

## **Agenda**

### **Regular City Council Meeting**

**City of Geneva, New York**

May 19, 2026

**City Hall**

**2nd Floor Council Chambers**

**47 Castle Street**

**Geneva, NY**

### **Executive Session Starts at 6:00 PM**

To discuss collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law, and the proposed sale of real property.

### **Council Meeting Starts at 6:00 PM**

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[YouTube.com/@CityofGenevaNY](https://www.youtube.com/@CityofGenevaNY)

- I. **Call to Order** – Mayor, Jim Cecere
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Roll Call**
- IV. **Unfinished Business**
  - a. Requesting a New York State Disaster Emergency Declaration for 2026 Finger Lakes Storm, Flooding, High-Water, Shoreline, and Infrastructure Damage
- V. **Discussion**
  - a. Assessment Overview
  - b. 2027 Budget Direction and Projection Clarification
- VI. **Attorney Client Meeting**
- VII. **Adjournment**

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Geneva City Council  
**From:** Mayor James Cecere  
**Date:** May 12, 2026  
**Subject:** Resolution Requesting a New York State Disaster Emergency Declaration for 2026 Finger Lakes Storm, Flooding, High-Water, Shoreline, and Infrastructure Damage  
**Requested Action:** Adopt the attached resolution and direct transmission to the Governor, DHSES, state agencies, state legislators, counties, and affected municipalities.

## Executive Summary

The proposed resolution asks the City Council to formally request a New York State Disaster Emergency declaration for storm, flooding, high-water, shoreline, and infrastructure damage affecting Geneva and the broader Finger Lakes region.

The immediate purpose is to strengthen Geneva's request for state action, organize regional municipal support, preserve eligibility for state and federal recovery assistance, and accelerate technical review, emergency stabilization, and long-term mitigation support.

The strongest basis for Council action is the combined public-safety, infrastructure, fiscal, and regional watershed impact. Seneca Lake at Geneva exceeded action stage and approached minor flood stage, with NOAA listing action stage at 447.50 feet and minor flooding at 448.00 feet. Local reporting has identified continued lakefront damage, wave action, erosion, sinkholes, and repair estimates reaching up to \$4 million for Lakefront Park. The draft resolution also identifies preliminary City damage estimates of approximately \$3 million to \$5 million and damage involving Lakefront Park seawalls, Marsh Creek culverts, public rights-of-way, municipal facilities, and utility systems.<sup>123</sup>

Council action should be paired with a coordinated regional advocacy effort. The resolution should be transmitted immediately to Governor Hochul, DHSES, NYSDOT, NYSDEC, State Parks, Canal Corporation, state legislators, Ontario County, nearby counties, and affected municipalities.

## Purpose of the Resolution

- Request a State Disaster Emergency declaration under New York State Executive Law § 28.
- Ask DHSES to coordinate regional Preliminary Damage Assessments for public infrastructure, emergency protective measures, water-control facilities, roads, bridges, culverts, parks, shoreline protection structures, utilities, and related eligible damage categories.
- Ask the Governor to pursue all available state and federal assistance if validated damage thresholds and eligibility requirements are met.
- Call on affected counties, cities, towns, and villages to pass similar resolutions and submit damage data through a coordinated regional process.
- Support long-term mitigation planning for shoreline resilience, stormwater systems, culvert capacity, watershed management, Castle Creek, Marsh Creek, and lakefront resiliency improvements.

## Background and Current Conditions

- Spring 2026 precipitation events have saturated soils, elevated runoff, increased lake levels, and increased shoreline pressure throughout the Finger Lakes region.
- Seneca Lake has exceeded action stage at Geneva and approached minor flood stage, increasing the risk of shoreline erosion, wave damage, public-access hazards, and infrastructure impacts.<sup>4</sup>
- Geneva has experienced material damage at the lakefront, including shoreline erosion, sinkholes, and threatened pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>City of Geneva, Draft Resolution No. \_\_\_\_ of 2026, "Advocating for a Regional Review of 2026 Precipitation Damages and a Unified Request for a New York State Disaster Emergency Declaration," provided May 2026.

<sup>2</sup>Finger Lakes Daily News, "Geneva Lakefront Damage Could Cost Millions," May 11, 2026, reporting Lakefront Park damage, erosion, sinkholes, wave action, and potential repair costs up to \$4 million, <https://www.fingerlakesdailynews.com/local/geneva-lakefront-damage-could-cost-millions/>.

<sup>3</sup>NOAA Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service, Seneca Lake at Geneva gauge, action stage 447.50 feet and minor flooding 448.00 feet, accessed May 12, 2026, <https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/gnvn6>.

<sup>4</sup>NOAA Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service, Seneca Lake at Geneva gauge, flood stage categories and current lake-level information, accessed May 12, 2026, <https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/gnvn6>.

<sup>5</sup>FingerLakes1.com, "Waves damage Geneva lakefront as repair costs climb," May 10, 2026, summarizing reported wave damage, near-record lake levels, flood-stage water impacts, and potential repair costs, <https://www.fingerlakes1.com/2026/05/10/waves-damage-geneva-lakefront-as-repair-costs-climb/>.

- The draft resolution identifies additional damage and repair needs involving Lakefront Park seawalls, Marsh Creek culverts, municipal facilities, public rights-of-way, and essential utility systems.<sup>6</sup>
- The regional nature of the damage matters. Lake levels, tributary flows, stormwater systems, watershed runoff, and shoreline impacts cross municipal and county boundaries.

## Legal and Policy Basis

New York State Executive Law Article 2-B establishes the state and local disaster-preparedness framework. It states local government and emergency service organizations serve as the first line of defense in disasters, with the State providing appropriate supportive services as needed.<sup>7</sup>

Executive Law § 28 authorizes the Governor to declare a State Disaster Emergency when a disaster has occurred or is imminent and local governments lack adequate capacity to respond. The same section allows a declaration to be made on the Governor’s initiative or after a request from one or more chief executives.<sup>8</sup>

This legal structure supports Geneva’s approach. The Mayor and City Council should frame the resolution as both a local request and the beginning of a multi-municipal regional request.

## Key Policy Rationale for Council Action

Rationale	Council Consideration
<b>Public Safety</b>	Erosion, sinkholes, shoreline damage, high water, and wave action create risk to public access, trails, parks, roads, culverts, and utilities.
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	Preliminary Geneva damages are estimated in the millions, with reported Lakefront Park repair needs reaching up to \$4 million.
<b>Regional Impact</b>	The damage is tied to shared lake levels, runoff, tributaries, shoreline systems, and watershed conditions.
<b>Eligibility Preservation</b>	Fast documentation and state review protect the City’s ability to pursue reimbursement and future mitigation support.
<b>Intergovernmental Leverage</b>	A shared resolution across municipalities creates a stronger request than a single-city appeal.

## Fiscal Impact

- The resolution itself has no direct fiscal appropriation.
- The underlying damage creates significant potential fiscal exposure for the City, including emergency work, engineering, shoreline stabilization, stormwater repairs, culvert repairs, park repairs, public-access restoration, and long-term mitigation.
- The resolution improves Geneva’s position to seek state review, state assistance, federal assistance if eligible, and agency coordination.
- Staff should separately track emergency costs, permanent repair estimates, staff time, contractor costs, materials, equipment use, and engineering invoices by location and damage category.

## Recommended Council Action

1. Adopt the attached resolution requesting a New York State Disaster Emergency declaration.
2. Direct the City Clerk to transmit the adopted resolution to the Governor, DHSES, NYSDOT, NYSDEC, State Parks, Canal Corporation, state legislators, Ontario County, nearby counties, and affected municipalities.
3. Direct the City Manager to prepare a site-by-site damage inventory, including photos, cost estimates, engineering needs, emergency work already completed, and public-safety impacts.
4. Authorize the Mayor to circulate a model resolution and cover letter to other affected municipalities and county leaders.
5. Request a coordinated regional meeting with DHSES, Ontario County Emergency Management, lakefront municipalities, and relevant state agencies.

<sup>6</sup>City of Geneva, Draft Resolution No. \_\_\_\_ of 2026, provided May 2026.

<sup>7</sup>New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, NYS Executive Law Article 2-B, § 20, natural and man-made disasters policy, <https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/06/nys-executive-law-article-2b.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup>New York State Senate, Executive Law § 28, State declaration of disaster emergency, accessed May 12, 2026, <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EXC/28>.

## Recommended Documentation Package

- Site name and precise location.
- Damage category and cause.
- Date observed and date photographed.
- Photos and video.
- Emergency work completed.
- Estimated permanent repair cost.
- Engineering or contractor estimate status.
- Public-safety impact.
- Operational impact.
- Staff time, equipment, materials, and invoices.
- Map of damage locations.

## Recommended Talking Points

- This is a regional watershed event, not an isolated maintenance issue.
- Geneva is acting early to protect residents, public infrastructure, public access, and taxpayers.
- The City is seeking state partnership, technical support, damage validation, and access to recovery resources.
- A unified regional request gives affected municipalities a stronger voice in Albany.
- The City should document every eligible cost now to protect future reimbursement options.

## Attachment

- Resolution No. 26 of 2026, Requesting a New York State Disaster Emergency Declaration for 2026 Finger Lakes Storm, Flooding, High-Water, Shoreline, and Infrastructure Damage.

## RESOLUTION # 26-2026

### REQUESTING A NEW YORK STATE DISASTER EMERGENCY DECLARATION FOR 2026 FINGER LAKES STORM, FLOODING, HIGH-WATER, SHORELINE, AND INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE

**WHEREAS**, the City of Geneva and communities across the Finger Lakes region have experienced repeated spring 2026 precipitation events, saturated soils, elevated runoff, stormwater impacts, high lake levels, wave action, shoreline erosion, and related infrastructure damage; and

**WHEREAS**, Seneca Lake at Geneva exceeded action stage and approached minor flood stage, creating sustained public-safety, shoreline, stormwater, transportation, recreation, and infrastructure concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Geneva has sustained significant damage to public infrastructure and public assets, including Lakefront Park, shoreline protection structures, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, stormwater systems, culverts, public access areas, and related municipal facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, preliminary estimates indicate City of Geneva damage and repair needs in the range of approximately \$3 million to \$5 million, subject to engineering review, state validation, and continued assessment; and

**WHEREAS**, damage at Lakefront Park includes shoreline erosion, sinkholes, public-access hazards, and damage worsened by elevated lake levels and wave action; and

**WHEREAS**, damage to Marsh Creek culverts and related drainage infrastructure presents regional stormwater, transportation, and public-safety concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, these conditions are not limited to one municipality, because stormwater, lake levels, tributary flows, shoreline impacts, and watershed conditions cross municipal and county boundaries; and

**WHEREAS**, New York State Executive Law Article 2-B recognizes local governments as the first line of defense in disasters and authorizes state support when local response capacity is exceeded; and

**WHEREAS**, under New York State Executive Law § 28, the Governor is authorized to declare a State Disaster Emergency when a disaster has occurred or is imminent and local governments are unable to respond adequately; and

**WHEREAS**, Executive Law § 28 also permits such a declaration after a request from one or more local chief executives; and

**WHEREAS**, the scale, cost, regional nature, and continuing risk of the 2026 storm, flooding, high-water, shoreline, and infrastructure damage exceed the capacity of individual municipalities to address without state assistance; and

**WHEREAS**, a coordinated regional damage assessment is necessary to determine eligibility for state assistance, federal assistance, emergency protective measures, public infrastructure repair, and long-term mitigation support; now, therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of Geneva hereby requests that Governor Kathy Hochul declare a State Disaster Emergency under New York State Executive Law § 28 for the Finger Lakes communities affected by 2026 storm, flooding, high-water, shoreline, and infrastructure damage; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the City Council requests that the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services coordinate with affected counties, municipalities, and state agencies to conduct regional Preliminary Damage Assessments for public infrastructure, public facilities, emergency protective measures, debris removal, water-control facilities, roads, bridges, culverts, utilities, parks, shoreline protection structures, and other eligible damage categories; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the City Council requests that the Governor pursue all available state and federal assistance, including any appropriate request for federal assistance if validated damage thresholds and eligibility requirements are met; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the City Council calls upon affected counties, cities, towns, and villages across the Finger Lakes region to adopt similar resolutions, submit local damage data, and join a unified regional request for state action; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the City Council requests support from the New York State Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Conservation, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Canal Corporation, and other relevant agencies to assist with emergency stabilization, technical review, permitting coordination, public-safety measures, and long-term mitigation planning; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the City Council supports a coordinated regional mitigation strategy addressing shoreline resilience, culvert capacity, stormwater systems, watershed management, floodplain protection, and long-term projects including, where appropriate, Castle Creek daylighting, Marsh Creek improvements, and lakefront resiliency improvements; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the City Clerk is directed to transmit this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, the New York State Department of Transportation, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the New York State Canal Corporation, Senator Pamela Helming, Assemblymember Jeff Gallahan, Ontario County, surrounding counties, and affected cities, towns, and villages in the Finger Lakes region.