

# Around & About Olean

News and information from the Mayor's Office  
at 101 East State Street.



William J. Aiello was sworn in by the Honorable Daniel Palumbo, Olean City Court Judge, for second term as Mayor of the City of Olean on January 2, 2018. His wife, Patty, held the bible during the swearing-in ceremony.

In addition Kelly Andreano, Alderman Ward 2, Kevin Dougherty, Alderman Ward 4, Nate Smith, Alderman Ward 6 and Brian George, Alderman Ward 7, were all sworn for new terms on the Olean Common Council. No changes in the personnel of the Common Council this year, however John Crawford, Alderman Ward 5, was voted in as President, replacing Paul Gonzalez, Alderman Ward 1.

During the meeting Mayor Aiello gave the annual State of the City address in which he unveiled his theme for the year: *Turning Challenges into Opportunities*. In addition he discussed a number of ways that city departments and employees work with businesses and residents to make Olean a better place to live.

The [speech](#) is posted on the City's Website. Throughout this newsletter are quotes from the State of the City Address.





The Mayor's Conference Room or Room 119 in the City Building is alive with the presence of Mayor's past. Olean's first mayor was Nicholas Van Vranker Franchot. He served as Mayor for two terms or fours years (1894-1898). He was also appointed as the State Superintendent of Public Works by Governor Higgins. He held that position for three years. He was an oil man and served as president of Mid-Continent Producers and was the Chairman of the Exchange Bank. He died on May 6, 1943.



G. Howard Strong was the second Mayor of Olean. He was one of the largest owners of oil and gas wells in the area. He served as Mayor of Olean from 1898 until 1900.

He was married to Anna McIntosh Strong, who was the founding regent of the Olean Daughters of the American Revolution.

The Strong's home, the Elms, was on the corner of First and Laurens. Mr. Strong was secretary and treasurer of the Electric Railway of Olean and was on the board of directors of the Exchange Bank and the Olean Building and Loan Association



Alexander Utecht retired from his position as City Clerk on December 29, 2017. Having served as Clerk for 11 ½ years, Mr. Utecht oversaw a number of technological improvements in customer service. The most recent change was the switch from quarterly to monthly water billing. His knowledge of Olean and his dedication to the Clerk's office will be missed by staff and residents. And the first floor staff members will miss his end of the day, cheery farewell, "Good night down there."

The City Building staff feted Mr. Utecht with a cake in the conference room on his last official day.

## From the Office of Mayor Bill Aiello

We welcome in a new year — and I think 2018 is going to be an excellent year for Olean.

During the past year Olean has seen continual revival—new businesses have opened their doors and construction continues on buildings that have been long forgotten and abandoned.

We still have a lot to do and it is important that we stay motivated. Luckily the community received the \$10 million dollar downtown revitalization grant in September. The consulting group, Urban Strategies, is

working with the Local Planning Committee to go through the proposals and determine which ones will receive funding.

In the meantime other exciting things are taking place in our community. The recreation center refurbishment was completed in record time—the ice was ready in September and has been used steadily.

At Oak Hill Park the Laurens Street Steps are almost done, a project that was funded by Erick and Marianne Laine in conjunction with the Cattaraugus

County Regional Foundation.

New flooring was installed at the John Ash Community Center. The OATS bus took on an extra run. There are two new scoreboards at Bradner Stadium, both privately funded. A number of streets were restored during the year—including the heavily travelled Wayne Street. And the Olean Beautification Committee is working to make our gardens eye-catching. Stay tuned for more next month!



## Honoring Olean's Public Safety Departments



"For generations the Olean Police and Fire Departments have worked hard to keep Olean residents safe. Over the past year the two departments were very busy and I would like to thank the personnel in both departments for their bravery and dedication to our community. They never know what to expect when they walk into work. They are faced with a different challenge everyday and many of their acts of bravery go unnoticed. However this fall, our community got to see them on the job, working together, to save both lives and property.

"A fire that started in the early morning hours on Oak Street in late October could have led to a terrible tragedy. It was late at night, tenants were sleeping, there were children on the third floor and the house stood very close to the house next door.

"I want to personally thank the police officers who first responded and helped the tenants to evacuate the house to safety. They were Captain Andrew Langdon, Patrolmen Matthew Schnell, Kyle Baldwin and William Beggs. And I want to personally thank Captain Theodore and Platoon A. They were the first on the scene from the Olean Fire Department. In addition Firefighter Nate Veno assisted Captain Langdon in rescuing a tenant in the front of the house.

"The firefighters did an excellent job, fighting a ferocious fire and preventing it from spreading to the neighboring house. Their expertise is commendable.

"But what makes Olean a great place to live is what happened after the fire. The patrolmen who helped the children to safety had lunch with them a few days later. And City Building employees, along with other agencies, businesses and individuals throughout the community joined together to help the residents who were displaced by the fire to get back on their feet and begin to rebuild their lives."



### Turning Challenges Into Opportunities



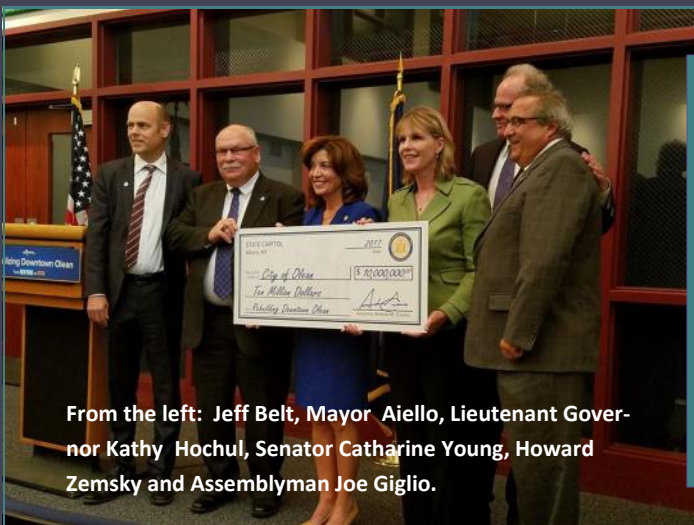
“When I stood over a water main break a couple of years back, I learned first-hand that the weather challenges Olean faces can look overwhelming but with a professional staff working together to solve a problem—Olean is second to none.

“I heard something at a breakfast lecture a few weeks ago at JCC that caught my attention. The speaker said that the combination of strong teamwork and the creative problem solving can help turn challenges into opportunity. As he was speaking, I immediately thought of that water main break—an excellent example that Olean’s limited resources encourage imaginative and creative approaches to the inevitable challenges that we face as a small city in Western New York”

“In April 2017, after the Home Show; Kinley Corporation as the general contractor, started dismantling the William O. Smith Recreation Center. They were on a very strict time line. The Rec. Center’s Ice is a hot commodity in Olean and it had to be ready in September for recreational skaters as well as the many hockey teams that rely on the rink throughout the winter. The \$3.2 million project was aided by grants secured by Senator Cathy Young in the amount of \$200,000, from a grant from New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in the amount of \$500,000 and a grant from Empire State Development in the amount of \$420,000.”



“The City’s investment in this project guarantees that the next generation of Olean residents can enjoy the benefits of the pool in the summer and the ice rink in the winter.”



From the left: Jeff Belt, Mayor Aiello, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, Senator Catharine Young, Howard Zemsky and Assemblyman Joe Giglio.

“Early autumn brought some excitement to Olean. The community was thrilled that Olean was selected to receive 10 million dollars of funding for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, a program introduced by Governor Cuomo to improve the vitality of urban centers across New York State. Urban Strategies, a consultant team, is working with the Local Planning Committee—a group of residents from our community. Together they will assess the opportunities and the potential projects that could occur in our downtown. The Local Planning Committee will select the projects that continue our downtown revitalization and eligible projects will be approved for funding by the Governor’s Office.”



“Every year in June, members of the City’s Police and Fire Departments join the Boy Scouts and other members of our community in a tradition that started in 1995. Through their joint efforts, a portion of Franchot Park is transformed into a vibrant and fragrant garden.”

## MANY HELPING HANDS MAKE OLEAN SPARKLE IN THE SUMMER.

“And speaking of the gardens and our parks there are a number of groups and volunteers, who, year after year, keep the streets and parks in Olean free of litter--organized groups such as the Zonta Club and groups of concerned citizens such as Lila Ervay’s Litter Control Program, Revitalizing Olean, the State and Union Group and other volunteers who not only pick up litter, but tend to the gardens at the Bartlett House and the other City owned facilities. Their hard work and dedication to our community does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated.”



“In June, the Youth and Recreation program at St. John’s winds down and the staff gears-up for the summer program—a program that has seen, during the past four years, participation by well over 400 children—per year, who take part in the numerous events and activities that are planned daily. Local businesses underwrite some of the costs of this amazing summer program.

“And by June, the entertainment has been booked for 10 weeks of Thursday night concerts at the Gazebo in Lincoln Park. The Gazebo was funded many years ago by the Rotary Club, who most recently funded the Silent Policeman in the corner of Lincoln Park--reminiscent of the direction marker that stood in the intersection of State and Union long before my time.”



Keri Kerper



Lens Martial



Bob Ring



Kris Shewairy

As for personnel, the City has had some major changes over the year.

Long term Youth and Recreation Director John Anastasia retired in August. Kris Shewairy was recently appointed to the position of director.

Mary George who served as Community Development Director for many years, retired in September. Keri Kerper was appointed Director of this very busy office.

Alex Utecht retired as City Clerk at the end of December. Lens Martial has been appointed to the position of City Clerk In the State of the City, Mayor Aiello thank all three retirees for their dedication to Olean. He said that they worked tirelessly to make our community a great place to live and they will be missed.

During the year Tom Windus, Olean’s DPW Director, resigned from his position and Bob Ring was appointed to replace him.

Three of the new Department Heads have served the City in the past. Keri Kerper in Community Development, Bob Ring in the Engineering Department and Kris Shewairy in the Parks Department.

### Making Wedding Plans?



Mayor Aiello is available to perform marriage ceremonies in the City of Olean. Please call his office (376-5615) for more details. There is no set fee, however any donations will be placed in the Mayor’s Scholarship

Fund.

New York State law requires you to obtain a marriage license twenty-four hours prior to a marriage ceremony. For more information about marriage licenses please call the Department of Vital Records at 376-5605 or the City Clerk at 376-5604.

Many marriages are performed right in the Mayor’s Office. The John Ash Community Center on Barry Street is an excellent spot for a reception as are Olean’s various parks facilities. For more information on the city’s facilities please call 376-5666.



### Seniors are Never Bored In Olean

The Olean Senior Center located at the John Ash Community Center on North Barry Street has many activities and programs for those age 55 and above. The monthly calendar is now on the city’s website under the [Youth and Recreation Department-Olean Senior Center](#).

For more information please contact: 376-5670 or [seniorcenter@cityofolean.org](mailto:seniorcenter@cityofolean.org).



The City’s website is great source of up-to-date information. Please visit it at [cityofolean.org](http://cityofolean.org). In addition the city has a Face Book page and Twitter feed—all are excellent sources for information.

*“I’m open to suggestions and I’d like to hear from people. If we’re doing something you think is right, I’d like to know. If we’re doing something you think is wrong, I’d like to know. If you have suggestions for me, I beg you pass them along.”*

—Mayor Aiello, January 2, 2014



You can reach the mayor at his office in the Olean Municipal Building at 101 East State Street in Olean, or by phone at 716 376-5615, or by e-mail at [waiello@cityofolean.org](mailto:waiello@cityofolean.org)

