

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 30, 2025 – 6:00 PM

City Hall – 2nd Floor Council Chambers
47 Castle Street
Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Grimaldi, Clr. Pealer (arrived at 6:08), Clr. Lavin, Clr. Brennan

Absent: Clr. Whitfield, Clr. Moracco

2. DISCUSSION – 2026 Budget

Mayor Valentino shared that he will wait until next week to make motions to change the City Manager's budget.

City Manager Hendrix opened the meeting reviewing the meeting calendar, noting that the budgets need to be adopted by Council by October 31, otherwise the City Manager's budget presented on September 9 will be the City's 2026 Budget.

City Manager Hendrix reviewed forecasting for future years using the Compound Annual Growth Rate. She explained the pros and cons of CAGR with ten years of data, explaining that this makes the most sense for a City in the long term. Councilor Petropoulos wondered how the rate of inflation is factored in. City Manager Hendrix explained that it's a calculation of growth, how the city is managing finances.

Comptroller Blowers broke down all rent, insurance, and upkeep of the two fire facilities not owned by the City, on Genesee St, and Geneva St. He reviewed upkeep and maintenance costs on page 70 of the budget book. Comptroller Blowers explained that maintenance costs include capital projects plus upkeep and general maintenance. He noted that replacement of bay doors on the Genesee St. Station is budgeted for 2026. He further explained that contents are insured, not broken out in individual locations or items, only broken out by fund, falling under the City's umbrella insurance policy. Councilor Gillotte wondered who pays for repairs to the facilities. Comptroller Blowers explained that the City, as tenant, pays for repairs. A Geneva Housing Authority subsidiary owns the Genesee St. property, and Hydrant Hose owns the Geneva Street facility. Councilor. Gillotte expanded his question, wondering if the city pay for all repairs. Comptroller Blowers explained that day to day maintenance and repairs are the City's responsibility. City Manager Hendrix explained that the Hydrant Hose cost shares with the City, explaining that the lease agreements cover this arrangement Councilor Lavin wondered how the lease payments made to Hydrant Hose is used, and if it's part of a City's audit. City Manager Hendrix explained that the City simply makes lease payments noting that Hydrant Hose is an organization that the City contacts with.

Comptroller Blowers shared that there would be no savings in 2026 if the City delayed purchasing a new fire truck for one year, because when you borrow there are typically no payments in the year a municipality borrows, but there would be potential savings after that, with new debt payments beginning in 2027. Comptroller Blowers also explained the long lead time for a fire truck build, of about three years, noting that there will be continued upkeep costs for two or three years for the aging truck, before the replacement truck would be delivered. Councilor Petropoulos wondered since costs will go up each year, if any savings will be realized by delaying the purchase. Chief Parrotta advised that he doesn't see a cost decrease coming, rather, he expects costs to continue to increase each year. He explained that in 2012 a new fire apparatus costs \$477,000, and now same apparatus costs \$1.2 million. City Manager Hendrix clarified that the fire truck will go out to bid, and costs are a best estimate. Councilor Brennan wondered if the City fails to be awarded grant funding, can a less expensive truck be purchased. City Manager Hendrix explained that the City will need about \$1.2 million to purchase the fire truck, if grant funding isn't awarded, explaining that council would have to bond, for the total cost, or choose not to purchase the new apparatus if grant funding isn't secured. Councilor Petropoulos wondered when the grant will be awarded. Chief Parrotta shared that he's waiting on two more letters of support, has preapproval, and is working through final steps to apply now. Councilor Pealer wondered what the range of the bond rates might be. City Manager Hendrix explained that they fluctuate, so interest rates will depend on when the City bonds. Comptroller Blowers shared that the last bond was at 3.7%. Discussion followed around the fire truck's useful life of 15 years, what will it replace, how trucks be moved down the line. Councilor Lavin wondered if the Town keeps to the same replacement schedule. Chief Parrotta explained that they do, and just replaced two apparatus on the same standard. Chief Parrotta also explained how many apparatuses are required to cover a set area, and that front line apparatus standards are set by population. He further explained that if demographics are expanded to cover more territory, more apparatus will need to be added, to cover distance and population. Mayor Valentino shared the Town of Victor's recent struggle with their fire district, and noted that Geneva is lucky to have fire staff and volunteers.

City Manager Hendrix reviewed the 2026 city wide revaluation. She explained that annual revaluations are meant to keep taxes equitable and fair across neighborhoods, rather than placing unfair burdens on some tax payers, and that the 2026 revaluation will impact 2027 taxes. She further explained that revaluations look at property sales and what's going on in the market in the City. She went on to explain the commercial revaluation process, noting that there is methodology that has to be consistent. Property owners will receive letters with new values, and other information. The Assessors Office will be available to answer questions, as well. Councilor Grimaldi shared that it's important to stay close to 100% equalization rates, especially for school and county taxes. He also explained that STAR exemption, and how it can be affected by equalization, and how homeowners can see jumps in value based on the market. In 2023 equalization rate was 77%, City Manager Hendrix explained that the revaluation helps avoid a large swing in value of property.

City Manager Hendrix explained that the 2026 budget doesn't include any resources for housing rehabilitation and home ownership, noting that programs like that haven't been prioritized in many budgets, as local Municipalities are restricted from providing direct assistance to home owners, although federal funds can be used.

Assistant City Manager Youngs explained that data can be used to track performance and budgetary resources by utilizing Key Performance Indicators (KPI). She reminded Council of Return On Investment (ROI) budget management tools, and shifting to results-based accountability for services and investments in the community. She recommended using these tools to look for outcomes for residents, developing measures and attempting to exceed targets. ACM Youngs explained that staffing changes have delayed the comprehensive plan to 2026, which will provide an opportunity to align metrics with that updated plan. She explained that it takes time to develop data driven resources, explaining that the foundation is being laid for that now, to better inform future budget cycles.

Councilor Gillotte raised concerns about first time home buyers and incentivizing landlords to improve property. City Manager Hendrix explained that state and federal advocacy is an option. She shared that the State still has some resources, but current federal funding likely won't exist in the future. Councilor Pealer echoed the importance of home ownership, recommending neighborhood initiatives and recreation to incentivize homeownership in the City.

City Manager Hendrix pointed out a piece of what the City can start tracking, KPI's for home ownership. She suggested looking at population metrics and exploring what identified trends mean. She pointed out that a piece of the equation to remember is that HWS students are counted, as well as seniors that may not want to own a home anymore. Councilor Lavin noted that the best thing a city can do for residents is to redo streets and sewers. He explained that Rochester clears sidewalks in the winter, collects trash. He noted public private partnerships like houses being done by Habitat for Humanity. Councilor Petropoulos wondered if there is a list of what the city can do. City Manager Hendrix explained that staffing resources, connections, anything that's not a direct gift are things a municipality can offer, explaining that the city can do something for the entire population, but not for homeowner A, and not homeowner B. Mayor Valentino explained that starter homes are important, noting that it's important to attract developers to undeveloped parcels, and that if the City can put in infrastructure, that will entice development. Discussion followed around available land.

Comptroller Blowers shared a recreation facility overview. He explained that the rink budget can be found on page 75. The City is currently seeking quotes to replace the chiller, and staff will share the number when quotes come in, it will then need to go out to bid. He went on to explain that some buildings and grounds salaries are included in the rink's operational costs, the ice re-surfacer was paid off in 2021, so there is no debt associated with the rink at this time. He also informed Council that the Dasher Boards were recently repaired. Councilor Pealer shared that when he was on the recreation board, he saw funding going down over the years, and noted that the expenses of the rink for tax payers is minimal. He wondered what the breakdown is for the total cost of all recreation annually. Comptroller Blowers shared that page 73 of the budget book has that information, without insurance and utility costs.

City Manager Hendrix noted that Councilor Pealer's questions lead nicely into considering recreation as an enterprise fund in the future. An enterprise fund would help illustrate what revenue and expenses are, and that budget discussions pushed the city towards a 2026 feasibility study to examine a recreation enterprise fund. A proposed fee policy would be developed as part of that process. She did caution that recreation programming rarely covers their expenses, as recreation is also a service the city provides to residents. Councilor Pealer wants the goal to be providing activities and enrichment for residents, not to cover costs. Councilor Petropoulos recalled rink improvement discussions, and sees this budget as operating the rink as it has been. City Manager Hendrix explained that the chiller and other capital improvements aren't part of the budget, and that there is more design work to be done to get to some improvements to the recreation complex. Councilor Petropoulos wondered if the chiller is replaced, does it tie the city to Option One of the three design options. City Manager Hendrix explained that the chiller quotes are so the city knows, if it breaks down this year, what it would take to keep the rink going. Councilor Lavin noted that one of the issues with the rink, is that this is about one sport, hockey and skating. He observed that the City isn't in the business of recreation the way it was 20 years ago with playgrounds and adult softball leagues, rather it has been left with a recreation department is largely skating, and noted that basketball isn't being invested in, and there is no money for it. He agrees that the Hobart element is important for downtown, but wonders what the city has for 20-somethings who want to play softball. City Manager Hendrix explained that the recreation facility is used over 300 days annually, with the turf booked with summer programming, and lacrosse. Councilor Gillotte noted that he hears a need for sports leagues for people to get involved in, and wondered what the city can do to enhance what it's already doing. Mayor Valentino said that if it was strictly financial the city would figure it out. He noted that it's also about use, people don't seem to want more softball or swimming. City Manager Hendrix shared that the Assistant City Manager and coordinator that will come on board, will take a closer look at how to do recreation, how to find the best path forward with great

resources and partnerships that already exist in the City. Councilor Pealer wondered if there is an opportunity to expand baseball culture in the City, like the Art Guards in the 1980's. He illustrated the cultural change of families watching kids recreate at sports practices. Councilor Brennan shared that he attended the Clark Street picnic on Sunday. There was a lot of support to use the Clark Street baseball diamond there. Councilor Petropoulos shared that he attended as well, and would like to see participation at the park.

3. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Petropulos; seconded by Clr. Pealer
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 7:16pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (7-2 absent)

Nicole Tillotson
City Clerk