

# A YEAR IN Review

A YEARLY NEWSLETTER FROM MAYOR BARLOW



William J. Barlow, Jr.  
City of Oswego Mayor

www.oswegony.org  
Mayor Billy Barlow

## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MAYOR

Dear City of Oswego Residents,

As we wrap up 2018, I wanted to take the opportunity to craft a third City of Oswego newsletter to keep our constituents apprised and current with Oswego City government happenings. I'm proud to have continued our successes from 2016 and 2017 with another productive and progressive year as we work together to keep moving Oswego forward. I'd like to thank the Common Council for their support and cooperation throughout the year and I look forward to continuing our work together as we build upon the momentum that exists throughout our City.

As Mayor, I believe it's important that our City government makes an honest effort to keep our residents informed about our accomplishments and what we continue to work on at City Hall as we move forward. As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office for assistance in the future!

William J. Barlow, Jr.  
City of Oswego Mayor

## 2018-19 COMMON COUNCIL

**SUSAN MCBREARTY**  
1st Ward Councilor  
Phone: (315) 343-2462

**LINDA DEMASSI**  
2nd Ward Councilor  
Phone: (315) 529-5177

**KEVIN HILL**  
3rd Ward Councilor  
Phone: (315) 591-1786

**ROBERT WILMOTT**  
4th Ward Councilor  
Phone: (315) 591-7461

**JOHN GOSEK**  
5th Ward Councilor  
Phone: (315) 591-1677

**RONALD TESORIERO**  
6th Ward Councilor  
Phone: (315) 806-1660

**ROBERT CORRADINO**  
7th Ward Councilor  
Phone: (315) 342-0612

## 2019 CITY BUDGET – FIRST TAX CUT IN 20 YEARS!

For the first time since 1999, City government was able to reduce the tax rate. In late August, we passed a City budget reducing city property taxes 2.4%, shrinking a tax bill on a home assessed at \$80,000 by \$28 a year. **Additionally, we did not use the City's saving account, known as the general fund, to accomplish this tax cut.** To put that in perspective, in 1999 when the last tax cut was issued, \$2.8 million of the general fund was used to balance the budget. We issued this tax cut with no use of the general fund. After looking through City budgets dating back to 1969, we cannot find a City budget that cut taxes without using the general fund to do so. The real property tax decrease is largely due to our overall \$1.5 million reduction in spending since taking office in January of 2016, particularly in City-wide overtime, and our return-on-investment-driven strategy bearing tangible results. Some other highlights of the 2019 City budget include a \$250,000 investment to our municipal buildings, \$50,000 to address our inadequate technology infrastructure and \$15,000 to establish a workforce development center in our Section 8 Rental Assistance Office for our clients.

## CITY OF OSWEGO TOTAL OVERTIME PAYROLL

2015	2016	2017	2018
\$1,228,384	\$1,008,503	\$857,395	\$850,100

\*Data as of 12/5/18

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION UPDATE

Several of our \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiatives projects are underway. Housing Visions now owns the former Flexo wire site and has started their site remediation work. Construction on the \$20 million housing project will begin in Summer 2019. The Children's Museum of Oswego has started their renovation and expansion project, the proposed waterpark has broken ground, the Market Street Pocket Park is under contract to begin in the Spring, the make-over to our State Route 104 Corridor between West First and West Third Streets is on schedule to begin in the Spring and in November we officially cut the ribbon and re-opened the historic Cahill Building. We've also launched the Downtown Improvement Fund and awarded 20 downtown small businesses with funding to conduct various projects both large and small, leveraging an anticipated \$1.5 million in private investment.

## CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

We continue to push and improve our code enforcement efforts by passing new legislation and implementing new ideas to be more effective in our efforts to hold negligent landlords accountable and reduce blight in our community. In 2018 we passed legislation strengthening our ability to enforce nuisance violations like un-shoveled sidewalks and tall grass, especially for repeat offenders. We also implemented a new fine structure for violators that escalates after every violation, creating larger fines for properties that are consistently in violation. We instituted a policy with Oswego County Department of Social Services requiring landlords receiving rental assistance payments for their tenants from the Oswego County Department of Social Services to demonstrate compliance with all City of Oswego laws and regulations and must possess a valid City of Oswego Rental Permit. The partnership, through a Memorandum of Understanding, ensures collaboration between the Department of Social Services and the City of Oswego Department of Code Enforcement allowing the two departments to work together to ensure that tenants relying on rental assistance from the Department of Social Services are placed in property in the City of Oswego that is code-compliant and has a valid rental permit. This partnership ensures DSS clients are placed in safe, quality housing and increases the accountability of landlords accepting payments comprised of taxpayer money.

## IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITY

The Oswego Harbor Trail was re-opened after we completed the \$225,000 renovation project to improve and revitalize the trail. The Oswego Harbor Trail is located around the bottom of Breitbeck Park and has a pedestrian walkway along the Lake Ontario waterfront. The \$225,000 project was funded through a 2016 LWRRP grant the City received, administered by the City of Oswego and completed by the Oswego Department of Public Works. The improvements include two new scenic overlooks at Breitbeck Park, two seating pads along Harbor Trail and the waterfront, a walkable dock in the harbor and substantial clearing of weeds and overgrown brush, allowing access to the water along the entire length of the trail. Previously, Harbor Trail was overgrown with dense weeds and brush, discouraging pedestrians from using the trail and degrading what should've been the most picturesque scene in the City of Oswego. **We also constructed and opened the first ever City of Oswego Dog Park, repainted the Oswego Lighthouse with help from a \$100,000 grant from Assemblyman Will Barclay and replaced the aging Kingsford Park School Playground with a brand new playground. Lastly, you'll notice the ongoing public space improvement project at the five way "forks in the road" intersection along State Route 104, beautifying our gateway.**

## RESIDENT RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

In early Spring we launched the City of Oswego Resident Recruitment Initiative, a partnership between the City of Oswego and four major employers in and around the Oswego community. The Resident Recruitment Initiative is a comprehensive guide and introduction to the Oswego community to be given to new recruits and new employees to the four major employers upon their hiring and orientation. Four major employers in the Oswego area, Oswego Health, SUNY Oswego, Novelis, and Exelon have all agreed to participate in the Resident Recruitment Initiative as a way to partner with the City of Oswego to encourage employees to live local and be involved in the Oswego community. Historically, the City of Oswego has failed to capitalize on capturing the local workforce and encouraging people who work in Oswego to actually live in Oswego and a few years ago that problem perhaps was well deserved. After three years of progress and revitalization, we are a completely different community and our story needs to be shared to encourage new hires and the employees of our major employers to consider living in Oswego rather than commuting from outside of Oswego daily. The Resident Recruitment Initiative contains a prepared pamphlet with information about the Oswego community including summaries of different neighborhoods and parks throughout the City, nearby tourist attractions, major annual events, information on the Oswego City School District, local healthcare and much more information on local civic organizations, additional resources and important contacts.

### 2018 – A Year of Accomplishments for the City of Oswego

- ✓ \$827,000 worth of road paving on City streets, plus Routes 481 & 104
- ✓ \$80,000 of repaired or replaced City sidewalks
- ✓ Secured a \$500,000 grant for the restoration of Oswego City Hall
- ✓ Secured a \$500,000 grant for improvements to the City animal shelter
- ✓ Eliminated all entry fees for the Charles E. Gallagher Swimming Pool
- ✓ Eliminated all entry fees for City of Oswego public ice skating
- ✓ Placed victims of domestic violence on a top priority list for housing assistance and placement
- ✓ Permanently passed the Home Improvement and Business Improvement Tax Exemptions
- ✓ Installed the first municipal electric car charging station downtown
- ✓ Placed four handicap device charging stations throughout the City
- ✓ Banned the blacktopping of front yard green space
- ✓ Planted over 120 trees in public space throughout the City
- ✓ Refurbished all war memorial monuments throughout the City
- ✓ Conducted a homelessness canvassing analysis project
- ✓ Launched the Oswego Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative
- ✓ Passed the Social Host Law to reduce late night neighborhood disruption
- ✓ Revived the City of Oswego Softball league at Legend's Field using Champions Events
- ✓ Started a multifaceted tourism campaign highlighting our unique assets
- ✓ Implemented officer body cameras throughout the Oswego Police Department

## CODE ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
Reported Complaints	526	1,582	2,046	1,822
Reported Violations	974	2,106	3,510	2,812

\*Data as of 12/5/18

