

OSWEGO COMMON COUNCIL

Mayor

Robert A. Corradino
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Members

Chance Kennedy, Ward 1
Jonathan Ashline, Ward 2
Laurel Lautensack, Ward 3
John FitzGibbons, Ward 4
Council President
William Myer, Ward 5
Council Vice President
Timothy Plunkett, Ward 6
Shane Thompson, Ward 7

OSWEGO COMMON COUNCIL MINUTES

August 10, 2026
7:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

First Ward Councilor Chance Kennedy, Second Ward Councilor Jonathan Ashline, Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack, Fourth Ward Councilor John FitzGibbons, Fifth Ward Councilor William Myer, Sixth Ward Councilor Timothy Plunkett, Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson

OTHERS PRESENT:

MEDIA PRESENT:

PUBLIC HEARING

7:10 - Local Law No. *2 of the Year 2026

Mayor Robert A. Corradino called to order the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Brandon Walker urged the Council to carefully review the proposed city budget as a whole, identify opportunities for savings, and limit increases to help ease the financial burden on Oswego residents, particularly those on fixed incomes, retirement, or disability.

Alexis Phelps, a full-time student, worker, and Ward 7 constituent, addressed the Council regarding Resolution 254. She urged the Council to reject the resolution to override the State property tax cap, expressing concern that increasing the tax burden would disproportionately affect residents on fixed or limited incomes, renters, students, faculty, and campus workers. Phelps emphasized the importance of fiscal responsibility, transparency, and reviewing the city's budget line by line before seeking authority to exceed the tax cap. She also noted that increased housing and tax costs could negatively affect local businesses and the broader Oswego community.

Carol Thompson stated that overriding the property tax cap is a procedural action typically taken each year and serves as a safeguard that does not necessarily mean taxes will increase. She noted that several factors are considered when determining the tax rate and urged the Council, regardless of whether members support the

override, not to raise residents' taxes.

Mayor Robert A. Corradino called to adjourn the Public Hearing at 7:20 p.m.

PUBLIC SESSION

7:15

Mayor Robert A. Corradino called to order the Public Session at 7:20 p.m.

Eva Corradino, representing the Promotion and Tourism Advisory Board, provided an update on the City's Visitor Center. She reported that the Visitor Center has operated since August 2019, with the space also being utilized for community purposes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a partnership with Oswego County, the Visitor Center has expanded its hours and staffing, with the County also providing internet service. As of August 8, the Visitor Center had welcomed more than 300 visitors from 17 states and three countries, including Brazil, France, and Canada. Eva noted that visitors come to Oswego for family events, weddings, reunions, Harborfest, youth activities, athletics, and the arts, and that the Visitor Center provides information and recommendations to help visitors enjoy the area. Eva also highlighted the space's additional community uses, including the Holiday History Shop, block parties, Maritime Museum pilot training, and Police Department activities, and emphasized that the facility provides a free, safe, Wi-Fi-enabled space for public use when it is not operating as a visitor center.

The Mayor commented that in the interest of full transparency that the person who just spoke is his wife and that she has been a non-paid volunteer for the City of Oswego and has participated in that position for almost 10 years.

Chris Novak, an Oswego County resident, expressed concerns regarding the use and expansion of video surveillance technology in the City without public input or consultation with the Common Council. Chris specifically raised concerns about automated license plate readers and other surveillance systems, including the collection, storage, and sharing of vehicle and location data with law enforcement agencies and third parties. Chris questioned the lack of oversight and judicial safeguards governing access to and use of the information, citing examples from other jurisdictions where surveillance data was allegedly misused. Chris urged the Council to examine the technology, its costs, policies, and potential impacts on residents' privacy before allowing further expansion.

Collin Seeley followed up on Resolution 249 regarding the Community Health Outreach Fair, clarifying that the event's primary goal is to connect residents with healthcare providers and social services. He noted that informational materials will be available in multiple languages, including Spanish and Russian, in addition to English, to ensure that as many community members as possible can access available resources.

Kyle Dzintars, a mental health counselor, expressed concerns regarding the proposed override of the State property tax cap, questioning why the Council was

considering the measure before the proposed budget was presented. He stated that approving the override could undermine public trust and emphasized the importance of transparency regarding taxes and City spending. Dzintars also raised concerns about increased tax collections, police funding, surveillance technology, and potential costs associated with automated license plate reader errors, settlements, and overtime. He questioned whether these expenses had been considered in the City's budget and requested additional information regarding the City's surveillance systems and contracts.

The Mayor responded to Kyle Dzintars' comments, clarifying that the Mayor's annual salary is \$40,000 and has remained unchanged for many years. He stated that he wanted to correct the statistic for the record and noted that he understood how the confusion may have occurred.

Alexis Phelps questioned the wording and purpose of Resolutions 257, 259, and 260, asking whether Resolution 257 was intended to ensure public input and consideration before the other resolutions move forward. She expressed support for considering the opinions of residents and stated that she believed the matters before the Council were not necessarily black and white and should be made available for public review and discussion.

The Mayor responded that residents with questions are welcome to make an appointment to meet with him, noting that he is available from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and can arrange special hours on Saturdays if needed.

Carol Thompson thanked the Mayor and City Clerk for promptly addressing her concerns regarding inaccuracies in the portraits and records of former Oswego mayors, noting the historical importance of the portraits. She also expressed concerns about the proposal to add two additional public comment sessions each month, questioning whether the Council has consistently responded to constituents through existing avenues of communication. Carol cited her concerns regarding the placement of 988 signs and stated that residents with relevant expertise were not adequately consulted before decisions were made. She questioned how the proposed public comment sessions would operate, including their timing, speaking limits, and how residents would be accommodated if more people wished to speak than the allotted time allowed. Carol emphasized that meaningful public engagement should be measured by whether the Council genuinely considers residents' input before making decisions. She also urged the Council to prioritize infrastructure concerns, including roads, potholes, and sidewalks.

Mayor Robert A. Corradino adjourned the Public Session at 7:43 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
ROLL CALL FOR REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Robert A. Corradino asked for the roll call at 7:44 p.m. All councilors were present.

MAYOR'S REPORT TO THE COMMON COUNCIL

7:30

1. The Mayor addressed a correction regarding a statement that an item concerning a 15-minute public comment period had been removed from a committee agenda. He clarified that, after speaking with staff responsible for preparing agendas, he confirmed that no request had been made to place the item on the agenda. The Mayor emphasized the importance of following established agenda procedures, providing proper notice to the public and Council members, and ensuring that statements made during meetings are accurate and supported by facts.

2. The Mayor presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget, totaling \$82,966,236, and noted that the budget reflects continued investment in infrastructure and city services while attempting to limit the burden on taxpayers. The proposed budget includes a 2.97% tax levy increase, with rising personnel, healthcare, retirement, utility, and contractual costs cited as contributing factors. The Mayor highlighted cost-saving and revenue-generating efforts, including the High Dam improvements, conversion of approximately 3,100 streetlights to LED fixtures, and increased use of grants and alternative funding sources. He also expressed concern regarding the Sewer Enterprise Fund and urged the Council to develop a plan to stabilize it. The Mayor thanked City staff and department heads for their work on the budget and noted that the Common Council will review the proposal during a public budget workshop the week of August 17, with a potential vote scheduled for August 24.

RESOLUTIONS

246 Approve Minutes Common Council Meeting Held July 27, 2026

Sixth Ward Councilor Timothy Plunkett sponsored the resolution. Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

247 Appoint Commissioner of Deeds

First Ward Councilor Chance Kennedy sponsored the resolution. Fifth Ward Councilor William Myer seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

248 Approve Use of Public Space — National Grid, in Order to Utilize Area located at 249 West Fifth Street, to Install a Utility Pole between the Curb and Sidewalk

Sixth Ward Councilor Timothy Plunkett sponsored the resolution. Fifth Ward Councilor William Myer seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

249 Authorize Use of Public Space — Oswego County OASAS, in Order to Host the Community Health Outreach Fair in Breitbeck Park on Wednesday, August 26, 2026

Second Ward Councilor Jonathan Ashline sponsored the resolution. Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

- 250 Approve Use of Public Space — Susan McBrearty, in Order to Host a Block Party on West Fifth Street to be Held on Saturday, August 15, 2026

First Ward Councilor Chance Kennedy sponsored the resolution. Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

- 251 Approve Use of Public Space — Christine Wills, in Order to Host a Glow and Flow event in Wright's Landing Marina and the Oswego Harbor on Saturday, August 15, 2026

Sixth Ward Councilor Timothy Plunkett sponsored the resolution. Fifth Ward Councilor William Myer seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

- 252 Approve Use of Public Space — Eason Lee, in Order to Host a Wedding at Breitbeck Park on Monday, August 10, 2026

Second Ward Councilor Jonathan Ashline sponsored the resolution. Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

- 253 Refer Petition Submitted by Darrell Pfiffner, Contract Purchaser of Real Property Located at 37 West Cayuga Street, for a Change of Zone, From a TN1, Traditional Neighborhood 1 to TD, Traditional Downtown to the Planning Board for an Advisory Opinion

Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack sponsored the resolution. Fifth Ward Councilor William Myer seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

- 254 Approve Local Law No. 2 of the Year 2026 - A Local Law Authorizing a Property Tax Levy in Excess of the Limit Established in General Municipal Law §3-c

Councilor FitzGibbons expressed concerns regarding consideration of a tax levy exceeding two percent, emphasizing the Council's fiduciary responsibilities and the need for timely and accurate financial information. He stated that, since February, the Council had repeatedly requested monthly financial reports and other information required under the City Charter but had not received the information in a timely manner. He referenced findings from the New York State Comptroller indicating that the Chamberlain had not provided the Council with current budget-to-actual reports and balance sheets necessary for effective financial oversight. Councilor FitzGibbons reviewed the Charter provisions concerning the preparation and adoption of the annual budget, including the Mayor's role as budget officer, the role of the Budget Commission, the requirement that the proposed budget be presented to the Council by August 1, and the Council's authority to approve the budget by August 31. He expressed concern that members of the Budget Commission had not been adequately involved in the budget preparation process. He stated that the proposed budget was a City budget, rather than solely the Mayor's budget, and that the Council should have sufficient information and time to establish priorities and carefully consider any tax levy exceeding two percent. He

further stated that the Council had been placed in a difficult position because of what he characterized as failures in the administrative process, including delays in receiving requested financial information. He maintained that public comment was an important part of the Council's responsibilities and should not be characterized as an obstacle to the budget process.

Councilor Kennedy agreed with the concerns raised by Councilor FitzGibbons. He noted that the Charter requires the budget to be presented by August 1 and that the Council had received it nine days late. He expressed concern that the Council would consequently have less time to review the budget and develop amendments. He stated that the Council had not received sufficient financial information from the Comptroller or Chamberlain's offices to properly complete its review. Councilor Kennedy said that, although he remained willing to listen to constituents and reconsider his position, the discussion had led him to oppose the proposed local law.

Councilor Thompson stated that the proposed budget represented a starting point of less than a three-percent increase and expressed the hope that the Council and administration could work together to reduce the increase below two percent. He stated that opportunities for tax savings and additional revenue had not been adequately pursued during the year. Because the Council had only received the budget that evening, he questioned whether the resolution should be tabled to allow additional time for review.

City Attorney, Kevin Caraccioli, explained that the local law authorizing an override of the two-percent tax cap must be adopted and filed with the State before a budget exceeding the cap could legally be adopted. He advised that the local law and the budget could not be adopted on the same night because the local law must first become effective upon filing with the State. He stated that the Council could table the resolution and schedule a special meeting if necessary, but recommended allowing several days for the local law to be filed in Albany before considering a budget that exceeded the cap. He also explained that the tax-cap override requires a supermajority vote of the governing body. He provided additional historical context, noting that the State's tax-cap law allows municipalities to adopt a local law authorizing consideration of a tax levy above the two-percent cap. He stated that, in his experience, he had not encountered a governing board that had considered and rejected such an override; boards had generally either adopted the local law or proceeded with a budget within the cap.

The Mayor stated that previous Councils had traditionally received the budget during the first or second week of August and had completed their review within approximately two weeks. He said that he had been working nights and weekends to complete the proposed budget and encouraged Council members to review the document, communicate with one another and the administration, and use the scheduled August 19 budget workshop to address questions and proposed changes. He expressed the view that the Council had sufficient time to complete its work.

before the anticipated August 24 budget adoption.

Councilor FitzGibbons responded that, although he recognized and appreciated the Mayor's efforts, the budget preparation process did not follow the procedure established by the City Charter. He stated that members of the Budget Commission appointed to participate in the budget process should have been involved in preparing the budget and sharing that work with the Council.

The Mayor responded that he was available to work with the Budget Commission during the week and maintained that he had done his best to prepare the budget. He pointed to the proposed 2.9-percent tax levy increase and again urged the Council to review the budget and perform its responsibilities.

Councilor FitzGibbons reiterated that the Charter's procedures should be followed. The Mayor and Councilor FitzGibbons briefly disagreed over the budget process and the Council's meeting procedures. Councilor FitzGibbons stated that the Council has authority under the Charter to establish its own meeting rules, while the Mayor questioned whether the Council had completed that process.

Councilor Lautensack asked the City Attorney whether the Council could adopt Local Law No. 2 on August 24 and then hold a special meeting on August 31 or the following business day to adopt the budget, if necessary.

City Attorney, Kevin Caraccioli, confirmed that this schedule would be procedurally possible, provided the local law was adopted on August 24 and sufficient time was allowed for it to be filed and become effective before the budget was adopted.

Councilor Lautensack suggested the approach as an option for the Council.

Councilor Thompson stated that allowing additional time to review the budget before deciding whether an override was necessary appeared to be the most logical course of action. He expressed a preference for working toward a tax increase of two percent or less rather than authorizing an override before the Council had fully reviewed the proposed budget. He then moved to table Resolution 254 until the next Council meeting on August 24.

Councilor Lautensack seconded the motion.

The Mayor directed that the motion to table Resolution 254 be called for a vote.

254t Motion to Table Resolution 254 - Local Law No. 2 of the Year 2026

Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson sponsored the resolution. Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (4 - 3 - 0).

255 Extend Renewable Energy System Moratorium

Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack sponsored the resolution. Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

256 Authorize Mayor to Sign Supplemental Request No. 2 from JMT of New York, Inc.in the amount of \$30,278.60 and Further Authorize the City Chamberlain to Advance Funds for Same

Sixth Ward Councilor Timothy Plunkett sponsored the resolution. Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

257 Authorize City Chamberlain to Complete a Budget Amendment in the Amount of \$46,000.00 to cover Unforeseen High Dam Operational Costs

Councilor Thompson acknowledged that the \$46,000 budget amendment for unforeseen High Dam operational costs was necessary, despite the expense, and expressed hope that the project would ultimately provide a significant return on the investment.

Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack sponsored the resolution. Fifth Ward Councilor William Myer seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

258 Waive Rules of the Common Council to Present Resolution No.s 259-260 without Committee Consideration

Sixth Ward Councilor Timothy Plunkett sponsored the resolution. Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

259 Accept \$500,000.00 Grant from New York State Companion Animal Capital Projects Fund and Further Authorize City Chamberlain to Advance Funds for the Animal Shelter Expansion

Councilor Thompson expressed strong support for accepting the \$500,000 grant, noting that it would fund needed mandated upgrades to the animal shelter, with assistance from Economic Development and DPW to help offset the City's costs.

Third Ward Councilor Laurel Lautensack sponsored the resolution. Second Ward Councilor Jonathan Ashline seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

260 Authorize Participation in the CHARM Grant Program for a Downtown Mural

The Mayor explained that the CHARM Grant would fund a mural on panels to be installed on the side of Five West Cayuga Street, with no upfront cost or administrative responsibilities for the City, as CNY Arts would pay the mural company directly.

First Ward Councilor Chance Kennedy sponsored the resolution. Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilor Plunkett, as chair of the 2027 Budget Committee, invited the public to attend the annual budget workshop in the council chambers on Wednesday, August 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. to voice any questions and concerns regarding the upcoming budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Robert A. Corradino made a motion to adjourn at 8:39 p.m.

Seventh Ward Councilor Shane Thompson sponsored the resolution. Fifth Ward Councilor William Myer seconded the motion, motion approved by a vote of (7 - 0 - 0).

[MIN_FOOT]