interest in working with the county to maintain the landing provided the fee was lowered or removed.

Cushing commented Hazelhurst charges a launch fee using an envelope but noted the box has been broken into and the money stolen.

Fried recommended the commissioner and chair work with the town to negotiate some ways to improve the situation.

Bauknecht commented an official statement explaining that maintaining refers to specific upgrades at the landing because most of the people she spoke to felt \$10 was too much or would feel better knowing why they were putting money in.

Almekinder explained town residents would not be eligible for a pass such as in Hazelhurst or Minocqua since the landing was owned by the county and not by the town.

Fried commented one of the options available was to turn the landing over to the town.

Bauknecht recommended providing a flyer at the landing explaining the purpose of the fee.

9. 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 update

Cushing reported he met with the WCHA Executive Director, Patrick Vander Sanden and lobbyist, Collin Drisciol who will take it to the attorneys at the WCA. Cushing believed something similar happened in Juneau County years earlier so they would investigate what happened there. Cushing reported there are grants available for lands that butt up to national forest lands noting there are two engineering firms that have agreed to help.

Almekinder commented the land was primarily state and county owned.

Rich noted there three or four smaller roads that provide access to the national forest in Price County and tribal lands also fall under those grants.

Almekinder noted if the grants are available to the town the county would not need to take the road over.

Cushing commented St. Croix County takes care of all of the town roads and Peirce County only has two town shops.

Rich reported Mark Pertile would be willing to maintain the road for a couple of years but not at the county level of service and Lynne had only one full time employee.

Fried commented their role was to identify the costs before taking it to the full county board.

Rich noted based on the estimate from the STP construction costs would be \$4 million on the low-end just to bring 1.2 miles of the road up to county standards.

Almekinder commented in addition to the construction costs, maintenance of the 28 miles of road would require an additional employee, a patrol truck, loader and a place to store sand.

10. Equipment Updates

Rich commented there was nothing new to report.

11. Complaint Status Report

Rich reported there was a complaint the scenic overview on CTH J required brushing and the distance listed on the sign was incorrect noting he contacted the DNR.

12. Commissioner's Report

Rich reported work on the CTH K project was on hold for approximately two weeks until the contractor is able to obtain the part to repair the hot plant. The paving of CTH E should begin the following Tuesday and Northeast Asphalt was working with the railroad to schedule the CTH N project. Jewell was doing a fantastic job on the acquisition of the right of way for CTH N and the land acquisition for the CTH C Bridge project was going through very fast. The crew was busy hauling gravel and millings. The crew was crack sealing CTH L and would start work on the USH 8 DMA following. An operator backed a patrol truck into a vehicle after missing his turn on Lassig Road noting no one was injured.

13. Future Agenda Items

- Jurisdictional transfer request update
- Sand Lake boat landing

14. Public comments

None

15. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 am

Committee Chairman

Committee Secretary