

**A Citizen's Report**  
on  
**A Meeting of the Corning City Council**

**March 2, 2026**

The Council for the City of Corning, New York held its regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Council Chambers, Civic Center Plaza, Corning, New York.

All Councilmembers attended the meeting except Councilmember Hyde. Counting City of Corning employees, 23 members of the public were in the audience.

**Adoption of a Pro-Housing Communities Pledge and Support Seeking Certification as a Pro-Housing Community**

*Background:*

*According to a presentation by Jen Miller, Director of Planning and Economic Development, adopting the Pro-Housing Communities Pledge is a requirement for the state to certify Corning as a Pro-Housing Community. The state must certify Corning for it to be able apply for money from a variety of New York State funding sources, some of which the state has recently linked to a Pro-Housing Communities Pledge and certification. These sources include:*

- *The Downtown Revitalization Initiative*
- *NY Forward Program*
- *Regional Council Capital Fund*
- *Market New York*
- *Public Transportation Modernization Enhancement Program*

*Ms. Miller feels that Corning has already adopted many policies and programs that are congruent with the Pro Housing Communities program. She feels that obtaining certification and keeping it will be a handleable task for the city, while opening possibilities it currently doesn't have.*

*Mr. Ryckman expressed concern, which Councilmembers Baccales and Hunt later echoed, that there is no program manual defining what it means to adopt the Pro-Housing Communities Pledge and to seek certification. The resolution before the Council is, substantially, that which the state requires. For example, it pledges that the city will adopt policies that affirmatively further fair housing. The question is: whose policies? Are they state policies?*

*Can they be local? Another question: how does a city withdraw if it wants to? Upon withdrawal, does the state claw back funds it granted?*

*Usually, a program manual answers these types of questions. There isn't one. Instead, Mr. Ryckman, Mayor Walker and Ms. Miller met with a person in authority at the New York State Homes and Community Renewal division, which runs the Pro-Housing Communities program. Ms. Miller, Mayor Walker, and he were satisfied with the information they received. However, they have added, to the form resolution, the last two Whereas clauses as a means of asserting the home-rule independence of the city.*

*Mayor Walker stated her position for the record. In summary, she said that developers can choose where to invest. Visitors can choose from many charming downtown areas to visit. If Corning is not among the Pro-Housing Communities, it will not be eligible for funds needed to ensure that Corning is the place developers and visitors will choose in the future. There have already been nine rounds of grants given under the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) program alone. These grants are taxpayer dollars that Corning residents have paid to the state which have gone to other cities. There is a 10<sup>th</sup> round of DRI grant consideration coming up. After that, funding for the program is not certain. Corning cannot afford to miss the 10<sup>th</sup> round, which gives it a chance at a \$10 million dollar revitalization grant. This money will not be available if Corning is not a Pro-Housing Community, which itself is a program affirming positive values that the city's own newly adopted Comprehensive Plan endorses.*

*During the time for community comment, several citizens representing various business and civic organizations spoke in favor of Corning becoming certified as a Pro Housing Community.*

Thereafter, the Council unanimously adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Corning believes that the lack of housing for New York State residents of all ages and income levels negatively impacts the future of New York's State's economic growth and community well-being; and

WHEREAS, the housing crisis has negative effects at regional and local levels, and we believe that every community must do their part to contribute to housing growth and benefit from the positive impacts a healthy housing market brings to communities; and

WHEREAS, we believe that supporting housing production of all kinds in our community will bring multiple benefits, including increasing housing access and choices for current and future residents, providing integrated accessible housing options that meets the needs of people with sensory and mobility disabilities, bringing economic opportunities and vitality to our communities, and allowing workers at all levels to improve their quality of life through living closer to their employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, we believe that evidence showing that infill development reduces sprawl and supports walkable communities has significant environmental and public health benefits; and

WHEREAS, we believe that affirmatively furthering fair housing and reducing segregation is not only required by law, but is essential for keeping our community strong and vibrant; and

WHEREAS, the City of Corning adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan on December 11, 2025 which included a goal of providing a range of housing opportunities and identified the Pro-Housing Communities program as a strategy for supporting housing, community, and economic development projects; and

WHEREAS, the City maintains Home Rule authority, which includes authority over adopting zoning and other policies that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the City of Corning, in order to take positive steps to alleviate the housing crisis, adopts the Pro-Housing Communities Pledge, which will have us endeavor to take the following important steps:

1. Streamlining permitting multifamily housing, affordable housing, accessible housing accessory dwelling units, and supportive housing.
2. Adopting policies that affirmatively further fair housing.
3. Incorporating regional housing needs into planning decisions,
4. Increasing development capacity for residential uses.
5. Enacting policies that encourage a broad range of housing development, including multifamily housing, affordable housing, accessible housing, accessory dwelling units, and supportive housing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Corning City Council authorizes the City Manager or their designee to submit the required documentation to New York State Homes and Community Renewal to seek Pro-Housing Program certification.

**Supporting the Preparation and Submission of a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Application**

*Background:*

*Adopting the Pro-Housing Communities Pledge and agreeing to seek certification was the precursor to consideration of submitting a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant application. Ms. Miller told the Council that since it had already adopted a Parks Strategy, a Public Arts Strategy, a Corning Civic Center Master Plan, and Vision 2040, the new comprehensive plan, Corning is in a good position to apply for a DRI grant and hopefully will be successful.*

*DRI requires the city to show that there are 12 to 15 million dollars of shovel-ready projects in the city, each with a high potential of leveraging capital investment. Because of its planning work, Corning is well positioned to make this case. Ms. Miller feels that many of the certified Pro-Housing Communities are not as advanced.*

Thereafter, the Council unanimously adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Program provides an opportunity for the City of Corning to secure significant funding to implement transformative projects that enhance the downtown, promote economic growth, and improve livability; and

WHEREAS, the City of Corning's updated Comprehensive Plan, adopted on December 11, 2025, identified the DRI program as a key strategy for supporting the City's economic development goals; and

WHEREAS, participation in the DRI program aligns with the City's commitment to fostering a walkable community, mixed-used development, supporting local businesses, improving public spaces, and creating a more vibrant downtown for residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, the preparation of a competitive DRI application requires collaboration among City officials, community stakeholders, regional partners, and the public to identify priority projects and strategies that will maximize the impact of the program.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Corning City Council supports the preparation and submission of a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) application.

**Supporting the Governor's Proposal to Increase Temporary Municipal Aid  
and Calling for a Permanent Increase in Aid and Incentives to  
Municipalities (AIM) Funding**

*Background:*

*In each fiscal year, the AIM program provides \$1,499,556 in state revenue sharing money. This plays a critical role in the City of Corning's budget, which like every municipality in the state, is under stress due to ever-increasing costs of labor, materials, and municipal operations. However, funding for the AIM program has been inadequate for many years.*

*In Fiscal Year 2009, seventeen years ago, the state cut the amount Corning receives from AIM by \$122,734 or 7.6%. The reason that the state reduced AIM funding was the financial upheaval of the Great Recession. Even though times have changed, and costs continued to increase, the state never restored the AIM money it deducted. If adjusted for inflation, Corning would receive another million dollars a year.*

*Two years ago, the state introduced the Temporary Municipal Assistance (TMA) program. For the past two budget cycles the state has made a TMA payment of \$174,131 to the City of Corning in addition to its AIM money. However, the state has made it clear, each year, that TMA cannot be relied upon to support ongoing operating costs of the city. Because TMA is a non-recurring program the city uses the money for one-time capital expenses and other non-recurring expenditures.*

*This year, Governor Hochul's budget recommends a substantial increase in TMA which, if adopted, means \$522,393 for Corning. Again, the state is explicit in saying that, even if the legislature agrees, this money is temporary and non-recurring. Some believe that the size increase in Governor Hochul's budget for TMA shows that she realizes that there is a problem in municipal aid funding. This could mean that the door to discussion of a permanent fix for AIM funding will be open this year.*

*Because a \$522,393 increase in TMA will provide meaningful short-term relief for the City of Corning, the Council unanimously expressed its appreciation to Governor*

*Hochul for the proposed increase in TMA and supported its inclusion in the final budget when it is adopted by the legislature.*

*However, the Council also knows that the City of Corning is on the front line of ensuring safety and providing quality infrastructure for its residents. The Council believes that the real solution to rising costs and controlling property taxes is a permanent, long-term increase in AIM funding. Having predictable and sustainable state support, the city can use its resources most effectively. Because of this, the Council unanimously urged Governor Hochul and the state legislature to work toward a long term, permanent increase in AIM funding.*

### **Requesting State Aid for Road Maintenance**

#### *Background:*

*Corning is one of thirty-eight New York cities which have agreements with the state to maintain state highways within each city's jurisdiction. Under this agreement, the City of Corning maintains almost 64,900 square yards of state highway.*

*Centerway and Denison Parkway are the state highways in Corning that the city supports. It provides street striping, traffic control signal maintenance, snow plowing, mowing, and other maintenance for these roads.*

*In 1987 the state reimbursed the city at a rate of 85 cents per square yard. The state has never adjusted this rate. From 1987 to 2026, the city received \$55,129 annually to do its work. Even if adjusted only for inflation, the reimbursement rate should be \$2.54 per square yard, resulting in a maintenance payment of \$164,738.*

The Council unanimously requested Governor Hochul and the New York State Legislature to increase arterial maintenance aid reimbursement to \$2.54 per square yard in the 2026-2027 state budget.

### **New Business - the Council Unanimously:**

- *Authorized various street closures for various Gaffer District events. The dates for the events are:*

***GlassFest:*** *May 22 – May 24, 2026*

***Wineglass 8K Road Race:*** *May 23, 2026*

***Farmer's Market:*** *Every Thursday June 4 – October 29, 2026*

***Corning Pride:*** *June 13, 2026*

***America 250:*** *July 4, 2026*

**India Day:** August 15, 2026

**Community Night:** August 22, 2026

**Harvest Festival:** September 18 – September 19, 2026

**Wineglass (Storflex) 5K Road Race:** October 3, 2026

**Guthrie Wineglass Marathon:** October 3 – October 4, 2026

**Guthrie Wineglass Half-Marathon:** October 3 – October 4, 2026

**Days of Incandescence 2026:** October 22 - October 24, 2026

**Sparkle:** December 5, 2026

- *Authorized vending for the GlassFest, Farmer’s Market, Corning Pride America 250, India Day, Harvest Festival Days of Incandescence and Sparkle, plus two more events:*

**Music in the Square:** Every Thursday July 2 – August 27, 2026

**Horse and Wagon Rides:** November 28, December 12, December 13, December 19, and December 20, 2026.

- Consented to City Manager, Mark Ryckman, serving on the Board of Directors of the Steuben County Land Bank Corporation (SCLBC) for a term ending on December 31, 2027.

*Background:*

*Steuben County established the SCLBC in 2016. It is a nonprofit corporation, operating under New York State authority, to assist communities within Steuben County in addressing the issues of blight caused by vacant, abandoned, condemned, and foreclosed properties. The SCLBC endeavors to reverse the trend of declining property values and further deterioration of Steuben County's housing and commercial stock by stabilizing neighborhoods, encouraging private investment, and improving the quality of life for Steuben County residents.*

*The board of the SCLBC consists of seven members. Mr. Ryckman, currently serving on the board, was re-appointed to this position by the Steuben County Legislature, subject to the city’s consent.*

- Granted permission for open containers of alcohol in certain locations for Glass Fest and Harvest Festival subject to proof of adequate insurance.
- Transferred \$15,000 from the contingency line item to the line item for Streets - Salt and Sand for the purchase of road salt.
- Waived a 30-day notice period for the application of Ella’s Acres Homestead for a liquor license.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

### **NOTES**

- The writer of this report has presented items in an order different than the order at the meeting.
- The writer has, except as specifically noted, amended, or cut comments and attribution for them. Unless the writer uses quotation marks anything reported is not verbatim.
- For brevity, the writer has not included all items on the agenda of the meeting.
- The writer has added material for context or clarity and where it is extensive, is in italics and labeled "Background."