

Community Update

A Bi-weekly News Report on the City of Olean
From the Desk of Mayor Linda Witte



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Budget adopted March 27

The 2012-2013 Budget for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2013 was passed into law March 27 in a 6-1 vote of the Olean Common Council.

My preliminary plan -- and its associated \$14.64 per \$1,000 tax rate -- would not have increased property taxes, but after heeding the State Comptroller’s recommendations and negotiating with aldermen, I agreed to adjust my plan to reduce the property tax by 1.01 percent. The preliminary general fund was reduced by \$162,264 and the preliminary tax levy was reduced by \$72,264, while the tax rate in the final approved budget became \$14.49 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. In the Executive Budget Message, below, I state the water and sewer funds were also reduced slightly, but carry a 1% increase in rates. The contingency fund has grown to a safe level and equals 4.68 percent of our operating expenses.

In my *Executive Budget Message* (see excerpt in italics) of March 28, 2012, I express a wish to avoid burdening taxpayers or cutting services. The budget passed “*Despite ever-rising pension costs, declining state revenue, and cost of living expenditures.... Included in the budget is a 1% increase in water and sewer rates - the first increase in the water rates in three years – and slightly boosted manpower and funding to continue repairs of infrastructure. ... we hope to improve our efficiency and make our city more responsive to taxpayer needs. ... I am happy to announce that we have completed our five year plan, and at this time we are updating it to include modifications to the current plan....*

Anyone who would like to review the budget as adopted can visit the City Auditor’s office or see my secretary, Kathy.

JCC named top performer

During a recent Mayor’s Executive Forum Jamestown Community College President Dr. Gregory T. DeCinque that the college has been named the “Top Performing Public Two-Year College” in New York in a report issued by The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Dr. DeCinque recalled the Olean business community’s strong support to keep the campus in the city when the \$30 million expansion question came up. He said the Cattaraugus County campus enrollment has increased from nine percent of area high school graduates to 21 percent in the eight years since the Olean expansion.

Also during the Forum Campus Dean John Sayegh and the new Continuing Education Director Keith Kranick informed the business leaders of the many options available for JCC’s workforce and corporate training programs. They pointed out that these are tools (continuing education, specialized technical courses, corporate training in house and in partnerships among several businesses) to help drive the local economy and attract more businesses and employers to the area.

Mayor Linda Witte cast a swing vote for the controversial JCC expansion while serving as a Cattaraugus County Legislator. She is a JCC graduate and, like several of the executives attending the Forum, her children are able to carry JCC’s transferable New Vision high school course credits to institutions of higher learning.

Congratulations JCC on your achievement!

NY bans synthetic marijuana sales

New York State Health Commissioner Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H. has issued an order of summary action banning the sale of synthetic marijuana products in New York State. These substances, generally referred to as “synthetic marijuana”, consist of plant material coated by chemicals that mimic THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. These products are being sold as a “legal alternative” to marijuana in convenience stores, smoke shops, and tobacco stores with brand names such as “Spice”, “K2”, “Mr. Nice Guy”, and “Galaxy Gold.”

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo called upon the Department of Health to take action to ban the sale of these dangerous products. The order states, “synthetic cannabinoids have been linked to severe adverse reactions, including death and acute renal failure, and commonly cause: tachycardia (increased heart rate); paranoid behavior, agitation and irritability; nausea and vomiting; confusion; drowsiness; headache; hypertension; electrolyte abnormalities; seizures; and syncope (loss of consciousness).”

The Commissioner’s order calls for sales and distribution of these products to cease immediately. And it calls upon local health officials to distribute the order and check for compliance.

Last week, the Commissioner sent special health alerts to local health departments, emergency departments and other health care providers to make them aware of the dangers of these products.

To find out more about the Order for Summary Action, contact the New York State Department of Health or your local Health Department.

The photo of Olean Creek on Page 1 was snapped at sunset on the Main Street Bridge, facing west and overlooking Route 16. (Photo Credit: Mayor Linda Witte)

Merchant Focus: Sears



March 19, 2012: Mayor Linda Witte officially welcomed another new business in the community: a Sears and Roebuck branch store in a new space at the Olean Centre Mall. She clipped the red ribbon using a brand-new Craftsman lopper. Flanking Mayor Witte, l-r, are sales clerk Brian Austin, District Manager Gary Altieri, Owner of the Bradford and Olean stores Chris Work, Manager Kim Tharnish, and sales clerk John Coulter. Welcome back to Olean Sears and Roebuck, staff and friends!

Announcements:

Work is progressing on the new site of **Scott Rotary Seals** in North Olean (above).

Olean City Police Captain Randy Langdon retired from the force on March 30, 2012. He signed on with the Department 31 years ago. Good luck Randy!

Congratulations are also in order to the **St. Bonaventure Bonnies Ladies Basketball Team!** It was hard to ignore your talent from the beginning of the season and Mayor Witte delighted in watching you progress through the spectacular conclusion of this season. You made her and all residents of the Southern Tier proud to be fans!

Scott Rotary Seals coming soon!



Health Care and Social Responsibility



Wendy Johnson, M.D., delivered the keynote speech to a Health Care Access Coalition event held Saturday, March 31 in Christ United Methodist Church. The topic was “Am I My Brother’s Keeper: Health Care and Social Responsibility,” was also tackled by several local, regional and international experts from the medical and faith perspectives.

Capital Improvements: War Vets Park first to sprout playground upgrades



***Merchant Spotlight:
CVS sports a bright new look***



***Paper Factory "boutique" opens
(Vera Bradley, Crabtree & Evelyn featured)***

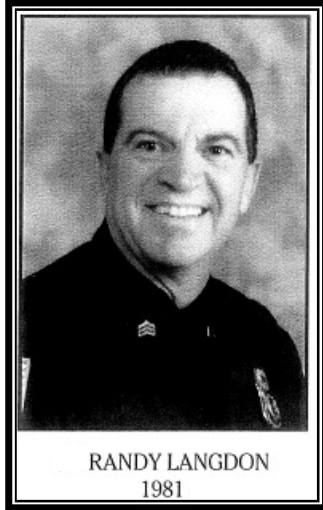


***Haggerty Field : a partnership
between Sol Epoxy, JCC and the city***

The field will reopen soon to provide space for the JCC girls' softball team. Here, the Parks Department workers prepare the field for playing.



Retiring after 31 years with Olean Police



At the end of March 2012 Captain Randy Langdon retired his badge after 31 years with the City of Olean Police Department.

His friends, family and co-workers will honor him with a retirement party on April 27.

We wish you all the best Randy and thanks for your many years of service to our community!

“Woodland in the City” population expanded March 31 with squirrel unveiling



“InVINCEable,” sponsored by Olean Trans Am on West Sullivan Street, was unveiled March 31 as the newest addition to the city’s fiberglass squirrel collection. It is named for Vince Houghtaling, 9, (l), who received immediate treatment during a cardiac emergency suffered in 2009 near the Trans Am headquarters.



How can the city help?

By Mayor Linda Witte

As your Mayor I continue to have an Open Door Policy. You can contact my office at 376-5615 with questions and complaints.

2012 City Directories are available in my office. These list the phone numbers of the Department Heads and Alderman.

Phone numbers and other information are also available on the city’s website, www.cityofolean.org.

We want your suggestions! Employee salary information is available on the website www.SeeThroughNY.net

Aldermen can be contacted as below:

Jim Brady, Cncl. Pres. Ward 1: 372-3692

Ann McLaughlin, Ward 2: 560-8407 (c)

Christina Kamery, Ward 3: 307-7457

Matt Keller, Ward 4: 585-378-0557

Jim Finch, Ward 5: 373-0163

Nate Smith, Ward 6: 307-8199

Tom Morgan, Ward 7: 373-4860

To leave a message for an aldermen call 376-5635. To correspond with city employees and officials, type the first initial of the first name, the full last name, @, and cityofolean.org.

In the meantime, I encourage you to enjoy our parks and trails, some of the amenities that give our city such a fantastic quality of life -- get outside to see, smell and hear the signs of spring in our city!

