

ONEIDA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS & SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Oneida County Highway Department Conference Room
Thursday, September 4, 2025 8:00 a.m.

Attendance:	Present	Excused	Absent
Ted Cushing	X		
Bob Almekinder	X		
Billy Fried	X		
Dan Hess	X		
Robb Jensen	X		

Present: Lisa Bauknecht/Solid Waste Director, Alex Hegeman/Highway Commissioner, Tracy Hartman/Administrative Coordinator, Jeri Cooper/Highway 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 a.m. noting the meeting was ADA accessible and properly posted.

2. Approve agenda

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

3. Approve minutes of the Public Works & Solid Waste Committee meeting held August 21, 2025

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

4. Public comments

None

5. Future Meeting Dates:

- September 18, 2025
- October 2, 2025
- October 16, 2025
- October 30, 2025

6. August Monthly Vendor Voucher and Budget to Actual Report

Cushing noted receipt of the reports.

7. Credit Account Application for Property Management Solutions

Motion by Cushing/Almekinder to approve the credit account application for Property Management Solutions. Motion carried.

8. 2025 Capital Improvement Project

Bauknecht explained the committee approved the purchase of a new hook truck for 2025 but since mileage was down without compost sales, she did not order the truck. Bauknecht reported that when she spoke with vendors about used trucks, they recommended waiting

until the fall. Bauknecht suggested if they could not find a truck this year revisit it again the following year rather than spending \$145,000 on truck only driven 5,000 miles this year. Bauknecht reported two unexpected expenses in the last week:

- \$20,000 estimated to repair the flare
- \$16,000 quote to repair the demo site compactor

9. 2026 Budget Proposal

Bauknecht reported the estimated total budget for 2026 was \$2,515,500 and the 2025 year-end estimate was \$3,001,476 that included insurance recoveries of \$296,216.

Fried commented he would ask Bauknecht to raise the revenues at the hearing.

Bauknecht confirmed the fee and tipping rate increases were included in the both the year-end estimate and the proposed 2026 budget noting the estimates were conservative.

Fried commented he thought the demo site would bring in more money.

Bauknecht explained the biggest challenge was getting people to separate their stuff and use the demo site after not having the site for a year. Bauknecht reported she sent a letter to all customers asking them to separate those items.

Fried questioned if the hook truck could collect the County's garbage in order to reduce cost for the County and generate revenue for the department.

Bauknecht explained it could but boxes would need to be ordered but their boxes might not fit in the areas the current boxes were located.

Bauknecht confirmed anticipated expenses associated with the removal of the compost were not included in the 2026 budget.

Motion by Hess/Almekinder to approve the 2026 Solid Waste budget, to be sent to the Executive Committee. Motion carried.

Fried commented at Executive they would question the finance director if surpluses should be allocated for anticipated expenses associated with the compost removal.

10. Compost Update

Bauknecht reported they have not received the test results from the State. Bauknecht noted they could not develop costs until they know if a site will accept the material.

Jensen commented there was thought of the County developing its own site.

Bauknecht explained in addition to the challenge of the cost, there was time it would take to get all the permitting and built. However, it come back if no other sites will accept the material.

11. Solid Waste Report

Bauknecht reported:

- The newly hired employee in the yard resigned without notice after working two days.

12. Future Agenda Items

- Compost update
- CIP project for flare replacement for 2026 or 2027

Hartman noted CIP project requests must be submitted to the finance director by September 12 for consideration at the budget meeting.

Fried recommend submitting the CIP project pending committee approval and bring to the September 18 Public Works & Solid Waste meeting for approval.

13. Approve Vendor Vouchers

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

14. Invoices Paid Report

Hegeman noted the Budget to Actual report was also available for review.

15. 2024 Year End Financial Statements

Hegeman reported the total highway internal service fund was about \$1.1 million noting that number appeared skewed because it included \$950,000 of ARPA funding used to purchase two patrol trucks.

Fried asked Hegeman to estimate the amount of the fund moving into 2026.

Hegeman explain the severity of the winter season largely affects equipment revenue and expenses.

Hegeman explained the 2026 equipment purchases were based on the 2024 year-end numbers since they do not receive the audited numbers until August.

Hegeman reported the department came out ahead \$140,000.

16. 2026 Traffic Safety Commission Budget Request

Motion by Jensen/Almekinder to approve the Traffic Safety Commission budget as presented and forward to the budget hearings for consideration. Motion carried.

17. 2026 Highway Construction CIP Request

Hegeman explained as part of the budgeting process, funding for general maintenance would be short in 2026 so levy dollars were shifted from construction to general maintenance and the request from the general fund for construction was increased.

Hegeman confirmed the CHIP funding was included in this request for \$1.4 million but the funding for STP and the Local Bridge program was a separate request.

Hegeman explained general maintenance was funded by a combination of tax levy and state general transportation aids with approximately sixty percent coming from the State.

Motion by Jensen/Cushing to approve the Capital Improvement Project as presented and forward on to the budget hearing for consideration. Motion carried.

18. 2026 Highway Department Budget Request

Continuing Appropriations: Hegeman reported the surplus balance carried forward from year-to-year in the continuing appropriation account for general maintenance would likely be depleted by the end of 2026 as predicted.

Hegeman explained because the department was more proactive in its maintenance practices it has been spending more on general maintenance than was coming in from the tax levy. Hegeman noted unless there was an increase from the County portion the level of service would decrease, as it is not sustainable. Hegeman explained if funding was shifted to general maintenance from the bridge aid and the construction accounts the CIP requests would just increase by that amount.

Jensen commented looking forward to 2027, if the County did not have a fund balance for a CIP request the tax levy would need to be increased.

Hegeman noted the money they have been asking for construction could be used for the matching funds on the federal projects and then reduce the level of service on county maintenance.

Hess commented if you do not keep up on maintenance it would cost more in the long run. Hegeman commented maintenance practices have been more proactive with more crack sealing and more mill and fill than in past noting repairs were more permanent in an effort to reduce long-term costs. Hegeman explained they would not know if the GTA would increase until the end of September noting if the County reduced spending the GTA would also go down.

Hegeman explained the State budget was not included in continuing appropriations.

Hegeman commented he believed there would be an increase in the RMA but that was completely separate from County maintenance so he would not recommend reducing the levy ask for County maintenance.

Fried commented he would be asking Hegeman to estimate the increase in order to reduce the levy ask.

Hegeman confirmed he would not recommend reducing the levy ask.

Jensen commented there was money in the general fund that could be used to fund 2026 noting he felt from a taxpayer standpoint investing in the roads was a high priority.

Almekinder commented if they did not invest in the roads, that they would go back to where they were adding they were trying to dig out of that hole and should not be pushing be pushing back into that hole.

Hegeman commented when it comes to the building, the equipment, the roads or whatever is was, the department would do its best with whatever County provided noting ninety-eight percent of work performed was for either the County or the State.

Department Goals: Hegeman commented the goals included continuing to create a long-range plan for the highway facility improvements and upgrades in addition to experimenting with both the County and State plow routes to develop efficiencies. Hegeman explained eliminating one State route by combining those lane miles into other State routes, would eliminate the need for one truck but not the need for the operator, as there are currently only two spare drivers. Hegeman commented when the mechanics were plowing maintenance and repairs to trucks fell behind adding it was already difficult to put two crews together during the summer.

Non-Mandated Programs: Hegeman reported aside from lowering the level of service or doing less miles of construction, although it was not a large expense the Adopt-a-Highway program was the only non-mandated service provided. Hegeman noted costs would be higher if the department was responsible for picking up garbage from the roadways. Hess commented there would a large number of complaints because of the amount of garbage in the ditch-line in the spring.

The committee generally agreed that they did not think it was a good idea to eliminate the program.

2025 Year End Estimate: Hegeman anticipated being under budget in Towns and Other due to both light winters and lack of material sales. Hegeman explained because the State did know what funding would be available when the County budget was created he anticipated being over budget in the State miscellaneous account. Hegeman reported the radio expense account would be over budget because several new trucks were delivered.

Budget Request Narrative: Hegeman reported revenues vary from year-to-year based on the weather. Hegeman reported he hoped for more DMA's from the State in addition to an increase to the RMA resulting in higher State revenues.

Hegeman commented there would be lower construction expenses in 2026; however, the department continued to see increases in equipment purchases, repair parts and road supplies such as gravel and asphalt.

Hegeman reported a new expense account was created budgeting \$10,000 for maintenance of the boat landing.

2026 Budget Request: Hegeman explained the total request for construction was the general fund transfer and a portion included from the department levy. Hegeman confirmed for 2025, the County was on track to complete 7.1 miles and 6 miles for the STP projects for a total of over 13 miles. However, in 2026 they planned on 5.4 miles of construction both because they were ahead in 2025 and in an order to stay out of the way of the USH 8 Project.

Hegeman confirmed the levy request had not changed noting he would be applying for six more projects unless the committee directed him otherwise.

The committee agreed that the commissioner should continue to apply for additional matching funds.

Motion by Jensen/Almekinder to approve the 2026 Oneida County Highway Department budget as presented and forward on to the budget hearings for consideration. Motion carried.

19. Approve resolution for County Bridge Aid reimbursement request for the Town of Minocqua

Motion by Jensen/Hess to approve the resolution to reimburse the Town of Minocqua one-half the cost of installing a culvert over Little Willow Creek on Price County Road and forward on to the county board as a consent agenda. Motion carried.

20. Request for Hidden Driveway sign at intersection of CTH G and Summer Lane, Pelican Lake

Hegeman reported he had not had a chance to review accident data or visit in person. Hess suggest Hegeman look at the location and bring back the accident the data.

21. Equipment Updates

Hegeman reported:

- Another new truck was delivered and the truck delivered previously was taken back to make some repairs.
- Two loaders were at McCoy for repairs noting he anticipated an expensive repair for one of the loaders.
- Electrical repairs were being made to the surge bin that was used to produce salt-sand.

22. Complaint Status Report

Hegeman reported:

- There were very few complaints.
- The CTH P request would be taken care of that day.
- The paving on CTH G and CTH Q was completed the previous Thursday so the crew started filling approaches of driveways with gravel that same day.
- There was a complaint of a missing speed limit sign on CTH O; however, there was not speed limit on the road.

23. Commissioner's Report

Hegeman reported:

- The paving on CTH G and CTH Q was finished the previous week and shouldering would begin the following week.
- The crew completed the mill and fill on D West, and were currently working on the LFA on STH 32.
- The CTH L Bridge Project was on schedule with curb and gutter planned for the following day, paving the following Tuesday and guardrail planned for Wednesday.
- He was working with a contractor to get estimates for the boat landing to submit with the grant application.
- Advertisement for the two open positions should be posted soon.

24. Future Agenda Items

- CTH B storm sewer
- CTH G sign request
- Bridge Aid reimbursement requests

25. Public comments

None

26. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Committee Chairman

Committee Secretary