

**HUMAN SERVICES  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
May 18, 2026**

Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

***MEMBERS PRESENT:*** Chairman Kennedy, Councilor Thompson, and Councilor Ashline.

***OTHERS PRESENT:*** Councilor Myer; Councilor FitzGibbons; Councilor Lautensack; Councilor Plunkett; Mayor, Robert Corradino; City Attorney, Kevin Caraccioli; Craig Rebeor, Commissioner of Public Works and Parks and Recreation; Fire Chief, Paul Conzone; Director of Code Enforcement, Michael Cleary II; Abby Jenkins, Deputy Director of Economic Development; Director of Information Technology, Steve Coffey.

***MEDIA PRESENT:*** No media present.

***OLD BUSINESS:*** There was no old business.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2026, Committee Meeting was made by Councilor Ashline and seconded by Councilor Thompson. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. Chairman Chance Kennedy requests discussion regarding the installation of 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline signage at key locations throughout the City of Oswego.**

Councilor Kennedy explained that similar signage has been installed in the City of Fulton on bridge structures and suggested that bridges in Oswego, along with parks, could serve as high-visibility locations where individuals in distress might encounter the message. He described parks as places of reflection and solitude, noting that they can also be locations where individuals may be vulnerable. He shared a personal account involving the loss of his uncle to suicide in a park in 2009 and stated that the initiative was motivated by a desire to prevent similar tragedies. He emphasized that the 988 Lifeline provides immediate access to crisis support and stated that even one life saved would make the effort worthwhile.

Gina Vaughn stated that she is a licensed mental health professional and lifelong resident of the community and introduced the proposal as part of Mental Health Awareness Month outreach efforts. She explained that the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is a federally designated, free, confidential, 24/7 service that connects individuals in crisis with trained counselors, but emphasized that awareness of the number is still not universal. She stated that the purpose of the signage is to increase visibility of the resource in everyday public spaces, particularly in areas where individuals may be alone or in distress. Vaughn further explained that the proposal is supported by the Oswego County Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Oswego County Division of Mental Hygiene, both of which have committed to fully funding 10 reflective signs at no cost to the City. She described the initiative as a low-cost, high-impact public health effort intended

to normalize help-seeking behavior and reduce stigma around mental health crises.

Councilor Lautensack asked how large the proposed signs would be and whether there were standard dimensions being used.

Gina responded that signage is typically produced in multiple standardized sizes, and she noted that the version previously installed in Fulton measured approximately 18 inches by 18 inches. She indicated that this size is commonly used for visibility while remaining compatible with existing infrastructure such as poles and bridge structures.

Councilor Lautensack then asked about installation methods and whether the signs would require dedicated posts or could be attached to existing infrastructure.

Gina responded that installation would be determined by site conditions. She explained that in bridge and park environments, signage is often mounted on existing light poles, railings, or other fixed structures. She added that placement decisions would be made collaboratively with the City to ensure the signs are visible, appropriately located, and consistent with the surroundings.

Councilor Kennedy stated that the initial donation included 10 signs and explained that placement would likely focus on high-traffic and high-visibility locations such as bridges and key pedestrian corridors. He also noted that if the City later determined additional signage was needed, external funding sources such as the Shineman Foundation could potentially be explored to support expansion without burdening the City budget.

Gina responded that she would coordinate with the Oswego County Suicide Prevention Coalition and other partners to explore additional funding opportunities if the Council chose to expand the initiative beyond the initial 10 donated signs. She reiterated that the goal was flexibility and partnership rather than limiting the scope of the effort.

Councilor Kennedy stated that based on his discussion with the Commissioner of Public Works, installation costs for the City would likely be minimal and primarily involve staff time and use of existing infrastructure. He noted that DPW already maintains signage equipment and expertise, which would reduce implementation barriers.

Commissioner of Public Works and Parks and Recreation, Craig Rebeor, responded that DPW could install the signs on existing light poles and structures in bridge corridors, parks, and pedestrian areas without requiring new infrastructure. He explained that the City's sign shop could also fabricate the signs internally if provided with proper digital artwork files from the program organizers. He further stated that installation costs would be minimal and likely limited to staff time and basic mounting materials such as brackets, clamps, or fasteners. He also noted that DPW would need to ensure proper placement to avoid interfering with maintenance or visibility.

Councilor Kennedy asked whether producing additional signs beyond the 10 donated signs would still be feasible within existing DPW capacity.

Craig responded that while he could not provide an exact figure at the meeting, the cost would be relatively minor and potentially absorbable within existing DPW operational budgets. He indicated that staff could prepare a more precise estimate if the Council wished to move forward.

Councilor Lautensack suggested placing one of the signs on the pedestrian walking bridge near Rotary Park, noting that it is a frequently used and highly visible location that could reinforce the message.

Councilor Kennedy agreed and stated that the pedestrian bridge near Rotary Park would be an appropriate and meaningful placement location due to its visibility and pedestrian traffic.

Craig responded that DPW would likely implement the project in phases, beginning with bridge corridors and downtown pedestrian areas, and then potentially expanding to parks or additional locations depending on Council direction. He emphasized that existing light poles and infrastructure would be prioritized to minimize installation effort.

Councilor Thompson asked whether the intent was to focus primarily on bridges and riverfront walkway areas rather than distributing signage broadly across all city parks.

Councilor Lautensack responded that she supported prioritizing high-visibility areas such as bridges and linear park corridors, where foot traffic is consistent and exposure would be higher. She noted that these areas may provide the most meaningful opportunities for the message to be seen.

Craig stated that DPW's recommendation would be to begin with a limited pilot phase focused on bridges and downtown/high-traffic pedestrian areas. He added that parks could be considered in a later phase if the pilot proved successful and the Council wished to expand the initiative. Kevin Caraccioli stated, in his capacity as a resident of the City of Oswego and not as City Attorney, that he appreciated the discussion and acknowledged the emotional importance of the topic, noting that suicide has impacted many families in the community. He expressed concern about the potential for over-saturation of signage in public spaces, stating that installing multiple 18-by-18-inch signs across parks and infrastructure could reduce visual effectiveness and create a cluttered appearance. He suggested that alternative approaches, including encouraging private businesses and organizations to display 988 signage, may help spread awareness while reducing reliance on public infrastructure. He stated that he supported the message but urged caution regarding scale and placement.

Mayor, Robert Corradino; stated that he agreed the subject matter was important and expressed support for mental health awareness efforts, but raised concerns about precedent. He explained that approving signage for one cause could lead to similar requests from other advocacy groups, including those focused on substance abuse prevention, domestic violence awareness, and veteran support. He emphasized the need to balance public messaging with maintaining the visual and functional integrity of city spaces. The Mayor also encouraged exploring broader communication strategies beyond signage alone to ensure sustainability and consistency in messaging.

Councilor Thompson stated that while he supported the intent of the initiative, he shared concerns that too many signs could dilute public attention and reduce the effectiveness of the message over time. He emphasized the importance of limiting placement to key, strategic locations and ensuring that the signage remains noticeable rather than blending into the environment.

Councilor Kennedy responded that he agreed the initiative should not result in excessive signage throughout the City and clarified that his intent was focused on a limited number of high-impact locations such as bridges and potentially a small number of park-adjacent areas. He reiterated that the goal was visibility in meaningful locations rather than widespread distribution.

Gina stated that she appreciated the feedback and acknowledged concerns about signage saturation. She emphasized that even a small number of signs could still have meaningful impact, particularly if placed in locations where individuals may be experiencing distress. She explained that repeated exposure to the 988 number in public spaces helps reinforce awareness and reduces barriers to seeking help during moments of crisis. She also noted that signage would be one component of a broader outreach strategy that could include business partnerships, printed materials, and community education efforts.

Councilor Kennedy stated that the signage initiative aligned with other community wellness efforts, including the public art hydrant project discussed earlier in the meeting, and reiterated that both initiatives reflected a broader commitment to mental health awareness and community support.

City Attorney, Kevin Caraccioli, stated that if the Council intended to take formal action, a resolution would need to be drafted with specific details, including the number of signs and designated placement areas. He recommended that the matter be deferred to a future meeting to allow time for proper drafting and public input, suggesting a two-week review cycle.

Councilor Thompson agreed that additional time would be beneficial to allow for public feedback and to develop a clearer and more balanced proposal.

Councilor Kennedy stated that he intended to bring forward a formal resolution at a future meeting to accept the donation of 10 signs, with placement locations to be determined through further discussion.

Kevin advised that the appropriate course would be to prepare a formal resolution for future consideration.

**COMMITTEE DECISION:** Councilor Ashline made a motion to approve the request from the Oswego County Suicide Prevention Coalition. Councilor Thompson seconded the motion, it was approved unanimously.

***THE RESOLUTION THAT WAS PART OF THE MEETING WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL.***

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 7:36 p.m. by Councilor Thompson. A second was made by Councilor Ashline, it was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Egor Golubchikov', written in a cursive style.

Egor Golubchikov