CITY OF OSWEGO

CITY HALL

AGENDA
Administrative Services Committee
Common Council Chambers – City Hall
August 3, 2026
6:30 PM

Roll Call **Timothy Plunkett, Chairman**
William Myer
John FitzGibbons
Laurel Lautensack
Jonathan Ashline

Approve minutes of the July 6, 2026 Committee meeting.

I. <u>Old Business</u>

II. <u>New Business</u>

<u>Authorization</u>

1. The Engineering Office requests authorization for the Mayor to sign Supplemental Request No. 2 with JMT of New York, Inc. in the amount of $30,278.60 for additional professional services regarding the Riverwalk West- Bridge Street to West Utica Street Project.
2. The Engineering Office requests authorization for the City Chamberlain to complete a budget amendment in the amount of $46,000.00 to the High Dam Utilities Account to cover the new PSC monthly customer charge.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING
August 3, 2026

Chair Plunkett called the meeting to order at 7:09 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; Fire Chief, Paul Conzone; Zoning and Planning Administrator, Jeff McGann; City Engineer, Elizabeth Chrestler.

MEDIA PRESENT: No media present.

OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business.

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2026, Committee Meeting was made by Councilor Lautensack and seconded by Councilor Myer. Minutes were approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **The Engineering Office requests authorization for the Mayor to sign Supplemental Request No. 2 with JMT of New York, Inc. in the amount of $30,278.60 for additional professional services regarding the Riverwalk West - Bridge Street to West Utica Street Project.**

City Engineer, Elizabeth Chrestler, explained that the request is for services already completed during the project. The project, which began in 2022, encountered numerous unforeseen conditions and 11 change orders, including an incident where an excavator fell through a concrete sidewalk after previously unknown arches and underground structures were discovered. The project required redesigns, new retaining walls, and additional design and inspection work. Elizabeth explained that during project closeout, JMT experienced problems with a new software and file-storage system, which delayed its ability to produce the documentation required to close out the project. The requested funds cover closeout services performed from January 2025 through spring 2025, including final inspections, punch-list work, and coordination with the contractor regarding change-order costs. The additional authorization would bring the overall contract amount to approximately $435,578.00.

Councilor Myer asked whether the sidewalk collapse was caused by river erosion. Elizabeth explained that previously unknown tunnels and culverts, including original arches beneath the area behind the post office, were discovered. When the existing retaining wall and sidewalk slab were cut during repairs, the slab lost its underlying support and collapsed. The excavator was safely removed, and the area remained closed for some time.

Councilor FitzGibbons asked how much time had passed between completion of the services and JMT's request for payment. Elizabeth stated that the most recent bill was received on April 7, 2026, although she was unaware of whether an earlier bill had been submitted. Councilor FitzGibbons asked when the City received an accounting of the hours. Elizabeth said she reviewed the information the previous week after the Purchasing Office referred the matter to her for Council consideration. Councilor FitzGibbons expressed concern about the length of time between the work being performed and the City receiving the documentation and requested payment, noting that it raised questions about the continuity of the firm's services.

Elizabeth stated that she contacted JMT directly that morning and spoke with both the department head and the on-site representative. She said she was comfortable with their explanation of the work performed and that they provided a detailed timeline of the services and were knowledgeable about the project, including the design work and change orders. She acknowledged that she could not independently verify all of the work because she was not present at the time but found the explanation credible.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Myer made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from City Engineer, Elizabeth Chrestler. 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 City Chamberlain to complete a budget amendment in the amount of $46,000.00 to the High Dam Utilities Account to cover the new PSC monthly customer charge.**

City Engineer, Elizabeth Chrestler, explained that the High Dam has been placed under a new National Grid classification for standalone hydroelectric generators. The new classification results in a monthly charge of approximately $5,100.00, compared with the previous charge of approximately $1,500. The City has been working with National Grid and NYSERDA to maximize the revenue received from the power generated at the High Dam and offset the increased cost.

A member of the public questioned the impact of the new charge on the High Dam's financial performance and whether similar charges would apply to the Energy Recovery Facility.

Elizabeth explained that the charge applies to the specific classification assigned to the High Dam. City Attorney, Kevin Caraccioli, provided additional clarification, stating that the new charge results from a PSC directive establishing new tariff rates for certain generating facilities. He noted that although the City's monthly cost has increased to approximately $5,100, the financial benefit to the City from producing and selling power under its NYSERDA power purchase agreement is substantially greater.

Miles Becker, a member of the public, asked for clarification about why the City pays for power while also selling power generated by the High Dam. Elizabeth explained that the City pays for the power needed to operate the facility and sells the power it generates back to the grid.

Brandon Walker, a member of the public, commented on the arrangement and expressed concern about the costs to taxpayers. Elizabeth stated that the City is working to maximize energy production and revenue from the facility.

Councilor Lautensack asked whether the new tariff would be a flat rate or based on the amount of energy used. Elizabeth believed it was a flat rate, and Kevin confirmed that the $5,100.00 monthly charge is a flat rate, subject to any future increases established by the PSC. He explained that the requested $46,000.00 covers the increased cost over the next five years, accounting for the amount currently budgeted. Councilor Lautensack asked about projected energy production once the facility is fully operational. Elizabeth stated that projections had been provided to the Council and indicated that the High Dam has the potential to generate millions of dollars in net positive revenue.

Councilor Thompson asked whether the City is required to pay the new charge. Elizabeth confirmed that the City must pay the charge to continue generating energy under the new classification.

Councilor Kennedy asked about the status of the fourth generator. Elizabeth explained that three of the four turbines are currently operational, while Unit 1 remains under repair. The City is working with Siemens to obtain the necessary parts and complete the repairs. She stated that the goal is to have the unit operational by the end of the year, although no firm date could be guaranteed due to parts with lead times of up to 23 weeks and the additional time required for shipping and installation.

Brandon Walker asked when the City first became aware of the PSC's increased charge. Elizabeth was unable to provide a specific date. Kevin stated that the new tariff became effective April 1. He noted that the City's NYSERDA power purchase agreement and associated Renewable Energy Credit payments are being applied retroactively, which will provide additional revenue from the City's energy production. He reiterated that the anticipated revenue from the High Dam is substantially greater than the increased tariff. Brandon Walker acknowledged the projected net revenue but expressed concern about the impact of unexpected increases in costs and the broader issue of affordability for residents and municipalities.

COMMITTEE DECISION: Councilor Lautensack made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Full Council the request from City Engineer, Elizabeth Chrestler. Councilor Myer seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

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

Councilor FitzGibbons introduced a discussion regarding adding a 15-minute public comment session at the beginning of Committee Meetings. He cited the City Charter's provision allowing the Council to establish its own rules and stated that the purpose would be to increase public engagement, transparency, accountability, and public participation earlier in the legislative process.

Councilor Myer stated that he had consulted with NYCOM and was advised that the Council could establish a 15-minute public comment period if it chose to do so.

Councilor Thompson suggested tabling the discussion and placing it on a future agenda because the public had not received notice of the proposal. He recommended allowing two to four weeks for public input and obtaining guidance from the City Attorney regarding the process for changing the Council's rules. He also suggested considering the timing of a public comment period in relation to the schedules of residents and department heads.

Councilor Kennedy supported further consideration of the proposal and stated that public participation earlier in the legislative process could provide an opportunity for residents to raise questions and provide input before Committee action.

Councilor Thompson clarified that members of the public are currently permitted to speak on action items and that the proposed public session would provide a different opportunity, as the Council would listen to comments but would not respond during the Common Council's Public Session. He reiterated that the matter should be placed on an agenda so the public has proper notice.

Councilor Myer agreed that, since the matter was raised for discussion, it could be placed on a future agenda if the Council wished to pursue it, allowing the public an opportunity to comment before any action was taken.

Councilor Plunkett expressed concern that the proposal had been discussed publicly online before being brought before the full Committee and stated that several constituents had contacted him with concerns about decisions being made outside the formal agenda process. He emphasized that Councilors should have an opportunity to review and vote on proposals before they are characterized as decisions.

Councilor FitzGibbons supported tabling the matter for future consideration. He explained that he had submitted the proposal as an agenda item two days earlier and believed it should have been included for public discussion. He stated that the proposal was intended to improve public participation and transparency, not to make a decision outside the public process. He further stated that he supported allowing additional time for the proposal to be publicly considered and acknowledged that Councilors may disagree on the matter.

Councilor Kennedy reiterated that the City Charter gives the Council authority to establish rules governing its proceedings and supported continued consideration of the proposal.

Councilor Thompson recommended waiting approximately four weeks, rather than two weeks, so that the Council could focus on the budget during the upcoming meetings and give the proposal adequate consideration.

Councilor FitzGibbons agreed to the four-week timeframe, noting the importance of working collaboratively and allowing the proposal to receive appropriate public consideration.

Councilor Myer clarified that a formal motion was not necessary at this stage because the matter was being discussed and could simply be placed on a future agenda.

The Committee agreed to place the proposed public comment session on a future agenda for further discussion and public consideration.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 7:45 p.m. by Councilor Myer. A second was made by Councilor Lautensack, it was approved by a vote of 4-1-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Egor Golubchikov