

**ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING
February 17, 2026**

Chairman Plunkett called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Plunkett, Councilor Myer, Councilor FitzGibbons, Councilor Lautensack, and Councilor Ashline.

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilor Kennedy; Councilor Thompson; City Attorney, Kevin Caraccioli; Planning and Zoning Advisor, Jeff McGann; City Assessor, Kevin Hill; Code Enforcement Director, Michael Cleary II; Chief Operator of the Westside Wastewater Department, John McGrath; Engineering Technician, Wesley Morse; Interim City Engineer, John Trimble; Mayor Robert Corradino.

MEDIA PRESENT: No media present.

OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026, Committee Meeting was made by Councilor Myer and seconded by Councilor Lautensack. Minutes were approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. The Engineering Office requests authorization for the Mayor to sign Amendment No. 5 in the amount of \$114,500.00 with C&S Companies for additional construction administration services for the Beautification and Safety Improvement Route 48 Corridor Project.**

Engineering Technician, Wesley Morse, addressed the council regarding two project items, including a \$114,500 time extension request from C&S Consulting Services and a revised change order for Rifenburg Construction, explaining that the original full-depth road reconstruction and water main project from the Cooper Electric business to Utica Street expanded due to unforeseen field conditions and additional water main extensions of approximately 600–700 feet. Councilor Thompson first asked why change orders are often presented after work has already been completed and whether the council should be notified at the time project expansions are discovered in the field. Wesley explained that this change order was originally in the amount of approximately \$269,000 but had been revised that morning to roughly \$37,000, reflecting work already completed with paperwork catching up from the summer months. Councilor Thompson then asked what percentage over the original budget the project currently stands. Wesley could not give a specific percentage, but he responded that approximately \$617,065.55 had been added to the original construction contract of \$7,069,115.00. Councilor Thompson said it's roughly a 10% increase. Councilor FitzGibbons subsequently reviewed the broader financial picture, outlining the base construction cost, total project costs including design and inspection, grant funding received, bonding through a bond anticipation note, and the impact on non-exempt City debt, emphasizing the importance of fiscal

oversight and Charter-required financial reporting from the City Chamberlain. Councilor Thompson then asked Councilor FitzGibbons how much was currently in the City's fund balance; Councilor FitzGibbons responded that he did not have that information available. Councilor Myer raised concerns about lane seams and manhole issues in his ward and asked whether the contractor's return in the spring would be covered under the project or require additional cost. The C&S representative responded that some paving was completed late in the season to beat snowfall and that the roadway will be re-inspected using a 16-foot straightedge under New York State DOT specifications. Any pavement, drainage structures, or castings found to be out of tolerance, generally defined as more than ¼ inch over 16 feet, must be corrected by the contractor at no cost to the city, and temporary striping will also be replaced at the contractor's expense. Councilor Thompson then asked whether the city would be paying for corrections if the work was rushed and did not meet expectations, and C&S clarified that any work outside of specification tolerances would be fixed by the contractor, while additional improvements requested by the city that fall within tolerance would be at the City's expense.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Myer made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from the Engineering Office. Councilor Lautensack seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

THE RESOLUTION WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

- 2. The Engineering Office requests authorization for the Mayor to sign Change Order No. 6 in the amount of \$269,573.40 with Rifenburg Construction, Inc. for adjusting quantities to as-built conditions relating to the West First Street (NYS Route 48) Safety Improvements Project.**

Engineering Technician, Wesley Morse, referred to the C&S Representative to talk about the amended change order. Regarding the reduction, the C&S representative explained that after reviewing the initially submitted figure, contingencies were removed and a significant error was identified in which costs had been inadvertently allocated to both the water line and roadway funding categories, effectively duplicating certain impacts. Once corrected, and after further review to remove additional items that were not required for payment, the amount was reduced to \$37,127.24. Councilor Lautensack asked whether all project bills had been reviewed considering the error. The C&S Representative responded that the mistake was limited to the change order and that contractor invoices are being reviewed carefully, noting the error occurred while rushing to meet the committee agenda deadline. Councilor Thompson asked what deadline was referenced, and they clarified it was the deadline to submit materials for the committee meeting, acknowledging the submission was made in error and apologizing. Councilor Lautensack further asked whether a margin or threshold could be established for project cost increases to prevent similar issues in the future. They responded that a 10% threshold on a project of this size would be a reasonable standard.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Lautensack made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from the Engineering Office. Councilor

Ashline seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

THE RESOLUTION WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

- 3. The Engineering Office requests that the Common Council approve the declaration of the Lead Pipe Water Service Replacement Project as a Type II Action under the New York State SEQR Act.**

Interim City Engineer, John Trimble, explained that because the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation is funding the replacement of lead service lines, the resolution seeks to utilize a SEQR exemption for in-kind utility replacement to avoid a full environmental assessment and prevent delays to construction.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Lautensack made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from the Engineering Office. Councilor FitzGibbons seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

THE RESOLUTION WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

- 4. The Engineering Office requests that the Common Council approve the declaration of the Operable Unit 1 Soil Cover Rehabilitation & Restoration Project as a Type II Action under the New York State SEQR Act.**

Interim City Engineer, John Trimble, explained that the Operable Unit 1 Soil Cover Rehabilitation and Restoration Project involves regrading the top of a capped contaminated area on city-owned property that formerly housed Oswego Castings. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation monitors the site, and concerns arose about depressions and standing water on the cap, which is also used by DPW for material storage. The work will be performed this spring by DPW staff, and under a DEC consent order, a SEQR exemption applies, so a full environmental assessment is not required. John stated that documenting the action is consistent with good public policy. Councilor FitzGibbons asked which buildings are affected, and John clarified that only the main older casting building and the area immediately behind it toward the lake are involved, not the newer buildings to the east. Engineering Technician, Wesley Morse, further explained that the work addresses the contaminated soil cap and an adjacent filter zone to prevent water accumulation, ensuring proper site drainage.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Lautensack made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from the Engineering Office. Councilor Myer seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

THE RESOLUTION WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

5. Code Enforcement Director, Michael Cleary II, requests authorization for the City Chamberlain to complete a budget amendment in the amount of \$18,336.00 to the Code Enforcement Equipment Account to cover the cost difference for the purchase of a new vehicle.

Code Enforcement Director, Michael Cleary II, informed the council that one of the Code Department's vehicles was involved in a motor vehicle accident through no fault of the employee, with \$14,215 reimbursed by insurance and \$18,336 needed to purchase a replacement. Councilor Thompson thanked Michael for answering previous questions via email and asked about the need for four vehicles versus three. Michael explained that all four staff members are frequently in the field at different locations, occasionally traveling together for large inspections, and that vehicles are standard Ford Mavericks with rugged bed and floor liners but no specialized equipment. Councilor Thompson also suggested potential cost savings by sharing vehicles with other departments, such as IT.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Lautensack made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from Code Enforcement Director, Michael Cleary II. Councilor Ashline seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

THE RESOLUTION WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

6. Mayor Robert Corradino requests authorization for the Common Council to adjust the metered and flat rate sewer rates.

Mayor Corradino opened the discussion on proposed sewer rate adjustments, explaining that the authority to set fees rests with the council, while his role is to provide context, analysis, and recommendations. He proposed a \$20 per quarter increase for both flat-rate and metered sewer customers, noting that past rate reductions were possible due to grant funding and completed consent decree work, but rising operational costs now require careful planning. Dan Ramer from the wastewater plant described the high ongoing costs of operating the facility, including labor, benefits, equipment maintenance, and groundwater management, emphasizing that rate reductions create a "yo-yo" effect and that fund balances should absorb unexpected costs. Councilor FitzGibbons commended the professionalism of plant staff, highlighted that salaries and benefits comprise nearly 70% of the operating budget, and stressed the need to institutionalize long-term rate planning rather than reacting to short-term funding gaps. Councilor Myer asked whether previous grants were exclusively for sewer and water projects, whether they are still available, and whether they could be credited to the sewer and water enterprise fund, and inquired about the West Side and East Side wastewater plants' capacity, future projects, and funding strategies to ensure the plants could handle growth and operational costs. Dan explained the state and federal funding process, Environmental Facilities Corporation support, zero-interest loans, and the need for planned projects to be on the intended use plan and scored for grant eligibility, while outlining current upgrades and future planning considerations. Councilor Kennedy referred to audited financial statements, highlighting the city's long-term liabilities, the pay-as-you-go method for post-employment benefits, and the need for predictable revenue streams, asking that the administration clearly connect proposed rate changes to actual

costs, debt service, capital planning, and long-term sustainability rather than relying on temporary fixes. Councilor Thompson questioned prior miscalculations, noting that reductions and increases in past rates had not been properly projected, and emphasized that future resolutions must consider operational costs like wages and maintenance to avoid depleting fund balances. Councilor FitzGibbons followed, emphasizing that the new council should develop a long-term, thoughtful policy to prevent reactive rate changes, citing past “yo-yo” rate adjustments and the importance of using user fees to sustainably fund essential wastewater services. Councilor Myer added that the new council, being largely inexperienced, needed extra time to understand the historical data, grants, and past rate changes to ensure decisions are informed, sustainable, and avoid repeating prior funding “yo-yo” effects. Brandon Walker from the fifth ward suggested evaluating higher sewer rates for commercial and industrial users while keeping residential rates stable. Councilor FitzGibbons responded, noting that knowledge of best practices from organizations like NYCOM could help the council establish fair, sustainable policies and avoid underfunding, emphasizing the need to be proactive rather than reactive. Mayor Corradino explained that prior councils and mayors made their decisions using the financial information available at the time, including audit reports, secured grants, project schedules, and consent decree requirements. He said past rate reductions were intentional and made when fund balances were strong and grant funding was in place, with the goal of providing relief to residents while still maintaining compliance and protecting the City’s infrastructure. Councilor Kennedy emphasized that the council’s responsibility is to do what is best for the people of the city and stated that members need sufficient time to review the financial data, understand the long-term impacts, and ensure any rate decision is thoughtful, sustainable, and in the best interest of residents.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Lautensack made a motion to table a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from Mayor Robert Corradino. Councilor Myer seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

THE RESOLUTION WILL BE TABLED BEFORE PRESENTED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

7. Mayor Robert Corradino requests authorization for the Common Council to amend the current Sewer Use Agreement with the Town of Oswego.

Town of Oswego Attorney, Kevin Caraccioli, addressed the council requesting that the existing intermunicipal wastewater agreement be extended from a five-year term to a 30-year term to align with the Town’s 30-year Environmental Facilities Corporation bond financing. He clarified that the request does not change the current fee structure, rates, or capacity allocations, but only extends the term to satisfy lender requirements for long-term certainty. He reviewed the history of the agreement, noting it has been in place for roughly 20 years, applies only to wastewater service, includes the Ontario Heights, Lakeside Commons, and Sleepy Hollow sewer districts, and currently sets rates through 2027 with scheduled annual increases. Councilor FitzGibbons then asked whether the Town had been impacted by prior external user rate adjustments and how the Town’s rates are reviewed and set. Kevin explained that the Town’s rates are governed by contract, historically renegotiated approximately every five years, and currently locked in through 2027 with incremental annual increases. Councilor FitzGibbons

followed up by asking whether this was an opportunity to structure future rates so they more closely reflect the city's actual cost of production and enterprise fund requirements under the consent order rather than relying solely on inflationary adjustments. Kevin responded that while the current rates are fixed through 2027, extending the term could include reopening provisions allowing the parties to renegotiate rates periodically, and acknowledged the importance of accurately determining cost per thousand gallons. Councilor FitzGibbons continued, emphasizing the need for a responsive rate structure that reflects operational costs, ensures fairness among residents and outside users, and avoids locking into overly long pricing terms without review. Kevin agreed while cautioning against excessively long fixed-rate periods and stating that five-year review cycles have historically provided balance and predictability for both municipalities. Councilor Thompson then asked for clarification that any rate changes would require council approval, and Kevin confirmed that negotiated changes are subject to council authorization. Councilor Myer asked how a 30-year term would interact with the City's authority to adjust rates if a study shows the City is undercharging, and Kevin explained that although the overall agreement term could extend to 30 years, it would include scheduled reopening provisions, which typically happen every three to five years, to renegotiate rates and capacity, ensuring continued Council oversight.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor FitzGibbons made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from Mayor Robert Corradino. Councilor Lautensack seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

THE RESOLUTION WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 8:21 p.m. by Councilor FitzGibbons. A second was made by Councilor Ashline, it was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Egor Golubchikov