



**Town of Oneonta  
TOWN BOARD  
Regular Meeting  
March 12, 2025  
07:00PM**

The regular meeting of the Oneonta Town Board was held on March 12, 2025, with the following members present:

Interim Supervisor:	Brett Holleran	(BH)
Town Board Member:	Kim Fierke	(KF)
Town Board Member:	Joseph M. Camarata	(JMC)
Town Board Member:	Patricia Riddell Kent	(PRK)
Town Clerk:	Ryan F. Pereira	
Town Attorney:	Robert Panasci	

Others present: Teresa DeSantis; Eric Santamount; Charlotte Ballard; Steve & Lisa Waller; Anita Levine; Cindy Lehr; Allen Ruffles, County Treasurer; Don Bouton, Property Tax Supervisor; J. Caroline Williams, SUNY Oneonta; Sandra Garcia-Fine, SUNY Oneonta; Karen Smallin; Dale Webster.

After the pledge of allegiance, Interim Supervisor Brett Holleran, announced Supervisor Randal Mowers' resignation citing medical concerns, as Mr. Holleran will be assuming duties of the position until the end of the year. Mr. Holleran referenced an article in the Daily Star, highlighting Mr. Mowers' accomplishments.

**"Privilege of the floor"**

Eric Santamount, Wesleyan Church Congregation;

- An inquiry regarding water repayment was made by a representative from Westland Church.
- The church sought consideration due to its size and projected low water consumption.
- A discussion about installing a water meter to accurately assess water usage was mentioned.

Diane Gallo;

- A request was made to remove a sign located at the intersection of roads 23 and 205.
- The requestor was advised to submit a formal letter to the board.
- Ms. Gallo claims the oversized "TRUMP" campaign sign exceeding permitted size and duration needs removal.
- The sign's removal was requested due to election regulations and time constraints.
- Copies of letters were distributed to ensure information consistency.
- A review and discussion of the letters' content took place.

The Town Board would follow up with Ms. Gallo after legal consultation.

A presentation to the board led by Allen Ruffles, County Treasurer; centered on the vision of tax-collection services, county-wide, becoming a shared service performed by the County Treasurer's office.

Major points delivered in the presentation include:

Streamlined Tax Collection Solution

- A cost-effective tax collection solution is offered to improve efficiency.
- The system includes levee collection and software for monitoring.
- This service addresses the challenge of finding tax collectors in smaller towns.

Cost-Effective Shared Services Agreement

- A shared services agreement will result in cost savings for towns and the county.
- The agreement may lead to changes in payment methods, potentially eliminating in-person cash payments.
- A single point of contact for tax information will be established, streamlining the process.

Streamlining Tax Collection Process

- A central location for tax collection is proposed for improved efficiency.
- Free software assistance is offered to aid in tax collection.
- A secure Dropbox and potential computer setup at the town hall are suggested for convenient payment options.

Cost Reduction in Parcel Tax Collection

- The goal is to find a cost-effective solution applicable to various towns, avoiding budget increases.
- A response is needed by September or October to allow sufficient time before January.

A presentation by Sandra Garcia-Fine, SUNY Oneonta's Energy manager; Caroline Williams, Director of Community Affairs & Government Relations:

SUNY Oneonta, West Street Solar Project Presentation

- A presentation was given on a proposed solar array installation.
- The project site is a vacant parcel at 285 West Street.

Project Timeline and Construction Details

- A project is underway in partnership with a New York State public authority.
- Preparatory work will occur this summer, with main construction slated for Spring 2026 to December 2026.
- Construction will be limited to weekdays, between 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM, to minimize disruption.

Campus Solar Power Project

- A 1-1.5 MW solar power system is planned for direct connection to the campus substation.
- The system's energy will not enter the main power grid, but will be used on campus.
- This solar power generation will supply approximately a quarter of the campus's daily energy needs (3-4.5 MW peak).

Solar Project Land Details

- The project site covers approximately 121.5 acres of land.
- The solar panels are currently planned to be fixed, not trackers.
- The usable area for the solar project is about 1.5 acres within a larger 58-acre parcel.

Underground Utility Planning

- Discussion about overhead versus underground utility installation.
- Preference for pollinator-friendly landscaping above underground utilities.

Development Project Feedback and Stormwater Management

- Resident feedback received regarding noise and screening from planting.
- Stormwater pollution prevention plan to be implemented.
- Discussion on ensuring solar panel removal after 20-year lifespan, addressing company longevity concerns.

Power Purchase Agreement Analysis

- Discussion about financial requirements for a proposal involving bonds.
- Details of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), typically lasting 20-25 years, are explained.
- Concerns regarding the long-term implications and potential risks associated with PPAs are raised, along with the existence of a guarantee.

West Street Drainage Inquiry

- Inquiry regarding the drainage strip along West Street; its location relative to underground structures and potential for water runoff.
- Question about the drainage's impact on a property at 251 West Street, adjacent to a water source.
- Concern raised about water runoff from a hill and state-owned land affecting the property.

**Public Hearing – Blighted Properties Legislation** – regarding a proposed Local Law to address blighted properties, as it is the intention of the Town Board of Oneonta to protect the public health, safety and welfare by authorizing the establishment of procedures to identify, abate and eliminate the presence of blight upon properties throughout the Town.

Blighted Property Report Updates

- Feedback received on reporting procedures for blighted properties.
- Adjustments made to protect the identity of reporters, especially town residents.
- Clarification added that reports can originate from various sources beyond town residents.

Property Point System Adjustments

- A property reaching 100 points is considered blighted, with adjustments made for immediate safety threats.
- Clarifications were made regarding unregistered or ungaraged motor vehicles and their associated codes.
- Discussions involved fees that could be imposed on affected properties.

Fee Adjustment Discussion

- Initial fees were set at \$5000 (commercial) and \$250 (residential).
- Residential fee was raised to \$750 to ensure seriousness and avoid underpayment.

- A final decision on the fee adjustment will be made next month, pending legal review.

Teresa DeSantis, a resident of the town raised concerns about a proposed the plan might be too strict and focus excessively on cosmetic aspects. A suggestion to create a less stringent law to encourage repairs before penalties are applied.

Ms. DeSantis further presented these points:

Town Agreement Enforcement and Poverty Statistics

- Research is needed to ensure citizen consensus on the agreement and its enforcement.
- Town poverty statistics reveal 17% poverty rate, 19% disability, and nearly 22% of the population aged 65 or older.

State Property Maintenance Code Review

- Existing state property maintenance code addresses structural issues and repair mechanisms.
- Concerns exist regarding the code's effectiveness in addressing all citizen needs.
- Further review and potential revisions are suggested to ensure comprehensive coverage.

(PUBLIC HEARING REMAINS OPEN)

RESOLUTION 2025-0041 (07:42) Motion by KF, seconded by PRK;

Whereas the Town Board votes to amend an October 9, 2002, meeting resolution;  
 Whereas establishing a repair reserve fund to be known as the "Town of Oneonta Swimming Pool Repair Reserve Fund";  
 Now therefore be it resolved the resolution will be subject to a permissive referendum;  
 The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	_____

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4) AIF MOTION CARRIED

Town Fund Allocation for Repairs

- Funds need to be moved between reserve funds for town hall and pool repairs.
  - The current fund setup, established in 2002, requires a change to access the necessary money.
  - A motion is needed to approve the transfer of funds for the pool reconstruction project.
- \*Public Notice published on March 20, 2025 in The Daily Star.

Original resolution passed at the regular board meeting dated October 9, 2002:  
 "Swimming Pool Repair Reserve Account - Motion was made by Delameter, seconded by Lusins to adopt the following Swimming Pool Repair Reserve Account resolution:

RESOLVED, that pursuant to section 6-d of the General Municipal Law, as amended, there is hereby established a repair reserve fund to be known as the "Town of Oneonta Swimming Pool Repair Reserve Fund" (hereinafter "Reserve Fund"). The purpose of this Reserve Fund is to accumulate monies of finance the cost of a type of capital repair. The repair to be financed from the Reserve Fund is the reconstruction of the Town of Oneonta swimming pool.

The chief fiscal officer is hereby directed to deposit and secure the monies of this Reserve Fund in the manner provided by section 10 of the General Municipal Law. The chief fiscal officer may invest the monies in the Reserve Fund in the manner provided by section 11 of the General Municipal Law, and consistent with the investment policy of the Town of Oneonta. Any interest earned or capital gains realized on the monies so deposited or invested shall accrue to and become part of the Reserve Fund. The chief fiscal officer shall account for the Reserve Fund in a manner, which maintains the separate identity of the cash and investments of the Reserve Fund.

Except as otherwise provided by section 6-d of the General Municipal Law, expenditures from this Reserve Fund shall be made only for the purpose for which the Reserve Fund is established. No expenditure shall be made from

this Reserve Fund without the approval of this governing board and without such additional actions of proceedings as may be required by section 6-d of the General Municipal Law, including a permissive referendum if required.

VOTE - Ayes 5, Nays 0 Motion Carried”

RESOLUTION 2025-0042 (07:43) Motion by PRK, seconded by JMC;

Whereas the Town Board votes to approve the laborer hire for the Highway Department;
Now therefore be it resolved;
The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

Table with 4 columns: Name, Title, AYE, NAY. Rows include Kim Fierke, Joseph M. Camarata, Patricia Riddell Kent, and Brett D. Holleran with their respective titles and vote marks.

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4) AIF MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTION 2025-0043 (07:44) Motion by KF, seconded by PRK;

Whereas the Town Board votes to reclassify the parcel of property containing the Wesleyan Church;
Whereas the classification will change from “Commercial 1” to “Household”;
Whereas the change will be based on current water usage values for 2 households and given a non-profit designation;
Now therefore be it resolved;
The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

Table with 4 columns: Name, Title, AYE, NAY. Rows include Kim Fierke, Joseph M. Camarata, Patricia Riddell Kent, and Brett D. Holleran with their respective titles and vote marks.

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4) AIF MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTION 2025-0044 (07:46) Motion by PRK, seconded by BH;

Whereas the Town Board votes to approve the town pool construction contract;
Whereas 21st Century Pools & Spa’s have been awarded the contract in the amount of \$758,444.00;
Whereas the price will be to furnish and install the new pool, with preliminary demo done by the town highway dept.;
Now therefore be it resolved;
The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

Table with 4 columns: Name, Title, AYE, NAY. Rows include Kim Fierke, Joseph M. Camarata, Patricia Riddell Kent, and Brett D. Holleran with their respective titles and vote marks.

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4) AIF MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTION 2025-0045 (08:02) Motion by BH, seconded by JMC;

Whereas the Town Board votes to approve application for Water Quality Improvement Project grants;
Whereas to engage Lamont Engineering services for preliminary grant-related work;
The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

Table with 4 columns: Name, Title, AYE, NAY. Row includes Kim Fierke as Board Member with an AYE vote mark.



Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	_____
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	_____

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE                    AYES (4) AIF

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan F. Pereira  
Oneonta Town Clerk